The Experience of Policing Critical Incidents: Thematic, Narrative, and
Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool
for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

By

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December 2014

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"Social research is often crude – especially when it relies on quantitative methods. It is reasonable to ask whether the available research methods are sufficiently sensitive to handle this level of complexity" (Hough, 2012, p.337).

"For me, this kind of grew in visibility like the Cheshire cat – minus any grin"

(participant).

ABSTRACT

A phenomenological approach was adopted to examine police officers' experiences of U.K. critical incidents. In the U.K. police service, critical incidents (CI) are incidents with a significant impact on the confidence victims, families, and the public have in the police. Data were e-focus groups for: i) operational debriefs ($n = 9$) and ii) reviews of service delivery ($n = 9$). With professional participants throughout ($N = 250$), the project had considerable ecological validity. Experiences of three types of incident, Serious Crime (SC) ($n = 6$), Counter-terrorist (CT) ($n = 6$), and Non-criminal (NC) ($n = 6$) were examined. Three qualitative methods - thematic analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and narrative analysis - provided triangulation of method. Different incident types and police forces provided data triangulation. Results showed that the most common themes revolved around relationships with partners and communities; staff welfare concerns were also highlighted. Common experiences obtained across incident types: *exclusion* and *pressure of incident* were negative experiences; *professional image* and *serving victims and families* were positive experiences. Differences specific to incident type also emerged: *humour* was unique to CT experiences and functioned to divert from trauma and reinforce social bonds; *taking control* was a feature of serious crime incidents; *uncertainty* was unique to NC incidents. Models of the impact on staff welfare and uncertainty are presented. A social identity model of transforming experiences is also presented. Narrative exemplars are presented: SC incidents had a *Media monster* narrative; CT incidents had a *CONTEST quest* narrative; NC incidents had a *Cheshire cat* narrative. Extant literature is discussed throughout. Findings are discussed in relation to social identity theory.

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1. Impetus for the Project

In the event of a dangerous, life-or-death, complex, critical incident – such as a terrorist attack or a major natural disaster with mass casualties – no one would suggest that the best person to manage it is a novice. Yet some incidents may be 'once-in-a-career' for responders. This realisation was the springboard for my thesis. How do the individuals who are responsible for responding to such incidents, experience them? Do they, for example, feel like novices? Are the experiences the same in different types of incident?

It is almost a truism to state that you cannot fully anticipate what has never happened before and critical incidents may be a unique combination of challenging features, each of which may be more or less or not at all familiar. They are typically large-scale, fast-paced, events containing high stakes, much uncertainty and high demands on those involved (Eyre*[1], Alison, Crego, & McLean, 2008; Eyre, Crego, & Alison, 2008). Indeed, these aspects of policing constitute a very specific and complex domain. Research shows that it takes 10 years to become proficient and knowledgeable enough to claim expertise in complex domains (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009) and that deliberate practice is necessary to attain it (Charness, Tuffiash, Krampe, Reingold, & Vasukova, 2009; Ericsson, 2006). Given that certain types of incidents are extremely rare and, therefore, beyond the experience of almost all professionals, it is possible that the unprecedented, unique event could make a novice of everybody. On the other hand, the very essence of expertise is that the individuals concerned are flexible enough to deal with the unanticipated, the unprepared-for incident no matter what it may turn out to be. Expertise brings the embedded, deep-structure knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required for

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[1] My own publications are asterisked in end references though none is based on/derived from this thesis.

truly adaptable performance (Lord & Hall, 2005); some elements of expertise may transfer from prior experiences (Eyre & Alison, 2007). The examination of police officers' experience of critical incidents makes for an interesting topic.

Police response to critical incidents is a difficult area to access and, given the comparative rarity of incidents, even more difficult to gather data in any significant quantity. This can mean that research is conducted from a distance (for example, using non-professional participants in simulated vignette studies). This can create unhelpful 'degrees of separation' between the researcher and the topic at hand which may dilute results. If the research topic constitutes a specialised domain, then researchers need to get as close as possible to the individuals involved in order to gather that experience. A substituted experience is insufficient as it may not only dilute results (via degrees of separation) but also manifestly fails to capture the critical incident context. Laboratory studies with general-public or student participants tend not to take place in alarm-blaring, siren-sounding, life-or-death environments.

Meaning is context specific so any understanding presented by researchers must take account of that context if findings are not to be challenged. The context can be complex: It comprises organisational, cultural, experiential, relational, temporal elements. It is too complex to be substituted adequately so it needed to be captured. This meant accessing the individuals who actually experienced the events and using methods that captured as fully, as richly, and as directly as possible, their experience. For this project, a phenomenological approach was duly adopted, and professional responders' experiences of critical incidents obtained. With this thesis, I aim to contribute to knowledge in this under-researched area and the overarching research question for this thesis was this: What are the professionals' experiences of critical incidents?

1.2. Data and Analyses

Focus group discussions conducted by and for the police service constituted the data corpus for this project. The professional responders were drawn principally from the police service. They participated in e-focus groups of two types: i) operational debriefs of critical incidents; and ii) reviews of service delivery. A

phenomenological perspective was used for the project and, accordingly, two methods that give primacy to participants' experience were used (Holloway & Todres, 2003): interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2004; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009); and narrative analysis (Frank, 2010; Mishler, 1991; Riessman, 1993, 2003). These formed the central 'backbone' of the thesis and were examined idiographically on a case-by-case (incident-by-incident) basis.

There was an additional area of interest. Albeit each incident may be once-in-a-career for each individual, these incidents do recur and the research question here was simply: What are the recurring features of these incidents? Accordingly, a thematic analysis was conducted across the data corpus to provide an overview of the common patterns in the data. This third method of analysis did not prioritise the details of individual experience; it was used to look across the entire data corpus rather than within each data item (i.e., each critical incident debrief) and provided an initial orientation to the data. The thematic analysis was not tied to any epistemological perspective and, indeed, was chosen specifically for that reason (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It was, however, related insofar as the identification of recurrent features could point to the influences or common experiences for the professionals involved. In terms of the arc of the thesis, the broad thematic overview provided a pathway into the detailed central body of the thesis that explored how those involved chose to relate their experiences (here determined by: What did participants choose to talk about? What stories did they tell and how did they tell them?)

1.3.   Participants

Participants were police officers who attended 10kV sessions. They attended either because: a) they had been involved in responding to or managing a critical incident (operational debriefs) or b) they had responsibility for the topic under discussion (service delivery reviews). Exact participant numbers and demographics were unknown. However, the following general protocols for 10kV applied: 1) Each session comprises 12-20 participants so there was an absolute minimum of 216 participants across the 18 sessions (over 100 of whom were in the nine operational debriefs); repeat sessions are conducted for large incidents (e.g., morning and

afternoon debriefs run over several days) so it is probable the actual number was much higher than the minimum stated; 2) all ranks and roles (*Bronze*, *Silver* and *Gold*) are represented; 3) 10kV is an uncommon tool so attendance is prioritised. Thus, those invited correspond accurately to those who attend. As secondary data, the researcher did not control participant selection nor attend the 10kV sessions that constituted the data-collection events. The set-up arrangements for the focus groups in this project were unavailable so there was no further demographic detail (e.g., gender, age, years served).

However, given the focus on common critical-incident experiences among police officers, the lack of participant demographics – while unusual - did not compromise research aims. It may perhaps be perceived to place some limitations on the rigour of the dataset (but see chapter 2, section 2.3.1., on representativeness and generalisation). It has been argued that the deletion of the interviewer (i.e., the facilitator) is a regular omission in qualitative research and ignores the interaction between facilitator and participants (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Smith, Holloway, & Mishler, 2005). As secondary data, this is unavoidable but I have outlined the standard arrangements (also see section 3.3., session format), which information was obtained from the 10kV team (J. Crego, personal communication, April, 2010). Furthermore, social identity theory "predicts that people with the same social identities will perceive their views as inter-changeable" (Eyre & Alison, 2007, p.225). Thus, the absence of finer-grained participant demographics does not offend the principles of the theoretical framework for the project. Similarly, the phenomenological focus on the experience of police officers in their organisational context was not compromised by ignorance of each individual's demographic details.

1.4.   What is a Critical Incident (CI)? Definitions

Critical incidents (CI) are intuitively regarded by most lay people as a life-or-death crisis that requires the help of the emergency services. Professional definitions are situated; they are defined explicitly, for example, in policy documents and standard operating procedures for the relevant police service. U.S. and Canadian definitions are, perhaps, more closely allied to the lay, intuitive idea of a critical incident. They are defined as "sudden, powerful events outside the officers' control"

(Anderson, Litzenberger, & Plecas, 2002, p. 403) with shootings, sieges and so on cited as examples. Thus, critical incidents in these countries refer to unanticipated events with a sudden onset that officers are likely to find unmanageable (i.e., beyond control). The emphasis tends to be on the probable impact of events on the police officer (Kulbarsh, 2007; Kureczka, 1996) and the potential for critical incidents to overwhelm the coping mechanisms of a reasonable professional.

In the U.K. definition, the focus is decidedly away from the professional. Instead, the emphasis is on the public. A critical incident is defined by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO[2]) as "any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community" (National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), 2009a, p.13). The U.K. definition refers to the performance of the police and their effectiveness but accountability to those whom they serve (i.e., the public) is also implicit in the definition. By contrast, in the U.S. and Canadian definition, there is recognition that professionals are not in control of events.

In the U.K., the breadth of the definition has been problematic. Although intended by ACPO to be broad to ensure incidents were not missed, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) reported, "The variation in existing levels of understanding of this term [critical incident] gives cause for concern" (2008, p.9). Alison, Eyre, and Humann (2010) discussed the difficulty in recognising and declaring an incident as a critical incident given that public confidence is perceptual; consequently, there could be a variety of opinions on police effectiveness. These authors gave the example of "a community consisting of a small street [where residents] may have no confidence in the police's ability to stop children playing and causing nuisance to adult residents" (p.275) and argued that this example meets the terms of the definition; however, few would define that situation as a critical incident and even fewer declare it to be so.

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[2] See Appendix A for a glossary of police abbreviations.

Rather, critical incidents connote life-threatening, traumatic events. This is nearer to the U.S. and Canadian definition and these connotations of trauma and life-and-death stakes probably account for some U.K. forces refining the ACPO definition. For example, the largest U.K. police force, the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) amended definition of a critical incident is "any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community, which has the potential to generate grave public concern at a local, regional, national or international level" (Metropolitan Police Service, 2003, p.4; 2008, p.3). To reiterate, definitions are situated and public perceptions of (and, indeed, demands on) responders will differ across organisational, cultural, temporal, and national contexts. Thus, the MPS definition incorporated the ACPO definition and extended it by specifying what for most people a critical incident connotes: its gravity and high-profile nature. For this thesis, the MPS's was the working definition of a critical incident though the potential for adverse impact on professionals, included in the U.S./Canadian definition, was also held in mind.

In practice, when a critical incident occurs, the police service is faced with managing the incident. In the U.K.'s emergency services, the police service is the lead agency. The response may take many forms: to rescue victims of natural or man-made disasters, to organise relief and co-ordinate a return to normality after the incident; they may need to investigate murder and bring offender(s) to justice or negotiate with hostage takers during a siege whilst protecting hostages and preserving life among the surrounding community. Thus, critical incidents demand a wide range of responses yet compared to volume crime such as theft or traffic offences, the likelihood of the occurrence of a critical incident is relatively small. It follows that officers may never before have been involved in a critical incident. Given the life-or-death stakes involved, it is clearly nowhere more vital that officers are not novices and are confident in their responses. However, it is not well established how officers experience their involvement in critical incidents, what meaning these events have or whether responders' experiences are common across incidents. In this project, I examined professional experiences across a range of critical incidents as defined above.

1.5. Objectives and Influences

A central aim of this project was that its beginning and ending were grounded in applied psychology: from first data collection, (drawn from organisational and operational discussions among professionals) to the objective that its findings would have practical applications for the organisations involved. Pragmatism was not an epistemological perspective explicitly adopted for this research; however, the aims of the project nonetheless (very broadly speaking) bore some comparison with pragmatism (Fishman, 1999). Although pragmatism does not eschew theory development, it is typically a bottom-up practitioner-driven approach that aims to solve problems. It was likewise anticipated that the findings of this thesis would have practical utility for the police service.

The project also drew on a naturalistic approach that has gained prominence in the decision making literature (Klein, 2008; Klein, Orasanu, Calderwood, & Zsambok, 1993; LeBoeuf & Shafir, 2001). Like pragmatism, naturalistic research "follows the principle of looking to experts in a particular context as a starting point for research" (Eyre & Alison, 2007, p.216-217). As a specialised domain, this research area can pose particular challenges. As mentioned earlier, data are difficult to access; contributions from professional participants are extremely difficult to acquire, if not completely, then certainly in sufficient numbers to provide a robust sample. Lay participants are likely to cause significant difficulties for the ecological validity of the research. Certainly, there is a vast body of literature on policing but some areas are so under-researched, they still lack a coherent, overarching description of the main issues. It was intended that this thesis draw together some hitherto under-explored issues. To do so, innovative methods were required to access and capture sufficient information and the thread through this thesis was the method used to collect data. It was an e-focus group technology named 10,000 Volts (10kV) designed for the police service as an organisational learning tool (see chapter 3 for review).

1.6.   Theoretical Framework: Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorisation Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the allied, subsequently-developed self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) provide the theoretical framework for the thesis. Tajfel and Turner defined social identity as "an individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him or her of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p.31, cited in Haslam, Postmes & Ellemers, 2003); as specific examples, one may belong to the social groups, parent, police officer and so on. The allied self-categorisation theory explicated the processes in forging or maintaining social identity, focusing more on the individual's construction of self. Identity is characterised as a continuum between the individual at one end (construed as a unique self with one's own personality and biography) moving towards increasingly inclusive collective social identities at the other. Thus, the social identity of human being would be at the extreme collective end of the continuum with identities such as parent or police officer placed mid-way between individual and human being.

Individuals self-categorise via a process of self-stereotyping; they do so by reference to the prototypical category member and via a dialectical relationship with relevant attendant products (Haslam et al., 2003). Thus, it is meaningful for participants to define themselves as a police officer. They self-categorise in relation to the norms and culture of the organisation that is the police service. They know they belong to that particular professional group; it is meaningful to them and has value. Social (aka organisational) identity drives behaviour. Generally, individuals will act in accordance with prevailing organisational norms (obviously, police officers are less likely than career criminals to rob banks regularly); stronger social identity predicts behaviour that adheres more closely to group norms. Relevant groups may be nested within

overarching categories (e.g., CT officer within police service) and each individual must negotiate any conflict between individual and social identity and different social identities. Eyre and Alison (2007) stated: "An individual's social identity and self-categorisation as part of a team will be mediated through identification with the larger group that is the organisation and we may look to those organisational norms to identify the derivation of mental models or a 'team mind' (p.226).

Social identity theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for several reasons. It is a macro-theory that can accommodate complex social-psychological phenomena and provide insight into individuals and groups as well as individuals within- or between-groups. In other words, it had sufficient explanatory power for: i) the individual (i.e., at one end of a continuum the psychology of the individual is held to be socially structured); in relation to ii) his or her social context (i.e., the individual's associated social or organisational environments); and iii) the explication of the dialectical relationships in the individuals' self-categorisation in their particular social contexts (i.e., the processes between individual and contextual lifeworld). This last component bolstered social identity theory beyond potential alternatives I considered, for example, role theory, which latter did not account fully for the processes entailed in construction of identities.

Finally, social identity theory was an apt partner for phenomenology. I adopted a phenomenological approach because it gave primacy to experience, which was my core interest. More fundamentally, Heidegger's (1927/1962) concept of *dasein*, there-being underpinned my methodological approach. Specifically, *being-in-the-world* was the organising principle for the project. It represented conceptually (and, incidentally, semiotically, as signifier depicted graphically in the text), a gestalt that had an irreducible integrity. I therefore embraced *being-in-the-world* as my unit of analysis. Conceptually, it characterised the focus of study as individuals embodied in their social context. To retain that social context avoided the fragmentation of more atomistic approaches which focus on a decontextualised individual or, at a smaller grain size, aspects of behaviour, for example. As signifier in the text, *being-in-the-world* had, at one end of the hyphenated concatenation, the individual *being–,* at the other end was *–the world;* between the two was the *in-* representing the intentionality

and orientation of the individual towards his or her lifeworld. This was a sound graphic representation of the continuum as conceived in social identity theory: from an individual *being* with a unique identity at one end reaching along the (hyphenated) continuum to the increasingly collective other end, which incorporates more and more of the social *world*. Self-categorisation theory's explication of the processes in the creation or maintenance of social identity retains the links (hyphens) between individual *being* and social context of the life*world*. This mapped neatly onto the phenomenological concepts I adopted. Thus, there was a solid correspondence, an affinity, between methodology and theory.

1.7. Argument Structure and Main Contribution

I argue that examining the experiences of professional participants can yield new insights into the management of critical incidents given that: There has been little access to this sensitive area, (and hence) an insufficient quantity of ecologically valid data. I argue that an analysis of these critical incident experiences may have value in the development of theory (yet I acknowledge that the data are situated within and, indeed, bounded by a specific social, organisational and temporal context). This was not to wish to 'have one's cake and eat it'. Rather, it was to recognise explicitly the dangers of over-extrapolation whilst seeking to establish the recurring features of critical incidents and the potential for these findings to make a contribution to knowledge. I drew on a substantial dataset of operational debriefs of critical incidents and discussion workshops (the latter termed *service delivery reviews*). All participants were professional responders recounting and discussing real-life incidents or organisational strategies to manage them.

I relied on a pluralist approach to conduct a detailed qualitative analysis of a set of 18 discussion (e-focus group) sessions collated for this project. The pluralist approach required a rationale to justify the methodological selections made as well as providing explanations for those rejected. Therefore, the first section of the thesis takes up the question of the dominant methodological approaches within the discipline of psychology. I challenge the passive acceptance of methodolatry and argue for the prioritisation of ecological validity over *clean and tidy* data. I argue that while clean and tidy data may better meet orthodox academic standards of

methodological purity, access to naturalistic settings provides a truer representation of the real-world domain being studied. Thus, my methodological approach chapter (2) includes a valid argument that the data corpus collated for this project provided experiences of critical incidents that were representative of critical incidents in general. The e-focus group technology, 10kV, (i.e., data collection method), is described and reviewed in chapter 3. A general literature review is provided in chapter 4. The remaining sections of the thesis move the work forward and use qualitative methods to examine different aspects of the data corpus. In chapters 5 and 6, a thematic analysis provided a broad overview of the most prominent topics that emerged from the entire data corpus (18 sessions).

In accordance with the phenomenological thrust of the thesis, I wished to examine professionals' experiences of critical incidents. It transpired that these experiences were not found directly in the general discussion forums of service delivery reviews. Therefore, after the initial broad thematic analysis of the data corpus (reported in chapters 5 and 6) the service delivery review sessions were excluded. Thereafter, the operational debriefs (N = 9) formed the dataset for the remainder of this thesis. In this operational part of the data corpus, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to examine participants' lived experiences of critical incidents (chapters 7, 8, and 9). I add to the literature by considering the meanings participants constructed and the sense they made of extraordinary and chaotic events. I also conducted a narrative analysis to explore the participants' stories and how they chose to relate them, examining the ways in which they incorporated the experiences into their lives. I evaluate the constructed meanings and narrative structures and consider the social, organisational, and inter-group features that influenced the types of narratives produced (chapters 10, 11, and 12). Findings are discussed in chapter 13. The thesis as a whole makes an epistemological contribution to an under-researched domain.

CHAPTER TWO. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

"One cannot do good qualitative research by following a cookbook"

(Smith, 2004, p.40).

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss methodological approaches and methods. It is reflexive throughout and presented in two parts: In the first part, *Putting Away the Cookbook*, I consider the dominant approaches in the discipline of psychology and reject those inappropriate for this project (to extend Smith's quotation above, moving beyond the recipes in the cookbook); in the second part, *Choosing my Ingredients,* I go on to discuss the approaches that were adopted, providing a rationale for the choices made.

Thus, I develop a formulation for considering professionals' critical incident experiences to: a) explore and describe the basic phenomenological quality of their experiences (Clegg, 2012) with a view to b) developing theory. This does not imply a confirmatory approach and there was no hypothesis testing. Rather, it was a search to establish what these events meant to the professionals involved and the stories they relayed about their experiences. No claims are made to a singular truth; a wide-open interpretative stance was likewise rejected. Broadly, , as the researcher, I engaged with the data in an interpretative way to produce findings that were moderately bounded. After an initial orientation through thematic analysis, I used a narrative approach coupled with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to examine participants' accounts. Smith et al. (2009) argued that qualitative research "requires a willingness to use the first-person, to take up positions and develop arguments" (2009, l.922). This position, including the use of the first-person, was likewise adopted here. I further outline my stance next.

2.2. Putting Away the Cookbook

2.2.1. Within and Without the Discipline of Psychology

Insofar as the dominant orthodox methodology within psychology is positivist, the methodological approach I adopted is atypical. Within the discipline, experimental methods and quantitative analysis are standard - even gold standard - research activities. Yet each time I explored methodological approaches 'without' the discipline of psychology, the less they cohered with 'within-discipline' assumptions. Standard approaches seemed inappropriate and too narrow for capturing the richness of the data I had. In this chapter, then, I reflect on and argue for the approach I adopted.

2.2.2. What Counts as Science?

Research that does not conform to the dominant approach within psychology is sometimes held not to be 'real science'. On this basis, qualitative research can sometimes be seen as a poor relation compared to positivist approaches that privilege quantitative methods employing statistical support (Kidd, 2002; Madill & Gough, 2008). I subscribe to Denzin's (2009) argument that this is a narrow view of science. It is not a lone view. Harré (2004) shared this position and attributed the impulse to reductionism to a "naïve idea of what constitutes a scientific discipline" (p.11). Indeed, Harré stated that qualitative techniques conform more closely to natural science ideals. Howe (2004) also provided a strong critique of experimentalism. Nevertheless, these arguments have yet to gain traction within the discipline so there remains a sense in which qualitative researchers need to present their positions more explicitly as they cannot rely on within-discipline norms for acceptance: hence, this chapter.

Denzin argued against the unequal treatment of different methodological approaches. I subscribe to Denzin's view of scientific activity; he argued, "We need a broader framework where such key terms as science, data, evidence, field, method, analysis, knowledge, truth, are no longer defined from within a narrow, policy-oriented, positivistic framework" (Denzin, 2009, p.153; see also, e.g., Howe,

2004; Lather, 2006). It should be noted that I do not in any way reject experiments, RCTs and accompanying quantitative/statistical/SPSS analysis – indeed, straightforward quantitative frequency measures begin the empirical section of the thesis. Sometimes, however, extremely interesting research topics fit into the prototypical within-discipline methodology about as well as the ugly sisters fit into Cinderella's glass slipper. The dataset I had was by no means dainty but it was incredibly interesting. As Canter said, "The applied scientist's task is to provide a coherent resumé of that world so that it can be understood and acted on" (1996, p.41). I aimed to provide a coherent resumé of critical incident experiences, one of sufficient utility that it may be acted on.

2.2.3. Methodological Cuckoos

Like any cultural norm, the within-discipline norms in psychology can be so taken for granted they remain unnoticed. Canter (1996) appositely expressed this problem when he stated:

> "Simplifying the problems to be studied, in advance of studying them, for the sake of some notional scientific rigour, seemed to me like the joke about a person searching for something where it is easy to see, rather than in the area where he had lost it!" (1996, p.41-42).

This so-called *drunken-path* approach (named for the drunken man in the aforementioned joke who sought lost keys beneath the bright street lamp rather than in the dark alley where he had actually dropped them) has been criticised elsewhere. It is rejected here in favour of an approach driven by the appropriate methods for the task at hand. Frost and Nolas (2011) noted the problems that can ensue when "the method risks becoming more important than the topic under inquiry" (p.115). Others cautioned similarly and emphasised the importance of allowing the research domain to yield the method and not vice versa (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Chamberlain, Cain, Sheridan, & Dupius, 2011; Holloway & Todres, 2003; Kelle, 2006; Mason, 2006a). Methodolatry is an unfortunate position from which to begin study. To avoid this, I examine below some standard aspects of research with this aim: to reveal them as methodological cuckoos in the nest that do not have a legitimate place in this project.

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2.2.3.1. On Variables and Uncertainty

Within the discipline of psychology, a variable-centred approach as part of a tightly controlled research design which removes uncertainty is regarded as the norm (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). I regard this as a methodological cuckoo. Creation of closure around 'legitimate' areas of examination can relegate to the background much that may be of interest. Worse, it may even hide that which is central to understanding the domain under study. Quantitative methods emphasise prediction, associations or correlations among representative populations, or causality or event consequences. This necessitates a lesser emphasis on meaning or sense-making of individuals as they engage with the world; to exchange real-life individuals for a presentation of numerical averages is to drain the meaning from the experiences. Smith et al. drew on an apposite quotation to criticise such approaches, "Dealing with group averages rather than particular cases, such analyses produce what Kastenbaum describes as 'indeterminate statistical zones that construct people who never were and never could be' (2009, l.667). I wanted to study people not indeterminate statistical zones. Qualitative approaches in general can preserve richer detail but they are fewer in the policing literature (Miller, J., 2008; Miner-Romanoff, 2012). This view is supported by this project's literature review (chapter 4) which also revealed a particular gap in research that explores the experiences of police officers.

Haslam and McGarty (2001) criticised social psychology's narrowing in the boundaries of the (acceptable) scientific method with the single-study experiment becoming the predominant approach in recent decades. These criticisms are not novel. In 1956, Blumer addressed the variable-centred approach which was at that time "becoming the norm" (p.653) for social science. Blumer rejected the lack of limits around variable choices and the seeming disregard for variables' simplicity or complexity, disregard for variables' generality or specificity, and for unthinkingly imparting quantitative dimensions to qualitative items. He criticised selection of variables "on a specious impression of what is important" (p.653).

Half a century on, Blumer's criticisms have not gained enough traction to overturn the dominance of variable-centred research so the difficulties of variable-

centred research persist. Studies present findings purportedly about individuals' thoughts yet those thoughts have only been operationalised through variables taken from theories (Smith et al., 2009). They are further filtered through questions on surveys. These constitute several degrees of separation between participants' experience and researchers' findings. Immediate, direct experience is, of course, impossible to access but it is possible to get closer. In this project, I rejected a variable-centred approach in favour of adopting a bottom-up approach firmly rooted in the data and driven primarily by the participants' priorities (not researcher's questions). My interest began with the ways in which participants made sense of their experiences, how they placed order on events and the stories they conveyed.

Howell Major and Savin-Baden (2011) argued against the removal of uncertainty stating that the most interesting findings occur at the point of uncertainty, and that this disjunction opens the door to new insights; indeed, they argued, inference demands uncertainty (see also chapter 10, 10.2. and Fadiman, 1998). Haslam and McGarty (2000) warned against elevating the reduction of uncertainty to the status of first principle in research and argued that the complete removal of uncertainty can lead to dull findings. Rather, uncertainty should be embraced since, they argued, it can foster greater creativity and even the emergence of new paradigms. Such lofty claims are not made here but embracing the uncertainty of what the data would yield and forgoing a priori hypotheses or theory was preferred.

2.2.3.2. On Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are concepts that derive from a positivist tradition (Elliott, 2007). Thus, it may be argued that they sit more comfortably with and are more appropriate to quantitative research, which studies emphasise measurement over description or other examination of participants' experiences (Becker, 1996). However, qualitative approaches cannot simply reject checks and balances as unnecessary. Neither does one have to disappear into a tangential semantic discussion to resolve the issue. A definition of validity is essentially, "Are we measuring what we think we are measuring?" (Kerlinger, 1973, p.456). Whether "measuring" or describing or examining in another way, this applies to different types of scientific study; that is, in presenting experiences categorised together in some

form, researchers must be consistently tapping into the same concepts in order to explain the phenomena under scrutiny. The essential pertinent issues are: 1. What are we tapping into conceptually? (And is it replicated across the dataset?); and 2. Generalisation.

2.2.3.3. On Triangulation

Triangulation of the dataset may be regarded as an alternative to mainstream (dominant) techniques for addressing the idea of reliability and validity. The overarching aim was that triangulation would ensure methodological robustness and enhance confidence in research findings. Recently, triangulation has been applied as a term for research where two or more methods are employed (Mason, 2006b). In that respect, triangulation is demonstrated in the current project as different methods were used to examine different aspects of the topic at hand. However, earlier ideas on triangulation were broader. Denzin (1970) specified four strands of triangulation: data, methodological, theoretical, and investigator. This project did not conform so readily to all four Denzin criteria though it did meet some. For the first strand, there was triangulation across the dataset with the number of sessions about different incidents (18 for thematic, nine for IPA and narrative analyses) as well as participants (i.e., different forces so different points of view were placed side by side). For the second strand, adoption of different methods to examine different aspects of the dataset provided methodological triangulation (i.e., analytical rather than data-gathering methods).

This project did not begin tied to a theoretical viewpoint so, on the third strand, theoretical triangulation as an a priori feature was absent. On Denzin's final, fourth strand: I regarded investigator (researcher) triangulation as a methodological cuckoo for this thesis. I expand on the problematic assumptions associated with investigator triangulation in the section on inter-rater reliability (2.2.3.4. below). Thus, the current project met some of Denzin's (1970) four original triangulation criteria (specifically, data and methodological were satisfied) but it may be seen as somewhat problematic in other regards (i.e., theoretical and investigator). However, it did satisfy recent definitions of triangulation via multiple methods (Mason, 2006b).

In the interest of reflexivity, it is acknowledged that the idea of triangulation itself is not without its critics. Firstly, it has been criticised as a position of naïve realism which assumes there is a singular truth that can be represented if only the data, analysis and results can be successfully corroborated or integrated (Bryman, 2008a, 2008b; Chamberlain et al., 2011; Hammersley, 2008). Secondly, it is problematic in its assumption that different methods can be taken as each other's equivalent (Mason, 2006b). Checks and balances in some form were nevertheless required. There were multiple sessions in the dataset that provided opportunity for cross-checking for commonalities across time, place, situation, and participants (in Chamberlain et al.'s phrase, "pluralism of occasion" [2011, p.153]). A pluralist approach, then, acknowledged the social complexity of human experience and tried therefore to retain the multiple perspectives. Under that umbrella, the different (plural) methods employed here were adopted in order to examine different aspects of the experience of critical incidents.

Although multiple methods have been offered as providing triangulation, it would be more accurate to regard them as complementary. One (IPA) does not validate the other (narrative analysis). This was not the role they had in relation to one another. Rather, I regarded them as different tools to examine different dimensions of the critical incident domain (May & Burke, 2010). By analogy, a screwdriver and a saw may each make a valuable contribution to a building project. Each is useful to a specific part of the project; indeed, one would hope it would ultimately be a better project for having both tools available yet one would not attempt to integrate the two; one does not corroborate or validate the other (Mason, 2006a; Mason, 2006b). Thematic analysis helped identify recurrent critical incident elements. IPA was used to analyse participants' experiences and the sense they made of them; narrative analysis was concerned with how they told their stories (May, 2010).

2.2.3.4. On Inter-rater Reliability

Within the discipline of psychology, inter-rater reliability (IRR) tests commonly provide investigator triangulation. However, an IRR merely establishes a degree of agreement (or otherwise) between two people and there is insufficient power in a

sample of $N = 2$. . Moreover, the project was explicitly interpretative; seeking to integrate via IRR would have flattened different interpretations into a single dimension to no advantage.

In principle, second and other investigators can be invaluable in providing further viewpoints and add to collective findings. However, the restricted nature of IRR tests provides a second rater with a severely decontextualised and, hence, unavoidably superficial glimpse of the data. Therefore, two raters cannot examine the same object of study without the same level of immersion in the data which, in a PhD research project, was an impractical and wholly unrealistic proposition. It is accepted, then, that second investigators can contribute if their roles and relative contributions are carefully considered. An IRR would not do so; it was therefore deemed inappropriate for the current approach and rejected as a means of triangulation.

In sum, I did not want to take an instrumental approach. Neither did I want to take a drunken-path approach by using prototypical methods that were not necessarily appropriate for the data corpus. In standard terminology, there was methodological and data triangulation but not theoretical or investigator. Triangulation has thus been provided, supplemented by a virtual audit (Smith et al., 2009) to demonstrate reliability and validity (see chapter 7, 7.1. for audit details). It was regarded as paramount that methods served the project aims not vice versa. Multiple methods of complementary data analysis could better preserve multi-dimensional aspects of the findings, a must-have given the complexity of the domain. By rejecting methodological *cuckoos in the nest*, I hoped instead to research an under-explored area by adopting the most apposite methodological approach for a data corpus with significant ecological validity.

To re-cap, I adopted a phenomenological perspective in pursuit of which, I have taken issue with dominant approaches within the discipline of psychology. Methodologically, I subscribed to a pluralist approach; specifically, I adopted an interpretative position whilst arguing for some generalisations to be made (section 2.3.1. below). Having presented the approaches I rejected, I next reflect on some related issues and further outline the approach I did take.

2.3. Choosing my Ingredients

2.3.1. Representativeness and Generalisation

The 10kV data were bounded: The statements made by participants were accepted as statements made in a specific situation in the social and organisational context that obtained for that particular 10kV session. No automatic assumption was made that statements in a 10kV session indicated what might obtain in other social situations. The idiographic principles underpinning a chosen method in this thesis (IPA) forego representativeness as a major concern, arguing *less is more* (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). However, I did not adhere to a strict idiographic approach; that is, the critical incidents were considered in a case-by-case fashion but a *case* did not refer to an individual. Instead, the dataset comprised focus groups where a critical incident was discussed by a group of individuals: This was a sample by any other name. I leave aside the desirability or no of larger samples and their being equated with higher value research (Reid et al., 2005). Instead, I argue that representativeness happened to exist in my sample. I also argue for some generalisations to be made. Although I do not conflate generalisation with representativeness, I consider them together in this section.

Williams (2000) named three types of generalisation: 1) total - most often seen in the natural sciences for general laws; 2) statistical - the recognisable norm in social science, often with assumptions of probability sampling and the reporting of confidence levels about generalisations made. This second type, statistical generalisation, is the approach favoured in psychology yet it is not the only one available. Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster argued that, "Denial of the capacity for case study research to support empirical generalisation often seems to rest on the mistaken assumption that this form of generalisation required some form of statistical sampling. This restricts the idea of representation to its statistical version; it confuses the task of empirical generalisation with the use of statistical techniques to achieve that goal. While those techniques are a very effective basis for generalisation, they are not essential" (2000, p.104).

This brings us to the third of Williams' three types: moderatum generalisation. Williams defined this last type of generalisation as one "where aspects of S [the sample] can be seen to be instances of a broader recognisable set of features. This is the form of generalisation made in interpretive research, either knowingly or unknowingly" (p.215). Kelle (2006) agreed that generalisation is implicit in many areas of study and that it is completely taken for granted; Kelle went so far as to argue that, without this unquestioned acceptance, some types of "macrosocial phenomena (for instance, the existence of cultural norms)" (p.304) would have to be completely excluded from qualitative research. Accepting that generalisation is a typical but implicit feature of qualitative research, I argue that it would nonetheless be preferable to make the implicit explicit and examine the basis on which the (bounded, *moderatum*) generalisations may be made.

Extending Williams' notion of moderatum generalisation, Fairweather and Rinne (2012) posited the idea of making "moderate claims about the social world that depend on shared culture or cultural consistency in the social environment" (p.474). This was the basis for my generalisations. The 10kV sessions in my data corpus were all drawn from the shared organisational culture of the police service. Standardised educative and training procedures exist within the police service (e.g., the U.K.'s national PIP (Professionalising Investigations Programme). Such programmes provide mandatory qualifying criteria for those whose role requires them to manage critical incidents. Notwithstanding different types of incident, standard operating procedures for critical incident response prevail, providing a reasonable degree of consistency across the sessions. Thus, these participants shared a social (organisational) mileu and must reach a bar set at the same height for all. These influences served to homogenise the group on relevant dimensions.

2.3.2. Considering Context

This, of course, highlights the idea of social context. In arguing for the importance of avoiding decontextualised research, it is vital to pause to consider what is referred to when context is invoked. I consider that experiences of critical incidents are psychosocial phenomena which are situated temporally, culturally and historically. Funnelling down from those broad elements, context is defined as "an

occasioned phenomenon, built up (or down) across the real-time, situational circumstances in question (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p.308-309). Thus, there are multiple contexts that may be occasioned. Specifically, however, those "real-time situational circumstances" refer here to: i) the shared features of the immediate critical incident situation (I call this the proximal context); ii) the (comparatively more temporally stable) climate and culture of the organisations that employ the professionals (the distal context); and iii) the broader public backdrop (external context). This was necessarily a little crude but it helped to render more concrete what can be a somewhat nebulous concept.

Crucially, these shared features of the social milieu are regarded, in Mason's (2006b) phrase, as "associated surroundings" (p.18) rather than a loose or random collection of features. Hence, in the middle of a fast-paced unfolding and life-threatening critical incident, an individual may decide to prioritise officer safety over preservation of life of a member of the public (e.g., not to send officers immediately into a building to rescue child hostages where guns are reported as present). Factors in the proximal context (hearing a crying child in danger) may lean the decision maker towards a decision to rescue; policy and procedures (distal organisational context) may tend the same individual towards avoiding the rescue decision, perhaps anticipating blame if officers are injured or killed in the rescue attempt (Anderson, 2003); as a countervailing force, anticipation of regret at the prospect of public evaluation in the media ('police leave child to die' headlines) may prompt the decision to rescue. These associated surroundings interact fluidly.

Hence, any of the above elements might combine and be the right or wrong decision (again, depending on the context in which it is judged). Recounting those experiences during data collection naturally comprised another social context but suffice to say, contextual factors always form part of the critical incident experience and will influence the professional (Eyre & Alison, 2007). Those contexts will constrain or enable individuals' intentions and actions. The consideration of context is sometimes forsaken when judging one kind of data as more worthy or valid than another but Hammersley cautioned: "As researchers we should not be concerned with assessing the validity of the accounts informants provide but rather with

analysing how they produce these accounts and what function is served by them (2008, p.26-27). This was the analysis intended here; in order to do so, context was an important consideration.

This professional subset of individuals shared an organisational context; the organisational culture and climate formed their associated surroundings. It is argued therefore, that they constituted a more homogeneous population than the equivalent number of individuals selected from the population at large. The professional subset shared an organisational identity (Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and each individual self-categorised (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherall, 1987) in order to take up their place or role within the shared organisational culture. Of course, this is not to argue that they are all alike as individuals, merely that these features forge a more homogeneous population than a general population at large. Thus, it was likely that the sample of participants in my dataset was more representative of their peer population than many standard samples that extrapolate to general populations.

Of course, this was not measured, simply averred but Gobo (2009) argued, "It is not necessarily the case that a researcher must choose between either an (approximately) random sample or an entirely subjective one – or between a sample which is (even only) partially probabilistic and one about whose representativeness absolutely nothing can be said" (2009, p.201). I submit Gobo's view for the sample of participants in my dataset. Thus, a sample from a comparatively homogeneous population (police) was likely to be a more representative sample than many studies with less closure around participant selection where generalisation is accepted as unproblematic. From this basis, then, I submit that 108-250+ participants drawn from a specialist professional population, all of whom experienced events which are relatively rare, comprised a sample that was: a) of at least comparable representativeness; and b) of significant enough size from which to generalise. Recall too that I draw on "a shared culture or cultural consistency in the social environment [in order to make] moderate claims about the social world" (Fairweather & Rinnie, 2012, p.474).

I nevertheless admit its boundedness (Kelle, 2006) and borrow, therefore, Williams' (2000) notion of moderatum generalisation (note, it is employed here as a term rather than suggesting adherence to its method). As mentioned earlier, critical incident management is a specialist domain requiring specialist expertise (e.g., Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009) and there ought to be no expectation that research findings should automatically generalise beyond that domain (Eyre & Alison, 2007). Hence, I argue for bounded parameters. The fundamental thrust of this project was, of course, to gather rare once-in-a-career events to examine the experiences and to establish common features in an under-researched area; that is, to generalise across these separate and ostensibly different incidents whilst recognising that critical incident management is a very specialised area. Findings here may not generalise to other professional domains but, within the domain, it should be possible to generalise.

2.3.3. Considering Language

Language was not accepted at face value as if it were a mirror to social reality. Language was not assumed to be telementational; rather, it is a complex medium wherein influence may be wrought (e.g., persuasive messages), where messages may be obfuscated as well as communicated and where meaning may be constructed, altered, or even deliberately hidden. As Alvesson and Karreman stated, "The production of an account is a complex accomplishment that needs to be understood in its own terms" (2000, p.142).

Howell Major and Savin-Barden argued, "Truths exist as individualized and multiplied aspects of peoples' lives" (2011, p.648). Notwithstanding the inability to establish a sole objective truth, the search for meaning can be fruitful "even if it is contested and provisional" (Scott-Baumann, 2011, p. 594). It is difficult, then, to stake claims that any research can be sure it has accessed even multiple truths but in this project I attempted a reflexive approach by adopting methods that assisted in examining language used by participants. This was not characterised as participants' *inner worlds* – their perceptions of reality or cognitive representations of truth(s) - being made accessible (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Rather, it is more modestly claimed that some attempt was made to problematise the issue by choosing

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methods that would entail some examination of the language used by participants and the ways in which their accounts reflected or served organisational purposes – the former via interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (e.g., Smith, 2004) and the latter via narrative analysis of the data (Mishler, 1991).

2.3.4. Pluralism: a Multi-dimensional Approach

An ESRC- (Economic and Social Research Council-) commissioned report noted the comparative lack of prominence of qualitative methods and called for "unconventional methods, including realistic evaluation … [and] … methods for hard-to-reach groups" (Bardsley, Wiles, & Powell, 2006, p.ii). This project responded to that call. Pluralism of method offered a means of examining the different dimensions of the domain being studied (Chamberlain et al., 2011). In an area that is under-researched because it is difficult to access, it was important to examine the critical incident experiences in the richest detail possible.

The ESRC report paid particular regard to the "effects and opportunities of new modes of data collection afforded by technology … [and] … computing resources to 'scale-up' qualitative research" (2006, p.i); they were reported as prominent issues to be addressed for stakeholders within and beyond academia (i.e., public, private and voluntary sector). This thesis contributes in these areas via the use of unconventional technology to collect data from a hard-to-reach group. Discourse analysis could obviously have revealed valuable insights. However, I wished the individual to occupy a central position in these accounts rather than cede the foreground of the research to other (arguably more superordinate) components Thematic, IPA, and narrative analysis offered plural complementary methods for analysing the dataset. Compiling 18 e-focus group sessions into one dataset for this thesis provided pluralism of occasion for the professional group being studied (Chamberlain et al., 2011). To borrow Chamberlain et al.'s neat term, this overcame the limitations of the "drive-by nature" (p.152) of one-contact, one-method approaches that are more commonly used.

2.3.5. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was chosen as the first method of analysis for several reasons, outlined earlier (1.2. Data and Analyses). To recap: it addressed the research question, *What are the recurring features of these incidents?* Thematic analysis thereby provided an overview of common patterns; it provided a straightforward means of immersion into the data; that is, it gave the researcher an opportunity for: i) initial familiarisation with the data and ii) a means of organising the very large data corpus minimally without having simultaneously to consider epistemological and theoretical positions. Hence, it offered a pathway into the data before the more detailed phenomenological perspective in the central body of the thesis. It offered an easy at-a-glance means of accessing rank order of discussion topics and, finally, as a more generic qualitative approach, it also offered the best chance for comparisons by others who wish to take it forward.

2.3.6. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) seemed a promising method for this dataset yet did not initially seem suitable. On the one hand, it is a method that was devised to provide insights into subjective lived experience and examine what it means to an individual to be in a particular situation (Biggerstaffe & Thompson, 2008). This was a snug fit for my project. IPA's core phenomenological principle provides researcher freedom to engage closely with the data in an inductive way; its hermeneutic focus brings interpretive analysis to the fore (Smith, 2004). These were all valuable features, appropriate to my research into the experiences of critical incidents. However, the focus group nature of 10kV data meant that a central pillar of IPA – namely, its idiographic approach – would be flouted. This view has, however, been revised. Smith (2004) provided for the suitability of IPA with focus group data based on two criteria: i) examination of the data to ascertain whether idiographic accounts appeared and ii) confidence that participants would discuss personal experiences in sufficient detail. The dataset met both these criteria.

In relation to i) above, parsing the text revealed idiographic accounts in the data; in addition, each incident may be described as an idiographic account (even to

the point of sharing the term, *case*, the common police parlance referring to an investigation); in relation to ii) personal details appeared in this dataset and are a standard feature of 10kV accounts (e.g., the impact of long working hours on marriages; distress when discovery of bodies transformed a missing person into a murder enquiry) (also see, Crego, Alison, Roocroft, & Eyre, 2008). The strict anonymity provided by 10kV has been argued to foster open, candid accounts (Eyre, Crego, & Alison, 2008). The facilitator of the sessions confirmed this to be so and further added that participants report the experience as cathartic: They welcomed a first opportunity to speak about challenging, traumatic events to discover distress was a collective (and, therefore, normal) experience, not an individual weakness (Crego, personal communication). That these idiographic accounts containing personal details were substantial enough to permit narrative analysis further validated the use of IPA.

Palmer, Larkin, de Visser and Fadden (2010) expanded on the suitability of conducting IPA with focus group data. It was their extended and detailed protocol for IPA that was adopted for this project. There were several protocols for following the IPA method but Palmer et al. provided some additional valuable elements. As discussed earlier, (section 2.3.2.), the inclusion of context was important in order to gather as full an account as possible. I wanted to capture the organisational (distal) and other social (proximal or external) contexts that obtained in relation to participants' experiences of these critical incidents. Contexts were likewise mentioned earlier as fluid and multiple; hence, there was, of course, a social context when collecting focus group data. Albeit not my main focus, I pause briefly to consider it here.

Palmer et al. (2010) explained that their IPA strategy does not have "the micro-analytical interactional focus of the main traditions in discursive work … [instead, it] is a means of accommodating some of the contextual elements of shared meaning making when in pursuit of an interpretative phenomenological account" (p.102). Thus, it permitted a broadly idiographic approach without being exclusively focused on the individual. The social context in which the focus group took place was part of the protocol and the degree of context around which I created closure.

Context was, then, not the sharp focus of my research but it warranted inclusion. A distinction needs to be drawn because there were two strands to context: i) data content and ii) data collection. Firstly, the context in data content: Focus group data meant that extended, open comments were obtained. Therefore, social (organisational) contexts were included and captured in the content of the data. Conversely, these social contexts would have been excluded if, for example, discrete variables had been selected as part of a more atomistic, experimental approach. The second strand was the context of data collection: Participants shared a social context during the focus group. The session unfolded in a particular time and place, and as participants made comments, they contributed to the session. This back-and-forth comment-and-response format allowed for the creation of shared meaning between participants in the session. This had been the original stumbling block for conducting IPA with focus group data given that the group co-creation of meaning ran counter to the notion of an idiographic approach. Academics since have considered ways to adapt IPA to accommodate these features (Smith, 2004). Nonetheless, this shared social context of data collection ought not to gain too much prominence. The Palmer et al. (2010) IPA protocol (deemed most appropriate) was one that was: a) especially suited to focus group data whilst also b) specifically relegating the interactional context of the focus group to a background feature.

This second feature (b above) was serendipitous. 10kV is very much a hybrid method; the sessions are recognisably focus groups, participants can access (on-screen) other individuals' comments. It remains the case, however, that 10kV does not conform to the typical characteristics of focus groups. Specifically, there is comparatively little interaction between participants in the sense of conversational turn-taking where a participant responds directly to his or her interlocutor. Thus, an IPA protocol where the interactional context of the focus group is included but reduced to a background feature was extremely fortunate. Incidentally, this relative lack of turn-taking, back-and-forth interaction was another minor reason for not conducting discourse analysis which methods would have been better suited to highlight interactive elements (Palmer et al., 2010).

In sum, IPA was chosen for the first of two analyses of experience. It provided an idiographic approach suited to the case-by-case way in which the data corpus was arranged. A particular IPA protocol was selected for its additional elements. Context was considered in two ways: firstly, as part of the project's examination of all aspects of critical incident experiences – context was captured in the data's content; secondly, it was also considered when selecting appropriate analytical methods – an IPA protocol where the interactional context of the focus group was included but receded to the background. The Palmer et al. protocol acknowledged the undesirability of rigid instructions and advised that their steps should be regarded as enabling instead of overly prescriptive should they prove to be inapplicable to a particular set of data. It was in that spirit that I conducted the IPA in this project; that is, the steps in the Palmer et al. protocol were broadly followed. Some aspects did not occupy a prominent role in analysis; for example, positionality advised exploration of the facilitator's role with details such as tracking encouragements, redirections and so forth. These are features typical of an oral medium but do not apply to 10kV, an e-focus group where participants largely self-facilitate once the session is under way (also see chapter 3 on 10kV technology). The full Palmer, Larkin, de Visser, and Fadden (2010) IPA protocol used for this analysis can be found in Appendix B.

2.3.7. Narrative Analysis

The stories participants told formed part of the original Palmer et al. (2010) IPA protocol used in this project. I wanted a stronger narrative grounding for this thesis so I opted instead to use narrative analysis as a complementary method to IPA. This provided an additional dimension to the topic of enquiry; in so doing it could enhance confidence in the findings.

Narrative analysis was a natural partner. There is held to be "a strong affinity between IPA and the various forms of narrative analysis, not least because of a shared interest in meaning making and how narrative shapes our experience of the world" (Palmer et al., 2010, p.112). However, the expression "various forms" in the quotation above lends a clue to the complexity of narrative. It is not merely a method

of analysis. Neither is it simply a (non-dominant) qualitative approach in psychology and other social sciences. It is an entirely separate discipline (or disciplines) of literary theory; it is the core backbone of literature as an object of study; it is a topic in philosophy and an important component in other disciplines (e.g., media studies). To that end, narrative and the processes in selecting narrative as a method are considered in a separate chapter later on (see chapter 10).

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the methodological approach for this thesis. Plural methods were deemed not only to enhance confidence in findings but also to provide the richest detail possible for an under-researched, difficult-to-access area. Specifically, I have argued that the research should drive the methodology and not vice versa (i.e., methodolatry is rejected). To that end, I have reflexively explored and challenged some assumptions around methodological approaches and methods in mainstream empirical psychology. I have rejected specific methodological cuckoos. I have argued for the representativeness of the data and argued for bounded generalisations to be made. I argued for retaining multi-dimensionality rather than integration of findings. I have outlined my chosen methods for this project: thematic analysis, IPA and narrative analysis and I have provided a rationale for their use, arguing for their complementary contribution to the understanding of complex social phenomena. I have detailed the chosen protocol for IPA (Palmer et al., 2010) (see Appendix B). Due to the range of narrative as a topic, I have reserved discussion of narrative analysis for a separate chapter (10) later in the thesis. In sum, in this chapter, I have discussed the qualitative methods employed to examine the critical incident experiences professionals had, the way they understood those experiences and the stories they told of extraordinary events. In the next chapter, I discuss the data collection technology: 10kV.

CHAPTER THREE. DATA COLLECTION: THE 10KV METHODOLOGY

3.1. What is 10kV? Background and Development

The Ten Thousand Volts system (hereafter 10kV) is a debriefing technology devised by Professor Jonathan Crego at the behest of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in the U.K. 10kV is a software package installed on a set of networked (but otherwise standalone) laptop computers. Participants (aka delegates) attend facilitator-led 10kV sessions; the events most closely resemble focus groups but are perhaps better described as e-focus groups. Participants interact with each other by typing their comments onto the laptops on which 10kV is installed. Inputted comments are immediately shared onscreen with all other participants in the session. They can then respond to each other's comments and a discussion evolves. In this respect, 10kV functions essentially like an online chat room albeit participants are typically seated in the same room (though online sessions can be run).

Simultaneous input of comments forgoes the need for traditional conversational turn-taking making the system extremely time-efficient. Although anonymous, comments can be attributed to the source participant (via assignation of participant number), thus avoiding the possibility of one vociferous individual skewing the results (also see Eyre, Crego, & Alison, 2008). Crucially, all input is non-source attributable. 10kV acquired its soubriquet from an early session participant. In relating the impact of an extremely high-profile critical incident, the officer recounted his/her experience of being among an entire community in distress, of trying to manage a major incident whilst undergoing the maelstrom of intense media attention and commented that it was akin to receiving a 10,000 volt shock: The name stuck.

3.2. Developed to Learn Without Blame

The 10kV system was conceived as a means of overcoming difficulties in gathering candid, full accounts of challenges encountered during police operations and investigations. The anonymity it provides has come to be a central strength of the system as trust has accrued around it over the last decade or so of its use. This is thought responsible for easing several concerns associated with focus groups: It

removes the possibility of attaching different value to comments according to the rank and seniority of the source. It also permits a voice for those individuals uncomfortable with the attention associated with 'taking the floor' in discussions (also see Clapper & Massey, 1996; Easton, Easton & Belch, 2003). At its inception, then, 10kV was devised as a means of capturing an organisational memory, to harness the learning from rare incidents in order that the new knowledge could be exploited in the future (de Weerd-Nederhof, Pacitti, de Silva Gomes, & Pearson, 2002).

Debriefs typically take place within a few days to a few weeks of the incident. In general, participants are selected to attend 10kV sessions by dint of: i) their involvement in responding to a particular critical incident (in the case of an operational debrief); or ii) their responsibilities related to the topic at hand (for a service delivery review). A small team of specialists (facilitators and technicians) can travel with laptops to relevant forces. Naturally, the timescale differs depending on the incident: Serial murders may unfold over weeks or months before the offender is traced and caught whereas a domestic incident where an offender has committed suicide after murdering family members is a *self-solver* (Innes, 2003) that is concluded quickly. Reflection and review via 10kV is naturally not a priority in the middle of an unfolding terrorist attack or co-ordinating an operation to trace a missing child; the arrest of the offender(s) (where applicable) is a typical milestone for demarcating a suitable hiatus for a debrief to be held.

3.3. Session Format

After introduction to the purpose and aim of the session (e.g., debrief of Operation X), participants are briefed on the ethics of 10kV – they are expected to keep comments respectful, refrain from personal insult (but not criticism) and be mindful of consequences in naming individuals. They are given a non-related prompt (e.g., 'favourite biscuit/inspirational leader?') with which to practise using the system. Once familiar with its use, a typical format (i.e., for this dataset) entails free recall though the system does provide for facilitator-led prompts; for example, where comments required clarification, a facilitator might respond directly to a comment such as 'Organisation was poor' by inputting their own comment 'Can you expand on that?' This is usually effective in eliciting specific details (e.g., 'The shift rota didn't

work well; the same tired folk got more overtime when others hadn't been called at all!') Although sessions are typically scheduled for a half-day or full day depending on size, there is a clear, natural end to a session: The tapping of keyboards ceases. It is part of the 10kV protocol that participants are offered refreshments as a thank you for their input at the end of a session.

3.4. Who is Involved? Gold, Silver, Bronze

The U.K. police service employs a three-tiered metallic-coloured system of response: gold, silver and bronze. These map onto strategic, tactical, and operational roles respectively. Thus, *gold* designates the strategic commanders in overall control, *silver* refers to the officer(s) co-ordinating tactical response and *bronze* officers are operational; that is, the last tend to be the people at the scene performing tasks. Officers will use the words as agent nouns, as in: 'Gold decided all leave was cancelled'; 'Silver set up the RP (rendezvous point)'; 'Bronze was cordoning off the scene'[3]. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no 10kV session has taken place without all roles being represented at the event. The *gold, silver, bronze* system designates role not rank but, in practice, the two are reasonably inter-changeable. For example, the first officer on a scene of a plane crash in a rural field is technically *silver* but this would be handed over as soon as the more appropriate specialist arrives (i.e., the local village 'bobby' is in charge of operations for as long as it takes a more senior officer to arrive under blue lights; a *gold* group would then be convened for a major incident like a plane crash). Therefore, 10kV sessions involve participants from the bottom to the top of the hierarchy.

There are naturally everyday organisational constraints on attendance but 10kV is an uncommon tool; specially commissioned, it is not deployed every day. Forces are usually keen, therefore, to prioritise attendance wherever possible. A session consists of the 10kV team (facilitator and technicians) as well as participants

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[3] These three sentences are simply examples not extracts from data.

with numbers typically between 12-20 per session. The number has a ceiling: the number of laptops that can comfortably be networked (effectively be wired together) in a face-to-face venue. Repeat sessions debriefing the same incident ensure a wider representation of participants. Although 10kV has been used in an online collaboration of more than 100 participants, this is atypical. Fifteen or so participants seated in the same room to discuss an incident on laptops cabled together is the norm.

3.5. Why Use 10kV as Research Data?

Naturalistic research begins with experts in the field (Eyre & Alison, 2007) and 10kV data are drawn from organisational and operational discussions among public sector professionals. They promise ecological validity alongside practical applications for the organisations involved. Dasgupta, Sahay, and Gupta (2009) argued that successful organisational learning and knowledge management, particularly in relation to implicit knowledge, can foster innovation. Such organisational learning is important. Rare or even unique critical incidents require bespoke decisions and organisations need to foster such creativity in their leaders. For the organisations themselves, then, their learning ideal would be that 10kV sessions help to forge better understanding of these types of incidents; in turn, that learning could help to develop the creativity required to manage unique events for which no protocol has yet been written, where policy is absent and where no template exists. This is an ideal and remains a goal rather than an achievement. Meantime, it would be a fairly uncontentious claim to say that 10kV is an effective means of eliciting the knowledge that staff possess of organisations, of the culture, processes and procedures that do not reside in readily accessible documents: This is useful for research as well as organisational learning.

As a specialised domain for research, critical incidents constitute an area of immense interest with potential for advancing academic understanding. However, challenges remain: Among many restrictions, the relevant organisations are not willing to grant access to examine, in-depth, matters of national security. Therefore, contributions from professional participants are extremely difficult to acquire. Without access, it is difficult to map the landscape accurately and determine exactly how the

responders experienced these events. 10kV provides a means to do so. In providing access to experiences of uncommon events and, sometimes, extreme environments, 10kV data can address omissions in the literature (see literature review, chapter 4).

As a method for gathering data, then, 10kV captures the accounts of professionals and their real-world experiences. In adopting 10kV, the method of data collection becomes a central thread through this thesis allowing many hitherto under-explored issues to be drawn together. It is nonetheless an organisational learning tool and was not designed for research data collection; it is unequivocally practitioner-led. Hence, the methodological approach required careful consideration as data had not been gathered for and, therefore, could not necessarily be matched with an 'off-the-peg' method. However, rich naturalistic data should not be sacrificed in favour of standard methodology or ostensibly tighter control of research design. The system has captured the experiences of personnel who have managed the most demanding and often high-profile incidents of the last decade. 10kV will never have the tight control of experimental design but it does yield substantive rich qualitative data. Next, I consider the strengths and weaknesses of 10kV in the ideas and challenges outlined below.

3.6. Engaging with 10kV Products: Reflecting on the Data

By definition, opportunities to access rare incidents are very few. Indeed, some critical incidents (e.g., 9/11, the London bombings) are once-in-a-career events of which the professionals themselves have little or no direct experience. They are also intensely demanding and often life-threatening environments. These environments generate ethically unjustifiable risk with respect to direct observation. A contemporaneous research presence could also compromise the effectiveness of decision makers. Post-event, 10kV has promise. 10kV provided an opportunity to access the experiences across entire operations from the rank and file officers to the leader in overall command and control to the individuals who have been 'tasked' with, for example, standing for an entire shift in sub-zero temperatures to guard a crime scene or crawling beneath wreckage in 70° heat to recover bodies. Such incidents are debriefed using the 10kV system. Thus, 10kV offers academics a rare opportunity in two inter-related respects: data from professional participants (too

busy to submit to lengthy interview) as well as data from unusual events (such as terrorist attacks).

Data gathered from a specialist sub-group of interest involved in managing rare, extreme events might whet the appetite of many researchers but 10kV poses more questions than it answers: What kind of data have been gathered? What if any contribution can they make to scientific knowledge? How do we define 10kV in relation to the categorisation of methods elsewhere in the literature? What are the best means of analysing 10kV products? In this section, some of the issues are discussed in the spirit of reflexivity for the current project. The database is of such potential interest but 10kV does not conform to a standard research data collection method: These two issues are worthy of serious consideration. The issues are not by any means resolved as using 10kV as data for academic study is very much in its infancy. Some reflective discussion is offered next.

3.7. 10kV versus Standard Research Methods

A 10kV session appears to be a virtual group and has some parallels with online communities insofar as participants are anonymous. On the face of it, 10kV participants gathering for a morning's debrief would be hard-pressed to meet the definition of a *community* (aka *virtual community*). On this basis, it might be better termed an electronic *group* with no temporal connotations attached to its descriptive term. However, participants do have prior connections: They are selected as participants from an established community of police officers. A *community* was defined by Christensen and Robertson (1980) as a group of people involved in social interaction with psychological ties to each other in a geographically bounded area. Allowing that geographical boundedness has been superseded since the cited study (e.g., the emergence of virtual communities), this is an adequate definition and certainly one that 10kV participants meet. At the most minimal definition, 10kV samples are e-groups. They can further be defined as a professional community with a shared identity; in addition, they are physically a face-to-face group and so other tenets of group psychology are likely to prevail (e.g., in-group elements in accordance with social identity theory and self-categorisation theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherall, 1987).

10kV's retrospective accounts are not merely singular self-reports. They are pooled and expanded. This could be considered advantageous in that other co-present participants act as prompts whereby their accounts assist each other in the retrieval of memory to obtain a fuller, richer account of what happened. Thus, the problem of omissions caused by inadequate memory retrieval may be reduced or even eliminated given that accounts are 'scaffolded' by other participants present (Means & Loftus, 1991). Conversely, it may be perceived as a weakness of the system insofar as the recounting of events among a whole group may lead to a generic memory being produced. This may be at the expense of accurate recall (Means, Nigam, Zarrow, Loftus, & Donaldson, 1989). To borrow an older term, it may lead to *groupthink* (Janis, 1972).

I argue here that it was not necessarily problematic that a 10kV discussion forum might generate collective accounts as it did not compromise current research aims. More generally, any scientific research seeks to identify and classify phenomena in order to provide explanations (Harré, 2004). The categorisation that is part and parcel of any scientific process necessitates this pooling; academics routinely pool participants' experiential accounts or test scores or other measures in order that the researcher might establish the common (or different) properties. Decisions are taken and choices made throughout the process. Therefore, this pooling of participants' accounts is not exclusive to 10kV products. This does not of itself render them unproblematic. Indeed, these processes are of inherent interest for social constructionists but this was not a primary interest in the current thesis. Assuming that the 10kV process does entail participants generating a collective account, it may be argued that it simply shifts the locus of construction; that is, it is the participants themselves who do some of the sifting and shaping of the accounts instead of the researcher during analysis. In so doing, it removes a *degree of separation* and thereby maintains a truer picture of the experience as participants negotiated the construction back-and-forth via reciprocal comments.

In this respect, 10kV is akin to an organic conversation. This may provide 10kV an advantage over methods such as questionnaires, which are static snapshots that fail to provide the reciprocal and continual refining of detail in

answers that 10kV can offer. Practice to date has produced data that follow conversational norms; for example, direct responses to another participant's comment build on and/or introduce new points into the discussion (Schaeffer & Presser, 2003). This mirroring of conversational norms is one of the mechanisms responsible for the richness of the data in that participants are likely to make fuller contributions and not simply be content with satisficing (e.g., Krosnick, 1991).

However, the mirroring of conversational norms does not obtain throughout the entire 10kV session. It is an area in which 10kV operates very much as a hybrid. Specifically, conversational patterns in data tend to surface in the later stages of the session. In the first flow of the initial free recall phase of a 10kV session, there is relatively little interaction between participants; rather, they devote time to recording their own individual answers just as respondents to traditional, open-ended, free-text items in questionnaires or semi-structured interviews would do. It may prove that these hybrid aspects of 10kV offer the 'best of both worlds'. It warrants investigation, not least to ensure that it does not carry the danger of incorporating 'the worst of both worlds'. Examination of changes in interaction over the duration of a 10kV session is beyond the scope of the current project and is merely highlighted reflexively here.

In terms of quality of engagement, Hrastinski (2008) found that synchronous e-discussions induce personal participation so 10kV may confer an advantage over other discussion (i.e., focus group) data (see also Parent, Gallupe, Salisbury, & Handelman, 2000, on more evenly distributed participation). Wong and Aiken (2003) suggested there was little difference between automated facilitators or human facilitators of electronic groups. In the 10kV session, there tends to be little direct input by the facilitator beyond introductory instructions. This corresponds well with Wengraf's standards for the ideal interview situation: He recommended, "minimalist interviewer intervention" (2001, p.112). Kerr and Murthy (2009) found that participants prefer face-to-face communication over computer-mediated communication and yet 10kV occupies a peculiar place in both camps. It is computer-mediated and anonymous in a face-to-face setting among people who may be long-standing colleagues or co-professional strangers brought together ad hoc to

respond to an extraordinary event. They write separate accounts and also participate in conversation without speaking directly to their interlocutor. 10kV is a strange hybrid in these and other respects. Of course, this may simply point to its innovative nature.

3.8. What Kind of Data?

10kV sessions often have much in common, both in purpose and design, with focus groups and yet participants do not speak to each other. Rather, the communication is written. Writing is a whole different medium from oral communication in terms of the process, the texts produced and the methodological and analytical approaches adopted (Biber, 1991). However, the data products of focus group research undergo the same transformation during the transcription process. For this data corpus then, focus groups seem to bear the closest resemblance to 10kV data with the proviso that participants themselves undertake the transcription process before analysis begins.

Another area of interest is to determine what we are accessing with retrospective accounts. It is not realistic to gather contemporaneous accounts of professional experience and decision making during unfolding critical incidents[4] Retrospective accounts are a necessary substitute. Again, this issue is not by any means exclusive to 10kV. There is a large body of literature on the post-event availability of memories and whether or to what degree they survive intact to be retrieved retrospectively (e.g., Cohen & Conway, 2007). These concerns usually emerge in more positivist approaches given the assumptions that a singular true account exists to be accessed. Interpretive or constructionist approaches accept these features as an inevitable part of retrospective accounts. As Woods pointed out:

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[4] Critical incidents are, however, trained for using simulated environments. In the U.K. and elsewhere, this is undertaken using Hydra, 10kV's sister technology. Hydra does make it possible to examine detailed aspects of decision making in rare incidents/extreme environments. See Eyre, Crego and Alison (2008) for details.

"Any reconstruction is a fictional story" (1995, p.237). Indeed, far from being problematic, it was precisely these stories that were of interest in the current research. The data then, comprised retrospective accounts gathered in (a setting most similar to) an e-focus group. They were recorded in written form and collated contemporaneously into one transcribed (Word) document per session.

3.9. Contributing to Scientific Knowledge

The events participants recall and discuss are often emotional, even traumatic. 10kV's strict anonymity and accrued trust foster very candid accounts. Although speculative, the co-presence or support of peers during data collection may be a better means to yield very personal experiences than an unfamiliar 'stranger' researcher can access. This social context may confer an advantage for 10kV in that more honest and, therefore, more accurate accounts are retrieved (n. b., accurate refers not to an objective truth but simply to complete or whole accounts with fewer omissions). These fuller accounts have a greater potential for contribution to knowledge. Anecdotal reports suggest 10kV is a cathartic experience for participants. This is a potential strength for 10kV as a process and also for its data to contribute in academia but empirical support to substantiate these (seemingly common) claims is as yet lacking. This project provided some opportunity to examine these features. Speculatively, it may be that in an organisational culture where presentation of toughness obtains, a reluctance to discuss emotions becomes equated with successful coping skills (e.g., Pogrebin & Poole, 1991); the anonymity of 10kV provides a means whereby officers can safely disclose their trauma without compromise or repercussion. As a method, then, 10kV entails a trade-off. Specifically, there is no technical reason why participant details could not be gathered on 10kV: It is simply part of the ethical protocol not to do so. Extracting details of sub-groups may conflict with the founding 10kV principle of complete anonymity, which principle is responsible for both: a) the richness of the very candid data gathered but also b) the inability to track demographic and other details of participants. This could ultimately prove to be a limitation on the scientific utility of the database. It may remain confined to an academic backwater given that mainstream practice demands participant demographics.

Representativeness of participants is important if we wish to extrapolate findings and generalise. If we wish to study what happens to police officers caught in a maelstrom of media attention while they try to catch a serial killer before another murder, there is no substitute for the individuals who actually do the job. Undergraduates (those stalwarts of study samples) cannot know. That one should seek participants among those who understand the profession under scrutiny might brook no major disagreement though access, as discussed above, can be a hurdle. 10kV solves the accessibility problem that too often sees researchers resort to readily available student populations. Ecological validity of the data gathered by 10kV is a major strength.

10kV is certainly a hybrid. It is acknowledged that, for methodological puritans, it masks some rather muddy features. Its current strength lies in describing the landscape of a professional domain that is under-researched and rarely accessed. It certainly allowed for the examination of experience: the central aim of this thesis. Now that 10kV has gathered the experiences and very candid views of those engaged in managing critical incidents, it seems uncontentious to claim that scientists ought to examine, analyse, and explore the experiences of the rare and extremely challenging events participants have so transparently reported. They ought not to be excluded for not matching perfectly what has come to be (only in recent decades) the predominant notion of the scientific method in social psychology (Haslam & McGarty, 2001). The task at hand is to examine what they can offer, then develop and refine a suitable methodological approach as necessary not reject them outright. Lest we forget first principles, the Popperian aim is to falsify, to knock down and challenge the established order (Popper, 1963/2000) and we should be as open to debate in relation to methods as other aspects of scientific enquiry.

Realistically, trade-offs occur in many methods; finding acceptable trade-offs is key. In 10kV, it is a practitioner tool first and foremost. What it does offer is continuity of method of data collection around some of the most challenging critical incidents of the day. The big question is whether to engage with important contemporary social issues despite imperfect methods or withdraw from the issues of the day until methods improve enough to attain greater ontological and

epistemological certainty. Meantime, it is realistically the case that demanding very clean data from such a complex and restricted area would very likely mean no data at all, which would discard data of unparalleled ecological validity. Of itself, this is no reason to advocate 10kV but trade-offs are always made in the real academic world. The intrinsic worth and scientific interest inherent in the content of the 10kV data corpus means it warrants a thorough attempt to find it a meaningful place in the multi-method toolbox. In these respects, the 10kV method and its data products can make a valuable contribution to scientific knowledge.

3.10. Access to Data

I was originally given access to the data as part of my research role while employed at a U.K. university. The data corpus comprised a number of e-focus group sessions gathered via 10kV. As part of a knowledge exchange programme, there was reciprocal provision of 10kV sessions as data for research purposes (from which the current project evolved) in exchange for academic input to develop evidence-based practice in the police service. Specifically, a number of practitioner reports were provided to the commissioning forces. The funded research projects were completed and there is no conflict of interest to declare[5].

I did not attend the sessions in this data corpus: they were secondary data. However, I have facilitated and attended other 10kV sessions. I am familiar therefore with the protocols for using the system (e.g., ethics) and the social context of the events. These opportunities for attendance and facilitation of other sessions were not designed to be part of the current research but were nonetheless a useful by-product that aided my understanding of the 10kV system. They also enhanced my understanding of the role of professionals' work in the field. I draw implicitly on these and other experiences (e.g., evaluation of simulated critical incident training exercises) to give me a firmer grounding in the domain.

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[5] Confidentiality prohibits references (anonymity would be breached). However, the work for this thesis is entirely separate.

3.11. The Final Data Corpus

There were two types of 10kV session in the data corpus: operational debriefs and service delivery reviews. Both were commissioned and conducted in the same way by the same team. They differed only in purpose. Service delivery workshops were 10kV sessions that were held to allow relevant professionals to meet and discuss a particular topic/issue. There were nine service delivery workshops in total. As the term suggests, operational debriefs were 10kV sessions that followed police operations. These sessions were organised with the principal aim of gathering examples of best practice or identifying difficulties in operations or both. Debriefing is a fairly common process in the police service. However, operational debriefs utilising 10kV technology are less common; 10kV tends to be deployed after critical or major incidents or both. Thus, these 10kV sessions gathered the experiences of professionals who managed uncommon incidents. There were nine operational debriefs, bringing the total number of sessions in the data corpus to eighteen.

Sessions in the data corpus were assigned to three overarching categories: Counter-terrorism (CT); Serious Crime (SC); Non-criminal (NC) (e.g., accident or natural disaster). The three *incident type* categories were further sub-divided equally to include the two types of session (i.e., service delivery workshop and operational debrief). Thus, there were three operational incidents and three service delivery reviews in the Counter-terrorism category, three operational incidents and three service delivery reviews in the Serious Crime category and three operational incidents and three service delivery reviews in the Non-criminal category. There was a 2:1 ratio of U.K. to overseas sessions in each category. The categories are shown in Table 3.1. below.

Table 3.1.

Sessions in the Data Corpus

Session type	Number of U.K. comments	No. of overseas comments
CT1 (operational, U.K.)	3988	
CT2 (operational, U.K.)	1138	
CT3 (operational, overseas)		479
CT4 (service delivery, U.K.)	2663	
CT5 (service delivery, U.K.)	657	
CT6 (service delivery, overseas)		348
SC1 (operational, U.K.)	310	
SC2 (operational, U.K.)	235	
SC3 (operational, overseas)		403
SC4 (service delivery, U.K.)	448	
SC5 (service delivery, U.K.)	553	
SC6 (service delivery, overseas)		464
NC1 (operational, U.K.)	1159	
NC2 (operational, U.K.)	742	
NC3 (operational, overseas)		280
NC4 (service delivery, U.K.)	917	
NC5 (service delivery, U.K.)	414	
NC6 (service delivery, overseas)		546
Total comments	13224	2520

The extra facilities on the 10kV system (e.g., questionnaires) were not used for the current data corpus; it was comprised solely of the transcripts of all the open responses (comments) inputted by participants. Because participants had typed the comments themselves, there was no transcriber as is customary with audio-recorded focus groups. This was advantageous in that it overcame the extra degree of separation that might cause (mis)interpretation. Thus, expression, punctuation, emphases and so forth were participants' own. For example:

There needs to be an understanding by and a clear message given to the general public! That is that should they feel the need to give INFORMATION not Intelligence, they are able and confident in knowing that INFO will get to the right people succinctly! When that INFO has been evaluated and researched it may become INTELLIGENCE.

The comments are taken off the system by saving as a Word file. Thus, the data transcript was a complete file showing all the comments made in one 10kV session, appearing in the chronological sequence in which they were inputted. In terms of formatting, new line and bullet point indicate a new comment. The system distinguishes between inputting a comment into the general discussion (bullet point beneath last comment made) and responding directly to another participant (response indented on the page, and beneath original comment); by this means, the researcher can read contributions to discussion or direct response to another. The extract below shows general formatting and the indented response shows the reciprocal comments:

- *Perhaps an important lesson here is to leave lawyers out of the equation.*
  - *I think the comment is disrespectful and not helpful. We need lawyers.*
    - *Sorry I don't. And I don't accept your view on respect or are we only to comment on what you approve of. If lawyers feel uncomfortable then we should be discussing the issues not trying to stifle debate.*

Some 10kV sessions in the dataset were described as *overseas*. For service delivery reviews, the sessions were held overseas with overseas participants; these were confined to the first empirical study (thematic analysis) where the objective was to compare and contrast emergent themes within and outside the U.K. They were not taken forward and subsequent analyses (IPA and narrative) focused exclusively on operational sessions. For operational sessions labelled *overseas*, U.K. police had managed or co-managed an incident that occurred outside the U.K. As far as possible, the categorisation of incident types and session types for overseas 10kV

sessions was a replication of the U.K. categorisation. It is acknowledged, however, that this was far from a matched sample. These data were not gathered for the purposes of scientific research. In addition, they referenced unusual incidents: There were simply not enough similar 10kV sessions available to adhere to traditional methodological standards of rigour. Initially, I did not wish to forego the chance to explore some overseas sessions and some presented with enough similarities in incident type to warrant inclusion. The overseas-U.K. comparisons yielded some speculative comparisons (see thematic analysis, chapter 5) but, as the project evolved, they did not transpire to be the most successful (one of the reasons for not taking them forward).

Similarly, the U.K. sessions in the dataset were not a strictly-matched orthodox sample. There was not necessarily parity across the types of session; for example, the Serious Crime category contained serious sexual offences and homicides. They nevertheless had much in common (e.g., demanded similar skill sets). However, the different offences featured only in the service delivery review part of the data corpus (so was confined to the thematic analysis of the whole data corpus). In later analyses (IPA and narrative), only operational sessions were used, which sessions all debriefed the same offence; that is, SC operational sessions were all homicide (specifically, murder) debriefs.

As a final note on the term *session*, it was sometimes the case that more than one 10kV session was conducted in relation to a particular incident (e.g, where participants exceeded 20-laptop limit of the 10kV hardware set). For ease of reference, the term *session* is used even where more than one session was conducted for one incident. Likewise, the term *session* is used interchangeably to refer to both types of session: operational debriefs and service delivery workshops.

In sum, there were eighteen sessions in the data corpus for the current project corresponding to nine operational debriefs and nine service delivery reviews. They were evenly sub-divided into Counter-terrorism (CT), Serious Crime (SC), and Non-criminal (NC). Data gathered from each session were transferred to Word documents. They were read and coded as hard copies in early stages of analysis. As part of the memorandum of agreement with the data providers, hard copies had to

be shredded immediately after use in accordance with protocols for restricted data. In order to meet archiving requirements, raw transcripts needed to be retained in some form. It was agreed that these were to be retained only as e-documents and locked away with access restricted.

3.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the debriefing technology named 10,000 Volts (10kV). I have outlined its background and development. I have reflexively considered its status as a research method as well as its merits (or otherwise) versus other data collection techniques. I have reflected on the type of data produced by 10kV and considered the contribution it can make to scientific knowledge. I have clarified details about the data corpus, the categorisation of types of session and terminology. I concluded that 10kV is a hybrid that defies easy categorisation as any one particular technique for data collection. To that end, the system and its strengths and weaknesses required careful consideration but were regarded as having potential for a pluralistic, multi-method toolkit. Given the unparalleled ecological validity, I concluded that this conferred benefits enough to outweigh any disadvantages associated with their non-mainstream status as a research method; I particularly submit its advantage in removing degrees of separation between researcher and participant. In the next chapter (4), I review the critical incident literature. Thereafter, the thesis will move on to the 'data chapters': a thematic analysis of the whole data corpus, and IPA and narrative analyses of the operational parts of the dataset.

CHAPTER FOUR. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1. Parameters of Critical Incident Review

The critical incident literature is reviewed in this chapter (see Appendix C for literature search protocol). *Critical incident* is in widespread use as a term and many definitions are different from the U.K. police definition. Therefore parameters needed to be drawn around the relevant literature. Different definitions of *critical incident* are briefly summarised in this section to indicate what literature was excluded; the chapter then funnels down to discuss literature that was relevant to the critical incident definitions used in U.K. policing and the three incident types (CT, SC, and NC).

The search showed that critical incident was often merely a synonym for a significant incident of any sort (e.g., Chaudry & Al-Sagheer, 2011; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Moizer & Lean, 2012). Some domains had their own, specific definitions of critical incident. In business and marketing, it may signify a breach of company values (Jaakson, Reino, & Vadi, 2004), for example, a negative interaction with customers (e.g., Vidal, 2012). In the education domain, it was used to signify a turning point in learning (e.g., Fraser & Hunt, 2011; Wong-Wylie, 2007). Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) had a substantial body of literature (e.g., Leonard & Alison, 1999; O'Brien, Mills, Fraser, & Andersson, 2011; Pack, 2012; Pia, Burkle, Stanley, & Markenson, 2011). CISD referred to a specific intervention programme used after a critical incident (of any definition). However, the emphasis was on a clinical intervention tool rather than the professionals' experiences and findings were framed by the efficacy of the tool in ameliorating stress.

Critical incident also denotes a specific technique for categorical scaling of behaviour (e.g., Ahmetašević, Bartoňová, & Válková, 2012; Bianchi & Drennan, 2012; Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009; Flanagan, 1954), sometimes referred to as the *critical incident research method* (e.g., Kemppainen et al., 2012). The critical incident technique, as originally devised, was grounded in the phenomenological tradition and drew on narrative approaches (Flanagan, 1954;

Sharoff, 2008). Thus, it coincidentally shared some methodological similarities with the current project but the use of the term was quite different.

Most critical incident literature was from the health domain. There, critical incidents are stressful work events that can adversely affect functioning (Halpern, Maunder, Schwartz, & Gurevich, 2012). Medical critical incidents may impact the patients and clinicians involved; similarly, a large organisation's accountability procedures may be invoked (Kram, 2008; Mahajan, 2010) but medical critical incidents were less likely to take place in the glare of the media (Hohenstein, Rupp, & Fleischmann, 2011). Whereas a medical critical incident could be a low-key, private occurrence, police critical incidents are inevitably public, often large-scale events. Overall, the critical incident literature from other domains showed that the term has different referents so cannot transfer to policing.

4.2. Critical Incidents in Policing

On critical incidents as they exist in the U.K. policing sphere, the literature was limited. Crego and Alison (2004) reported the problems of post-positivist approaches in decontextualising participants' accounts. They advocated case-based approaches to capture the rich detail of critical incident management; however, their study was not formally idiographic. It was based on 28 different cases considered simultaneously and essentially comprised a self-sort thematic analysis conducted by participants of different types of incidents. Thirteen themes were identified and the authors concluded that two main issues determined criticality: the way officers were judged externally (e.g., by the community) and the direct consequences a particular issue had on successful outcomes. Crego and Alison did not adopt a phenomenological approach though some themes did cover participants' perceptions and experiences; other themes did not. Their themes were also scored for ease and impact though the selection procedure for these particular dimensions was unclear. It was nonetheless a seminal study using 10kV data and an initial description of critical incident management in a U.K. policing context.

Others have researched critical and major incidents in a U.K. policing context but the studies honed in on specific aspects. For example, Devitt and Borodzicz

(2008) explored leadership qualities; they conducted unstructured interviews with strategic level responders from different U.K. agencies though demographics and methodology were not reported. Similar to this project, they argued for the use of naturalistic approaches and emphasised the importance of social context. In their findings, Devitt and Borodzicz outlined the competencies and personal attributes required for leadership at strategic level (also see, Whitfield, 2009, on leadership). The current project differed in two major respects: i) I examined participants' experiences whereas Devitt and Borodicz (2008) and Whitfield (2009) emphasised skills-based approaches; ii) I explored types of critical incident whereas Devitt and Borodicz and Whitfield examined a specific topic associated with critical incident environments.

Other studies into U.K.-based critical incident management also examined specific topics (and thus differed from the current project). Waring (2011) used mixed methods, including a qualitative analysis of 10kV data, to examine accountability. Waring extracted, from the mass of 10kV data over several sessions, any comments related to accountability (some 6% of data from her chosen sessions). Overall, Waring found that attention, emotions and goals could be affected by accountability and thereby alter police judgements and decisions. Compared to the current approach, the Waring 10kV study created greater prior closure around: firstly, one topic (accountability) and, secondly therefore, data selection. van den Heuvel (2011) and van den Heuvel, Alison, and Crego (2012) used data from critical-incident training events to examine decision making. Participants were U.K.-based police officers undergoing simulation exercises. They found that issues of accountability, anticipated blame, and uncertainty derailed optimal decisions; derailing essentially entailed decision avoidance or deferral. The 2012 study was a qualitative study (thematic analysis). Similar to the current project, van den Heuvel and colleagues preserved the critical incident context as far as possible though they differed in that the studies examined specific aspects of decision making.

Alison and Crego (2008) edited a critical incident management book based on U.K. policing. It covered a range of specific topics associated with critical incident management (e.g., leadership or decision-making heuristics and biases). Two

empirical chapters may be said to have featured participants' experiences: One chapter examined emotion in homicide investigations and used 10kV data to do so (Crego, Alison, Roocroft, & Eyre, 2008); another explored the (affective and cognitive) influences on decision avoidance (Eyre, Alison, Crego, & McLean, 2008). Although participants' experiences were discussed in those chapters, the person was not the central focus; rather, more general (e.g., theoretical) issues were. Specifically, the former chapter discussed the relative neglect of affect in the decision-making literature; the latter reviewed decision avoidance theory alongside a descriptive account of decision avoidance in simulated critical-incident exercises. There was no particular orientation that prioritised participants' experiences, either in the two empirical chapters mentioned or elsewhere in the book.

In this literature search, three studies were found where a phenomenological approach to critical incidents had been taken prior to the current project: Clement (2012), Miller, B. (2008), and Pickens (2010). Miller, B. (2008) explored the experiences of fifteen law-enforcement responders, using semi-structured interviews and idiographic analysis. Findings included perceptions of training having been helpful in managing stress; however, participants could neither recall the training content nor describe how it had helped. Miller's study added to the policing literature in that it identified a gap between perceptions on the value of training and the likely contribution it had actually made (i.e., given the failure of recall). Similarly, Pickens (2010) conducted a phenomenological study of law-enforcement officers' critical incident experiences, finding that participants suffered bio-physiological and psycho-emotional distress. They were most affected by a lack of organisational support and other post-incident stressors such as negative media reports. Both studies, however, were U.S.-based (Miller's, in Texas; Pickens', in California) where the definition of critical incident is different from the U.K. police definition. The U.S. definition is shared by Canada (see chapter 1, 1.3) where the third phenomenological study on critical incidents took place. Clement (2012) examined the resilience of twelve Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers during critical incidents. Detailed findings ranged from the perceived importance of readiness for an incident to the support of family and friends.

Clement's (2012), Miller, B.'s (2008), and Pickens' (2010) studies were rare exceptions in a field where there is a paucity of phenomenological research (but see, Broomé, 2011, 2013, section 4.6.2. below). However, the U.S. and Canadian definition (i.e., of overwhelming individuals' coping mechanisms sufficient to induce stress [chapter 1, 1.3.]) framed all three studies' research questions into experiences of stress or resilience. Different contexts and definitions illustrate the dangers of assuming equivalence across domains; that is, studies not founded on the U.K. organisational context or the U.K. definition of critical incidents cannot capture the U.K. experience. The current project addressed that gap.

Overall, the literature search highlighted a significant gap in the literature on policing critical incidents: namely, a failure to emphasise individual experience. For the few studies that have appeared (Clement, 2012; Miller, B., 2008; Pickens, 2010), a different organisational context obtained; in those contexts, definitions differed so findings could not be assumed to transfer to the U.K. police's critical-incident environment and experience. The current project addressed that gap by focusing on individual experience and three types of critical incident as defined in the U.K. police service.

Having reviewed the critical incident literature, I review next the literature in relation to each of the overarching categories for the three types of critical incidents. The topics did not impinge on the current project (there was indeed a gap) so detailed descriptions of studies (e.g., participants, methods) were excluded. The literature was nonetheless included here in a bid to show that the literature on counter-terrorism, serious crime, and non-criminal incidents does not focus on critical incidents, much less on professional experience. Hence, the argument in the following sections (4.3. - 4.5) was structured to provide summary examples of topics that typify the literature: In so doing, it illustrates the gap occupied by the current project.

4.3. Counter-terrorism (CT) Literature

4.3.1. Policy-related CT Literature

A significant section of the CT literature examined CT policies, much of which was not policing-related. There were many discussion papers and topics included: aid in Kenya being contingent on supporting CT aims (Lind & Howell, 2010); humanitarian engagement in relation to U.S. CT policy (Modirzadeh, Lewis, & Bruderlein, 2011); comparisons of U.K. versus U.S. politicians' perceptions of CT (Hammond, 2008) and strategy versus tactics in relation to Al-Qaeda (Cronin, 2010). European Union (EU) policy also featured in the literature. Despite terrorism being framed in EU discourse as an international challenge, Keohane (2008) concluded that foreign policy elements (i.e., vs. internal) were absent from EU CT policy. Similarly, Martins and Ferreira-Pereira (2012) argued that the EU's common security and defence policy (of four key concepts: prevention, protection, response/consequence management, and support to third countries) lacked external dimensions and was more rhetoric than concrete CT objectives (also see Ferreira-Pereira & Martins, 2012). It may be, therefore, that the policies which were expected to function as a framework for CT policing do not actually do so.

Policy ought to provide a sound foundation and set parameters for CT praxis but research suggested this may not be the case. A systematic review revealed that CT policy was not evidence-based (Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2008). Further, they found little evidence of evaluation of CT programmes. Lum et al. also argued that, of the rather limited CT literature, there was a dearth of empirical studies (specifically 3%) whereas 96% were described as *thought pieces* and the remaining 1% comprised case studies. The authors baldly concluded that, "Terrorism research lacks an empirical evidence base" (2008, p.36). Policy is, then, not evidence-based. Further, despite the existence of EU-wide policies, it seemed that provision for CT policing was made within each member state.

4.3.2. Human Rights CT Literature

The EU is nonetheless regarded as a "security actor" (Guild, 2008, p.173) and human rights was a common topic in the CT literature, again with discussion papers prominent. For example, Guild (2008) discussed human rights issues raised by EU legislative changes made post-9/11. Specifically, the changes enabled the compilation of lists of individuals or organisations suspected of terrorism; member states chose who to list but all lists provided for the freezing of assets. Guild argued that the denial of due process to those named on the lists rendered them victims of terrorism (see also Fenwick, 2008; Middleton, 2011; Öztaş, 2011; Ramsay, 2011, on human rights in CT). In a U.K. context, Cram (2006) discussed parliamentary debates in relation to the adverse impact of CT measures on media freedom of expression. More generally, the House of Lords and House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights noted that government had attempted to circumvent EU human rights law via its CT policies (House of Commons, 2010a). This has had a particularly detrimental impact on Muslim communities, for which concerns were expressed in another House of Commons report (2010b).

4.3.3. U.K. Muslim Communities CT Literature

Indeed, a number of U.K. studies have explored CT strategy and policy in relation to Muslim communities. PREVENT, one of the four strands in the U.K. CT policy CONTEST, specifically singles out Muslims as a group that needs to challenge extreme ideologies, a targeting many saw as discriminatory (Alam & Husband, 2013; Kundnani, 2009). In considering European human rights in a post-9/11 legislative context, Bonner (2013) argued that enhanced police investigative powers (under The Terrorism Act, 2000) were being used for intelligence gathering rather than criminal prosecution in the U.K. (also see Innes, 2011, on *control creep* and Sorrell, 2011, on *mission creep* in the U.K.). Again, this has been argued to have particular impact for Muslim communities disproportionately targeted for surveillance (Alam & Husband, 2013). As a concrete example, ACPO TAM (see glossary, Appendix A) funded covert and overt surveillance cameras that effectively monitored all movements by residents in a predominantly Muslim area in the U.K.'s West Midlands (Awan, 2011; also see Dodd, 2009). Subsequent interview and

questionnaire studies of Muslims in the region found mistrust and perceptions of police as racist and anti-terrorist operations had a significant influence in forming perceptions (Awan, 2012; Awan, Blakemore, & Kennedy, 2013). Bonino (2012) also examined the socio-political context in which Muslims have become framed as a *suspect population* (see also Guru, 2012; Mythen, Walklate, & Khan, 2012). In addition, a U.K. government minister acknowledged that "Some of our terrorist powers will be disproportionately experienced by members of the Muslim community. That is the reality of the situation" (House of Commons, 2005, p.46). Given this U.K. context, it followed that (the) views of Muslim communities was a topic in the CT literature.

Some studies examined the public more generally (e.g., Braithwaite, 2013, on the logic of public fear of terrorism; Cherney & Murphy, 2013, on willingness to co-operate with CT police; Jarvis & Lister, 2013, who examined the perceptions of citizens from different backgrounds, including Muslims). Parmar (2011) examined the proportions of different ethnic backgrounds among individuals who had - ostensibly based on CT objectives - been stopped and searched in London. However, the specific focus on Muslim communities affected by CT was the more dominant topic in the U.K. literature.

Some studies have even been commissioned by police services. Innes (2006) reviewed the changes in CT policy in the U.K. in the wake of the 7th July London bombings. His was not a thought piece but an interview study that comprised three U.K. forces, including the Metropolitan Police Service (responsible for policing greater London and national lead on policing CT); officers and members of the public participated. Innes argued that the social organisation of terrorism had changed the policing landscape post-9/11. As well as the reactive (apprehend and prosecute offenders) dimension of CT policing, the prospective (prevent and deter) dimension needed to widen to encompass community impact. Innes also posited neighbourhood policing (NP) as a solution to the uncertainty surrounding CT policing and its concomitant potential for stoking community tensions (see also Murray, 2005). NP would be the strategic umbrella beneath which community intelligence could develop; that is, soft power could be used to forge trust without recourse to

covert means (i.e., use of CHIS[6] and CHIS handlers) to gain knowledge about relevant communities which might have members vulnerable to radicalisation.

4.3.4. Discursive Practices CT Literature

A section of the CT literature explored discursive practices. The emergence of the concept of homegrown terrorism in the West was traced by Crone and Harrow (2011). Critiques of CT rhetoric have been produced (e.g., Michaelsen, 2006, on the post-9/11 landscape; Sciullo, 2012, on the language of *the war on terror* after the death of Osama bin Laden). Even the discourse of terrorism as it appeared in Batman films has been studied (Hopperer, 2008). McDonald, Hunter, and O'Regan (2011) analysed a wide range of 21st century U.K. policy documents on national security. They identified discourses centred around community cohesion and citizenship in earlier documents with later documents focused on the prevention of violent extremism (also e.g., Terpstra, 2008). Heath-Kelly (2013) examined the discourse of radicalisation in U.K. CT. She argued that the U.K. CT strategy *PREVENT* conceived radicalisation as a construct through which the future may be governed or policed. Seeking to present radicalised individuals as simultaneously vulnerable and dangerous constituted a confused construct: It suggested that such individuals needed protection (because vulnerable) whilst others needed protecting from the threat they posed (because dangerous). Sedgewick (2010) recommended dispensing with the term *radicalisation* as an absolute concept, so disparate are its meanings, such is the lack of consensus in different countries, political contexts and fields of research (see also Richards, 2011). In discussing the development of theories of radicalisation processes, Heath-Kelly (2013) also commented incidentally on the dearth of empirical CT data. King's and Taylor's (2011) review of theoretical models and social psychological evidence for radicalisation likewise noted the absence of empirical studies. In addition, they commented on the fragmented nature of such studies and argued that each model developed without reference to other

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[6] CHIS = covert human intelligence source, colloquially *informants.*

models (see also McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008, on intergroup influences on radicalisation).

This likely points to the difficulty of obtaining ecologically valid data for CT research and may account for the preponderance of policy discussions in the absence of access to terrorists, CT police, or security services. Indeed, Mullins (2009) argued that the lesser availability of terrorists as research participants meant that much CT research is poor quality. Predicated on a continuum between crime and terrorism, Mullins sought points of intersection between terrorists and other criminals to improve the evidence base. It was, though, an exploratory paper not an empirical study.

4.3.5. Police or Terrorist Participants CT Literature

Some studies which accessed police or terrorist participants do exist. Innes' (2006) study was outlined above. Goodman (2009) presented police narratives of terrorism in the U.S., examining the relationship between police stories and the police's authority ascribed by the state. Sarangi and Alison (2005) was another notable exception. Accessing convicted terrorists, they found common narratives of oppression, poverty, state corruption and self-images of heroism among participants. The study had considerable ecological validity but drew on a different cultural, political, and policing context. Dingley and Mollica (2007) examined the ways in which individuals' bodies could become terrorist weapons. Findings were elicited through interviews with surviving hunger strikers from Northern Ireland and the study also cited suicide bombers as examples. The authors argued against explorations of individual psychology (e.g., an individual's motivations); they argued for a broader approach that embraced the socio-political and cultural context in which the individuals operated. A similar argument was made from the discipline of psychiatry; Palmer (2007) argued that it would provide a richer understanding of mental health if greater consideration were given to context, in particular group behaviours, rather than the individual psychology of those who commit terrorist acts.

4.3.6. Consideration of Contexts in CT Literature

Other research has foregone the examination of individual psychology to explore the broader level of terrorist organisations. Describing such organisations as malevolently creative, Gill, Horgan, Hunter, and Cushenbery (2013) devised models which drew parallels from organisational psychology, then applied the insights to two cases of terrorism: the 2006 plot to detonate bombs on transatlantic aircraft (the innovative use of liquids in drinks bottles) and the 1984 bombing of the Brighton Grand Hotel during the Conservative Party conference (innovative use of long-delay timers from video recorders and also introduced the Provisional IRA's use of semtex). At an even broader level, Crelinsten (2002) presented an ambitious and wide-ranging model of terrorist violence as communication and outlined the ways in which it was grounded in state and international institutions. Albeit wide-ranging papers, neither Gill et al. nor Crelinsten were empirical studies.

CT policing research from different organisational contexts covered a range of topics (e.g., Buerger & Levin, 2005, on U.S. FBI officer safety in managing terrorism; Glomseth & Gottschalk, 2009, on comparing the culture of CT vs. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) units in Norway; Phillips & Burrell, 2009, on decision-making skills in U.S. law enforcement). There were also some comparative studies (e.g., Foley, 2009, on CT intelligence in Britain and France; Nussbaum, 2007, on CT policing of global cities using New York and London as examples). Other research extended beyond national borders to examine terrorism online (Weimann & von Knop, 2008).

Studies based directly on the U.K. were also found in the literature search. Field (2009) reviewed the disjointed nature of the U.K. intelligence agencies in relation to the London bombings: MI5's remit to investigate significant terrorist threats left peripheral suspects uninvestigated unless there was particular reason for them to fall within the purview of the police. Field also found that the intelligence agencies' culture was averse to sharing information. Empirical CT studies clustered around decision making as a topic. A vignette study of a simulated CT operation found that participants' judgements were influenced by degree of suspect co-operation (Vogel & Kebbell, 2011); in another study, hindsight bias was found to

affect the quality of decisions and perceptions of threat (Goodwill, Alison, Lehmann, Francis, & Eyre, 2010). However, participants were not police officers but undergraduate students. In a study which did employ officer participants, a model was developed showing the impact of uncertainty and accountability on CT decision-making (van den Heuvel, Alison, & Crego, 2012).

4.3.7 Similarities to Current Project in CT Literature

Two studies captured in the literature search overlapped with the current project. One study addressed CT and also used a phenomenological approach. Through the framework of alterity, terrorist perceptions were examined in order that they might inform CT policy or research (Morris & Crank, 2011). The second study adopted a social constructionist approach to examine the sense-making processes of CT officers involved in the mistaken fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes; the authors found that, in a situation of ambiguous meaning, the frame of organisational identity (and accompanying organisational routines) informed officers' sense-making and thereby hampered their ability to deal with a novel situation (Colville, Pye, & Carter, 2013). Both studies shared two points of overlap with the current project: the topic of counter-terrorism and methodological similarities. However, the Morris and Crank study differed in that its emphasis was on criminals rather than police. The Colville et al. study used the *Stockwell One* report (Independent Police Complaints Commission, 2007) as data and thus was grounded in the already-processed evidence of a public enquiry rather than direct access to officer participants.

4.3.8. Summary of CT Literature

In sum, policy was a significant topic across disciplines in CT literature. Of those which referenced U.K. CT policing, the overall thrust of discussion papers was on the impact of policy changes on human rights and related political discourses rather than on the police service per se (also see Eckes, 2011, 2012). In the few studies where policing had been discussed directly, it was clear that the national level was the operative criterion (e.g., Bonino, 2012). In contrast, the literature showed that international features tended to be confined to the arena of rhetoric or

other political discourses. Other research into the U.K. picture saw a focus on the impact of terrorism on Muslim communities. A small number of studies clustered around decision-making or other precise sub-topics within CT which shaped research findings. The literature search indicated that the current project addressed a substantial gap. It can address the paucity of empirical studies; in particular, it employed CT officers as participants so will add to the evidence base.

4.4. Non-criminal Literature

Notwithstanding police have to respond to a range of non-criminal (NC) incidents, they did not constitute a recognisable category in the literature. Searching "non-criminal" AND incident* drew only ten results. Some of these articles were broadly forensic-related but were beyond the policing domain, for example, anti-social behaviour in schools that fell short of criminal thresholds (Bauer, 2008), criminal background checks of college applicants (Mann, 2007) or the utility of restorative practice in racist non-criminal incidents (Walter, 2012). It may be significant that four of the ten results were student dissertations which may reflect a gap in established traditional publication routes for such research.

4.4.1. Infrastructure or Technologies in NC Literature

Where the literature did focus on the non-criminal in policing, some studies examined infrastructure systems or technologies. For example: Evaluations of police information systems have been made (Nizich 2010; Sheptycki, 2004); the distribution of calls made to police explored (Bennett, 2004); systems for criminal background checks of officers have been examined (Colbert, 2011). Core ideas and approaches in policing have also garnered research attention: problem-oriented policing (e.g., Boba & Crank, 2008); neighbourhood policing (e.g., Crego, Alison, & Eyre, 2008; Innes, 2005; Innes, Abbott, Lowe, & Roberts, 2009; Lowe & Innes, 2012); professional standards (e.g., Crego, Eyre, & Alison, 2010) and the role of citizens (e.g., Innes et al., 2009; Terpstra, 2008).

4.4.2. Trust and Confidence and Communities in NC Literature

Trust and confidence has been a particularly pertinent idea since its inception as a central performance measure in U.K. policing (e.g., Alison, Merry, McManus, Eyre, & Power, in press; Casey, 2008; Hough, 2012; Lee & McGovern, 2013; Myhill & Bradford, 2012; Stanko, Jackson, Bradford, & Hohl, 2012); it also appeared in overseas policing contexts (e.g., Andreescu & Keeling, 2012; Crego, Alison, & Eyre, 2009; Leechaianan, Khruakham, & Hoover, 2012). However, these studies did not focus on specific incidents, much less on the experiences of police responders. This reflects the review of policing research trends conducted by Telep, Varriale, Gibbs, Na and Bartholemew (2008) who noted the prominence of research on police strategies with studies on community policing dominating the literature. Ikerd (2011) produced the only study near to elements of the current project. It explored experience and also contained a non-criminal focus; specifically, a content theme analysis was used to explore officers' experiences of problem-oriented policing (POP), revealing the ways POP assisted supervision. Ikerd also showed that successful experiences occurred when the community was involved and officers invested in the approach. However, the study was not incident-specific and it was not based on a U.K. context.

4.4.3. Other Specific Topics in NC Literature

Maher's (2008) research did focus on police perceptions, using a sample of police chiefs; however, it had a very specific focus on officer sexual misconduct, which framed its findings. In Maher's particular context, non-criminal incidents referred to the exploitation of the police officer role for personal gain (e.g., traffic stops directed only at attractive drivers). Rowe's (2002) thematic study of U.K. policing was framed around the topic of diversity and Taylor's and Russell's (2012), the nature of non-criminal intelligence. De Valck's (2006) study was likewise framed by the DVI (disaster victim identification) process. However, the study was a notable exception in that it was incident-specific, focusing on the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, a large-scale non-criminal incident. Neither did De Valck employ quantitative methods but instead provided a detailed evaluation of ante-mortem data-collection procedures and issues arising from a large-scale Interpol response. Exceptions

aside, however, policing literature which examined the non-criminal tended away from specific incidents (critical or otherwise) and towards organisational structures or procedures or it was framed by specific topics or research questions.

Otherwise in this search, the term *non-criminal* merely appeared incidentally in articles unrelated to police responses to NC incidents (e.g., Allum & Fyfe, 2008, on adjustments to non-criminal life in witness protection programmes; Jackson, Bradford, Hohl, & Farrell, 2009, on non-criminal features of local neighbourhoods; Karch, 2011, on suicide; Leisenring, 2012, on involvement of non-criminal-justice agencies in managing domestic abuse; McMullan & Perrier, 2007 on non-criminal individuals in cyber-crime; Rossmo, 2012, on non-criminal spatial data in geographic profiling; Sidebottom & Tilley, 2008, on evolutionary psychology in the categorisation of behaviour as criminal or non-criminal; Terpstra, 2012, on managing multi-agency partnerships; Wall, Sellbom, & Goodwin, 2013, on the non-criminal aspects of psychopathy). There was, then, a paucity of literature on actually policing non-criminal incidents, which confirmed the gap for the current project.

4.4.4. Major Incidents in NC Literature

To elicit relevant policing literature, *major* was substituted as an alternative search term for *non-criminal* (i.e., "non-criminal" OR major AND incident*). This garnered more results. However, expanding the search to encompass major incidents garnered more cross-domain literature. Davis (2013) examined the impact of major incidents on professionals: Some incidents discussed were non-criminal disasters (e.g., 2004 tsunami, Hurricane Katrina) and others were criminal (e.g., Dunblane shootings). However, Davis's study examined the social work domain, exploring the role and operation of crisis support teams so did not draw on a policing organisational context. Likewise, Nolan (1996) examined the prospect of major incidents but from an engineering point of view, focusing on risk of fire and explosions in the chemical industry. Non-criminal incidents featured in safety industry research that focused on major incidents (e.g., Flin, 1996; Goh, Brown, & Spickett, 2010; Ibrahim & Allen, 2012; Kaszeta, 2013; Lambert & Woodward, 2011), some of which was incident-specific (e.g., Fishwick, 2010, on a chemical fire in Ellesmere Port, England). In religious studies, Klein (2012) studied the ability of religious

groups to maintain independence from political interference. The study made specific reference to the Aum terrorist attack in Japan but also drew on non-criminal actions that may have harmed the environment. The health domain also had a substantial body of literature on major incidents (e.g., Cohen et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2013; Stark, Garman, McMenamin, McCormick, & Oates, 2010; Waseen, Carenzo, Razzek, & Naseer, 2012), some of which were incident-specific studies (e.g., Romundstad, Sundnes, Pillgram-Larsen, Røste, & Gilbert, 2004, on a military roof collapse in Norway), some were also U.K. critical incidents (e.g., Challen & Walter, 2013, or Wilson, Murray & Kettle, 2009, respectively on triage and health risk assessment after the London bombings). Given the multi-agency responses to such incidents, studies naturally often refer to the same incident type but as research from other domains, a different organisational context obtained.

4.4.5. Summary of NC Literature

In sum, the topics of the existing literature pointed to the generic nature of NC incidents. They can range from environmental or other man-made disasters to large-scale natural events. As a corollary, studies tended to come from disciplines other than forensic psychology. That NC incidents are under-represented in the policing literature may be an artefact of the curious kudos attached to researching homicide. Indeed, it is a standard claim that there are more people researching serial killers than there are serial killers (Alison & Eyre, 2009). NC incidents are particularly neglected in the policing literature and constitute an obvious gap that needs to be addressed. To that end, the current project makes a contribution to the literature.

4.5. Serious Crime (SC) Literature

This category intuitively connotes policing research in general and it comprised the largest body of policing literature. A substantial literature exists on the investigation of criminal behaviour, especially homicide. This may reflect the centrality of murder investigations in police culture (Ericson, 1993; Innes, 2002a) though there is an obvious distinction between researching criminal behaviour versus researching the police. Some research had an implicit policing focus; for example, establishing identifiable patterns in criminal behaviour has obvious utility

for investigators (e.g., Beauregard & Martineau, 2012; Godwin, 1998; White, Lester, Gentile, & Rosenbleeth, 2011). However, literature on criminal behaviour was excluded from this discussion in favour of a focus on the professionals and, in this very large field, fewer studies concentrated directly on the professionals instead of criminals. The search was further refined by using serious crime (i.e., rape or homicide) as an inclusion criterion during the abstract reading stage.

4.5.1. Beyond the U.K. in SC Literature

Naturally, the literature beyond the U.K. occupied a significant proportion of the field. In Australia, police were shown to exhibit confirmation bias during murder investigations (Wastell, Weeks, Wearing, & Duncan, 2012). Keel, Jarvis, and Muirhead (2009) examined how community and other factors influenced murder clearance rates in the U.S. (see also Davies, 2007; Regoeczi, Jarvis, & Riedel, 2008). Zilli and Vargas (2013) conducted an ethnographic study of youth homicide in a Brazilian context. Harris (2013) provided a view of police practice and social context of French homicide investigations while Campobasso et al. (2009) analysed a multiple-victim murder investigation in Italy. Labuschange (2004) used case studies to develop investigative guidance for police on South African muti murders (where the body is used in traditional medicine) (also see Birkhoff, Candelli, Zeroli, La Tegola, & Carabellese, 2013, on forensics in the *Bestie di Satana* murder investigations in Italy). Fahsing and Ask (2013) drew on Norwegian and U.K. policing to explore the tipping points in officers' decision making in homicide investigations.

Other studies focused on homicide investigations as stressors upon the professionals involved (e.g., see Dabney, Copes, Tewksbury, & Hawk-Turtelot, 2013 for a qualitative assessment of homicide investigators' perceptions of stress; Karlsson & Christianson, 2003, 2006, offered a phenomenological perspective on Swedish police (but see 4.6.2. below for further details); Van Patten & Burke, 2001, on U.S. investigators' stress in dealing with murders of children). There were many studies examining different aspects of policing serious crime. Studies predicated on a non-U.K. organisational context may be assumed to generalise but it is clear that many cannot. For example, the organisational context itself has been shown to constitute a stressor (Dabney et al., 2013). Other contexts may entail other stressors

so parity with other organisational contexts cannot simply be assumed. Therefore an examination of policing serious crime critical incidents, specific to the U.K. organisational context can add to the literature.

4.5.2. Precisely-defined Topics in SC Literature

All studies are obviously framed by the parameters of research topics but authors honed serious crime topics very closely. Example topics included: cognitive or structural processes (e.g., Barrett, 2009; Bex & Verheij, 2012, on investigators' argumentation structures and story schemas; Godwin, 1998, on investigators' neglect of victims' social networks); police knowledge (e.g., Williams & Weetman, 2013, on police use of forensics); development of investigation typologies (e.g., Bijleveld & Smith, 2006; Mullins, Alison, & Crego, 2008) or other categorisations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2005, on manslaughter vs. murder in euthanasia cases; Hopkins, Tilley, & Gibson, 2013, on homicides related to organised crime; Koehler & Applegate, 2013, on distinguishing between sudden infant death and infanticide). Also in finely-honed research topics, there was a significant body of literature on particular types of victim of serious crime (e.g., Brown & Keppell, 2007, on child abduction and murder; Campobasso et al., 2009, on murders of elderly women; Peck & Heide, 2012, on fratricide or sororicide; Quinet, 2011, on murders of sex workers; Zilli & Vargas, 2013, on youth homicide). Although victims were excluded from this search, in some studies, the policing focus was implicit with authors suggesting the utility of findings; in others, police investigations were examined directly, for example, Roberts' and Lyons' (2011) comparison of the clearance rates of murders with race as a variable, revealing the lowest clearance rates for Hispanic victims (also see Lemelle, 2013, for a symbolic interactionist view on race and gender in homicide; Martin, 2013; Roberts, 2007).

4.5.3. Focusing on Overseas Police in SC Literature

Some sections of the policing literature did focus on police officers (e.g., on behaviour, attitudes, perceptions) but did not typically relate to serious crime while so doing. Westmarland (2013) was an exception: an ethnographic study that examined the morals and ethics of homicide detectives. Albeit not a comparative study, it was

remarkable for its portrayal of contrasting features of the U.S. versus U.K. legislative and organisational contexts; for example, practices of lying to suspects and pressuring individuals for hours to confess are illegal in the U.K. yet commonplace in the U.S. Similarly, U.K. support technologies used to manage information in murder investigations (i.e., HOLMES) were absent in the U.S., with the latter detectives reliant on memory or notebooks; they were consequently selective about what was recorded. There were also significant resource differences with U.S. detectives operating under a substantially higher caseload than U.K. counterparts, which could have considerable influence on stressors. To that end, Pridemore (2007) reported that Russia has one of the highest homicide rates at 30 people per 100,000 per annum. By comparison, the equivalent rate is 1.2 per 100,000 in England and Wales but actually may be as high as 80 per 100,000 in some U.S. cities (Westmarland, 2013). The Westmarland study offered a neat illustration of the problems in accepting, comparing, or pooling studies without regard for their respective contexts. It is important therefore to consider what literature was available on police in the U.K. context, discussed next.

4.5.4. Focusing on U.K. Police in SC Literature

In the U.K. literature, several SC studies employed police participants. Wright (2013) investigated the much-characterised skill of detective intuition. She used a sorting task (of crime scene photographs) to elicit the knowledge structures through which detectives categorised types of homicide, finding that experienced participants' greater use of inference indicated that intuition was a component of expertise (albeit not officer participants, see also Knabe-Nicol & Alison, 2011; Knabe-Nichol, Alison, & Rainbow, 2011, respectively on expertise of U.K. and German geoprofilers and U.K. behavioural investigative advisers). Foster (2008) presented a study based on officers' perceptions after the public enquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson, 1999); it was an ethnographic approach to detectives' views. Foster found that officers considered the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence more incompetent than racist.

Innes (2002a) provided a symbolic interactionist perspective on murder investigations. This study revealed how officers' and the public's construction of

meaning served to legitimise the role of the police in providing social control and protecting the public. It was a multi-method study that used semi-structured interviews and over 50 current and past cases. A further study on process structures in homicide investigations (Innes, 2002b) used qualitative methods to examine 70 different cases. However, both Innes' studies were confined to one U.K. police force. A further qualitative study of four U.K. forces examined professional views on the elements of a successful murder investigation (see also Innes, 2010). As well as successful apprehension and prosecution of offenders, officers regarded the following as relevant dimensions of success: procedures, accountability and - where prevention had failed - minimal impact on community (Brookman & Innes, 2013). The current project provides a further view by examining officers' views in critical incident SC cases. Foster (2008) shared the views of Innes that reviews of murder tended to "pick up problems that occurred *within* a system", for example, a failure in forensic capture, or intelligence, not "problems with the system itself" or the investigative process more holistically (2008, p. 109). Scerra (2012) examined the impact of police culture on investigation of serial violent crime (rape and murder). She found the cultural acceptance of stereotypes (e.g., rape myths and concomitant disbelief of reports by victims who were sex workers) to be problematic: It meant investigators failed to act expeditiously despite active serial offenders being at large. Williams and Weetman (2013) used cases to review forensic practices and reflected specifically on the ways in which organisational structures in U.K. policing led to an over-simplification of the contribution of forensic science to homicide investigations.

4.5.5. Summary of SC Literature

In sum, the SC literature was extremely wide-ranging. Studies came from many different countries, cultures, and social or organisational contexts. There were many topics with very precisely-, often, narrowly-defined research questions. The research topics have likely become very finely honed because the existing body of literature is so large; this may ironically have hampered more holistic views. The search indicated that an examination of the experience of managing SC critical incidents contributes to the literature.

4.6. Other Literature

4.6.1. Other Literature with Methodological Similarities

As well as the literature on critical incidents and the three incident types reviewed above, further searches were conducted to capture other potentially relevant literature. Using Boolean operators to pool searches elicited policing literature that had also utilised similar methodologies to the current thesis. The search term *experience** was used (i.e., as well as *phenomenolog**) to elicit phenomenological research (see 4.6.2. below on phenomenological literature). It garnered no results that coincided with the current project. Several qualitative studies were found but, as may be expected given this wider casting of the net, they differed on some dimension: usually, a precisely-defined topic or organisational context. Evans, Pistrang, and Billings (2013) examined the role of officers' social support after traumatic incidents; it was U.S.-based and used thematic analysis. Again in the U.S., a constant comparative analysis of focus group data explored officers' experiences of dealing with domestic violence calls (Horwitz et al., 2011). Bochantin and Cowan (2010) produced a cluster analysis of women's experiences of combining their police officer role with parenthood. Content analysis was used to examine Swedish police officers' experience of committing mentally ill patients to psychiatric care (Erdner & Piskator, 2013). Taken together, these studies, though qualitative, did not overlap enough to compromise the current project.

4.6.2. Phenomenological Studies in the Policing Literature

Studies in the policing domain which explicitly adopted phenomenological methods were found. Broomé (2011, 2013) examined the lived experience of police officers and emphasised the "subjective perspective" (2011, p.141). He also noted the dearth of qualitative policing literature. In the 2011 and 2013 studies, Broomé adopted Giorgi's (2009, cited in Broomé, 2011) method rather than the several methods proposed in the current project. Nonetheless, there were similarities with the current IPA and narrative approaches: a phenomenological perspective as the researcher's first orientation; the gathering of naïve accounts; the identification and analysis of meaning (thought) units; a qualitative analysis that emphasised

participant experience (whilst bracketing researcher response). In the lethal force study, Broomé (2011) showed that officers found situations ambiguous and dangerous; they experienced anxiety and shock and felt vulnerable; that vulnerability passed when control was restored. In Broomé's (2013) car chase study, the chases occurred after different law violations but all ended with suspects being apprehended. Officers experienced anxiety and also excitement; they were conscious of their role and the need: to read the suspect's behaviour; to co-ordinate with colleagues; for ongoing evaluation of the situation, including post-incident sense-making. Rather than critical incident experiences, though, Broomé's studies focused on three officers' experiences of specific situations: (chronologically) simulated lethal-force training and real-life car chases. Nonetheless, in terms of methodological orientation towards individuals' lived experience, Broomé addressed a significant omission in the policing literature; so too did Clement (2012), Miller, B. (2008) and Pickens, 2010 (see 4.2. above) whose research comprised phenomenological studies of critical incidents. However, all authors' studies were U.S.- or Canada-based which have a different critical incident definition and different organisational contexts from the U.K.. As mentioned earlier (4.5.), Karlsson and Christianson (2003) researched Swedish police in *The phenomenology of traumatic experiences in police work* (2003, p.419). They used an officer sample ($N = 162$) with prior experience of trauma or stress. It was a questionnaire study where participants described their most stressful incident and thereafter rated the support received and their emotional reactions, using Likert scales. They also reported physiological reactions via tick boxes and their pre-event state (social, physical, mental). Karlsson and Christianson found that most officers reported road traffic accidents or armed threats (e.g., weapons such as firearms, knives, broken glass) as most traumatic. The types of incident and details were described as were the types of memory that persisted (e.g., visual, auditory).

The Karlsson and Christianson (2003) study imposed quantitative dimensions onto qualitative experiences (Blumer, 1956) and though it was described as a phenomenological account, there was no initial research orientation in that regard, there was no privileging of the participants' experience (as Husserl advocated, "We must turn our attention to that experience itself" (Husserl, 1911/1965, p.87). Rather,

the researchers turned their attention to the questionnaire-filtered and Likert-scale-filtered experience. Although interesting descriptions were provided, the Karlsson and Christianson (2003) study imparted extra degrees of separation between the experience itself and the tabulated percentage results offered. It was loosely phenomenological in that the research question concerned experience; however, phenomenology was not Karlsson's and Christianson's methodology (unlike Broomé, 2011, 2013, above).

4.6.3. Narrative Studies in the Policing Literature

There are very few studies in the policing domain that used narrative analysis. Aldridge's and Luchjenbroers' (2008) study was set in a U.K. policing context. They argued that narrative accounts enabled best evidence in court as opposed to more typical closed question-and-answer formats which format closed down witnesses in favour of barristers' control over evidence presented. To that end, Aldridge and Luchjenbroer explored the narrative features in police videotapes of interviews with a child rape victim. They concluded that child victims may undermine their case because they cannot provide a sophisticated enough narrative to convince a jury (i.e., a narrative which explicitly explains that compliance was due to coercion not willing co-operation). The Aldridge and Luchjenbroer study was a detailed narrative analysis in the U.K. policing domain but it focused principally on the crime victim rather than the police. Innes (2002a) discussed police use of narrative structures to understand and explain cases (also see Innes & Brookman, 2013, on consequences when narrative structures are denied). However, narrative was not used as a method. None was found that used narrative analysis to examine police officers' experiences.

4.6.4. IPA Studies in the Policing Literature

Likewise, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) drew very few results; again, studies differed on some dimension or other (typically topic or context) from the current project. McLean and Marshall (2010) used IPA to examine police experiences of dealing with individuals with mental health issues. They analysed data from nine semi-structured interviews and found that officers reported the

emotional aspects of dealing with people with poor mental health (e.g., officers were individually motivated to help and felt empathy). Officers also reported the impact on resources, perceiving that, in terms of infrastructure, health services were the more appropriate agency for responsibility. McLean's and Marshall's (2010) study contributed to the U.K. policing literature but it centred on the specific topic of mental health.

In another IPA study, Passmore and Townsend (2012) explored training for drivers in blue-light emergencies, using two groups (five instructors, five trainees) as participants. In accordance with IPA principles, they privileged participants' experience (whilst bracketing researchers') and adopted the Smith (2008) protocol. Passmore and Townsend found that instructors saw value in their training and recognised the difficulties trainee officers often had in expressing emotions (e.g., fear) in blue-light driving. Trainees did not want to be passive learners and they saw some elements of their training as subjective. They recognised the importance of flexibility in training though safety was perceived as paramount. Both IPA studies (McLean & Marshall, 2010; Passmore & Townsend, 2012) were U.K.-based but each had topics other than critical incidents. No idiographic policing studies were found (apart from a psychiatric case study where the patient was incidentally a policeman [Peterson, 1993]) and the search term *interpretative* yielded the same results as IPA had. The literature search showed that the current project's approach is very under-used in policing research; that is, there is a significant gap in the literature for qualitative approaches examining U.K. police critical incident experiences.

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the literature relating to critical incidents was reviewed to funnel down to uses of the term that were relevant to the current research. I argued that police critical incidents have specific referents and that the term cannot transfer across domains in the literature: It has a precise definition and meaning specific to U.K. policing. Given the evidently different contexts, caution should also be exercised in assuming research can be readily compared or pooled across countries or cultures (though a reading of the literature revealed this to be a common enough presumption).

The literature on the three types of critical incident was discussed: Counter-terrorism, Serious Crime and Non-criminal incidents. Counter-terrorism research comprised cross-disciplinary literature with CT policy, human rights, and CT discourse as prominent topics; research on the impact of CT approaches on U.K. Muslims also featured. Empirical studies were relatively few pointing towards inaccessibility of suitable participant populations. It became evident that the term *non-criminal* was insufficient to elicit relevant policing literature. *Major incident* drew some results but they were fewer in number than CT or SC research. Serious crime produced the largest body of literature. Many studies were variable-centred and so finely honed that they offered very narrow slices of the policing picture. Compared to criminals or victims of crime, fewer SC studies examined police officers; fewer still employed police officers as participants. Again, this likely indicates difficulties in gaining access to appropriate populations but does impair ecological validity of available literature. Many studies into serious crime used quantitative methods even though qualitative studies can provide rich meaningful and experiential detail. Those studies which had been undertaken offered valuable insights into professional views in the U.K. as well as the context in which police work. They were not, however, similar enough to compromise the current project.

The literature search revealed the under-use of phenomenological approaches in policing research; interpretative phenomenological analysis and narrative analysis were even more neglected. It is contended that the policing literature is dominated by thinly-sliced, variable-centred topics, especially in relation to SC incidents. In relation to CT, empirical studies are under-represented and NC incidents are most neglected of all. The literature is therefore lacking a more holistic view of critical incidents. By analogy, the close examination of cogs, or wheels, or dials means that we have forgotten to consider the gestalt whole that is the watch (Eyre & Alison, 2007). In the current thesis, the aim was to preserve real people's experiences of real-life cases. Meaningful insights beyond participants' explicit claims were also sought; that is, I sought to establish connections across a larger data corpus than any single incident participants experienced (Smith et al., 2009). It is contended that this approach addressed a gap in the body of literature presently available. The current project's approach was broad enough in range to encompass

police experiences of different aspects of critical incidents - from overarching organisations or systems to individual attitudes or behaviours. As such, it will have pragmatic utility for policing. In the next chapter, I present the first of the empirical chapters in the project: a thematic analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE. THEMATIC ANALYSIS: 1

5.1. Introduction

In these first two data chapters, I present the findings of a thematic analysis of the whole data corpus, that is, the themes that emerged from all eighteen 10kV sessions. To recap, the whole data corpus comprised twelve U.K. sessions and six overseas sessions. Both U.K. and overseas sessions were categorised by type of incident: i) Counter-terrorism (CT), ii) Serious Crime (SC), and iii) Non-criminal (NC). They were further categorised by type of session: a) debrief or b) review of service delivery; the former were straightforward operational debriefs of a recent critical incident, the latter were *think tank* or *sandpit* discussion forums for reviewing that particular topic in policing. Thus, a thematic analysis was conducted on two U.K. service reviews and one overseas review of each of the categories: CT, SC, and NC. Also analysed were two U.K. debriefs and one overseas debrief of critical incidents for each of the categories: CT, SC, and NC. Given the substantial data corpus, the study is presented over two chapters. This chapter contains the method, results and discussion for the most prominent three themes. The remaining themes and discussion sections appear in the next chapter (6).

Thematic analysis provides a means of organising data minimally in order that common themes may be identified and described (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some researchers extend the method to offer in-depth interpretations of data but, in this project, it was adopted for a first description of the main categories to emerge from the entire data corpus. For current purposes, thematic analysis had two advantages. Firstly, it offered a qualitative method that was not tied to any epistemological or theoretical position (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It has been argued that using exclusively qualitative methods avoids clashing epistemologies (Chamberlain et al., 2011); nonetheless, it seemed wise to impose a manageable upper limit to complexity given that an appropriate method was available. Secondly, the absence of epistemological or theoretical parameters rendered the method more flexible. The thematising of meaning is regarded as a generic skill common across qualitative research (Holloway & Todres, 2003); this *common ground* could enable points of comparison with other studies. Thus, a widely-adopted, commonly-understood methodological

tool provided the best means of conducting a first-phase broad analysis before branching off into more specialised qualitative methods (IPA and narrative analysis) to explore the data further. Although thematic analysis often disregards frequency counts in preference to content and meaning, frequency counts were nonetheless included here. Caution is advised against taking inferences that importance necessarily correlated with number of comments. As Holloway and Todres put it, "A part meaning is thus not given more value just because it occurs more times" (2003, p.350). Frequencies did, however, render a very large data corpus manageable; further, they offered triangulation of other methods used in the project.

In sum, thematic analysis offered a means of analysis that was: i) methodologically flexible (theoretically and epistemologically free), ii) focused on meaning, and iii) readily identifiable and optimally open for comparative purposes (i.e., for others to take forward). Frequencies lent an easy, at-a-glance means of accessing the rank order of discussion topics and the degree to which (in terms of percentage of comments made) a topic engaged participants so they are reported in and, indeed, structure these two chapters. They helped to give a first shape to the data for the project and likewise provide the reader a first immersion into 10kV data on critical incidents.

5.2. Method

The Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis protocol was followed, steering away from interpretation to incorporate participants' views as directly as possible into a first broad overview; this rendered this study descriptive (Silverman, 2006). The analytic process began with familiarisation with the data through reading and line-by-line re-reading; initial codes were generated and annotations made to the data transcripts. At this early stage, these were principally codes that summarised participants' comments, and occasionally included in-vivo codes where participants' comments were apposite (Saldaña, 2013). The codes were collated by similarity into second stage codes. These codes were extracted and transcribed onto a mind map as potential themes. Subsequent review collapsed themes where overlap had been identified; thus, theme boundaries were clarified at this stage. These themes were then named and defined. Final themes were refined iteratively throughout the

process as analysis continued across the data corpus of eighteen sessions. For example, an early theme of *occupational health* (named as a department by participants concerned at its absence) finally became *staff welfare.* The latter, final name labelled a more generic superordinate theme that encompassed concerns expressed in other sessions (e.g., tiredness after long shifts). A theme dictionary was constructed to present definitions for all final themes that emerged from the data corpus (See Appendix D).

To make this first analysis as comprehensive as possible, every theme that emerged was rank ordered. Ranking was based on two criteria: proportion (i.e., number of sessions the theme appeared in out of total 18 sessions) and frequency (mean percentage of the theme across sessions it appeared in). Results were plotted on these two dimensions (see figure 5.1. below). Recall, direct quotations are italicised and indented; brackets alongside reference the source session; directly reciprocal comments are preceded by the bracketed phrase: [In response]. Abbreviations for incident-type categories are: CT for Counter-terrorism; SC for Serious Crime; NC for Non-criminal, each accompanied by the number of the session (e.g., CT1, SC2, NC3, etc.).

5.3. Results

5.3.1. Most Common[7] Themes in the Data Corpus

A total of 65 themes emerged from the analysis. Thirty-two of the 65 themes appeared in more than one session. Of the thirty-two themes that did appear in more than one session, 31 had a mean frequency >2.0%. This was rounded down to 30 as a manageable point for presentation: outside this *top-thirty* boundary, the majority

---

[7] The word *common* is less unwieldy than the phrase *the proportion of sessions*. *Common* refers throughout to the proportion of sessions a theme appeared in; that is, the theme that appeared in the highest proportion of sessions (15 of 18) is the most common theme. Common is distinguished from the percentage of comments in each session (the latter is termed *frequency*).

(i.e., 33/35) of themes appeared in one session only; the two exceptions (specifically, the themes, *risk* and *forensics*) each appeared in two sessions but at very low mean frequencies (2.90% and 1.44% total comments respectively).

Thirty themes would still comprise an unwieldy discussion for initial data chapters so were further subdivided into two categories, termed *major* (n = 15) and *minor* (n = 15) themes. The minor themes are listed for the sake of completeness but not discussed. The major themes are discussed. Thus, this chapter and the next essentially comprise a descriptive account of the top-fifteen recurring topics from discussions on the policing of critical incidents.

The top-15 major themes ranged from 4-15 sessions (except the *leadership* theme which appeared in only two sessions but at comparatively high frequency [M = 12.04, SD = 1.52]). Major theme frequencies ranged from a mean of 4.63% (SD = 3.50) for the theme *victims and families* up to a mean of 13.16% (SD = 6.31) for the top theme *partnerships*. The remaining fifteen minor themes each appeared in 2-4 sessions with the majority of frequencies ranging from >3% to approximately 10%. Specifically, the fifteen minor themes included one theme of lower frequency (the theme *evidence*, M = 2.49%, SD = 1.68) though this theme did appear in four sessions; at the upper end, two minor themes had mean frequencies slightly higher than 10% (*performance measures*, M = 10.07 [SD = 9.11] and *trust*, M = 10.05% [SD = 7.74]).

In sum, minor themes were characterised by appearing in 2-4 sessions and >3% total comments. Major themes were characterised by appearing in >4-15 sessions as well as >4% (typically >6%) total comments. In rank order, the major themes were: 1. *partnerships*; 2. *community*; 3. *communication*; 4. *planning*; 5. *learn lessons*; 6. *staff goodwill*; 7. *resources*; 8. *staff welfare*; 9. *roles and responsibilities*; 10. *professional image*; 11. *training*; 12. *leadership*; 13. *media*; 14. *expertise*; 15. *victims and families*. The remaining minor themes in the top thirty were: 16. *performance measures*; 17. *logistics*; 18. *trust*; 19. *I.T. systems*; 20. *scale*; 21. *security*; 22. *politics*; 23. *ad hoc decision making*; 24. *human rights*; 25. *fast pace*; 26. *policy*; 27. *business as usual*; 28. *balancing needs and priorities*; 29. *uncertainty*; 30. *evidence* (See Appendix E for rank order of all 65 themes). Figure 5.1. below

provides a graphic representation of the top thirty themes. The top three themes are labelled; other points are unlabelled (to avoid clutter) but give an indication of distribution of themes with minor themes clustering at the left-hand side of the graph in the lower number of sessions.

Figure 5.1. Top thirty critical incident themes.
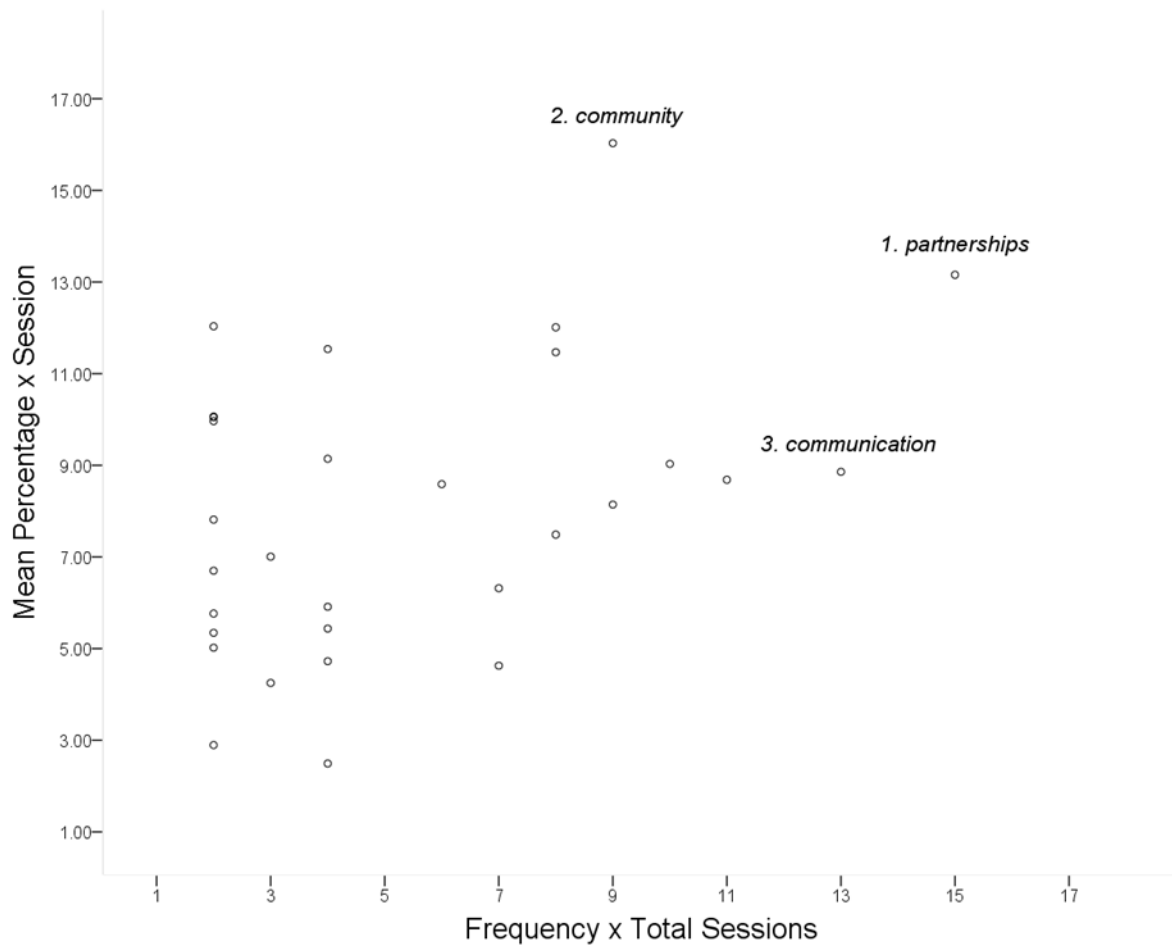
5.3.2. Comparison of U.K. and Overseas Themes

U.K. and overseas sessions were combined to provide figures on common themes. When considered separately, some themes did not meet both criteria for major themes (i.e., common in >4 sessions and M = >4% comments); for example, the theme *professional image* appeared in only two U.K. sessions and two overseas sessions though it amply met the frequency criterion for a major theme in each (M = 11.50% and 11.58% respectively). When considered separately as either U.K. or overseas sessions, all top-thirty themes met at least one of the major theme criteria.

Of the fifteen major themes, five were major themes in both U.K. and overseas sessions. They were: *partnerships*, *communication*, *learn lessons*, *resources*, and *roles and responsibilities*. Three themes which were major themes in

U.K. sessions were minor themes in overseas sessions (i.e., appeared in 2-4 sessions and *M* = >3%). They were: *planning*, *staff goodwill*, and *victims and families*. Two were minor themes in both U.K. and overseas sessions: *professional image* and *expertise*.

Some themes were skewed towards U.K. or overseas sessions. Most notably, the theme *community* was the second top theme in the rank order, appearing in nine of 18 sessions with a mean frequency of 16.03%. It was, however, a theme exclusive to U.K. sessions and did not feature overseas. This suggests its salience for officers in the U.K.. Similarly, *staff welfare* was a theme more prevalent in the U.K.. It was discussed in 8 of 18 sessions whilst appearing in only one overseas session. Frequencies for *staff welfare*, however, met the major theme criterion in both types of session (7.91% in the U.K. and 10.02% overseas). The two themes *training* and *media* were also more prevalent in U.K. than overseas sessions, (five and six sessions respectively) but each appearing only once in overseas sessions. Recall, however, that there were twice as many U.K. as overseas sessions (*n* = 12 and 6 respectively), which limits the comparison of raw numbers.

No top-fifteen theme appeared in more overseas than U.K. sessions though some had similar raw numbers. Similar raw numbers suggest greater prevalence as an overseas discussion topic given there were half as many overseas as U.K. sessions. Themes which appeared in similar numbers of U.K. and overseas sessions were as follows (parentheses show respectively the number of U.K. and overseas sessions the theme appeared in): *communication* (7, 6); *learn lessons* (6, 5); *resources* (5, 5); *roles and responsibilities* (4, 4); *professional image* (2, 2); and *expertise* (2, 2). As well as showing in an equal number of U.K. and overseas sessions, the theme *resources* also stood out as having higher mean frequency in overseas than U.K. sessions (12.57% and 5.49% respectively). Resources were clearly a much more prominent topic for discussion for participants overseas.

Table 5.1.

Top Fifteen Major Themes in U.K. and Overseas Sessions

No.	Theme	U.K. major/minor (/12)	Overseas major/minor (/6)	U.K. mean frequency	Overseas mean frequency
1	*Partnerships*	Major (9)	Major (6)	13.65	12.41
2	*Community*	Major (9)	- (0)	16.03	-
3	*Communication*	Major (7)	Major (6)	8.84	8.88
4	*Planning*	Major (5)	Minor (3)	12.26	11.61
5	*Learn Lessons*	Major (6)	Major (5)	6.87	10.86
6	*Staff Goodwill*	Major (5)	Minor (3)	13.93	7.36
7	*Resources*	Major (5)	Major (5)	5.49	12.57
8	*Staff Welfare*	Major (8)	- (1)	7.91	10.02
9	*Roles & Responsibilities*	Major (4)	Major (4)	7.97	8.46
10	*Professional Image*	Minor (2)	Minor (2)	11.50	11.58
11	*Training*	Major (5)	- (1)	9.56	3.72
12	*Leadership*	Minor (2)	- (0)	12.04	-
13	*Media*	Major (6)	- (1)	7.48	1.46
14	*Expertise*	Minor (2)	Minor (2)	7.42	10.87
15	*Victims and Families*	Major (5)	Minor (2)	4.02	6.16

Further information is presented in appendices. Theme content and boundaries were defined in a theme dictionary in Appendix D. Recall, frequency of theme within each session was examined as a cross-check of popularity as a topic for discussion and, combined with the number of sessions, formulated rank order. A see-at-a-glance measure of the theme's popularity within as well as across sessions is provided in Appendix F (Tables F1-F4). Each of the top-fifteen major themes is discussed next in descending rank order. For ease of reading, the lengthy results have been divided over two chapters: The top three themes appear below; the

remaining twelve themes are presented in chapter 6. As themes descend in rank order so discussion length diminishes accordingly.

5.3.3. Theme 1. Partnerships (intra- and inter-agency)

The theme of *partnerships* appeared in 8 of the 12 U.K. sessions and 5 of the 6 overseas sessions. It had a mean frequency of 13.16% (SD = 6.31). It was the theme with the highest frequency in four sessions (two U.K. and two overseas); 3 of these 4 were counter-terrorist sessions. It appeared in 2 of the 3 service delivery review CT sessions on preparedness against terrorist attack (i.e., one overseas and 1 of 2 U.K. sessions). Participants' contact with non-partners was viewed positively but official partner agency relationships drew negative comments:

> [Name of non-partners] *did not always have the answer to your questions but they would try their best* [CT6]*;*

> *When seeking information their operation and appropriate support … police were sent from pillar to post. Also those with whom they negotiated were not able to deliver and did not understand the issues* [CT5].

In the U.K. CT service review session, one partner agency stood out as a problem with the perception that this agency would be likely to assume command and over-rule decisions; others thought its demands unrealistic:

> [Problem agency name] *believes they run the country whilst in town - they will try and enforce changes at last moment that will impact on security* [CT5];

> [Problem agency name] *bullied the* [nation name] *govt. so they will be able to bully our govt.* [CT5].

In CT operational debrief sessions, *partnerships* was the most prominent theme in both U.K. sessions (1st of 7 and 1st of 4 themes). Overseas, *partnerships* was 3rd of 12 themes and that session featured some positive comments:

Regardless of inexperience in this field of work, rank & interforce / agency issues, the British police & respective government agencies worked together to achieve a professional result [CT3].

In U.K. sessions, one problem agency again appeared as an unco-operative out-group that wanted to impose their own priorities on others without negotiation:

We were allowed to get some work done, but only as long as we played by their [problem team] *rules* [CT1];

Terrible tension between police and [partner agency] *must not be replicated* [CT2];

The frustration that is involved when working in an international multi agency investigation, plus the aftermath that was left behind [CT3].

In summary, counter-terrorism sessions mostly drew negative comments on partnerships. Given officers' different roles, it may be that different goals underpinned the strained relationships; for example, one team walking on site to rescue victims would compromise another's opportunity to preserve evidence. On a broader level, terrorist threats are regarded as ever evolving, the source and nature of new attacks seen as unpredictable (Hogan-Howe, personal communication, January 24th, 2013). Offenders are the most extreme risk takers. Given its scale, rarity and potential for mass casualties, it is also an area of intense media scrutiny and, thus, public accountability. Hence, it may be expected that these participants are uncomfortable if not fully in command of the role they occupy.

In SC sessions, *partnerships* was the 4th of 5 major themes in the first U.K. service review session and 5th of 10 in the other U.K. review. The discussion context of the first session was that just over half (54.69%) of discussions were neutral and a further 17.63% comments were explicitly positive (expressing praise); therefore, it was not an especially negative session. However, *partnerships* theme comments were exclusively negative. Although positive vs. neutral vs. negative frequencies

were not calculated for the whole of the other U.K. service review session[8], an iterative check confirmed that *partnership* theme comments were exclusively negative. Differing goals and priorities were cited as reasons for problematic inter-agency relationships generally. Again, both sessions singled out one particular partner as a *problem agency* albeit each session chose a different agency as its problem partner:

> *Need to look at the different targets for police and* [problem agency] *as we are constantly pulling against each other* [SC4];
>
> [Problem agency] *decision making … generates significant problems … often accompanied by a dramatic loss of confidence amongst victims* [SC4];
>
> [Problem agency] *need to get on board please, now. Come to our meetings and let's talk through the issues together. Often if* [problem agency] *attends, which is rare, they say little and leave early* [SC5].

The *partnerships* theme did not appear in either of the two U.K. operational debriefs in the Serious Crime category. The nature of critical incidents necessitates engagement with other agencies so future research could explore more closely what factors co-present to: a) make partnerships worthy of discussion and b) generate negative (or positive) experiences or discussions. *Partnerships* did emerge in the overseas SC operational debrief where it was the 4th (10.67%) of 13 themes. In this session, participants regarded positive relationships as fundamental in underpinning the successful aspects of the operation. Although some negative comments appeared, positive comments were almost three times as frequent, which was unusual for this theme:

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[8] It was an anomaly of early coding that comments were coded for positive, negative, neutral. It was later abandoned as yielding too little insight for disproportionate effort and, hence, was available for some sessions but not others.

There was a tangible tension between the [number redacted] *nations at most of the meetings I was at* [SC3];

The working inter-agency relationships in country were generally very positive [SC3];

Despite a regular change over in staff, from all countries, good and effective working relationships were built and maintained [SC3].

In non-criminal service reviews, *partnerships* emerged in all three sessions. In the two U.K. sessions, it was the 3rd of 8 and 1st of 10 themes; it was 1st of 9 themes in the overseas session. In NC sessions, the theme drew a mix of positive and negative comments. Participants did not claim that excellent service delivery had yet been achieved; rather, partnership working was often cited as a means of improvement. However, in these sessions, *partnership* comments had a somewhat generalised *mission statement* style:

Currently have good working relationships with [agency], *intend to build on these in relation to critical incidents* [NC4];

Having the capacity … local agencies, outside agencies working collaboratively (joint locations, etc.) [NC5];

Every entity in the [place name] *is strapped for cash. But what we can do is have a collaborative game plan in place where all of our agencies are on board and ready to meet these challenges whenever things turn around financially* [NC6].

In NC operational debriefs, *partnerships* appeared in all three sessions: 6th of 7 and 3rd of 17 themes in the U.K. sessions and 2nd of 14 overseas. *Partnerships* attracted some positive comments. Similar to the NC service review sessions, they were often more future-goal than objective-achieved; sometimes, however, it appeared that the circumstances of the incidents themselves could foster better partnerships:

For me it is about working together to find a way forward and not about them and us [NC1];

Good relations developed and maintained with [agency name] *and police services in the first week. Mutual respect developed* [NC2].

Tensions were also discussed. Scapegoating did not appear as prominently as in SC though, as elsewhere, negative comments accrued around one problem agency; the agency was different from those cited in CT or SC sessions.

At Gold there were a lot of reps from [agency name] *and they did not all sing from the same hymn sheet.* [Agency] *advice varied depending on which professional was giving it* [NC2];

Different [agency name] *bodies never got together as a single entity - conscious of some them being new to this, and new arrangements in place, but the operation was moving much faster than they were;*

[In response] *And* [agency name] *are undergoing another restructuring!* [NC2].

In sum, the *partnerships* theme drew mixed comments. In NC service reviews, comments on *partnerships* had a mission-statement flavour; strengthening partnerships was a common intention. NC operational debriefs featured positive comments but also cited a problem agency. Comments were positive in the SC operational debrief. However, in SC service reviews, discussions focused on problems faced and, again, participants singled out one problem agency. Most CT comments on partners were negative; the *problem agency* feature was common to CT as well as SC and NC sessions albeit there was a different agency in different sessions.

5.3.3.1. Partnerships: Discussion

Partnerships generated much discussion in many sessions. They were, in many respects, not regarded positively. No matter the context (CT, SC, NC), one

agency tended to be cited as a problem partner. Future research might explore why partnership working seemed to ascribe a scapegoat role. In the inevitable challenges of very complex, demanding critical incidents, blame might accrue around an individual body/agency perhaps in lieu of fuller, more complex explanations; this may well be a parallel to fundamental attribution error whereby individuals are biased towards ascribing causal explanations to an individual (here, agency) rather than social (organisational) circumstances (Tetlock, 1985). Alternatively, it might be a matter of affirming in-groups by defining out-groups, a feature of social identity processes (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This is, of course, speculative but an interesting avenue for future research.

A striking feature within this theme was the absence of comments relating to communities as partners. Of course, *community* constituted a separate theme so this was possibly a product of the thematic categorisation. However, it seemed unlikely. Comments classified within the theme *community* referred to issues such as calls for communities to assist in coming forward as witnesses or engaging with young people to improve police image and so forth (see Appendix D Theme Dictionary). Put simply, communities served by the police tended not to be found in discussions on partnerships, professionals did. Possibly, communities were subsumed within the more generic term *partners* and *partnerships*. However, when specific groups *were* mentioned by name in relation to strengthening partnerships, they were, (with only one exception), professional agencies. In other words, stated intentions on strengthening links of any kind, however expressed, (e.g., bringing people together, attending a particular forum, re-engaging with partners or stakeholders and so on) all expressly referred to professionals. It was perhaps merely a matter of terminology but such linguistic matters might influence thinking on who constitutes a legitimate partner.

The community was mentioned directly as a partner just twice: once in the second NC service review session (but even here, contact would be indirect via a charity) and once in a U.K. CT service review session. Thus, the only two direct explicit references to communities as partners were:

Review existing partnerships with community, police and other stakeholder groups [NC4];

We can articulate what a successful police/community/partnership looks like and this will be further evidence to prove that the way to deal with this threat is to invest in stopping people becoming terrorists [CT4].

In terms of limitations, *partnerships* formed a very broad category that incorporated both intra- and inter-agency partnerships. It would obviously be preferable to distinguish between inter-agency and intra-agency (team) partnerships. Unfortunately, this was unavoidable because participants did not always distinguish precisely enough who they were talking about. Most obviously, participants' demographics were not attached to their comments in 10kV data so their 'home' team could not be cross-referenced with comments; the analysis could not, therefore, be more fine-grained.

Partnerships likewise became something of a catch-all category because of its superordinate nature; that is, some types of comments were excluded from the themes of *accountability*, *job well done*, *health* and *leadership* and assigned instead to *partnership* if they were too generic. This may point to insufficient refining of early codes during analysis or imprecise distinction between theme boundaries. However, the real-life referents of the theme names are complex phenomena with fluid, reciprocal influence; and all themes are ultimately a constructed product with the implicit hand of a researcher disconnecting complex, interacting phenomena for classification purposes. Boundaries were necessarily drawn somewhere. In defining the parameters of themes, Rosch's principle of fuzzy boundaries was adopted and a best-fit principle applied. Caution should be taken in interpreting the finding that *partnerships* was the number one theme beyond this analysis. It does not occupy some inevitable and immutable position as the most common category across all types of incident. It was likely attributable in some measure to the breadth of the category definition in this first overview of the entire data corpus.

Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory show that generating a shared social identity is key to securing co-operation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner

et al., 1987). It may have utility here and indicate that stakeholders should not wait for an incident to occur before relationships are built. Further research may be able to elucidate the details in the way partnerships evolve over time during the course of critical incident response. Examining scapegoating of one agency might prove particularly fruitful.

5.3.4. Theme 2. Community

Community poses a question of definition as it can be a rather nebulous concept. In its simplest interpretation, the term refers to a group of people with something in common. This nonetheless suggests that there are ties and/or interactions between those individuals (as opposed to a random group of individuals). Christensen and Robertson (1980) defined a community as a group of people who interact socially, who possess one or more psychological ties to each other and who occupy a geographically bounded area (e.g., residents in a neighbourhood or bankers in a financial district). The geographical aspect of community is echoed in the American Psychological Association's (APA) Dictionary of Psychology (Vandenbos, 2007) which definition refers to a socially organised set of species members living in a physically defined locality. However, physical proximity is not a necessary criterion. Individuals with common interests or qualities may be perceived by others or by themselves as distinctive in some way (e.g., the scientific community, a virtual community) and dictionary definitions admit these further meanings of community as a group distinguished from the larger society by some defining feature. Thus, the APA definition is not completely sound but certainly adequate if extended to include non-geographically co-located groups of individuals, with social and/or psychological ties, and who are likely to interact.

For current purposes, the dataset included reference to such groups in discussions of community: for example, the Muslim community – a group defined by its shared religious beliefs and values; the traveller community – a group with shared ethnic origin, identity, and other social ties. Community was also used by participants as a synonym for the general public and was used generally to refer to any group served by the police. In the current thematic analysis, fine-grained distinctions were

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not drawn between the different types of communities as all referred in some way to the general public served by the police.

Community was an interesting theme in that it was entirely absent from overseas sessions. It was, however, a prominent topic in the U.K. appearing in nine of twelve sessions with a mean frequency of 16.03% (*SD* = 15.27). The large standard deviation indicates the wide range within this theme. In two incidents, it was very much a minor discussion topic (two lowest values of 2.55% and 3.10%); in one, it occupied 53.30% total discussion time. Mostly, it presented as a substantial thread (9.58–17.18%). It was not especially characterised by incident type.

In CT service reviews, *community* appeared in just one session. As illustrated by the quotations below, the *community* theme was notable for impinging on other themes; that is, boundaries were particularly fuzzy in relation to this theme (e.g., *trust*). Similarly, the emphasis on forward thinking and prevention rather than response showed a nod to the *planning* theme. This may point to the importance of community and its role in underpinning relationships and interactions:

> [There are] *huge risks around briefing the community but it does help build trust. Can pre brief or at the time but must brief community at same time NOT after media* [CT4];

> *We can articulate what a successful police/community/partnership looks like and this will be further evidence to prove that the way to deal with this threat is to invest in stopping people becoming terrorists AS MUCH AS or even more than catching them planning what they intend to do*[9] [CT4].

In operational debriefs, *community* was a theme in 1 of the 2 U.K. sessions. Operational discussions were more positive than in the service review. Challenges

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[9] This quotation also appears in the section on *partnerships* above (section 5.3.3.) as one of only two comments that refer to communities as partners.

were also evident but participants did not report a sense of failure, simply the difficulties that arose in managing complex incidents:

> *I undertook community reassurance strategies, attending various meetings, often with individuals, sometimes large groups. Acting as a liaison between different communities. I am pleased to say, it did all seem positive* [CT2];

> *Found it difficult, to not be able to share secret information which would have proved valuable in reassuring the community* [CT2].

In SC service reviews, the theme *community* appeared in one session (17.18% total comments). Participants referred to different types of community. The need for police to engage more successfully was regarded as a foundation stone in improving performance:

> *How do we engage with the harder to reach communities, for example, Somalians* [SC5]?

> *Young Muslim community, if they feel disengaged and unable to be a part of community then WE have a responsibility to allow young Muslims and in fact young people to engage and feel part of the community and shaping of the future;*

> > [In response] *We need to engage with all youth regardless of their racial background and social background* [SC5].

In SC operational debriefs, *community* appeared in both sessions. In the first session, *community* drew no negative comments despite being a significant topic (16.77% coded comments). This was notable as Crego and Alison (2004) showed this aspect of critical incident management to be extremely difficult. 45% of the comments indicated a desire to sustain and develop long-term positive relationships. Again, it tended to be future-goal rather than objective-achieved (which might explain all-positive comments). The second SC debrief juxtaposed community with staff welfare:

The community response to the incidents has been phenomenal and we need to find a way to capitalise on this and build it into … work for the future [SC1];

[In response] *We need to understand whether and how we influenced this response – i.e. how did we manage to get the public and the community to …* [identifier redacted, general meaning = assist police] [SC1];

The support to communities needs to be two-way. Our staff and the wider police family needs to feel that support from the public, and the two things will go hand in hand if done properly. Without one, we won't see the other [SC2];

I don't think we should worry too much about the community - we need to look after our own staff [SC2].

In NC service reviews, *community* appeared in both sessions (16.03% and 7.25%). It was the subject of reflective comments, both positive and negative. Participants derived a sense of satisfaction from meaningful relationships in the community though senior top-down strategy was not always regarded as helpful.

Maybe it's the police service that is hard to reach and not the community groups [NC4]?

Getting buy-in from all communities - job satisfaction which comes from the engagement and the sense of achievement (connectivity with the public) [NC5];

You need to be able to find to find out what the community want and then have the guts to say 'no' to your Borough commander [NC5];

Why don't we ask the citizens rather than we tell them [NC5]?

Some participants did not support the idea of working with communities. They showed more traditional authoritarian views on what constitutes police work revealing a desire to direct ("steering") others into supporting roles:

Our culture is policing…we need a greater focus on enforcement while steering our partners toward support and environmental improvement [NC5];

Let the teams get on with simple policing and locking up the baddies [NC5]!

In NC operational debriefs, *community* was a theme in both sessions albeit with extremely different frequencies (53.30% and 3.10%) Participants regarded community relationships as very important but believed they still presented a challenge, for example, in relation to trade-offs between operational secrecy versus consultation.

Cultural weakness as police that we assume that we know our communities [NC1];

Public meetings in [redacted] *early on, helped release from real community tension that could have exploded* [NC2]!

We talked earlier about the defensive approach of insurance lawyers, yet the community needs to feel they matter and are being considered rather than ignored [NC2]*;*

Fairness and justice [matter] *including engagement of communities not just engagement and consultation with each other as professionals* [NC1].

The last quotation shows participant recognition of the failure to regard communities as partners. However, a 'bean count' of all intentions for future improvements in this session showed that only 11.1% related to community partnerships. Research is needed to establish the reason for this *action gap* on an issue participants declared as: i) very important and ii) not yet successful given that this was a session where the *community* theme consumed more than half of all discussion time. To put it baldly, participants paid a good deal of lip service to the matter but it translated into intended action for almost nobody.

5.3.4.1. Community: Discussion

In sum, *community* was a common theme in U.K. sessions. It appeared in all types of session at a wide range of frequencies. In CT, community engagement and response were regarded as fairly successful endeavours though challenges were also evident. Future improvements also featured in CT as well as SC sessions. SC particularly focused on different sections of the community (e.g., minority ethnic groups). Some participants saw community support as reciprocal, a 'two-way street'. In NC sessions, discussion covered satisfaction derived from meaningful community relationships while other positive comments reflected the need to strengthen community ties; however, an *action gap* was evident. Some did not support even the rhetoric of community focus in policing. The theme's complete absence from overseas sessions highlights an obvious direction for future research. Although the absence of *community* may simply have been due to the nature of short-term deployments into others' communities, that itself reveals how parameters around responsibility are perceived. Another avenue may be how to engage hard-to-reach communities given two features that emerged from these data: i) It was declared to be important and ii) There were few intentions for action. Suggestions may have been absent simply because officers do not know what to do (nor even see it as 'real policing'). This is an evident opportunity for applied, high-utility research.

Another issue in this theme was the tension between newer community-led policing initiatives and older traditional approaches (the latter captured in the term *law enforcement*). This is coupled with the fact that the police service is the lead agency among the emergency services giving it chief status. Overturning an authoritarian culture where police tell people what to do (rather than communities telling police what they need) takes time and big change can make novices of everyone for a period. As a concrete example, neighbourhood policing teams, with their emphasis on community-led policing, have been at the forefront of these cultural changes. The Neighbourhood Policing Team Guide (Home Office, 2006) stated, "Community owned solutions are the most sustainable" (p.24). However, other research has shown that officers' perceptions differ. Rank and file officers perceived a split between *hard* and *soft* policing. They also regarded the former as

'real policing' (by implication, listening to or negotiating with communities is not real policing). They also resisted soft options even when shown how effective collaborative, negotiated solutions are (Innes, 2005). In short, police have been accustomed to being in charge and this remains part of the occupational culture (for now). This was recognised in the sessions and though there was willingness to move towards community-owned solutions, it was apparent that it was perceived as an aspiration.

5.3.5. Theme 3. Communication

Communication was the third most common theme. It had an overall mean frequency of 8.86% and emerged in 13 of the 18 sessions (7 of 12 U.K. and 6 of 6 overseas). Communication problems are naturally something of a cliché but this fact does not diminish their significance. This broad theme was manifested in several different respects. Regions, agencies, and teams were all reported as not communicating effectively.

In CT service reviews, *communication* appeared as a theme in all three sessions (8th of 10 and 6th of 10 themes in U.K.; 3rd of 10 themes, overseas). Echoing the *partnerships* theme, problem agencies were discussed. Two principal non-communicating agencies have been designated X and Y to disambiguate in extracts below:

> *Danger that* [Agency Y] *do not allow vital evidence to be shared, i.e., photos etc. of subjects* [CT4];

> *The tension only exists due to the secret nature in which the information is owned and retained. It is impossible to work with only half the information just because someone wants to feel important by keeping it within their environment.* [Agency Y] *still would appear to view the* [Agency X] *as an asset rather than a full partnership* [CT4];

> *We urgently need a specific information sharing agreement* [CT5]!

The balance between openness and secrecy, the *who needs to know what when* issue was extremely wide ranging and ran from intra-team to inter-agency to cross-communities. It applied to internal as well as external communication problems.

In the overseas CT service review, this particular context was more fortunate in having less experience of terrorism than the U.K. so the focus tended more towards hypothetical scenarios but the challenges remained:

> *If they* [evacuees] *are to shelter, how do we get the information out to them* [CT6]?

> [Agency name] *is called in and there are communication problems, "Cover me" means different things to the* [agency name] *versus patrol officers* [CT6].

In CT operational debriefs, *communication* did not emerge as a theme in either of the two U.K. sessions; however, it was the 2nd of 12 themes overseas. Time featured: Timeliness and time consumed seeking information were topics for discussion.

> *There was difficulty in keeping* [name] *updated with critical as information being sent by E mail was not being received by me for up to two days* [CT3];

> [Role names] *need to be updated with correct information and as soon as possible. A lot of what you are being told today is as a result of all statements being read (there were well over 100 witnesses to this incident). This takes time* [CT3].

In SC service reviews, *communication* appeared in one U.K. (3rd of 10 themes) and one overseas session (6th of 12 themes). There was a focus on the communication challenges with greater sharing a U.K. goal. The familiar problem agency was a U.K. feature whereas preventing leaks was a concern overseas:

> *There is still a lack of info sharing; for example, prisoners release plans aren't shared with police or LAs* [local authorities] *when they could help* [SC5];

> *The current climate is an inhibitor to stepping up when it is necessary. Over emphasising confidentiality data protection etc. is an industry in the UK* [SC5];

The law on classified information protects us from the question of the press. It is very simple to tell a journalist that you are not allowed to disclose the information they want because that would be illegal but if the law disappears, how are we going to hide it [SC6]?

[Agency name] *seem to be the most difficult agency to ask for information or even basic data* [SC5].

In SC operational debriefs, *communication* was the 4th of 9 and 3rd of 13 themes in U.K. sessions; overseas, it was 10th of 13 themes. Effectiveness of information sharing naturally varied across time and affected internal and external communication:

Teething problems in the initial stages as not all incident rooms and intel cells were getting the information at the same time [but] *we quickly organised an intelligence cell…insures* [sic] *all information is shared equally* [SC1];

What about communication with … concerned public during the incident? We let people down by promising to come back with information and then not doing so [SC2].

Communication failures often referred to a sense of being excluded. This may point to the possibility of in-group, out-group dynamics and the possible different social identities that were highlighted in the *partnerships* theme (section 5.3.3. above).

There appeared to be a gap in communication from higher echelons in the force to the individual officers and line supervisors on the ground [SC1];

The issue with this is the staff feels no one knows what they did. There is a danger they feel undervalued [SC2].

In NC service reviews, *communication* did not appear as a theme in either of the U.K. sessions. In the equivalent overseas session, it was 4th of 9 themes (12.09%) where comments were mostly about challenges faced: the impact on professional morale and service delivery caused by lack of information sharing:

Mainly poor or no communication and cooperation cause frustration that actually keeps the system not functioning properly [NC6];

Some of the newer officers are not aware of the myriad of services in the [place name] *area* [NC6].

In NC operational debriefs, *communication* was a theme in all sessions (4th of 7 and 1st of 9 in U.K.; 6th of 14 themes overseas). There was no common strand of discussion in this type of session, possibly due to the more diverse nature of incidents in the non-criminal category. In one U.K. session, this theme referred to communicating with the public. In the other U.K. session, contamination was an issue so comments referred to accessing or disseminating specialist knowledge or public safety messages whereas overseas, different infrastructures hampered communications:

Advice to officers from lawyer - often advised to say 'nowt';

[In response] *Siege mentality prevails* [NC1];

A long time before [officers] *give their account;*

[In response] *Makes it difficult to get to the truth* [NC1];

Fast moving incident; required rapid assessment of public health impact and advice - with very incomplete information early, and, later, unrealistic expectations about what further information would be available to inform the acute response [NC2];

The issue of credible [expert information] *was an essential requirement in the early stages but it did not happen for well over 24 hours* [NC2].

Accessing reliable scientific information in a timely manner proved very challenging. It was very evident that scientists are not part of the fast-response emergency services. Other comments bore comparison with relationship or partnership problems, for example:

Lack of complete confidence that individuals requesting information were actually working on behalf of the line of command rather than just posturing or making a role for themselves in the margins [NC2];

National Govt. agencies are starting to put pressure on me and making statements in meetings that have not been discussed with me [NC2].

In sum, the majority of comments in the *communications* theme were about a lack of communication. In CT, the timeliness and time-consuming nature of communication featured. The familiar problem agency was also discussed in CT as well as SC. Feeling excluded from information-sharing and the concomitant impact on morale was discussed in SC and NC sessions. Acts of commission were also seen to occur, with the problem being attributed to differing status or rivalry. Communication topics were generally more diverse in NC sessions, possibly related to the greater diversity of this category.

5.3.5.1. Communication: Discussion

As with the *partnerships* theme, *communication* was a broad category that could be meaningfully sub-divided into finer-grained categories (only *I.T. systems* was categorised separately in this study). Communication is also a perennial problem. Public enquiries over the years repeatedly uncover similar failings. For example, poor inter-agency communication and resistance to sharing information have been themes of contributory failure from the deaths of Maria Colwell in 1973 (Field-Fisher, 1974) to the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000 (Bichard, 2004) and beyond with lessons seemingly unlearned between each tragedy that occurs (as noted by Best, 2004, discussing deaths in police custody).

Sometimes, communication failure was a feature of operations at the start of a still-unfolding incident. However, the failure to communicate was often perceived as relating to difficulties in partnerships and often attributed to rivalries or even petty jealousies. Some suggested that knowledge was deliberately withheld by those who felt it conferred more status/importance on them to exclude others. In other words, if knowledge is power, I become more powerful than you if I don't tell you something.

The perception might be false: It could be that incompatible systems were at fault or that other upstream factors were responsible – for example, poorly conceived policy on information-sharing channels or a lack of inter-positional knowledge such that individuals were not aware who else ought to know. Notwithstanding that communication failures might have been acts of omission rather than commission, the perception matters. A lack of shared identity is one possible explanation and may underpin the failure to communicate with others because they were simply not regarded as part of the same group (i.e., so why tell 'outsiders'?) Perceptions of exclusion from the in-group can be unsettling. This was noted in the following comment that arose in the context of having received no communication about VIP visits:

> *There are some sensitivities around 'who gets invited to see PM and HRH and why were we missed'* [SC2].

There is a need to continue to address such issues post-incident so that perceptions of exclusion – which can emerge following lack of information sharing – do not grow.

Research suggests that people will accept limited access (e.g., to information) as long as they regard the reasons as legitimate (Stott, 2009; Stott, Adang, Livingstone, & Schreiber, 2007, 2008; Stott & Drury, 2004) and this applies to professionals as much as the public. Using training time to explore *why* information is restricted might promote the idea that secrecy is legitimate. This could help prevent officers attributing non-communication to rivalry or self-importance, as was reported in the sessions. Similarly, psychological knowledge of the factors that underpin trust and co-operation should be included in training programmes to raise awareness of issues that may affect officers in an environment where secrecy is an inherent part of the work. This may apply particularly to CT; that is, communication failures were possibly compounded by participants' perceived lack of structure at national level in C.T. The absent structure may impede a sense of a national team (see also Field, 2009). The corollary is that there are no team members with whom one ought to communicate.

Explaining restrictions on communication may, then, help to foster legitimacy and reduce attribution of non-communication to others' self-importance or rivalry and, in turn, support partnerships (e.g., Stott, 2009). Where information does not exist to be communicated, admission of ignorance of certain facts or information during an incident does not damage public confidence; rather it can foster trust that an organisation is honest and enhances the belief that it has nothing to hide from the public (Chong, 2006; De Vries & Fitzpatrick, 2006). Some communication difficulties (e.g., early incident phase) cannot be overcome but can be understood and, therefore, made more legitimate and perceptions changed (Stott, 2009). Others can be resolved. Figure 5.2. below illustrates connections between the three most dominant themes in the sessions.

Figure 5.2. Relationship between top three themes: partnerships, community, communication.

Police
(participants)

Communication

Partnerships
(professionals)
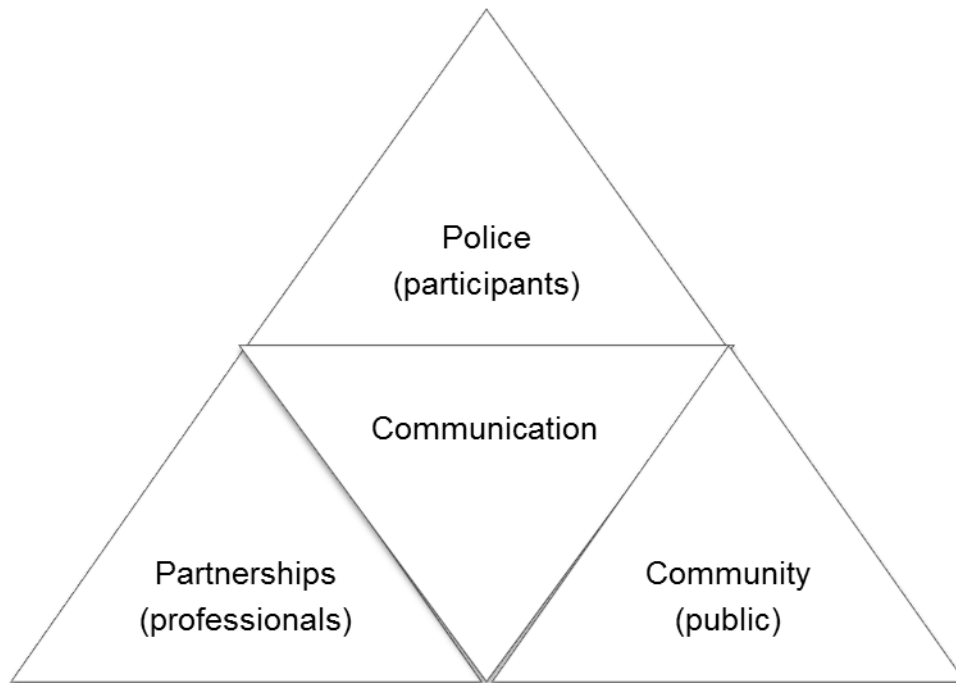
Community
(public)

5.4. Conclusion

The three most prominent themes - *partnerships*, *community*, and *communication* – obviously revolve around human relationships and the interactions that maintain or develop them. Successes were reported though, for the most part, participants reported candidly the sources of tension alongside their desire (and sometimes intention) to improve these fundamental relationships with other professionals and the communities they serve. That these themes dominated discussions may be an artefact of the breadth of the theme categories. It nonetheless illustrates the fundamental importance of relationships in policing and the transactional communication they depend on. In the next chapter, the remaining twelve major themes which emerged from the thematic analysis will be presented.

This chapter completes the findings of the thematic analysis of the entire data corpus of eighteen sessions. To recap: The method was presented in the preceding chapter (5); major themes comprised themes which were the most common as well as the most frequent, characterised by appearing in >4-15 sessions as well as mean frequencies >4% (typically >6%) total comments. Themes four through to fifteen are presented below in descending rank order. As themes become less common and reduce in frequency, results will be reported: through shorter summaries for each theme; illustrated just by quotations from each incident type; without distinguishing between service delivery reviews and operational sessions; and without the reflexive discussion sections (i.e., limitations, future research suggestions). A final discussion section will close the chapter.

6.1. Theme 4. Planning

Lessons learned and *planning* can be mistaken for the same construct if orientation is not explained. Drawing a distinction between looking backwards and looking forwards helped prevent slippage between the two and gave some precision around boundaries of each theme. Thus, looking backwards to an event was categorised as *lessons learned* while looking forwards to the future was classified as *planning*. However, reference to formal plans or legislation was coded as *planning* even where participants referred back to a plan's use. Generally, during coding, where a comment itself did not distinguish, context was used to disambiguate. A best fit principle was applied. It should be acknowledged that, more than any other two themes, these were artefactual constructs that were at times a little contrived.

Planning had an overall mean frequency of 12.01% ($SD = 3.45$) and appeared in eight sessions (five U.K. and three overseas). Some formal plans were seen as successful. When challenges were discussed, it was people (i.e., as opposed to objects, equipment etc.) who seemed to impede successful planning:

> *Requirement to define new working methods frustrated by individuals driving own agendas rather than the best outcome* [CT4];

At the outset consider and plan for the long haul. We often say at the 10 week and much later stage, 'If only we had done/considered that [at] *the beginning'* [SC3];

Need for EU (World) database of specialisms, to assist in coordinating the response. This will avoid duplication of assets / enable a more effective & fair response / reduce UK costs / assist with resilience & succession planning [NC3].

The limitations of prescriptive planning through SOPs were succinctly expressed by one participant:

The existence of protocols does not mean things will necessarily improve - it might mean people become more ingenious at circumventing them [CT4].

In sum, the *planning* theme arose in sessions that were particularly complex or unique. It was not a prominent feature of core policing activities (i.e., serious crime investigations).

6.2. Theme 5. Learn Lessons

See comment above (6.1.) on orientation to distinguish between *planning* and *learn lessons*. The *learn lessons* theme was in eleven sessions (five U.K. and six overseas) with an overall mean frequency of 8.69% (*SD* = 4.88). In this theme, comments focused on removing obstacles to learning and the valuable experience derived from operations:

We need to learn to debrief without blame [CT6];

BOCU commanders are obsessed with volume crime to the detriment of serious crime - I don't know anyone who has attended a public enquiry because we haven't dealt with an attempted burglary properly, but that is the first thing the BOCU Commander and Ops Supt look at each day rather than the number of violence victims [SC4];

The TRiM [trauma risk management] *response was good (lessons learned from the* [previous critical incident]*)* [SC2];

There are very few jobs like this and we should be getting as much learning from this as possible [SC3];

Learnt more on incident management in 2 x12 hour shifts at Gold than 10 years of training courses could have provided [NC2].

In sum, *lessons learned* clustered around the importance of disseminating the learning and ensuring it became embedded into practice as well as the professional development that operations provided. Many details of the *lessons learned* theme tended to be specific to the incident in which they occurred. It is an unsurprising theme to emerge given that a purpose and function of debriefs is to ascertain lessons that might be learned. Notwithstanding, the content is valuable and may have utility.

6.3. Theme 6. Staff Goodwill

The theme *staff goodwill* emerged in five U.K. sessions (one service review and four operational) and three of the overseas equivalent sessions (one service review and two operational). The theme was closely related to the theme *staff welfare*: Specifically, concerns about the extent to which staff goodwill was drawn upon to support operations were seen to lead directly to concerns about staff welfare though they are considered separately below.

The most common core strength that emerged repeatedly was the perception that employees were motivated and committed to the work they do. The dedication to the job was clearly a source of considerable pride. This may be regarded as a valuable asset as it will generate group norms and valuable can-do attitudes that can be harnessed in times of crisis.

Positive work ethic can do attitude, the ability to survive extreme periods of crises [CT4];

I am proud of the commitment and the uncomplaining nature of the people that pulled together to get the job done [CT1];

It was great literally everyone helping…they didn't hide behind it isn't my job, cleaners, cooks, caretakers, office staff as well as police staff [SC1];

Staff responded to the incident to offer assistance voluntarily [NC3].

Overall, staff goodwill was a common feature that was drawn upon in critical incidents, naturally being more evident and, therefore, a more salient topic in operational sessions. Operationally, the key success was seen as the huge personal investment of individuals committed to making it work. There would be resilience concerns should officers decide to withdraw such goodwill from future operations as it seemed evident that the service relied on it to support an under-resourced infrastructure.

6.4. Theme 7. Resources

The theme *resources* appeared in ten sessions (five U.K. and five overseas) with an overall mean frequency of 9.03 (*SD* = 5.27). The inadequacy of human resources was a prominent discussion thread. In overlaps with other themes, participants reported role changes or expansion to compensate for the lack of staff. There were knock-on effects with respect to the necessity to use inadequately trained staff to meet demands:

We don't have enough staff or resources - everyone likes our successes and then asks for cutbacks - we don't even have enough cars to go around [CT2];

Please treat these incidents with the seriousness that they deserve and provide your staff with the resources they need to achieve best results. An agreement must be reached regarding deployment of all staff via respective forces to enable them to do the job at hand [CT3];

Frequently relying on better equipped colleagues from other countries … not as efficient as foreign partners [SC3];

No co-ordination resources available - limited specialist resources already engaged [NC3].

In sum, human resources were generally seen as inadequate over the long term. They connected with other themes, staff goodwill was relied on to compensate for under-resourcing (with negative effects on staff welfare) and resilience was anticipated as a problem should other resource-intensive incidents occur. Other threads within this theme concerned knowledge of what resources were available and ease of access to resources (or lack of same). It was a theme that was more prominent overseas (given half the number of overseas sessions). The lack of resources and the greater complexity of accessing necessary resources overseas were both discussed in this theme.

6.5. Theme 8. Staff Welfare

Staff welfare was a theme in 8 of 12 U.K. sessions with a mean frequency of 7.91% but it appeared in just one overseas session (10.02% comments). As well as being mostly a U.K. concern, the theme was characterised as an operational feature with seven sessions being operational debriefs (six U.K., one overseas) compared to two service review sessions.

But this [goodwill] *needs reward; long hours and high pressure will burn people out. We need to address this urgently* [CT4];

I felt under pressure too, but the [force name] *culture is not to admit weakness* [CT2];

Some of the teams at the mortuary did not see any [senior officer] *members and felt abandoned* [CT1];

Officers worked long hours in extreme heat and unpleasant conditions. All of us were ill at some stage, and under a great deal of stress, including emotional [CT3];

We activated the TriM [trauma risk management] *process as soon as possible and ensured that the message was out there for those who mattered for example shifts going off duty should have been aware of when the briefings were* [SC2];

[Re. the prospect of public and similar enquiries] *Should not be treated as criminal suspects - needs to be a national debate of how we can make it better. How do we stop the officer feeling alienated* [NC1]?

This theme saw a difference in incident types: Measures taken to alleviate stress or organisational concern for staff welfare featured in SC sessions but were omitted from CT and NC sessions. If it was in the latter two, available or successful or both, it was not discussed. Future research could explore whether the service is better placed to provide support for SC than other incident types.

In sum, *staff welfare* was mostly a theme that drew comments about concerns not successes. It was overwhelmingly an operational issue with long hours reported and a culture of being expected to 'get on with it'. As a theme, it was clearly related to *staff goodwill* with the latter being drawn upon to support operations.

6.6. Theme 9. Roles and Responsibilities

This theme appeared in eight sessions, four U.K. and four overseas with an overall mean frequency of 7.49% (*SD* = 2.58). Participants discussed challenges in determining the parameters of roles and responsibilities. In this regard, the *gold, silver, bronze* command structure was seen as operationally problematic in CT. This may be an interesting future study.

It is important that the involved parties actually know their roles in a terrorist event, and their limitations [CT6];

There was a degree of confusion as to who was performing what role. [Force name] *are very short of … trained staff and as a result struggled to understand the issues and concepts of this area of work* [CT3];

It would be useful in the future to have some tacit understanding of roles and expectations in similar circumstances e.g. who funds what etc. to prevent demarcation disputes and looking after self [SC3];

The perception from outside was that it was hard to understand what people's roles actually were, as well as a lack of understanding about what should be asked for [NC3].

Generally, comments in this theme suggested inter-positional knowledge was lacking. It is, perhaps, notable that comments on this theme did not refer to any serious harm to the overall success of the operations.

6.7. Theme 10. Professional Image

Professional image was a theme in two U.K. and two overseas sessions with an overall mean frequency of 11.54% (*SD* = 3.72). It appeared in one U.K. service review (CT) and one operational debrief (SC) and also one service review and one operational debrief overseas (both SC sessions).

When the agency is attacked from outside, we all feel hurt. We should be more active about creating a positive image [SC6];

Practical points …and how much is known by the other nationalities. Became apparent that everyone knew but we lost face by holding back what was to be included [SC3].

In sum, *Professional image* was a theme that arose from comparisons being made with other professionals or public perceptions. Participants were either proud or had a sense of being found wanting. It was an interesting theme because it has a wide range of possible causes and explanations, making it a rich vein for future research. It is possible that professional image concerns are related to the complexity and/or delicacy of some aspects of operations (e.g., political attention) or the salience of attention from other external sources (e.g., IPCC, media) or officers' sense of self- or social identity. Future research could explore the factors that

influence the salience of the reputation of the force and cause it to become a personal concern for some but not others.

After the top ten themes, the number of sessions in which a theme appeared began to decline. Accordingly, discussions hereafter for these less prominent themes will be confined to the frequency and types of sessions in which the theme featured and illustrative quotations without further detailed commentary. The quotations are kept to one per session where possible but more than one is used if necessary to best reflect the comments; for example, if there was a mixture of positive and negative, quotations for both will be presented to show learning points and successes.

6.8. Theme 11. Training

Training appeared in six sessions with a mean frequency of 8.59% (*SD* = 3.78). It appeared in just one overseas session (SC operational) and was not a prominent topic (3.72%). It was a more common topic in U.K. sessions. It emerged in two CT sessions (one service review, one debrief, respective frequencies of 10.21% and 12.21%), just one SC operational debrief at relatively low frequency (5.11%) and two NC sessions (again, one service review at 12.87% and one debrief at 7.41%). Some training gaps were identified but, overall, comments were positive:

Earlier Emergency Planning Training was highly valued; it helped overcome earlier concerns... the training just kicked in [NC2];

Our training was fit for purpose, resilience, attitude achieved all that was expected of us [SC3].

6.9. Theme 12. Leadership

The *leadership* theme appeared in just two sessions, both U.K. operational debriefs. One was a CT session and one a serious crime session with fairly high frequencies in each (13.11% and 10.96% respectively).

I thought the leadership was brilliant; everyone knew what they had to do and wanted to get on with the task [CT1];

Leadership shown at the upper tiers of command structure has been first class. All staff feeling valued [SC1].

6.10. Theme 13. Media

This theme appeared in seven sessions but the lower frequencies in some sessions relegated it in terms of rank. It had an overall mean frequency of 6.32% (*SD* = 4.90). It emerged in five U.K. and two overseas sessions. By incident type, the theme appeared in two CT operational sessions, two SC operational debriefs but no service review sessions and three NC sessions (one U.K. service review and two operational debriefs, one U.K. and one overseas).

I relied upon the media coverage in the early stages [NC2];

Even when reporters came to borough looking for unrest, didn't find it - struggled for a negative story [CT2];

The media appeared to be far better informed of the developments occurring than officers who were actually at scene and expected to be flexible with a rapidly changing situation [SC1];

Throughout this incident there has been an undercurrent of information passed to the families by media and other victims' families [SC3].

6.11. Theme 14. Expertise

This theme had a mean frequency of 9.14% (*SD* = 4.79) and was in four sessions, two U.K. and two overseas. Two sessions were SC service reviews (one U.K. and one overseas) and two sessions were NC operational debriefs (again, one U.K. and overseas).

The lack of genuine experts; more and more people think that they are entitled to give advice on a certain issue but actually prove [to have] *a complete lack of training* [SC6];

Received [redacted] *advice from national and international medical and scientific experts on the* [redacted] *which confirmed earlier risk assessment decisions (thank God)* [NC2].

6.12. Theme 15. Victims and Families

The *victims and families* theme was in seven sessions but at consistently low (i.e., single figure) frequencies (overall $M = 4.63$, $SD = 3.50$) which accounts for its lower ranking. It appeared in five U.K. and two overseas sessions: two CT operational debriefs (U.K. and overseas), two SC sessions (both U.K., one service review and one operational) and three NC sessions (one U.K. service review, one U.K. and one overseas operational debrief):

Family of one victim were constantly ringing and we weren't set up to release information [NC2];

Child victims do not have an effective political lobby; they do not have a voice [SC4];

The fact that I was able to hopefully provide some sort of comfort to the relatives of the victims by giving them something to mourn. Actually felt like I was "serving" for a change [CT1].

6.13. Discussion

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the top-three major themes, *partnerships*, *community*, and *communication*, were founded on maintaining and developing solid relationships. The detail behind those top themes was encompassed in the remaining twelve major themes presented in this chapter. *Planning* was not prominent in core policing activities but came up in unique sessions. Individuals were perceived to stand in the way of successful planning. In

learn lessons, participants were keen to share learning and some thought there was no substitute for experience gained from operations.

The next three themes were clearly related. Operations were dependent on *staff goodwill* and job dedication was a source of pride. *Resources* (especially human) were regarded as inadequate, hence, the reliance on goodwill. Overseas, difficulties in organising or accessing resources was the more common experience (i.e., rather than no resources per se). *Staff welfare* was mostly a U.K. concern. In serious crime sessions, participants discussed measures to look after staff welfare (i.e., availability and implementation of same); CT or NC discussions on the *staff welfare* theme referred more to what was needed. The three themes may be formulated thus: Under-resourcing led to reliance on goodwill to the potential detriment of staff welfare. Figure 6.1., below, could be empirically tested.

Figure 6.1. Relationship between themes 6, 7, and 8: resources, staff goodwill, staff welfare.
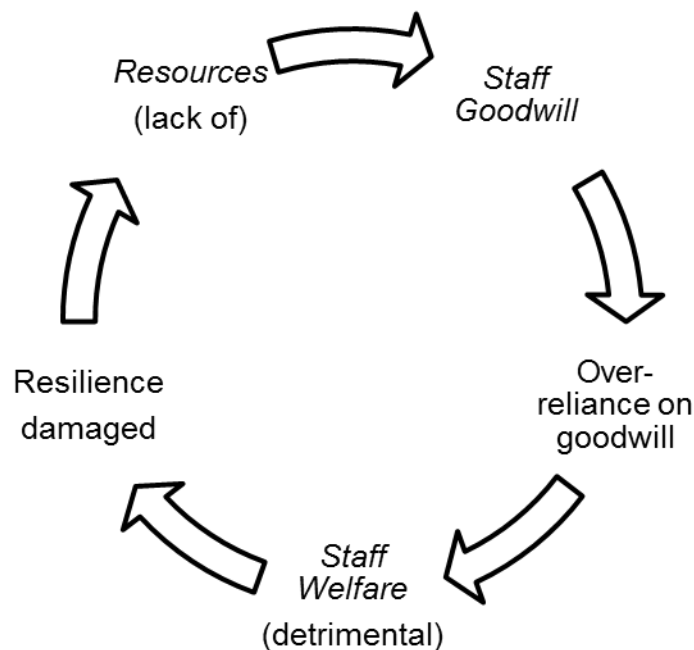
Professional image was the final top-ten theme. Comments referred to a sense of pride in the job, in the successful completion of tasks; also common, however, was a concern with being found wanting in some respect. Outside the top-

ten themes, the *training* theme saw gaps identified but most comments were positive on how well training had stood up in operations. Leadership during operations was likewise evaluated positively.

The final three themes returned once more to relationships. The *media* theme was characterised by slightly more neutral appraisals in NC sessions; they were regarded more negatively in CT and SC discussions. There were a range of positive and negative comments on *expertise*. Finally, the theme *victims and families* did not have one especially defining feature beyond a clear sense that participants provided a service and drew comfort from having done so. The primary three themes revolved around the essential relationships between police, partner agencies, and the community. As they had more detailed commentary, discussion is forsaken here in favour of other major themes with the focus on potential links.

Participants themselves linked the themes of *training* and *roles and responsibilities*. The absence of inter-positional knowledge was deemed responsible for, at best, a lack of understanding, at worst, confusion, about the parameters of roles and responsibilities. Participants directly mentioned training as a remedy. As it was a particular feature of CT, it is possibly attributable to the multiple structures and governance arrangements for that incident type. If so, training front-line responders may not be a remedy if muddy organisational structures and governance are the source of the problem. In this respect, Reason's (2000) systems-based *Swiss cheese model* of error has explanatory power. Here, the notion is that human fallibility is inevitable, even where organisations have highly resilient defence mechanisms. In contrast to the traditional *person approach* (in which error is seen as a consequence of aberrant mental processes), Reason's *systems approach* argued that the early origins of catastrophic error are embedded within systemic failures. Like the Swiss cheese it was named for, holes appear in each slice at different levels of the system. These holes or *organisational error defences* are a product of either *active failures* (individual acts or chains of action) or *latent conditions* (resident pathogens in the system, resulting from earlier decisions made by policy makers or top-level strategists). It is important to build in resilience at different hierarchical levels by removing the risk for misinterpretation and error at each. Likewise, the

organisation's strategy and expectations must be crystal clear. The 10kV sessions indicated that there seemed to be a deficit at this level, especially in relation to CT. To return to the participants' concrete suggestion: Confusion about roles and responsibilities might be solved by training. This is consistent with a person-based approach; that is, the individual was seen to be lacking. If, however, latent conditions are responsible – specifically, if confused structures and governance are latent pathogens – no amount of training individuals on the receiving end of policy will effect a solution (though training strategists to re-design structures might do).

The three themes *staff goodwill*, *staff welfare* and *resources* were potentially linked. Goodwill evidently supported operations with concerns for organisational resilience should it be withdrawn. Individual resilience is obviously also a factor. In particular, officer fatigue was a problem in operations considered less well co-ordinated. It has been shown that tiredness can seriously impair decision making and insightfulness Further, the ability to think critically is reduced in fatigued individuals resulting in increased *automatic believing* (Wagner, Gais, Haider, Verleger, & Born, 2004). This can make it hard for individuals to adjust to new information or seek alternative avenues of exploration. The motivation to help in major and critical incidents is very powerful – staff goodwill was evident – and leaders must recognise the personal stake that those under their command invest in such incidents.

Although, on the whole, it was a positive influence, the desire to be part of the event could be overshadowed by frustration for officers who felt unappreciated or even overlooked. Future research could explore the potential for such problems to develop into professional issues where officers feel that they may be passed over for promotion if not involved. Likewise, officers who are involved may overwork themselves to the point of persistent or chronic fatigue in order to plant themselves firmly at the core of the incident. They are unlikely to be effective decision makers.

Research shows that the relationship between resilience levels and other factors is not straightforward. There is no significant correlation between number of hours worked and resilience levels. Rather, it is heavier workload that is likely to impact on resilience by increasing fatigue levels (Xuanling, Tan, Khader, Ang, &

Maan, 2010)[10] and some participants acknowledged being close to exhaustion. In monitoring and managing staff welfare post-incident, it is also important to note there is not a relationship between absenteeism and lack of resilience. It would be unwise, therefore, to examine attendance records as a starting point to see who is coping (and conversely, it should not be assumed that an individual is managing well because s/he is in work).

Several factors which are potential stressors were identified: public expectations seen in the themes, *community* and *media* and informational demands and time criticality (Xuan Ling et al., 2010) – seen in the obstacles highlighted in the *communication* theme. All are associated with poor sleep quality. This may, therefore, be a useful symptom to monitor in determining impact on resilience levels. It should also be noted that critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) has not necessarily always shown positive effects. Indeed, some officers who underwent CISD actually fared worse than those who were offered but refused support. (Those who were offered none fared worst of all psychologically). It is, then, important to offer support but to avoid the potential for ruminating too long and failing to move on and cope constructively (Leonard & Alison, 1999). It is a fairly robust finding that social, community and family support networks are key protective factors that can aid recovery and resilience (e.g., Xuanling et al., 2010). In the current analysis, only SC participants referred to measures taken to support staff welfare. It is acknowledged that CT and NC participants might simply have chosen not to discuss it; it nevertheless warrants further exploration.

Finally, the *professional image* theme was not directly linked to other themes but links with other organisational factors may explain participants' concern with image. Professional image was perhaps salient because of links to trust and confidence, which are primary performance indicators and Peelian principles (Peel, 1829), which

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[10] It is acknowledged that this distinction between workload and number of hours may seem a moot point in grave incidents where many are striving to undertake both together but they are distinct constructs and, for that reason, ought not to be confused.

latter have long underscored the U.K. police's awareness of public evaluation. Concern with external perceptions has also been allied with lack of control, particularly over external forces such as the media (Crego & Alison, 2004). Alternatively, these relatively 'hot' debriefs might have drawn out anxiety levels that were understandably still high. Further debriefs might well have shown this issue to be less salient and, thus, to have receded (though this would clearly not account for its appearance in a service review).

6.14. Limitations

The clearest limitation to this study was the breadth because depth was necessarily sacrificed. Another casualty therefore was the lack of any incisive insight into the very rich and meaningful data corpus. Comprehensively rank ordering themes on dimensions of *most-least common* and *most-least frequent* circumscribed the exploration of detailed meaning. In short, the method was limited. Although some more-personal themes emerged, such as *staff goodwill* and *staff welfare*, the thematic analysis provided a rather broad-strokes approach that highlighted the organisational aspects of these concerns; for example, within the theme *staff welfare*, opportunities for debriefing or availability of counselling services for officers were the focus. However, the more individual experiences, the very human stories that were contained within these rich data were not effectively evinced by a thematic analysis. An orientation to the data evolved as the project developed. The phenomenological basis for the project was not fully developed when this first empirical study was undertaken; this was also a limitation. It was addressed as the overall methodology was refined.

The inclusion of service delivery reviews in the dataset gave as complete a picture as possible of contextual factors; that is, they offered some insight into upstream organisational factors that situate and influence the professionals' experiences. However, the overseas service reviews drew on a broader range of organisational contexts; they did not therefore necessarily reflect solely the U.K. context, which muddied the organisational picture. These were reflections made as the project evolved. Moreover, the analysis of service reviews did not yield the immediate proximal accounts of involvement in a critical incident. Put another way,

the disadvantage was that this breadth across: i) a significant number as well as ii) different types of session(s) necessarily sacrificed depth. This was a further limitation of this study. A decision was taken to remove the service delivery review part of the data corpus from further analyses. The remainder of the thesis is, therefore, confined to the dataset that constituted critical incident operational debriefs (i.e., 9 of 18 sessions).

6.15. Conclusion

The thematic analysis presented in these first two data chapters gave some shape to a mass of qualitative data to provide an initial descriptive account. Fifteen major themes were described with the most common revolving around relationships, and some clustering around welfare and resilience issues; elsewhere links to other organisational factors drove salience. The most open, generic approach was used (Holloway & Todres, 2003); specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) broadly-adopted method provided the best means to facilitate comparisons with other studies examining critical incidents before the thesis funnels down to examine incident experiences in more depth.

If priority could be mapped directly onto frequency, then it could be stated firmly that relationships were unequivocally participants' first and last concerns. They began with partnerships, community, and the communication (or lack of) involved. They moved on to discuss the details: how to learn from the experience, to plan for the future properly resourced – staffed, trained and equipped - in order to protect officers' welfare and resolve incidents. They ended once more on relationships: with the media, experts, and with victims and families. In moving through the rank order of themes, the lessons to be learned were surrounded (before and after) by relationships and the concerns they generated.

However, there is no perfect correspondence between bean-count frequencies and priorities (though it offered a rough-hewn account). A central question for social science research is, as Mattingly (2006) said, "The tension between social accounts that emphasise large-scale social and political structures and accounts that emphasise lived experience and some form of personal agency…

how to pay attention to large realities … as well as the personal intimate realities faced by on-the-ground people" (p.40). This quotation resonated. In conducting a qualitative analysis of the data and producing themes, some of the *personal intimate realities* faced on the ground had receded into the background. This would be a significant omission from the thesis. Therefore, in the next part of the thesis I begin to explore more closely the professionals' experiences of the incidents themselves, using more detailed methods more suited to examining experience. I present next an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the operational dataset (chapters 7, 8, and 9).

CHAPTER SEVEN. INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS. COMMON THEMES ACROSS INCIDENT TYPES: NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

7.1.Introduction and Methodology

The preceding thematic analysis provided a first overview of the data corpus. However, the atheoretical nature of thematic analysis means that it can be hard to 'step up' from description to examine higher level concepts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Silverman, 2006). Therefore, methods more appropriate to the project's phenomenological approach were employed to provide greater depth and move the thesis forward.

This section of the thesis comprises three chapters: The findings of an interpretative phenomenological analysis of part of the original data corpus are presented. A variety of themes were common across all debrief sessions so, for ease of reading, common themes have been divided over two chapters. Negative experiences common to all incidents are presented in this chapter (7). Positive experiences common to all incidents are in the next chapter (8). Divergent themes specific to incident types appear in the third of the IPA chapters (9). All experiences - positive and negative, common and divergent - emerged from the same IPA method so the three chapters are structured as one coherent IPA section. In this chapter, the introduction and methodology for the study are presented while results and discussion focus only on two negative common themes; next, in chapter 8, two positive common themes are presented with a closing general discussion on all common critical incident experiences; finally, in the last of the IPA section, divergent themes and closing discussion appear (chapter 9).

This dataset comprised all operational debriefs from the original data corpus: six U.K. and three overseas debriefs of critical incidents. The debriefs were evenly divided across the categories: Counter-terrorism (CT), Serious Crime (SC), and Non-criminal incidents (NC). An idiographic approach was taken: Analysis proceeded on a case-by-case (i.e., 10kV session-by-session) basis. The cases were then compared and contrasted across the three sessions (cases) in each incident-type category (Smith et al., 2009).

The fundamental reason for choosing IPA was that, as its name suggests, IPA is broadly phenomenological in concept. Husserl argued, "If we want to know how conscious experience presents us with a world then we must turn our attention to that experience itself, in order to study the structures which sustain the natural attitude (Husserl, 1911/1965, p.87). The police service and its organisational culture comprised the social context, in Husserl's phrase, the *lifeworld* that situated participants' experiences. Participants orientated themselves towards that world, displayed intentionality towards it and derived their normative constructions from the organisation and its culture (Martin & Hickerson, 2013). Thus, analysis was not confined to personal (e.g., cognitive) aspects of experience; rather, the scope was broad and inclusive. This accorded well with Palmer et al.'s argument for the adaptation of IPA for use with focus group data. They noted the potential for "experiential claims … to be nested within a fairly complex set of social and contextual relationships" (2010, p.100) in focus group settings. They also argued that the focus group setting can enhance experiential reflection and thereby add "something extra to the analysis which would otherwise have been missed" (p.100).

In broad terms, then, IPA was a suitable tool for bottom-up analysis, grounded in participants' experiences of critical incidents. The IPA analysis attended to factors that structured the world of policing critical incidents. It examined "the ways in which things come to light or show up for [participants] as the sort of things that they are" (Martin, 2011, p.497). These were the broad conceptual underpinnings while the three principal components advocated by Smith et al. (2009) - descriptive, conceptual and linguistic features – helped to organise coding and analysis. The greater detail of the Palmer et al. (2010) protocol helped to distinguish between some of the extra complexity in pooled experiences in focus group data; specifically, Palmer et al. steps attend to: objects of concern and experiential claims, roles and relationships, organisations and systems, stories, and language.

Smith et al. (2009) advocated the independent audit (actual or virtual) as an appropriate means of providing validity for IPA and demonstrating a systematic analysis that could reliably be reproduced. The restricted dataset required New Scotland Yard security clearance, which included extensive background checks and

face-to-face interviews prior to access. Therefore, an actual audit proved impractical so a virtual audit was conducted whereby "the researcher files the data in such a way that someone else could check through the paper trail" and find "a coherent chain of arguments from the initial raw data to the final write-up" (Smith et al., 2009, p.183). The intention was to enhance transparency in the current project (Yardley, 2008).

Writing on the phenomenology of judgement, Martin and Hickerson (2013) argued, "The possession of an identity predelineates our experience … providing a sense of orientation already in place prior to undertaking particular deliberations. Arriving at an accident scene, a veteran first-responder does not consider *whether* to offer assistance to a stranger in distress. For her to have that identity is to inhabit a world where that question is already settled" (2013, p.205).

Although derived from the phenomenological literature, this position resonates with the perspective of social identity theory (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and (the allied) self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 1987) where it is argued that "organisational identity makes organisational behaviour possible" (Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003, p.365). Social identity is defined as "an individual's knowledge that he or she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him or her of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p.31, cited in Haslam et al., 2003). Self-categorisation theory explicates the processes entailed: Individuals adopt social identities via a process of self-stereotyping and they do so with reference to a category prototype of the relevant social (organisational) identity abstracted from members of the group in question (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, & Holzworth, 1993). Thus, social identity is derived from the organisation and behaviour is driven by organisational norms (Eyre & Alison, 2007; Eyre, Crego, & Alison, 2008). Note the literature tends to refer generically to social identity and specifically, to organisational identity in the context of business organisation research. Here, the terms are used interchangeably throughout and refer to a collective (i.e., social) not personal identity (Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2002).

Current participants' experiences, then, were informed by their organisational identities. These identities were grounded in the particular social context in which

they worked: the organisational infrastructures, culture and climate that guided and oriented their judgements, decisions, and interactions (Eyre & Alison, 2007; Eyre et al., 2008; Hannum, 2007; Haslam et al., 2003). Thus, the shared organisational context may generate common orientations (as seen in the common experiences in this and the next chapter). Conversely, the differences which account for the divergent themes that emerged in this study can likewise be rooted in the organisational context (also see final discussion, chapter 13, 13.5). This would account for the finding that experiences were common within each incident type yet different between incident types; that is, a superordinate organisational identity provided for common experiences whereas different organisational features pertaining to different incident types provided for different experiences, in turn, contributing to divergent themes.

7.2. Method

The method comprised three stages. In stage one, an initial reading and re-reading of the transcripts was undertaken. A notebook was used initially to record initial ideas, to bracket researcher responses and thereby obtain closer engagement with the text. The notebook was forsaken in favour of note-taking (with different coloured pens) directly onto transcripts, which facilitated making connections. Comments and possible emergent themes were recorded in separate margins of transcripts. The note-taking process focused on Smith et al.'s (2009) three principal components: describing what participants discussed, the language used, and the concepts to which they referred. Initial analysis was predominantly descriptive with notes staying as close as possible to participants' key experiential claims and objects of concern. Note-taking focused on relationships, events and places, processes, values and principles (Smith et al., 2009) and the meaning these features had for participants; essentially, what mattered to participants in their *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1911/1965) was noted. Palmer et al.'s (2010) protocol provided a supplementary means of note-taking with one exception. Palmer et al.'s step two, *Positionality* recommended consideration of the facilitator's role in traditional focus groups. As facilitators adopt a minimal role in 10kV sessions, positionality was not considered. Palmer et al.'s detailed protocol allowed, then, for the extra complexity of focus

group data but had a secondary role to the Smith et al. (2009) suggested components for IPA transcript note-taking. Stage one was an iterative process; on subsequent readings, loose notes were transformed into concise, named themes. As before, sessions were labelled CT: 1, 2, 3; SC: 1, 2, 3; and NC: 1, 2, 3.

In stage two, *transcript extracts* were created. Transcript extracts that can be tabulated cohesively constitute a tangible product. As such, they form a core part of the virtual audit used to demonstrate validity. Via transcript extracts (in conjunction with original transcript notes), the IPA process is revealed as systematic and rigorous. Transcript extracts were undertaken as follows. Separate files were constructed of extracts from transcripts for each case/10kV session. The transcript extract files consisted of tables with columns on: Themes, Key Words, and Quotations. The Themes column listed emergent themes; Key Words comprised three columns populated with researcher notes and memos on descriptive, conceptual and linguistic features; the final column contained direct quotations, each transferred from hard copies of transcripts. Table 7.1. below illustrates the format of transcript extract tables (see Appendix G for more detailed sample table). This virtual audit process was repeated for each case (10kV session) in the dataset. As well as providing a virtual audit, transcript extracts also functioned to facilitate stage three.

Table 7.1.

Column Headings and Sample Entry for Transcript Extract Tables

Theme	Key words descriptive	Key words conceptual	Key words linguistic	Quotation
Theme name inserted here e.g., community	We Public Community	ME – curious and interested in cmmny response. 'We need to' = seen as	Verbs in quick succession understand, influenced, manage,	We need to try to understand whether and how we influenced this response – i.e.

	necessary to engage w/cmmny but clear that it is something of a mystery how actually to do so.	empathise	how did we manage to get the public and community to empathise with [details of this incident redacted] (p.4)

In stage three, transcript extract tables were printed off and side-by-side comparisons made to explore across the cases: i) within the same incident-type category (i.e., CT, SC, NC) and ii) across the whole dataset. At this more interpretative stage, the themes, key words and quotations were compared and examined for patterns of similarity, difference, contradictions and so forth (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Researcher focus at this stage remained on the main aim: looking for the essence, the core critical incident experience that appeared within or across the incidents. Finally, themes were clustered, assigned names and tabulated as final superordinate themes (See Appendix H).

7.3. Results

Table 7.2.

Core Themes Common to all Critical Incident Experiences

Theme name	Details within the theme			
Excluded from information	exclusion within organisation	exclusion by other agencies	exclusion from systems	
Pressure of incident	time pressure	pressure of visitors	balancing other business	scale of incident
Professional image	lack of confidence	pride and honour	external validation	shaping the image

	serving the public	honest relationships	measure of success
Victims and families			

Four major themes emerged across all three types of session; that is, these issues were at the heart of participants' critical incident experiences. The four common themes were: *excluded from information*; *pressure of the incident*; *professional image*; and *victims and families*. They are shown in Table 7.2. above, with columns indicating the details of the experiences within each theme. The themes subdivided into two distinctive characteristics: *excluded from information* and *pressure of the incident* were exclusively negative experiences; *professional image* and *victims and families* concerned more positive experiences of critical incidents. The first two themes (negative experiences) are discussed in turn below; the last two themes (positive experiences) are discussed in the next chapter.

7.3.1. Excluded from Information

Being excluded from information was a core critical incident experience and the theme appeared in every session. Information is acknowledged to be a term that may refer to a variety of related concepts but in a phenomenographic approach, users (participants) provide their own meaningful definition of *information* (Shenton & Hayter, 2006). This was an apposite approach though the types of information in the current study sat comfortably within the different strands identified by Shenton and Hayter (i.e., Shenton's (2002) content-based, source-related or use-related assumptions about information; Hayter's (2005) strands: need for knowledge, gathering, or sharing information [cited in Shenton & Hayter, 2006]).

In all sessions, participants described the impact of working in conditions where knowledge or information was limited. This experience manifested in a number of ways: Participants were excluded by others within the organisation or by other agencies; limitations of organisational systems (e.g., I.T. systems) caused participants to be excluded from available information; sometimes information had not been available to anyone. This was typically in the early phase of the incident

and may be said, therefore, to be a component feature of the ambient environment in critical incidents. For example:

> *Early on, unable to identify any organisation who will undertake rapid monitoring of* [potential contamination] *in the neighbourhood so we can assess the health immediate likely health effects and give advice as to the sheltering/evacuation if the incident runs on* [NC2].

That it was an ambient feature of the environment is not to deny the impact of this experience; however, the main focus of discussions in this theme was on the explicit and deliberate exclusion from information (i.e., with intent rather than incidental exclusion). In short, participants perceived commission not omission.

7.3.1.1. Exclusion Within the Organisation

Participants held other teams within the organisation responsible for excluding them. This was in turn linked to demands from other sources who expected participants to provide information. Thus, there was a conflict between: a) others' expectations that participants ought to provide information whilst b) participants had not received information to disseminate. This mismatch between being a supposed sender of information (versus exclusion as a legitimate receiver) was a dissonant experience for participants; it is a known stressor (Boyd, Tuckey, & Winefield, 2013).

> *If the borough commander does not have the advance information, then he is straight away on the back foot when the operation commences. Whilst I appreciate he may not need to know every minute detail, he should have enough to enable him to be in a strong position to direct things when the need arises, and trust me, it will! ... After all, who knows what is around the corner? Certainly not the borough commander!!!* [CT2]

When participants did have information available, the exclusion took the form of not being told when or how to disseminate it. Thus, exclusion from information management was a feature within this theme and a negative experience for participants. Clearly, information had been available but someone other than participants had disseminated it beyond the organisation: to partners, the community

or the media. Bypassing participants excluded and marginalised them. This experience suggested an organisation that operated via unknown channels, possibly informal, nepotistic or even illegitimate.

> *Found it difficult, to not be able to share secret information which would have proved valuable in reassuring the community;*

> [In response] *Agree with comments – this was sooooo* [sic] *frustrating to* [as]*sure partners that we would tell them, to have them phone us and tell us update from the news before we got it* [CT2].

As the above quotation suggests, participants' goals went beyond successful transfer of information. It was not sufficient that the information had been conveyed and received; it also mattered that participants had not been the sender. This suggests participants saw themselves as the legitimate senders; that is, it ought to have been their role (Hough, 2012). Rank was perceived as a reason for being excluded from information. However, it should be noted that the data did not reveal explicitly why participants had actually been excluded. The impact on participants was nonetheless apparent from the affective statements they made, referring to shock and frustration. The metaphorical use of darkness also hints at a fearful situation:

> *It was both a shock and a concern as a non-*[force name] *employee to witness the lack of briefing and dialogue coming from the centre to the local borough commander, and how fragmented it was* [CT2];

> *I appreciate the fact that information internally has to be dealt with confidentially but I do feel that the average bobby on the beat has been kept in the dark as to the progress of the investigation. I do feel frustrated that we aren't trusted with confidential information* [SC1].

Exclusion by rank was a pervasive experience that surfaced even on minor issues. There was secrecy and exclusion from a more privileged group; access to their information was denied.

[On parking problems] *Gold control was issued with 4* [car parking] *spaces….however this was a closely guarded secret and wasn't used therefore the spaces were taken away* [CT3].

Participants were concerned they had been excluded from others' knowledge or information, particularly in relation to the media. Affective statements again show the personal impact on participants with vivid language ("screaming"), imagery of emptiness and short, choppy phrases to convey the pace and pressure they were under:

A complete lack of information coming from the centre. We were getting our updates from Sky news who knew more than we did in the borough. This was compounded by what can only be described as stonewalling when we tried to find out more. WE had a community and partner screaming for info and reassurance - what's happened, what's going on, what's coming next, is this it or is there more to come etc. etc. We couldn't answer because we in the borough were not in the loop [CT2];

Information on TV before officers informed [CT1];

As Borough Commander (Gold) I felt I was working in a vacuum of information. I had little press support and felt miffed at being rebuked for a release to community & partners that the central press bureau did not like [CT1].

Exclusion led to feeling mistrusted and to mistrust of the motives of others:

Lack of complete confidence that individuals requesting information were actually working on behalf of the line of command rather than just posturing or trying to make a role for themselves in the margins [NC2];

The public still needed their daily police officers. I know some felt left behind and this could, if not managed, cause long terms problems, e.g., some staff gaining loads of knowledge for their careers and experience and others left behind [SC1].

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Participants experienced exclusion within the organisation; this exclusion occurred despite formal membership of the organisational group. This theme showed that in-group – out-group dynamics operated in the organisation as a whole. It is proposed that different social identities operated and that they underpinned the common experience of exclusion by others within the organisation (also see chapter 8, 8.4., general discussion). It contributed to negative critical incident experiences.

7.3.1.2. Exclusion by Other Agencies

Participants also described exclusion by other agencies beyond the organisation. In some instances, participants were not regarded as legitimate receivers for information. These were negative experiences:

> *Sitting as an observer in Gold for most of* [day] *and* [day] *it was evident that clear advice was occasionally difficult to come by. Some agencies were reluctant to commit with "best information available at this time". Other agencies were of the opinion that a decision was required, make one!* [NC2];

> *During day 2 (or 3) a* [vehicle] *was sent to recover samples from* [place name]. *However, when Health requested results from the agency who had instigated the* [task], *they were told that the results were classified as secret so could not be shared with the Gold Command team. How could you plan and give guidance without the baseline information?* [NC2].

With regard to other agencies, participants described partners' motivations. Sometimes participants imputed decision avoidance to their partners when explaining partners' failure to share information (Anderson, 2003). Different organisational identities may also have prevented efficient information sharing between partners, revealing the challenges of multi-agency partnerships (Eyre & Alison, 2007).

7.3.1.3. Exclusion from Systems

Exclusion from systems was a significant barrier for participants. I.T. systems and organisational procedures were problematic:

People talking about [name] *models and sampling as providing important information on which to base risk assessments – but to which key individuals did not have access because of poor IT capability* [NC2];

We do have the systems in place to help the individuals – but not necessarily the ability to identify them;

> [In response] *For example – would a sergeant (supervisor) who identified an individual who may be at risk know what to do to start them on the way to getting assistance* [NC1];

Too many systems that did not appear to be able to talk to each other. Distinct lack of integration;

> [In response] *Specifically which?*

UK policing have 4 databases that cannot speak to each other; all are playing their part in collating information relating to this [incident] [NC3].

These comments did not have the personal tone (e.g., affective statements) of other comments within this theme. However, preventing participants from attaining their best work could be an undermining experience. It is acknowledged that this is more implicit than explicit and, hence, a more interpretative conclusion from the data. Nonetheless, exclusion from some information systems points to the existence of asymmetrical relationships between different groups: The more privileged in-group had access, the out-group did not.

7.3.1.4. Excluded from Information: Discussion

The organisational context influences all experiences. Information exchange is no exception. Mokros, Mullins, and Saracevic argued, "Information searches are embedded in a matrix of social responsibilities. Within this social matrix it is concerns about social and personal identity that are of primary importance, not resolution of an information need" (1995, p.253). Hence, participants reported more than conveyance and receipt of information; that is, the study revealed more than the experience of

working with incompatible information systems in critical incidents. It also highlighted human factors that facilitated or prohibited information exchange. These are discussed in the framework of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Haslem et al. (2003) stated that organisational/social identity's utility lies in its "embodiment of the dialectic relationship between, on the one hand, socially structured individual psychology and, on the other, collective organisational products" (p.365). Inability to negotiate a successful synthesis (and thereby successfully manage the dialectic relationship) is a negative, dissonant experience that requires resolution.

Being excluded from information was exclusively a negative experience although it manifested in different ways. Firstly, the early phase absence of information is a stable finding across critical incident domains (e.g., Klein, 1997). It may therefore be expected to occur but ought to have been resolved over the course of the incident. This was not the case. Secondly, participants experienced exclusion at the hands of others inside the organisation. Thirdly, this experience was repeated at the hands of those outside the organisation. Finally, there was exclusion from information systems. Albeit this last was more a matter of omission than commission, the systems nonetheless constitute organisational products which participants needed but were unable to utilise successfully.

Absence of information in the early incident phase requires no further exploration: It had yet to be gathered. For other aspects of this theme, however, it is not sufficient merely to forward the view that it was part of the organisational context. Information exchange obviously cannot be limitless. Boundaries must be drawn, exclusion necessarily follows. Further, it is an organisational norm in policing to withhold information (e.g., not releasing details that might alert an offender or prejudice a future trial) (Hardy & Gunn, 2007; Kingshott, 2011). However, participants reported the significant personal impact of being excluded from information (concern, frustration, shock, etc.) They presented as entitled to the information, thought it necessary and legitimate that they be informed. Why, then, did others within and beyond the organisation exclude participants?

Gaicomantonio (2013) argued that the work unit constitutes an organisational boundary, at which boundary information is unlikely to cross without negotiation.

Gaicomantonio defined this unit in policing as "an organizational sub-section of officers and support personnel who work together both spatially and temporally" (2013, p.4). Gaicomantonio's structural typology's category of *technological/systemic boundary* (p.9) could account for the exclusion from information systems found here but it would not account for the exclusion by rank seen in the present analysis. The organisational boundary and the psychological group seem to be different entities; the latter is the current focus. In terms of social identity theory, individuals are known to expend effort in accordance with the degree to which others share an organisational identity (Veenstra, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2004). Thus, different identities between the different groups (e.g., agencies, teams, ranks) involved in the operation can account for the exclusion of participants from information (Haslam, 2001). More specifically, if the social identity of, for example, Superintendent or Constable is more salient than the superordinate (formally ascribed) identity of police officer, this would explain the exclusion by rank. It likewise follows that partners in other agencies would not readily share information with those of different identities. It points to inherent difficulties in multi-agency incidents. Co-operation cannot be assumed nor mandated as different organisational identities may be expected to impede successful collaboration. This might provide a viable hypothesis for future research.

The impact of restrictive information practices on the officers themselves has been under-explored. Reduced access or receptivity to information is known to have a negative impact (Heinström, 2006). This study likewise showed that exclusion was a negative personal experience. This may obtain no matter what the source of exclusion. It makes intuitive sense, though, that exclusion by other agencies would prove less problematic. A distinction should be drawn at this point. Being excluded from information is a negative experience no matter the source (obviously, it may reduce effectiveness of incident response); however, officers may have different expectations of different groups. Outside agencies have different identities which may modify and normalise the exclusion somewhat. Exclusion by colleagues within the organisation may have a greater impact because they share with participants an identity of police officer. This may be the source of entitlement shown by participants. They were all police officers together engaged in incident response together. Hence,

they saw it as legitimate to be included because they shared an organisational identity (Stott, 2009). In a link to the theme *professional image* (chapter 6, 6.7.), comments suggested that participants saw close involvement as a source of pride; they described it as a privilege and an honour. Positive personal experiences derived from close involvement in a high-profile critical incident. This might explain the sensitivity to being excluded from information: It signified that an individual does not possess the requisite organisational identity. Put simply, if you are not in the know, you are not in the elite in-group (Collier, 2006; Yang & Wu, 2008). It may convey a vicarious sense of importance to have access to exclusive restricted information (Bell, Dean, & Gottschalk, 2010). Certainly, involvement was seen to advance careers.

In sum, participants made sense of exclusion from information as exclusion from the higher valued in-group. Social exclusion is known to have an adverse impact on psychological well-being (Hitlan, Clifton, & DeSoto, 2006; Pereira, Meier, & Elfering, 2013). It is argued here that they had different organisational identities and it was, therefore, a marginalising experience. Individuals not directly involved may be left behind professionally. Those who were involved experienced marginalisation or isolation in the midst of life-or-death situations. This isolation was accompanied by intense pressure, the second negative experience.

7.3.2. Pressure of the Incident

This theme emerged in all but two of the sessions; that is, it was common to all incident types, appearing in at least two or all three incidents in each category (see also disconfirming cases in Limitations, chapter 8, 8.5.). This theme manifested in several ways: time pressure, pressure from visitors, balancing the critical incident operation with business as usual, and the pressure of the scale of the incident.

7.3.2.1. Time Pressure

Time pressure was often discussed explicitly, most often in relation to the need to rush the recovery phase of the critical incident and return to normal business. It was also implicit in the number of tasks that participants had to complete

in parallel because there was too little time to undertake them serially. Extracts below illustrate the different experiences of time pressure:

Encouraging people/organisations to think about recovery when they were still "up to their necks in muck and bullets" [NC2];

Never in the history of British crime had events unfolded so quickly….We quickly organised an intelligence cell that sat above all [number deleted] *individual incident rooms* [SC1];

This was a fast running incident and policy at times could not be followed but common sense prevailed and nothing was done without risk assessment [SC2].

Time also featured as participants described their experience of the pressure of long hours without respite from the operation:

We got to the stage where people had been working solidly without a day off and so we started to give a couple of the staff a day off to catch up with home life etc. in turn which was appreciated [CT2];

We put ourselves under a lot of pressure as we were working long hours. Everything seemed to take a long time to achieve [SC3].

Increasing pressure as incidents progressed over time was evident in participants' language. Incidents were organic entities that changed shape and evolved of their own accord. It was seen in the repetition of the word *became*; it was also evident in the vivid image from one participant's experience of the incident:

For me, this kind of grew in visibility like the Cheshire cat – minus any grin [NC3];

Became much more intensive, worked in the Coordination Cell, worked 12 hour shifts, more briefings to surveillance teams, more meetings to organise, more intelligence to disseminate [CT2];

As the threat of the operation began to increase, my involvement became more intense. At an early stage I had to think about supporting evidence development as well as intelligence development [CT2].

Silla and Gamero proposed a collective construct of time pressure arguing that "organizational socialization … contribute[s] to homogeneity in time pressure" (2013, p.2). This position is adopted here. Time pressure was too widespread an experience to be accounted for by individual difference arguments (e.g., vulnerable participants predisposed to feeling pressure). Moreover, it was apparent that the organisational context was the source of the time pressure: policy requirements, demands for speedy recovery, long hours all underpinned the time pressure experienced by participants. Although some time pressure can enhance performance (Lepine, Podsakoff, & Lepine, 2005), it more typically decreases well-being (Syrek, Apostel, & Antoni, 2013).

7.3.2.2. Pressure of Visitors

The ostensible reason for VIP (e.g., royals, government figures) visits during high-profile incidents is to offer support, strengthen morale as well as presenting a united front (e.g., as a nation in the face of terrorism). However, these visits did not hold the same meaning for participants:

The visit by the PM caused major distraction to the force at a number of levels. There is a risk that aspects of the operation could be distracted by this;

[In response] *Probably at a senior level mostly* [SC2];

Why was PM's press office asking the [name] *inspector to organise meetings with the* [name] *when we were trying to build confidence and look after our staff? We need to manage their expectations. The importance of doing the right thing for their position overshadowed what a community needed* [SC1];

Didn't like being out on show. I know people need to see what's going on but there must be a better way of doing this;

[In response] *At least if you're on show, have the decency to present the person you're staring at!* [CT1]

Glad not to be part of the performing circus any longer, with all the visitors felt a bit uncomfortable. Could the visits not be performed early or late in the day outside of working hours? [CT1]

Let us get on with the job, we don't need them putting pressure on, and Mr. [govt. minister's] *visit only helped to divert resources away from the task* [NC2].

Instead of being the intended opportunity for solidarity, visitors were experienced negatively. Referring to visitors as "a major distraction" indicated that participants had a different idea of which activities were legitimate. Likewise, being put "on show" was a passive experience. Thus, there was no sense of unity between those passively presented, those who put them 'on show' and those who came to view. Visitors were, then, perceived as a separate group from participants. Social identity drives the appraisal of others' actions as legitimate (or not) (Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993). A police social identity rests on perceived legitimacy in their critical incident management role (Hough, 2012; Stott, 2009). In responding to incidents, "Police are legitimate … they represent collective interests (i.e., a communal good)" (Côté-Lussier, 2013, p.197). Visitors, on the other hand, were not perceived to be members of a united in-group and were therefore deemed not to have a legitimate role in the incident. Hence, visitors were construed not as supporters but as an extra pressure.

7.3.2.3. Balancing Other Business

Managing critical incidents in addition to normal core business was an additional pressure that caused participants concern. The urgency and high profile nature of critical incidents means they are prioritised above day-to-day business. Participants felt their needs were not met:

Fed up with staff being taken from area and us being expected to cope. We were running with only two area cars to police [place name]. *Lates and nights were particularly bad* [SC1];

Given [number] *major incidents[11] in six months it is difficult to know what normal is and when it will feel normal; whilst we have coped well with this incident there are some key decisions now around business as usual. Our capacity to deliver it is stretched and we are identifying some key risks around some of the business* [SC2];

Operational stuff versus daily stuff and being unable to discuss with anyone the pressure being felt [CT2].

Increased workload and switching between competing demands may adversely affect health (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013). Like any type of business, resourcing decisions are related to predictions of future expectations. Critical incidents are extraordinary events that are typically large-scale and intensive. They have resource implications which officers have to manage in an uncertain context. Central government might provide extra funding; for example, disaster may be declared if certain criteria are met but participants did not find the criteria transparent. Crucially, these decisions were outside their remit. Similarly, arrangements exist for mutual aid whereby other U.K. forces assist the force leading the critical incident response. Mutual aid may provide for extra human resources, expertise (e.g., specialist firearms officers) or equipment (e.g., helicopters, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology). However, decision makers typically do not know at the time of the incident whether extra funds will be made available. Mutual aid deployments are often made in a context of significant goodwill but without a clear picture of who will eventually fund the extra resources. Participants

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[11] A major incident is any large incident that requires extraordinary arrangements to be put in place (e.g., extra resources or personnel). Major incidents and critical incidents differ, therefore, but are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

felt pressured by the lack of information over resources. Uncertain or depleted resources can lead to poorer health and potential burnout (Kivimäki et al., 2001; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). The incidents also leave a legacy such that long-term resilience for the force is threatened, which can also be an organisational stressor (Boyd et al., 2013; Cooper, 2012).

7.3.2.4. Scale of the Incident

Participants found the scale of the incident they were dealing with a source of pressure:

> *I made initial decisions on the "hoof" trying to use my knowledge and experience to good effect from very limited information albeit my experience has involved me in mass disaster on previous occasions and I was aware what was required but unsighted on this scale* [NC3];

> *The scale of the incident was unprecedented; the particular* [redacted] *has never been seen in the UK before* [redacted] *… all created a confusing and fast moving incident. Officers on the ground used initiative and local knowledge and played a big part in resolution* [SC2].

Large-scale incidents caused pressure for participants because they stretched their professional competencies. By definition, they could not rely on past experience to support them during unique, novel events. They must respond regardless and they experienced this as a source of significant pressure.

7.3.2.5. Pressure of the Incident: Discussion

Pressure of the incident was a core critical incident experience. It came from several sources: time, visitors, balancing business as usual, and the large scale of the incident. All combined to create an extremely challenging working environment where participants must make fast-time decisions in a context of limited information. Fast-time decision making is known to depend upon priming whereby decision makers *pattern match* from previous experience; they act on a decision generated by similarity to a decision made in the prior situation (Klein, 2008; Klein et al., 1993).

This is a core component of expertise. As Eyre and Alison (2007) stated, "Experts store memories of different situations they've experienced but expertise lies in the development of a complex memory model that assists in assessing the situation at hand and contains knowledge of how rules should be applied" (p.215). The essence of the pressure, then, is that unique critical incidents provide few if any pattern-matching opportunities for decision making. Participants have to decide without full knowledge of what to do. Competing demands also add to the pressure (both business as usual and pressure of managing visitors) when time is also short. Time pressure can adversely affect decision making (Durham, Locke, Poon, & McLeod, 2000; Höge, 2009). In addition, greater workload and switching between competing demands may adversely affect health (Baethge & Rigotti, 2013).

In sum, in this theme, there were various features that caused pressure: Time and scale of incident were operational features whereas balancing other business and visitors were organisational. That officers find organisational features more stressful than operational duties is a long-established finding in the policing literature (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Dabney et al., 2013; Tuckey, Winwood, & Dollard, 2012). A strong social identity can help to buffer any impact from these potential stressors (Haslam, Jetten, O'Brien, & Jacobs, 2004; Haslam, Jetten, & Waghorn, 2009). However, this experience was compounded by the exclusion from information that was also a core critical incident experience. Such exclusion can generate negative rather than positive (protective) appraisals of the work environment (Escartin, Ullrich, Zapf, Schülter, & van Dick, 2013; Haslam et al., 2004). Elevated levels of stress have been found in police after critical incidents (van Patten & Burke[12], 2001). A recent meta-analysis found that organisational constraints and interpersonal conflict had the strongest relationships with physical symptoms of stress (Nixon, Mazzola, Bauer, Krueger, & Spector, 2011). Thus, participants may be at risk of stress from the negative experiences found in all types of critical incident.

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[12] U.S. study: critical incidents in this study were homicides.

In this chapter, partial findings of an IPA study were presented. Two themes which constituted negative experiences were common to all critical incidents: *excluded from information* and *pressure of the incident*. In the next chapter, the two remaining common themes will be explored. The positive experiences are discussed next in chapter 8.

CHAPTER EIGHT. IPA ANALYSIS. COMMON THEMES ACROSS INCIDENT TYPES: POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

8.1. Introduction and Methodology

The findings of the IPA analysis are continued here; positive experiences common to all incidents are discussed in this chapter. As before, the theoretical perspective of social identity theory (Haslam, 2001; Tajfel & Tuner, 1986) and the allied self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) will inform discussions.

8.2. Method

The analysis proceeded exactly as presented in chapter 7, utilising the same dataset. As before, literature pertaining to the resulting themes appears in discussion sections below. As before, supporting extracts are labelled CT: 1, 2, 3, SC: 1, 2, 3, and NC: 1, 2, 3.

8.3. Results

The final two of the four common themes which emerged in the IPA analysis are presented below: *professional image* and *victims and families*. In short, both comprised positive experiences; more specifically, they were characterised by either positive experiences or contained the means or processes participants used to frame their critical incident experiences positively. Table 8.1.below serves as a reminder of positive theme details.

Table 8.1.

Positive Common Themes in Critical Incident Experiences

Theme name	Details within theme			
Professional image	lack of confidence	pride and honour	external validation	shaping the image

Victims and families	serving the public	honest relationships	measure of success

8.3.1. Professional Image

Notwithstanding the challenging critical incident environment, participants had a significant sense of professional pride and concern for their professional image. How participants were viewed by others was a very salient concern. This was, then, the third of four critical incident experiences common across incident types. The content of this theme was not always inherently positive (e.g., lack of confidence) but participants were aware that professional image was an entity that could be shaped. It was, thus, a pivotal means of reframing experiences. Given that their job was a significant source of pride, they were keen to see that their professional image was constructed positively.

8.3.1.1. Lack of Confidence

Participants' personal investment in a positive professional image was evident. However, there were some indications of a lack of confidence.

> *We should feel more confident as individuals and an organisation and be proud* [SC1].

Sometimes earlier confidence had proven to be misplaced. For example, participants felt proud they were the experts, the best professionals. However, this image did not always hold up during an operation (e.g., embarrassment at poor resourcing). It was not clear from the dataset whether participants' concerns about partners' loss of respect were well-founded (i.e., it might simply have been participants' perceptions). Either way, it was certainly a phenomenal concern. When participants perceived a shortfall between the image and the reality, they

experienced it as loss of face: To use the terminology of social identity theory, it was a loss of identity (Cooper, 2012; Stoner, Perrewé, & Munyon, 2010).

I think 'we' deferred moving the cell to [UK place name] *earlier because we were embarrassed by our lack of facilities when we were putting ourselves forward as experts* [SC3];

How did the media know before us? Were we just showboating? [CT1];

[Force name] *was tight lipped on nature of investigation….someone nationally leaked the detail…..undermined* [force name] *and made us look as if we had something to hide* [ellipsis original] [CT2];

It was clear that the [nationality] *and* [nationality] *had greater knowledge of intelligence than the British* [name]. *This weakened their respect for the British, who being more experienced were leading this aspect of the* [redacted] *specialism* [SC3].

Participants experienced a disconnection between their evident pride in their identity and the reality. They feared that others did not have faith in participants' ability to fulfil their role. This is problematic for maintaining a positive identity and might explain why participants were reliant on external validation and why others' views were so salient.

Participants saw the potential for these incidents to cast a long shadow over the force's reputation. More generally, these concerns are not 'mere' perception. Fears for reputational damage after poorly managed critical incidents were grounded in reality whereby blame had accrued around other forces following poorly managed critical incidents.

People turning it into a joke is real. That's what happened to [previous incident named] *and it took the force ten years to recover* [NC1].

8.3.1.2. Pride and Honour

Participants were proud of a particular set of values and behaviours deemed appropriate. These constituted components of a positive image: A sense of honour was evident; working hard was important; the common good was also a core aim and self-serving behaviours were criticised.

Got tremendous job satisfaction – there are few career-changing moments in your service and this was one of them [CT1];

Despite criticisms of freelancing and self-mobilising of blue light responders, what other industry finds its employees bursting to deliver their service to the public [NC2]?

Our response was second to one and everyone stepped up to the mark from officers on duty and officers off duty ringing in asking to come and assist … could not be prepared for what happened [SC2];

Many people now want to join this area because they believe that it is a good money earner … [ellipsis original] *the wrong attitude I feel* [CT1];

All the deceased were repatriated quickly following ethical identifications following the hard work … testament to the professionalism and flexibility of the officers concerned. I am proud to have okayed a major decision making role within this operation [CT3];

Working with colleagues who were committed to getting the job done with minimum of fuss and acceptance of long hours and an unpleasant task. We were all heroes! [CT1]

The sense of honour was evident in participants' language which drew on literary allusions. They cast themselves as heroes (see first quotation in section 8.3.1.3. below, "*Let them come and see us and look in awe…*", and immediately below):

I thought the [Agency Q] *staff were eating kryptonite sandwiches for breakfast* [CT1];

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Can we split up – act one, scene one of Macbeth [CT1].

Thus, the partner agency Q - which had excluded participants from information - was cast as weak: either as heroes made weak or they were a cause of weakness for participants. The reference to the weird sisters from Macbeth is an interesting comparison. It is not a positive image but it centres on clear intent to shape the tragic hero's destiny. It may be seen, therefore, as a call for participants to act to shape their own future or the organisation's future or both.

8.3.1.3. External Validation

As well as personal satisfaction in a job well done, participants derived their pride from external sources: the perceived respect of professionals in the wider organisation (i.e., other forces) and others outside it.

[Force name] *can rightfully call themselves the best police service in the world. Many persons have commented on how well we have dealt with this incident, the systems in place, the documents and procedures we use. Let them come and see us and look in awe at what we can do* [CT1];

Look at messages of support from public, PM … and the Queen. We will never satisfy everybody but this is as good as it gets [CT1];

[Force name] *came out as a professional force in the eyes of the world* [CT2];

Force earned a lot of respect from other forces and from the country as a whole [SC1];

We have shown that despite being a small force, which the media kept stressing, we have shown them we can cope and I believe have earned the respect of the whole country [SC1].

Respect from external sources was an important contributor to feeling proud. Some simply reported its existence; others offered, as evidence, feedback that had been received. The media were regarded as an especially powerful influence on professional image, an idea supported by the literature (e.g., Kingshott, 2011; Lee &

McGovern, 2013). Heightened accountability and transparency for police in recent years has been cited as a cause of police concern about media representation (Cook & Sturges, 2009). Participants did not explicitly refer to these issues; however, media praise was particularly valued and rationalised if absent:

> *Much praise from other staff from other forces – some want to transfer now – cross over with Can do/Flexibility was a key to success* [SC1];

> *Our reputation will hold up as has been proved by the letters and E-Mails received from both public and other forces, what is being said in media by so-called experts, both T.V. and papers is hearsay and no one unless they were dealing with the incident on the day can say what they would have done* [SC2];

> *The media coverage around the event shows the police and security services are doing a good job. Even when reporters came to borough looking for unrest, didn't find it – struggled for a negative story* [CT2];

> *Media was well managed. After all, it's not how well you have done, it's how well you are reported to have done!*

> [In response] *But we did do well* [NC2].

8.3.1.4. Shaping the Image

After the negative experiences in critical incidents, participants were keen to reframe experiences positively; they wanted to shape the future image of the force. The organisation was regarded as a commodity in a marketplace that required branding and promoting. Despite disapproval voiced elsewhere about self-serving behaviours (section 8.3.1.2 above), shaping the image also included an awareness of future career development opportunities afforded by critical incidents:

> *Future – need to demonstrate improvements and also market when good things have been done* [NC1];

This episode will have a very positive effect on our ability to recruit at all levels and across all disciplines [SC1];

If we get it right, it will enhance our reputation; get the right people to do the media stuff [NC2].

Participants also projected into future scenarios where they needed to defend decision making before prospective external enquiries into the incidents.

Within minutes of the incident in [incident place name] *we had established a negotiator cell and were trying to contact* [name]. *This should stand well in any inquest* [SC2];

The PMs visit was an opportunity … [ellipsis original] *we were being criticised in the media and it gave us a chance to shape political thinking at the top. Things would be different if we hadn't managed the visit and we had the IPCC poring all over this* [SC2]!

[Number] *months' time … the eyes of the world will be upon us again. We need to be prepared for this in terms of producing an exemplary investigation, first class support for the victims and their families and media management. The effects of this incident will last a generation in* [incident place name] *and … will determine how our public perceive us for a long time to come* [SC1].

In particular, participants were concerned to present a positive professional image to their communities:

Priority is to manage the public reaction [NC1];

Review investigation of these linked incidents to date and establish if we have made any errors so far. Consider using an independent SIO to carry out the review. This will aid public confidence [NC1];

The response from the community was very positive. The community in [incident place name] *and elsewhere appeared to have great confidence that the police were doing their best to detect these crimes* [SC1];

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Feedback at ground level continues to be positive from local communities. There are examples of standing ovations and rounds of applause at public meetings. I've never experienced that prior to this incident. Again this shows the national media are not in touch with local feeling. Can we use the local media more to get our message out?

[In response] *Absolutely. We are working on this now* [SC2].

Some concerns over public perceptions of the police's image may be traced to the performance indicators based on trust and confidence. Trust and confidence have become the most important measures of performance for the U.K. police service in the last decade (Casey, 2008; Flanagan, 2008; Fleming & McLaughlin, 2012; Hough, 2012; Mawby, 2010; Stanko, Jackson, Bradford, & Hohl, 2012). Another explanation for participants' concern to shape professional image is this: participants sought others who could reflect back their own pride in a job well done – this would be an affirmation of their identity. These explanations are not, however, mutually exclusive. Certainly, the incidents provided a platform to display a positive image to the world. Participants were keen to grasp the opportunity.

8.3.1.5. Professional Image: Discussion

Professional Image was a theme that emerged from all incidents in the dataset. The organisational context has been shown to contain several negative features (chapter 7) yet participants did not report being overwhelmed in this context. Instead, this theme showed that pride in the job was a significant source of satisfaction for participants and a core positive experience.

Recall that social identity theory forwards the view that individuals must manage a dialectic relationship between themselves and the *collective organisational products* (Haslem et al., 2003). This may account for participants' self-reflexive awareness of the need to construct their professional image; that is, officers experienced challenges to their identity on several fronts. They felt intrinsically proud of their achievements but the organisational context was such that they became unconfident that their pride was well-founded. Compounded by operational

pressures, this perhaps led to participants being more reliant on feedback from others to 'shore up' their sense of achievement and, more fundamentally, their identity. To cite two examples: Firstly, the inability to draw on sufficient resources (*organisational products*) signified a failure of expertise and, hence, undermined participant identity as the go-to professionals, proud of their expertise; here experienced as loss of confidence, a new synthesis must be sought to maintain or re-configure organisational identity. Secondly, the allegiance participants sought was not reciprocated by colleagues or partners; rather, the organisational context was one of exclusion, again requiring participants to seek validation from other external sources and actively shape professional image. In other words, participants were reliant on professional image to negotiate successfully the dialectic relationships entailed in maintaining organisational identity (Haslam et al., 2003). Inaccessibility (e.g., of some groups) or lack of permeability (e.g., between ranks) is known to make social identity salient to the group in question; that is, these conditions make the social (rather than individual) identity salient among those denied access (Haslam, 2001; Haslam, Postmes, & Ellemers, 2003; Haslam & Reicher, 2006).

This more fully explains the concern with professional image and its appearance as a common theme. In the more proximal critical incident context, the negative experiences may be factors that propel the phenomenological concern with professional image and the need for external affirmation of a shared organisational identity. When one knows things have been done properly, confidence comes from within: There is no disjuncture between an internalised identity and the social context. If individuals are really not sure they have done well, they need someone else to tell them so. It should be noted, however, that it has been argued that public perceptions of policing matter more in the U.K. than elsewhere (Fleming & McLaughlin, 2012; Lowe & Innes, 2012). Indeed, they form part of the long-established principles of policing (Home Office, 2012; Peel, 1829, cited in Goodwill, Alison, Lehmann, Francis, & Eyre, 2010). Hence, the distal organisational context is also such that professional image is particularly salient for these participants.

Reliance on professional image can be a precarious experience if reality does not match expectations. Nonetheless, participants seek to frame the critical incident

experience positively via these means. This is supported elsewhere in policing literature. Lee and McGovern (2013) argued that, in managing their image, police "justify their actions and in so doing confer legitimacy upon their peers, their superiors and the policing organisation" (p.107). This has concordance with a social identity approach: Legitimacy is a key to maintaining social identity and professional image is a source of legitimacy (Côté-Lussier, 2013; Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993; Hough, 2012; Stott, 2009).

The data collection method was discussed in terms of the particular candour it fosters (chapter 2, 2.3.4. and chapter 3, 3.2.). The medium might also have been a factor that contributed to the data gathered. It seems very unlikely that police officers utter out loud statements such as "*Look in awe at what we can do*" (CT1) (section 8.3.1.3 above) or self-describe as heroes, whether to a research interviewer or colleague. Albeit beyond the scope of the current project, examination of data gathered via different media (e.g., anonymous writing versus face-to-face oral interviews) offer an interesting next step.

In sum, several features emerged in this theme: a lack of confidence accompanied by a reliance on external validation; and a need to shape the image positively. Overall, though, professional image was a significant source of pride: It was a means of managing organisational identity and had an important role in creating a positive experience.

8.3.2. Victims and Families

Concern for victims and their families was the fourth core critical incident experience. This was a significant source of job satisfaction for participants. It was also seen as the top priority in delivering a service and the principal measure of success. Like the *professional image* theme, it was a significant means of framing the critical incident experience positively.

8.3.2.1. Serving the Public

Participants showed empathy for the victims and families who had been affected by the critical incident. The personal investment in interactions and

relationships with families was evident; affective statements were used to convey the personal satisfaction they derived from these relationships:

> *I felt valued for my work in* [incident place name] *as all the families I dealt with expressed their gratitude* [CT3];

> *It became evident this incident was going to change the life of so many people in different ways. We dealt with each victim with dignity, respect and a feeling of it really could have been any one of us, or one of our loved ones, taken away without a chance to say goodbye* [CT1];

> *I think the call between stopping and helping a wounded person and chasing the suspect is a very hard decision with no guidance* [SC1].

Participants valued their service to the public. Given the counterfactual thinking (what if it had been my loved one?), each individual and family may be said to have had a generic status as member of the public. This may have had a simultaneous dual function of closeness and distancing: In the former, it engendered a high quality of care appropriate to close family; in the latter, the generic representativeness might buffer officers' distress (could have been anyone). Overall, participants acknowledged the challenges they faced but mostly framed their own actions positively and expressed their satisfaction in the care they provided.

8.3.2.2. Honest Relationships

Where injury or fatalities had occurred, participants were still able to frame their public service positively via the appreciation families showed. Honesty was particularly valued:

> [My contribution] *was my honesty with the family* [NC3];

> *Being able to give the* [name] *family information after so long not knowing the outcome* [CT3];

The [number] *families who came out to* [incident place name] *were full of praise of their flos in the UK. They were well looked after in* [incident place name]*, and appreciated our efforts, compassion, and honesty* [CT3];

Being able to be honest and giving the family information even if it was not what they wanted to hear [SC1];

Rewarding to know that there are families out there who despite this tragic event have the correct loved one to mourn [CT1].

Placing a value on open, honest relationships might be a way for participants to distance themselves from the secrecy and lack of openness they experienced elsewhere in the incident (as seen in the *excluded from information* theme). Again, it possibly functions as a means of re-framing the experience as positive, reasoned thus: I will be honest and inclusive with victims and families even if others in the organisation are not inclusive. Organisational identity includes roles (Haslam, 2001; Haslam et al., 2003) and the role of public protector forms part of police organisational identity (Cooper, 2012; Goodwill, Alison, Lehmann, Francis, & Eyre, 2010). Because injury or fatality had already occurred in most incidents, the opportunity to act as public protector was diminished. Participants' honesty with victims' families may function to protect relatives from further trauma. In this way, the role of public protector can continue and a positive organisational identity is maintained.

8.3.2.3. Measure of Success

As mentioned earlier (section 8.3.1.4.), trust and confidence is a key performance indicator (KPI) for police (Casey, 2008; Flanagan, 2008; Hough, 2012; Stanko et al, 2012). It was unsurprising, therefore, that public perception of police was salient to officers. However, a subtle shift in emphasis may be noted. The KPI construct is a generic idea of overall public confidence in a (somewhat faceless) organisation whereas these data revealed a far more personal construct. Participants discussed success as a human interface. The value was placed on real

and personal relationships forged between individuals in times of crisis. To re-jig an old slogan, the political is personal:

> [Success is] *achieving justice for the public and the deceased* [CT1];

> *Success is recorded from feedback from the community that we serve. Provided they have felt safe, updated and satisfied proves we have been a success* [SC1];

> *Success is difficult to articulate when* [number] *people die as a result of a terrorist incident; however, quick ID and support for families is a good benchmark* [CT1].

Participants are expected to manage the police service's performance indicators for trust and confidence. They do so because, in policing, "what gets counted gets done" (Hough, 2012, p.333) but this study revealed that they actually cared most about looking after individuals injured, killed, or otherwise harmed in the incident. This is a source of pride and satisfaction but involvement with victims and families can carry risk to participants' well-being; for example, exposure to injuries or fatalities is an established stressor for police (e.g., Karlsson & Christianson, 2003, 2006). They need, therefore, to manage these relationships by finding ways to: a) protect against stressors whilst b) maintaining a role (organisational) identity of public protector.

To that end, some discussion within this theme had a less personal tone. This perhaps serves to distance participants from the intensity of victims' and families' losses. For example,

> *The single white roses with an 'in memorium' card were a great success. These were used by most families. Some were left with the victims, others were taken away or left in the memorial garden* [CT1].

The quotation above is oddly unemotional. It relays the police decision to place a flower on each victim's body for viewing. This is an extremely personal and intimate act. The care behind the decision is moving yet the account is descriptive in tone but not affective. Personal pronouns are absent; the use of the passive effectively removes the act of the individual(s) from the description. The actions are categorised

as "a great success" but no personal involvement is revealed. Thus, participants disappear and cede the foreground to victims and families, prioritising the people served and playing down any concerns for self. This harks back to the sense of honour (section 8.3.1.2.) whereby self-serving behaviours drew disapproval and the common good was prioritised instead, which may be said to be a component of the police organisational identity (Haslam et al., 2001, 2003).

8.3.2.4. Victims and Families: Discussion

Victims and families was the fourth core theme common across different critical incident experiences. In managing life-or-death situations, serving the public was a central source of achievement for participants. They drew satisfaction from their interpersonal relationships with victims and their families and defined success by families' appreciation. This corresponds with the police's primary role as protector of the public (Cooper, 2012), and, as such, forms an integral part of officers' social identity (Haslam, 2001; Haslam et al., 2003). In other respects, participants maintained some distance, possibly as a self-protective measure (e.g., Backteman-Erlanson, Jacobsson, Öster, & Brulin, 2011; Siltaloppi, Kinnunen, & Feldt, 2009). As not displaying emotion is known to be an organisational norm in policing (Tuckey et al., 2012), protecting oneself from distress would have benefits beyond the obvious maintenance of personal psychological health: It would also facilitate conformity with the requisite organisational identity.

Prevention is a central focus in modern policing, prevention of crimes and accidents. Indeed, *Prevent* is the title of one of four strands in the U.K.'s *CONTEST* counter-terrorism strategy (Home Office, 2011). That these incidents occurred necessitated that police channel activities into response rather than prevention. The now-impossible goal of protecting the public was replaced by goals of caring for victims and families. Thus, although injury and fatalities meant that police had been unable to protect the public, participants were still able to re-frame this experience positively. Reuniting victims' bodies with loved ones became a main goal and honest relationships with victims' families were also valued.

One explanation is that victims have rights and officers are obliged to serve them but, firstly, this does not capture the personal investment that was evident in participants' accounts; secondly, this popular idea has been argued to have little traction in law. Burton (2009) stated, "The rhetoric of victims' rights is a useful policy-making tool but in reality victims have gained few enforceable rights" (p.292). Maintaining a positive organisational identity by fulfilling the role of public protector has more explanatory power. Having honest relationships with victims and families was a source of job satisfaction; and participants' own definition of success was taking care of victims and their families. By these means, participants could successfully maintain their organisational identity and extract a positive experience from intensely negative and challenging circumstances.

8.4. General Discussion

The focus here is on the phenomenological aspects of the critical incident experience and it is contended that they did not emanate exclusively from individuals' psychology. Rather, they were rooted in the organisational and social context of police critical incident response and participants' experiences must be understood in relation to the prevailing context. Earlier literature has provided insight into specific aspects of that context. It includes a culture of blame and participants' concerns may derive therefore from anticipation of blame (Anderson, 2003). Fleming and Mclaughlin (2012) argued that the public has shifted away from regarding the police as protectors from risk and now views them as sources of risk; the accompanying decline in trust and confidence drives police defensiveness. This would explain the keen awareness participants had of future evaluations into their response (e.g., public enquiries). Many factors exist, many studies examined nice details, many, more appropriate to variable-centred methods, remain to be explored. At the broader extreme, organisational context cannot merely be averred as a maelstrom of complex influences. It nonetheless requires consideration. Contextual influences are here bounded by participant experience: Where organisational context appeared as a phenomenal concern, it was reported by participants and analysed here. Neither are earlier policing studies incompatible with the present social identity approach but it too has its dangers; in Haslam et al.'s phrase, "There is a tendency

for researchers to characterise organizational identity as something of a universal elixir" (2003, p.365). With a duly wary eye, it can nonetheless theoretically inform the present findings.

In the current analysis, it was found that the challenges of a critical incident comprised exclusion from information and intense pressures of a shifting environment. These findings held across incident types so they were core experiences. I have argued that different social identities contributed to negative experiences (e.g., exclusion by different ranks) presented in chapter 7. In an environment where suspects must not be alerted to police activity aimed at apprehending them or where public health or national security may be at risk, restrictions on information may be seen as an organisational norm. The impact on members of those organisations has, however, been comparatively overlooked. Participants felt they did not completely belong in the organisation. Thus, a sense of marginalisation and exclusion was the common critical incident experience.

The critical incident environment was also one of intense pressure. This pressure (e.g., of time, competing demands) served to undermine police in their efforts to provide an effective response. For example, unique incidents render police unable to use the decision-making style known to be the default mechanism in time-pressured situations (Klein, 1997; Klein, 2008) – it relies on utilising previous experience and previous experience of unique incidents cannot exist (Eyre & Alison, 2007). Likewise, standard operating procedures for non-standard incidents have yet to be compiled (Alison, Eyre, & Humann, 2010; Crego & Eyre, 2009). In these respects, the organisational context was such that it did not permit participants a successful dialectic relationship with collective organisational products. Instead of reflecting back to participants an organisational identity shared with others (i.e., fostering a sense of being in it together) their identity was threatened.

So officers were excluded from information, a marginalising experience, and they were under intense pressure from various sources yet officers were not defeated by these experiences. Rather, professional pride was also a core experience. This suggested a successful renegotiation of relationships: in short, a realignment of organisational identity. Exclusion from one group makes another

more salient (Haslam et al., 2003; Haslam & Reicher, 2006). When people are marginalised, they will seek social support that can protect against adverse effects (e.g., Karlsson & Christianson, 2003, 2006; Tuckey et al., 2012; Vanheule, Declerq, Meganck, & Desmet, 2008). Participants did so but it is interesting to note that participants were not willing to connect with just anyone. Considerable effort goes into VIP visits to provide just such support to let emergency service responders know that others are standing behind them. It is a bid to promote unity and manage image. However, participants experienced these visits as further pressure. Participants wanted, then, only to connect with specific others. Those others were victims and families – the very communities the police serve – in this way police could remain proud of the work they do and maintain aspects of their organisational identity: namely, a role as public protector when other aspects of identity had been denied or diminished.

Social identity can buffer stress (Haslam, Jetten, O'Brien, & Jacobs, 2004; Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005). The role identity of public protector may act as a buffer for officers in critical incidents. However, the management of organisational identity may be regarded as an ongoing demand due to the conflict between the formal ascribed identity of police officer and the reality of different social identities within the organisation. It is a demand that is heightened during or after critical incidents if officers are to extract the positive from negative experiences. Figure 8.1. below shows the negotiation of the dialectical relationship between individuals and the organisational products in order to maintain a positive professional identity in the face of negative experiences.

Figure 8.1. Core critical incident experiences: from negative to positive.
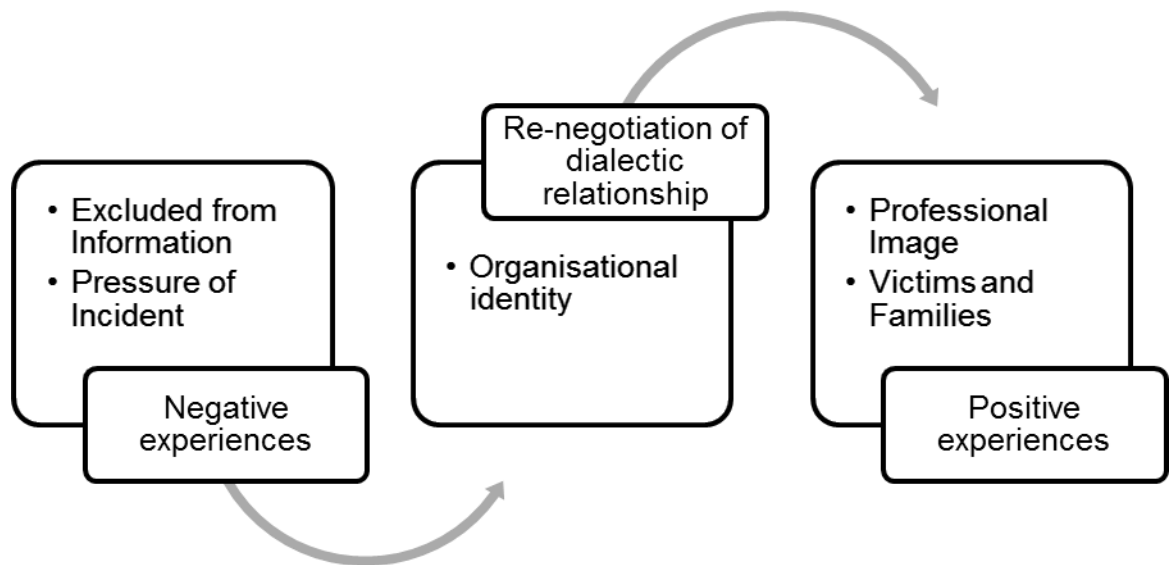
8.5. Limitations

Disconfirming cases provide a further validity check in idiographic qualitative research (Yardley, 2008). Three cases in the dataset each had one disconfirming theme: *Pressure of incident* was not a major theme in one non-criminal case (NC1); *victims and families* did not appear in two cases (CT1 and NC3). However, in the case/session where *pressure of incident* did not appear, *blame culture* was a prominent theme. Moreover, the blame theme was exclusive to that one session. It likely points to insufficient refining of this theme as transcript extracts revealed that comments within the *blame* theme could plausibly or even comfortably have been subsumed into the *pressure of incident* theme. For example:

> *Cultural issues around blame etc. People become worried about their position/job;*

> [In response] *Inhibitors in the police service around being honest and open* [NC1].

The two disconfirming cases for the *victims and families* theme were different. In one case (CT2), the operation was successful in preventing injury. Albeit people were affected, victims - in the intuitive sense of injury or fatality - were absent. All the critical incidents in the dataset differ on some dimensions. In this particular case, it transpired that it differed on a core feature, which is a limitation. In the second case without the *victims and families* theme (SC3), participants' roles may provide an explanation. In some types of operation, sterile corridors feature in SOPs to protect officers and the investigation; for example, on-scene DVI (Disaster Victim Identification) officers, hostage negotiators, CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Sources) handlers cannot have direct contact with other elements of the operation (e.g., families (DVI) or arrested suspects (CHIS handlers)). Sterile corridors were used in this incident. Thus, a professional role may have influenced findings. With some participants directly prohibited from contact with families, it is less surprising the theme was absent. It is an inherent limitation of 10kV data that participant details are restricted. That the dataset was not entirely homogeneous is a limitation. It should be concluded that *victims and families* was a core experience in the majority of critical incidents. The findings overall, should, likewise, be qualified: Two core themes were present in every case in the dataset (i.e., *excluded from information* and *professional image*); one core theme was present in eight of nine cases (*pressure of incident*) and one core theme was present in seven of nine cases (*victims and families*).

8.6. Conclusion

Critical incidents are extraordinary and complex events that participants experienced both as negative and positive. In this context, the organisation provided a social identity, of which participants were duly proud (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). They spoke of job satisfaction, the honour of association with the operation, and respect from colleagues and public. However, the organisation also imposed expectations on participants that could not always be met. Norms, policies and procedures were not always sufficient for unique incidents. The scale and the pressure of competing demands were challenging. Exclusion from information (by colleagues, partners, and systems) was a marginalising experience. Thus, the

organisational context was a source of pressure as well as identity, of negatives and positives.

Within this context, participants sought to reframe negative experiences positively. They did so by exploring and shaping their professional image: seeking validation to elicit pride and satisfaction; protecting themselves against anticipated blame via positive image management. They countered marginalising experiences in the organisation by forging connections with victims and families. These relationships were positive experiences and highly valued in accordance with the role and identity of public protector (Cooper, 2012). Hence, a critical incident was a negative experience created by external, extraordinary events. It moved through chaos to a return to normal. Reclaiming mastery over relationships and image promoted recovery. Individuals transformed their negative (pressurised, marginalising) experiences into positive experiences. This was the core critical incident experience.

In these two chapters, the themes which arose across all incident types were examined. The core critical incident experiences were: being *excluded from information*; the *pressure of the incident*; *professional image*; and *victims and families*. Despite the negative experiences of marginalisation and intense pressure inherent in managing critical incidents, participants managed nonetheless to frame their experiences positively. They did this primarily by focussing on victims and their families and deriving satisfaction from serving them. Honest interactions were a source of satisfaction and contributed to the sense of professional pride that was also a core critical incident experience. The next chapter will move the work forward by exploring divergent themes in the IPA analysis; that is, the themes that were specific to particular types of incident. Chapter 9 will conclude the IPA section of the thesis.

CHAPTER NINE. IPA ANALYSIS: DIVERGENT THEMES SPECIFIC TO INCIDENT TYPE

9.1. Introduction

This chapter is the last of the three IPA chapters and focuses on the divergent themes that emerged from the analysis. Giorgi (1997) advocated the descriptive strengths of IPA as a method and further advised that IPA focus on commonalities across cases. This was broadened by Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, and Hendry (2011) who argued that "IPA stresses the interpretative and hermeneutic elements, seeking to capture examples of convergence and divergence, rather than focusing solely on commonalities (2011, p.22). The Pringle et al. emphasis on convergence and divergence was the organising rationale adopted for these IPA chapters. The preceding chapters (7 and 8) examined commonalities and this chapter moves the IPA work forward by examining the divergent features in critical incidents. Hence, major themes which emerged in some types of incident sessions but not others are explored in this chapter.

As before, the phenomenological focus of the thesis will guide discussion (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2012; Martin & Hickerson, 2013) with pertinent literature throughout. Likewise, theoretical discussions will be informed by a social identity perspective (Halsam, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987): Context is considered to orient experiences and identity. The differences that obtain in organisational context can account for the finding of common experiences within incident types (i.e., counter-terrorism, serious crime, or non-criminal) yet different between incident types. To reiterate: A superordinate organisational identity provided for common experiences whereas different organisational features pertaining to different incident types provided for different experiences, in turn, contributing to divergent themes.

9.2. Method

The analysis proceeded as before (see chapters 7 and 8), utilising the same dataset. Again, because a bottom-up approach was used, extant literature is presented in thematic discussions. As before, supporting extracts from sessions are labelled CT: 1, 2, 3; SC: 1, 2, 3; and NC: 1, 2, 3.

9.3. Results

There were three divergent themes that were specific to incident type: *humour*, *taking control*, and *uncertainty*. Each theme was either completely exclusive to or predominant in one incident type. *Humour* was exclusive to CT sessions, appearing in all three cases. *Taking control* emerged as a theme in all three SC sessions but only one CT and one NC case. *Uncertainty* appeared as a theme in all three NC sessions but was not in other incident types. Each is discussed in turn below.

Table 9.1.

Divergent Themes in Critical Incident Experiences

Theme name	Incident type	Details within theme			
Humour	CT	wrapping the discomfort	deflecting from self	diverting from trauma	forging common experience
Taking control	SC	controlling experts	don't be a victim	developing future SOPs	
Uncertainty	NC	early phase uncertainty	uncertainty about competencies	uncertainty about learning	

9.3.1. Humour in CT

Humour emerged as a theme in all three CT sessions but did not feature in other sessions. In CT, humour appeared in discussions where pride was displayed or direct praise was offered to other participants. Humour was also used to change topic immediately after distressing details.

9.3.1.1. Wrapping the Discomfort

The functions of humour are discussed below but an interesting linguistic feature of this theme is presented first. Comments made by participants were wrapped in humour. Specifically, comments that referred to uncomfortable issues were preceded and followed by humour. In transcripts, this occurred, firstly, at the

sentence level where comments were syntactically wrapped in humour; that is, within the sentence, the syntax provided a *humour – uncomfortable comment – humour* structure. It occurred, secondly, in conversational turn-taking; that is, uncomfortable comments drew humorous responses from others. Thus, humour structured participants' discussions when sensitive issues arose. For example, despite participants feeling proud of their involvement in an incident (chapter 8), humour appeared when praise was offered directly. Humour was used to manage the discomfort:

You all did a very good job! [signed as Piglet Trixibell Peaches] [CT1];

I think you are all great and did a super job despite all the politics and red tape involved. Well done :-)

> [In response] *I agree – the team accomplished a tremendous amount in a very short time. The operation was a real success and a credit to those involved;*

> [In response] *Stop I'm feeling sick now* [CT3];

Perhaps we should all have a team hug in the car park;

> [In response] *Make that the bar and I'm up for it* [CT2].

The professional pride yields to self-deprecating humour. Thus, humour may function to 'wrap up' and thereby soften any discomfort at actions that may be perceived as self-aggrandising. This fits with the organisational norm of placing the focus on the public they serve and not themselves.

This theme, incidentally, revealed the importance of ensuring that analysis did not de-contextualise comments; the researcher returned to the data to review turn-taking. In the *professional image* theme, for example (chapter 6, 6.7.), reviewing the turn-taking context revealed that pride had immediately been met with a humorous response: a call for Queen's police medals (QPM).

Working with colleagues who were committed to getting the job done with minimum of fuss and acceptance of long hours and an unpleasant task. We were all heroes!

[In response] *QPMs all round* [CT1]!

Covering comments in humour diverted from discomfort. We turn next to the contents of the discomfort.

9.3.1.2. Deflecting from Self

Given the norm of prioritising public over self, self-aggrandisement was one potential area of discomfort. Participants needed, therefore, to avoid it whilst also reporting successes and achievements. Humour functioned to divert attention from oneself; it was used to minimise or cover up participants' contributions to the incident. Tasks completed, goals achieved, and welfare concerns were all wrapped in the language of humour.

It was like juggling soot and knitting fog trying to get all the paperwork sorted in time to satisfy everyone. But I managed to do it, against the odds [CT2].

Juggling soot and knitting fog are vivid metaphors to convey the idea of an amorphous, impossible task but the humorous colloquialism leavens the possible discomfort at claiming success. However, "against the odds" in the same comment is suggestive of the possibility of losses. Thus, the participant leads with humour, then relates the successful completion of the task but the final gambling image undercuts the success tale. The success sits in the middle of the comment, syntactically wrapped in self-deprecation. The same wrapped structure was used in turn-taking to express success in the following bathetic exchanges:

[My biggest achievement was] *I stayed awake;*

[In response] *Why - was your role so boring if you could not stay awake?*

Role was very fulfilling & involved but it was a very long 2 days!

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How did you manage this?

Concentrating on the role and lots of chocolate [CT2];

PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE FLO ON HIS LONESOME DEPLOYED IN [operation name] – *DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS FOR HELP* [caps original];

[In response] *This particular FLO drove everyone mad!*

[Name], *you performed perfectly. Now, now, children* [CT3].

"On his lonesome" is a light-hearted colloquialism that permits the issue of staff welfare to be raised. It simultaneously prevents the possibility of being perceived as prioritising self-interest over serving the public, which behaviour would be contrary to group norms of serving the public not self.

They spent a lot of money on clothes! Thought we were looked after at the venue but what happens now.....there should be some sort of support;

[In response] *Shopping makes everything better! More shopping please;*

I never did get one of those fleeces [CT1]!

I'd like an OBE please. Mrs [Name] *looks good in blue – with a big hat for her visit to the palace. Nothing less than an OBE will do* [CT1].

The direct praise from a colleague "You performed perfectly" is immediately followed by a mock admonishment, again syntactically enclosing the praise, and thereby conforming to group norms against self-aggrandising behaviour. Similarly, in the second extract above, attention is diverted away from the self. The repeated demand for an honour is stark but the benefits are projected onto the participant's wife. Participants are proud of their work and feel deserving of reward. To state so may be regarded as self-aggrandising but such an accusation could be more readily deflected if one can claim it was only a joke. Projecting benefits elsewhere also deflects away from self and appears more altruistic.

9.3.1.3. Diverting from Trauma

The traumatic details inherent in many incidents were another potential area of discomfort. Possible distress needed, therefore, to be avoided whilst participants recalled and discussed the incidents. Participants used humour to divert from trauma. Humorous exchanges typically followed distressing details, suggesting mutual social support. Immediately prior to the extract below, discussion had centred on the experiences of identifying victims; it had included graphic details of fatalities. By leavening the tone, participants diverted each other from the worst consequences of the critical incident.

> *These officers … did a fantastic job in the most horrendous conditions. The puddings did well too;*
>
> > [In response] *If I hear the word 'pudding' again, I'm going to rage up!*
>
> *Pudding…pudding…pudding… :)* [emoticon original] [CT3].

Likewise, the second extract below ends in self-deprecating humour.

> *Did* [victim name] *survive?*
>
> > [In response] *Sadly she died about two weeks after the incident in* [place name];
>
> > > *Listen up – you were told in the presentation;*
>
> *I can't listen, type and think of my next meal all at the same time* [CT3].

Social support within a group indicates a shared social identity (Haslam et al., 2005). This was shown through the sequencing in exchanges of banter; by inserting humour immediately after sad or distressing details, participants helped each other to buffer the affective impact of the information. In the latter instance above, it may also have served to deflect discomfort at the fact that participants had been updated on victims and this participant had failed to register the information.

9.3.1.4. Forging Common Experience

Humour tended to deflect attention away from participants' struggles, achievements and praise. However, humour was also used to recall the common experience participants had shared. Hence, it functioned to reinforce social bonds. Humour here was based on their knowledge of each other and reflected more personal or social aspects of the experience:

My presence in [place name] *ensured success;*

[In response] *you did bugger all* [CT2];

[My contribution was] *taking clean knickers for the SIM;*

[In response] *I wore the same pair for two weeks;*

I thought you had [CT3].

[I was] *looking good in a paper dress!!!*

[In response] *What's all that about then?*

No really, I checked myself out in the mirror. I was good;

I thought your bum looked big in it [CT3].

Very grateful to [named individual] *to be deployed to the incident room and provide us with expert knowledge re family liaison and assist with the writing of FLO strategy;*

[In response] *But no beer tokens;*

Shame he can't book a hotel;

FLO (******** name removed to preserve debrief integrity) is a lightweight and won't buy a drink [CT1].

In the last quotation above, the participant was providing an ironic take on 10kV protocol; specifically, facilitators monitor input during a session and will intervene to delete overly-explicit details (e.g., anonymity breaches). The phrase used is: *removed to preserve debrief integrity*. Thus, in this example, the participant has appropriated 10kV phraseology and incorporated it into his or her own humorous comment. Overall, humour functioned to forge a common bond; it reminded participants of the extraordinary events they had shared. Deprecation was usually directed at individuals. However, the collective group identity was recalled, foregrounded, and reinforced via humour.

9.3.1.5. Humour: Discussion

Humour was a theme exclusive to counter-terrorism sessions. Uncomfortable experiences – trauma, staff welfare concerns and, indeed, achievements and praise, were all blanketed in humour. That humour is an organisational norm accords with the idea of gallows humour, or so-called 'black' humour (Rowe & Regehr, 2010), among those who work in challenging circumstances (Coughlin, 2002; Heidner, 2001; Maxwell, 2003). It helps individuals manage their emotions, distance themselves from distress, and permits them to continue with the difficult tasks they need to undertake. It can function to normalise the extraordinary events experienced (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Humour is, then, an effective technique used by police to manage stressful situations (Maxwell, 2003; Myers, 2005; Scott, 2007) and, as such, constitutes an organisational norm.

9.3.1.5.1. Managing organisational norms.

In this study, humour was used to deflect attention from individuals, especially when praise was offered or struggles were revealed in discussions, thus supporting earlier literature on humour as an organisational norm in policing. The current IPA analysis found that self-serving behaviours were deemed inappropriate (chapter 8, themes - *professional image* (8.3.1.) and *victims and families* (8.3.2.)). It is argued, therefore, that humour functioned as a means of managing these norms, an idea supported in the policing literature. Police officers are expected not to discuss personal emotions (Evans et al., 2013; Howard, Tuffins, & Stephens, 2000). As

expressing emotions is regarded as a potential cause of reputational damage for police (Evans et al., 2013), the use of humour to deflect attention away from emotional comments relating to trauma is unsurprising. Police officers use humour as a means of regulating emotion and re-framing the negative into a positive (Samson & Gross, 2012); humour acts as "a communication tool to broach difficult topics and implicitly acknowledge the emotionally difficult nature of events" (Evans et al., 2013, p.7). That humour appeared in all CT sessions points to the affective impact of managing terrorist incidents.

9.3.1.5.2. Social bonding and identity.

The mutual support among participants in this study also shows humour's role in reinforcing social bonds; specifically, immediately disturbing issues arose, participants managed the potential distressing reaction by engaging in humour or banter with fellow participants (Haslam et al., 2005). Again, this echoes earlier findings on the role of police officers' humour (Garner, 1997). Charman likened humour to "social glue" (2013, p.157) whilst Nielsen argued that humour helps to "establish a collective sense of 'us'" (2011, p.508). In this study, humour served to bond the group and indicated a common social identity of a team facing adversity (Abrams & Bippus, 2011; Charman, 2013). More specifically, the debrief sessions provided an opportunity to create or reinforce social identity. Again, from a negative experience, the participants extracted a positive via humour.

9.3.1.5.3. Why only CT?

If humour contributed to effective coping, reinforced group bonds, and was an organisational norm of serving the public not the self, the obvious question becomes: Why did humour only appear in CT sessions? The central argument in this IPA section of the thesis is that experiences and, indeed, identity are grounded in and are oriented by the organisational context. Hence, the differences between each incident type are held to emanate from the differences in organisational context; that is, differences found in this study are attributed to the distinctions between the CT, SC, and NC contexts and their specific organisational products (e.g., different governance structures, roles, training, expertise etc.).

Applying a social identity approach to the organisational context, there is support in the policing literature for the drawing of preferential boundaries around in-groups (vs. out-groups) (Charman, 2004, cited in Charman, 2013; Fielding, 1994; Fletcher, 1996). This finding is echoed in the current study's theme, *excluded from information* (chapter 7, 7.3.1.). The hierarchical structure of policing means different social identities exist but the CT difference may be this: The preferred social identity may be inaccessible in CT work. Given secrecy is paramount in CT work (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004), out-groups would be a particularly prominent feature of CT incidents. There is an overarching organisational identity as police officers but others (with different, even competing identities) run or lead the operation (Eyre & Alison, 2007) and these groups are impermeable; the preferred social identity is inaccessible so some are rejected. Individuals show an elevated need for social bonding in social contexts where rejection occurs (Knowles & Gardner, 2008). Humour fulfils that need. As argued in the previous chapter, exclusion (especially within the organisation) would necessitate a realignment of organisational identity. Thus, increased exclusion would increase motivation to enhance self-categorisation in the available in-group. This may drive the use of humour given that humour can reinforce group values and strengthen bonds between emergency service professionals (Charman, 2013; Garner, 1997; Myers, 2005).

9.3.1.6. Future Directions in CT

Empirical support is needed for the idea that exclusion or inaccessibility of some groups is more prominent in CT compared to other operations. Earlier research distinguished between positive, (self-enhancing and affiliative) humour and negative (self-defeating and aggressive) humour among police (Cann, Norman, Welbourne, & Calhoun, 2008; Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray & Weir, 2003). They argued that the positive, self-enhancing humour served a stress-management purpose whereas negative, self-defeating humour was used to gain acceptance into a social group. In the current study, humour served both stress management and social bonding purposes in CT incidents. These functions map neatly onto Martin et al.'s (2003) and Cann et al.'s (2008) positive and negative axis of humour. It might, then, provide a useful framework for variable-based research into humour use in CT

work as the current study did not examine humour styles. Humour may simply serve different purposes at different times. On the other hand, the dichotomous design adopted by Martin, Cann and colleagues may not be optimal if the need to reduce stress is actually an antecedent of the need for social bonding. Re-framed as an antecedent, the different types of humour manifest among police in CT but ultimately both may function to ameliorate stress and facilitate social bonding in line with organisational norms. These different perspectives may inform future directions on CT humour.

9.3.1.7. CT: Humour - Summary

In CT incidents, humour allayed discomfort and contributed to management of organisational norms and identity. The humour provided a frame that facilitated the collective construction of meaning and thereby strengthened bonds as an organisational group with a shared social identity and a shared experience. That this was necessary suggests that the particular context of CT work generates an increased need to reinforce social identity or manage stress or both.

9.3.2. Taking Control in SC

Taking control emerged as a theme in one CT case and one NC case so it was not exclusive to SC incidents (see section 9.4. below); however, it was a theme predominantly associated with serious crime incidents, appearing in all three SC cases. This theme was future-oriented with participants wanting to take control: of standard operating procedures (SOPs), of the potential for a victim mentality, and away from experts.

9.3.2.1. Controlling 'Experts'

Participants wanted greater control over individuals who offered some form of expertise; the 'experts' either took a role as commentators or provided unsolicited advice. The common link was that these individuals tended to be outside the organisation and, therefore, beyond the control of participants.

Some of the experts I am aware of who commented have actually made things worse. Comments about many people in [incident place name] *now being likely to suffer from PTSD are incorrect and unhelpful – it would be good to be able to stop people from associating themselves with us in order to further their own career and maybe make some extra money!*

[In response] *The service needs a gagging order then for people to sign when they leave! Agree comments like this make already vulnerable people suggestible to the thoughts of stress* [SC2];

Many of the experts were simply cv building… at times it was distasteful, but it was important that we embraced them. It's better to have them in a coalition than opposition [SC1]!

Participants' views on 'experts' is consistent with participants' disapproval of self-serving behaviours (chapter 8). As the abnegation of self was an organisational norm, self-serving experts drew disapproval. Their dissenting views may threaten the collective shaping of meaning where police (not outsiders) served and protected the public. In this study, crime was seen as core police business. As one participant said of a SC critical incident:

This gave us the opportunity to be police officers, professional dedicated members of a police team - instead of performance indicators that can all be fiddled and changed by writing things differently anyway [SC1].

Experts taking a self-serving role, especially while participants forego their own needs, runs counter to participants' shared meaning of appropriate conduct and their construction of the critical incident experience; so participants called for better control of experts.

9.3.2.2. Don't be a Victim

Participants were clear in their rejection of a so-called victim mentality, an idea supported in the policing literature where being a crime victim and seeing

oneself as a victim are distinct constructs (Burcar, 2013). This is consistent with their determination to forge a positive account of their experience of critical incidents.

> *Self-determination & empowerment may be an important factor in healing and "de-victimising"* [incident place name] [SC1].

Having been forced to react to events, it was part of the process of restoration of normality that participants wrest control from chaos.

> *We should try to resist perpetuating the "victim" mentality – it is unhealthy & unhelpful;*

>> [In response] *Absolutely – totally agree. This has been a terrible time but we don't want* [incident place name] *to be seen as a place where bad things happen – have to move forward when the time is right* [SC2].

In rejecting a victim mentality, participants were again not referring to themselves. Rather, they perceived it to be a characteristic potentially ascribed to the place in which incidents had occurred. In this respect, participants may be said, firstly, to be mindful of the reputation of their communities and, secondly, perceived it to be their legitimate role to shape it. This view accords with participants' expressed wishes to forge a positive experience from the negative impact of critical incidents.

9.3.2.3. Developing Future SOPs

Wanting to develop new SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for future incidents was a common desire expressed by participants. New policies and procedures were regarded as important lessons to learn:

> *Much of the decision making around deployments focused on the ancillary costs of transport, accommodation etc. Whilst such thought is essential, SOP need to be set up and adhered to so everyone knows to which set of guidelines we are working. It was again an ad hoc system of who and how many based on individual assessments rather than pre planned agreement* [SC3];

> *Office processes established as a result of* [operation name] *should be shared to improve day to day working and as best practice* [SC1];

> [We need] *SOP to assist with our line managers at home regarding national expectation of commitment to deployment duration etc.* [SC2].

Returning to normality is the final phase of critical incidents. Control is restored. Participants' concern to develop SOPs after critical incidents perhaps revealed their desire to appropriate and transform the experience. Incorporating an extraordinary experience into standard procedures ensures it is brought under control. In this regard, the need to take control may form part of the normal recovery process. It is interesting to note that there was not unanimity on this particular issue.

> *SOPs often impinge on flexibility. The event would not have been covered by the most sophisticated SOP and therefore an acceptance that we do what we can to get the job done is far more beneficial than guidelines that are only ever, at best, guidelines. Let's be poets* [SC3]!

9.3.2.4. Taking Control: Discussion

The *Taking control* theme appeared in all SC sessions. Participants wanted to control others, the incident, and the community: They did not regard experts' role as legitimate; they rejected a victim identity; and they wanted to incorporate the experiences of the incident into standard procedures and thereby tame it. At first glance, the theme *Taking control* connotes an absence of control. Further consideration reveals more subtle features. In this study, it was found that participants wanted more control in SC incidents because they had less than they would have preferred. However, the preference – the intention to increase control - (rather than its actual paucity) was the key emphasis.

9.3.2.4.1. Organisational norms.

Participants clearly viewed it as their legitimate entitlement to take control; controlling SC incidents was an organisational norm: 'Experts' outside the organisation were deemed not to have a legitimate role; in calls not to be a victim,

they revealed their intention to take communities forward positively; in calling for SOPs changes, they called on organisational support structures to regain control.

The intention to take control showed a preference for autonomy and self-determination. Such self-determination has been found to have positive outcomes (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011) so it may represent an effective means of extracting a positive experience from negative circumstances for critical incident officers. Given that this was a common aim, why did *taking control* not appear in other incident types? This was a matter of degree: The theme did appear in one CT incident and one NC incident (section 9.4. below). Nevertheless, it was predominant in SC incidents.

Crime and especially serious crime has historically been the defining feature of police business (Innes, 2005). Catching criminals is seen as 'proper' policing (Crego, Alison, & Eyre, 2008; Innes, 2005; Terpstra, 2012); it forms part of a police organisational identity in a way that non-criminal matters or even CT work does not. Therefore it is not regarded as legitimate for others to take a role. The organisation unequivocally supports officers' efforts to manage criminal incidents. This suggests participants were confident they could take charge and had the skills and knowledge to do so. Crucially, as a requisite part of participants' organisational identity, it was legitimate that they should do so. Who else should control serious criminal incidents if not the police? Of SC incidents, this question can be asked rhetorically. Asked of NC incidents or even CT incidents, it would yield answers grounded in the reality of multi-agency working and partner lead agencies. In short, SC incidents are the categorical prototype for critical incidents.

9.3.2.5. SC: Taking Control – Summary

Overall, in discussions on this theme, participants showed agency and intent. Participants' need to control manifested as an intention to take control of the aftermath and the future. They wanted to take control of self-appointed experts, to direct communities away from a victim identity and develop SOPs to control future incidents by codifying procedures. In social identity terms, the dialectic relationship between individuals involved and the collective organisational products was

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successfully negotiated. Policing crime is core business and officers knew what to do; SC incidents therefore formed part of their organisational identity so they saw it as their role to take charge (Haslam et al., 2003).

9.3.3. Uncertainty in NC

Uncertainty was a theme that was exclusive to NC sessions. Participants experienced uncertainty in the early phase of the incident. This replicated an established finding that uncertainty is an ambient feature early in critical incidents; information is typically unknown because events are still unfolding (Crego & Alison, 2004; Flin & Arbuthnot, 2002; Klein et al., 1993). Otherwise, this theme centred on participants' uncertainties about their own professional competencies, which manifested in two ways: i) They felt uncertain what to do during the incident; ii) they experienced uncertainty about the future and how to learn lessons from the incident. Albeit participants were unsure how best to implement lessons for the future, they nonetheless thought it important to learn lessons.

9.3.3.1. Early Phase Uncertainty

Uncertainty was prominent during the initial stage of the incident. Participants commonly experienced a phase where they did not understand what had happened:

> *Early on – what do I need to be doing now – there are some things that need doing – and we do not have enough information* [NC1];

> *I received a very vague call … after a short conversation trying to get clarity on the request I was asked to prepare a briefing note on what I would send as a team and what they could do. I complied and did not hear anything else for two days* [NC3]*;*

> *Don't know what has really happened – how did this happen – who did it – what is the plan (is there a plan?) What the hell is that* [identifying detail redacted], *and what is going to happen to anyone* [redacted] *– huge need for more information – and NOW!!* [NC2]

The questioning style conveys the uncertainty experienced by participants; as each question elides into the next, the many demands faced are revealed. The capital letters and double exclamation show the urgency of the situation. It is an established finding that there is uncertainty in the early phase of critical incidents; the current analysis replicated this finding (Crego & Alison, 2004; Flin & Arbuthnot, 2002; Klein et al., 1993).

9.3.3.2. Uncertainty about Competencies

Participants were uncertain whether they would be able to manage the incident. The self-doubt expressed referred to personal resilience and professional knowledge:

> *Question own ability to cope. What needs to be done? Who else do I need? What support is required? What is the impact, how many casualties, how will we manage?*

> [In response] *Same here – this was going to be a challenge like no other – by* [number] *o'clock I had a sense of how big, and was conscious of my part in resolving it* [NC2];

> *Call came whilst at party at friend's house. Initial thought what has this got to do with my organisation. Panic that I would not be able to get hold of key players* [NC3];

> *What was my role? Where did I fit into the structure of the command team? How long would I need to be away from the day job* [NC3]?

Again, the questioning style conveys the uncertainty but these discussions in this theme had a more personal tone (e.g., "panic"). They contained reflections on participants' own abilities as an effective responder. The very short phrases for turns of direction in a multitude of thoughts are akin to a stream of consciousness; along with the common use of the present tense, they register the immediacy and confusion of the experience.

9.3.3.3. Uncertainty about Learning Lessons

Participants were keen that the experiences be used to improve critical incident management but they felt uncertain how best to go about implementing that learning:

> *Immediate need to improve relations between these communities. How do we do this* [NC1]?

> *Our aim has to be to learn the lessons and prevent a future tragedy. How would we do this? Would a good protocol with* [partner], *better info sharing,* [have] *changed what happened* [NC1]?

> *In terms of* [identifying detail omitted], *we don't have certain fundamental things like protocols for how we work. How can this be addressed* [NC2]?

A debrief session is an obvious forum for reflecting on and reviewing performance. It is, therefore, not unusual that some participants question how to learn lessons. This is typically accompanied by answers or suggestions from colleagues. This was not so evident in non-criminal sessions. It seems that there is an organisational gap in managing non-criminal critical incidents.

9.3.3.4. Uncertainty: Discussion

Uncertainty has a large body of literature. More space is devoted here because it can, unfortunately, be a nebulous concept. Definition seems an obvious requirement to provide consensus or determine boundaries around types of study but is often absent from the literature. Lipshitz's and Strauss's (1997) summary highlighted various definitions, including studies defining uncertainty as synonymous with ambiguity or risk. Individual difference arguments aver uncertainty as aversion to or acceptance of ambiguous situations or risk (Fischhoff, 2005; Haynes & Hart, 2009). Uncertainty is prominent in the decision-making literature. It is frequently examined for its role in decision-making processes (Eyre & Alison, 2010). There is often a focus on probabilities as measures in normative or behavioural decision theories (e.g., Austin, Reventlow, Sandøe, & Broderen, 2013; Khalaj, Makui, &

Tavakkoli-Moghaddam, 2012; Kreye, Goh, Newnes, & Goodwin, 2012). Thus, the locus is on exterior entities (e.g., epistemic uncertainty) and how a situation might be altered by action. In policing, uncertainty was found as a theme in policing road traffic accidents (Backteman-Larneson, Jacobsson, Öster, & Brulin, 2011). In the critical incident domain, Crego and Alison (2004) posited uncertainty as a feature of critical incident environments but did not explore its component features.

Uncertainty has been conceptualised as a multi-faceted construct: both a cognitive state and also embedded in situations (e.g., McCormick, 2002), thus arguing for an internal as well as external locus. Elsewhere cognitive processes or experience were examined more generally (e.g., Mishel, 1988; Tjosvold, Peng, Chen, & Fang, 2012). Mishel defined uncertainty as "a cognitive state created when the person cannot adequately structure or categorize an event because of insufficient cues" (1988, p.225; McCormick, 2002, p.127). Hilton (1992) refined this definition by specifying which insufficient cues could cause uncertainty, thus: "A cognitive state created when an event cannot be adequately defined or categorized due to lack of information" (Hilton, 1992, p.70). This locates the uncertainty in the individual's experience whilst allowing for the influence of context upon the individual. This emphasis is consistent with the social identity perspective of the current study and the phenomenological approach of the thesis.

Hilton (1992), then, provided a generic definition of uncertainty. This definition brings to the critical incident domain two useful refinements: Firstly, it explicitly conceives of uncertainty as a cognitive state rather than, say, probability values where the locus tends towards external entities (e.g., event likelihood); secondly, Hilton identified insufficient information as an environmental influence, which is consilient with the current approach. Further, it is a component empirically supported in the critical incident domain: Information is unavailable in the early stages of critical incidents (Flin & Arbuthnot, 2002; Klein et al., 1993), a finding replicated in this IPA analysis (section 9.3.3.1. above). By the Hilton (1992) definition, then, the ambient feature of insufficient information may account for some of the uncertainty.

The contribution of the current study is the greater detail revealed about uncertainty: Personal self-doubt is also part of the NC critical incident experience.

Uncertainty has previously been conceptualised as a type of self-doubt, namely, "A sense of doubt that blocks or delays action" (Lipshitz & Strauss, 1997, p.150). This retains the cognitive element of the Hilton definition and introduces the idea of consequences (rather than antecedents, e.g., absent information). The idea of consequences of uncertainty may be a useful addition in mapping the critical incident experience in further research.

9.3.3.4.1. Why only in NC incidents?

The obvious question becomes - why was uncertainty exclusive to non-criminal incidents given that: a) Participants were excluded from information in all types of incident; and b) uncertainty has previously been shown to be a feature of critical incidents (Crego & Alison, 2004; Flin & Arbuthnot, 2002; Klein et al., 1993). Incomplete information alone has insufficient explanatory power; the uncertainty theme did not appear in CT or SC sessions where information was similarly absent. Another factor must either contribute to uncertainty in NC incidents or militate against it in other incident types.

Uncertainty tended to occur when an incident was still unfolding, supporting previous research. It may be that early phase uncertainty is normalised and, thus, did not warrant debrief discussion until other experiences of uncertainty propelled it to prominence; that is, uncertainty reached a tipping point as a discussion topic because it was coupled with other types or causes of uncertainty in non-criminal incidents. In this respect, its exclusivity in NC incidents might be a methodological artefact. The double hermeneutic in an IPA analysis must not be forgotten (Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2009); specifically, individuals might have experienced some uncertainty during all types of critical incident as the actual events were taking place. However, it was not sufficiently salient either to be recalled or warrant discussion during debrief without additional factors that contributed to or caused uncertainty. These additional factors were present only in non-criminal incidents. Uncertainty might have actually been experienced in other incident types (supporting earlier critical incident research findings of early phase uncertainty). However, it went unreported and hence did not become data.

The Lipshitz and Strauss (1997) study may yield some insights. They found that inadequate understanding was one of three types of uncertainty in the naturalistic decision-making (NDM) domain of the military. Inadequate understanding may account for uncertainty in NC incidents. This *inadequate understanding* explanation is consistent with the current finding that participants' self-doubt specifically centred on: i) their professional competencies (as effective responders); and ii) feeling unsure how to implement any lessons learned. Further, these particular two types of uncertainty (i and ii above) resonate with research in the medical domain that differentiated between five types of uncertainty (Austin et al., 2013; Politi, Han, & Col, 2007); specifically, the uncertainty about professional competence and how to implement lessons learned corresponds respectively to Politi et al.'s and Austin et al.'s uncertainty resulting from ignorance and uncertainty about future outcomes.

9.3.3.4.2. Organisational norms.

Inadequate understanding offers a plausible explanation given the relative lack of focus on non-criminal incidents in the police service. In Stelfox's and Pease's phrase, the police have "heuristics [that] enable officers to make sense of crime scenes … no different to other occupational groups which have been found to develop experiential working practices" (2005, p.192). Criminal incidents are regarded as core business in a way that other types of incident are not (Crego, Alison, & Eyre, 2008; Terpstra, 2012). The prototypical police organisational identity centres on managing crime; SC incidents are the prototypical critical incident and what the general public would first associate with policing. In contrast, there are no NC organisational products or norms to which participants could conform. There are no non-criminal investigation departments, databases or SOPs. Police are less trained in (and, therefore, less familiar with) managing non-criminal incidents: Recall that comments on not knowing what to do to appeared only in this theme. Because they are atypical, the NC critical incident experience is characterised by uncertainty born partly of lack of understanding. This explanation sits comfortably within the theoretical frame of social identity.

9.3.3.5. Future Directions in NC

Non-criminal incidents may not be a core component of police identity: This is worthy of further study. The support fostered by a shared social identity may be unavailable to officers in NC incidents: This might expose them to greater risk; alternatively, a superordinate identity of police officer might suffice. Future research could usefully seek empirical support for specific variables that may co-occur with insufficient information to cause uncertainty. Further studies could examine police officers' views on what constitutes legitimate components of policing and seek associations between degrees of certainty and type of incident. The existence of organisational protective factors in particular types of incident could also be explored. The antecedents and potential consequences of uncertainty in NC incidents (Figure 9.1. below) also offer a model for testing. One example consequence is illustrated but others should be considered (e.g., psychological impact on officers).

Figure 9.1. Drivers of uncertainty in NC incidents.
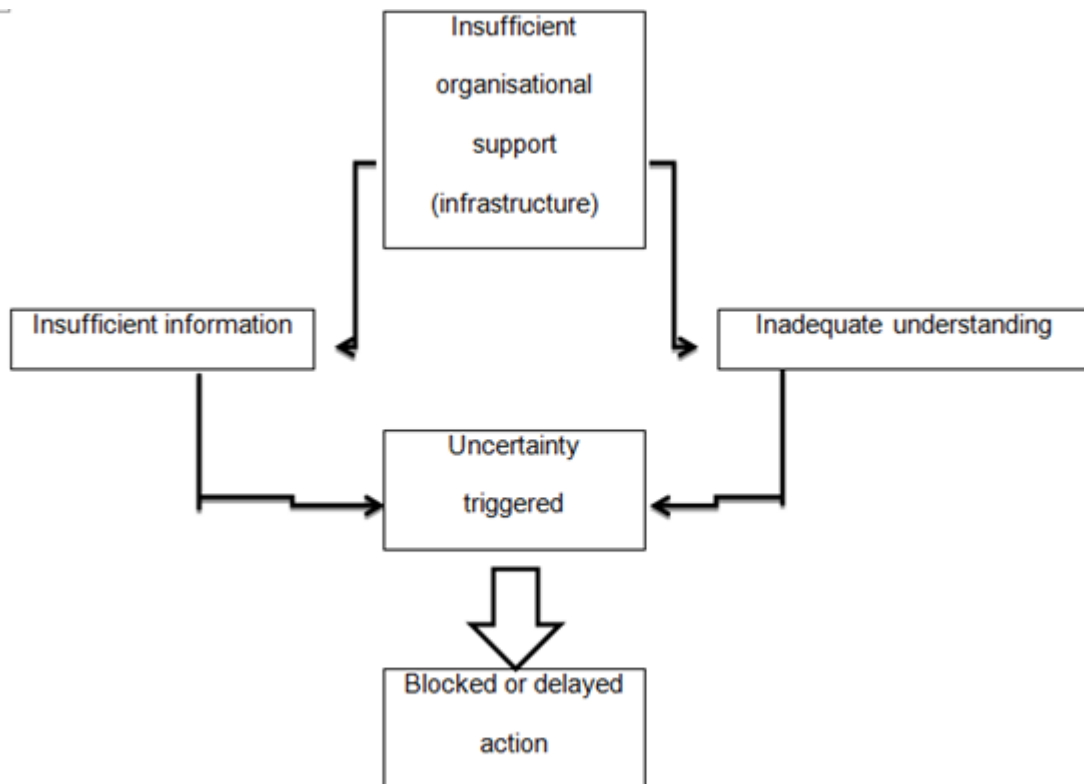
9.3.3.6. NC: Uncertainty – Summary

The current study supports some aspects of findings from previous research. In terms of the conceptualisation of uncertainty and the orientation of participants' uncertainty towards particular objects in the world (e.g., future outcomes), the current study is not ground-breaking. However, the particular configuration of types of uncertainty experienced in a specific domain - NC critical incidents - is novel. Uncertainty in critical incidents was an affective as well as cognitive experience. It centred on self-doubt about personal resilience and professional competencies during the incident and also in relation to learning lessons for the future. Further, uncertainty was confined to a particular type of critical incident: It related exclusively to non-criminal incidents.

From a social identity perspective: Individuals seek to reduce uncertainty by adhering to group norms (Hogg & Mullin, 1999). It is argued here that non-criminal incidents do not form a core part of organisational identity, leaving individuals without a reference for appropriate group norms (see chapter 13 for further final discussion). It is possible that an organisational gap has been identified in the absence of protective factors against uncertainty in non-criminal incidents. Individuals will attempt to reduce uncertainty by identifying more strongly with their in-group (Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Reid & Hogg, 2005) so protection (vs. continuing uncertainty) may rest on the availability of accessible in-groups. These findings contribute to current knowledge and extend the literature.

9.4. Limitations

As noted in the previous chapters, idiographic qualitative research recommends consideration of disconfirming cases as an extra check on validity (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2008). There were no disconfirming cases in two of the three divergent themes (i.e., *humour* theme in CT and *uncertainty* theme in NC). The third divergent theme, *taking control* did emerge in all three SC incidents; however, the theme was not exclusive to that incident type. The theme also appeared in one CT case and one NC case.

The CT case was an incident that occurred overseas, which may give some account of the emergence of the theme. In this different social and cultural context, the comparatively peripheral position of CT incidents in U.K. policing did not obtain. There was no disjuncture between participants and the prevailing organisational norms in the way there might have been had the incident occurred in the U.K. There was no expectation that there ought to be a fit between U.K. officers and a foreign organisation (Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991); such an organisation was not part of participants' social identity (Haslam, 2001). It is not possible to explain the background without disclosing identifying features of the incident. Suffice that it was a context in which there is deference to U.K. expertise in counter-terrorism. Hence, instead of being marginalised (by the U.K. organisational CT context), in this context participants' ipseity was intact, their social identity was intact, and they experienced deference to their expertise. This configuration may have fuelled a perception that it was legitimate to take control and to orient themselves towards the future in order to learn lessons from the incident.

In the case of the one NC incident, it is unclear why the *taking control* theme appeared. It was a U.K. incident with the prevailing organisational context of policing. Therefore, it does not fit into the argument that organisationally central incidents drive a need to take control by dint of their being concordant with the organisational identity (and, thus, a legitimate role). This disconfirming case must simply be acknowledged as a limitation and findings qualified accordingly. *Taking control* was not a perfectly divergent theme as it was not exclusive to SC incidents.

9.5. Conclusion

In conclusion: An idiographic approach was used in this IPA analysis. In terms of findings, a hermeneutic operated whereby themes have been taken to represent common experiences or divergent experiences. Social identity theory has been proffered as having explanatory power. As Haslam et al. argued, "Shared organisational identity is a basis … for people to perceive and interpret their world in similar ways" (2003, p.364). Organisational identity has therefore been inferred from similar collective experiences. If this reversal of direction is an over-extrapolation, it

is a limitation of the study. Nonetheless, a direction for further research based on the themes identified here has been provided.

It has been suggested in this chapter that participants' experiences reflect the organisational context; further, context varies according to incident type. Crime is seen as core police business in a way that CT incidents are not, and NC incidents even less so. Hence, criminal investigations represent archetypal business practices that draw the greatest organisational support. Policies, procedures, and professional development are channelled disproportionately into management of criminal critical incidents, potentially leaving officers involved in other incident types less supported or protected by the organisation. These ideas are elaborated in the closing discussion of the thesis (chapter 13).

Across these three chapters (7, 8 and 9), the findings of an IPA analysis have been presented. Core themes common across critical incident experiences were explored as well as divergent themes specific to each type of critical incident. An atomistic approach is not the preferred approach in this project. It is important, then, not to leave fragmented results as the exit point of research. Rather, it is important to explore how the highlighted features cohere. In the next stage, an examination of more holistic aspects of the critical incident experience moves the work forward. The focus is on the ways in which participants tell their stories. In the next chapters, then, narrative and models of narrative analysis are discussed (chapter 10). Thereafter, the results of a narrative analysis are presented. The rationale was, firstly, to examine the ways in which participants combined or constructed the different aspects of the critical incident experience (chapter 11); secondly, it was to explore narratives associated with the different types of critical incident (chapter 12).

CHAPTER TEN. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: 1 – INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

10.1. Introduction

Hitherto, empirical chapters have focused on, firstly, a thematic analysis of the whole data corpus (service delivery reviews and operational debriefs) and, secondly, an IPA analysis on the operational dataset. In these final data chapters, the focus turns to the final research questions: What stories did participants choose to tell? How did they tell their stories? Presented in this final 'data' section, then, is a narrative analysis of part of the original data corpus. Again, for ease of reading, the study has been divided into three chapters. This chapter (10) contains the introduction and method. In the next chapter (11), results are reported and Mishler's (1991) elements of narrative structure are discussed: specifically, the *how*, *who*, *where*, and *why* of the narratives (formally: *sequencing*; *orientation*: *character*, *setting*; *complicating action*; *evaluation*; *resolution*, respectively). Finally, the *what* appears in the final narrative chapter (12); that is, the overarching critical incident narrative exemplars are presented as well as a discussion of the utility of the study and its theoretical contribution. Chapter 12 closes the narrative part of the thesis.

The narrative analysis was intended to shed light on stories told of the experiences of the participants who commanded, managed, or responded to these critical incidents. They might have agreed with or differed from the top-down strategic intentions laid out in the formal guidance documents in the police service and, as such, were seen as a way of gaining insight into the organisation.

10.2. Why Narrative? Theoretical Cohesion

The focus on participants' stories was grounded in a core narratological premise: Human behaviour is shaped by stories and storytelling (Frank, 2010). This resonates with a central theoretical component in social identity theory: that social identity predicts human behaviour (Haslam, 2001; Haslam et al., 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). There was a further parallel between the processes of social identities and narrative identities. As discussed in the preceding IPA analyses, social identity

operates as a dialectical relationship between an individual's psychology (held to be socially structured) and the organisational products (culture, policies, procedures and so forth) (Haslam et al., 2003). Similarly, narrative identity is held to be dialogical: A symbiotic relationship exists between the individual and the social (for current purposes - organisational) context in which stories are told (Frank, 2010). As much as individuals might shape their world (or storyworld), it too shapes their experiences, actions, and themselves. Such is the performativity of narratives. In Frank's (2010) terminology, individuals are shaped by the *companion stories* that they take with them into new encounters. Hence, stories precede experience: A culture's narrative resources function as templates from which to construct experiences (Bruner, 1990). Pentland described the top-down influence in the relationship between an organisation's culture and its individuals thus: "Stories are like ruts in the road that people follow and thereby re-create. For this reason, narrative can be a particularly valuable source of insight about organizations" (1999, p.712). Reciprocally, new events will generate new stories and become incorporated into a culture's available narrative resources. It is a storied world we live in (Harrington, 2008). Thus social identity and narrative approaches share common ideas about: i) identity and its processes; and ii) drivers of human behaviour. This provided theoretical cohesion for the thesis.

Narratives provide a portal into culture (Bayard, 2007) and narrative analysis can connect stories about similar experiences, eliciting the common patterns between them (Frank, 2010). Because narrative is intimately related to individual's lived experience (Mattingley & Garro, 2000), it is therefore an apposite method for phenomenological studies. Thus, a narrative approach also provides methodological cohesion for the thesis. Indeed, the storied world humans live in (Harrington, 2008) means that narrative is regarded as a 'default setting' for people. Individuals deploy narrative to convey experiences (e.g., Carr, 1991; Hiles & Cermák, 2008; Mishler, 2006; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992); that is, in the telling of experiences, individuals must structure their accounts and narrative is seen as a 'natural' human act – the most fundamental way that humans represent reality when they communicate with others (Aristotle, 335BC/1996). It has therefore been proposed that stories have ontological status (Smith, 2008).

Notwithstanding the variety of definitions, (see 10.3. below), narratives are regarded as universal phenomena (Heath, 1986). Narrative is ubiquitous with some researchers arguing for: i) narrative as a mode of thought (i.e., in contradistinction to rational thought) (Bruner, 1986; Genereux & McKeough, 2007; Mattingley, 1998a; Polkinghorne, 1988); and ii) for narrative as a meaningful alternative to variable-centred explanation in research (Abell, 2004). As Hiles and Cermák (2008) put it, "Narratives play a crucial role in almost every human activity … and are foundational to the cultural processes that organize and structure human experience. Narratives enable human experiences to be seen as socially positioned and culturally grounded" (p.147). It is posited that these cultural and social contexts (or grounding) will be retained and, indeed, highlighted, by a narrative analysis in a way that they were not through thematic analysis. Thus, the links between the organisational culture and the individuals who work within it may be examined. Further, narrative identity may provide insight into organisational identity processes, which adds to the IPA analysis and moves the thesis forward.

A narrative approach retains a participant's account in the most whole format possible; hence, narrative's unique preservation of structure and sequence (Mishler, 1990) provides an additional perspective, different from the IPA analyses. Because narrative has the capacity to contain (and subsequently convey) a great deal of complex material, it preserves better the social and cultural context in which the individuals' experiences occurred. Therefore narrative arguably constitutes a richer method for obtaining or examining data (Mattingley, 1998a). Other methods may fracture participants' accounts, for example: by capturing them via bounded questionnaires designed (in some respects) for ease of quantitative coding; via semi-structured interviews divided into component parts according to the researcher's design. It is, of course, acknowledged that researchers using narrative will, ultimately, during their narrative analysis, likewise divide and categorise narrative accounts provided by participants. Nonetheless, the account first provided by the participants is as whole and complete as possible. The participant decides what constitutes a significant event, the participant (not the researcher) places order on the events. A narrative approach can, thus, capture well that which is most meaningful to the participant. It is ethically 'cleaner' to leave participants to decide

what to relate of sensitive or traumatic issues and removes the need to decide beforehand whether a question is too intrusive (Elliott, 2007). Unlike some methods it does not insert an extra 'degree of separation' between the researcher and the participant's lived experience by capturing what the participant thinks the researcher regards as meaningful (Wengraf, 2001). In short, it arguably reduces the possibility of demand characteristics, established as a danger of experimental methods (Orne, 1962) and confirmed recently as a potential confound that still exists in lab tasks (Nichols & Maner, 2008).

The anthropologist Anne Fadiman (1998) argued that the most interesting details were found in liminal places where edges meet (e.g., shorelines, international borders) and that frictions and incongruities at tangent points yielded more insights than being immersed in the centre would (See also Howell Major & Savin-Baden, 2011, chapter 2, 2.2.3.1.). Fadiman argued that this applied especially to cultures. I argue likewise that taking the point of difference as a starting point can be particularly revealing in that it is the point of starkest contrast. Narratives do not merely include difference; rather, differences – where conflicts arise - are central. They propel the action (Aristotle, 335BC/1996; Bal, 2009; Bruner and Lucariello, 1989). Narrative/drama always has conflict (or disequilibrium) that complicates the action and must be resolved (Mortola, 1999; Ryan, 2007). Hence narrative can be a very revealing way to enter and see-through, to see what does not cohere with the dominant beliefs and values (of the organisation, culture, society, and so forth) (Bal, Butterman, & Bakker, 2011; O'Connor, 2000). My position (i.e., differences are the point of starkest contrast, and thus most revealing) has some resonance with Garfinkel's (1967) classic breaching experiments: Garfinkel argued that the surest way to discover social norms was to break them. Likewise, the disruptive complicating actions in narratives might highlight organisational norms that had been breached.

10.3. What's Narrative?

In the simplest definition, there is a beginning, middle, and an end to a story (the story being a sequence of events). These events need to be put together in some way if the story is to be told to someone else: in its construction lies the narrative. The most commonly found narrative structure is held to be triadic: firstly, a state of equilibrium (with some description to set the scene) followed, secondly, by a disequilibrium (usually a breach of norms, a challenge for a character, or some other rupture or conflict); finally, efforts are made to understand or influence events in order that the narrative may be concluded (typically upon a new or modified equilibrium) (Todorov, 1969, cited in Bal, 2009). Bruner and Lucariello (1989) also affirmed narrative as "a vehicle for characterising, exploring, preventing, brooding about, redressing, or recounting the consequences of 'trouble'" (p.77) where trouble is an unmet need typically caused by the violation of norms or a violation of what is expected in our lives.

It is intriguingly difficult to get a handle on an agreed definition of what exactly constitutes a narrative and it extends beyond disagreement about semantics (where one person's *trouble* is another's *disequilibrium* and yet another's *complicating action*) (respectively, Bruner & Luciarello, 1989; Todorov, 1969, cited in Bal, 2009; Labov & Waletsky, 1967, also Mishler, 1991). The most irreducible formula, perhaps, is: state – event – state. Without the event, we are simply in the land of description but this is unhelpfully reductive. Typically, some form of chronological and/or causal sequence is also implied as is an agent (or agents). Narratives present personally constructed views of a shared world (Hopkinson, 2003). Stories need content as well as (narrative) structure (Frank, 2010) and a raft of cultural influences and actual or imagined events populate stories' content.

Agency typically occurs in the guise of a protagonist or hero; the complicating action may be provided by an antagonist whose actions must be overcome or vanquished in some way to bring about resolution of the narrative, typically through the restoration of order. Classical protagonists include romantic heroes who tend to show outstanding qualities (e.g., feats of endurance) in all respects. By comparison,

even the environment – mighty nature – may be reduced to mere animal or vegetable matter next to the exceptional romantic hero (Frye, 1957).

In his seminal theory of modes, Frye (1957) presented exemplars of various types of hero. Frye argued that tragic heroes are not quite so outstanding when pitted against natural forces or situations. However, they will be superior compared to humans if they possess extraordinary qualities (e.g., magical); if human, they will be a leader. Tragic heroes are in some way isolated (e.g., from the group they aspire to belong to or their inability to solve inner vs. outer conflicts). They may not overcome their situation or vanquish an antagonist but narratives are nonetheless resolved: typically via some lesson learned or an insight gained by the tragic hero and audiences sympathise with their isolation. Comic heroes tend to be realistic, neither greater nor lesser than other humans and audiences relate to them for their essential ordinariness. They are one of us and though pathos is not induced (because they are not isolated), satisfaction may be derived from observing them from the outside; that is, the audience may at some level recognise him or herself (one of us) yet realises that it is a presentation of a self, a social mask.

Finally the ironic hero is inferior to other humans and, especially to the audience though, as this may involve artifice – a knowing self-deprecation – the ironic hero may not be inferior after all but rather a sophisticated character and hence, has the capacity to return full circle to the superior romantic hero. These heroes from Northrop Frye's (1957) theory of modes map onto classical genres of romance, tragedy, comedy and irony/satire (Aristotle, 335BC/1996). Albeit literary theory has moved on in the intervening half-century since Frye, the heroes and genres remain eminently useful and findings will be discussed in relation to them.

Taken together, then, narrative resources provide genres, structures and heroic archetypes: We typically find different characters meeting varying kinds of trouble, overcoming it (or not) and evaluating what happened, all of which fulfils a certain social or cultural function (Ryan, 2007). These dramatic interruptions and disruptions of daily life can reveal the social function of stories. These tangent points force people to stop and question the tacit yet taken-for-granted expectations that there will be a tomorrow which will unfold much like today and yesterday. In Frank's

(2010) terminology, these re-evaluations comprise dialogical processes. Becker (1999) argued that disruptive events (e.g., illness, bereavement, accident) trigger attempts by individuals to re-establish some sense of whatever constituted 'normal' before the disruptive event, to retrieve an earlier identity. Indeed, studies by narrative researchers often report in their findings, participants' attempts at replication (of what went before) and restitution (of the status quo) (e.g., Frank, 2010; Kierans, 2005; Mattingley, 2006) in order that they reach the new equilibrium that will signal the story's end and close the narrative.

10.4. The Current Study: Research Aims

It can be agreed that people are inclined to tell stories of their troubles and these narratives can help to make sense of their experiences and resolve the disequilibrium they have undergone (Mattingley, 2006; Mortola, 1999). The topics at the centre of 10kV sessions contain extraordinary troubles: Each murder, terrorist attack, natural or man-made disaster - that is, each critical incident itself - stands outside ordinary experience. They were dramatic events, in the colloquial sense. They were also dramatic events in the sense that the term *drama* is understood in literary theory where the essence of drama is conflict (Aristotle, 335BC/1996). These dramatic events were predicated upon the disequilibrium that occurred to interrupt 'normal' events and daily routines of life (e.g., Mortola, 1999; Todorov, 1969, cited in Bal, 2009). This inherently dramatic content of the incidents coupled with individuals' 'default setting' of employing narrative to convey experience meant it was unsurprising that narrative accounts were found in 10kV data.

I was interested to know: whether there were common or canonical narratives among participants and across sessions in the dataset; whether there were archetypal roles within the narratives and what function the narratives might serve (e.g., whether those features marginalised individuals who offered a different narrative). The dataset might or might not have contained such features but they were a springboard for analysis. I was interested in seeking culturally normative narratives within the police service.

10.5. The Current Study: Narrative Analysis Models

As narrative straddles so many disciplines there were many models available. This study was intended to be catholic in relation to narrative insights but some streamlining was necessary to guide analysis. The analysis in the present study drew primarily on two models: Mishler (1991), and Frank (2010). Narrative structure as well as content was examined. However, I regard structure versus content as somewhat of a contrived dichotomy. Rather, the one informs the other so, on this basis, examination of structure provided insight. It also served as a validity check given that the selected data constituted narratives in accordance with Mishler's (1991) model.

The Mishler model of narrative analysis offered a pragmatic solution in this complex field. Mishler's is essentially an adaptation of the earlier Labov and Waletsky (1967) model; in turn, Labov (1982) refined the model further to become a six-part model for narrative analysis. Using the six-part Labov (1982) model, the researcher considers the following narrative elements: i) *Abstract* (summary of events); ii) *Orientation* (setting and character); iii) *Complicating action*; iv) *Evaluation* (significance of the events to the narrator); v) *Resolution* (what happened finally); vi) *Coda* (returns the perspective to the present). The Labov and Waletsky (1967) model was developed for sociolinguists though Mishler's (1991) model of narrative analysis tends to be the more common reference within the field of psychology. More importantly, Mishler's further contribution was to address the analytical question, 'How has this participant ordered his or her experience?'

Mishler's model was adopted because it encompassed the possibility of non-chronological sequencing of participants' narratives (specifically, incorporated into *Sequence*). Mishler's five-part model comprised: i) *Sequence* (e.g., if chronological, the 'and then and then…' parts of the narrative); ii) *Orientation* (as Labov – character and setting); iii) *Complicating action* (as per Labov and with parallels in other models using different semantics: *trouble* [Bruner & Lucariello, 1989], *disequilibrium* [Todorov, 1967, cited in Bal, 2009], *conflict* [Aristotle, 335BC/1995] etc.); iv) *Evaluation* (commentary on events, including personal responses, feelings etc.); and v) *Resolution*. The Mishler (1991) model had sufficient capacity to hold complex

stories with many narrative elements should they have appeared in the data. In addition, the five parts: Sequencing, Orientation, Complicating Action, Evaluation and Resolution could readily transfer to column headings providing for an easily-read graphical representation of ideas or issues of meaning or construction in the narratives. The Mishler model was used in the present study principally as a means of examining narrative elements in the data though it also served as a first orientation to confirm narrative structures in the selected dataset.

The socio-narratologist Frank's (2010) model of dialogical narrative analysis provided a comprehensive means of considering story content, narrative structures and their social function. He argued that people depend on the narrative resources which are available in the relevant social or cultural context to understand others' stories and also to tell their own. To conduct narrative analysis, Frank advocated consideration of the capacities of stories. Considering capacities allowed for consideration of elements within and without the text, thus covering content as well as relationships between narrative resources, storytellers and their readers (hence, dialogical). This has two advantages: firstly, it avoids a formalist position and the potential trap of assuming meaning somehow resides in the text which, secondly, preserves the social context in which stories are embedded; that is, it considers the contextual influences on stories and of stories on others.

Frank discussed the following capacities: i) *characters* (casting of, motives and the dialogical aspect of motive (e.g., fixed or fluid), relation to other actors/things); ii) *point of view* (what impact if seen from another's perspective); iii) *suspense* (tension between alternative outcomes); iv) *interpretive openness* (degree of); v) *out of control* (willingness to permit); vi) *inherent morality*; vii) *resonance* (with other stories); viii) *symbiosis* (between stories and their tellers); ix) *shape shifting* (stories travel and shift but retain recognisable elements); x) *performative*; xi) *truth-telling* (monological or dialogical and polyphonic?); xii) *imagination* (affective). It should be noted that this is a comprehensive list of possibilities, not required criteria.

Last though not least, some consideration was given to three other typologies: firstly, Frye's (1957) classic narrative divisions of comedy, tragedy, romance and satire; secondly, Booker (2009) who drew on Frye's classic divisions to provide a

typology of archetypal plots; finally, Gergen and Gergen (1986) who also drew on Frye's divisions to develop three narrative structures: progressive, regressive and stable. Gergen's and Gergen's structures model was founded on change. A progressive structure involved change in order to attain a goal whereas a regressive structure entailed the reverse; the self-explanatory stable structure involved little or no change. Smith (2008) mapped the intersecting points. Both comedy and romance have progressive structures. Comedy sees movement towards a goal of a happy ending; romance involves restoration following some loss in the face of adversity. Tragedy has a regressive structure where protagonists also face adversity but suffer losses often despite good intentions. Satire tends to have a stable structure with reflections on absurdity and often entailing an outside perspective. These widely recognisable genres or structures are, in Frank's terminology, the narrative resources available to storytellers.

Frye, Booker, and Gergen and Gergen were included because these authors gave more prominence to genre. This was not necessarily overlooked by Frank – he wrote clearly on narrative resources that were available to individuals as templates with which to construct and convey their experiences. However, the notion of genre is the more widespread and readily understood concept. Thus, genre provided for the presentation of exemplars as summative findings in this study. In sum, the analysis was informed principally by the work of Frank (2010) and Booker (2009), supported and validated by Mishler (1991) and, in a lesser capacity, Gergen and Gergen (1986) and, in turn, by Frye (1957).

10.6. Reflexivity

In arguing for narrative as a meaning-making process (Bruner, 1990), the influence of narrative resources beyond the organisation must also be considered. There are two most obvious sources: the research and the data collection method. An explicitly interpretive approach was adopted so the researcher's capacity for co-construction of meaning needed consideration. Triangulation via the other methods used in the project should afford some further support for findings here. Specifically, the model presented at the end of the IPA analyses (Figure 8.1.) transpired to correspond with a narrative structure. It is possibly an artefact – the influence of the

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researcher's narrative resources upon the data. However, this seems to overstate the researcher's influence and understate the data's integrity. Moreover, the substantive reading for narrative was not undertaken until after the completion of the IPA chapters so narratives were not at all salient at that point. If I may transgress George Orwell's (1946) exhortation never to use a double negative, it was a not unhappy discovery that occurred after the fact.

The data collection method should also be considered in three respects. The first is the narratives selected for this study. They were self-contained monologues presented as one comment by one participant. However, it is the case that, in a 10kV session, the process of narrative construction is a dynamic, dialogical, even dialectic process. Participants' rolling sequences of input and response form a framework within which meaning may be formed and narratives constructed. For example:

> *Family members wanted to attend the airport to be present for the arrival of the aircraft but when enquiries were made there were no facilities in place and they were openly dissuaded by the coroner. Why was this?*

>> [In response] *Our understanding was that the families would not be given 'airside' access so would not have seen anything. The bodies were obviously taken straight to the mortuary and as a vast majority of you are aware they were not suitable for viewing.*

> *It was not airside access that was required but to be there to grieve. As per Op* [previous operation name], *a private area to view the landing not the unloading* [CT3].

It is easy to see how such exchanges and the process of evaluation would generate a shared narrative of events. It was possible, therefore, to have taken a different approach to the identification of narratives that resided in the data. The decision was taken to confine the analysis to narratives provided as already completed monologues. It made for a clearer category boundary with less slippage between what constitutes a narrative (i.e., versus a shared narrative or a partially formed or

potential narrative). It did, however, create some closure around narratives and also mean that the analysis of this dataset was not exhaustive.

Secondly, the significance of the sessions may also be an issue. It is argued here (and earlier in the thesis) that experiences may be re-framed in the telling such that old identities are reinforced and/or new organisational identities are formulated (as part of the narrative drive towards a modified equilibrium). As the most substantial debriefs conducted by the organisation, 10kV sessions might over-contribute to this process. Meantime, it is clear that participants collaborate to generate narratives. It may lead to a composite experience (to use an older term, *groupthink* [Janis, 1972]). This has been acknowledged as a potential limitation of the 10kV method (Eyre, Crego, & Alison, 2008). However, this is not considered a general hindrance in this study given the principal interest in canonical narratives in the organisation. However, it may cast a shadow over individual narratives and could potentially diminish the significance of marginal stories. Similarly, narratives of incidents deemed less significant but which occur more frequently might be different from those examined in this study.

Finally, these data were not gathered through formal narrative interviews. Thus, some accounts (generally and in these data) may not fully meet the conditions of narrative. Whether an account meets the definition of a narrative - as opposed to being, say, a 'mere' descriptive passage - may provoke disagreement. Mishler (2006) invoked a useful comparison to Rosch's (1975) prototypical categorisation of natural objects (e.g., a bird) whereby the ideal prototype (e.g., a robin) occupies centre place in the category while less prototypical specimens (e.g., a penguin) occupy a peripheral place nearer to the fuzzy boundaries of the category *bird*. Similarly, an individual's account of events experienced may possess a high number of narrative elements (and likewise occupy centre place as a prototypical narrative) whereas other accounts may be low on narrativity (and, thus occupy a position near the fuzzy boundaries).

Definitions of narrative proliferate. The swiftness with which one can generate exceptions to the rule that will see one or another definition (or indeed, model) of narrative vanquished perhaps points to the ubiquity of narratives. They are such a

profound and fundamental part of our lives, identities and sense-making in the world that we can all draw on almost limitless examples against which to disprove someone's definition with a 'Ha, interesting but fails to meet the fifth condition/criterion'. This can be a smart trick but dangerously paralysing for a research area. As outlined above, the Mishler (1991) model was used iteratively as a validity check that data selected for this study met conditions for narrativity. It nonetheless holds that formal narrative interviews might have elicited richer results.

10.7. Method

The socio-narratologist, Arthur Frank argued: "Narrative analysis has no method in the sense of a canonical sequence of steps that, if followed properly, produce an analysis" (2010, p.15). Nonetheless, the method - in terms of parameters of analysis - is outlined next. In exploring the operational dataset, completed, self-contained narratives were selected for analysis. Hence, each narrative was held to be one whole comment provided by one participant that exhibited one or more of the following elements of the Mishler model: i) *plot* (sequence of events), ii) *orientation* (character, setting), iii) *complicating action* (or conflict), iv) *evaluation*, and v) *resolution*.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. Stage one was transcript reading. Transcripts of each of the nine operational debriefs in the data corpus were read. Comments which seemed intuitively to be narrative were highlighted; to ensure capture was as wide as possible, a default setting of 'If in doubt, include' was used at this stage. A closer reading of highlighted comments was undertaken to confirm that one or more of the narrative elements were indeed present. The Mishler narrative elements were particularly salient by this time. They were held in mind while transcripts were re-read to search for omissions; any overlooked narrative comments were duly highlighted and included.

Stage two was the construction of transcript extracts. Highlighted narrative comments were extracted from transcripts and tabulated. As in the preceding IPA analyses, this facilitated further reading and allowed for researcher annotations though it also served as an independent audit for validity purposes (Yardley, 2008);

that is, transcript extracts were a tangible product forming part of a virtual audit (Smith et al., 2009) (see also IPA analysis, chapter 7, 7.1.).

Narrative structures were next examined by deconstructing each narrative comment and pasting it into tabular form: so-called Mishler tables; they were too lengthy to include in-text though Table 10.1. below illustrates the format (see Appendix I for sample Mishler table).

Table 10.1.

Example Showing Column Headings for Mishler Tables

ME notes	Quotation/ extracts	Orientation: setting or character	Complicating action	Evaluation	Resolution
Researcher notes here	Narrative inserted here	Details of places and story characters	Main trouble or conflict	Participant/ narrator's reflections, feelings, conclusions	How story ended

The tables were created as follows. One column contained narrative extracts from the data (headed *Quotations*). With the exception of *Sequencing*, each remaining column contained one of Mishler's narrative elements; that is, *Orientation* (character/setting), *Complicating Action* (conflict), *Evaluation*, and *Resolution*. Sequencing was considered by examining the narrative comment as a whole (i.e., the *Quotations* column) to determine the order placed on events in the narrative; sequencing features (e.g., temporal markers) were highlighted in colour. The remaining columns in the Mishler tables were populated by the relevant *thought unit* from each quotation/extract. A thought unit was drawn from Black (1993) whose definition was determined by the unit bearing information or carrying meaning. This also corresponded closely to Gee's (1986) notion of an *idea unit*. Thus, examination of narrative data privileged meaning over grammatical boundaries; as a result,

thought units varied in size (e.g., clause, sentence). Researcher notes populated an additional column in the tables

In Stage three, the Mishler tables' contents were transferred to A1 sheets of paper, organised as colour-coded mind maps of each element (i.e., orientation, complicating action etc.). Mind maps of participant narratives were supplemented by researcher annotations. This was repeated for each incident type. The mind maps were read and re-read, across and down to explore narrative structures and content. Frank's (2010) capacities of stories served to guide the consideration of narrative elements. Notes of emergent patterns on similar or different elements were recorded on the mind maps and then summarised separately.

Repeated patterns were noted as emergent narrative types and considered with regard to: participants' experiences, incident type, and organisational norms and expectations. This procedure was followed for each of the three incident types. They were then compared with existing typologies (Booker, 2009; Frye, 1957; Gergen & Gergen, 1986; Smith, 2008) to examine similarities and differences and final exemplars were formulated. Findings are presented over the next two chapters. Findings in relation to structural elements of the Mishler model of narrative appear in chapter 11. The overarching critical incident narratives as well as a general discussion are presented in chapter 12. As before, phenomenological and social identity theory perspectives guide discussions; supporting quotations are labelled CT: 1, 2, 3; SC: 1, 2, 3; and NC: 1, 2, 3 and extant literature appears throughout.

CHAPTER ELEVEN. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: 2 – RESULTS

11.1. General

Participants used narrative to report their experiences of critical incidents. Their accounts were narrative in form and content. However, it would be tautological to call this a finding given that the initial selection criterion was that comments should intuitively read as narratives. That comments had a narrative structure might, then, have been predicted but was nonetheless confirmed by analysis. Within this structure, however, elements differed according to incident type, which findings are presented later. Some general findings appear first.

Generally, the narrative structures conformed to most elements of Mishler's (1991) model (See Appendix I for sample Mishler table). Detailed evidence is provided in specific sections below but, in sum, sequenced stories appeared in the data; characters were described and so were settings. They faced complicating actions, they provided evaluations of the events that had occurred and concluded stories with a resolution of some sort. Most narratives conformed to all the elements of the Mishler model. Of those that did not, it was usually only one element that was absent. Specifically, four accounts did not feature evaluations but were otherwise high on narrativity. Another seven stories had no complicating action. However, it may be that the incident itself was implicitly assumed to fulfil this element. The incident had propelled the action in the real world; the organising rationale for these debriefs was known to all so further detail was not incorporated into the storyworld to convey it to a reader. Where resolutions appeared in stories, some were characterised by their being conditional resolutions: They tended to describe unrealised wishes or suggested an action that might have improved outcomes or could improve incident management in the future. Several stories ended in further complicating actions that were framed as challenges to be faced and overcome next time. In others, evaluations served as resolutions.

Table 11.1.

Mishler Model of Narrative Elements x Incident Type

Mishler Element	SC	CT	NC
Sequencing	Chronological	Chronological Temporal markers evident	Structure disrupted; some significant turning points
Orientation: Character	Protagonist self	Protagonist self	First person singular but role less clear
	Romantic hero	Tragic → romantic hero	Ironic hero
	Antagonist = media	Multiple characters; Antagonist = colleagues/partners/ offenders/media	No characteristic antagonist
	First person plural pronoun extensive	First person plural pronoun (but smaller referent group)	Third person pronouns or generic noun-titles for colleagues
	Possessive pronouns for agencies/partners	Generic agency titles	Generic agency titles
	United colleagues-as-family	Refs to family = literal	Family (real-life) appear at start of narrative

Orientation: Setting	Clear demarcation of space (literal cordons)	More varied & bigger than SC	Scale more prominent
	Distinction between inside/outside	Journey through settings	Ejection from home prominent → Confusing journey through settings
	Interiors organisation-owned	Underworld/death-related	No cohesive cluster; V few places of belonging (generalised/ anomalous/indefinite articles)
	Front door synecdoche	Front door synecdoche	
	Exteriors: material properties/what-lies-beneath or theatre spotlight		Exteriors: public/transitory spaces
Complicating Action	Media disrupt prescribed narrative	Interpersonal tensions	Interpersonal tensions (unresolved)
		Media (but less prominent than SC)	
Evaluation	Positive appraisal of own performance	Positive appraisal of own performance	
	Success attributed to goodwill	Personal toll of incident	Yields to further complicating actions (i.e., disrupted

			structure)
	Under-resourced mentioned (but organisational criticism only implicit)	Criticism of organisation more overt	
Resolution	Moral-of-the-tale Normative lessons	Moral-of-the-tale Normative lessons	Moral-of-the-tale Fewer normative lessons
	Content: in line with force priorities (e.g., T & C); shared social identity	Content: improve relationships; professional development; lesson learned re. dignity in death	Content: serendipity; individual competence (but bathetic uncertainty)
General	Theatre as metaphor	Theatre as metaphor Scripts are unfamiliar/novel	Theatre as metaphor Frequent metaphor use for difficulties faced

11.2. Sequence

When I was directed to the Mortuary the next day, I received no input as to what the next two and a half weeks would entail - what we would see, hear and smell. There was only a very brief description of my duties on arrival. [I] *was told that if you completed the paperwork incorrectly then it could cause major complications in the investigation. As I had never even seen the forms before or completed them, it would be true to say I was a little worried* [CT1].

Sequencing in accordance with the Mishler model was evident. The extract above illustrates the typical manifestation of: i) what happened; ii) details about role or duties in the incident place; iii) conflicts created by other people or by situational challenges (e.g., urgent decision required despite absent information); iv) affective statements or mental states often accompanied by preferred future action (e.g., "I was a little worried"; elsewhere, e.g., "I was frustrated by … we need to change"). Temporal markers were used throughout to assist sequencing. Phrases such as: "the next day … the next two and a half weeks … on arrival" above; elsewhere, examples included "at first", "later on", "by the end of day two". They structured the typically chronological accounts; explicit temporal markers were most evident in CT narratives.

In terms of plot, participants told stories of themselves as protagonists who faced, often, difficult challenges (all incidents). They were typically cast as heroes whose task it was to defeat prominent antagonists (SC) or otherwise contend with 'dark forces' (CT). Some participant-characters were more united (SC) than others (CT/NC). Others were sent on journeys (CT/NC), some learned lessons along the way (CT). They concluded narratives by reflecting; they evaluated some as having been more successful than others (SC, CT, NC, respectively). Plots are further elucidated in exemplar narratives later on where they are discussed in relation to existing typologies (see chapter 12). Further details outlining patterns in the three incident types (i.e., counter-terrorism (CT), serious crime (SC), and non-criminal (NC)) are provided next.

11.3. Orientation (Character and Setting)

11.3.1. Character: Who are 'We'?

In terms of character, SC stories were notably first-person accounts with participants referring to "we", "I", or "our team". Family was also mentioned in SC stories but these were typically metaphorical references to colleagues, suggesting close attachments among teams of responders:

We are a family, all here to do one job [SC1];

We are a family and pull together when required [SC2]*.*

The first person plural pronoun/possessive pronoun also appeared in CT accounts. However, although teams were mentioned, there was a lesser sense of close professional attachments compared to SC narratives.

> *I was involved in the intelligence background to the incident and deployed liaison staff to support the BOCUs and the investigators … capturing early conflicts and attempting resolution between BOCU staff and SIOs … I then became involved in sub groups looking predominantly at community relationship issues … ensuring that we fulfil our responsibilities for the service of the case on the Court … together with my staff* [CT2];

> *A gold group at* [HQ place] *where our interests were being represented by a senior officer from outside our business group … our own organisation was making our job so much more difficult. In the end I called in a few favours from colleagues in* [team name]*, whom I'd worked with before. They gave me the run down - unofficially and only then could I brief my smt* [CT2].

As the quotations above show, there were generally more characters in CT narratives, which possibly contributed to a more loosely defined 'we', a less prominent lead character. Note that 'we/our' sometimes appeared but the referents were unstable across and sometimes within narratives (e.g., in the latter example above: "our interests" may refer to "our business group" or "our organisation" or "my SMT" or someone else). This may simply reflect the greater multi-agency involvement in CT work but it was a discernable feature of the CT storyworld (see chapter 12).

In CT accounts, 'we'/'our' often signified actual family or friends rather than colleagues. CT colleagues tended to be referred to by rank, which was more generic and impersonal than the frequent possessive pronouns in SC. To illustrate, counter-terrorism stories included such examples as: "a team of individuals", "a surveillance team", "the counter-terrorism investigators", "the management board", "the police" whereas examples from serious crime included: "our force", "our spokespeople", "our

own staff", "our European colleagues". In CT, the agency title was the preferred nomenclature whereas a sense of belonging was conveyed in SC references to other agencies. Thus, in SC, participants referred less to agency titles but instead to "our partners" or "our stakeholders".

Like CT stories, colleagues in NC stories were also referred to by nouns that indicated function or title; for example, participants spoke of the "Regional Ops Manager" or "Emergency Planning Team Officer". Indeed, there was generally a greater reliance on generic names for characters in NC narratives without recourse to possessive pronouns. Thus, in NC narratives, generic terms such as "specialists", "passengers", "a child", or "willing volunteers" (i.e., rather than "our partners", "our community") gave the narratives a more impersonal tone. Both NC factors together (i.e.,: i) the relative absence of a collegiate approach ('we') among professionals; and ii) the orientation generally tending more to the third person) may account for NC stories having had less sense of immediacy.

These differences in orientation were not absolutes so qualification is required. First person accounts did feature in NC stories but they were confined to individual thoughts/acts by the participant (e.g., "How am I going to respond?"). 'We' did appear in some NC narratives though the pronoun distinguished between U.K. colleagues ('we') and overseas partners ('they') in the overseas session. Some characters from participants' own family or personal circle appeared with first-person possessive pronouns, usually at the opening of narratives, for example:

> *Concerns at how I would juggle home life. While running a* [name]*day morning kids football match I had a call asking me to start marshalling resources … Our 9 year old left winger got very confused when I shouted, "Cross the ball to* [incident place name]*" at one point* [NC1]!

> *How am I going to respond following about 3hrs sleep as my eldest son had been ill during the night* [NC1]?

Overall, though, NC characterisations conveyed less immediacy than found in SC and to a lesser degree in CT stories. NC narratives were also notable for participant-characters' metaphorical allusions to difficulties faced:

For me, this kind of grew in visibility like the Cheshire cat - minus any grin [NC1];

The people at the 'coalface' were still trying to get the job done [NC2];

I received a very vague call asking what could we do if we sent two men in white coats to [incident place name] [NC3].

The NC characters in the extracts above were all oriented towards arduous or unsettling tasks where things were unclear. The coalface suggested hard, physical labour in an unpleasant and uncertain environment. The men in white coats represented not simply the scientific support of the actual police role but also carried echoes of the common stereotype of madness and having to deal with bedlam. The vaguest of the above examples was the Cheshire cat: a literary allusion to a supremely confusing experience and an indication of how difficult and uncertain events were. Normality was suspended and the negative aspects pithily conveyed by the tag, "minus any grin".

11.3.2. Character: Who are 'They'?

If participants were the main characters or protagonists of their own stories, it follows that they were pitted against antagonists who appeared in the narratives. In other words, the 'I' or 'we' characters (which signified the participants) were obviously oriented towards story characters who were designated *other*. It might be expected that the offender would be the obvious antagonist in SC narratives given that it is so in popular crime dramas. Interestingly, it was not so in this analysis. Although offenders were discussed in debriefs and, indeed, in stories, the media were a more prominent antagonist in SC narratives. Participants said:

Success is more than catching our offenders – we have maintained low crime, we have ridden the media storm with our reputation intact [SC1];

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We had the world's media and world's viewpoint, spotlight on us, and they wanted to show we could not do it right. WE WERE DETERMINED [caps original] *to show this was totally false of a small force. We were one unit, all knew each other and how each other works* [SC2];

A great deal of effort! We were dealing with local, national, and international media, broadcasting 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Today's media don't pack up and go home at 5pm each evening. They are a constant presence as you can see on the front lawn of P[olice] *HQ.* [SC2].

The media could be regarded as a convenient displacement of the offender as antagonist in SC narratives because the media were a vital, constant presence, unlike offenders whose main aim clearly is to remain absent from the purview of the police though this is discussed in further detail below.

The *other* did appear in CT narratives but differed from SC narratives in that CT had more types. Firstly, internal tensions were more overt in CT stories and saw colleagues explicitly cast as *other*.

I didn't feel that [team name] *wanted us there* [CT1].

Secondly, the media appeared in CT albeit not as the prominent antagonist of SC narratives. Finally, offenders featured more in CT narratives, sometimes framed as the antagonist against whom participants must (sometimes eagerly) engage:

I was at home when my flat mate's father called from [place name] *saying there was terrorists* [detail redacted] *… I was called to* [place name] *– I was far too excited - HURRY UP AND WAIT* [CT1];

This was about normal young men who turned into terrorists. The operation was successful but what are we learning … the way to deal with this threat is to invest in stopping people becoming terrorists AS MUCH AS or even more than catching them planning what they intend to do [CT2].

There was no characteristic *other* in NC narratives; that is, stories were not framed as protagonist versus adversarial antagonist(s). This made NC narratives, in terms of orientation, rather more nebulous than the other two incident types.

In sum, in SC narratives, participants were protagonists facing an antagonistic media who must be conquered whilst the expected adversary, the offender, was relatively absent. Overall, in CT stories, there was no one dominant group against whom participants were pitted. NC narratives contained no clear *other* group which made them the vaguest in terms of orientation of character. To compare the incident types: The offender did appear in CT narratives (but was absent from SC). The media featured in CT (but less prominently than in SC). In brief, participants as protagonists were oriented towards: no one particular group (NC), towards several groups (CT), or one dominant group (SC).

Several explanations exist. It may be that narrative templates were less clear for CT such that participant-protagonists were unsure who to orientate towards as their adversary. Alternatively, it is possible that participants conformed to a narrative template containing multiple adversaries. The multi-agency reality of disparate responsibility for CT was reflected in the multi-character stories told. With several characters cast as antagonists, CT stories may be viewed more as ensemble pieces. Continuing the analogy, the comparatively nebulous orientation of character in NC rendered them extras without a clear role to play. This echoed the *uncertainty* theme found for NC in the IPA analysis (see chapters 7, 8, 9) and validates the earlier argument about the shift - depending on critical incident type - from organisational centrality to organisational periphery.

In the organisationally central SC incidents, participants cast themselves as leading men or leading ladies. SC participants were confident of their place in the *goodies versus baddies* storyworld. As the example below illustrates, participant-protagonists controlled so-called 'facts', constructed the stories and thereby gained

control over, indeed, even vanquished their adversaries. There is an evident parallel with the adage of history being written by the victors.[13]

> *The media worked on speculation which we balanced against fact. When we did speak to the media we were in control and the time was right for the investigation to release the facts. We always managed to give them more than what they actually knew* [SC2].

Participants constructing narratives of real life cannot enjoy the omniscience of authors of fiction. In the absence, then, of knowledge about the real-life offender, participants instead oriented themselves against the known adversary: the ever-present media. Hence, the media were incorporated into narrative accounts. Fuller explanations will be discussed further below. Nonetheless, there was an arch awareness that it was a construction, a performance - as seen in the second aspect of Mishler's orientation in narrative: the setting.

11.3.3. Setting

Critical incident narratives were replete with theatre metaphors and terms. Some are so familiar, they generally pass unnoticed, for example, the term, *crime scenes*. On analysis, however, they were so ubiquitous they warrant inclusion as a *metaphor we live by*. In their 1980 book of the same title, Lakoff and Johnson advocated a type of consciousness-raising about hidden metaphors of everyday life, predicated on the argument that one ought to be aware of linguistic influences on individuals' thinking. Lakoff's and Johnson's example, *good is up–bad is down* is a superordinate metaphorical category that contains or even generates many words or phrases; thus, examples such as: 'feeling elated', 'she's picking up', 'he's on a high' vs. 'feeling depressed', 'she's a bit low', 'he's down in the mouth' are all predicated on the core spatial metaphor of up equals good whilst down equals bad. I argue here that theatre is a metaphor the police live by in managing critical incidents. The

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[13] More accurately, the quotation from Winston Churchill (1946) reads, "History will be kind to me for I intend to write it" – the epitome of narrative construction.

deployment of a theatre metaphor complemented the prescribed narratives through which meaning is created and incident experiences understood. Theatre appeared in all incident types. Examples included:

Media intruding on scenes [SC1];

The UK kept its message re. terrorism on the world stage [CT2];

All realised they had a role to play and played it to the full …many staff… performed different roles to support colleagues [SC1];

The media will return in force and the eyes of the world will be upon us again [SC2];

[Named individual] *and his unflappable persona fronting the enquiry* [SC2].

Role is, of course, a common enough word in the employment arena. Its frequency, however, was notable as were the companion theatrical terms that support the argument of theatre as a metaphor police live by. The idea of a 'persona' suggests an intradiegetic frame (Phelan & Rabinowitz, 2008) containing a lead individual cast in the spokesperson role to present the media the scripted construction of events. As well as the hero's chutzpah or bravado (fronting it out), the notion of 'fronting' carries echoes of the theatre's 'front of house' where there is simultaneously a backstage, where things under construction remain hidden from view whilst performances are prepared and rehearsed. Although it was not everyone's prime motivation, the construction was nonetheless made explicit as participants discussed whether or when to allow officers to present at media interviews:

The difficulty with getting their [i.e., officers'] *accounts out earlier is that we rush the investigation and end up with inaccuracies, or conflicting accounts being given. Trauma means that people remember things differently, or inaccurately, particularly straight afterwards. This might put the organisation and officers in a difficult situation later on. It has to be about balance. Also finding out what individuals* [i.e., officers] *had done so that we could bat off*

the media wasn't the initial investigative demand. This needs to be communicated to those involved [SC2].

The media in serious crime incidents were assigned a rightful place in the audience. It was not for them to 'intrude' on scenes. Rather, their legitimate space was on the opposite side of the proscenium arch from the police: in the auditorium, as passive audience member expected to wait until police 'got their stories straight', and sit alongside others (the "eyes of the world") who arrived to watch the performance of the prepared and, indeed, preferred narrative. This resonated with the *taking control* theme in the IPA analysis (see chapter 7). The preferred narrative did not always hold sway, however.

The role of the [nation] *team was somewhat different to normal … deployment … the role could have been more clearly defined rather than just developed as it went along* [SC3];

Deployed in country limiting their ability to manage issues and fulfil their role as they would in the UK. The role of [officers] *in* [nation] *was unclear and developed in a random fashion as time went on* [SC3].

The two examples above from the overseas SC session illustrate the discomfort felt by participants at the deviation from expected roles; it thereby indicated reliance on a canonical U.K. narrative, a script in which roles were clearly delineated and officers knew what kind of performance was expected of them. The further one moved away from core SC business, the more deviation from the familiar narrative, expressed through theatre metaphor:

I had no understanding of the chaos caused by a 'mass disaster'. I had been on numerous murder incident rooms where one or maybe two people had been killed … end[ing] *up witnessing the most horrible scenes imaginable was an eye opener* [CT3];

Let's not implode and lose sight of the fact that there is still daily business to get done, although the backdrop had changed significantly [CT2];

I was the borough detective superintendent on day 1 for about an hour before donning what bits of uniform I had and going out on the ground to visit all the scenes in an attempt to find out exactly how many scenes we had cos we didn't know! … whilst sorting this mess out [CT2].

The CT examples referred to hitherto unexperienced events (e.g., "no understanding"/"horrible scenes"/"an eye opener"). They were regarded as new productions that deviated from the more familiar crime narrative with theatre references to how the "backdrop had changed significantly" and the need to travel to "find out exactly how many scenes we had". Changing into appropriate costume ("donning uniform") was shown to be a transformative process after which the performance could then be undertaken. Stepping into costume, learning about the new backdrop and understanding the new scenes provided a means of learning about CT incidents. Settings were bigger and more varied in CT narratives (e.g., "the world stage", "another country", "a big place", "the rest of the country"). CT participant-characters moved through these places: References to journeys were more evident in CT ("out and about in a response car", "arranged a visit", "the plane home").

In NC, there were fewer general theatre metaphors although scenes and roles appeared in participants' stories (albeit less frequently). More prominent was the ejection from home:

How am I going to respond following about 3hrs sleep as my eldest son had been ill during the night. Who will be in charge on scene, what is the extent of the damage, what is actually [detail redacted]*, what initial* [detail redacted] *is still intact on site, when I got to Police HQ - will anyone ever let me in??* [NC1];

I knew that it would be complicated and far-reaching, but had no idea quite what was ahead. I headed for the shower … I wanted to go to the scene to look, and get a sense of what had happened, but knew that was not my place yet … I had seen it on the news and had lots of conversations with people

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inside and outside my own organisation, but to play my part I needed to see the scene [NC1];

A phone call from a middle ranking [partner agency individual] *to me at home … I knew my place was at Gold despite wanting to attend the scene. So it was to Gold I went early* [name]*day morning* [NC2];

There was no one clear start point, nor a form of commencement message. For me, this kind of grew in visibility like the Cheshire cat - minus any grin [NC2] (also see chapter 7, 7.3.2.1.).

Like CT, the orientation in NC narratives comprised journeys through different settings. However, NC participants clearly did not know what they were being cast into; unlike other incident types, NC stories did not tend to begin at the incident site or worksite. More frequently, the opening setting in NC narratives was home from where participants were cast out. Neither did they have a clear place once cast out ("Who will be in charge?"; "Will anyone ever let me in?"; "Not my place yet") but a fatalistic orientation towards the inevitably unfolding mystery was apparent. Indeed, a remarkable fairy-tale register appeared to describe one journey: "So it was to Gold I went early [name]day morning". There were also references to the overwhelming scale in NC narratives:

How do you deal with something this big? [NC2];

Scale of event enormous initially and throughout incident immediately are people dead, ill or at risk? [NC2].

NC theatre phrases were then, fewer and less varied, limited mainly to *scenes* and *roles*. NC participants were cast out of the familiar setting (typically home) and into an expectation that there would be a narrative, a script in which they would have a role; they tended not to know what the role was though they did know they were not the lead. There was one NC exception:

It sounds arrogant, but I felt I knew what to do, but my clearly defined role was in support of a commander. This was a 'big job' and I would rather have had a

command role in its own right. So no organisational tensions, but only within myself, in that I knew I had to do one thing but really wanted to do something else. Later on, I was asking for (later demanding) clear tactical plans, and even sent out a planner to assist, but what we got back did not in my mind fit the bill … Even further down the line there was tension between the 'We must do it like this because the plan says so' versus 'Why can't we do it like this because we find it is working?' [NC2].

The participant claimed confidence and wanted a lead role. The participant knew s/he "had to do one thing but wanted to do something else". However, that which was expected did not occur and the disjuncture between the two was expressed via a clear theatrical reference: That is, the plans demanded "did not fit the bill" – the bill on which theatres advertise their performance details. This participant, it seems, had confidence in his/her role in a canonical narrative and invoked the collegiate 'we' in anticipation; however, it transpired that the incident faced was beyond the organisation's prescribed narrative. Finally, the participant acknowledged that they were in a novel place where officers sought approval for new ideas that worked to replace old plans that did not "fit the bill". Albeit the theatre reference was not explicit by the end of the story, it was evident that the top-down narrative did not work in these circumstances. The dialogue between the organisational narrative and the incident that unfolded had broken down. Participants had been cast out. They were and often remained uncertain of their place in these NC settings, echoing the *uncertainty* theme in the earlier IPA analysis (chapter 9).

The analysis showed other features relating to settings besides theatre as metaphor. Spaces were clearly demarcated in SC, literally by cordons strung around crime scenes. There was also a general demarcation between inside and outside space in SC with inside spaces being functionally designated: "intel cells", "the HOLMES room", "the police bar", the nomenclature defined by the organisation. As discussed above, outside spaces contained theatre references (e.g., "under a spotlight") but outside-space references also featured material properties, and referred to what lies beneath; hence, participants referred to being "on the ground", "on the tarmac", "on the front lawn of HQ" when denoting the settings for particular

events. To continue the metaphor to somewhat obvious conclusion: Participants cast themselves as grounded, on terra firma in their SC stories.

Spaces in CT clustered more obviously around death. Participants referred to the "murder incident room", "funeral venue", "the mortuary". Some were outside spaces though the inside/outside demarcation in CT was less apparent than in SC, with one distinct exception: "The front door" appeared in CT and in SC, indicating the crisp demarcation between the organisation's space and public space. It was so sharply delineated that the very doorway was a synecdoche of the organisation where the police were under scrutiny. The front door was where "unflappable persona[e] fronted" enquiries; it was how officers spoke of the need to return to normal business to lead the way to resolution of the narratives:

> *Above all, have a plan of how to say, OK we're alright now; it's time to get out of the ambulance and walk back in the front door* [CT2];

> *The front door was under a spotlight but you could always be proud that the work the reporters said was being done was being done* [SC2].

Overall, though, CT settings were more scattered and not so defined by function as SC settings. In NC, after the initial ejection from home settings, places did not cluster into any cohesive category recognisable as police-based (e.g., "at the coalface"). There were ad hoc venues: "vacant accommodation" to be found, "reception centres" to be set up but no ownership of these settings; even a "daily briefing [was held] at the airport". Instead, spaces were generalised or anomalous: "the site", "the affected zone". Outside spaces referred to the wider world, often public or transitory places: "the globe" (with theatre connotations), "overseas", "abroad [vs.] back home", "the motorway network", "shopping centres". During iterative checks of data to ensure that researcher ideas were not being unduly imposed on data, a frequency count of places of belonging in NC narratives was undertaken to ensure it was exhaustive. They were so few they can be listed here in their entirety: "police HQ", "the duty office", "control room", "at Gold", "in Silver", "our incident room". Some features from other incident types did appear, then, but they were merely single mentions rather than repeated patterns.

Thus far, then, narrative accounts of participants' experiences were clearly present in the raw data. As events were recounted and presented to an audience (whether researchers examining 10kV data or a co-debriefed colleague or friend), a construction was placed upon the events described. It was a narrative construction and participants' orientation in terms of character and setting revealed some differences characterising incident types. Narratives, of course, also require a complicating action, discussed next.

11.4. Complicating Action

Narratives require a complicating action: It is the quintessence of narrative that the equilibrium be disrupted (and later restored) (Todorov, 1969, cited in Bal, 2009). The most self-evident complicating actions in these data were the incidents themselves: events that disrupted individuals' lives in extremely dramatic ways. As was seen in the analysis of orientation, however, the most predictable was not necessarily the finding. The analysis revealed complicating-action details subordinate to the obvious overarching incident. In SC narratives, the actions of the media were prominent complicating actions. There is perhaps an important dual layer here between an expected (top-down) narrative and the actual (bottom-up) events that played out, and from which participants must construct a narrative. What the media's actions had disrupted was the participants' enactment of an expected narrative. The expected narrative runs thus: Participant-character is cast as hero, pitted against offenders whose criminal actions provide the disequilibrium; when caught and charged, equilibrium is restored. The reported experience was that the media's actions were disrupting not the search for the offender (indeed, the media are frequently valuable assistants to the police in that regard) – rather, they were disrupting the enactment of the prescribed narrative. Hence, the media were reported as a complicating action in participants' SC stories:

I have been bitterly disappointed at the negative briefings given both to the media and behind our backs to influential people [SC2];

On occasions we have attended addresses of witnesses to find them being interviewed by the media ahead of us! On other occasions, the media have interviewed persons we were trying to locate & hadn't [SC1]!

That this latter example was identified as a problem is interesting. An alternative framing could have been that the media's actions were helpful in tracing witnesses during demanding periods for officers. However, participants did not make that interpretation. Instead, it was cited as problematic; media actions featuring as complicating actions indicated that what was paramount was not necessarily the expeditious solving of the crime, the speedy apprehending of the criminal. Rather, what was important in forging meaning from these experiences was the construction of the narrative, the adherence to a prescribed narrative. Thus, complicating actions presented by the media could be successfully resolved and equilibrium restored. Success was construed as control of the narrative, positive reviews of the performance:

The press are always going to comment unfortunately in the UK mostly in a negative way … coping under the same pressure but from a different source, the media and aftermath. The reputation of the force is being upheld by all concerned at all levels. Having read the comments posted on the Sky site, their approach largely backfired; the public are with us [SC2].

Another complicating action in some SC narratives was a perceived lack of trust or mutual support among colleagues:

The average bobby on the beat has been kept in the dark as to the progress of the investigation. I do feel frustrated that we aren't trusted with confidential information [SC1];

There are some sensitivities around 'who gets invited to see PM and HRH and why were we missed' [SC2];

There were different levels of trust, but we were able to effectively manage this … uneasiness from foreign partners that UK was not playing with a straight bat [SC3].

This may seem to counter the claim above that a sense of belonging was a component in the orientation in SC narratives (11.3.1. above). However, the disjuncture between the prescribed top-down narrative and the bottom-up events provide some explanatory power. Serious crime is the canonical narrative because serious crime is organisationally central; thus, SC represents the prototypical critical incident type. Officers ought to belong absolutely and be on solid ground in such narratives - mostly, they were. However, for some, there was an evident disparity between the ideal and the real; bottom-up events revealed that some officers were evidently more equal than others. The leading role in the narrative was not automatically granted to all individuals. Hence, it was a complicating action that required resolution if participants were satisfactorily to resolve their (real-life) sense of exclusion and take what they deemed to be their rightful place in the prescribed narrative. This was no less than a negotiation of their organisational identity.

Internal tensions and exclusion were likewise prominent complicating actions in CT and NC narratives:

I didn't feel that [team name] *wanted us there ... we had something to offer and we might have been the answer to some of the pressures they felt under* [CT1];

I was most proud about the ability of the [force name] *to come up trumps, despite the internal frictions* [CT2].

In CT, as in SC narratives, there was evidence that the complicating actions either had been resolved or could be in future incidents. This was less evident in NC narratives, echoing the *uncertainty* theme in the earlier IPA analysis.

The results were classified as secret so could not be shared with the Gold Command Team [NC2];

I'd received incident management training based around response at Bronze & did not quite know what I'd expect to find at Gold. Arrived at Gold. No phone line to connect laptop to, so no e-mail access. No desk to work at.

Mobile phone battery getting low, is there somewhere to charge it, all plugs seem to be full? [NC2];

I very much felt we were operating essentially in isolation. It took a while before feeling part of wider operation, and we still do not have effective command across all regions from the national team/arrangements [NC3].

As the last examples illustrate, some NC narratives were characterised more by a series of unresolved complicating actions, the repeated questions conveying the sense of uncertainty. Indeed, NC narratives were generally more atypical than SC or NC narratives (discussed further below and in chapter 12).

Other complicating actions appeared in narratives. Insufficient resources were challenges to be managed in SC narratives. In CT, participants discussed the personal toll of a critical incident (yet nonetheless wanted a role). In NC narratives, the uncertainty of how to cope was attributed to the incident scale and occasionally to lack of competencies as well as lack of information. Information absence or surfeit was also a complicating action in some SC and CT narratives; this last was unsurprising as it is a finding from other critical incident research (e.g., Crego & Alison, 2004; Eyre, Crego & Alison, 2008).

In sum, complicating actions clustered around the media in SC narratives. In narratives of all incident types, internal tensions featured as complicating actions. Albeit with slightly different emphases in each incident type, some form of exclusion was a factor: Favoured in-groups were perceived to exist (SC and CT); participants felt mistrusted (CT) or out of their depth among other groups (NC). These complicating actions tended to be more successfully resolved in SC and CT compared to NC. Serious crime stood out as the only incident type where the media's actions were a commonly cited complicating action in the stories told. Both main complicating actions (internal exclusion and media's actions) found in this analysis can be viewed as means of negotiating social identity, with participants seeking to resolve dissonant experiences through the narratives told (Haslam et al., 2004; Haslam et al., 2009). By resolving the complicating action, they could find a means of taking on the organisational identity sought and thereby take up their

legitimate role in the prescribed organisational narrative. Unresolved narratives consigned participants to a repeated series of events: in Riessman's (1993) phrase, an *habitual narrative*; in Frank's (2010) typology, a *chaos narrative*. This was mostly seen in NC narratives and may account for the series of complicating actions within each narrative. Without a narrative prescribed by the organisation, the individual struggled to define their main complicating action as they tried to formulate narratives without a clear template. Next, we turn to what participants made of it all; in the terminology of the Mishler (1991) model – the evaluation aspect of the narrative structures.

11.5. Evaluation

In SC and CT narratives, participants evaluated their own performances positively. This was the most prominent evaluation in both incident types:

I have witnessed the most exceptional examples of personal leadership and getting on with things – I have heard people say I was only doing my job – but this was an exceptional event in anyone's books and people cope with everything thrown at them [SC1];

As a force I felt we handled the world's media very professionally [SC1];

Part of the success was that key people had the flexibility and courage to depart from policy and established practice [SC2];

The fact that we have gone beyond the scope of National Guidelines and supported the injured as well as families of the deceased shows that we are a caring organisation and forward thinking [SC2];

I believe it worked well at [officer] *level and provided professional advice to in country lead* [SC3];

If it was a member of my family I'd want someone like me to recover them. Hard work, but I feel I HAVE made a difference with my contribution [CT1];

The brainchild was ours and that is something you and we can be proud of. It was awesome to see [CT1];

[Agency name] *was too slow to respond and often unclear as to its responsibilities ... Fortunately, we are good at it* [CT2]!!

I showed great deal of versatility and flexibility during my deployment [CT3];

I requested to be on this team and am proud that everyone came home - it was all worth it [CT3].

To reprise the theatre metaphor, the importance of a prescribed narrative in supporting performance was also noted:

Having a script that all levels of staff could stick to was almost a comfort blanket … whereas before I was frightened of what to say to people [CT1].

Naturally, evaluations were not so simplistic that they were confined merely to positive assessments. CT evaluations also attended to the personal toll the incidents had had on individuals:

The expectations upon those of us at the centre led us close to exhaustion. We could have done with more senior support. Gold and some Inspectors were getting very tired. I feel we were lucky to do as well as we did [CT1];

Post-traumatic stress has not been dealt with properly, lack of support network. We probably didn't do anything to measure and deal with the stress [CT1];

I felt angry. Several members of staff felt burnt out because we had a lack of information that led to a breakdown of trust [CT2];

We felt like we were fighting blind and were being treated as insignificant by the organisation [CT2];

I have developed my understanding of other agencies and the frustration that is involved when working in an international multi agency investigation plus the aftermath that was left behind [CT3];

You cannot have those who process the bodies meeting with the family - it will blow a fuse [CT3].

Serious crime evaluations stopped short of the overt criticism of the organisation found in CT evaluations. Instead, SC evaluations saw participants attributing the incidents' successful outcomes to goodwill; the absence of resources or support was more implicit than in CT evaluations:

Staff responded well and were very well motivated despite the physical conditions on the ground, this had little to do with staff planning and much to do with staff goodwill [SC1];

The flexibility shown by these staff was impressive many were off duty at the time of the incident and returned to assist. These staff continued to work into the night to recover bodies, complete scenes and return communities to some sense of normality [SC2];

Our response was second to none and everyone stepped up the mark from officers on duty and officers off duty ringing in asking to come and assist [SC2].

Different explanations are possible for the greater willingness to criticise in CT though it is consistent with the social identity account provided hitherto; namely, closer alignment between individual identity and organisational identity in SC incidents would yield more reluctance to criticise the organisation. To do so would be to criticise oneself, a dissonant experience at odds with the positive evaluation of participants' own performance. The less organisationally central CT incidents provided greater distance between the individual and the organisational identity which permits a space in which to define the organisation as 'other'. There is no contradiction between holding a critical view of another (the organisation) and a

positive view of one's own performance. This is necessarily speculative but offers an interesting empirical topic.

What, then, of NC evaluations? They stood apart from other incident types but the analysis revealed an interesting pattern within this category of incident type: The *evaluations* mirrored the *complicating actions* in NC. Recall that the original source narratives were deconstructed such that the constituent elements populated columns in the Mishler tables. Subsequent examination of the NC tables revealed that two different columns contained entries that could be matched by meaning; specifically, the *complicating action* and *evaluation* columns formed pairs of narrative elements. Examples are shown in Table 11.1. below where quotations in adjacent columns are 'pairs' taken from the same narrative.

Table 11.2.

Complicating Actions and Evaluations in Non-criminal Narratives

Complicating action	Evaluation
My main problem with command arrangements was/is resilience [NC3].	*We still do not have effective command across all regions from the national team/arrangements* [NC3].
The results were classified as secret so could not be shared with the Gold Command Team [NC2].	*How could you plan and give guidance without the baseline information?* [NC2].
Flattered to be called on by [force name] *SIM but lack of certainty about jurisdiction* [NC3].	*I had no clear authority for calling other people to help me other than by goodwill in the initial stages so hugely frustrated that I couldn't demand the help I required* [NC3].

It is, of course, an interpretative analysis so it is conceivable that another analyst might have consigned to the same category what have been regarded as pairs in this study. In other words, why not consider all the examples above either as complicating actions or as evaluations? In the interest of reflexivity, two points can be made. Firstly, the Mishler model was applied sequentially; that is, the data were examined in turn for sequence, then next for orientation, complicating actions and so forth. Thus, there was no consciousness of 'pairs' at that stage of analysis (they did not become apparent until stage three where mind maps revealed connections across results). Secondly, the sequencing of narrative structures was also relevant; the *evaluations* (right-hand column of Table 11.1.) appeared later in syntax than *complicating actions* (left-hand column). This corresponded to Mishler's model which, thus, may act as a further check against having sub-divided categories into too small a grain size and misclassifying them as 'paired' elements rather than single

entities. It is acknowledged that, although category boundaries must be established somewhere, they are not positively objective. However, I do not consider them a researcher artefact.

Ultimately, NC narratives tended to be atypical when compared to SC or CT narratives. The examples in the table above came from narratives that did not resolve problems conclusively and this was a feature of this incident type: The structure of the NC narratives tended to start and end the story with the same problems. Some narratives from other incident types lacked firm resolution but they tended to take a different form, discussed next.

11.6. Resolution

After the beginning and middle, stories must end. The disrupted equilibrium is restored and normality either resumes as before or is modified so that a new order prevails and equilibrium is once more attained. There was no strong distinction between incident types; albeit NC resolutions tended to be a different from SC and CT, it was a matter of degree not kind. Accordingly, all incident types are discussed together in this section.

Resolutions in the critical incident narratives were often absent or not definitive. Absent resolutions of the narratives conceivably constituted a passage from the immersion in the storyworld (during the construction of narrative accounts in the debrief session) back to the real-life profession and the prospect of further events that participants would have to manage. Incidents were not necessarily completed at time of debrief (e.g., ongoing prosecutions, potential public enquiries). As one participant asked, "*Is there a danger of people thinking it's all over now?*" [SC1] so this could account for absent resolutions; that is, the story had not yet ended so the absence of resolutions could have been an artefact of the timing of data collection.

On reflection, however, it became apparent that what were actually absent were formal resolutions. To clarify: Stories ended but in so doing they did not conform to an archetypal structure (which ends at the point where equilibrium has

explicitly been restored). Instead, the story on the page ended at the evaluation stage:

> [re. bureaucracy]*: All the other stuff we need to do before we go out the door, - this time we just went outside and was there doing the job – instead of talking about it* [SC1];

> *We are a family all here to do one job get the offender or offenders and we can only do this if everyone pulls their weight and do the best they can* [SC1].

As seen in the latter example above, some evaluation-resolutions were in the guise of 'and the moral of the tale is…' which acted to signal the close of the narrative. It is, of course, the case that there is no register for real-life incidents that allowed for the *happily ever after* closure of fairy tale narratives. Participants' positive evaluations of their own performance (11.5. above) were possibly a substitute in that regard.

Some resolutions tended to comprise reflection on what had been learned from the experience; this was a particular characteristic of CT narratives. Others were more future-based and took the form of normative lessons to be learned for future incidents:

> *We dealt with each victim with dignity, respect and a feeling of it really could have been any one of us, or one of our loved ones, taken away without a chance to say goodbye* [CT1];

> [re. negative briefings to media] *I hope the actions of ACPO team in* [incident place name] *go some way to rectifying this behaviour of other ACPO officers and demonstrate that we did care* [SC1];

> *This is one of the most important issues in the investigation and should be heavily highlighted in the post investigation stage to encourage persons in the community to come forward and help us more in the future, both in major and minor investigations* [SC1].

The evaluation-resolution and the future-based normative resolution were certainly not mutually exclusive. Normative resolutions also conveyed 'the moral of the tale'.

> *I'd tell them to take regular breaks, and to look out for everyone's welfare, not just their own. They'd need to know as much about what they were to face as possible* [CT2].

It was mentioned above that there were few differences between incident types in terms of resolutions. Specifically, all incident types contained evaluation-resolutions and normative 'moral of the tale' resolutions. There are, however, two qualifications to be made. Firstly, the content of these resolutions differed. Secondly, as elsewhere, non-criminal incidents were somewhat different.

In terms of content, SC resolutions reported the high standards in positive reviews of own performance, a shared identity and force priorities:

> *We are a family all here to do one job* [SC1];

> [We have] *designed to ensure a positive experience for each person in contact with the investigation to maintain public confidence* [SC2].

That public confidence appeared as a topic indicated the salience of trust and confidence as a key performance indicator for the police (Casey, 2008); it perhaps illustrates the salience of the organisation that force priorities on trust and confidence were the closing point of some narrative accounts. It certainly explains the insistence on wresting control of the narrative away from media and their negative stories (See also chapter 13 on Peelian principles).

Content of CT resolutions attended to: improving relationships and professional development, as well as positive self-appraisal:

> *Be aware of the stresses it causes the officers on the ground who have to make life changing decisions whilst not in the comfortable surroundings of an air conditioned office* [CT3]!

We might have been the answer to some of the pressures they felt under. A bit too much testosterone for my liking [CT1];

Made me a better team player. I can say that I am proud to have been associated with the incident and staff of Op [current op name] [CT3]*.*

NC resolutions were sometimes normative though less frequently so than SC and CT. Otherwise, NC resolution content included serendipity and individual competencies:

The weather system held up - the public health impact was nowhere near as significant as it could have been [NC2];

[re. intent to *"report periodically on lessons that can be learned"*] *I wonder has there been any progress on this* [NC1];

Worked very hard, did, my very best. Only lost it a little about three times despite the pressure and the potential to foul up [NC2].

The last examples above show the tendency for NC resolutions to yield to further mention of the complicating action. Although it appeared in other incident types, it was more evident in NC narratives. In the second normative example, the participant ended by declaring his/her ignorance, left wondering if there has "been any progress". In the last, the reader is left not with the positive appraisal but the potential to foul up. They had the effect of undercutting the ostensibly successful resolutions. Given their syntactical position as final statements, the uncertainty leaked through.

Although NC resolutions conformed to the evaluation-resolutions and normative resolutions that SC and CT narratives did, the normative resolutions were fewer in number. It should be noted that recommendations did sometimes appear in NC narratives; however, they were not, syntactically, the final take-home message and appeared amidst, even buried in, many other statements or questions. With respect to evaluation-resolutions, recall that evaluations in NC narratives had the distinguishing feature of mirroring the complicating actions. At close of narrative,

therefore, this had the effect of landing the reader firmly back at square one. Equilibrium was disrupted by (unresolved) complicating actions. Moving on through the narrative merely returned us to the beginning, indistinguishable from the end. I have therefore named the NC narrative, *Cheshire cats* (see chapter 12) after one participant's apposite description.

It seems appropriate to conclude the resolution section of a narrative chapter with a resolution from a participant's narrative. The participant provided a resolution that worked in three neat steps. The way that the incident itself concluded (i.e., the reuniting of families with their loved ones) constituted the new equilibrium. Thus, in step one, the storyworld's complicating action was overcome. In step two, the task was evaluated with praise for the police role. Finally, the narrative moved out of the nested structure of the storyworld swiftly back into the present: In step three, the participant asked to leave the debrief, the context in which experiences had been recounted, narratives constructed, meanings made, and even identities processed. Thus, this resolution section closes with the supreme economy of the participant's words. S/he said:

All [number redacted] *bodies home - top job - can I go now?*   [CT3].

11.7. Conclusion

In sum, SC narratives contained participant-characters who had a clear place in the organisation. Storyworld settings were clearly demarcated along 'inside/outside the organisation' lines. Participants were cast as heroes set against an antagonistic media (more so than the offender). Through gaining control of the media and restoring community confidence, the narrative could be successfully resolved.

CT narratives contained participant-characters who were part of an ensemble of characters. There was no dominant antagonist but, in addition to terrorists, a range of internal tensions served as challenges. Death was also a vivid feature of CT stories as was the personal toll. Settings were less demarcated than in SC, places covered a grander scale so travel and transport also featured. Narratives were

concluded with evaluations of positive self-appraisal, valuable learning that helped participants: i) to recognise the need for improved relationships; and ii) to develop professionally.

NC narratives contained participant-characters who were ejected from home but unclear what they had been cast into. Settings were varied and comparatively generic or even vague. As with CT, journeys featured in NC but participant-characters did not have ownership of places. NC stories had less sense of immediacy or even an air of mystery where participants remained unclear. Where positive self-appraisal did appear, it tended to give way to bathetic further complicating actions. Hence, resolution was certainly less definitive than other incident types or even entirely absent.

All incident types featured an awareness of self-reflexive construction of the narratives, seen in the pervasive theatre metaphor. All incident types also had narratives that were without formal resolutions. Instead, some ended at evaluation. Others had 'not-quite resolutions' that were normative, future-based lessons that could be learned; that is, (in narrative terms), the resolutions yielded to further complicating actions. This was most apparent in NC narratives where mirrored (hence, reversible) pairs of *complicating action - resolution* were a feature. This chapter concludes the focus on separate elements of narrative structure posited by the Mishler (1991) model. In the next chapter, the focus of the study moves to others' approaches to narrative, in particular, broader considerations of plot and genre (Booker, 2009; Frank, 2010; Frye, 1957; Gergen & Gergen, 1986), which discussion will close the narrative part of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWELVE. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS: 3 – PLOT, GENRE, AND DISCUSSION

12.1. Introduction

In this final narrative chapter, the focus turns to plot and genre. This chapter is essentially a presentation of the overarching incident-type narratives. It also contains a final general discussion of the narrative analysis, including the theoretical contribution of the study and the utility of findings.

12.2. Method

The analysis proceeded exactly as presented in chapter 10, utilising the same dataset and products. Transcripts were read and re-read (stage 1), previously constructed Mishler tables were used (stage 2) and mind maps used to examine patterns (stage 3). Again, the analysis was inductive and pertinent literature appears in discussion sections below. Previously, supporting extracts have been labelled (e.g., CT1). The fuller nature of narrative accounts potentially permits more identifying details. Therefore, they have been omitted here.

12.3. Results

The results of the study showed that participants used narrative to convey their experiences of critical incidents, narratives which conformed to the model of narrative structure proposed by Mishler (1991). There were similarities in stories across the incident-type categories, unsurprising, given the common context of policing critical incidents of one type or another. However, there were differences between incident types that can be formulated here. Findings are discussed in relation to different typologies and narrative approaches (Frank, 2010; Frye, 1957; Gergen & Gergen, 1986) although, in essence, each conformed to different archetypal plots (Booker, 2009). With the caveat that Booker's plots are not mutually exclusive, exemplars of critical incident narratives have been developed on a 'best fit' principle.

Mishler (1990) recommended exemplars as an appropriate means of establishing validity (though he preferred the term *validation*). Citing Kuhn (1970), Mishler (1990) argued that, "Exemplars serve as testaments to the internal history of validation within particular domains of inquiry [because they] contain within themselves the criteria and procedures for evaluating the 'trustworthiness' of studies" (p.422). This exemplar approach was adopted in this study for three reasons: Firstly, it conformed to validity/validation procedures used specifically in narrative enquiry; secondly, it provided an extra check without compromising the virtual audits already used in the earlier IPA analysis and the current narrative analysis (Smith et al., 2009; see also Yardley, 2008); thirdly and most importantly, exemplars provided a means of collating the hitherto rather atomistic results from this study into holistic, cohesive summary narratives that are easily recognisable. Whole narratives are more memorable than fragmented elements. Frank termed such narratives *companion stories* whereby stories are "material-semiotic beings [that] become humans' companions" (2010, p.43). The exemplars formulated from this analysis have been named: Serious crime incidents had a *Media monster* narrative; Counter-terrorism incidents had a *CONTEST quest* narrative; Non-criminal incidents had a *Cheshire cats* narrative. The narratives for each incident type are discussed next.

12.3.1. The Media Monster Narrative

In serious crime incidents, participant-characters conformed closely to Frye's (1957) romantic hero. Further in accordance with Frye's genre, the characteristic references to the "ground", "tarmac" et cetera reduced the environment to mere material next to the outstanding heroes. The plot of SC narratives was that of Booker's (2009) *Overcoming the monster* where, as the title suggests, a monster is cast as principal antagonist. The monster must be vanquished so a hero is called to end the disruptive threat it poses in order that equilibrium may be restored; in examples from classical mythology: Theseus defeated the minotaur, Hercules killed the Hydra, Perseus slayed Medusa. Following that plot, police romantic heroes in *Media monster* narratives faced several challenges before the final encounter. Extracts show those challenges were many, varied, and extremely difficult. They positioned narrators as empathic. Further, the difficult nature of the challenges

elevated and served to confirm their status as heroes. At the very least, they were resourceful individuals who could overcome anything by pulling together; at their best, they could manage unprecedented situations with aplomb, magicking up resources from nowhere to do so.

Unprecedented; the particular [redacted] *has never been seen in the UK before;*

Provided resources when I thought that there were none available;

Establishing a witness of no fixed abode was in custody so we could interview them;

Obtained hand warmers for officers on cordons who had been standing in the cold for 12 hours at a time in uniform designed not for this weather;

Plan the route and format for the escort of detained persons from police custody to court appearances whilst keeping the media at arms' length;

Having been first officer at the scene of the [redacted] *deposition sites I initiated the setting up of cordons and points in order to secure each scene.*

Charged with ridding the community of fatal threats, these narratives used dramatic linguistic practices to create urgency. They showed protagonists who overcame the pressure and had initial success in that they found and apprehended offenders.

A fast moving investigation that was exploding in size by the hour....Never in the history of British crime had events unfolded...;

There has been a severe fear factor to deal with as [place name] *community is tightly grouped and they respond by standing together against such terror within the community so it has not been only the police but the whole community at large that has got together to bring the offender(s) to justice.*

They experienced the plot's frustration stage whereby a more vivid antagonist appeared and had to be confronted. Thus, they encountered the trickiest adversary: the media who vied with them for control.

> *The media appeared to be far better informed of the developments occurring than officers who were actually at scene and expected to be flexible with a rapidly changing situation*;

> *The media coverage plays an important part in any enquiry of this scale and size if used correctly. However sometimes more so at the scenes I feel they have tried to push the boundaries by wanting too much, putting extra pressure on those manning the cordons. They should respect the boundaries and what we are trying to do*;

> *It's difficult not to be over sensitive when you have the weight of the press trying to destroy confidence you have worked hard to build.*

Ultimately, officers successfully took control of the media. By shaping the story themselves, participants had vanquished the monster media and claimed for themselves the power over the narrative and, in so doing, their reputation.

> *We have shown that despite being a small force, which the media kept stressing, we have shown them we can cope and I believe have earned the respect of the whole country*;

> *It didn't matter what we did the media were always going to focus on the negatives - they don't do good news. However, if you look at some of the forces that have been in the media spotlight recently we did really well. It could have been much worse. In private conversations the media are telling us that it has been handled really well;*

> *Agree that certain broadcast media simply seeking a lurid story- this is inevitable. Our response was just right- not defensive, but factual, realistic, & essentially human.*

The last quotation invokes the exacting perfectionism of Goldilocks and her satisfaction at having finally found the perfect resolution. These storied plots were different from the real-life experiences and this demands explanation. In SC incidents, officers had actually removed the shadow of the offenders from the communities. Equilibrium had been restored. There was, ostensibly, then, a viable alternative narrative plot: The offender was the obvious contender for *monster* but these incidents offered no real-life prospect of the offender being cast as the storyworld monster for several reasons. Firstly, participants needed control over the monster but they lacked knowledge of real-life offenders' actions or motives, especially at the time narratives were constructed. This meant that an omniscient narrator/author position was impossible; indeed, it was difficult even to orientate towards an antagonist monster that was unknown (whereas media practices were familiar). Secondly, it is a requirement of heroic narrative structures (including the *overcoming the monster* plot) that they contain a final, thrilling escape from death: The escape ratifies their hero status. However, police had not been threatened with death (from which to escape), which potentially invalidated hero status. Finally, and most importantly, the offenders' victims had sadly not escaped. Neither had they been rescued. It would therefore be wholly inappropriate to accept such glorification, given the rescuing connotation associated with a hero role in that narrative. Again, the hero status was threatened.

Nonetheless, an *overcoming the monster* plot posits a thrilling escape from death as the final narrative stage and participants were cast as protagonist heroes. How was this to be resolved? An effective substitute adversary was required. One was at hand, one that allowed officers to have a hero role without any discomfort. By escaping from the clutches of the media's negative accounts, participants had avoided the prospect of a tragedy genre being imposed upon them. The *Media monster* narrative enabled them to make a thrilling escape from the death of their reputations. Instead, their heroic actions had restored the community to safety; just as Goldilocks had her thrilling escape when the bears returned home, so too the ending here was "just right". Police and public were thus united, as befits the reunion ending in comedy genres, as befits the canonical narrative of the critical incident management policy. In Gergen and Gergen's (1986) model, the *Media monster*

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narrative had a progressive structure in that participants extracted success from tragedy and thus attained their goal.

In recounting their experiences, then, the dilemma was harsh. Officers could not displace victims from centre stage (they were not two-dimensional fictional characters who had died but real people). On the other hand, to motivate themselves to face intensely challenging events, officers needed to cast themselves as heroes, active protagonists who would defeat 'dark forces', eliminate threats, and restore communities. In place of power over the offender monster, they successfully took power over the media monster. In so doing, they claimed power over the narrative as their prize. To draw once more on Frank's (2010) terminology, the narrative constitutes a positive companion story. Moreover, it conforms to organisational expectations of how incidents should conclude: with a positive appraisal of performance that will maintain public confidence.

12.3.2. The CONTEST Quest Narrative

In counter-terrorism incidents, participant-characters conformed in some respects to Frye's (1957) tragic hero. Specifically, they did not necessarily stand head and shoulders above their environments but they were clearly isolated, as seen in the overt exclusion from (and, indeed, conflict with) colleagues and partners. As tragic heroes, they also tended to learn from their experiences as shown in the reflective evaluation parts of narratives.

The plots in CT narratives conformed to Booker's (2009) *quest* plot. Following this plot, the hero receives a call and must follow a difficult journey in order to remove a threat that is making life intolerable. Other characters are varied and may be helpers, rivals, or other so-called 'dark forces'. *CONTEST quest* narratives were peopled by multiple characters compared to other incident types.

> *I was at* [name] *Crown Court. Rung by* [named individual] *and asked to sort out* [redacted], *by* [other force name] *police. Then went and informed the judge in the case of what had occurred and asked him to release me and my team from court. Went from there to* [HQ].

The brief extract above opens a narrative with no fewer than four characters (I, the person who telephoned, judge, my team) and three agencies (crown court, partner police force, own HQ). The release from court acts as narrative device to heighten the sense of calling. The portrayal of the substantial power and authority of the crown court confirms the hero status by comparison. The presiding judge's reply does not bear narrating: Even a crown court judge acknowledges that the hero has a higher calling.

Several challenges are faced on the *quest* journey, including hostility, as seen in the internal tensions with colleagues/CT partners who were regarded as rivals.

> *Listening to people going on about KIT. The KIT I had was fine and did the job. We were there to recover the dead not to try and get as much KIT as we could;*

> *Getting info from* [name] *authorities was like plaiting fog;*

> *The Exhibits Officer at my scene was a dinosaur who clearly did not want any 'outside' interference in his scene and it took a couple of days for him to begin to appreciate the value that we could bring to his operation;*

> *On arrival and liaison felt that we were a spare part and not welcome …and then felt that a job was "found" for the team at the mortuary.*

The *quest* plot is distinguished by the passage through the underworld where the hero may receive guidance or otherwise learn something valuable from the shades. It is assumed that CT officers do not consciously engage in a *quest* plot (i.e., with requisite journey to the underworld). It was intriguing then, that death nonetheless appeared in CT narratives. Recall too, the earlier analysis of narrative structural elements showed that spaces clustered around death only in CT sessions (see chapter 11, 11.3.3. Orientation: Setting).

> *Good to see us remembering one of the main objectives. To respect dignity of families and dead;*

Getting a good job done, with respect for the victims.

That death should have emerged in CT stories (from a completely bottom-up analysis) indicates the intractable and remarkable grip of narrative. Might it be explained by the rather transparent corollary between real-life fatalities and death as an emergent cluster in subsequent analysis? Possibly, but it did not appear in SC or NC narratives (despite real-life fatalities), lending some weight to my argument that it is attributable to a characteristic CT plot: the *CONTEST quest*.

In a *quest* plot, the final challenges faced typically comprise three. When the hero finally reaches the goal, the prize sought may be won. Classically, the life-transforming treasure may be a kingdom or a princess's hand but the quest can also be a search for wisdom; upon reaching said goal, the narrative is resolved. Learning from the experience was a feature characteristic of CT participants' evaluation/resolutions in this study, below (also see chapter 11, 11.6.):

I am proud to have contributed to helping the victims' families get closure. I was pleased to be part of a team which did not look for the kudos but gave help and support;

I was proud to have been part of the team that dealt with the victims in a respectful way identified them so they could be laid to rest by their loved ones;

I knew the work we were doing was important to the investigation and to the victims' families. For the first time in many years I felt I was doing something worthwhile. I only hope that if it was me or a member of my family that one of you would be there to get us home.

Learning about dignity in death or the importance of building stronger professional relationships were evaluative features that concluded CT stories; 'moral of the tale' endings also featured and thus were characteristic of the *CONTEST quest*. However, the CT narratives in the current study did not produce any discernable rule of three and were atypical on that element of a *quest* narrative.

Frye (1957) stated that an ironic hero may display a knowing self-deprecation, which quality ultimately elevates the hero from the ostensibly inferior to the sophisticated romantic hero. This may be the function of the self-deprecating humour seen in the IPA analyses. However, humour did not appear in the storyworld of CT narratives. Again, it would be inappropriate given the real-life tragedies that occurred. When considering stories' capacities, Frank (2010) advocated examination of what is 'without' as well as what is 'within' the text. To consider, then, what happened outside the text: It may be that CT officers recovered themselves from tragedy in stages. Analogous to deep-sea divers who must undergo decompression in stages; within the text, CT officers were tragic heroes, having passed through the underworld – isolated, despite the wisdom gained, as King Lear or Macbeth near the close of the play. Beyond the text, participants retreated from the storyworld into the half-way decompression chamber of the debrief session (in structural terms, the Coda element of Labov's (1982) model of narrative structure: the return to the present). At that stage, participants engaged others in humour, through which process, they shifted from tragic hero to self-deprecating and, hence, sophisticated romantic hero. This is a significant capacity of CT stories, one which makes for a very positive companion (Frank, 2010) if the casting as hero motivates officers to face considerable adversity.

As discussed earlier (chapter 10, 10.5.), Gergen and Gergen (1986) argued that restoration after loss (in the face of adversity) is a component of a romance narrative structure whereas tragic narrative structures are regressive where well-intentioned characters simply suffer losses (also Smith, 2008). In this study, the losses were evident in the CT narratives' discussions of personal toll of the incident, supporting earlier research on police officers' psychological stress caused by exposure to dead bodies (Karlsson & Christianson, 2003). Ostensibly, these experiences of loss accord with a regressive structure for the narrative (Gergen & Gergen, 1986; Smith, 2008) but participants redeemed their status as they retreated from the storyworld to become romantic heroes, showing the importance of Frank's (2010) exhortation to view narratives dialogically and consider stories' capacities outside as well as inside the text.

In terms of Frank's (2010) capacities, motives in CT narratives had a fluid aspect with regard to heroes. This interpretive openness around CT functioned to unite at debrief those who had formerly been split (e.g., the 'dark rivals' in the storyworld). Like in SC narratives, the role of romantic hero served as motivator to enable officers to face extraordinary events and overcome them. The difference (apart from plot type) was that SC showed a symbiosis between story and teller whereas those telling CT stories had to travel from their position inside the storyworld (tragic/ironic hero) to the desired position outside the storyworld (romantic hero).

As hero of the plot, then, CT officers learned from the shades of the underworld; for example, their sagacity about the need for dignity in death which was brought back to 'make whole' the community. In some cases, real-life victims had actually been reunited with families through the actions of officers who had recovered them; it could thereby feature in and resolve the *CONTEST quest* narrative. The last extract above contains an overt expression of conciliation among those who may have been former rivals, by conditionally entrusting the care of his or her family to colleagues. Ending narratives with an act of reunion once again subverted the tragedy genre and borrowed instead from romance and comedy. The narrative heroic self who can effectively wrest victory from defeat by subverting genres may help to overcome the real-life tragedy experienced. Put simply, participants cast as heroes in organisational narratives may actually be a protective factor in reality. Thus, these stories have the capacity to be positive companion stories (Frank, 2010).

12.3.3. The Cheshire Cat Narrative

In non-criminal incidents, participant-characters did not conform to Frye's (1957) heroic type. Indeed, the incident type as a whole did not converge so obviously into sharp clusters. Nonetheless, it did conform to one of Booker's (2009) plots: the *voyage and return* plot. As the title suggests, protagonists undertake a journey and typically return home again. In this plot, they are not compelled to respond to a call for a hero (though they may be called to journey's beginning). More often, they can accidentally fall into the action. The world they fall into is unfamiliar.

The character does not belong there and nothing is what it seems. *Alice in Wonderland* is the archetypal *voyage and return* narrative.

Clearly, participants did belong in the real-life world they inhabited; that is, they were bona fide police officers who had been charged with managing a critical incident. However, participants needed the narratives to convey that they had experienced the incident as unfamiliar terrain; this may account for the characteristic opening of *Cheshire cat* narratives where participants were at home or otherwise at leisure. Unlike the heroes' callings of some plots, it is atypical to respond to a call in a *voyage and return* plot. In *Cheshire cat* narratives, starting from home symbolised the ejection from a safe place of ordinary occurrences and the casting into a strange world.

Call came whilst at party at friend's house;

A phone call from a … officer to me at home saying… ;

My call came as I was shopping in Waitrose. My colleague was in Sainsbury's;

First notification - whilst on call - was through international media, and then directly in force because [redacted] *was believed killed. This led us to contact with the* [name] *Police and to set up our own local command and control. There was no one clear start point, nor a form of commencement message. For me, this kind of grew in visibility like the Cheshire cat - minus any grin.*

As the extract above shows, the strange Cheshire cat of Alice's world can lose even its grin and dissolve completely. A distinguishing feature of the *voyage and return* plot is that reality changes and a defining point of identity may dissolve. That which had been recognisable, disappears, replaced by the unfamiliar or the unexpected. Ordinary standards and practices change; absent characters suddenly appear; the impossible is requested; magic wands are required.

We are in a field of subjective decision making and not evidence based decision making;

[In response] *In complex situations don't all decisions have an element of uncertainty, meaning that all are to some degree subjective*?

I picked up a mistake, dealt with it straight away, reported it, and 20 minutes later had the Supt who never comes in giving me what for;

Families and communities are expecting more and more - what would have been a Rolls Royce service in the past is now seen as a minimum;

Feeling that there was a perception that we could wave our magic wand and it would all be done as we have "contacts";

Some difficulties in persuading the requesting agencies that the information they required did not exist - or at least we did not have it;

Was totally unclear as to whether we could do as requested in the limited time available … Much more difficult to get movement where buy-in was needed from partners, especially if they were in theatre … great sense of urgency and willingness but not a lot of coordination; sense of frustration in having to remit every decision upwards, sense of fear.

The unfamiliar was also manifest in discussion of the scale in the incident (also chapter 7, 7.3.2.4.): a feature of *Cheshire cat* narratives that could have come straight from the pages of another famous *voyage and return* plot, *Gulliver's Travels* (see chapter 11, 11.3.3., setting).

In practice money not (or shouldn't have been) a problem given the scale of the emergency - anything was theoretically possible where there was a clear need. But did this come across?

[In response] *No it didn't come across;*

My experience has involved me in mass disaster on previous occasions and I was aware what was required but unsighted on this scale;

How many casualties, there are going to be loads and how are we going to cope. Why can't we find any dead? How do we co-ordinate the immense health response? Will staff do what they are supposed to?

Voyage and return plots do not necessarily close on successful resolutions. They allow for characters who may return home none the wiser. They have not succeeded in quests for holy grails nor defeated monsters, hence, the common 'it was all a dream' ending. In the NC *Cheshire cat* narrative, truly, nothing was as it seemed. They did not even return home - the place where things were safe and familiar; the return to normality did not characterise the close of these narratives. Recall that evaluation-resolutions yielded to further complicating actions in mirrored pairs (Table 11.1.), the narrative boundaries of one story dissolving into the next.

Police Authorities are already challenging the legality of their forces contributing to [operation name] *unless a clear link to their force area can be made in proportion to their contribution. We are in danger of having to withdraw staff if this cannot be resolved. This might well have wider ramifications for future mutual support operations;*

Tactics in theatre worked well considering the initial chaos. Difficulty in getting the UK (those back home) to fully understand the complexity and international dimensions in trying to engage and influence the international [name] *communities was frustrating;*

If you could get over the blame culture and negativity, you could use a similar aspect around all aspects of policing, but it seems that this would be like turning the Titanic round.

The unresolved challenges are revealed by the confused image in the final quotation. The colloquial simile of *turning a tanker around* – used to illustrate slow and effortful challenges – morphs into a reference to a ship that is long since beneath the sea, one that cannot sail let alone turn around. It indicates a task doomed to failure yet somehow it is nonetheless being contemplated. Real-life participants had actually managed the incidents to conclusion; normality had been

restored and, where fatalities occurred, some had been reunited with families as a direct result of officers' actions. Yet, on the whole, these real-life features tended not to make it into NC narratives. The storied selves were not cast as heroes in the way that SC and CT participants had been. Rather, they left the safety of the real world for a narrative world in which they remained lost.

This dissolution of identity corresponds neatly with the idea that participants in NC incidents failed when they tried to confirm their organisational identity. They could not engage successfully with organisational products that in any way reflected back who they are or what they should do (Haslam et al., 2003). They were through the looking glass and one's image cannot be reflected back on the wrong side of the mirror. Participants from NC incidents clearly had an outside perspective in the *Cheshire cat* narrative, from which position, they reflected on the absurdity of huge events. This last feature fits the NC *Cheshire cat* narrative neatly into Gergen and Gergen's (1986) stable narrative structure and they may be regarded therefore as satires (See also Smith, 2008).

12.4. Discussion

Discussion of the current study in relation to social identity theory will be reserved for the final chapter (13). Narrative identity is discussed in this section. The IPA analysis in the preceding chapters hinted at the narrative structures that were revealed in these chapters. Officers who extracted a positive conclusion from negative experiences (IPA) were enacting a progressive narrative structure. Moreover, the experiences map neatly onto Frye's (1957) classification of romance: Officers were protagonists who overcame adversity to regain what had been lost.

Indeed, this is echoed throughout incident management documents where the recovery phase is the restoration of normality For example, the U.K.'s *CONTEST* CT strategy states that police (and partner agencies) must "work to bring the terrorist attack to an end, and to recover from its aftermath. An effective and efficient response will save lives, reduce harm, and aid recovery" (Home Office, 2011, p.94). In a policing domain, then, this drive towards re-establishing the situation as it existed prior to the disruptive event is an explicit part of the model for managing

emergencies and critical incidents (NPIA, 2009a). It suggests the implicit narrative structure within police, Home Office, and NPIA protocols. The 2009 guidance outlines procedures for: i) the response process (e.g., rescue phase); and ii) the recovery process, this latter culminating in restoration (e.g., of public services) and regeneration (e.g., of affected area). Further, policy elements correspond to narrative features: ACPO critical incident management guidance refers to "the circumstances … the emotional, mental and physical impact of the incident [and] general feelings of security and/or vulnerability" (ACPO, 2011a, p.35). These correspond directly with Bruner's (1990) story features of human beings as characters, events, actions, and mental states. It corresponds to a further defining property of narrative, "the forging of links between the exceptional and the ordinary [as a means] of constructing reality, of bringing sense to something that is obscure or unusual" (Smith, 2008, l.2369-l.2375). Narratives are indeed ubiquitous.

To return to the phenomenological basis of the thesis: It is incontestable that the critical incident events temporally preceded the recounting of events. The essence lies, then, in the definition of experience. Was the experience the physical, visceral *experience* – the tasks, actions and emotions during the events or was the *experience* the constructed narrative - the subsequent meaning-making process? However, viewing them as static leads us to an unhelpful dichotomy. Frank (2010) helps to escape the trap of a mutually exclusive dichotomous understanding of experience by framing it instead as a reciprocal process. By any other name, this is the dialectic relationship with organisational products (Haslam et al., 2003), as argued in the preceding IPA chapters and the introduction to the current narrative studies (chapter 10). Frank argued that stories satisfy a demand for experience; they materialise letters and words – that which had been an abstract set of signs. Hence, stories become material-semiotic beings that can accompany humans through life. Frank stated that, "A story offers to become the companion of anyone who receives it … [and that] companion species shape each other in their progressive co-evolution" (2010, p.44). Companion stories provide the means through which identities are shaped.

With companion stories in common, narratives may also serve to bring disparate groups into common cause. Frank (2010) argued that any group's corpus of stories will express what is acceptable. The *CONTEST quest* narrative pointed the way to dignity for victims and in so doing protected bereaved families from further grief, which protection is a key strand in the U.K.'s counter-terrorism strategy (Home Office, 2011). The *Media monster* narrative advocated that the appropriate place for serious crime was in the hands of the police, not the media. Both *Media monster* and *CONTEST quest* narratives modelled appropriate behaviour via the heroic protagonists. By making heroes' motivations and actions visible, the stories could act as preparation for future accounts. They explicated the processes involved in legitimate behaviour for police officers. The narrative identities showed the way to social identities.

The *Cheshire cat* narrative did not model legitimate actions in the same way. However, this narrative could serve other purposes: Demonstrating what is illegitimate can be valuable. The *Cheshire cat* narrative may actually reveal an act of agency, one that signifies a rejection of this unfamiliar non-criminal world. Police may simply not want to manage these incidents. Alternatively, they do want to manage them but do not know how. Either way, there is a problem in formulating acceptable identities. Hence, the difficulties inherent in managing NC incidents were shown through the *Cheshire cat* narrative; similarly, the personal toll on officers managing fatalities was raised in the *CONTEST quest* narratives. Both could act as signals to the organisation to address problems. If, as Smith (2008) suggests, narratives have ontological status, there will be an impulse to restore order, to attain a coherent identity within a cohesive narrative. That depends, of course, whether the relevant people within the organisation listen to the stories told.

12.5. Utility

It was argued at the start that the central conflict in narratives may yield insights into organisational culture (chapter 10, 10.2.). The narratives' complicating actions in this study revealed the difficulties faced by critical incident responders. The media loomed large for serious crime responders and caused more immediate conflict for participants than did the offenders they sought to apprehend. There is

utility in considering the appropriate role for media in critical incident management. Although media management training exists in the police service, the current study indicates that it needs to be developed in a more positive, collaborative manner. It also suggests there is a possibility that officers are more concerned with managing professional image than pursuing investigations.

The main source of conflict for counter-terrorism responders was the colleagues and partners who were 'dark rivals'. They caused participants to feel excluded or displaced from their role. The suggested utility for the police service is in developing partnerships and forging a stronger sense of teamwork. Post-incident support also requires improvement as CT officers in particular recounted the personal toll of CT incidents and death was salient in a way it was not elsewhere.

In non-criminal incidents, narrative conflict was generated by participants being unsure of their competencies. The police service needs especially to address the relative absence of organisational products (e.g., policies, SOPs) for non-criminal critical incidents. Organisational products specific to non-criminal incidents would legitimise officers' experience of NC incidents by providing a template against which to check their decisions. They would also function as a narrative that legitimises the non-criminal and thereby provides NC responders a recognisable role, and a legitimate identity and place in the organisation. Such moves would address the uncertainty experienced by officers responding to non-criminal critical incidents.

Narrative functions to construct and maintain self- and social identity (Hiles & Cermák, 2008; McAdams, 1993; Worthington, 1996). In this policing domain, narrative may also prove to be a worthwhile parallel to that in health psychology where narrative approaches have proved to be a rich therapeutic seam (e.g., Frank, 2010; Mattingley, 2006). It is beyond the scope of this project to explore details but narrative has provided applications for re-framing experiences in therapeutic communities via the telling of new companion stories, creation of new biographical narratives and thereby re-shaping individuals' sense of identity (see e.g., McAdams, 1993; McAdams, Josselon, & Lieblich, 2006; Mishler, 1991; and in Gestalt therapy, e.g., Mortola, 1999). This study has shown a willingness among police to adopt narrative (see also Innes, 2002a, 2002b, on narrative used in homicide

investigations). Narrative approaches may therefore also be therapeutically useful with police adversely affected by incidents.

This study has elicited a clear empirical question: What happens to those officers who cannot successfully negotiate a place for themselves in an organisational narrative? The absence of creativity required to generate an alternative narrative may be an important factor. A hypothesis is suggested: Unresolved narratives will be positively correlated with continuing trauma after critical incidents. If so, it has clear utility. The organisation needs to provide narrative structures that incorporate bottom-up experiences. They would serve to normalise experiences; that is, permit a successful negotiation between the individual's identity with the organisational products resulting in a stronger organisational identity, a greater sense of belonging.

In sum, policy prescribes an organisational structure, a narrative template to which officers can adhere (or not) as each individual negotiates the dialectical relationship s/he has with the collective organisational products (Haslam et al., 2003). That structure - it is contended here - is a narrative structure. In managing social identity as police officers, individuals had to negotiate the dialectical relationship with the organisation's collective products; in so doing, they considered the prescribed template, which offered narratives showing how to self-categorise (or not) as a police officer in particular types of critical incident: *Media monster*, *CONTEST quest*, and *Cheshire cat*.

12.6. Limitations

Some limitations of the study were covered in Chapter 10 (section 10.6., reflexivity). To recap, potential limitations include: the degree of researcher co-construction of meaning; the selection of monologue narratives instead of dialogical exchanges among participants (therefore, not an exhaustive examination of dataset); 10kV's collective construction of meaning facilitates a composite experience so individual stories go relatively unheard. Individual stories were not the focus of this study; nevertheless, current findings are not necessarily a complete picture.

Also in an earlier IPA chapter (9, 9.5.) was the acknowledgement that organisational identity has been inferred. It has been inferred on the premise that similar shared experiences may forge shared organisational identity (i.e., bottom-up rather than top-down). However, this reverses the direction given that Haslam et al. argued that "shared organisational identity is a basis … for people to perceive and interpret their world in similar ways" (2003, p.364). It might therefore be an over-extrapolation and, thus, limitation. It nonetheless poses an interesting empirical question.

This study's analysis process entailed extracting narrative accounts from the data. They were then tabulated as transcript extracts. It is important to note that the data were restricted because the material was confidential. It was an important ethical issue not to disclose details that would permit identification of each incident, in particular, those involved or affected by it. Therefore, easily identifiable features were omitted when selecting extracts from the data. Given the detailed nature of narratives, it was inevitable that the participant responses most likely to disclose identifying details were narrative accounts. To redact sufficient to guard against disclosure was to destroy some of the narrative qualities of the account. This problem occurred most in the non-criminal session NC2 where it so happened that many identifying details appeared in any suitable quotation. It was ethically insurmountable so there were fewer NC2 extracts presented. Similarly, narratives with identifying details had to be excluded from the Mishler tables. During analysis, it was overcome in part by considering such accounts as they appeared in the original transcript but this was clearly a deviation from the described method. It is a therefore limitation of the study that: i) only selected narratives from one NC session were rigorously examined as per the method; and that ii) validity could only be demonstrated by part of the dataset. In sum, selection of narrative accounts for detailed analysis was not perfectly rigorous.

The presentation of exemplar plots was formulated on a best fit principle. This necessarily means that they tend more towards being a composite rather than a model to which each individual narrative closely conformed. Therefore, compared to the analysis of narrative structures presented in chapter 11, (which study stayed

closer to the data of each individual narrative), each whole exemplar will be more artefactual. In addition, the *CONTEST quest* narrative drew more on two of the sessions than it did on the third with regard to death/the underworld as a plot point. This may be regarded as a limitation of the current study.

Hitherto, social identity and self-categorisation theory have provided the theoretical framework in the thesis. They have sufficient explanatory power for the study in this chapter but reach their limit at the attribution of a particular social identity (or no). Alternative (specifically narrative) frameworks were forsaken here in the name of theoretical cohesiveness across the thesis but are clearly valuable. Narrative models could elucidate finer grain details and thereby have greater explanatory power. For example, given that the McAdams (1996) life story model offers three distinct levels in "the configuration of the Me" (p.295), it could be useful in future research to explore other identity processes or statuses besides the narrative and organisational identity found here.

12.7. Conclusion

In this study, I examined the narrative accounts of the people involved in critical incidents and hoped to elucidate the conflicts they encountered, the ways in which they characterised themselves and the roles they were cast into, the stories they produced in making sense of and placing meaning on the inherently chaotic events they experienced. Mattingley (1998b) most clearly placed narrative temporally before experience and argued that the enactment of a priori stories is the reason individuals believe they are having experiences. This reveals the function of canonical narratives prescribed by the organisation. It was evident that some participants enacted the organisation's stories as laid down in organisational products (e.g., policies and protocols). However, it would be overly deterministic to conclude that such enactment was the only possibility. In the subsequent narrative construction of events, some participants had the capacity to create their own experiences. In general, individuals can enact received narratives but they can also generate novel constructions of experience. In other words, people have the capacity to shape as well as conform.

In this study, participants from SC incidents overtly and self-reflexively shaped the narrative by defeating others who attempted to control it. With a seamless congruence, they defeated the *Media monster* both inside the storyworld and, consequently, outside the diegetic frame of the narrative. In CT *CONTEST quest* storyworld, participants conformed to a narrative with a recognisable quest plot though in the decompression chamber of the debrief, a change occurred. Here, participants became active agents and shaped elements of comedy from tragedy, shifting from tragic to romantic hero. In NC, participants shaped least of all. They conformed to most parts of a recognisable plot. In the *Cheshire cat*, they crafted a narrative that might elicit understanding for having been overwhelmed (cast into a strange world) but they ultimately remained lost and without shape. However, this applied in the storyworld. In the real world, they managed incidents successfully; the narrative served therefore to convey their experience of marginalisation. Arthur Frank wrote, "All stories – here I risk the universal '*all*' – are about characters resisting or embracing or perhaps failing to recognise the character into which they have been cast" (2010, p.30). SC participants embraced their characters; CT participants resisted and transformed the tragic hero element of their character; NC failed to recognise their characters.

At the close of the narrative section of the thesis, the emergent pattern of SC as organisationally central, ranging through CT to NC as most marginal still obtained. Participants were cast in SC narratives with sharp demarcation around settings. There were clear places for police in the storyworld, standing on terra firma with colleagues like family and in settings that were robustly 'ours'. Though less defined in CT, participants had not lost sight of the organisation. They knew where to find it so they could again "walk through the front door" after their sojourn amongst the shades in the underworld. Only in NC narratives did participants remain displaced, without a place to belong, most marginalised from the organisation.

It has been argued here that organisational cultures are shaped or created by shared narrative accounts (Schein, 1996) and that narrative is the means whereby we understand "complex organisational phenomena" (Bal, Butterman, & Bakker, 2011, p.361). Thus, an examination of the small 'intimate realities' told via narrative

accounts in this study may well bring us full circle to the 'large scale social and political structures' evinced by the broad-ranging thematic analysis of the first part of this thesis. There were exemplar narratives that inform the culture of the police service and, reciprocally, act as the context, providing prototypes that inform the organisational identities of individual officers (Eyre & Alison, 2007; Eyre, Alison, Crego, & McLean, 2008). That organisational identity is more than a role as police officer. The identity is embedded in a complex context of inter-related networks and dynamic influences. In short, social identity can be a narrative identity; it is processed via narrative. In the next, final chapter (13) in this thesis, a discussion of the findings from the several different analyses is presented.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN. DISCUSSION

13.1. Introduction

In this final chapter of the thesis, the project is summarised. The methodological contribution and the contribution to the literature are presented. The theoretical contribution structures the main body of the discussion; specifically, the several analyses are discussed in relation to social identity theory. Utility as well as limitations are also presented; then future directions and final reflections close the discussion.

13.2. Project Summary

The aim of this project was to examine experiences of critical incidents in the U.K. police service. The project was grounded in principles of phenomenology. This required a particular orientation to professionals, to place primacy on their own reports of what they had experienced. Using a data corpus of e-focus groups, three different types of critical incident - serious crime, counter-terrorism, and non-criminal incidents - were examined. Different incident types as well as three different qualitative methods (thematic analysis, IPA, and narrative analysis) provided triangulation. In the thematic analysis, I presented the most common and frequent experiences, which revolved around relationships (principally with partners and community) and also highlighted staff welfare concerns. In the IPA analysis, I presented the experiences common across incident types as well as the differences between them. I formulated a model of the processes entailed in transforming negative experiences into positive ones. Combined with the narrative analysis and accompanying narrative exemplars, I have presented a new formulation for U.K. critical incident experiences. I argued that serious crime is the prototypical incident because it is organisationally central; counter-terrorism incidents are more peripheral; non-criminal incidents are most peripheral in the organisation. The project has been grounded in the literature and anchored to a social identity perspective throughout.

13.3. Methodological Contribution

13.3.1.Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods are under-used generally and especially so in forensic psychology so the current project addressed a significant gap. The multiple methods used provided triangulation and also revealed the different aspects of the critical incident topic at hand. Similarities were obviously found: The conflicts and tensions of *partnerships* in the thematic analysis echoed through the IPA theme of *excluded from information* (within and beyond the organisation) and sounded again in the antagonistic *Media monsters* and other 'dark forces' in *CONTEST quest* narratives. Showing (via IPA) how officers wrested a positive conclusion from negative experiences presaged the progressive narrative structures revealed in later studies where protagonist heroes snatched victory from defeat by overcoming adversaries. Such similarities pointed to the integrity of the data and supported triangulation, which feature was a stated aim at the start of the thesis (chapter 2). By the end of the project, I had concluded that triangulation can be an ill-used concept and that complementarity (Mason, 2006b; May, 2010) was preferable to triangulation, both as idea and terminology. Complementarity allows for different methods to inject some robustness to a research project yet allows for the fact that they may simply examine "a specific part of the problem or because their combination might give a better sense of the whole" (May, 2010, p.2). Complementarity does not seek to integrate findings but rather holds them to be multi-dimensional and retains the multi-dimensional aspects of the topic of enquiry at the level of explanation. As Mason argued, "Explanations do not have to be internally consensual and neatly consistent to have meaning and the capacity to explain" (2006b, p.20). In the final discussion in this thesis, then, I have borrowed the term and adopted complementarity's collective approach, discussing findings without necessarily seeking integration or corroboration (May & Burke, 2010).

These findings did not necessarily cohere precisely or even neatly but they did complement each other and provided different views of and insights into the same topic. The most frequent discussions revealed by the thematic analysis indicated the recurrent features but they were not necessarily the most meaningful to

participants. The IPA analysis was a better method for exploring in-depth what had been negative or positive about the critical incidents. The narrative analysis was a better method for identifying the likely arc of an incident. The plots in the exemplar narratives lent insight into what might be anticipated from start to finish as a particular type of critical incident unfolded, who officers might encounter (as supporters or, more especially, as adversaries) and how they might resolve such matters.

13.3.2. Phenomenological Approach

The differences show the importance of methodology. The phenomenological orientation of this project directed the researcher's gaze towards experience. The humour and uncertainty that were evident in the IPA analysis and echoed in different ways in the narrative analysis did not appear in the first thematic analysis. As an example: The topic content of a comment might have warranted assignation to a particular theme (e.g., *partnerships*). Focusing on the participant's experience of those partnerships directed attention to the tensions felt about those partnerships, the experience of exclusion (i.e., instead of simply 'bean counting' how often they were discussed). As a second example: Another comment might have been assigned to the category matching the topic content (e.g., *communication*). Only by directing attention to the participant's experience of frustratingly poor I.T. systems might the comment's tone been recognised as humorous. Of course, the thematic analysis was conducted on the whole data corpus, the IPA and narrative analyses were confined to the operational part of the dataset as the project evolved. The simplest explanation, then, cannot be overlooked: The findings in the latter two analyses were diluted among the larger data corpus. Nonetheless, it may be concluded that even ostensibly open, entirely bottom-up analyses are shaped by the researcher's orientation towards the data.

13.3.3. Data-collection Method

The data-collection method made a methodological contribution. 10kV sessions do not conform to orthodox scientific methods but they nevertheless yielded some interesting data. In particular, the candid nature of the accounts may be

attributable to several sources. Straightforward anonymity might elicit such candour: criticising colleagues, seniors or partners as freely as participants did is one example. Thus, 10kV mitigated some concerns associated with traditional face-to-face focus groups (e.g., the exclusion of quiet voices by their reluctance to 'take the floor') (Clapper & Massey, 1993; Easton, Easton & Belch, 2003). Anonymity was, then, a strength of the e-focus group method in this project. However, in other respects, anonymity intuitively seems insufficient explanation; for example, it is difficult to visualise officers speaking in such personal terms to researchers (though it is easy enough to introduce anonymity orally). Therefore the written medium might have been responsible for facilitating expressions of masculine pride (seen in the hero self-descriptions and narrative exemplar protagonists) which would otherwise have been excluded by alternative (especially oral, face-to-face) methods. The influence of the medium provides a suggestion for future research. Nonetheless, the use of novel technology to collect data from a hard-to-reach group was a particular gap cited by an ESRC report (Bardsley, Wiles, & Powell, 2006, also see chapter 2, 2.3.6.). The current project addressed that gap and thereby made a methodological contribution.

13.3.4. Absent Themes

The 10kV system provided data of officers' discussions that can be compared across incidents. Equally, it offered a reliable, auditable method for tracking what police officers did not discuss in many incidents where it ought to have been expected (Martin Innes, personal communication, 11th December 2014). This is of interest. A community focus is high on the modern policing agenda (e.g., Brookman & Innes, 2013; Casey, 2008; Innes, 2005) so its absence in two of the three analyses was interesting. The theme *community* which had been so prevalent in the thematic analysis largely disappeared[14] once an experiential lens was used in the latter two analyses (i.e., IPA and narrative). It is possible that *community* did not translate into

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[14] In latter analyses, the only sessions in which it still appeared were some SC discussions (e.g., 'community' was mentioned as part of the collective 'we' in some SC narratives).

a personal construct that merited discussion but this still prompts the question: why not?

The *victims and families* theme revealed that participants construed success as a human interface: they cared about real people (see chapter 8, 8.3.2.). By comparison, the community is an abstract, somewhat faceless entity that participants could not successfully orient towards when recounting their experiences. This might explain the strange *mission-statement* register of many comments on *community* and the action gap I identified; that is, participants had learned the organisational position or policy by rote. They could therefore regurgitate it but they were not personally invested in it and did not display intentionality towards it: hence, it disappeared from the more personal, phenomenological analyses. Moreover, they did not know what to do about it: hence, the action gap; it was difficult to find one's own place in relation to a phenomenon which was imposed from above but not personally meaningful. There was a seeming failure of orientation towards community; it was not an embedded embodied experience. There is significant work to be done (both in research and praxis) to identify why a stated priority for the police service does not seem to have gained traction and become embedded in many officers' personal experiences as a real-life, vivid, meaningful feature. The disconnect between abstract and (more meaningful) human constructs may offer a useful starting point.

Factors beyond the police's own world constituted another largely absent theme. It is well-established that information from the public is a significant factor in attaining success in police investigations (Innes, 2002a). Although mentioned in some SC sessions there was, overall, little discussion of credit given in this regard (though positive evaluations of own performance were prominent). Likewise, discussion of the role of luck, the fortuitous or timely piece of information received was absent, especially from SC and CT. Serendipity did appear in the content of NC narratives, which may point to the marginal nature of these incidents. Specifically, NC incidents do not fully belong in the organisation; NC narratives are, therefore, non-canonical narratives and have room to accommodate features such as luck (e.g., '*We were lucky the weather held up*'). NC discussions were also open enough

to discuss near-misses (e.g., *What is a near-miss register?* [In response] '*Something that will get them a bollocking if they place an entry in it*') – the last comment revealing one strong reason for presenting only the positive to the organisation.

Conversely, SC and CT narratives did not accommodate the idea of luck, how things nearly went/might have gone wrong, what near-misses had been avoided. This is a significant omission given that 10kV is an organisational learning tool. These are findings that emerged due to the auditable nature of the data-collection method. It was employed consistently, for the same purpose, across a wide range of incidents. It offered anonymous, open-ended free recall and participants did disclose candid details on sensitive topics (e.g., personal toll/staff welfare) yet other issues were neglected: some themes were absent. It is possible they were simply overlooked or too personal for discussion. However, this seems insufficient explanation given that the data-collection method succeeded in eliciting many personal issues (e.g., personal toll/staff welfare). The number of sessions precludes the conclusion that themes were absent due to happenstance (and, thus, the data-collection method makes a contribution). Information from the public has been empirically established in earlier literature as a significant predictor of successful resolution of investigations (e.g., Inness 2002a). This well-established finding precludes the conclusion that such factors did not occur in the incidents that stand behind this dataset. The absent themes were, then, more likely acts of commission than omission. Alternative explanations are offered here as future research directions.

In terms of identity, it seems that SC and CT are *greedy* narratives whereas NC narratives are *lite* enough to accommodate non-prescribed features (Frank, 2010); thus, SC and CT debriefs serve to reinforce organisational identity but forbid the discussion of aberrant features that do not promote a positive image of high-performing officers. By contrast, NC narratives do not provide for a successful negotiation of organisational identity but, in so doing, the space between these narratives and the requisite organisational identity allows these narratives to contain more open appraisals, disclosure of limitations, and comparative freedom from the requirement to present positive (but severely circumscribed) professional image.

In sum, SC and CT participants stuck more closely to a canonical narrative. Such narratives seemed to demand the presentation of an assured professional image where success was attributable to professional competencies, not to information from the public, and certainly not to the vagaries of fortune. The need to discover exactly what contributed to success is not served by such polishing. It does not bode well for learning lessons (though a strong organisational identity may be a protective factor in providing a collective 'we' - solidarity in the face of adversity). Ironically, the incidents in which participants felt least confident (i.e., NC) may transpire to be the best opportunities for truly learning lessons because they were *lite* enough to permit honest admission of difficulties, of near-misses, of luck. Future research could examine details.

13.3.5. Methodological Contribution: Conclusion

Overall, this project's different approaches have gone some way to demonstrate that findings will be shaped by researchers' first orientations toward their data; that is, the two latter methods (IPA and narrative) evinced closer, in-depth details of experiences whereas the first theoretically- and epistemologically-free method (thematic analysis) yielded broad categories but less depth. That orientation shapes findings holds good for positivist, experimental studies as well as the explicitly interpretative approaches of the current project. In terms of methods, it has been argued: i) that it is vital to begin with the task (because the task should dictate which tools are required, not vice versa); and ii) which tools were better suited to particular tasks (chapter 2). The project has also demonstrated some that complemented each other. The data-collection method provided an auditable means of tracking (Innes, personal communication) which discussions occurred as well as discussions that did not happen (and were here deemed to be significant omissions that provided insight into the topic at hand). As such, a methodological contribution has been made.

13.4. Contribution to the Literature

As a comparatively rare empirical project in an under-researched area, the thesis extends the literature in several respects. It described the critical incident

landscape by identifying the most common themes across a range of incidents in different forces; in so doing, it had uncommon ecological validity. Phenomenology was an under-used methodology in a little-accessed field (but see Clement (2012), Miller, B. (2008), and Pickens (2010), based in U.S. or Canada, section 4.6.2. and Morris & Crank (2011) on terrorists' perceptions, section 4.3.7.). The three methods employed to examine the same data corpus may provide a springboard for considering what particular aspects of a topic are best served by any one method.

Forensic psychology is a field dominated by quantitative, variable-centred empirical research. The extant serious crime literature revealed topics to be very thinly-sliced; the CT literature had much on policy and related *thought* pieces but little empirical work (but see e.g., Innes, 2006; Goodman, 2009; Sarangi & Alison, 2005, also section 4.3.5.); there was a particular paucity of non-criminal literature (but see de Valck, 2006 on a specific incident, the Boxing Day tsunami, section 4.4.3.). Therefore, the use of phenomenology and multiple qualitative methods in this field extended the literature: It brought a more holistic approach to serious crime, an ecologically-valid empirical view to the CT literature (gaps noted by Heath-Kelly, 2013; Lum et al., 2008) and was a rare addition in its examination of non-criminal incidents.

The respective findings of the thematic and IPA analyses on poor communication and being excluded from information support earlier work by Field (2009). He identified the technological, cultural and institutional factors that prevent effective information sharing. The current study extends the literature by identifying the experiences of those on the receiving end of such failures during incidents. They feel marginalised from the organisation and engage in processes that will re-affirm their social identities and thereby provide salve by promoting a sense of belonging (e.g., forging bonds via humour in CT; presenting positive professional image in SC and CT narratives). The organisational norm of information restrictions in the police is commonplace: Offenders must not be alerted. The impact of such secrecy on officers has been neglected; the experience of marginalisation highlighted by the current project adds to the literature. If marginalisation and other negative experiences are stressors, the current project may provide some support for Dabney

et al. (2013) who found the organisational context to be a stressor. The current finding of experience of exclusion also supports Terpstra's (2012) finding of failures in police communication. There were specific parallels between the two studies in relation to multi-agency endeavours being especially problematic and hierarchical relations or elitism as contributors to exclusion. This project's findings support the Crego & Alison (2004) study on the impact of the media on critical incident management; it further refines it by locating it as an SC or (to a lesser degree) CT issue.

It also contributed to the literature on narrative and narrative identity. The findings of recognisable narratives in this project's studies confirmed that participants occupy a narrative context. They replicated, in a police domain, Wodak's (2003) finding that people will deploy narrative strategies to account for their organisation's activities. The finding of particular narratives in different incident types supported O'Connor's (2000) finding that narratives can reveal the cultural circumstances behind the stories told. Heath-Kelly (2013) argued that CT discourse in the U.K. is founded on a narrative of the transition to terrorism. This project adds a further strand by developing a narrative of CT officers' experiences. Together with the other two narrative exemplars developed, they lend insight into a particular domain. In particular, the narrative role of hero may be a protective factor that enables officers to prepare for and cope with adverse situations. If so, it may be of concern that it was not a feature of NC incidents. On the other hand, these NC narratives gave comparative freedom from the restricted organisational narratives, providing room for open, honest appraisal and disclosure of individuals' self-doubts about their expertise. Colville, Pye and Carter (2013) have earlier used the framework of social identity theory to examine police officers in a specific U.K. critical incident: the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes. Their finding that social identity impeded decision making in a novel situation was the only other study found which applied the theory to policing U.K. critical incidents. The current project supports Colville et al. albeit indirectly; that is, the common maintenance of *professional image* as well as the pervasive theatre trope indicate that social identity was a prominent concern. In turn, behaviour may be predicted in line with group norms of the salient identity; policies and protocols are powerful communicators of that identity (Andras &

Charlton, 2005) and, thus, will be especially relied upon by those for whom social identity is salient. However, such codified procedures do not permit the flexible (or even bespoke) decision making required in novel situations. Colville et al. and the current findings should serve as a note of caution in relation to decision-making practices and how they may be circumscribed by current organisational climate and practice. By exploring the processes whereby organisational identity was synthesised in a specific policing domain across a range of such incidents, the current project develops the limited literature. Details are discussed next.

13.5. Theoretical Contribution

13.5.1. Social Identity: Thematic and IPA

This section discusses the project findings in relation to social identity theory illustrated throughout by the different studies. It is argued here that some incident types are more organisationally central than others. Specifically, serious crime incidents are prototypical incidents in the organisation's categorisation of critical incidents. This framing is analogous to Rosch's (1975) conceptualisation of natural object categories having fuzzy boundaries whereby some entities are central because prototypical (e.g., winged and feathered robin in the category *birds*); each classification elides to less prototypical specimens at the category boundaries, (e.g., flightless penguin). This idea of categorical protoypicality has concordance with the ideas posited in self-categorisation theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 1987) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). When adopting or maintaining a particular social identity, individuals use the prototypical category member as a reference point when they self-categorise (Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, & Holzworth, 1993; Hogg & Terry, 2001). Recall too that social identities drive behaviour in accordance with group (i.e., organisational) norms (Chatman & Spataro, 2005).

Serious crime incidents constitute core police business and, thus, comprise the prototype. Crime investigation has been the essential thread throughout the history of policing. It was the driver for the establishment of police forces, originating with the so-called thief-takers and the evolution of detectives through the 18th and 19th centuries to modern forces (Tong, 2009a). SC incidents are central to

organisational identity; they are the prototypical incident. As Innes argued, "The provision of a response to a small number of particularly serious personal crimes, especially murder, continues to be a significant source of meaning, in terms of how policing is symbolically constructed" (2002a, p.68).

Officers managing SC incidents are most likely to benefit from the prevailing organisational context. There is greater familiarity with criminal incidents, greater availability of career pathways, (e.g., CID), professional development (e.g., PIP programmes), more established policies and protocols (e.g., ACPO guidance for investigating: burglary, 2011b; e-crime, 2011c; murder, 2006; rape, 2010; volume crime, 2009) and infrastructure or technology (e.g., SCAS, ViSOR or CATCHEM databases) (Innes, 1999; Maguire & Norris, 1992; Tong, 2009b) (See Appendix A for Glossary). Innes, Fielding, and Cope (2005) also identified claims of objectivity and *scientification* in the policing of crime; an aura of science and rationality further elevates the status of crime investigation, its practices, and technologies. Recall from chapter 7, (7.3.) that Haslem et al.'s (2003) argument that organisational identity's utility lies in its "embodiment of the dialectic relationship between, on the one hand, socially structured individual psychology and, on the other, collective organisational products" (p.365): There are many SC products. Where opportunities exist for personal advancement, compliance with organisational norms is enhanced (Haslam & Reicher, 2006). Where organisational norms and characteristics are made explicit, social identity will become more salient (Herriot & Scott-Jackson, 2002). It is argued here that these are features of SC work. Although all critical incidents are challenging, SC incidents provide most concordance between an individual's psychology and the collective organisational products and, provide therefore, for the most successful synthesis; that is, as an individual seeks to make sense of his or her SC experience and process his or her identity, there is comparatively little conflict between the individual and his or her fit into the dominant organisational culture.

Social identity can account for the most dominant themes to emerge from the thematic analysis: *partnerships*, *community*, and *communication*. It was argued that they revolve around a core concept of relationships. A social identity perspective would characterise those relationships (and the communication between them) along

the dimensions of in-groups and out-groups. It was cited in that early study as a speculative topic for further research (chapter 5, 5.3.3.1). However, the latter studies confirmed the utility of a social identity perspective. On that basis, it is now further argued that different incident types occupy different positions in the organisation.

The argument that SC incidents constitute organisationally central prototypical incidents may seem at odds with the emergent SC theme from the IPA analysis - *taking control.* Certainly, participants from SC incidents reported they had experienced a relative lack of control (e.g., over self-appointed experts, the impact of the incident on victims). However, this manifested as a strong intention to take control in future. There was also a sense of entitlement in that participants perceived it as their legitimate role to take greater control: Firstly, participants wanted to review SOPs to improve future management; secondly - in an echo of the *professional image* theme in chapter 8 (8.3.1.) – participants' need to regain control manifested as a rejection of a victim identity in order that communities might recover; finally, they viewed the role of non-organisational 'experts' as illegitimate. The organisational structure was most beneficial to participants in SC incidents. Their organisational identity was aligned with the context and the systems and resources supported their work. Interestingly, those whom they wished to control were outside the organisation. Participants reported a lack of control but the experience was couched in positive terms. There was a strong sense of agency; it oriented their determination to take control in future. It was, therefore, deemed appropriate to take control away from self-appointed experts beyond the organisation, to re-frame the experience positively by rejecting a victim mentality and to draw on organisational resources to develop new SOPs. All constitute action that would mitigate uncertainty. In the thematic analysis, *partnerships* did not emerge as a theme in either U.K. operational debrief. The idea that officers took control, confident of their lead position meant partnerships were not discussion-worthy in debrief and so the theme was absent. This explanation supports the argument of SC centrality though the theme's appearance in the U.K. service review remains an anomaly. Its appearance in the overseas debrief can be explained by an unusually complex multi-national, multi-agency incident.

Other incident types may be regarded as deviating from the organisationally central (prototypical) position occupied by serious crime. Phenomenologically, experiences are shaped by these comparatively peripheral positions. Social identity will be forged and reinforced (or not) by the degree of prototypicality of the incident. Reciprocally, individuals must orient themselves to the fact of the organisationally peripheral positions of some incident types (namely, CT and NC incidents). In other words, they must negotiate the dialectic relationship between their (socially structured) individual psychology and the organisation's collective products (Haslem et al., 2003). Thus, we may account for the different divergent IPA themes.

In CT incidents, participants use of humour (e.g., diverting from trauma) supported earlier literature citing humour as an effective coping mechanism (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Coughlin, 2002). However, this could only be at best a partial explanation given the absence of the *humour* theme from other incident types despite their also being comparably traumatic. From a social identity perspective, CT work is something of a halfway house; it constitutes a part of police business and, therefore, a source of organisational identity for police. However, it is not core business; CT incidents are rarer and less familiar than the core business of 'regular' crime (Innes, 2002a, 2002b). Neither does CT occupy a core thread in the history of policing in the way that 'regular' crime does. Rather it has a fragmented history, its functions mirroring changes in the political landscape and concomitant terrorist threats.

Historically, CT policing became a specialism with the formation of Special Branch in 1883 in response to the activities of the Irish Republican Army. It was originally confined to the Metropolitan Police Service and only expanded to other forces in the late 1960s (Bunyan, 2003). CT responsibilities have splintered across agencies. From 1992, Special Branch deferred to the security service (MI5) (Bunyan, 2003): Special Branch provided intelligence gathering, arrest powers, and other support though guidelines state that it should not be diverted from national security (Home Office, 2004). The structure and size of Special Branch varied across forces or regions. ACPO TAM provides strategy, policy, and liaison with government for Special Branch (Home Office, 2004). The Metropolitan Police Service merged

Special Branch with its Anti-terrorist Branch in 2006 to form the Counter-terrorism Command (termed Counter-terrorism Units in other regions) (Innes, 2006; Metropolitan Police Service, 2013). This chequered development – down the decades, across the police service as an organisation and beyond to other agencies - means there has not been any unifying identity for CT work. This fragmentation may generate different social identities that could impede successful collaboration (Eyre & Alison, 2007). It certainly makes for a more complicated negotiation of the dialectic relationships therein. This is compounded given that CT agencies are oriented towards secrecy instead of collaborative partnerships (Innes & Sheptycki, 2004).

In CT incidents, then, organisational products - administrative-management structures and conceptual-knowledge structures - do exist as organisational norms with which officers can identify (Innes, 2002b). Participants know, therefore, how to respond but they do not occupy the same lead position enjoyed in SC incidents. Social identity theory predicts they will seek to act in accordance with group norms (i.e., for CT). In CT, they have to share or even cede control to others. Given the splintering of responsibility and overt political involvement in CT incidents, being the lead agency is not quite a core feature for police officers. So, officers have the professional competence to manage incidents but a lesser opportunity to do so because the legitimate role belongs to another group. This leaves individuals with a challenge: To establish a coherent experience, they must negotiate their relationship with others (i.e., individuals, teams, agencies). In adversity, they will seek the social support of the group but the several groups are fragmented and have different (or even competing) social identities. This greater prevalence of in-group – out-group dynamics in CT work can explain: i) the need for humour to promote social bonding (Charman, 2013; Neilsen, 2011) and ii) why the theme was exclusive to CT incidents in the IPA section of the thesis.

There may be an additional factor; as mentioned earlier, CT incidents are different in kind from SC incidents as well as less frequent. The decreased familiarity of CT work may also drive the use of humour to manage increased stress and normalise these rarer incidents (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Myers, 2005; Samson

& Gross, 2012). However, NC incidents are also less frequent than CT incidents but humour did not emerge as a theme. Thus, the more substantial explanation (also supported by the humour literature) is that humour was used to promote or reinforce their social bonds after a marginalising experience where officers needed to re-connect or reinforce their social identity (e.g., Garner, 1997; Heidner, 2001; Charman, 2013; Neilsen, 2011).

Finally, compared to CT and SC incidents, non-criminal (NC) incidents may occupy the most peripheral position in the organisation. Their marginal place means there is relatively little dedicated training, technological, or other support. Organisational products do exist to enable officers to manage such incidents but they tend to be generic. To provide examples contrasting NC and the organisationally central SC: ACPO lists 13 business areas, which include crime and criminal justice as two distinct areas but none for (nor associated with) NC as a category of incident. In terms of training, there are only generic skills development in leadership, strategic command and so on to prepare for major incidents but they are not specific to NC incidents whereas SC has PIP (Appendix A for glossary), a dedicated four-tier programme for professionalising investigations. As technological examples, ICCS or HOLMES systems provide general support for major incidents but not specifically NC incidents (vs. e.g., CATCHEM, ViSOR for SC) (Allen, Wilson, Norman, & Knight, 2008). There is no NC career pathway whereas the detective role in CID is so established even lay people are aware of it. Dedicated police agencies or sections exist for SC (e.g., erstwhile SOCA, now re-branded NCA; the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) and their databases that establish linking between criminal cases). This is not to claim that there ought to be; rather, it is to recognise how it engenders a different organisational context that affects officers. By contrast, then, NC incidents do not enjoy similar organisational support. Indeed, NC incidents tended not to cluster around any identifiable set of characteristics. Hence, they do not form part of participants' organisational identity in the same way as SC or even CT work does. Recall also the participant who, when first called to manage a non-criminal incident, reported: "*Initial thought, what has this got to do with my organisation?*" (NC3, also chapter 9, 9.3.3.2.). Participants were unsure what to do during incidents and, though they wanted to learn lessons for the future, they were

uncertain how to do so. There was no organisational identity on which to draw, no clear group norms to inform or direct behaviour. Moreover, individuals had no recourse to the social support provided by shared identities (Haslam et al., 2005). Participants thus had self-doubts about their professional competencies both during the incident and in relation to the future. Individuals may not regard it as legitimate nor, indeed, feel able to take control; appropriate organisational resources (to learn lessons for the future) were unavailable. Without recourse to find salve, they were left in a state of uncertainty. Coupled with insufficient information (in early incident phase), this propelled uncertainty to become a prominent experience. They recalled it and discussed it in debrief sessions.

Where organisational 'scaffolds' exist, they represent protective factors against some adverse experiences but NC does not enjoy such scaffolds. By contrast to NC incidents, some organisational support is available for CT incidents with officers using humour to enhance social bonds and bolster social identity. Organisational scaffolding is at its strongest for SC incidents with participants emerging from an inherently challenging critical incident experience, oriented towards the future with a determination to take control and improve the management of the next critical incident (but see 13.8 below on narrative foreclosure and Colville et al. (2013) on inflexible social identity (Colville et al. described in 13.4. above)).

The phenomenological thrust of the current study should not be overlooked and the importance of considering experience in context is advocated. We are reminded of the importance of context when Martin and Hickerson (discussing judgement) said, "All this figures in my experience only insofar as I am already situated - and more or less oriented - in a worldly context" (2013, p.200). The organisational culture orients individuals towards serious crime incidents more than other types. As individuals reciprocally orient towards the organisation, they negotiate their identities. In these dialectical relationships, synthesis is attained with varying degrees of success.

Figure 13.1. below provides a configuration of the critical incident experience. It is intended as a Venn-like diagram to illustrate the degree to which each incident type fits with the organisation. Each incident type abuts, overlaps with, or is almost

subsumed by the organisation (respectively, NC, CT, and SC incidents) affording greater or lesser concordance with organisational products. The figure also includes the divergent themes found in the IPA analysis (again, respectively, *uncertainty*, *humour*, and *taking control* for NC, CT, and SC incidents); in so doing, it illustrates the function each theme has when negotiating social identity.

Figure 13.1. A social identity model of critical incidents.
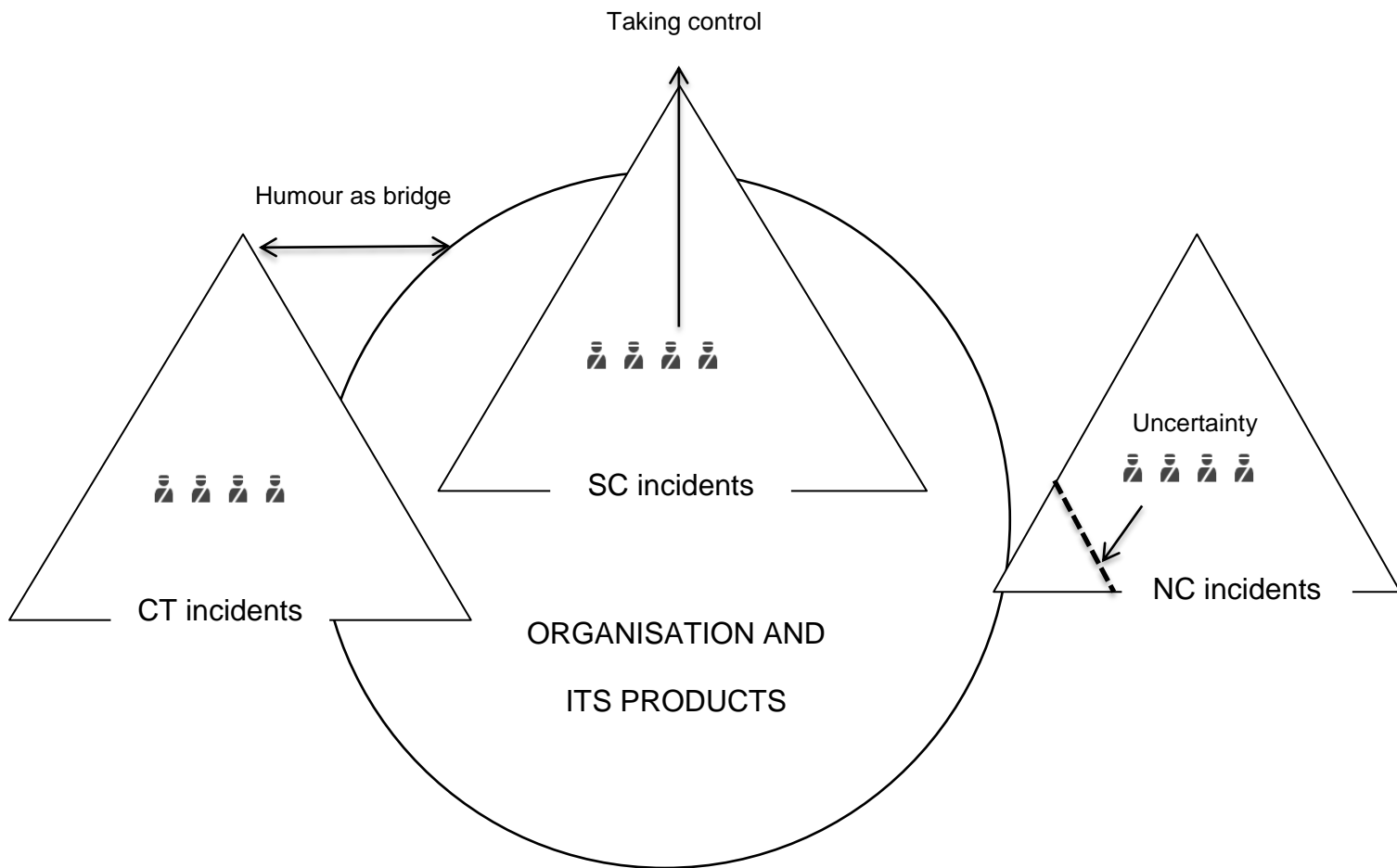
The narrative section of the project can also be discussed in relation to a social identity perspective. Narrative is a social practice that creates social identities (Alvesson & Kãrreman, 2000). If the narratives identified here have ontological status, as Smith argued (2008), then the meaning-making process (Bruner, 1990) for participants was one of self- or social-identification. To have a successful dialectic relationship with collective organisational products (i.e., to self-categorise as police officer), individuals must achieve a successful synthesis between the bottom-up events that played out and the top-down organisational products. Policy is clearly one such product. Policy can function as a reference point against which organisational identity may be confirmed or disconfirmed (Eyre & Alison, 2007). Moreover, policy has been shown to be a powerful communicator of the status quo of an organisation (Andras & Charlton, 2005). In this respect, policy provides the structure for an organisational narrative and one which comprises part of the organisational context for officers. The organisational manual outlining the phases of an incident adheres to a narrative structure, with the incident as complicating action and recovery and restoration of normality as later phases (ACPO, 2011a; see also NPIA, 2009a, emergency procedures guidance). To self-categorise successfully as *police officer*, then, individuals need to occupy a role within this canonical organisational narrative.

Other organisational products may assist in finding roles within the prescribed narrative structure: Peel's (1829) policing principles form the founding *Magna Carta* for the U.K. police service and are deeply embedded in the organisation's cultural psyche (see also Deloitte, 2013, for a modern application; Home Office, 2012 for response to FOI request). The first principle of policing states that the "basic mission for which police exist is to prevent crime and disorder" (1829, p.1), which principle indicates the centrality of SC incidents. The lead agency was entitled to take the narrative lead. It was legitimate for officers to be cast as hero, to defeat the offender and go on to take control of the narrative itself, restoring order in communities and ensuring that the media did nothing to disrupt the police narrative, a positive professional image or public confidence.

Clearly, CT incidents also have a place but occupy a special category of crime; counter-terrorism may resonate with the police's "basic mission" but it is by no means exclusively their domain. Nonetheless, there was some opportunity for participants in CT incidents to negotiate a successful synthesis between the events they experienced and the prescribed organisational narrative products. In other words, officers may share responsibility (as part of an ensemble piece) with other agencies for CT but this did not prevent participants from finding a social identity concordant with the organisation: They could cast themselves as heroes, defeat 'dark forces', rescue victims and restore order in accordance with the prescribed narrative structure. It entailed constructing a different type of narrative from SC; specifically, by defining rival teams or agencies as *other*, they could incorporate them into the narrative as 'dark forces' and defeat them. This constituted a successful synthesis between the bottom-up events (e.g., contending with out-group teams and competing agencies) and the canonical organisational narrative. The exposure to violence or death (as found in this project's CT narrative, *CONTEST quest*) has, in earlier research, been argued to fulfil an integrating function: that of a rite of passage for police officers (Karlsson & Christianson, 2003) as they self-categorise as police officers. For both incident types, then, participants and their companion stories found a legitimate place in the organisation.

In the most organisationally peripheral incidents - non-criminal - participants did not find it possible to construct heroic narratives where they cast themselves into lead or even main roles to recount or construct their experiences. The prescribed hero role might be evident but that was not their experience. To convey their antithetical, uncertain experience through narrative (as they chose to do) was to leave themselves at odds with the organisational identity; there was no recognisable match for this role of 'uncertain character'. Unable to find a successful synthesis between their own (bottom-up) experience and the available legitimate identities in the (top-down) canonical organisational narratives, they remained marginalised.

Social identity theory has valuable explanatory power at all levels of narrative. At the subordinate level of the narrative structural elements (i.e., Mishler model, 1991) discussed in this project's narrative study (chapter 11), the theory can shed

light on story characters with shared or different social identities. To illustrate with the example of *Orientation* (also see section 11.3.1., chapter 11): The character and behaviour of those who counted as 'we' in these narratives drew a boundary around the in- and out-groups, those with a shared or a different social identity. The 'we' in SC stories was the largest and most inclusive group. It included different kinds of police officers, participants even went so far as to refer to colleagues as family. Those served by the police were also included with references made to 'our public'. The 'we' character diminished in CT stories; that is, there was a smaller in-group. Fellow officers belonged to other groups (usually determined by function or role) or were perceived as rivals. It was most diminished in NC stories where possessive pronouns were used less and forsaken for third person accounts ('a/the', but not 'our'). Solidarity was diminished in NC and a less identifiable group faced the adversity, evident in frequent metaphors of difficulty (e.g., 'Cheshire cat'; "up to their necks in muck and bullets").

To consider another example: The complicating action in a canonical narrative was self-evidently the critical incident. Participants, however, contended with other complicating actions, for example, the actions of the media. The police could not successfully cast themselves as rescuing heroes who vanquished the baddie criminal by diligent detective work if the media were interviewing witnesses before the police had even found them. It disrupted the prescribed narrative (i.e., it was the police protagonist's duty to restore order). Participants must therefore negotiate their way through the obstacles cast into their path by the media if they were to reconcile the bottom-up events (i.e., someone else was looking swifter than the protagonist hero) with the top-down narrative. This dialectical process of narrative construction is by any other name a negotiation of social identity. To ask, then, how do individuals negotiate their organisational identities? In other words, how do the dialectic processes play out? The answer is: via narrative. The narrative exemplars, *Media monster*, *CONTEST quest*, and *Cheshire cats* either explicated the process on how to do so successfully or they highlighted the challenges encountered.

Consideration of the theatre metaphor is also warranted (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) given it has been claimed that theatre is a metaphor police live by (chapter 11,

11.3.3.). The second Peelian principle informs police that their ability to "perform their duties is dependent on public approval and [their ability] to secure and maintain public respect" (1829, p.1). It resonates with today's performance indicators of trust and confidence (e.g., Casey, 2008). Further, U.K. critical incident management policy defines the final phase of a critical incident as "restoring public confidence" (ACPO, 2011a, p.22, elsewhere termed "best confidence", p.23). Thus, arrest or prosecution of offenders does not denote the end of the story (i.e., in CT or SC incidents). Cleaning up debris after bomb blasts, successfully treating injured victims or restoring normal community services after a major non-criminal incident (e.g., a flood) does not signal the end of the story, only the restoration of public confidence does. The incident itself may be over, normal service might have resumed but the narrative is formally not yet finished. Recall that, in several narrative models, the restoration of equilibrium, by definition, signals the end of narrative (e.g., Todorov, 1969, cited in Bal, 2009; Bruner & Lucariello, 1989; Mortola, 1999). In the critical incident policy narrative, the return to equilibrium comprises a harmonious and confident partnership between public and police. Small wonder that professional image was a common core experience among participants; small wonder too that officers cast themselves in terms of literary heroes pledged to take control of reputation in the *Media monster* narrative for the prototypical incident type. Successful resolution of the incident might intuitively seem to be the end of the narrative. However, the prescribed narrative goes beyond restoration of order in the affected community: Audience evaluation signals the true end of the show. This supports Brookman's and Innes' (2013) findings that accountability and minimal impact on community were perceived measure of success in U.K. homicide investigations (also Cook & Sturges, 2009; Innes, 2010; Kingshott, 2011; Lee & McGovern, 2013 (chapter 8, 8.3.1.)). It is unsurprising, then, that control of the public narrative was paramount in the prototypical SC incidents. More fundamentally, it may explain the pervasive theatre trope. Reliant on public approval to function, it is crucial to be aware of the public gaze in order to perform as a police officer. The theatre metaphor can keep officers conscious that work is also a performance, one that the public is always watching. In this way, the theatre trope has a place as part of the social identity process: To have a police identity is to adopt the Peelian principle of public respect and public approval. This corresponds to earlier research where

external community judgement on officer performance was cited as one of two important dimensions of the critical incident experience (Crego & Alison, 2004). Public evaluation is also inherent in the U.K. definition of a critical incident (see chapter 1, 1.3.). It defines the closing phase (ACPO, 2011).

It is not overly deterministic to suggest that the *theatre as a metaphor police live by* influenced officers to construct their experiences as plays that, once scripted, could be presented to an audience. The police may undertake the construction (e.g., write the script and perform to an audience) but in prototypical incidents, the media became rivals for authorship. Hence, the participant-protagonists were motivated to frame the media as antagonist that needed to be vanquished. Moreover, as controllers of the outlets, the media, just like theatre proprietors, decide which performances are programmed. This may account for the evident tension between participant-characters and the media (seen in SC narratives and sometimes in CT narratives). Of course, the question arose as to why the orientation of police-protagonist vs. media-antagonist was not seen in NC narratives.

The answer is legitimacy. Legitimacy is a fundamental tenet of social identity theory and the determining factor in adopting or rejecting a specific identity or aspect thereof (e.g., behaviour and so forth) (e.g., Haslam, 2001; Stott, 2009). Serious crime is organisationally central. The existence of identifiable, familiar, supporting organisational products around serious crime validated and therefore legitimised participants' experiences. Counter-terrorism is less central but, by adapting the narrative, participants could nevertheless occupy a legitimate place in a canonical narrative. In CT and SC, police were the heroes who removed fatal threats and restored order. To preserve the continuity of the narrative, anyone who contested this role would be incorporated into the narrative as an antagonist who must be overcome – even displacing, if necessary, the more 'natural' antagonist: the criminal him/herself. The only legitimate players were the police not the media; likewise, rival partners did not constitute legitimate heroes and may be cast aside. By contrast, NC incidents did not seem legitimate police business ("What has this got to do with my organisation?"), there was no legitimate heroic role to be cast into; a successful

synthesis between individual and the requisite organisational identity could not be attained. The result was uncertainty and confused narratives.

Finally, to consider the whole narratives in relation to social identity: Companion stories (Frank, 2010) existed for all three types of incident. The companion stories, *Media monster* (SC) and *CONTEST quest* (CT), are good companions. Both have progressive narrative structures; both enable (via slightly different routes) successful negotiation of organisational identity. *Cheshire cat* (NC) can serve also as a companion story (Frank, 2010). In Gergen's and Gergen's (1986) terms, *Cheshire cat* conforms closely to satire, the perspective of the outsider. As a companion story, then, it may provide some distance from the difficulties encountered. As a stable narrative structure, however, it offers little prospect of change; that is, there is no prospect of redemption in the way permitted by romantic or even tragic genres (Frye, 1957; Gergen & Gergen, 1986; Smith, 2008). The distance from the organisation remains the distance from the organisation.

The capacity to generate narratives that are without the organisation's prescribed constructions necessarily has consequences. To reject a canonical narrative is to reject one's place as an actor within it is to reject the organisational identity. If these are unchosen choices (i.e., not consciously, explicitly reflected upon), the word 'reject' may be too active. If it is indeed a more passive experience without insight into one's own choices, external attributions are possibly made. In concrete terms, 'I cannot find my place here [ergo] the organisation has rejected me'. If this was the underlying sense-making process, it would account for the experience of exclusion common across all incidents (IPA analysis, chapter 7). It was the beginning point for constructing all three types of narratives. For SC and CT, places in the organisation were successfully found through narrative. For NC, the beginning was also the end of the narrative and the exclusion persisted. There is no prospect of belonging or having a social identity concordant with the organisation (Haslam, 2001; Haslam et al., 2003) unless NC stories are heard and incorporated into organisational narratives and other organisational products.

In sum, it has been argued here that social identity theory has significant explanatory power for the current project's findings. It provides a useful framework for the studies and, whilst each study examined a different aspect of the topic at hand, they were consilient with a social identity approach. As such, the project has made a contribution to understanding social identity in a specific organisation charged with managing complex incidents.

13.6. Utility: Contribution to Practice

Previous chapters contained applications for the research and are recapitulated here. Consideration of the role of the media would be valuable. Media training exists, of course. However, the narrative study revealed that many officers take an adversarial stance (chapter 12). Developing a more collaborative partnership with the media might reduce any potential adverse impact that antagonistic positions have on officers concerned; resources might also be better deployed. The media stood out but partnerships more generally clearly need improvement. Forging a superordinate social identity could prove a useful approach that might improve communication and reduce scapegoating *problem agencies* (chapter 5).

The current project has confirmed police officers' use of and familiarity with narrative (also see Innes, 2002a, 2002b). Narrative may therefore prove beneficial in therapeutic interventions in the police service as it has in other domains where stress needs to be managed (e.g., McAdams, 1993; McAdams et al., 2006). By identifying incident-specific details, the project could also serve to enhance stress exposure training. Accurate expectations prior to events help to normalise the incidents and can reduce stress (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 1998). It is an issue that needs to be addressed as an HMIC report on critical incident management in England & Wales revealed that, "There is evidence of organisational complacency in officers' awareness of, and preparedness, for critical incidents" (2009, p.4) and that the "understanding of and ability to 'grip' critical incidents varies widely from force to force" (2009, p.5). It is possible that the discussions that did not occur (see Absent Themes, section 13.3.4. above) point the way in this regard. The close adherence to canonical organisational narratives and reluctance in SC and CT to discuss openly the failures/near misses, serendipity or (in most sessions) public contribution to

resolution of the incidents highlighted the requirement to maintain a positive professional image at all times. This may hamper the ability of the police service to learn lessons from critical incidents. A non-complacent organisation which truly intends to be aware of and prepare for critical incidents has to be one that is receptive, one that is willing to permit and, indeed, encourage admissions of failure, and one that will accept stories richer than those about *can-do* officers with a positive professional image in order that real-life behaviour may change and professional responses develop and improve. This is the greater priority than smoothing professional image; it is the honest route to learning lessons and one more likely to forge trust and confidence. The current findings could inform a practitioners' manual on critical incident management (Graham Wagstaff, personal communication, 11th December 2014). In these respects, the current project has applied utility as well as contributing to the policing literature.

Most clearly, the project can contribute to practice in respect of non-criminal critical incidents. The organisational gaps and consequent absence of organisational protective factors in managing non-criminal incidents need review. Their peripheral status in the organisation and concomitant absence from organisational identity may mean that non-criminal incidents are truly the unique incidents. They force individuals to fall back on their own resources, culminating in uncertainty. Organisational products could be developed (e.g., policy, SOPs, training) that would enable officers in NC incidents to find a legitimate role, feel secure of a rightful place in the organisation, and thereby reduce uncertainty.

On the other hand, the reliance on organisational products could be evidence that individual expertise is lacking across all incident types. Specifically, individuals felt confident in their professional response primarily (or even solely) because they could rely on organisational products (such as policy or SOPs) as scaffolds; without them, they were found wanting. If this is the case, it highlights an important gap. Officers charged with managing such incidents need to be able to think and decide for themselves, not to rely on 'recipe knowledge' or *'If* (situation A) →*then* (Action X)*'* productions used in and, indeed, restricted to recognition-primed decision making (Eyre & Alison, 2007, 2010; Klein, 1993). Recognition-primed decision making finds

its limit in any situation that cannot be recognised. By analogy, it is akin to relying on pre-packaged ready meals whilst neglecting to develop an understanding of the basic principles of cooking. Only a thorough understanding of how to cook can be adapted to any situation. The *ready-meals* approach (which failed in NC incidents where pre-packaged SOPs were unavailable) suggests the deep-structure knowledge and skills which are the components of true expertise are missing (Lord & Hall, 2005). Whichever analogy is used - recipe knowledge, painting-by-numbers, ready-meals – it is an important gap. Smoothing professional image may compensate temporarily. However, the gap will become most apparent in the next unique critical incident where bespoke solutions are required and true expertise is called upon. Where situation awareness fails because a situation is unrecognisable, expertise must step in. If expertise is absent because it has been forsaken for pre-packaged ready-made solutions, the professional image may be successfully polished for a time but the real-life consequences (which may be catastrophic) will eventually catch up[15].

Overall, the data-collection method was valuable in revealing critical incident experiences. It was just as valuable in providing an auditable demonstration of what may not discussed by officers. Together they indicate that the approach to professional development of expertise, in general, and training, in particular, needs review. In this respect, the project has utility.

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[15] Hillsborough may be an apposite example here of recognition-primed decision making. Erroneously 'recognised' as situation A (pitch invasion) → Action X (contain the crowd) followed (also see Eyre & Alison, 2007). This pattern-matching clearly failed. Had it been evaluated accurately as a matter of public safety not public order, different actions might have ensued. Subsequent attempts at managing professional image failed eventually; catastrophe was compounded when it could have been averted with better expertise and decision making appropriate to the true situation. This critical incident cast a very long shadow.

13.7. Limitations

The phenomenological basis for the project did not shape the whole thesis. Rather, phenomenology evolved as a valuable orientation as the project developed. As noted at the start of the IPA section of the thesis (Chapter 7), the atheoretical nature of thematic analysis confines it to description; it is difficult to move up to higher-level concepts. Thus, IPA and narrative analyses were introduced to facilitate a more in-depth examination of critical incident experiences within the data. The first study provided an overview and, as such, provided a reasonably complementary view but it did not cohere with the broad phenomenological arc of the thesis.

Complementarity cannot be a 'get out' clause for anomalous findings that do not cohere at all. They demand explanation. Stand-out examples were: The *professional image* theme was prominent in the IPA studies, common to all incidents yet it was theme 10 in the rank-ordered thematic analysis; and *media*, the third-from-last major theme but a prime antagonist in the eponymous *Media monster* narrative; finally, *uncertainty* was a theme in all (and exclusive to) NC incidents in the IPA analysis but of lower rank in the thematic analysis. The most obvious explanation is that later (IPA or narrative) findings were diluted among the larger data corpus. This may suffice as explanation for the *Uncertainty* theme as its appearance in three operational NC incidents 'dilutes' to become 29th in the thematic analysis of all 18 sessions. However, the argument seems less convincing applied to *professional image* (common to all in IPA but only ranking 10th) and *Media* (SC narrative archetype antagonist but only ranking 15th). An alternative or additional explanation exists. A theme dictionary was created for the thematic analysis. Dictionaries codify meaning and thereafter create closure around a theme. Thus, what began as a bottom-up analysis inevitably shape-shifts to become top-down as later sessions are analysed and coded with increasing reference to the (iteratively refined but ultimately codified) dictionary definition. This may be a weakness of the thematic analysis method. By contrast, IPA and narrative was inductive throughout the analysis; without dictionaries, categories therefore remained more flexible and expanded to accommodate new ideas and meanings. Orientation and selected parts of the dataset (smallest in narrative) may also have contributed to differences.

Nonetheless, the closure imposed by a theme dictionary was a weakness but in other respects a strength (i.e., complementarity).

Participant demographics were absent so it was unknown whether they constituted a representative sample with regard to force, rank, age, gender, experience and so forth. Against this, it was argued that a *moderatum generalisation* (Williams, 2000) (see chapter 2, 2.3.1.) was possible insofar as a recognisable set of features were identified in the participant sample. It cannot be claimed that the project adhered to an accepted gold standard with regard to representativeness of the population though I argued (chapter 2, 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.) that participants were probably incidentally representative given they comprised a large sample from a professional sub-set with experience of rare events further homogenised by shared professional development (also see Hammersley, 2008; section 2.3.2.). If it is nonetheless regarded as a limitation, it could be overcome by further empirical testing.

In chapter 2 (2.2.3.1.) Blumer's (1956) criticisms of variable-centred research were presented. Among other issues, he argued against unthinkingly imposing quantitative dimensions onto qualitative entities. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) likewise counselled that the thrust of thematic analysis was to examine meaning not numbers. Therefore, to rank order themes by frequency and number of sessions prioritised quantity over meaning. In terms of the whole thesis, it provided complementarity (Mason, 2006a, 2006b) but, with regard to the first study alone, it was a limitation. More evidently, the same dataset was not used throughout the project. It was a limitation due to the organic development of the project over time.

A social identity theory and self-categorisation theory framework has been adopted throughout the thesis. Theoretically, it provided a cohesive thread throughout that helped to streamline an eclectic set of features: unorthodox data, several methods, and a wide array of literature. However, Haslam et al. (2003) warned against seeing organisational identity as "universal elixir" (p.365). It resonates here. A kind of confirmation bias might apply (i.e., where social identity was pertinent, it was mentioned) at the cost of Popperian principles in relation to theory in this project. Although an explicitly interpretative approach was used and it

was reflexive throughout, it might be considered a limitation. Thus, the downside was that social identity theory and self-categorisation theory meant alternative theories were neglected. They might have disconfirmed or perhaps added to findings. For example, as mentioned in chapter 12 (12.6.), some narrative theories might have evinced finer-grained details (e.g., McAdams, 1996) than the current project's attribution of social identity. It is a limitation but parameters must necessarily be drawn somewhere: In this case, it was around theory though it remains for others to take forward. Similarly, masculinity was an evident strand in some findings, especially narrative heroes. It was considered but rejected for two main reasons. Firstly, participant demographics were unknown: A study of masculinity would be limited without knowing whether participants were men or women adopting masculine roles in a masculine culture. Secondly, it was so large a topic; it could not have had justice here. Again, it remains a potentially rich seam for others to mine.

13.8. Future Directions

Managing to negotiate a social identity concordant with the organisation is not necessarily exclusively positive. Rather, it would be better framed as analogous to a Yerkes Dodson (1908) effect. Under the original configuration, performance under stress climbed to an optimal point after which further increases in stress became decremental to performance. Likewise, an individual identity concordant with the organisational identity may be a protective factor (in that it provides support and facilitates performance) but beyond the optimal point, identifying too closely with the organisation may become restrictive and hamper performance. This would incidentally support the findings of Colville et al. (2013) (see 13.4. above). If true expertise is lacking, managing social identity (manifested in disproportionate concern with professional image) may be a displacement activity that masks the deficits (see 13.6. above). Further exploration of the impact of social identity on performance would be beneficial.

The organisational culture and its products (policies, models, SOPs, etc.) circumscribe the available social identities and the available narratives. It would be an interesting empirical question to determine whether they are *lite/light* or *greedy* (the latter prohibiting many different narratives or narrative identities, the former vice

versa) (Frank, 2010). The findings on NC experience in this project nod towards such issues but require further research. If officers are required to subscribe to the formulaic narratives and identities on offer, it might well impede performance, particularly in unique situations (also Colville et al., 2013, above paragraph and 13.6.). This has previously been identified as *narrative foreclosure*, a term coined by Freeman (2000, cited in Bohlmeijer, Westerhof, Randall, Tromp, & Kenyon, 2011) to describe an impairment in an individual's capacity for reflection and meaning making (Bohlmeijer et al., 2011). Albeit developed for life narratives, it has utility in the organisational domain. As identity development may become static or foreclosed over the lifespan so too may it become foreclosed by the boundaries of an organisational mileu and culture. Hence, determining the greediness of organisational narratives or identities and the existence of narrative foreclosure would be a valuable future direction.

Further research into the divergence between incident experiences is warranted. In particular, uncertainty may be worth further examination. It may be that uncertainty is a common underlying experience; that is, uncertainty might have comprised a superordinate category – a common experience - but for organisational protective factors which moderated uncertainty (or, less optimistically, masked a lack of expertise). Specifically, promoting social bonds via humour in CT and determining to take control after SC incidents might have successfully resolved the experience of uncertainty in critical incidents. These moderating factors were unavailable to participants in NC incidents.

The project offers some interesting directions on the topic of stress. A more concrete hypothesis was derived from the argument on the organisationally-peripheral place of NC incidents: Unresolved narratives will be positively correlated with continuing trauma after critical incidents. CT participants disclosed the personal toll incidents had taken. As there is anecdotal evidence that 10kV sessions are cathartic (chapter 3, 3.9.), tracking CT officers who have or have not had 10kV debriefs might prove a useful study. Pickens (2010) found lack of organisational support and the media to be stressors. Albeit based on different definitions of critical incidents, this project's findings offer some support for Pickens. Also in a U.S.

context, time pressure was a stressor among homicide officers in a U.S. context (Dabney et al., 2013) (see chapter 4, 4.5.1.). It can also adversely affect decision making (Durham et al., 2000, also chapter 7, 7.3.2.5). The replication of *time pressure* as an emergent theme in the current project (IPA analysis, chapter 7, 7.3.2.1.) provides a basis to explore it in the U.K. as an organisational stressor and for its impact on decision making. Whether related to stress or no, the seeming need for scapegoats in multi-agency collaborations is also a promising future direction.

The medium of writing might have elicited the very open accounts provided as data (see 13.3. above). Alternatively, straightforward anonymity might elicit such candour notwithstanding the medium. They are interesting issues for exploration alongside a further examination of 10kV technology as data collection method. As discussed at the end of the previous section, alternative arguments could be made around theory; the masculinity of the roles embodied in organisational narratives also remains to be explored.

Finally, the models presented throughout warrant empirical testing: The dependence of staff goodwill caused by resource issues was proposed as decremental to staff welfare (figure 6.1.); the nature of the relationships between police, partner agencies, and community underpinned communication difficulties (figure 5.1.); potential drivers of uncertainty (figure 9.1.); and the narrative exemplars, *Monster media*, *CONTEST quest*, and *Cheshire cat*. Each provides useful empirical topics.

13.9. Conclusion

In this project, an examination of critical incident experiences was conducted. The focus group sessions explored professionals' accounts of some of the most significant U.K. critical incidents of the last decade. The recurrent features were recorded. Negative and positive experiences were identified along with the means to transform the former into the latter. Narratives were elucidated. Organisational identity was discussed. When participants recorded their experiences of critical incidents, their accounts focused principally on their relationships with others in their shared lifeworld. They were intersubjective accounts that were provided, revealing

the very human essence of those experiences and the importance of interactions with others as components of *being-in-the-world*: In Smith et al.'s phrase, "Relatedness-to-the-world is a fundamental part of our constitution" (2009, l. 359). The participants, in recounting their experiences, were making sense of their communications with others, their partnerships with others, their relatedness to others. Participants often talked about the failure to communicate or the poor quality of partnerships. Participants discussed the sense of exclusion and how they transformed those negative experiences by taking pride in the collective identity and serving victims and families. Participants also talked of antagonistic forces and how they overcame them. All were testament to the fact that these extraordinary experiences were not lone experiences. In the face of life-or-death events, and often in the face of many fatalities, these individuals were not alone. Each obstacle in the world, each division between one team and another, each frustration with another agency was simultaneously a connection to someone (Grosz, 2013). In undergoing these extraordinary adverse experiences, they stared at mortality, and what mattered to those human beings was this: It was a shared experience.

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APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY OF POLICE ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ACPO TAM	Association of Chief Police Officers Terrorism & Allied Matters
ANPR	Automatic number plate recognition
BCU	Borough Command Unit
CATCHEM	Centralised analytical team collating homicide expertise
CB	Casualty Bureau
CC	Chief Constable
CHIS	Covert Human Intelligence Source
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
DVI	Disaster Victim Identification
FIM	Force Incident Manager
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOLMES	Home Office large major enquiry system
ICCS	Integrated Command and Control System
KPI	Key performance indicator
MIR	Major Incident Room
MIRSAP	Major inquiry standard administrative procedures
MIU	Murder Investigation Unit
NCA	National Crime Agency

NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NPT	Neighbourhood Police Team
PIP	Professionalising investigation programme
SCAS	Serious Crime Analysis Section
SIO	Senior Investigating Officer
SLA	Service level agreement
SOCA	Serious and Organised Crime Agency
SOCO	Scenes of Crime Officer
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TRiM	Trauma risk management
ViSOR	Violent offender and sex offender register

APPENDIX B. IPA PROTOCOL

Palmer, Larkin, de Visser, and Fadden (2010) Protocol for using IPA with Focus Group Data

Step 1. Objects of Concern and Experiential Claims

a. Pick out experiential claims and concerns as they appear in the transcript;

b. Summarise these, and sort into emergent patterns.

Step 2. Positionality

a. Explore the role played by facilitators, keeping track of questions, permissions, encouragements, redirections, etc. (What is their perspective stance, position?)

b. Explore the function of statements made by respondents. (What is their perspective, stance?)

Step 3. Roles and Relationships

a. Examine references to other people: what roles and relationships are described? What sorts of meanings and expectations are attributed to these relationships?
b. What are understood to be the consequences of these?

Step 4. Organisations and Systems

a. Examine references to organisations and systems: how are these described? What sorts of meanings and expectations are attributed to these relationships?
b. What are understood to be the consequences of these?

Step 5. Stories

Examine the stories told by participants: look at the structure; genre; imagery and tone. What does each story achieve? How do participants support or impede each other to share their experiences? What temporal referents exist?

Step 6. Language

Throughout stages 1-7, monitor language use, paying particular attention to use of metaphor, euphemism, idiom etc. Consider:

a. Patterns – repetition, jargon, stand-out words and phrases, turn-taking, prompting – are these identified in individuals or the whole group?
b. Context – impact on language used; descriptors of feelings/emotive language; jargon and explanation of technical terms; impact of facilitator;
c. Function – how/why is certain language being used? (e.g., to emphasise/back-up a point, to shock, to provoke disagreement, to amuse/lighten the tone?)

Step 7. Emergent Themes

Return to the emergent themes from step 1b and adapt them according to the work done subsequently. Answering the following questions will help:

a. What experiences are being shared?
b. What are individuals doing by sharing their experiences?
c. How are they making those things meaningful to one another?
d. What are they doing as a group?
e. What are the consensus issues?
f. Where is there conflict? How is this being managed/resolved?

Step 8. Integration of Multiple Cases

Where more than one focus group has taken place, integrate work done with each to build up an overall analysis of the topic under investigation. Data should be checked to ensure sufficient homogeneity between focus groups to allow for successful integration. To draw the analysis to completion:

a. Pick out commonalities and stand-out differences between groups drawing out superordinate themes;
b. Frequently re-visit the transcripts to check themes in relation to the original claims made to help ensure accuracy;
c. Consider the analysis in the wider context of existing relevant theories, models, and explanations.

APPENDIX C. LIT SEARCH PROTOCOL

Research Questions

What are the experiences of the professionals responsible for managing critical incidents? What are the recurring features of these incidents? What did participants choose to talk about? How did they tell their stories?

Search Protocol - Parameters = 1990-2014. *Population -* Professionals all ages in emergency services & military settings (the latter included to cast a wide net over CT

literature); *Intervention/Inclusion (exclusion) -* Include any critical incidents, serious crime (specifically, rape and homicide), counter-terrorism, non-criminal policing; include relevant phenomenological, IPA, narrative studies (where relevant = forensic/policing-related). Exclude victims of crime; criminal behaviours. Include/exclude task to cover the first 500 hits unless relevance exhausted sooner; *Options -* Any outcome; *Study Design –* quantitative and qualitative included.

Search Terms - Set 1. 1. "critical incident*" (truncated to pick up plurals); 2. polic* (truncated to pick up policing); 3. "police officer*"; 4. "crim* investigation" (proximity operator of 3); 5. terroris*; 6. counter-terroris* (proximity operator of 3); 7. "non-criminal incident"/"non crim* incident" (proximity operator of 3); 8."major incident*; *Set 2.* 1.experience*; 2. idiographic/ideographic; 3. Interpretative; 4. Phenomenolog*; 5. "interpretative phenomenological" (proximity operator of 3); 6. narrative*.

Search Stages - Stage 1 – search each Set 1 term separately (i.e., terms 1-8 above); Stage 2 – OR searches as follows: "polic*" OR "critical incident*"; "polic*" OR "police officers"; *Stage 3 –* 'AND'. Boolean operators were also used to combine second set of terms; specifically 'AND' combined each term from the second set with each of the first set. All terms were truncated to pick up alternatives and results sorted by relevance.

Databases to be Searched - Web of Knowledge (no thesaurus); Discover (Discover accesses multiple providers including Psychinfo, JSTOR, Science Direct, and Scopus); regular library catalogue and thesis repository; policing-related websites (Home Office, National Policing Improvement Agency, police forces) to include significant publications or policy and procedures.

Note: On the search for the first set of search terms, including all critical incident domains proved unmanageably broad (14,000 plus results from one database) and largely irrelevant. The pooled search of '"critical incident*" NOT health' proved effective to exclude the vast number of non-relevant health results. Finally, critical incidents as defined in the business management, education and health domains were excluded unless abstracts showed cross-disciplinary insights.

APPENDIX D. THEME DICTIONARY

The themes listed below refer to thematic analysis in chapters 5 and 6. Themes are defined in this appendix. In real life, the referents of these definitions are complex phenomena that interact and overlap. They are not, therefore, 'watertight' mutually exclusive categories. Conceptually, Rosch's (1973) idea of 'fuzzy' boundaries was employed in determining the categories. As part of the iterative process of defining final themes, a best fit principle was adopted. Where overlap (fuzzy boundaries) occurred, these features are reported below as 'Excluded' for clarity.

Theme	Definition
Accountability	Taking responsibility; being held accountable; lack of clarity about accountability between agencies; diffusion of responsibility; concern over anticipated blame, mistakes made, things going wrong. Excluded: Lack of accountability cited as an inter-agency working difficulty (in Partnerships); accountability explicitly referring to performance measures (in Performance Measures).
Accreditation	Badges for access (e.g., to crime scenes); processes for organising of same.
Ad Hoc Decision Making	Making decisions on the spot: need to make decisions in absence of policy/procedures (e.g., unique incident not covered by policy); decision making or decision avoidance without reference to SOPs; managing in extremis; working under time pressure (e.g., actions despite absence of full information).

Asset Stripping Boroughs	Operational deployment problems; depletion of borough staff in preference to specialist units; skills loss in movement from borough to specialist (e.g., neighbourhood teams).
Balancing Needs and Priorities	Competing goals; mutually exclusive aims; managing time effectively and efficiently.
Binary Thinking	Reductive thinking that deals only in polar opposites/crude dichotomies; assuming mutual exclusivity where there is none; rigid black-and-white thinking; criticising others or arguing for rejection of ideas on this basis (e.g., 'We should be enforcing the law not being soft on people').
Business as Usual	Regular policing issues beyond the critical incident; competing demands; regular/ordinary workload demands or management of same. Excluded: demands on material goods e.g., equipment/kit (in Resources).
Catching the Offender	Investigative issues about suspect; preventing repeat offences; desire to apprehend suspects.
City Wide	Extent of policy/programme initiative or restrictions on same.
Communication	Relevant parties receiving/sending information; appropriate sharing/updating of information; appropriate volume of information (manageable); information withheld (e.g., Intel); accuracy of communications; transfer of clear and non-conflicting information; timely communications. Excluded: communication system technology (in I.T. Systems); equipment/kit or lack of

	same (e.g., mobile phones) (in Resources); reference to interacting parties in absence of clear/explicit reference to communication/information sharing (in Partnerships).
Community	Engagement with community; assistance from public (e.g., response to appeals for help); support from or satisfaction expressed by community; cultural issues specifically relating to community served. Excluded: clear and specific reference to victims or their families (despite being members of community (In Victims and Families); specific reference to a Community Impact Assessment (In Community Impact Assessment).
Community Impact Assessment	Specific procedure/assessment framework; protocols and processes relating to same.
Convictions	Securing convictions; improving conviction rates; reducing attrition rates, no criming decisions. Excluded: clear and specific reference to evidence (collection, building prosecution cases).
Diplomacy	Being sensitive to others' concerns or needs; taking care not to jeopardise one's own position (e.g., choosing not to discuss openly perceived weaknesses in seniors).
Discover Limits	Prospect of and anticipation of unknown challenges; concerns about capability.
Display	Branding/corporate livery or logos of organisation/force (e.g., uniform).
Evidence	Gathering/collecting evidence; role of evidence in building cases for prosecution.

	Excluded: clear and specific reference to convictions (In Conviction Rates); reference to forensic types of evidence (e.g., DNA, fingerprinting) (In Forensics).
Expertise	Individuals' competencies: knowledge, skills and attitudes displayed or needed for tasks or operations; specialist knowledge. Excluded: organisational strategies for specialist services (e.g., business models for serious crime investigation) (in Specialisation).
Fast Pace	Incident unfolding quickly; impact of same on the response (e.g., investigation changing direction in light of new information/suspects etc.)
Forensics	Specific specialised types of forensic evidence (DNA, fingerprinting, odontology); issues of maintaining sterility; preventing cross-contamination. Excluded: general references to evidence (In Evidence);
Fortune Cookies	Non-evidence based ideas; folk psychology assumptions; expression of home-spun homilies or platitudes as recommendations (e.g., 'Without order, there can be no change'; 'Working towards a common goal and respecting the differences will inspire innovation'.)
Human Rights	Legislation; protection of individuals/groups/public.
Inclusivity	Including all 'client' groups; diversity in service provision.
Intelligence	Collection or processing of information relevant to an investigation; information on

	illegal activity or criminal suspects.
	Excluded: specific reference to liaison with the Intelligence services (In Partnerships).
I.T. Systems	Technology and use of same for recording and storage of information; facilities for record keeping; data problems; (in)accessibility of information due to technology/system; compatibility of systems.
	Excluded: Lack of sufficient I.T. equipment (e.g., too few computers) (in Resources);
	Information sharing or lack of same without specific reference to I.T./technology (in Communication).
Job Well Done	Pride in own/colleagues' performance; overcoming challenges; successful conclusion of operation (e.g., victims reunited with family; suspect arrested and charged).
	Excluded: positive relationships generally (in Partnerships).
Knowledge of Terrorists	Knowledge or speculative discussion on motivation of individuals involved in terrorist acts; political stance or cultural perspectives that inform terrorists' positions.
Leadership	Command structure (Gold, Silver); collaboration among/co-ordination by seniors; setting of tasks and goals; perceptions of guidance (e.g., clarity of same); performance of seniors.
	Excluded: general collaboration in absence of reference to seniority/leadership (in

	Partnerships).
Learn Lessons	Desire to use experience of current incident to develop practice; failure to implement lessons of previous incidents; failure to embed previous lessons learned into practice; concerns over complacency; concerns over organisational 'memory'. Excluded: clear and specific reference to a formal plan that was implemented during an incident (e.g., Emergency Plan was implemented) (In Planning).
Listening to Others	Receptive attitude to public; accepting input from other people/groups (e.g., staff of different/lower rank).
Logistics	Organising resources to respond; transport of staff to scene/worksite; arrangements for e.g., call-out; arrangements for meeting basic needs (e.g., catering, accommodation on site).
Love	Love of the job; passion and commitment to profession.
Media	Media strategy; media glare; managing media demands; engaging/negotiating with media (e.g., to maintain profile of incident/seek public assistance); need to escape media intrusion; concern over preventing leaks (e.g., operationally sensitive information). Excluded: individuals' personal response/feelings on media portrayal of organisation/operation (in professional Image).

Mental Health	Clear specific reference to general mental health issues (e.g., mentally ill suspects). Excluded: specific/clear reference to psychological impact of incident on victims (in Victims and Families).
'Moles'	Individuals leaking or suspected of leaking confidential/restricted/secret information; practice of leaking.
Offender Management	Welfare of offenders (e.g., duty of care); responsibility for (e.g., during custody); release from custody; protection of vulnerable offenders. Excluded: clear, specific reference to offenders' human rights (In Human Rights).
P Agency	One specific agency that stood out as problematic in terms of liaison/co-operation (anonymised by the nomenclature 'P').
Partnerships	Effectiveness of working relationships; joined-up thinking; inter-agency/departmental liaison; inter-agency/departmental teamwork or co-operation; shared aims and goals; collaborative approach; professional attitudes/approach; understanding of other agencies' function and purpose (e.g., manifested in conflict re. elitist attitudes). Excluded: parameters of roles in absence of explicit or clear reference to other agencies (in Roles and Responsibilities); Explicit/clear reference to leaders or leadership qualities (in Leadership); Explicit/clear reference to confidence in support of others (or lack of same) (in Trust); Explicit/clear reference to information sharing or

	lack of or systems for same between interacting parties (In Communication); explicit reference to problem agencies P or Q (In P Agency and Q Agency respectively).
Performance Measures	Key performance indicators; impact of data recording requirements, statistics, etc. associated with performance measures; impact of performance measures on policing effectiveness; workload issued related to same. Excluded: specific references to accountability caused by performance measures (in Accountability).
Planning	Strategy for the future; anticipating events; anticipating long-term impact; structuring/staging response. Reference to formal plans (e.g., Evacuation Plan, Mass Casualty Plan, Emergency Plan etc.) Excluded: learning from incidents; reviewing and reflecting on incidents (in Learn Lessons) unless it was clear and specific reference to a formal plan that was implemented during an incident (e.g., implemented Emergency Plan).
Policy	Content of policy; impact of policy on operations (tactics, success, decision making etc.); failures of/need to review policy. Excluded: decision making in absence of policy (In Ad Hoc Decision Making)
Politics	External politics; government agenda/demands/support; ministerial involvement (e.g., visits/briefing demands).

	Excluded: internal relationships with perceived power dimension (e.g., senior officers perceived as vying for control) (in Partnerships).
Professional Image	Participants' internal perceptions on impression management; concern with external perceptions of organisation/its representatives; comparisons with others' image/status (e.g., feelings of being 'poor relation').
	Excluded: External reports from press (in Media); specific reference to branding/badges/corporate livery (In Display).
Progressing Investigations	Routine tasks undertaken to further an investigation (e.g., regularly updating paperwork).
Public Health	Public health (e.g., impact of incident on same); environmental issues; accessing emergency treatment (e.g., for managing casualties).
	Excluded: health of responders (in Staff Welfare); health as an organisation/agency (strategic/governance level) (in Partnerships); victims' psychological impact (e.g., trauma) (in Victims and Families).
Q Agency	One specific agency that stood out as problematic in terms of liaison/co-operation (anonymised by the nomenclature 'Q').
Recovery	Return to normal after incident: end of extraordinary arrangements (e.g., mutual aid ended, kit returned, temporary facilities removed etc.); standing down/return to normal duties after deployment.

Resilience	Ability of organisation to: absorb extraordinary events (e.g., major or critical incidents); maintain response to incident over extended periods of time. Excluded: references to/concerns for individuals' resilience (In Staff Welfare); specific references to everyday business managed alongside extraordinary incidents (In Business as Usual).
Resources	Availability of resources (e.g., equipment, staff); sufficient resources adequate for task; appropriate facilities; effective management of resources (e.g., insufficient financial reimbursement/expense allowance); mutual aid (references to equipment/technology). Excluded: issues related to working relationships (e.g., wouldn't let me access transport to scene because they think they're in charge (in Partnerships).
Risk	Threat of potential loss; potential harm to individual/group/public; assessment of same; processes and procedures for assessing risk.
Roads	Management of traffic and transport during or as a result of incident (e.g., re-routing, road closures or other alternative arrangements).
Roles and Responsibilities	Parameters of roles; clarity/adequacy of command structure (Gold, Silver, Bronze roles); clarity of responsibilities; clear definition of roles; duplication of roles; inter-positional knowledge; clear demarcation of duties; role over rank. Excluded: impact of poor role demarcation on working relationships (in Partnerships).

Scale	Size of incident; personal response to scale (e.g., shock, worry, reflection on extraordinary nature of circumstances); feelings/impressions on others' responses (e.g., couldn't believe they survived). Note: exclusive reference made to large scale.
Security	Safety of public: concerns at keeping people safe from harm/danger; anticipating/managing threat to life; safety of individual. Excluded: professional safety/well-being (In Staff Welfare); specific reference to widespread health/environmental concerns (In Public Health).
Specialisation	Organisational strategies for services (e.g., business models for types of criminal investigation); impact or consequences of specialism in organisations. Excluded: Individuals' specialist skills (in Expertise).
Staff Goodwill	Commitment and dedication to operation; working beyond ordinary requirements/shift patterns; 'can-do' attitude; acceptance of difficult circumstances; adaptability to extra demands (e.g., willingness to learn/take on new tasks). Excluded: references to proactively turning up at work while off-duty (in Self-deployment).
Staff Welfare	Welfare and safety of responders; working conditions; impact on staff health; health and safety concerns (e.g., lack of assessment of scene); support services (e.g., availability of counselling); meeting basic needs (e.g., catering outside normal hours

	during long shifts); impact on domestic/family life; burnout. Excluded: protecting officers from media intrusion (in Media).
Terminology	Use of jargon; common use/shared understanding of language; understanding language use in rules/policy/legislation.
Thinking and Deciding	Time and space to reflect and review; influences on decision making.
Time Limits	Limits on detaining suspects/offenders; specific reference to statutory or other deadlines (e.g., in investigations, PACE legislation; identification or recovery of injured victims).
Training	Training received; adequacy of training; gaps in provision/skills shortfall; making efficient use of trained staff. Effectiveness of joint training; desirability of nationally trained teams/response units.
Trust	Confidence in support of others; reliability of colleagues; suspicion of others' motives; confidence from public. Excluded: General negative perceptions on working relationships (in Partnerships).
Uncertainty	Personal reflections on absence of information; concern about decision making in circumstances of incomplete information; impact of partial/incomplete views of operation.
Uniqueness of Incident	Rarity of incident; how/why different from ordinary experience; reflections on/concerns

	about coping with novel events.
	Excluded: specific/clear reference to size of the incident (in Scale).
Victims and Families	Support for victims and families; victims'/families' engagement or place in processes (inclusion); managing emotions from family; expressions of gratitude from families; concerns to achieve high standards of care (e.g., respect dignity of victims and families); balancing different needs/goals in relation to victims and families (e.g., support tipping into intrusion).
	Excluded: specific reference to victims' or families'' human rights (In Human Rights).

APPENDIX E. RANK ORDER OF THEMES

(Ranked by Proportion of Sessions x Mean Percentage Frequency per Session)

No.	Theme Name	Proportion of Sessions (/18)	Mean Frequency (%)	Standard Deviation
1	*Partnerships*	15	13.16	6.306
2	*Community*	9	16.03	15.27
3	*Communication*	13	8.86	3.99
4	*Planning*	8	12.01	3.45
5	*Learn Lessons*	11	8.69	4.88
6	*Staff Goodwill*	8	11.47	5.30
7	*Resources*	10	9.03	5.27
8	*Staff Welfare*	9	8.14	3.14
9	*Roles and Responsibilities*	8	7.49	2.58
10	*Professional Image*	4	11.54	3.72
11	*Training*	6	8.59	3.78
12	*Leadership*	2	12.04	1.52
13	*Media*	7	6.32	4.90
14	*Expertise*	4	9.14	4.79
15	*Victims & Families*	7	4.63	3.50
16	*Performance Measures*	2	10.07	9.11
17	*Logistics*	2	9.97	6.78
18	*Trust*	2	10.05	7.74
19	*I.T. Systems*	3	7.01	6.56
20	*Scale*	4	5.91	5.55
21	*Security*	2	7.82	5.10
22	*Politics*	4	5.44	4.00
23	*Ad Hoc Decision Making*	4	4.73	2.65
24	*Human Rights*	2	6.70	3.85
25	*Fast Pace*	2	5.77	6.29
26	*Policy*	2	5.35	4.05

27	*Business as Usual*	3	4.25	4.17
28	*Balancing Needs and Priorities*	2	5.02	1.92
29	*Uncertainty*	2	4.67	2.55
30	*Evidence*	4	2.49	1.68
31	*Risk*	2	2.90	1.28
32	*Forensics*	2	1.44	0.29
33	*Listening to Others*	1	16.58	-
34	*Progressing Investigations*	1	15.52	-
35	*Thinking and Deciding*	1	14.08	-
36	*Specialisation*	1	12.95	-
37	*Catching the Offender*	1	12.25	-
38	*Community Impact Assessment*	1	11.48	-
39	*Asset Stripping Boroughs*	1	10.93	-
40	*Terminology*	1	10.68	-
41	*Inclusivity*	1	9.71	-
42	*Accountability*	1	9.52	-
43	*Time Limits*	1	9.42	-
44	*Convictions*	1	9.38	-
45	*Discover Limits*	1	9.19	-
46	*P Agency*	1	8.68	-
47	*Mental Health*	1	7.94	-
48	*Recovery*	1	7.47	-
49	*Q Agency*	1	7.41	-
50	*Public Health*	1	7.28	-
51	*Intelligence*	1	6.85	-
52	*Display*	1	5.78	-
53	*Job Well Done*	1	4.80	-
54	*City Wide*	1	3.65	-
55	*Diplomacy*	1	3.23	-
56	*Binary Thinking*	1	3.11	-

57	Offender Management	1	2.53	-
58	Knowledge of Terrorists	1	2.40	-
59	Accreditation	1	2.13	-
60	Roads	1	2.02	-
61	Resilience	1	1.62	-
62	Fortune Cookies	1	1.47	-
63	'Moles'	1	1.29	-
64	Uniqueness of Incident	1	1.24	-
65	Love	1	1.08	-

F.1. 10kV U.K. – Grouped by Frequency of Theme (parentheses show percentage total coded comments per session)

CT				SC				NC			
Operational		Service delivery		Operational		Service Delivery		Operational		Service Delivery	
CT1	CT2	CT4[16]	CT5	SC1	SC2	SC4	SC5	NC1	NC2	NC4	NC5
Partnerships (working together) (20.49)	Partnerships (19.42)	Staff Goodwill (19.68)	Logistics (14.76)	Community (response) (16.77)	Staff Goodwill (13.19)	Performance Measures (16.51)	Community (& individual) engagement (17.18)	Community (53.30)	Communication (& info share) (1.67)	Listening to Others (receptive to pub) (16.58)	Partnerships (26.81)
Staff Goodwill (14.89)	Planning (17.39)	Community (engagement/ relations) (18.51)	Scale (13.24)	Staff goodwill (13.54)	Staff Welfare (11.91)	Specialisation (12.95)	Learn Lessons (share best practice) (13.20)	Community Impact Assessment (11.48)	Expertise (need for specialist knowledge) (10.38)	Community (engagement) (16.03)	Planning (14.01)
Leadership (& Command) (13.11)	Media (managing) (12.92)	I.T. Systems (14.23)	Professional Image (12.79)	Catching the Offender (12.25)	Communication (& info share) (11.06)	Staff Welfare (11.61)	Communication (info sharing) (13.20)	Staff Welfare (11.04)	Partnerships (8.49)	Partnerships (15.16)	Learn Lessons (integrate) (10.14)
Planning (strategy) (12.51)	Resources (10.63)	Roles & Responsibilities (10.66)	Security (11.42)	Communication (info (management/ sharing)	Media (10.63)	Asset Stripping Boroughs (10.93)	Partnerships (multi-agency) (9.40)	Cmmuncation (10.79)	Staff Goodwill (8.36)	Training (&devlopment) (12.87)	Human Rights (9.42

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[16] Numbering is sequential but overseas sessions appear in separate table. Example sequence: operational sessions = CT1, CT2 (U.K.), CT3 (overseas); service delivery sessions = CT4, CT5 (U.K.), CT6 (overseas).

				(12.25)							
Training (12.21)	Community (9.58)	Training (10.21)	Partnerships (working relationships) (11.26)	Leadership (10.96)	Professional Image (2nd guessing) (10.21)	Partnerships (differing goals) (10.49)	[NAME P] agency (8.68)	Mental Health (7.94)	Learn Lessons (7.55)	Politics (11.34)	Time Limits (PACE) (9.42)
Staff Welfare (7.14)	Staff Welfare (7.55)	Planning (7.02)	Communication (Info sharing) (10.35)	Media (10.32)	Fast Pace (& speedy response) (10.21)	Convictions (securing and attrition) (9.38)	[NAME Q] agency (7.41)	Partnerships (1.38)	Training (team ready pre-trained) (7.41)	Terminology (10.68)	Policies and Procedures (8.21)
Roles & Responsibilities (4.41)	Intelligence (6.85)	Staff Welfare (4.99)	Planning (longer term) (10.35)	Business as Usual (keeping going) (9.03)	Balancing Needs and Priorities (6.38)	Victims and Families (8.26)	Roles & Responsibilities (6.15)	Victims and Families (1.12)	Public Health/ environmental Consequences (7.28)	Trust (4.58)	Community (7.25)
Learn Lessons (2.16)	Business as Usual (2.37)	Communication (2.59)	Display (5.78)	Resources (7.42)	Learn Lessons (5.53)	Expertise (specialist competencies) (4.46)	Human Rights (3.98)		Scale (of incident) (7.14)	Media (1.64)	Victims and Families (6.52)
Victims and Families (2.06)	Scale (2.20)	Knowledge of Terrorists (2.40	City Wide (3.65)	Staff Welfare (5.81)	Training (5.11)	Resources (3.57)	Risk (3.80)		Uncertainty (6.47)		Performance Measures (3.62)
I.T. systems (1.43)	Evidence (1.85)	Evidence (collect/casebuilding) (1.16)	Accreditation (2.13)		Ad hoc DM(creative) (4.68)	Learn Lessons (2.68)	Offender Management (2.53)		Roles & Responsib (4.85)		Politics (2.42)
Fast pace (1.32)					Community (2.55)	Evidence (2.01)			Resources (4.58)		
Forensic (1.23)					Vics/Fams (2.12)				Staff Welf (3.23)		

Ad Hoc Decisions (1.05)					Resources (1.27)				Community (3.10)		
									Roads (2.02)		
									Media (1.89)		
									Resilience (1.62)		
									Bus as usual (1.35)		
Partnerships (working together) (20.49)	Partnerships (19.42)	Staff Goodwill (19.68)	Logistics (14.76)	Community (response) (16.77)	Staff Goodwill (13.19)	Performance Measures (16.51)	Community (& individual) engagement) (17.18)	Community (53.30)	Communication (& info share) (1.67)	Listening to Others (receptive to pub) (16.58)	Partnerships (26.81)

F.2. 10kV U.K. – Grouped by Common Theme (parentheses show percentage total coded comments per session)

CT				SC				NC			
Operational		Service Delivery		Operational		Service Delivery		Operational		Service Delivery	
CT1	CT2	CT4[17]	CT5	SC1	SC2	SC4	SC5	NC1	NC2	NC4	NC5
Partnerships (working together) (20.49)	Partnerships (19.42)		Partnerships (working relationships) (11.26)			Partnerships (differing goals) (10.49)		Partnerships (1.38)	Partnerships (8.49)	Partnerships (strengthen) (26.81)	Partnerships (15.16)
	Community (9.58)	Community (engagement / relations) (18.51)		Community response (16.77)	Community (2.55)		Community (engagement) (17.18)	Community (53.30)	Community (engagement) (3.10)	Community (7.25)	Community (engagement) (16.03)
Staff Welfare (7.14)	Staff Welfare (7.55)	Staff Welfare (4.99)		Staff Welfare (5.81)	Staff Welfare (11.91)	Staff Welfare ((11.61)		Staff Welfare (11.04)	Staff Welfare (3.23)		
		Communication (2.59)	Communication (info sharing) (10.35)	Communication (info (management/ share) (12.25)	Communication (info share (11.06)		Communication (info sharing) (13.20)	Communication openness /info share w public (10.79)	Communication (info sharing (1.67)		

[17] Numbering is sequential but U.K. sessions appear in separate table. Example sequence: operational sessions = CT1, CT2 (U.K.), CT3 (overseas); service delivery sessions = CT4, CT5 (U.K.), CT6 (overseas).

Learn Lessons (2.16)				Learn Lessons (5.53)	Learn Lessons (2.68)		Learn Lessons (share best practice) (13.20)		Learn Lessons (7.55)	Learn Lessons (integrate) (10.14)	
Staff Goodwill (14.89)		Staff Goodwill (19.68)		Staff Goodwill (13.54)	Staff Goodwill (13.19)				Staff Goodwill (8.36)		
Planning (strategy) (12.51)	Planning (17.39)	Planning (7.02)	Planning (10.35)							Planning (14.01)	
Training (12.21)		Training (10.21)		Training (5.11)					Training (7.41)		Training (12.87)
Victims and Families (2.06)				Victims and Families (2.12)	Victims and Families (8.26)			Victims and Families (1.12)		Victims and Families (6.52)	
	Media (12.92)			Media (10.32)	Media (10.63)				Media (1.89)		Media (1.64)
	Resources (10.63)			Resources (7.42)	Resources (1.27)	Resources (3.57)			Resources (4.58)		
Roles & Responsibilities (4.41)		Roles & Responsibilities (10.66)					Roles & Responsibilities (6.15)		Roles & Responsibilities (10.66)		
	Evidence (1.85)	Evidence(collection & case build) (1.16)				Evidence (2.01)					
	Scale (2.20)		Scale (13.24)						Scale (of incident) (7.14)		
			Bus as Usual (keep on) (9.03)								

I.T. Systems (1.43)		I.T. Systems (14.23)									
			Professional Image (12.79)	Professional Image (2nd guessing) (10.21)							
Leadership (& command) (13.11)			Leadership (10.96)								
Fast Pace (1.32)				Fast Pace (& speedy response) (10.21)							
Ad Hoc Decisions (1.05)				Ad Hoc Decisions (4.68)							
					Expertise (4.46)				Expertise (need specialist knowledge) (10.38)		
					Performance Measures (16.51)					Performance Measures (3.62)	
						Human Rights (3.98)				Human Rights (9.42)	
										Politics (2.42)	Politics (11.34)
	Knowledge of Terrorists (2.40)										

			Logistics (14.76)						
			Display (5.78)						
			City Wide (3.65)						
			Accreditation (2.13)						
			Security (11.42)						
Forensics (1.23)									
	Intelligence (6.85)								
					Specialisation (12.95)				
					Asset Stripping Boroughs (10.93)				
					Convictions (securing and attrition) (9.38)				
						[NAME P] Agency (8.68)			
						[NAMEQ] agency (7.41)			
						Risk (3.80)			
						Offender Mng (2.53)			

				Catching the Offender (12.25)						
					Balancing Needs and Priorities (6.38)					
										Listening to Others (receptive) (16.58)
										Trminolgy (10.68)
										Trust (4.58)
									Time Limits (PACE) (9.42)	
									Policy & Procdure (8.21)	
								Cmny Impct Asmnt (11.48)		
								Mental Health (7.94)		
									Pub Health/ envirmnt (7.28)	
									Uncertainty (6.47)	

									Roads/traffic (2.02)		
									Resilience (1.62)		
Partnerships (working together) (20.49)	Partnerships (19.42)		Partnerships (working relationships) (11.26)			Partnerships (differing goals) (10.49)		Partnerships (1.38)	Partnerships (8.49)	Partnerships (strengthen) (26.81)	Partnerships (15.16)
	Community (9.58)	Community (engagement / relations) (18.51)		Community response (16.77)	Community (2.55)		Community (engagement) (17.18)	Community (53.30)	Community (engagement) (3.10)	Community (7.25)	Community (engagement) (16.03)
Staff Welfare (senior support (for) (7.14)	Staff Welfare (7.55)	Staff Welfare (4.99)		Staff Welfare (5.81)	Staff Welfare (11.91)	Staff Welfare (senior support (for) (11.61)		Staff Welfare (11.04)	Staff Welfare (3.23)		
		Communication (2.59)	Communication (info sharing) (10.35)	Communication (info (management/ share) (12.25)	Communication (info share (11.06)		Communication (info sharing) (13.20)	Communication openness /info share w public (10.79)	Communication (info sharing (1.67)		

F.3. 10kV OVERSEAS – Grouped by Frequency of Theme (parentheses show percentage total coded comments per session)

Operational	Service Delivery	Operational	Service Delivery	Operational	Service Delivery
CT3[18]	CT6	SC3	SC6	NC3	NC6
Learn Lessons (15.03)	Partnerships (different groups/inter-agency) (16.66)	Resources 18.61)	Professional Image (external perceptions) (15.95)	Planning (12.50)	Partnerships (joined-up approaches) (17.95)
Communication (info sharing) (12.32)	Thinking and Deciding (14.08)	Planning (deployment) (14.39)	Trust (15.52)	Partnerships (10.71)	Resources (15.38)
Partnerships (11.69)	Communication (10.63)	Learn Lessons (developing best practice) (14.14)	Expertise (individual competencies) (15.30)	Learn Lessons (10.00)	Learn Lessons (developing best practice) (12.63)
Roles & Responsibilities (11.69)	Resources (10.06)	Partnerships (maintain relationships) (10.67)	Staff Goodwill (11.64)	Resources (8.57)	Communication (12.09)
Resources (10.22)	Discover Limits (9.19)	Professional Image (7.20)	Partnerships (6.89)	Staff Goodwill (8.57)	Inclusivity (9.71)

[18] Numbering is sequential but U.K. sessions appear in separate table. Example sequence: operational sessions = CT1, CT2 (U.K.), CT3 (overseas); service delivery sessions = CT4, CT5 (U.K.), CT6 (overseas).

Staff Welfare (10.02)	Roles & Responsibilities (8.05)	Roles & Responsibilities (6.95)	Communication (info/share) (6.25)	Communication (8.24)	Accountability (9.52)
Victims and Families (9.81)	Recovery (7.47)	Security (4.21)	Ad Hoc Decisions (& decision avoidance) (6.03)	Roles & Responsibilities (7.14)	Evidence (4.95)
Planning (7.93)	Logistics (5.17)	Politics (3.97)	Progressing Investigations (3.87)	Ad Hoc Decisions (off policy) (7.14)	Binary Thinking (3.11)
Job Well Done (4.80)	Politics (4.02)	Communication (info sharing) (3.72)	Balancing Needs and Priorities (3.66)	Expertise (6.43)	Fortune Cookies (1.47)
Staff Goodwill (1.88)	Learn Lessons (2.48)	Training (3.72)	Diplomacy (3.23)	Media (5.36)	
Media (1.46)		Policy (2.48)	'Moles' (Leaks) (1.29)	I.T. Systems (5.36)	
Forensics (1.64)		Risk (assessment) (1.99)	Love (1.08)	Uncertainty (2.86)	
		Uniqueness of Operation (1.24)		Victims & Families (2.50)	
				Scale (1.07)	
Learn Lessons (15.03)	Partnerships (different groups/inter-agency) (16.66)	Resources (18.61)	Professional Image (external perceptions) (15.95)	Planning (12.50)	Partnerships (joined-up approaches) (17.95)

F.4. 10kV OVERSEAS – Grouped by Common Theme (parentheses show percentage total coded comments per session)

CT		SC		NC	
Operational	Service Delivery	Operational	Service delivery	Operational	Service Delivery
CT3[19]	CT6	SC3	SC6	NC3	NC6
Partnerships (11.69)	Partnerships (different groups/inter-agency) (16.55)	Partnerships (maintaining relationships) (10.67)	Partnerships (6.89)	Partnerships (10.71)	Partnerships (joined-up approaches) (17.95)
Communication (info sharing) (12.32)	Communication (10.63)	Communication (info sharing) (3.72)	Communication (info management/ share) (6.25)	Communication (8.24)	Communication (12.09)
Resources (10.22)	Resources (10.06)	Resources (18.61)		Resources (8.57)	Resources (15.38)
Learn Lessons (15.03)	Learn Lessons (2.48)	Learn Lessons (develop best practice) (14.14)		Learn Lessons (10.00)	Learn Lessons (dev best practice) (12.63)
Roles & Responsibilities (11.69)	Roles & Responsibilities (8.05)	Roles & Responsibilities (6.95)		Roles & Responsibilities (7.14)	

[19] Numbering is sequential but U.K. sessions appear in separate table. Example sequence: operational sessions = CT1, CT2 (U.K.), CT3 (overseas); service delivery sessions = CT4, CT5 (U.K.), CT6 (overseas).

Staff Goodwill (1.88)			Staff Goodwill (11.64)	Staff Goodwill (8.57)	
Planning (7.93)		Planning (deployment) (14.39)		Planning (12.50)	
	Politics (4.02)	Politics (3.97)			
Victims and Families (9.81)				Victims and Families (2.50)	
Media (1.46)				Media (5.36)	
		Professional Image (7.20)	Professional Image (external perceptions) (15.95)		
			Expertise (individual competencies) (15.30)	Expertise (6.43)	
			Ad Hoc Decisions (decision avoidance) (6.03)	Ad Hoc Decisions (off policy) (7.14)	
	Logistics (5.17)				
Staff Welfare (10.02)					
Forensics (1.64)					
			Trust (15.52)		
			Balancing Needs and Priorities (3.66)		
		Security (4.21)			
		Training (3.72)			
					Evidence (4.95)
				I.T. Systems (5.36)	
				Scale (1.07)	
	Thinking and				

	Deciding (14.08)				
	Discover Limits (9.19)				
	Recovery (7.47)				
Job Well Done (4.80)					
			Progressing Investigations (3.87)		
			Diplomacy (3.23)		
			'Moles' (leaks) (1.29)		

APPENDIX G. SAMPLE IPA TABLE

Examples given below are from serious crime; selected few only on *Community* theme to illustrate table design/use.

Theme	Key Words Descriptive	Key Words Conceptual	Key Words Linguistic	Quotations
Community	Everyone Families Friends	Everyone = one psych'al group	Personal pronouns here (our) also show one psych'al group which is perceived as very positive; repetition of 'everyone' also emphasises unity and pulling together. Repetition of families	Was fantastic, everyone wanted to help in their own way. Everyone wanted to support their local police; everyone had feelings about [victims'] death and had feelings for the [victims'] families and friends and wanted to show this. This was our [incident place name] and our families who were being murdered or having a criminal in it (p.4).

Community	We	ME – curious and interested in cmmny response. 'We need to' = seen as necessary to engage w/cmmny but clear that it is something of a mystery how actually to do so.	Verbs in quick succession understand, influenced, manage, empathise	We need to try to understand whether and how we influenced this response – i.e. how did we manage to get the public and community to empathise with [details of this incident redacted] (p.4)
	Public Community			
	Positive reaction Important issue Support community	ME – finding the key to cmmny engagement is a concern for future – don't seem to understand why it happened here/how to do it again. (ME – this = interesting discussion??)		Is the positive reaction from the community something we can retain and build upon? [In response] This is an important issue and one that needs consideration across the force not to make gains from the tragic events but to ensure we can continue

				to support the community of [incident place name] (p.5).
Community	Response from community Positive fashion Proved Faith	'Proved to them' implies cmmny needed proof (and wasn't there before) –	'faith' need to believe in the police? A paternalistic or even religious word to use (eg rely on would be more neutral alternative).	Response from the community has been huge and responding to this in a positive fashion has proved worthwhile and has also gained faith from the community we work within and proved to them that we listen and act upon the information they pass to us (p.5).
Community	Community overwhelming		'Plight' suggests vulnerability	[Response from the community was] overwhelming, VERY pro and wanting to assist with our plight

				(p.6).
Community	Severe fear factor Community tightly grouped Standing together	Good Q for showing one psych'al group.	Terror = v strong word. ME – think why a phrase 'fear factor' and not just fear – this is unusual. Is it perhaps a way of categorising it and thus draining it of any affect by objectifying it (a scientific word, factor)? Whole community repetition	There has been a severe fear factor to deal with as [place name] community is tightly grouped and they respond by standing together against such terror within the community so it has not been only the police but the whole community at large that has got together to bring the offender(s) to justice (p.6)

APPENDIX H. IPA THEMES BY INCIDENT TYPE SESSION

EMERGENT THEME	CT1	CT2	CT3	SC1	SC2	SC3	NC1	NC2	NC3
Affective Statements		•	•						
Apologies							•		
Big Egos	•								
Blame (anticipating/culture etc.)							•		
Bureaucracy	•								
Business as Usual				•					
Closely Involved in incident (to action)								•	
Communications						•			
Community (Need to Include Public in Info Share)		•			•		•	•	
Community Tension (Management of)		•							
Competing not Co-operating	•								
Concern for Future	•	•							
Discomfort under scrutiny	•								
Disorganised	•								•
Excluded from/Lack of Knowledge	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Flexibility/Ad Hoc									•
Goodwill (making best of it/long hours/can do attitude)	•			•				•	•
Health & Safety	•								
Heroes	•								
How to Value/Praise Staff					•				
Humour	•	•	•					•	
Impact on Domestic Life									•
Importance of Seniority		•							
Informing other Forces		•							
Leadership	•								
Learn Lessons							•		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Legislation (outdated)	•								
Media			•	•	•		•	•	•
Metaphor (& Simile)		•	•	•		•			
Military Language	•								
Mistrust (Cynical of Seniors' Motives)	•	•					•	•	
Narrative		•	•	•				•	•
Need for Reconciliation		•							
Need to Control/Impose Order			•	•	•	•		•	
One Step Ahead (maybe anticipating blame)						•			
Other Linguistic Features		•							
Partnerships (pulling together) (team spirit)				•		•	•	•	•
Pressure/Pace/Scale of Incident (Discomfort u/scrutiny)	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Professional Pride/Image (Impression Management)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Reassurance (ME – maybe in s/welf w/uncar org?	•								
Report Speak	•	•	•		•			•	
Resources (equip lack)	•			•					•
Roles & Responsibilities (parameters of)			•			•	•		
Self Image	•								
Senior Support (or lack of)	•								
Staff Welfare (org'al support)	•		•	•	•		•	•	
Taking & Giving Orders (Military)	•	•							
Too Difficult/not Do-able									•
Training or Skills Lacking	•								
Trust								•	
Trust & Confidence					•				
Uncaring Organisation	•	•							
Uncertainty							•	•	•
Victims and Families (justicefor/protect&f/public)	•		•	•	•		•	•	•

APPENDIX I. SAMPLE MISHLER TABLE

GREEN HIGHLIGHT FOR TEMPORAL MARKERS

PURPLE HIGHLIGHT DENOTES ABSENCE OF A PARTICULAR NARRATIVE ELEMENT

TEAL HIGHLIGHT INDICATES P's AFFECTIVE STATEMENTS (LISTED IN ORIENTATION CELLS AND CAPITALISED).

BURGUNDY HIGHLIGHT FOR SETTING (IE PART OF ORIENTATION), PRECEDED BY THE ABBREVIATION STNG –

ME Notes	Quotation/ Extracts	Orientation: Setting or Character	Complicating Action	Evaluation	Resolution
Metaphor – knitted = woven together into one interconnected whole (LING) Experience – pressure of incid and defensive stance from Ps (how known that media wants them to fail??) Knitted tightly = woven into one coherent whole and difficult to unravel/prise apart.	*Is there a danger of people thinking it's all over now? (Everyone wanted us to do this, we had the world's media and world's viewpoint, spotlight on us, and they wanted to show we could not do it right. WE WERE DETERMINED* [caps original] *to show this was totally false of a small force, knowing Home Office had their own agenda for amalgamation, Home Office for work force modernisation and press coverage and everyone asking us questions. This was the hardest thing. I spoke to my*	*People* *Everyone* *Us* *World's media* *One unit* *Colleagues* WE WERE DETERMINED	*They wanted to show we could not do it right.* *Unable to relax as there was nowhere to do this.* *Home Office had their own agenda* *Press*	*We were one unit, all knew each other and how each other works. This includes people's good things and bad things, includes people's ways and thoughts* *my colleagues and all were dedicated and committed ...real pressure for staff.* *(press coverage)*	*We knitted tightly together and developed a real desire to show and prove we were able to do this).*

Knitted garments serve to keep warm and protect. How does the P know others wanted them to fail? This is clearly his/her experience nonetheless. Has an adversarial stance – determined to prove others wrong by presenting as one united psych'al group ME – narr style too	*colleagues and all were dedicated and committed but were unable to relax as there was nowhere to do this. You couldn't go home and talk about it, you couldn't go to the pub; at one point you couldn't go to the canteen. This was real pressure for staff. We were one unit, all knew each other and how each other works. This includes people's good things and bad things, includes people's ways and thoughts so we knitted tightly together and developed a real desire to show and prove we were able to do this).*	*STNG – nowhere – home – pub - canteen*	*coverage and everyone asking us questions.*	*This was the hardest thing.*