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POLICE WORK : AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE IDENTITY WORK OF OFFICERS IN
A CHANGING INSTITUTION

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

Identity work in an institution of order

People spend most of their life in organizations and more particularly in a work setting. What we do and the environment in which we carry our work impact who we are. Our personal self and our social self are co-constructed (Kreiner *et al*, 2006; Watson, 2008). In this dissertation I take a symbolic interactionist perspective as my "primary concerns are the relationships among individuals and how people create meanings and social relations" (Hallett *et al*., 2009: 488), as well as how "the construction and negotiation of meanings and identities by individuals" (Davies and Thomas, 2008) are processed.

The constructions and negotiations of identities occur when there is a discrepancy in the coherence of the self that is significant enough to create a tension that needs to be addressed. The discrepancy may happen between the personal-self and the social-self (Watson, 2008), but also between different social identities that may compete. Kreiner et al. (2006:1034) defined identity tensions "as the stresses and strains experienced by an individual in relation to the interaction between her or his personal identity and a given social identity". Brewer defines personal identity as the "individuated self—those characteristics that differentiate one individual from others" and social identities as "categorizations of the self into more inclusive social units that depersonalize the self- concept" (1991: 476). As Kreiner et al. underline, "An ongoing struggle between an individual's personal identity and his or her various social identities can exist, as the demands of the social identities infringe upon the uniqueness of the personal identity (Brewer, 1991, 2003)". Social identities include different categories such as race, gender, occupations, status, or club membership. In certain organizational contexts, the demands of the occupation are so strong and overwhelming that they invade the personal sphere and merge with it.

This tension represents the constant adjustment and evolution of our identity, whether it addresses multiple-identities (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001; Thoits, 1983), threatened identities (Breakwell, 1986; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996), individual identities (Watson, 2008), or collective identities (Brown, 1988; Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1986). This process called identity work has been defined as the "range of activities that individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (Snow and Anderson,1987: 1348). Identity work involves "people being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003: 1165). Kreiner et al. (2006) add that "social group members engage in identity work in order to negotiate and optimize the boundaries between personal and social identity". It represents an internal process that weaves the personal and the social levels as the self is defined and inscribed in social relations and interactions, conceptually as well as physically.

A great majority of the studies on identity work apprehends and explains the phenomenon within a narrative, ideational, and individual perspective (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Beech, 2008; Brown and Coupland, 2015; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010, Snow and Anderson, 1989; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2009). In this dissertation I propose a complementary approach that focuses on the embodied, carnal, and collective aspects of identity work. I contend that the construction of identities does not only occur at an ideational level but also at an embodied, carnal level that has been neglected in the literature. The body as a working tool and crucible of identity, and the body as a manifestation of resisting strategies appear as the cornerstone of identity work particularly in organizational settings that involve physical engagement, taint, and risk taking.

The second dimension that is addressed in this study is the collective strategies that people of a same occupational field developed to cope with and resist to identity tensions. I try to

explain how at the group level, members craft and generate meanings and codes that are shared by the group and used as resources to buffer their preferred identity from threat.

This corporeal and in-group perspective was revealed and enabled thanks to an in-depth ethnography carried between 2012 and 2013. There were several challenges in this ethnography. First access to the field was problematic. The setting I investigated was the French police force; therefore it involved legal, safety, and confidentiality issues. Second, this field is being known for its cohesive and secrecy environment (Bittner, 1970; Brodeur, 2010), which makes it difficult to be integrated for someone external to the police institution (Van Maanen, 1978) and to have access to this knowledge. Furthermore, the ethnography took place at a moment when this institution undergone several institutional transformations and scandals, when its occupational members were and still are on the front stage because of terrorism issues, in a context of financial/human crisis that made society more controversial and physically and symbolically more violent.

In the literature on police studies, this occupation has been conceptualized as tainted work (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1951) mainly because of its capacity to use coercive force (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2005; Kreiner et al., 2006): Egon Bittner (1970) theorized the police as follow: "The police are a mechanism for the distribution of non-negotiable coercive force employed in accordance with the dictates of an intuitive grasp of situational exigencies". He then explains that: "Policemen are viewed as fire it takes to fight fire, that in the natural course of their duties they inflict harm, albeit deserved, and that their very existence attests that the nobler aspirations of mankind do not contain the means necessary to insure survival".

Drawing on Bittner, Brodeur adds that: "the need for quickly solving human situations that display complexity and drama invest police activities 'with the character of crudeness', the need to disregard complexity being structurally built into the occupation (Bittner, 1970/1990: 97). The public demands that violence be fought by violence, and at the same time stigmatizes

the violence workers" (2010: 123). The taint of police work does not only appear in its moral aspect (e.g. use of coercive force, dissimulated device) but also in its social and physical dimensions (Kreiner et al., 2006; Dick, 2005; Tracy and Scott, 2006). Police officers deal with criminals, violence, and death, which expose them to the taint of these socially unwanted elements. The unpredictable, uncertain, and risky situations they may face during their work bring a particular tainted physical dimension to the occupational environment. However, dirt is in the eye of the beholder and police officers do not conceive their work as tainted. On the contrary, they perceive themselves as deeply engaged in their work, and conceive it as a noble cause. As I will try to show, tainted work is transformed into extreme work, thus avoiding the contamination, and these extreme elements of work are turned into a badge of honor.

I followed two squads: a homicide squad and a more operational squad dedicated mainly to fieldwork. My informants were 40 police officers, including 5 women, 3 captains and the 2 chiefs of the squads. They belonged to the department of the Regional Security of a big French city. This department is dedicated exclusively to investigative work.

The National Police in France is a state-run police force. The institution is operated centrally and divided into eight directorates with sub-divisions at the county and regional levels. It represents around 150,000 civil servants who are classified in three different hierarchical ranks divided into sixteen levels. The French police force has undergone several reforms in recent decades – changes that have impacted how officers perform their jobs. The beginning of this new century brought major transformation to the recruitment system; the enactment of new laws regarding certain categories of crime and how to investigate them; and the implementation of a result-driven strategy as part of the modernization of the state project. This strategy has been perceived by investigators as focusing on statistics and quantity rather

than in-depth work and quality. The investigators I observed were for the majority grassroots police officers that took an exam to be qualified to carry judicial work.

One of the main concerns of my informants was the perception of a growing discrepancy between the conceptualized police and the police of the field. According to them, their centralized hierarchy has been more and more disconnected from the work in the field which leads to reforms that they find incoherent and incompatible with their work in practice. This gap in the conception of police work has reached a point where its grassroots members are questioning the meaning of their work. It appears all the more important in this occupational context where the personal and the professional identities overlap. Because they carry a work in a demanding (Kreiner et al., 2006) and risky environment, what police officers do is also what they are, and it is inscribed in their flesh and blood. This was particularly salient for the police investigators I followed and reciprocally it also influenced the way I apprehended the field experience and collected data.

I investigate the identity work processes involved in how individuals belonging to the same group negotiate and apprehend their relationship to their preferred occupational identity and under which conditions that negotiation occurs (Kreiner et al., 2006). I try to unveil, first at the group level then in moving even more inward to reach a deeper and more intimate level, the intricate ways used by individuals to compensate for the perception of a loss of meaning and identity. Police officers constitute an interesting setting as the personal and the professional identities merge. Most of my informants confessed that they did not distinguish between who they were as a police officer and who they were as a person. What they do is who they are. As in extreme cases, this particular occupational environment intensifies and magnifies processes and mechanisms at work. The nature and the strategies of identity work

police officers are engaged in were revealed through the embodied experience of the field by the researcher herself.

In the second chapter of this dissertation, I introduce and develop the methodological part that consisted in an ethnography of 12 months, about 3 days a week, corresponding to more than 1200 hours of direct observations. I try to describe what were the challenges I faced and how I went around them. The nature of my field required the adaptation to a corporeal dimension that was necessary not only to have access to my informants but also to my findings.

The ethnographic experience has been conceived as a liminal moment with three major steps. The first period when I arrived in my field and when I tried to find how I could connect with my informants was a sort of mirror phase. In this phase the observer and the observed looked at each other in trying to decipher the other's intentions until the boundaries between the roles blurred. This blurring of boundaries was facilitated by several factors such as sports as well as the fact that I allowed personal ties to be created. The mutual knowledge of each other generated the possibility of being incorporated in my field. This stage constituted the fusion step where I went through the mirror. Following Devereux's (1967) work I tried to be reflexive on the impact of my presence on my informants as well as their impact on me. The physical, mental, and emotional letting go that has been necessary to enter the core of the field transformed the researcher I was. Simultaneously, it gave me access to findings that I would not have discovered otherwise. The carnal, corporeal, and collective dimensions in identity work were unveiled because of my incorporation, in its physical sense, in the field by the group. The last step of the liminal experience was the extraction phase, when I had to leave the field and concentrate on headwork and textwork (Van Maanen, 2011). This phase was a sensitive phase as the ethnographic experience had left a strong imprint on me and I needed to step back to analyze the data of which I was myself a part of.

The third chapter proposes a collective framework on the identity work approach. Whereas the literature on identity work has mainly focused on an individual perspective, I try to provide an overall view of the work setting of my informants in analyzing the triggers of identity tensions that lead them to engage in identity work at the collective level. It is important to underline here that I do not address collective identity processes as for instance addressed by the social movement literature. My focus here is on what Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock (1987: 121) called *sub*cultural identity work, the creation of "signs, codes, and rites of affirmation that become shared resources for identity-making" (*ibid.*). My informants built a "body of meanings, signs, and signifying practices that are distinct from, yet linked to, a larger culture" (*ibid.*). These shared elements help them to protect and secure their preferred identity, defined in this study as the "good cop" and threatened by the emergence of a new work ethos (Weber, 1968) conveying new codes and values. The chapter addresses the clash between the preferred work ethos of police investigators implying action, risk, autonomy, physical strength and mastery, as well as a symbolic and mythical dimension, and the new work ethos dictated by the procedural and bureaucratic system that slows down and sanitizes their work environment. The tensions are released through identity strategies that are supported at the collective level. Although these strategies constitute a form of resistance, they are nevertheless non-confrontational, or as Scott (1991) called "infrapolitical" means. The power relation in this institution of order is very palpable and the hierarchical link officially respected. However police investigators found interstices and cracks that they appropriated collectively and where they developed meanings and practices that buffer them from the identity threat conveyed by the new work ethos.

The fourth chapter is a collective work as it was co-authored with my main supervisor. In this part we focus more in depth on an identity work dimension that is often missing in the literature: the corporeal and carnal dimension. Most of the literature on identity work focuses on discourses and narratives (Brown and Coupland, 2015; Watson, 2008). We contend here that the identity of police investigators is framed through and by the body, whether it is the police officer's body or the Other's body. Thanks to the appropriation of their body as an efficient tool and trough the distancing with the body of the Other, our informants deal with the taint associated with their occupation (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Bittner, 1970; Hughes, 1951; Kreiner *et al*., 2006). Furthermore corporeal identity work is manifested in particular physical spaces that police investigators appropriate to live their preferred identity. Reflecting on their experience and their feelings about the changing nature of their work, police officers outlined some of the ways in which corporeal practices are central to their identity, and how these practices are achieved and lived within spaces that they appropriate. Drawing from Wacquant (2000) carnal sociology, we try to show that bodies are intelligent and transient assemblages of shared skills, enabling the creation of individual corporeal proficiency and its relation to the occupationally constituted power held by many police officers despite growing pressures to change their work image. Through their bodies, police officers define who they are and who they want to be. It constitutes the main component to which they anchor meanings and practices that support their preferred identity and stabilize a work environment from which they feel more and more estranged.

To sum up, this doctoral dissertation addresses the question of identity work at two different but intertwined levels: a collective level and a corporeal level. I also show that the nature of the methodology participated in the way findings were discovered and analyzed. I propose now to immerse the reader in a fascinating setting, hoping that this journey will trigger

emotions and reflections on how identity work is a resisting strategy that is socially constructed and supported as well as inscribed in the flesh.

CHAPTER 2: ETHNOGRAPHY AS LIMINAL SPACE: RITES OF PASSAGE AND CHANGE IN POSITIONING

"What ethnographers call data are constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their counterparts say and do. It is not about what the ethnographer sees certain people doing but what these certain people see themselves doing" (Van Maanen, 2011:228).

Introduction

Ethnography requires at the same time self-confidence and questioning (re-assessment); Confidence to trust one's own interpretations and sensations, and questioning to be able to remain open to new ideas and elements that one has not thought of at the beginning.

Van Maanen's words resonate as very important as they positioned the ethnographer not as a central interpreter judging his/her informants' actions but rather as a tool through which we have access to someone else's world. We see and hear through the ethnographer who gives his/her voice to his/her informants. And this is how I tried to position myself, to catch the *how* – fieldwork – through the eyes of my informants seeing themselves doing their work. To do so I subjected myself (Van Maanen, 2011:219) or surrendered (Wolff, 1976; Gherardi, 2015) to my informants' world and its contingencies. I tried to adopt the position of a chameleon.

What is missing from this quote and that I did not expect was the effect of my presence on my informants and their behavior, as well as my own reactions and evolution during the ethnographic experience.

The ethnographic study was a liminal experience. I went through several phases that impacted mutually my informants and myself (Devereux, 1967). I sum up these phases in three moments: a first step of observation, a mirror phase when I faced the unknown and during which my informants and myself got to know each other and behaved consequently as we felt around to find the right distance. The second moment was the fusion phase: I went through

the looking glass and surrendered self-reflectively to the experiment using all the sensors I had, whether they were intellectual, physical, or emotional. I try to show in this part that the body played a central role in my 'incorporation' into my field and also framed my findings at the same time. Finally, the last step was the extraction phase when I had to return to the other side, but by then I was different and had acquired a new awareness.

Context

At the time I started this study, I was one of the very first students to conduct an ethnography in the framework of the PhD program in my school and I felt somehow marginalized, under pressure to present objective and rational data that needed to be understood and taken seriously by my quantitativist colleagues. I also felt an invisible pressure coming from part of the faculty. However, I was frustrated by what I presented as I considered it missed depth. But as the saying goes: "What's bred in the bones comes out in the flesh". I reflected on my positioning and I quickly freed myself from cognitive chains that impeded my perception and I surrendered body, soul and heart to the experience of the field. As Van Maanen (1988: 40) explains following Adler and Adler's (1987) call for "fully participant members", there is a need to grasp experientially the meanings and emotions that go with membership" to fully live and succeed in the ethnographic experience.

Thus, at the beginning of my fieldwork, I apprehended it as a distanced object that I needed to study as objectively and neutrally as possible, but very soon I realized that this field required an emotional and physical involvement if I wanted to have a chance to have access to the core levels of knowledge. With some anxiety (Devereux, 1967) I allowed the overlapping of the personal and the professional spheres as I intuitively felt that knowledge and understanding

would only come out of the success of this connecting space, of this confusion between both areas of emotional engagement.

After some time of observing each other, trying to figure out who was this "other" that we were facing, connections and ties started to weave. I initiated the first contact with each of my informants. I individually introduced myself and explained why I was there. From the beginning I tried to adopt a low-profile, explaining to my informants that I wanted to understand their work and that I was there to listen to what they had to say and to transmit messages if there were any. I was there for them, but first I needed to understand what their work environment consisted of.

I thus tried to walk in the shoes of my informants, or as the French say, to 'get inside their skin'. This would allow a sensuous perception (Stoller, 1989) of the other's world and a deeper understanding of the meaning of their work. This is difficult to achieve as we are influenced by many factors such as our cultural and educational background, gender, beliefs, sensitivity, etc. that very likely bias our perception. Therefore, very much like being neutral is an illusion, being inside someone's skin (or someone's head) is also illusory (Van Maanen, 2011); however, I tried to adopt this characteristic of the chameleon to better interact with my informants and understand the situations they faced during my fieldwork. As the chameleon, I used different *shades*: emotional, situational, physical, to adapt and to fit in to situations I experienced. I also tried to be reflective on my interpretations not only of the scenes I observed but also of the experiences I lived and felt.

Not being one of them but an interpretive researcher who "strive(s) for voices, experiences, life-worlds, and meanings as constructed by and between (my)self and (my) participants" (Turner and Norwood, 2013), I tried to have a reflexive and responsible position towards my findings and how I was going to report them. In this paper, I reflect upon my positioning, how I took different shades and how my informants influenced my shades, sometimes feeling that

I had lost my researcher identity. But in the end, when I reflect on this liminal experience, I am convinced that I did the right choice when I decided to incur the risk of engaging in qualitative research and I realize that I actually went through a rite of passage: This fieldwork gave birth to the ethnographer in me.

Chameleon: the mirror phase

The emotional and situational shades I took varied according to the context and the people. I used emotional shades to have a deeper understanding of my informants' work environment and identity. I adapted the shades of my identity according to how I positioned myself or how I was positioned by my informants in context. My setting consisted of police officers dedicated exclusively to investigative work implying that I could not legally participate in the procedural work itself. However, my status evolved according to whom I faced. This paper aims at explaining my role and status in this context. This particular field produced a specific status that required reflexivity in a complicated setting because of the nature of the field and because of the nature of the methodology itself.

I also thought that being a female in an almost exclusively male environment would be an issue I would have to deal with. I did not know whether it could be a problem or an advantage for my ethnographic work. As a woman in a masculine environment I did not try to pretend I was an asexual researcher, which could have put a distance in this type of environment where ambiguity is suspicious, I accepted to be a human being thus a person my informants could relate to and have access to, and I faced the sexual dimension in interactions when it was the case.

In the end, it turned out that my personality and my female characteristics allowed me to be not only integrated but more importantly *incorporated* – in the bodily sense of the word – by the group. Being who I was – a tall open-minded 39-year old female with experience in

competitive sports – gave me access to a kind of knowledge and interactions that would have been different had I been a short young inexperienced geeky male, for instance. Regarding my age, I represented the average age of the police officers I observed. This implied some sort of tacit agreement that I was not a "naïve" PhD student doing research with no experience of life. The fact that I practiced sports with them at a decent level also allowed ties to be created. Sports being one of the most important features in this work environment, it facilitated contacts and respect. These elements revealed themselves in the course of the ethnographic experience. The 'incorporation' in the field somehow occurred at the same time as the discoveries I made in the fieldwork. The evolution of my status depended on and came together with the knowledge of the field I accumulated.

I considered that having a connection with my field that went beyond the intellectual would help me to have access to a deeper understanding. Therefore I used all the "sensors" I had at my disposal to absorb the experience: my emotions, my body, my sensations, my identity, my cognitions, my experiences (Jorgenson, 2011; Turner and Norwood, 2013: 697), to be able to "see, hear, feel, and come to understand the kinds of responses others display (and withhold) in particular social situations" (Van Maanen, 2011:219). It appeared all the more relevant in a field where many things happen "at gut level" and where action and passion are still important drivers of work motivation and identity. It is also a setting that is socially controversial and I wanted to see with my own eyes what was hidden behind the badge, to give this tainted occupation (Bittner, 1970, Hughes, 1951) a chance by letting its workers explain their conception of their work. I chose to follow plain-cloth investigators in squads that exclusively deal with investigations as uniformed or patrol police officers had already been studied by many illustrious scholars (Manning, 1977; Van Maanen, 1978, Fassin, 2011).

Reflecting on the positioning

The positioning of the researcher represents one of the most important issues that has to be dealt with (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013) especially in ethnographic research. The positioning appears at several levels: in relation to the observed institution, to my informants, to my own institution, to myself, to theory, etc. For instance, regarding institutional pressure, before going to the field I had to decide whether or not I would choose a theory. Later I had to make a decision regarding how I was going to present my data and whose story I wanted to tell. In the end, I followed my supervisor's advice and went to the field with no specific theory in mind except my interest in identity work. I also chose to present my data in a way that translated as much as possible the point of view of grassroots police investigators who shared with me their everyday work life. After almost a year of spending several days a week with them, their life became my life and their concerns became my concerns.

The relationship with the police institution was also particular. I had access to the field thanks to a colleague who was part of the scientific committee of the nascent research center of the French national police. She introduced me to members of this center and, after some discussions, we agreed on the conditions of my field observations. They in turn provided me with names and phone numbers of people in decision-making positions – one of them at the Ministry of the Interior in Paris – with whom I made appointments. Because of bureaucratic processes, it took several months to draft the research agreement and get it officially signed; meanwhile, I was on the field doing my observations with only a psychological and moral agreement between them and myself. My official status in the field was "an intern external to the police force". In the police context, to be an intern provides a legal status that allows people like me to be in headquarters without being an official police officer. However, there are different kinds of interns: some are "external" – like I was or like a law student could be –, while other are "internal", e.g., would-be superintendents during their training at the graduate

school of the police. I sometimes played with this subtlety when, for instance, I showed up at the front desk of the police headquarters. At the beginning, I had to show my ID and explain that I was an intern doing research. I would then have to wait for one of my informants to pick me up at the front desk to go through the locked doors and access the offices. After a while, rather than waste time waiting for someone to come, I would just say that I was an intern and, because of my age, people at the front desk – I would often see new faces – probably thought I was a potential superintendent and when I politely asked them to open the locked door for me, they simply did without asking any questions. During the eleven months of my fieldwork, police officers at the front desk probably thought I was a future superintendent…

When I finally signed the research agreement with the research center of the national police, I had already left the field.

This experience somehow shows that the bureaucracy in which police officers evolve is not conducive to reactivity and prevents them from validating their own procedures. The first day I arrived at the police headquarter, they had forgotten that I was coming. I learned later that a note saying I would be coming had been issued and circulated in the department, but nobody seemed to recall when and nothing had been planned. However, they adapted and I was invited to join the daily meeting of the chiefs of squads in the office of the superintendent at the head of the department. The amount of time and frequency at which I was able to attend these meetings would depend on the latter. At the beginning, I asked to remain two weeks per month for three months. He accepted one week per month; however, after two months of observation, I bumped into him per chance in the hallways of the headquarters and he said I could come back any time I liked as long as I informed him of my presence on site. Because my presence the two previous weeks of observation had been viewed positively, I was allowed to go one step further. The exact legal framework regarding my status as an "intern external to the police" and what I was or wasn't allowed to do was never very clear. The

ability police officers have of adapting, getting around, and, to a certain extent, transgressing and bending bureaucratic rules – though with no bad intention, on the contrary – seemed to be in their DNA. They have to adopt this kind of behavior if they want to carry on and complete their work.

Although the members of the research center of the national police demanded to have access to all documents and communications I would deliver in public, they never censored any of my work. They expected me to deliver a report that would help them improve the way they function and I tried to remain true to my commitment. But my engagement is also concerned by what I lived in the field and the ties that I created with my informants.

The first time I went on the field, I did not know exactly what I wanted to observe. I knew I was interested in identity construction and the impact of work and occupational identity on people, but I had nothing specific in mind. After a few days spent observing different squads in one department, I decided to focus only on two squads: one that dealt more with the legal procedure – the homicide squad – and another squad – that I will name the HUNT squad for anonymity purpose – that dealt more with operational and field work.

As I explained above, I first thought that the best way to conduct my ethnography in such a challenging work environment was to be as transparent as possible, literally and figuratively. But for people whose work consists of observing and investigating into other people's lives – doing some kind of ethnographic work somehow –, being observed and analyzed themselves can make them feel uneasy and defensive. Although I tried to hide behind my long hair and glasses, being a rather athletic woman of 5'9 did not go unnoticed in the narrow hallways and confined offices. I therefore realized that if I wanted to gain their acceptance and trust, I would need to give something of myself to my informants. So I opened up and let them ask questions regarding not only professional but also personal and intimate matters. I actually

went through many interrogatory sessions… And from this moment the notions of reflexivity and responsibility took all their sense. I had to explain my position and positioning: What was my role? How was it possible that I was still a student at my age? Who was I as person? What was my relationship with their hierarchy? Whom I was going to report to? Did I intend to get into their head and psychoanalyze them?

They also put me to the test as they tried to see how I could react to some sexual jokes or vulgar attitudes. When they understood they could not shock me, they engaged in other conversations, with much more intellectual topics. It seems they tried to impress me in showing that they could be articulate and reflexive on their occupation.

As they felt they knew me more, most of my informants confided in me and behaved more freely in front of me. In terms of reflexivity, I was aware that I had a rather positive vision of the occupation that I wanted to observe. Regarding identity work, I hoped that there were other things to say beyond the recurrent themes of sexism, racism, and violence in the police.

In terms of responsibility, I took the stand of giving a voice to grassroots police investigators who were mainly the persons I observed in their daily work. The police institution in France is an extremely complex organization and it would have been impossible to integrate the positions of all stakeholders in a single study.

My female side appeared under my nurturing nature: I provided my informants with chocolates, pastries and candies at least once a week. At the beginning, some looked at me a little suspiciously, as if I was expecting something in return. After some time, they just enjoyed the kind gesture and, although they complained about putting on weight because of me, thus ruining the benefits of their daily sport practice, they also complained when I did not bring chocolate or pastries. This "sweet" relationship still exists when I visit them as they expect me to bring a cake or chocolate.

Female police officers represented a very small minority in the two squads I observed. Out of the 39 squads members only five were female. Out of the 5 females, 3 were lieutenants and group leaders. They all demonstrated great leadership capacities and professionalism and they were very helpful in my integration into the groups. At the very beginning, I asked police officials to have a written document that protected and exempted the policemen I was going to follow from any responsibility in case something happened to me in the field. I suspected that this could be a real drawback in my attempt to be accepted and to make the policemen less nervous if they had to take me on the field. Indeed, most "interns" stay in offices in the police headquarters. The first time I went "out" was with the homicide squad. Sarah, the lieutenant in charge of one of the two groups, went to the chief of the squad and asked if I could come along with them. He said he did not know and was hesitant. Then Sarah turned to me rolling her eyes, she handed me her bullet-proof jacket, gave me a wink and said: "Put this on: You are coming with us". In this male context, female were often in authority positions and all of them were very kind to me. One could have expected that they would try to secure their territory but it was absolutely not the case and they were very helpful in explaining me the work environment of police officers. I created strong ties with most of them and I still see several of them outside the work context.

Body and emotions: the fusion phase

The body as access to the field

The body played an important part, on the one hand, in my capacity to be integrated in the field (practice of sports with my informants, shooting sessions, enduring hours of surveillance, etc.), and, on the other hand, in my perception and knowledge of the work environment my informants evolved in (becoming a target when wearing a bulletproof jacket

flashing the police sign, being scrutinized by suspects in the police offices, witnessing the distress of victims, etc.). I used my body to have access to another level of perception. As Turner and Norwood (2013: 699) explain: "As reflexive researchers, we might consider moving from one-dimensional, static account of knowledge production to a multidimensional and embodied account of the process of knowing".

Sport was a linking element. My own experience of practicing competitive sport helped me to integrate more rapidly and to understand some aspects of identity work that were linked to corporeal activities conducted by police investigators.

"*The first day I was in the field, I found myself in deserted hallways at noon. The previous minutes, all the investigators were busy working and running from one office to the other and the next moment, they were all riding their bikes or putting on their running shoes and they were gone in the minute. The offices went back to life two hours later. After two days of lonely lunches, I thought I was missing something important related to my field observations. The next day I brought my sport gear and went with them to practice*". (Field notes)

The body facilitated my understanding and reflexivity regarding my research interest on identity work. It actually revealed itself as a key element to identity work of police investigators. The role of corporeal elements in this process only emerged consciously when I talked to my supervisor. I was trying to explain to him what I had observed, but I could not put words on it. I was gesticulating, struggling to find the right words that could translate what I had observed and felt. Then, as I was describing a police interrogation, I ended up saying:

"Well, it's all in the body… I physically feel what I observe… there is something deeply at the corporeal level in this occupation that goes beyond big guys pumping iron…" This is how one of the main findings came to light.

The police setting and its masculine culture (Dick, 2005; Godfrey et al., 2012; Van Maanen, 1978) is an interesting environment to analyze emotions as they tend to be concealed or put aside whereas in fact it is the emotions that is the bond between them. I focused not only on my informants' emotions, but also on my own emotional reactions to their work environment and behaviors. This opened up a new level of understanding of identity work processes. Self-reflexivity was not a process I carried out separately from my observations but a mechanism that was part of the analysis. Through my emotions, bodily perception and senses, I had access to another level of understanding of what it was to be a "good cop". I did not base my analysis only on what I was seeing or hearing (narratives, war stories, etc.), I also used all my bodily and emotional reactions to situations and conversations.

It was surprising for me to read that emotions have been removed from organizational ethnographies (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015) as I chose to opt for qualitative methods because of my own (hyper)sensitivity to emotions and behaviors as well as my sincere empathy for others. I thought that it was in this area that I could maybe bring the most compared to other methodologies that are more distanced from their subjects. I also thought it would be difficult to open the relationship in one direction only – from the informant towards the researcher –, the emotional reality flows in both directions and impacts all stakeholders. Therefore I used my emotions as well as their emotions to unveil important issues and topics in the work environment of my informants.

For instance, emotions revealed important aspects of police work. I felt emotions when I found myself confronted to uneasy, unknown or risky situations, but after a while I also started to feel the frustration, anger, joy, powerlessness, excitement, disappointment of my informants at the moment they felt it. At some point, I used the same way of speaking, the same idiomatic expressions as my informants. This became obvious when I interacted with my colleagues in my institution after having spent some time on the field. I was surprised at

thinking that they were speaking so politely, for instance. My children also made me realized that my chameleon side had taken over when they told me with a teasing look: "Mom, you said a bad word twice in one sentence, you're going to be punished…" Although I was always self-conscious about the way I spoke when I interacted with high-ranking police officials, I was less in control in the private sphere. Similarly after a few months in the field, I realized I tended to use "we" – thus including myself in the group I observed – when I described what my informants were doing to my supervisor or to my colleagues.

I noticed another phenomenon: After only a few weeks in the field, I felt the need to go back, as if I were an addicted to it. Indeed, I wanted to know how a case would end, whether they had caught the suspects in the morning operations, whether some new events had happened, etc. I suppose that apart from my natural curiosity, there is an addictive element in this occupation that consists in not knowing what tomorrow will hold in store. Every day is a new day, with new events and cases to follow, involving different people from different backgrounds. Despite the tragedies that police investigators have to face (i.e. homicides), they have the opportunity to feel useful and achieve rewarding goals when they arrest criminals. It was therefore very difficult to leave the field as the access to this intense meso-level reality was less possible. I realized that I enjoyed observing their work as if I were one of them and I thought I had maybe gone too far in the chameleon side. I was less reflexive as I was more engaged – emotionally and physically – in the work itself than in my own study. This is when I started to think it was maybe time for me to disengage from the field.

The addiction also appeared at the emotional level as cohesion was an important feature of the work environment. Although I observed a degradation of the ties between members while tensions were building up in the work environment, most investigators were available 24 hours a day for their team, several times a week if necessary. I could observe real friendships

among members of the team, even though there were several clans and tensions as well. This internal occupational cohesion extended to me as they helped me to move out on two occasions in one year. Similarly, although I have left the field for about two years, I am always available when they call me to discuss personal matters such as writing letters for a promotion, to discuss career plans, family matters, or to announce to me that they passed a test or changed squads. This kind of fusional state has probably been a necessary condition in this specific setting to conduct an in-depth ethnography because of particular characteristics, such as the prominence of the corporeal dimension, the emotionally charged events that need to be dealt with, and a strong cohesion as a necessity to carry on.

Different police officers at all levels of the hierarchy came freely to talk to me about their work, their position, their opinions, their frustrations and their problems with colleagues, superiors or subordinates. This made me feel as a receiver or the repository of all the ordeals of the squads at some point. This was very hard to carry and absorb emotionally. My observations happened to take place at a moment of violent changes at the institutional and occupational levels. People were more inclined to discuss and open to an outsider as they felt very concerned about the future of their job. Nevertheless I felt powerless when faced with so much frustration and sadness (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). So I tried at my humble level to provide some psychological support. In some conversations, my informants confided in me and told me about their wish to quit the squad or even the police. In these situations, I tried to talk with them about their options and opportunities. In the end, several of them enrolled in programs to advance their career, while others applied to other services better suited to their aspirations. One of them, a grassroots female police investigator, took a very competitive exam and passed it – a rare achievement in this occupational environment. She is therefore going to quit the police force soon to embark on managerial responsibilities for another public

administration. Most of my informants were in their late thirties or early forties and they sometimes had to make quick decisions regarding their career as some "action-oriented" services would not accept candidate beyond a certain age. There was also an enormous amount of frustration when the head of the directorate would refuse their requests to transfer to other services. I would often go out for lunch or for drinks out of the headquarters to soothe some of my informants and dispel their anger and disappointment with the system. In one year of observations, I witnessed two squads struggling with motivational issues and engagement in a job they once conceived of as a calling. Budget restrictions and bureaucratic fossilization implied fewer changes and opportunities. In one of these squads, out of the 20 members, eleven are now looking for a way to leave the squad, regardless of rank. So far only one was able to leave for another directorate. Although it is difficult to evaluate the impact of the interactions I had with my informants, the discussions they had with me very likely influenced some of them in their reactions and decisions. There is a missing space in this work environment that would help to bridge between the police officers and the issues they may encounter in the workplace. There are issues they are reluctant to discuss with their colleagues or bosses. They are also reluctant to discuss their problems with psychologists provided by their institution because they are afraid of being stigmatized as weak or unstable. In the end, some chose to talk to me and this put me in sometimes delicate situations. Some may have shared personal or managerial sensitive information that I could not discuss with the other members of the group, even if they asked me. On the one hand, I had to keep this information to myself, as these individuals had confided in me, but on the other hand I also wanted to keep the trusting relationship that I had with other squad members. Because of the nature of the work – collecting information about people – and because of the closed working environment – strong police in-group perception – my informants were on the look-out for

any information they could lay their hands on concerning their colleagues or their work environment.

By opening up my emotional side, I was also more sensitive to what was in conflict with my personal positions or ethics. In terms of responsibility, it was not easy, for instance, not to react when racist comments were made. I did engage in conversations regarding this matter a few times, but I did it individually, face-to-face. In the end, it appeared that most of my informants were aware of the prejudiced words they used but did not consider themselves as racists. Many of them explained they had friends from very different ethnic backgrounds.

Nevertheless I witnessed more opened prejudiced comments on one particular "category" of suspects or people: usually non-white males between 15 and 35 years old, living in underprivileged suburbs, not well educated. However it is difficult to say whether my informants would have behaved differently when confronted to people not belonging to this "category" because – to my own surprise – after one year of observation, almost all the cases they had to investigate involved this "category". What I observed was often a stereotypical behavior from both parties, the investigator and the suspect, that reinforced the stereotypes of the other. For instance, the police officer would use colloquial language[1] to address the suspect and the suspect would use the same words and expressions as most other suspects in other cases, as if they all spoke the same way with one voice, which reinforced the prejudice of suspicion. I was faced with two worlds that were impervious to one another – though sometimes they shared similar codes such as masculinity – and where there was almost no room to change one's the perception of the other: the one was always perceived as a "rude pig" and the other as "scum". According to what I could observe and hear in conversations, the behavior of police investigators toward suspects did not fundamentally aim at humiliating or showing disrespect – as might be the case in other services (Fassin, 2011) – but are an attempt at maintaining a position of authority, authority they feel in dwindling as a result of

recent reforms of their work environment. In doing so, they actually achieve the contrary as suspects – aware that they have more rights – indeed feel disrespected and subsequently deny them their authority and legitimacy position. This loss of authority ground is even more difficult to live as police officers have sometimes a paternalist – and biased – vision of their role. They somehow see themselves as an authority figure or a parent facing deviant children who have lost their bearings. Several of them expressed this vision:

"At some point, parents gave up on their authority role and relied on schools to educate and set boundaries for their children, then the school failed and now we are the last resort. Society relies on us to set boundaries to its lost and out-of-control children but at the same time they hypocritically criticize us".

"People see us (the police) as prejudiced against the youngsters of poor suburbs but actually it is our society that has a problem with its youngsters… We only get into the picture at the very end of the process, after all others stakeholders, parents, schools, etc. screwed up. We're only here to fix the mess they have made..."

Because of the chameleon capacity, I was able to get as close as I could to understand and feel what my informants experienced, but I was also empathetic to the suspects who were sometimes talked to very harshly according to my own standards. Although they often committed criminal and violent acts, the rough verbal interactions made me sometimes uncomfortable. Similarly when I witnessed tense discussions between colleagues or between the chief of the squad and a subordinate, I felt very uncomfortable and did not know how to react. Did I have to leave the room? Was my presence influencing their reactions? Not losing the face in front of an external element? Violence was therefore difficult to handle for me, but I also realized how much it was a reality in the work environment of my informants and how physical presence was important.

My positioning towards my informants:

Positioning and perceived power are important issues that are linked to the building of knowledge between the researcher and the informant (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). During my first days in the field, I observed two distinct reactions from my informants towards me. On the one hand, high-ranking officers (i.e. chiefs of the squads) had an equal-to-equal interaction with me. As a PhD student and because of my age – 39 years old at the time of the ethnography – they considered I was intellectually "superior" and mature enough to exchange ideas about their institution. I sometimes felt I was an opportunity for them to talk about topics they considered they could not discuss with colleagues; as if they had been having an internal dialogue with themselves for years and were finally able to share some of their life-long experiences as police officers. To a certain extent, some seemed to project themselves on me as they identified more with me than with their subordinates and were willing to engage in intellectual conversations. This positioning of the chiefs is probably due to the hierarchical and somehow paternalistic system of the French police. It also came to the fore in the positioning of their subordinates towards me.

At the beginning, grassroots investigators positioned themselves as intellectually "inferior". When I introduced myself for the first time to my informants by explaining that I wanted to observe how identity and work interacted, many replied: "Oh, so you came to observe how stupid we are! Believe me, there are some weirdoes among us!" or "You're going to be disappointed… there's a bunch of morons around here!"

Their positioning determined my own positioning as I mirrored the way they perceived themselves, following my chameleon ability. I did my best to establish an equal-to-equal relationship with all of them. Of course, this positioning did not prevent all power relations to occur. For instance, one or two of my informants tried to wield some "**power**" over me as

they refused that I accompany them on missions. It was actually more a teasing attitude than a serious position as they often repeated: "So you want to come with us… Do you have a police badge? No? So you can't come…" Although I could have twisted their arm by asking their chief, I chose to respect their demand and power relation – although they were also the most curious about what I could write about the squad. A few tried to see if I had any power or influence over their hierarchy. Since I wanted to gain their trust, I did not want to be associated with any hierarchical link, so I made it very clear from the beginning that I was independent in my work. When they saw I had no 'power', some were much less interested in talking to me. Conversely some others saw in me a means to express themselves and to deliver some messages to their hierarchy as well as to people outside. I actually told them: "What do you want me to say about your work? What is important for you?" On many occasions, when expressing their frustration and powerlessness, they said: "Tell them in the high ranks what's really going on down here!", "Tell them this…", "You can write in your report how senseless our work has become!", "See… You can tell everybody, we're normal people like everybody else". It also happened during action moments that some asked me not to write what they said or what I saw in my "report" as some of them were always aware I was not one of them when behaviors they considered controversial occurred. But what appeared sensitive for them was not necessarily controversial for me. Although I did not report what was said word for word, I included the idea in the big picture of the data, making the material less prejudicial to them.

In a work environment where hierarchy impacts workers' relationship, it is important to be aware of the "codes" to create a relationship of trust which determines the access and construction of knowledge with the informants. For instance, in my setting, the way my informants greeted someone else was a sign of their hierarchical relationship: for instance, when they shook hands with a female police officer it meant she was higher up on the

hierarchy ladder. Conversely, when they kissed on both cheeks, it meant that the person was of equal rank or belonged to the same category[2]. Therefore when I met new people, I matched my attitude to that of the person who had introduced me: I shook hands when introduced to superintendents; I kissed cheeks when they were colleagues of the same rank. This allowed me to lower the natural suspicion of police officers when they met me for the first time and allowed me to engage easily in conversations as the power relation was clear: They identified me as a non-threat to their career; they didn't identify me as journalist either, or, even worse, a lawyer. However, it happened that during some collective gathering, for instance for the Christmas dinner of the Regional Security department, the superintendent kissed me on both cheeks, somehow implying he considered me his equal as well as part of the 'big police family'.

Positioned by my informants:

As I adapted my positioning to my interlocutors, my informants also positioned me according to the persons they faced. To external parties, such as lawyers, witnesses, suspects, journalists, victims, etc., I was always introduced as "a colleague" or as "an intern" to prosecutors or judges. To other police officers, I was "an intern doing observations on our work", and after a few months they would usually add: "She's been with us for a while now, she's almost one of us!" This meant somehow that they could speak freely in front of me. When it was higher-ranking officers, my informants tended to introduce me as: "an intern external to the police" but they would add: "She's conducting research, writing something very intellectual about us". Most of my informants felt their hierarchy despised them. Therefore, I interpreted this sentence as a way to show their hierarchy that they were worth attention and that someone with a graduate degree like them was actually interested in what they were doing and what they had to say.

In places away from the gaze of the hierarchy or the public, they tended to include me, as for instance during practice at the shooting range or to prepare recruitment tests. However, they also "used" me to go in the field. I participated in several tailing and surveillance missions because I could team up with a male police officer to pretend we were a couple and they would be less suspicious than two men in a car or walking around behind a suspect. Because most of the members of the operational squad were male, they did not often have the opportunity to be in this configuration. However, when the missions involved potential car chases or shootouts, as for instance with so-called "go-fast" expeditions, they expressed their concerns for my safety if they were to bring me in the field and I never insisted to go with them. In these cases, I usually followed the mission in the squad's offices, where one or two members had to stay to keep contact with the different teams and to tell the other members the directions the suspects would follow as the suspects' car – or cars – had a tracking device that had to be followed on a screen. I helped as I could, following the instructions of the police investigators that were there, sometimes giving information regarding the moves of the suspects' cars, sometimes dispatching information through my cell phone when the radio broke down. The unpredictability of these missions made it also difficult for me to follow since it would have implied to leave town right away to go after the suspects' cars without any idea about when I would come back. In terms of family responsibility, it was not possible for me to follow the group during these missions. But it also revealed how unpredictable their work is and how they must adapt in terms of family relationships.

At some point, my presence was accepted as something banal. To an extent that was sometimes surprising as the following scene describes:

"We left for a surveillance mission with three cars. I was in a car with three other police officers. When the chief of squad summed up who was in which car, he said: "Ok, so Dony (group leader) is with Matt J. and Ron; Elvin (group leader) is with Clive and Matt B; and

Vanessa is with Carl, Mitch, and Duncan". I felt some kind of unease because the chief had positioned me not only as a group member but also as a group leader… in the car where I was, my informants smiled or laughed but they did not say anything. We just exchanged a knowing look that meant "Whatever!" (Field notes).

Some other time, the chief of squad met with a police officer from another service to discuss a sensitive case. He told me to join the meeting as I happened to walk by the door. The policeman from the other service looked at me suspiciously and asked: "Who is she?" The chief of squad simply said: "No problem, she's ok… she's been with us for several months… I sometimes even forget she doesn't have a badge".

My positioning inside the group:

Being neutral in one's interpretation is difficult but being neutral inside the group is also very challenging. Being close to some may also imply to keep some away of others. As the ethnography advanced and as affinities developed with some members, I could feel that some informants that were first willing to talk with me started to "close down" on me and avoid in-depth discussions. Similarly, as my affinity with one of the female lieutenants grew, the chief of squad did not know whether he could confide in me anymore as tensions grew between him and his lieutenant. In the same way, when I talked with some informants about some cases or the work and when some tensions had occurred among them, they were not sure that I knew about those tensions. I knew they were wondering whether I knew, and this ended up in conversations that I felt remained superficial as suspicion loomed because they did not know on which side I was. Therefore sometime being close was not always an advantage as it also implied taking sides when there was a conflict or tensions among my informants. The most difficult positioning in the end was with the chief of one the squads that had been very kind to me and very helpful. He had always accepted to welcome me in his squad whenever I

had asked him, which resulted in several days a week for several months. However, his relations with the members of his squad deteriorated very much during the period I observed them to a point where all the frustration of the squad had crystallized around him. He was somehow isolated, but at the same time it seemed he did not try to really improve the situation and went on imposing his decisions without opening a space for discussion. Thus, if I happened to spend some time discussing with him, the others would be less inclined to open up to me and it would require to spend some time exclusively with them to regain their trust. Similarly because of the ties I built with my informants in the field, it was sometimes delicate to write about their daily concerns and frustrations because many of the latter dealt with the way the institution managed the work and its members. I was authorized to conduct my research by people who were high up on the hierarchical ladder and did not felt at ease providing an analysis based on my informants' concerns that revealed managerial and institutional issues. Therefore, I often designate these people through the general term of "the hierarchy" to avoid focusing on particular individuals.

Leaving the field: a painful step but a necessary ritual to become an ethnographer

The decision to leave the field did not come as much from the fact that I felt that I had reached a saturation point in terms of data as from the fact that I needed to finish my dissertation within a determined time frame. Undoubtedly I had gathered enough data in one year of observation, but there were so many things that were going on in the field that I always wanted to learn more. It was difficult to be emotionally close and mentally clairvoyant at the same time. It appeared all the more difficult in a field that evolved constantly along the period of study. As I explained above, I felt some kind of addiction to my field. The work I observed was captivating and the people I was mixing with made me feel that I belonged to their world. I could feel the cohesive atmosphere and the frenzy of following a new case; I

also felt secure and supported. I guess that somehow I was reluctant to go back to my everyday life whereas I had changed so much during this experience as well as my personal life. However I could not remain in this liminal space, however securing and interesting it was. Because the experience had been felt so deeply at the corporeal level, it took me several months to really step back and work on the data analysis. This phenomenon in itself shows how much this work environment is engaging and eats up the personal sphere. It is therefore not surprising that theories and research questions around identity and identity work came very naturally to the fore. My approach was intuitively oriented toward an anthropological perspective. My analysis dealt more with "the sacred, emotional, moral, private, and expressive areas of life" at work than "the secular, economic, political, public, and instrumental aspects of daily life" favored by the sociologist perspective (Van Maanen, 1978: 22). I used a "communicative-interpretive theory, concerned with how people achieve common understandings" (Van Maanen, 1978: 52) to give shape to my inductive findings. I also continued the self-reflective journey I had started from the beginning of the ethnographic experience. I was aware that I had come to the field with a rather positive view of the work environment I was going to study and as Devereux (1967) explains I tried to use my emotional involvement with my material to produce my final analysis. He states (p. 6): "the fourth and last step that can be taken in our state of knowledge is the acceptance and exploitation of the observer's subjectivity, and of the fact that his presence influences the course of the observed event as radically as 'inspections' influences ('disturbs') the behavior of an electron".

After a relationship of trust was built with my informants, I started to have in-depth conversations with them about their job. They appeared to me rather self-reflexive and self-conscious about their relationship with their work and their environment. Their perception of being disregarded by their hierarchy, despised by lawyers, and misunderstood by the public

may have generated the need to constantly reflect on their deeds and identity as well. As Devereux explains: "the individual that is 'downgraded' by being studied in a manner which ignores or soft-pedals his self-awareness, often responds to this 'devaluation' by a protest reaction which overemphasizes his self-awareness" (1967:25). Thus in many regards this ethnographic study was co-constructed with my informants as their self-awareness appeared to be sharp. Culturally as well as legally – they cannot go on strike – they are denied the right to express themselves except through their unions. However the role of the latter is perceived as very controversial, as participating in political games. Therefore the space for exchange and release is very much restrained to the close and closed work environment of the peers. My presence gave them a space that allowed them to express themselves and to give a voice to the voiceless. I am not naïve and I also admit that my informants probably presented themselves in a favorable light and the facts they exposed – or did not expose – were probably biased to a certain extent. However this material was full of information and revealed much more than meets the eye. Furthermore, although this occupational environment is strongly cohesive when faced with exogenous threats to the group, it is not by far homogeneous in terms of expectations, needs, and perceptions inside the group. Thus this plurivocal material was added to the corporeal and sensuous ones that I lived in and through the field. The whole provided multilevel data that were complementary. The findings have been obtained and also depended on my relationship with my field, on my experience of incorporation and the consequent intimacy with my informants. The role of the corporeal dimension in the identity work of police officers was a central finding but also the entry point that lead me to be 'incorporated' into the field. The involvement of the body as an access to field knowledge appeared as a necessity in this particular setting.

After I exited the field, I started an iterative process back and forth between my data and conversations and analysis with my supervisor. A few perspectives were taken into

consideration but in the end, identity work emerged as a strong pillar of my observations as well as my ethnographic experience as such. As the analysis advanced two main corpuses of data arose: one that dealt with the corporeal/bodily dimension of identity work and another one that revealed the collective and ritualistic perspective in identity work. First order data were classified, then second order data were extracted. In a last stage, the theoretical construction took place to complement the areas of the identity work literature that have not been addressed.

Conclusion

To sum up, first I observed externally, then I shared and exchanged with my informants, and finally I tried to provide their point of view from inside therefore participating in the sustaining of the preferred identity they wanted to project and their own perception of what is a good cop. I agreed to be used as a medium to express the point of view of workers who consider themselves as voiceless. Thus I participated in constructing and maintaining their preferred identity as I provided in my dissertation an account of how they act and perceive themselves in a light that supports their preferred identity. At the same time I tried to provide a frame that depicted the reality of their daily work including their major concerns. This oscillating positioning is probably very close to the hyphenated-spaces – Engagement/Distance and Political-activism/Active-neutrality – described by Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013). As these scholars explained, it was not easy to find one's place in the different shades of these (hyphenated) spaces.

My ethnographic experience constituted a liminal space (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002). There was a before and an after. Today I evaluate and analyze situations and events through a new light inspired by my experience in this field. I feel more aware and more connected. I have

memories linked to places where I followed my informants on missions. Some events at the personal level are also linked to and a consequence of this experience.

When my responsibility and my informants' responsibility collided, the right shade had to be found to maintain the flow of knowledge construction. I tried not to invade their space but I adapted to the shades of the context and was able to access what was behind the discourses. Losing control sometimes brought me close to what my informants could experience in their work environment but I had to keep a reflective mind to build knowledge. The right balance had to be found between going too deep and losing one's identity as a researcher, and remaining too much on the surface and missing the shades. When I was able to release my anxieties (Devereux (1967), I found my way in the confusing maze of the ethnographic experience and became, as a final step, an ethnographer. I consider that my responsibility as a researcher is also to provide and reveal emotions as it remains one of the best way to learn.

Notes: 1: In French there are two way to address to a person "tu" and "vous". The former is used when you know the person, the latter is used when you don't know the person or to show some respect (older people, people with some high social status, etc.). Although police officers are required to address people politely, including suspects, police investigators tend to use "tu" when addressing suspects as for them it would mean to put themselves in a position of inferiority if they did not. It would be perceived as showing respect to a person who is suspected of a violent crime and this would be unbearable for them. As one investigator put it when we talked about the use of the polite form of address with suspects: "There's no way I pull down my pants in front of people who have assaulted victims."
Note 2: In the French police force, there are 3 categories divided in 16 hierarchical ranks.

CHAPTER 3: REGAINING MOVEMENT AND MAINTAINING EMOTIONAL SUBSTANCE: IDENTITY WORK AT THE COLLECTIVE LEVEL IN THE FRENCH POLICE FORCE

Introduction

In organizations it is important to understand the different forces at work and what is meaningful and significant for the members of the organization in the execution of their work. Identity represents an essential and necessary concept for research in social science as it impacts everyday relationships and behaviors, and the way people perceive and conceive their work. I take the stand that identity is multiple (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001) and always in the process of changing, striving to find a balanced point (Kreiner, et al., 2006) that can satisfactorily reconcile tensions in the self and with the others. Most essentially identities "orient us" and enable us to act" (Glaeser, 2000). The sharing of meaning and interpretation among the different members of an organization is all the more important today because more pressure is put on employees as constraints and uncertainty increase (Weick, 1993). What animates and gives meaning to our "work selves and work lives" and "what this might mean to managers in organizations where strong, valued, collective work identities are at play" (Van Maanen, 2010) seem an interesting challenge to investigate. It appears important to better understand in this changing environment how people perceive and conceive their work in terms of identity and what is their agency space to go through the process of identity work defined as a dynamic interaction between individuals and their social contexts (Snow and Anderson, 1989).

Identity work « refers to the mutually constitutive processes by which people strive to shape relatively coherent and distinctive notions of their selves » (Brown & Toyoki, 2013, p. 876).

It is usually viewed as the process of developing "plausible understandings" of one's own self (Brown & Toyoki, 2013, p. 875).

This process is especially acute in the workplace, where conflicting ethos (Weber, 1978) can generate tensions leading to self-doubts in the accomplishment of everyday tasks. I adopt Weber's (1978) definition of "work ethos" as both a mindset regarding the task at hand and a set of values that are shared by occupational members. The setting of my study is constituted of police officers exclusively dedicated to investigations and belonging to two squads in particular: a homicide squad and an operational squad carrying maily field work, both in a big French city.

I identitied 2 work ethos in my setting. One of them is summed up by the expression "good cop". This paper studies a subpopulation of police officers who are deeply committed to their organization while progressively pushed to adopt new work content that is incompatible with their view of "being a good cop." Their established self-image as action-oriented professionals is increasingly challenged by the judicial, bureaucratic tasks they are expected to perform (consisting largely of carrying paperwork). This context illustrates how policing agents develop strategies to reconcile their various roles, which many see as incompatible (Creed, *et al*., 2010), and cope with subsequent identity threats (Elsbach, 2003). I contend that identity work is carried at the collective level to cope with these identity tensions.

Tensions between the two identified work ethos did not appeared suddenly. They have been crawling and looming for a few decaces. In investigative work, action and fieldwork have always stood alongside paperwork, but previously the balance was in favor of fieldwork activities. For the last few decades, reforms in the police institution, new public management policies, and the homogenization of the European Union practices transformed gradually the police activity. These changes generated an evolution of the work with which police investigators do not identify anymore. Therefore, tensions emerged and today it seems they

have reached a point where latent has become clamant and tensions have to be released and coped with. Police officers perceive that their occupation is being slowed down, restrained, sanitized and drained out of their vital spark and meaningful substance. To counterbalance these tensions, police officers have recourse to coping strategies that help them to resist surrepticiously these institutional demands.

I identified two main strategies, a first one that involves regaining movement and autonmy and a second one that deals with maintening emotional and mythical substance.

In the former, I try to analyze how occupational trainings and sports constitute central linking elements, and how internal unofficial parallel systems are developed on the side by the collective to recover spaces of identity perceived as lost. In the second group of strategies, I focus on the construction and maintenance of an identity that is stretched to some extreme to counterbalance the extremity of the work done by my informants. These strategies highlight the emotional and mythical dimension sustained and deeply rooted in the collective.

 Previous work has shown that people actively contribute to defining their working experiences (Sims, 2005). Thomas and Linstead observe that managers "attempt to secure an identity" (2002, p. 79); while Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) demonstrate how individuals draw on organizational discourses to contribute to "creating a sense of self." Corchud, Patriotta & Neysen link identity work to issues of categorization and labelization (2014). Brown and Lewis (2011) analyze discourse among lawyers, illustrating their efforts to create nuanced versions of their professional selves. To sum up, research recognizes the capacity of workers to forge life projects "out of various sources of influence and inspiration" (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p. 628). In other words, people play an active role in shaping their identities (Storey *et al.,* 2005; Symon and Clegg, 2005), even when they are expected to "absorb" the identity assigned by their organization. Police officers are a prime example here, since they serve as the public face of their organization.

To date, most of the literature on identity work has highlighted reflexively organized narratives developed by workers who negotiate multiple discourses (Fenwick, 2002, p. 708; Brown, 2006; Pratt, *et al.*, 2006; Musson and Duberley, 2007; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009) while neglecting the collective work that workers engage in to defend their threatened identities. Most research takes both an individual and a discursive perspective. Storey *et al.* (2005, p. 1049) indeed state that there has been "little empirical analysis of this process [of identity work] in action"; while Alvesson *et al.* (2008) call for the investigation of "resources or materials out of which identities are crafted". Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003, p.1165) suggest that human beings are "engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness." Therefore the major focus has been on how individuals shape their personal identities (Watson, 2008, p. 127). Missing in the existing literature has been an explicit recognition of an "external" aspect, such as the role of teamwork in shaping identities (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996).

I contend that the focus on the relationship between the discursive aspects of social interactions and personal involvement in one's identity creation (Watson, 2008, p. 128) blocks the view of identity work as embedded in the collective. Indeed, most research on identity work relates to preexisting discourses that, however numerous and diverse, are seen to influence how individuals will interpret a given self-identity and whether or not they will choose to adopt it. Therefore, individual agencies are privileged points of analysis. Less prevalent in the research is any discussion of identity work as a collective process through which people try to construct strategies that combine aspects of conformity to prevailing constraints with aspects of recalcitrance. In this paper we strive to address this concern by demonstrating how identity work is done at the collective level, enabling the materialization

of practices that are directly linked to the preferred core activities supporting the action-oriented work ethos of the "good cop."

The context of this study is particularly challenging with respect to identity because it is structured by two competing discursive and practical pressures weighing upon every individual in the police force. Institutional discourse and working practices police officers are supposed to accept in order to conform to the growing procedural and bureaucratic ethos are both attacking the currently preferred work ethos which is often defined through physical, action-oriented, and dangerous activities. Engagement in identity work is therefore unavoidable for police officers, or exiting the force would be the only credible strategy (Fleming, 2013). However, the identity-making resources used by police officers today are situated at the level of the collective rather than the individual, as it is viewed as both a bulwark against new practices and a central marker of previously-valued police work. Police officers cannot face this struggle at the individual level because they are agents and faces of a strong and constraining organization in which the "self" is embedded. However, there are numerous interpretations of what it means to be a police officer today (Dent and Whitehead, 2001; Ramshaw, 2012), entailing a collective rather than personal concept of self. Put differently, identity work among police officers is constantly challenged as new concepts of what is a "good cop" emerge.

I argue that police officers do not develop self-narratives or alternative discourses, but rather coping mechanisms through identity strategies with which they strive to retain, maintain or develop occupational practices and rituals through which they can experience changes that affect or stigmatize their work. The construction of these identity strategies is a central ingredient in identity work, which is not necessarily overtly oppositional but rather non-confrontational strategies aimed at protecting and promoting their concept of "good cop".

Although these strategies occur behind-the-scenes they are nevertheless deeply woven and intertwined in the official and unofficial practices. This study helps to engage with the distinctive character of non-confrontational micro-activities of that kind and illustrates how police investigators engage in identity work at the collective level to continue attaching value to their occupation in the face of the current changes.

This paper identifies first the triggers of identity work, which does not occur in a void. Rather, it is generated by tensions police officers experience as a result of the growing discrepancy between their own professional values and institutional expectations. I then demonstrate that as an answer to these tensions, identity work is carried at the collective level. I unveiled two main coping mechanisms: regaining movement and autonomy, and maintaining emotional and mythicial substance, devised to reconcile shattered identities. I analyze these activities as collective forms of identity work that occur at the squad level. The following section will begin by presenting the methodology and explaining the empirical setting of my study.

Context and Method

A transforming context

The National Police in France is a state-run police force. The institution is operated centrally and divided into eight directorates with sub-divisions at the county and regional levels. It represents around 150,000 civil servants who are classified in three different hierarchical ranks divided into sixteen levels. The French police force has undergone several reforms in recent decades under the New Public Management policy. These changes have impacted how officers perform their jobs.

The choice of the case

Investigation and patrol represent the core of police activity (Ramshaw, 2012). Whereas uniformed police work has received much attention from scholars, activities of plain-clothed police investigators have been under-represented in the literature despite its prominence in movies and books (Brodeur, 2010). Police investigators, who enjoy occupational autonomy and discretion, constitute a sub-category of police officers that is rarely addressed in academia. As Manning (2007) states, "Detective work remains a complex sub-specialty within policing, and the culture reflects some of its self-created nuances and tactics. It stands midway between the citizen and the organization, a kind of buffer that expands and contracts its tactical reservoir as need be". As in other countries, the policing institution in France is complex. Several directorates belonging to the Ministry of the Interior have departments that may be in charge of investigative and judicial work. Furthermore in France, police investigators have two hierarchies: a judicial hierarchy represented by the prosecutor or investigative judge belonging ot the Ministry of Justice, and an administrative hiercrachy in the person of the police superintendent (Ministry of the Interior).

For police investigators, the boundary between what they do and who they are is thin. The institution makes them soldiers/agents at all moments. The deontological charter delivered to all police officers at the end of their training period states –among other things- that they must be ready to intervene at any time: "When the circumstances require it, the police officer or constable, even if s/he is not on duty, intervenes according to his/her own initiative, with the means at hand, particularly to assist people in danger" (article R. 434-19). These contextual circumstances make the police force a strong institution. Still, investigators have sufficient leeway to create interstices and spaces in which they give meaning to their work.

I choose to focus on a single case study as a theoretical sample from which to develop rather than test theory, as it "illuminat(es) and extend(s) relationships and logic among constructs" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). I had the opportunity to access this unusual setting (Yin,

1994/2004) through the research center of the Graduate School of the National Police, which provided me with the contacts and granted access to the field and personnel.

This paper offers an analysis of the identity work conducted by police investigators of two regional squads located in the police headquarters of a big French city. The first of these squads deals with homicide investigations, while the second one is a more operational squad; for anonymity purposes I will refer to the latter by the pseudonym HUNT. Both squads are exclusively dedicated to police investigations. The homicide squad is responsible for investigating murder, attempted murder, illegal confinement, prison breaking, and robbery or assault with firearms. The HUNT squad was originally created to address urban violence in crowds, ram-riding and car-jacking cases, and drug-dealing involving car trips by dealers. Recently, they have also been extensively used to assist other squads in arresting or tailing potentially dangerous suspects. These two squads face the same tensions, although to different degrees. On a continuum from the "action-oriented" to the "clerical" side of the activity spectrum, the homicide squad falls somewhere in the middle but moving towards the "clerical" end; while the HUNT squad is fighting to remain on the action-oriented side despite opposing forces. We do not compare the two squads, as we consider that they bring complementary elements to the discussion.

The two squads work five days a week, between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm. The HUNT squad also works at night when surveillance or tailing is required. Work also requires them to break the door of a suspect's home at 6 am (legal time) to arrest him/her.

Police officers of the Regional Directorate of the Public Safety (RDPS) consider these two squads as the most exciting and rewarding of the nine that comprise this directorate.

An embedded ethnography

As explained more in depth in the methodological chapter, the ethnographic work spanned from October 1, 2012 to August 30, 2013. I followed the investigators of the two squads

during their daily activities, lunchtime breaks, and social gatherings inside and outside police headquarters on an average of three days a week, accounting for more than 1200 hours of observation. I continue to follow these squads regularly to observe certain mechanisms in greater depth.

I attended interrogotaries and field operations –sometimes wearing a bulletproof jacket- but I was not allowed to use audio recording devices or videotape. My study material was derived from four sources: official documents (reports, internal memos, and documents); field notes (I wrote about a hundred pages following the daily observations, sometimes delayed by the need to isolate myself from the actors); informal semi-structured interviews of all investigators, conducted during quiet moments of surveillance or over lunch; and the richer, more intimate discussions that took place in cars, away from the hierarchy. Most of the verbatim material transcribed in this paper consists of recalled and reconstructed conversations between one researcher and the investigators (Summer Effler, 2010; Van Maanen, 1988: 56). At the earliest opportunity, I wrote in a small note book the sentences we found to be useful in illustrating the emerging themes. Although most of the investigators readily engaged in informal discussions and sometimes even confided in me, it was neither easy nor natural for them to open up to someone "external" to the police organization.

Data analysis

As the ethnography advanced, I began to notice recurrent themes throughout our discourses with the officers as well as my direct observations of their work. The data were analyzed in four steps. First, I had frequent exchanges with my main supervisor regarding field observations and discussions with the investigators. Second, field notes were analyzed until the emergence of mechanisms for understanding identity tensions –roughly at first, the mechanisms were refined to produce a coherent construct that reliably interpreted what I had observed in the field. In sum, I found that identity tensions occur at the friction point where

the preferred action-oriented work ethos of the investigators collides with the bureaucratic work ethos imposed by the hierarchy and the evolution of the judicial system. Following an iterative process between field observations, discussions, and analysis of data, I classified the triggers of tensions into four categories: scrutinization, sanitization, slowing down, and depersonalization (see Table I). In a third step, I tried to unveil the various strategies used by investigators to attempt to cope with these tensions. At the end of the coding process, two distinct but intertwined mechanisms emerged: regaining movement and control, and maintaining emotional and mythical substance- all emphasizing the collective aspect of identity work.

Findings

Tensions between work ethos

Tensions did not arise from particular events but rather from a progressive and latent aggregation of occupational transformations at the institutional, organizational, and societal levels.

Table 1: tensions.

first-order data: tensions	quotes	second-order data
Loss of discretional power	*"Now if we have to ask the prosecutor every time we want to go the toilets then we won't do anything anymore because our activity requires reactivity and adaptation… Sometimes we need to make fast decisions when we're outside or the guy is lost…These new laws are just nonsense..." (sergeant)*	**Scrutinization (1)**
	"The announcement of the restrictions on the use of the geolocalization device came as a shock. Many wondered what they were going to do from now on, since most of their activity relied on that. This is where they had the most discretional power." (fieldnotes, November 2013)	
	Centralization tendency is back. The central body of the police institution is willing to homogenize all the police organization in France. No more "local way to do things", they want to get back their control and to have a clear vision of the institution. (both testimonies and fieldnote)	
Visible vs invisible	*"Now we have to use a camera as if we were hitting suspects during auditions or making up their confessions… We are treated as the criminals we deal with and it's just unbearable!" (sergeant)*	
	"Ok guys, now you know where you are positioned in the streets for this mission... don't forget to remain vigilant if it gets hot because of the cameras and the bastards using their cell phone to videotape you… you don't want to be on Facebook this evening..." (senior constable)	
Neutral vocabulary	*"We don't use the word "interrogation" now. We use the word "audition"… some above thought it was more politically correct…" (senior sergeant)*	**Sanitization (2)**

	""We don't have "suspects" anymore, we have "respondents"… just so they don't feel attacked or traumatized before a judge sentences them for what they did!" (constable)	
	"we should not say "video-surveillance" anymore but "video-protection" now… I mean, are they serious? (senior constable HUNT squad)	
	"we changed names several time… now some colleagues don't even know who we are anymore when we introduce ourselves" (constable HUNT squad)	
	"Those above in their offices, they don't see or hear what we witness. They don't see the distressed victim that has just been beaten up, they don't hear the insults and misbehaviors of the bastards… and they want us to serve a "Sir" to those guys… I don't think so! I'm respectful but don't ask me to pull down my pants…" (senior sergeant)	
Control of practices	"Our hierarchy asks us to make the numbers look right for their statistics so we need 'to get the bad guys' but they don't want us to work overtime or risk damaging a car during missions… I mean, as if the bastards committed their criminal activities only during office hours and as if the drug dealers would nicely stop their cars when we ask them to do so during a go-fast… I mean, seriously…" (sergeant and constable)	
Technological tools	Technologization: "They tried to improve the software and it's OK, but the guys that conceived it probably never did procedural work! Again they did something without consulting the persons that predominantly use the product… Now we are obliged to compose with a tool that is not adapted… Really… as if we needed that in addition to the rest…" (sergeant and constable)	**Slowing down (3)**
	Scientification: "Well, the forensic guys are overwhelmed by the demands… There are few due to budget constraints. We sometimes have to wait for weeks or even months to get a print or DNA sample processed… They have to prioritize the cases according to urgency and public visibility of the matter… So we wait for the result to come..." (senior constable)	
	Distanciation: "We rely so much on technology now that we actually go less outside in the field… in Some squads, they don't even know how to tail people anymore… It's also more comfortable as you can go home rather than stay in the car for surveillance since you can use a tracking device..." (senior constable)	
Bureaucratization	"The last time I tailed a suspect was a year ago… I'm not in the field anymore because there is so much paperwork to do here in the office! I can't believe it… I didn't join the homicide squad to do office work! It was not like this a couple years ago. Things have changed lately… I miss being in the field…" (captain)	
	"Because the investigative judges are so overbooked, we have to plan arrests sometime weeks or months in advance… Once you have identified and judicially locked your guy, you call the judge and plan a date for the arrest… Of course, it also depends on the emergency of the case..." (sergeant)	
	"Because a great majority of the judges are female, we never plan arrests on Wednesday since there is nobody to deal with the cases. They take that day off to care for their kids…You just know it and deal with it…"	
Change of organizational environment	"Activity has been slow for the last two years now. We have fewer cases to deal with. Because of technological changes in the car industry, carjackings are becoming rare. Since stores have put barriers in front of their windows, there's almost no ram-riding anymore... so our activity has decreased..." (sergeant)	
	"They don't know and don't understand what constitutes the core activity of this squad. We used to go out there, and observe and unearth cases, whereas now we are waiting in the offices for the cases to arrive on our desk. We are becoming passive bureaucratic civil servants!" (Sergeant HUNT squad)	
	"Our administration does not care about us. They tell us at the beginning that we can have a career in this institution but when you want to move and get promoted there's nothing for us. Very few positions are open every year and to have the job you need to have a pretty strong network of relations... I feel stuck in a situation that is difficult... I'm disgusted and	

	frustrated..." (officer)	
	"After nine months of observations, the homicide squad did not investigate any homicide cases" (fieldnotes)	
Loss of meaning and expertise	"I always wanted to become a policeman… to catch the bad guys… to feel adrenaline, to be outside… a job where you're not locked in an office and where you're in contact with people… Now it's different..." (constable homicide squad)	**Depersonalization (4)**
	"What I prefer to do is to get the jerks at 6 am at their place… you can see surprise and fear in their stunned faces. When I think about the victim, I often tell myself: Yeah… this is why I do this jo -: for the victim and to make sure that the bastard don't get away with what he did to them… this is what helps me to go on despite the dead-end we're heading towards... " (senior sergeant)	
	"I'm telling you… today I don't know what my work consists of, what is expected from me anymore. I try to think and propose solutions, but nobody listens to us. Whatever! I have 15 years of operational experience, but I'm still a grassroots policeman…" (senior constable)	
Disembodiment/de-masculanization	"There's no action anymore. We don't take any risks anymore - at least with what the squad is reduced to doing these days…" (constable)	
	"Physical abilities are now less important and the educational level of recruits has increased. I mean, now the recruits don't even have to be able to climb a rope! When I joined the police force 20 years ago this was mandatory… Now people taking the police tests have a university degree… they are already profiled to do paperwork, not action…" (senior instructor)	
	"We don't need to train anymore. What for? There's no action, we don't do anything interesting anymore. There's no need to train in defense techniques, as we no longer face situations where they're needed. When there's a small risk, we intervene in teams so there is no more need to be fit or to have an expertise anymore..." (constable)	
Change of profile	"There are three categories in the police: the civil servant - the person that wants to do office hours and that's all… with minimal involvement in the job; then we have the police officer - someone more committed to the job such as investigators of some squads or police stations but not ready to sacrifice their lunch break or to give up their personal life for work; and finally you have the cop - the one that is involved in his job 24/24, does overtime, and is always ready for action. Unfortunately most of our recruits now fall into the first category." (senior constable HUNT squad).	

Some of these changes were particularly blatant in my setting due to a specific local event, i.e., a corruption scandal at the highest level of the Country Directorate of the Judicial Police in the headquarter where we were observing. Although the squads I followed do not belong to this directorate, the fallout drastically impacted their work and identity. For instance, at least two of the categories identified above as triggers of tensions – namely, scrutinization and sanitization – were visibly heightened.

Scrutinization

Police investigations have historically been characterized as a "tainted" occupation (Bittner, 2001/1974). Early investigators were persons blurring the line between legal and illegal activities (Brodeur, 2010; Kuykendall, 1989). The public complained that these police officers worked in the shadow and wore plain-clothes, thus making themselves indistinguishable from the general population. While this "invisibility" was needed to mix with criminals, it created unease and insecurity among the public, resulting in today's trend toward more visible uniformed police. Police activities have always been scrutinized by the media or political groups, yet this trend toward transparency has emerged from within the institution, which is eager to "clean" an image that has been stained by several recent scandals in police headquarters of several big French cities.

This effort does not distinguish between illegal practices performed, on the one hand for personal gain and on the other hand, those intended to boost the efficiency of police work. Although the former practice is despised by most police officers I observed, the latter is extensively used in their daily practices. Brodeur (1983) referred to this latter category as "legal lawlessness". It consists of activities that are "clandestine, informal, non-written, and constructed by a group of people working in the same workplace" (Cléach, 2007: 308). Because these transgressive practices help to reach the objectives imposed by the hierarchy, managers have historically tolerated them. However, this has been changing in the face of the recent corruption scandals, significantly transforming the way that police investigators are expected to perform their duties. For their part, investigators are generally unhappy that their once secretive activities (Brodeur, 1983; Jobard, 2012) are becoming more visible. Another complaint of investigators concerns their loss of discretionary power. This appears in several ways: for instance, the increasing role of the prosecutor in determining investigative techniques and the new laws aiming to conform to the standards of the European Union.

"Now if we have to ask the prosecutor every time we want to go the toilets then we won't be able to do anything anymore because our activity requires reactivity and adaptation… Sometimes we need to make fast decisions when we're outside otherwise the guy is lost…These new laws are just nonsense..." (senior constable, HUNT squad)

"The announcement of the restrictions on the use of the geolocalization device came as a shock. Many wondered what they were going to do from now on, since most of their activity relied on that. This is where they had the most discretionary power." (fieldnotes, November 2013)

There are various reasons why police work has become more visible. Some are external, such as the development and accessibility of new technologies and media (i.e., video recording with smart phones). Others are internal measures aimed at restoring public trust in law enforcement in the face of recent scandals. These include the mandatory use of cameras during interrogatory sessions regarding serious offenses and the 2010 law requiring the presence of an attorney during interrogatories starting from the first hour of custody. Some police officers regard the video cameras as intrusive and resent that the system does not trust them. All the officers of the squads regret the increase in suspects' rights to the detriment of the victims, for whom they feel they represent the only recourse:

> *"Now we have to use a camera as if we were hitting suspects during auditions or making up their confessions… We are treated as the criminals we deal with and it's just unbearable!" (Senior sergeant, Homicide squad)*

> *"If you look at it, the suspect has more rights than the victim… I mean, the victim has few recourses which he has to pay for himself… the suspect needs only o make a satement and he has a free lawyer, a free doctor, a free translator, and he can ask us to call anyone… and it's not over, it's becoming worse and worse, soon the lawyer will have access to the procedure from the*

beginning and we won't be able to work anymore…" (Senior constable, HUNT

squad)

Investigators also face another challenge: As journalists gain access to the field via increased media access, criminals are getting wise to police tactics.

Moreover, some cases involving police corruption are assigned to other police investigators of the same directorate and not necessarily the Office of the Internal Affairs. In fact, during my observation period some police officers were charged with investigating colleagues - a practice that caused some shock when it was revealed. Investigators that had been probed without their knowledge felt betrayed as the inquiry came from inside their own department. The leading investigator on this case of corruption received a special bonus that was perceived by her peers as extremely controversial.

Sanitization

We labeled the institutional effort of "cleaning" as "sanitization". This willingness to "sanitize" the image of police force and police work occurs simultaneously at several levels. At the organizational level, our informants describe changes implused by the centralized hierarchy in Paris as a way to homogeize and get control back. According to our informants, their Parisian hierarchy wants to abolish local practices over which they had less visisbility and control.

« The centralization tendency is back. The central body of our institution is willing to homogeneize all the police organizatiosn in France... No more "local way to do things", they want to get back their control and have a clear vision of the institution ». (Senior investigator)

Sanitization extends beyond practices into actual vocabulary. Policing agents are required to use neutral words to designate suspects – for instance, the word 'interrogatory' has been

replaced by the less judgmental term 'audition' –a moment when individuals are heard and express themselves on facts- and 'suspect' has been replaced by 'respondent' –a person that responds to questions[1]. Similarly they have been also ordered to replace "video-surveillance" by "video-protection. Officers have also been required to address the respondents and detainees with the polite salutations 'Sir' or 'Madam.' This sometimes generates frustration from the investigators:

> *"Those above in their offices, they don't see or hear what we witness… they*
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> *don't see the distressed victim that has just been beaten up, they don't hear the*
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> *insults and misbehaviors of the jerks… and they want us to serve a "Sir" to*
>
> *those guys… I don't think so! I'm respectful but don't ask me to pull down my*
>
> *pants…" (Senior sergeant, Homicide squad)*

There is a strong feeling among law enforcement officers of losing ground. The use of force has become restricted and monitored to the point that most police officers do not want to take their firearm out of their holster for fear of the bureaucratic procedures required to defend it.

> *"A recent internal study revealed that police officers refrain from using their*
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> *firearm, endangering their own safety. This apprehension impedes their work*
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> *efficacy… I mean, they tried to understand why during an operation, the police*
>
> *officers near the scene of a robbery did not arrest the suspects in the street. It*
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> *turned out that our colleagues refrained from taking their firearm out of their*
>
> *holster because they dreaded the sanctions."* (Senior sergeant)

Officers' discretion is also being curtailed by administrative demands to control costs. Facing budget restrictions, the institution send messages that create confusion at the field level:

"On the one hand, our hierarchy asks us to make the numbers look right for their statistics so we need 'to get the bad guys' but on the other hand, they don't want us to work overtime or to risk damaging cars during missions… I mean, as if the jerks committed their criminal

activities only during office hours and as if the drug dealers would nicely stop their cars when we ask them to do so during a chase… I mean, are they serious ?…" (sergeant and constable)

In their effort to homogenize and sanitize the police institution, the hierarchy also changed the names of some department and squads. It was the case for one of the squads I observed. Initially the name of the HUNT squad (fictional name) was B.R.A.V.[1] standing for Repression of Violent Actions Squad. Then their name changed a couple times for more neutral terms such as regional security squad. The members that joined the squad when it was still named B.R.A.V. are rather nostalgic about this name. They could identify more easily with the squad and the purpose of the work of the squad: they were the 'brave'.

"We changed names several times, now our current name doesn't mean anything… some police officers don't even know who we are anymore and what we do when we introduce ourselves." (senior constatble)

Similarly investigators of the HUNT squad also explained that they used to have a code name on the radio waves to communicate with other police officers during missions in the field. At this time, their code was "shark". Now the code has been replaced by a number, as for the other police squads or services. These changes create identity tensions. Today some police officers perceive their squad as 'identity-less', bland and anonymous.

As the link between the police officer and the criminal is being eroded, so too is the knowledge of the former regarding the latter.

As the investigators have to apply more and more specific rules and procedures at each step of the working process, the process itself is slowed down.

Slowing down

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[1] *'Brigade de Répression des Actions Violentes'* in French

The development of databases to record information about suspects is essential to investigative work. As computers have replaced typewriters, these databases are centralized and accessible to all police investigators. While they potentially allow fast access to crucial information, police investigators complain that the software was conceived by people who lack judicial expertise, and therefore it has not been optimized for investigative work. Furthermore the IT infrastructure of the police has not been developed enough yet to support these new softwares and to proceed these huge databases. Therefore the potential efficiency advantages have not been realized. In addition, judicial procedures have become more laborious and constraining, adding considerable time to the process. Therefore, police investigators have generally slowed down their activities as their responsibilities have shifted away from the action-oriented activities that comprise their preferred identity (Tracy and Scott, 2006).

Scientific developments:

Thanks to scientific developments - particularly in the area of DNA research - investigators have access to information that was previously unavailable. Fingerprints or traces of DNA represent irrefutable evidence. However with the spread of these techniques, the demands have reached a level that cannot be absorbed by the forensic technicians, producing longer delays in obtaining test results. Depending upon the urgency of a case, investigators may have the results anywhere between 24 hours and several months.

"Well, the forensic guys are overwhelmed by the demands... They are few due to budget constraints. We sometimes have to wait for weeks or even months to get a print result or DNA sample processed... They have to prioritize the cases according to the urgency and public visibility of the matter... So we wait for the result to come..." (senior constable)

Furthermore, forensics have not become the quintessence of police investigation (Brodeur, 2010) as criminals have adapted to modern investigative techniques and it is now rare to find

fingerprints or DNA at a crime scene. Fieldwork, interactions, and interrogatory sessions - which investigators consider as "real" police work- still constitute the core material of a case.

Distanciation:

Due to technological tools such as cameras and tracking devices, investigators no longer have to remain in a car day and night to monitor a suspect, making their job easier in a way. However, these tools also shift the work away from the field and demand increased technical knowledge, with greater emphasis on the tools as opposed to the field (Godfrey, et al. 2012). Working behind a screen is a vastly different experience from facing the situation directly with no intermediaries. However, contrary to the military world where technology may replace physical work in the field (Godfrey *et al.* 2012.), police investigators must still go out to set the technical devices, which require some specific knowledge. Furthermore, they must ultimately arrest the suspect physically. I observed that some squads delegate fieldwork to more operational squads such as the HUNT squad. They are frequently asked to help with assignments that are risky, involve the use of technical devices, or must be carried out in early morning, after office hours or during lunchtime. As one constable from the financial squad said, *"It is more comfortable for us to work with them. They conduct fieldwork while we can focus on procedural work."*

"We rely so much on technology now that we actually go less outside in the field… in some squads, they don't even know how to tail people anymore… It's also more comfortable as you can go home rather than staying in the car for surveillance since you can use a tracking device..." (senior constable)

As a consequence however, this disconnects police officers from the field.

Bureaucratization:

To complete the increasing amount of paperwork associated with the recent changes, homicide investigators must spend more time in offices than in the field. As new steps are

added to the procedure, there is more room for mistakes and therefore more tension. To satisfy the requirements of the judicial institution, investigators have become *"normative technicians"*[3] or as Brodeur (2010) calls them, "court-room evidence managers". The main issue now appears to be what information must be stated in order for the reports and procedure to be legally accepted, rather than how to find and gather the most irrefutable evidence.

At one end of the judicial system we find police investigators, whose work requires reactivity, adaptation, and speed. On the other end are the prosecutors and investigative judges, whose job is to channel and plan the case load they can manage and prioritize accordingly. This involves scheduling the arrest of suspects, sometimes weeks or months after they have been identified. There are several reasons for this. One is simply that the magistrates are following more cases than the court systems can absorb. In addition, according to our informants many investigative judges are females who take off on Wednesdays to care for their children since in France primary schools are closed on Wednesdays. This rather unexpected issue appeared recurrently in conversations within the two squads. Some complained about the unavailability of the magistrates in a work environment they see as requiring fast decisions and actions. Tension between the two occupations is further exacerbated because the work of the former depends upon the delegation of the judicial powers of the latter. Investigators do not see themselves as the executive arm of the judicial system but rather as dutiful policing agents doing their best to "catch the bad guys."

As the work of investigators is increasingly bureaucratized, my informants have seen their activity level decreasing over the last two years along with the intensity and size of the cases they follow. The dispatching of the cases among the different departments, services, and directions has changed with the changes of the persons at the head of these directions. Assigned to cases they regard as less important, my informants lose interest in the work as

reactivity and commitment that constituted key ingredients of their professional identity disappear.

> *"I'm so disappointed… I did not join this squad to do this… I mean this is the homicide squad! We shouldn't be in charge of investigating minor brawls… but there's nothing else left for us… the CDJP takes all the good cases now[4]…"* (group leader)

> *"After nine months of observations, the homicide squad did not investigate any homicide cases." (fieldnotes, 2013)*

These changes in the institutional environement increased the discrepancy between the conception of the work of grassroots police officers and their hierarchy. The framework of the work environment is perceived by grassroots investigators to become much more passive and alienating.

> *"They don't know and don't understand what constitutes the core activity of this squad. We used to go out there, and observe and unearth cases, whereas now we are waiting in the offices for the cases to arrive on our desk. We are becoming passive bureaucratic civil servants!" (Sergeant HUNT squad)*

> *"Our administration does not care about us. They tell us at the beginning that we can have a career in this insitution but when you want to move and get promoted there's nothing for us. Very few positions are open every year and to have the job you need to have a pretty strong network of relations... I feel stuck in a situation that is difficult... I'm disgusted and frustrated..." (officer)*

Furthermore the situation is sometimes accentuated by the choices of the chiefs of squads who may decide what kind of cases they want to take care of. When the choices of the chiefs do not correspond to the expectations of investigators, a loss a meaning occurs and they disengage in their work as the driver of work for them resides in the affective link they have

with their work and their feeling of being useful. On the one hand, the chiefs tend to see their subordinates as "brats":

"They all want to work on the 'case of the year' but it doesn't work like that… they are spoiled…"

And on the other hand, grassroots investigators do not understand why their chiefs do not take some cases that they are proposed:

"I don't get it… he refused we take this case whereas it could have been interesting… so now we're here in the offices doing nothing… I can't stand it anymore" (senior constable).

"The police station from the east-side asked us to assist them for one of their missions. He [chief of the squad] refused… assisting other services is supposed to be part of our work… they won't ask us anymore next time… I don't understand… I feel useless" (constatble).

Most of the investigators I observed explained they prefer to work in the field, to gather evidence, to get into action. The need for adrenaline is part of their identity, what makes really sense for them is when they are confronted to danger, the thrill of arresting a criminal, the thrill of preparing for action, the thrill of the chase/hunt: action is where identity and meaning takes place for them. This is why there is a cognitive shift that is difficult for them to accept: to have a work that goes away from action and that becomes more turn toward judicial and procedural work in the offices.

Tensions triggered by the scrutinization, sanitazation, and slowing down phenomena seem to drain away the preferred identity of police investigators and to force them to comply with a new work ethos that emerges as the new framework for identity. The action-oriented and corporeal components that seem to be at the fulcrum of the identity of our informant are gradually removed from practices.

Depersonalization and de-masculanization:

Many investigators joined the police because they had a stereotypical and idealized vision of police work as "catching the bad guys." They were attracted to various perceived elements of the job such as action, surprise, practice of sport, public service, physical activity, team spirit, danger, and commitment to a righteous cause (fieldnotes). The physical aspects of the job strongly impact their perception of their occupation (this point is developed further in chapter 3). One's value to others as well as self-worth is tested when facing difficult situations. Colleagues with strong temperaments and operational knowledge are regarded as icons by squads' members, and case anecdotes as narratives or "war stories" (Ford, 2003) link the group. However the physicality and the cohesive rituals involved in the socialization of police officers tend to fade away as the general recruitment process evolves.

> *"Physical abilities are now less important and the educational level of recruits has increased. I mean, now the recruits don't even have to be able to climb a rope… Now people taking the police tests usually have a university degree… they are already profiled to do paperwork, not to get into action…"* (senior instructor, HUNT squad)

Investigative work is turning away from face-to-face interactions and self-creative and proactive techniques are banned. This loss of physical contatcs and emotions in the work reflects a process that we could call the disembodiment of police work. The shrinking space of physicality –and consequently masculinity- is revealed by the decrease in outside actions and risky confrontations. As a consequence some investigators loose their motivation for training and conduct some routine missions with less preparations, which could be an issue according to my informants.

"The problem is that you never know what can happen when you go out in the field. Most of the time everything goes fine but if something goes wrong, there could be some dreadful consequences. We should be prepared all the time." (senior constable)

The identity of investigators also manifests itself in their occupational expertise, which they feel they are now losing. Few of the cases handled by the two squads I observed concerned their primary specialty. The HUNT squad investigated some carjacking cases but very few crowd control missions, or "go-fast", and no ram-raids. Even the demands for assisting colleagues in early morning arrests (which involved the breaking of doors) decreased or at least fluctuated strongly. Likewise, the homicide squad did not investigate a single case of homicide during our period of observation. According to them, their current responsibilities could be handled by any police officer without specialized knowledge or skills. They perceive that their preferred work substance is being drained out of them, and therefore feel estranged from the current direction of their institution. However, investigators do not receive change passively. They engage in indentity work at the collective level and develop strategies to cope with the tensions I just described. They try to recreate or maintain a work ethos that they find meaningfull and in which they can perform their preferred identity.

Identity coping strategies

My informants developed tactics to resist these tensions. They engage in micro-activities that are a manifestation of identity work supported at the collective level. These strategies help them to regain movement, emotional substance, and autonomy. They also allow my informants to construct an environment of collective references through which a mythologized identity is maintained/sustained and through which the taint associated with their occupation (Bittner, 1970; Hugues, 1951) is transformed into a badge of honor.

Table 2: coping strategies

Identity work at the collective level	Coping mechanisms
Regaining autonomy and movement (tensions 1, 3)	Trainings, internships, and sports

	The charter of the Wain
	Internal recruitment process
Maintaining emotional and mythical substance (tensions 2, 4)	The bad: distanciation
	The good: mythologization
	The hybrid: the emergent identity

Regaining autonomy and movement

- Occupational ritualization: enforcing common paradigms and autonomy

Van Maanen (2012) explains that "Occupational communities build and sustain relatively unique work cultures consisting of, among other things, task rituals, standards for proper and improper behavior, work codes surrounding relatively routine practices and, for the members at least, compelling accounts attesting to the logic and values of their rituals, practices, standards and codes". An example of this type of ritual is the *Charter of the Wain*[2]: this unofficial document has been conceived by a few investigators of the homicide squad a few years before my observations (in 2010). They were fed up with some let go in the (social and) professional practices of some of their colleagues of the squad and they decided to write down a charter which gathered internal rules agreed tacitly. In this charter, rules of professional practices and social behaviors are recalled and punishment are stated when the rules are not respected. All the members of the squad, including the chief of the squad and the group leaders, have signed the document and newcomers have to sign it when they join in.

> "*There used to be this unofficial practice of paying back the mistakes*
>
> *but at some point there was some let go so some of us decided to write*

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[2] name was changed for anonymity

a document to institutionalize the practice…" (senior constable

homicide squad)

Many rules indicated in this unofficial document are similar to the ones imposed by the official hierarchy but since the mistakes done in the field away from the eyes of the hierarchy may remain unnoticed, members of the squad develop this internal check and balance system to guarantee security and proper work of the group.

In this document, offenses and related penalties are explained and stated:

"This charter lays down the rules, offenses, and penalties, applicable to all

without any favoritism…"

The document is composed of four chapters: the offense, the penalty, the aggravating circumstance, and the members (p1)". The expression "to pay a custard"[3] is used when one of the squad members has made a mistake or misconduct and must pay back the group. Interestingly many of the "offenses" sanctioned in this Charter are also the ones that are also punished officially by the hierarchy. Chapter 1 classifies the different offenses in 3 categories: the mistakes, the losses and lapse of memory, and miscellaneous. In the first category of offense, we find for instance an error of procedure leading to the invalidity of the deed; the non-respect of the French language (vocabulary, grammar, and conjugation) or a date error on a document addressed to the hierarchy[4].

In the second category of offense, we find the losses and lapses of memory such as to forget keys of the cars or keys on the safe (where the firearms are stocked), to forget cards for gas or highway passes, or to forget one's turn to be on duty at lunch time, personal belongings or professional material during a search, an arrest, or during initial assessments, or even to forget to register one's vacation on the planning.

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[3] *Payer son flan* in French
[4] translation from French by the author

In the last section, diverse offenses are stated like denunciation of imaginary offense, fender-bender accident of an administrative vehicle, record of undue extra hours, the taking of hours off whereas none is left, the loss of a money collection, the non-respect of the intergroup cohesion, the untimely use of sirens and flashing lights of service vehicles.

Every member that has signed the charter must offer a farewell or an arrival party.

The penalties range from pastries to a complete country-style meal for the whole squad according to the degree of "seriousness" of the mistake.

This parallel system of check and balance encourages intra and intergroup communication as well as trust building. It also shows which elements and behaviors are important for the squad to do a good job. In addition, the aggravating circumstances in Chapter 3 sum up the unacceptable behaviors: "bad faith, complicity, conspiracy, dissimulation (of fact or evidence), and non-respect of deadlines" (p.6). Through the different elements put forward in this charter, it is possible to grab what are the fundamental factors that constitute the work ethos of this squad and what they consider as important for the job. It also reveals what are the behaviors and "standards of conduct" (Jermier *et al*, 1991) that are encouraged and penalized to carry on in this work environment.

The HUNT squad has no such document; yet professional mistakes do not go unnoticed and are treated similarly: their author must bring pastries for the whole squad the next morning. They usually all play the game, and when the pastries are late, the offender is reminded of his or her duty.

Another ritual worth noting is the silence during morning intervention missions: It is as much a part of their attire as their uniforms, as if they are setting their mind in a certain mode. It is a moment of concentration. They check their material and help each other put on their heavy reinforced bulletproof jacket. They proceed to the cars and then ceremoniously to the door of

the suspect without exchanging many words. This gives an impression of collective mastery and reinforces their cohesion in the relationship with risk-taking activities, as well as closure from other groups. The moment of breaking a suspect's door at 6am and securing the place is an exclusive moment of the intervention squad where only them can intervene.

Another ritual of both squads consists of their exclusive recruitment policy. Both exercise a specific selection process involving indirect access. Police officers wishing to join the homicide squad cannot apply directly from the police academy: they must first accumulate five years of experience in other squads and on the field. The superintendent at the head of the RS department then chooses the best applicants – the ones who, in his words, "has a thorough knowledge of the procedure." This vision contradicts the squad members' own image of themselves. Although some have grudgingly accepted more clerical work out of necessity, the majority continues to perceive themselves as action-oriented fieldworkers. When asked about work preference, most gave answers reflecting that view such as "arresting the suspects at their home early in the morning." None said they preferred procedural work exclusively.

The HUNT squad also imposes specific recruiting rules. Two of their members being qualified to administer recruitment tests, they organize and plan these sessions whenever they need new members. Several tests take place during a three-day period. The last test consists of an interview during which applicants are asked to describe how they would respond to various ethical and moral issues that may arise in particular work situations. The answers in and of themselves are less important than the consistency of behavior and coherence of arguments. Predictability is considered a crucial attribute; while procedural weakness does not preclude recruitment, lack of control and consistency does in a squad that places a premium on trust and courage. Once the applicants have been tested on their physical, technical, and psychological capacities according to an elitist image sustained by the squad, a choice is made

according to the needs. The candidates that scored the best and fit to the squad's identity will be put on a waiting list and will be called when a position becomes available. The waiting list system sustains as well the elitist work force image. A restricted collective decides who will join the squad.

Our informants also find autonomy in the way they conduct their investigations. The prosecutor usually relies on them to follow the leads and does not intervene as long as the investigator reports to him/her regularly. As Regional Securiy investigators, our informants in charge of an investigation have a global vision of their case, they take care of it from the beginning to the end.

"What I like in this (RS) department is that you are autonomous. You take care of your case as a whole. It's not the case for our colleagues in the RDJP, their work is fragmented and only the sergeant or the superintendant has a global view. I would not like that."(senior constable, Homicide squad)

"What is nice here (RS department) is that you can carry your investigation the way you want. Some investigative judges may give you a "shopping list" but in general, they rely on you and you work as you wish". (Constable, Homicide squad)

-Regaining movement and masculinity: Maintenance of abilities

The coping mechanisms discussed above, however helpful, are not sufficient to maintain a satisfactory work identity. In addition to interpersonal practices, identity work also requires the maintenance of skills and expertise that are perceived as the essential features of one work ethos (which, in the case of police investigators, is an action-oriented one). For instance, trainings and internships represent opportunities to learn and develop work-related practices and values. For the HUNT squad, the purpose of training is to be technically competent during concrete operational work, whereas for some other squads it is simply an

administrative obligation. Some training sessions/internships are mandatory while others are voluntary. There are two types of internships: external and internal. External internships are conceived at a national level and led by experts, who teach such skills as fast driving, marksmanship, use of specific intervention equipment, use of video and photographic devices, coordination of work from an helicopter, etc. (specific subjects vary each year). Only a few spaces are available for these internships.

Internal internships are developed and proposed for the whole Regional Security department by the two official HUNT squad instructors. Police officers who pass the instructorship are supposed to work in the police training center of the city, but local exceptions were permitted until recently, allowing some of them to join squads and remain in contact with the work done in the field. The added value of these instructors resides in their capacity to adapt their training to the nature of the investigative work at hand. Furthermore, having concrete experience with operational work gives them particular insight into the difficulties and 'inappropriateness' –according to them- of the technical gestures learnt during the official theoretical trainings.

The training sessions offered by these instructors are highly appreciated because the simulated scenarios they propose reflect the reality of the officers' work. They also allow the investigators to learn about their colleagues outside of an office setting, as well as to learn more about themselves. The HUNT squad organizes these *in situ* trainings at least once a year. These two instructors are also in charge of the weekly shooting sessions for the whole department, which represents around 190 investigators. They vary the scenarios every week to make the sessions more interesting, and most of the investigators we observed did in fact enjoy them:

> *"I dreaded the shooting sessions before Tony and Carl took over… the previous*
>
> *instructor thought we were in the military, he was shouting at us… always*

yelling how incompetent we were, that was somehow stressful. Now it's completely different… you go there and you're relaxed, you know you're going to learn stuff and you're going to enjoy your time…" (Constable, homicide squad)

 The previous instructors led static shooting sessions, where the police officer stood up in front of a target and shot the required 30 bullets. The current ones propose little scenarios requiring the investigators to move around and coordinate.

"Those two guys are very good in pedagogy… They make you understand stuff and correct your positions with positive comments. They try to put you in situations you might actually experience or perhaps already have... It's really great what they do!" (Constable, homicide squad)

These shooting sessions and trainings proposed by the HUNT squad are important for several reasons. First, they allow investigators to remain in contact with the operational techniques that are central to the action-oriented work ethos that is increasingly threatened by judicial and bureaucratic tasks. Second they create a social space where investigators can exchange ideas about work and learn techniques. Finally, the investigators derive pleasure and enjoyment from these locally devised sessions.

Another significant example of maintaining movement is physical fitness, where the importance of performance is stressed and sports are practiced. The great majority of the Regional Security (RS) investigators spend their lunch break in the gym, Sports are a central topic in everyday conversations. Spending time and practicing sports together during lunchtime is a manifestation of identity work at the collective level. The (re)appropriation of

their own body and its transformation into a weapon for work reprensent a strategy to resist collectively the degraded image police officers that they perceive from their hierarchy.

Movement is also maintained through the concept of "speed," which is central to the workplace identity of a police officer. Intervention in crime scenes requires not only strength but physical and mental quickness. They drive quickly even when there is no emergency, as they consider that there is no time to waste in a traffic jam. Police officers have the option to take a speed driving qualification exam that entitles them to drive more powerful cars than those used by regular police officers. At the time of my observation, most of the HUNT squad members had taken and passed this test. To operate these vehicles safely, investigators must be responsive, adaptive, and always on the lookout. So it is in the field where they must be ready to make fast decisions under pressure and act according to situational context.

Most of the operational work takes place outside which means away from the direct look of the hierarchy (Manning, 1977; Van Maanen, 1978). This provides police investigators some kind of freedom in terms of what to do and where to go. Every day is different from the previous one as activities and people implied in cases change. Unexpectedness is the routine.

"What I like in this job is that every day is different from the previous one… you don't know what you're going to work on tomorrow. You don't get bored." (senior constable, HUNT squad)

"At noon the tracking device of one of some suspects' cars started to move. All the squad's members stopped doing what they were doing –most of them getting ready for sports practice- and got ready to leave. In 10 minutes 3 investigators were tailing the car. They followed it until a foreign country. Other squad's members joined them. Some others remained in the headquarter to provide information about the moves of the car thanks to the tracking device. They slept there and waited for the car to come back to France to arrest them. The suspects

came back the day after. Some of the investigators worked for 48 hours in a row." (fieldnotes, 2013)

"I was in a car with 2 homicide squad's members. We were heading to the center of forensic services to drop evidence for analysis when a call was heard on the radio announcing that a robbery was in progress. Right away the investigators took out the blue light on the top of the car and we raced to the scene, taking great risks that did not appear to me as necessary". (Fieldnotes, 2012)

Therefore, my informants may complain about changes in the organizational environment impacting their work but they hang on to their prerogative and autonomy space they are still able to enjoy.

Speed, action, and adrenaline thrills are central components of the work identity of our informants. Conversely, social loafing is despised and slackers are few in these squads. Inactivity is avoided and almost all investigators count hundreds of overtime hours they wear as a badge of honor, some of them having accumulated the equivalent of a whole extra year of work at the time of our study.

-Regaining autonomy: Free spatialization

Autonmy and control are also secured and validated in physical spaces in which investigators may express themselves and display their preferred identity. Those spaces are interstices where resisting but non-confrontational strategies are used to balance institutional forces that push them away from their conception of police work. They allow investigators to construct and develop activities and practices that they regard as "real" police work.

For instance, the *office*: The walls are decorated with pictures representing interesting cases resolved successfully. Images include bruised suspects; vehicles crashed or impacted by bullets; seized material such as drugs, hi-fi equipment, jewelry or cash; and so on.

Investigators do not like to display official rewards or receive medals, which they regard as flashy indicators of compliance. However, they enjoy pinning press articles reporting cases they led. They sometimes frame pictures of interesting and important missions, then display them in the common room of the squad to sustain collective memory and proudly demonstrate their accomplishments to visitors. Also decorating the walls are caricatures of squad members that comically depict a particular characteristic, physical feature, or work situation that member encountered. Humor is an important collective link that creates intimacy and cohesion. The depicted situations often refer to masculinity and action.

Similarly, in the mixed toilets are politically incorrect jokes about such matters as politics, sex, women, hierarchical relationships, race, alcohol, etc. These witticisms convey a macho/prejudiced/controversial image that is no longer openly endorsed but still tacitly felt on some level, as well as self-mokery about the police situation.

The car represents also a particular space in the maintenance of autonomy of police investigators. The use –and abuse- of cars is regulated by the collective as they use these vehicles outside the gaze of the hierarchy. There are tacit agreements among members of the squads about the use, the fixing and the cleanliness of the cars. For the HUNT squad, cars are an extention of their physical autonomy and mastery. Because of budget restrictions, they are fighting to keep cars that fit their field activities: fast and powerful for chasing, and regular and not too new for tailing.

Most of the substantial conversations between the investigators and I took place in cars, where I gained significant insights into the group and their work. As Van Maanen (2012) explains (although he specifically refers to patrol police officers): "Stories are often the only entertainment available in patrol cars, they are the essence of long and late nightshifts spent waiting for something to happen." My informants were often alone in their cars while tailing or in teams of two or three during surveillance missions; they tried to maintain a vigilant and

proactive state of mind rather than a wait-and-see mode while anticipating possible moves of the suspects. This helped them to stand the many hours of inaction.

Another noticeable free space consists in informal interactions with the suspects. For instance, because interrogatories are now closely monitored by the lawyer and the camera, investigators interact with suspects during other casual interactional moments. They may have little chats in the car during the transportation time between the police headquarter and the home of the suspect for a search warrant, or sometimes during brief moments around the interrogatory session itself before or after the camera is activated or the lawyer arrives. Forensic protocol offers another opportunity for brief discussions, during which the investigator is always attentive to the behavior of the suspect. This may involve attempts to evaluate the person's state of mind or his or her willingness to cooperate, as well as gaining access to personal information that the respondent would not freely divulge amidst the formality of the interrogatory session. For instance, the first time we observed the interrogatory of an attempted murder suspect, he was found to be rather convincing in explaining he was not the author of the criminal act. Later that day, one of the researchers expressed her doubts to one the investigators in charge of the interrogatory, he smiled and replied:

> *"Well, actually in the car when we came back with him from the home search*
>
> *after the interrogatory, he almost told us straight out that he had shot at the*
>
> *guy… There's no slight doubt that he is the shooter[5]. But don't feel bad, they*
>
> *are very good at lying!" (Constable, homicide squad).*

These elements are important because they convey a feeling of appropriation of their work environment that is very controlled by their hierarchy. It also provides a positive feeling of "outsmarting" the suspect that balances their feeling of being depreciated by their institution.

These mechanisms supported at the group level, help our informants to regain/maintain self-esteem and cohesion.

The second category of identity work mechanisms that we identified deals with the construction of two main identities: a first one –the (super) hero- that buffers our informants from the taint associated with their occupation and a second one –the hybrid procedural master- that emerges as a tactic they use to appropriate and develop a new space of identity and autonomy.

Producing emotional substance and identity distance: The good, the bad, and the hybrid

Police officers evolve in an environment of boundaries. They see themselves as righteous human beings that are confronted to the worst of human nature. To protect themselves they build a binary world of oppositions (Van Maanen, 1978) where the distance between the in-group and the out-group (Dick, 2005) is stretched to the exteme.

Kreiner *et al.* (2006) refer to dirty work as occupations that are "widely perceived as degrading, disgusting, or demeaning"; they include work that is socially, physically, and morally tainted and that bears social stigmas that distinguish this work from regular socially valued occupations. But dirty work also refers to occupations such as firefighters and police officers (Tracy and Scott, 2006). Bittner (1970) define police work as a "tainted occupation" and grounds his theory of the police on their capacity to use coercive force. Dick (2005) also adds that police work is tainted on several dimensions as they "work in dangerous conditions (physical taint), work with criminals (social taint), and use coercive methods (moral taint)" (Kreiner *et al.*, 2006). However, our informants do not consider their work as tainted. On the contrary, dealing with the taint is a badge of honor and they perceive their work environment more as extreme than tainted. They are confronted to extreme situations (Bouty *et al.*, 2012), defined as evolving, uncertain, and risky but do not perceive it as tainted; they may use

extreme means (coercive force, legal lawlessness) but they enjoy using these means and to master them is part of the "good cop" identity; and finally the aim of the work is to neutralize "bad guys" whose conception is constructed in such an opposition and distance that the taint cannot contaminate them.

The bad

One of the first elements that stroke me during my early field experience was the relationship of police officers with cleanliness and health. All my informants took great care of their personal hygiene as well as cleaning their offices and common rooms. They generally ate healthy and balanced homemade meals together in the common room, praticed sports daily, and were attentive to give time to family activities whenever their schedule allowed it. This contrasted greatly with the comments I could hear about the suspects who were often, according to my informants, living in "insalubrious apartements", had a "tremendous lack of hygiene", or were "living like animals" (fieldnotes, several constables in both squads).

Police investigators also attach a great attention to the correct use of the (French) ***language***. Although some of them may use slang or vulgar words in informal conversations, they all take great care to speak proper French and take even some pride in mastering it. They are very careful to avoid spelling mistakes or to use proper words or idiomatic sentences in writing reports to magistrates. They also find it difficult to transcribe the sentences of the suspects they interrogate when they do not use proper language.

"The magistrates would like us to write in the reports the sentences as the suspects say them during interrogations but it's just unbearable for me to write in bad or incorrect French… I can't help it, I have to rephrase what they say in proper language!"

"Look at this guy, not even able to express himself in correct French… we're really dealing with the lowest class of society in our job. The most ironic part is that our politicians call these persons the 'future of our society'… I mean, seriously, where are we going?"

This attitude helps police officers to create a distance from the persons they are dealing with, reinforcing their identity as good citizens opposed to lacking hygiene, ignorant and uneducated ones. Furthermore my informants deal with cases that involve people that are very homogeneous in terms of social and ethnic background. An internal charter defines the scope of their work; for each squad of the RS department, specific missions are attributed. Because another direction (the Regional Direction of the Judicial Police) takes care of all the "important" cases, the scope of my informants' work is limited in terms of variety of suspects as they feel they deal now only with petty crime.

This oppositional identity is also constructed around the ***value of work and effort***. Because a great majority of the persons our informants are dealing with are often unemployed or do precarious jobs, they often benefit from the social system and perceive financial social aids. Police officers are proud to do long hours of work in opposition to their "clients" which they consider as "socially assisted", "lazy" (Van Maanen, 1978), or having an "idle life to the detriment of those who work" (constable, homicide squad).

"Sometime we get guys that receive more than my salary in social aids and they never work in their all life! There's really something wrong with this system…" (senior constable, HUNT squad)

"One of the guys I arrested one day for drug dealing told me he was making more money in one month than me in one year… how motivated do you think they are to try to find a regular job? Already very young they have been given large amounts of money to do a few hours of vigil work. They don't have the culture of work and the culture of making efforts to succeed. Although I understand that the perspective of a 40-hour unskilled job for a minimum wage is not the most motivating". (senior constatble, HUNT squad)

"I've been listening for days of phone conversations of this guy and he's just doing nothing, just staying home! Just spending hours on the phone discussing rubbish! How can these guys

make a living? It just drives me crazy to think that my taxes are feeding this scum of the earth". (Senior constable, HUNT squad)

This value of work and effort is also manifested in their perception of other civil servants as lazy and not engaged in their work. As police investigators perceive themselves as deeply engaged and committed to their work, they create a distance with other workers that do not do as many hours as they do in sometimes-difficult conditions.

"Some people join the police to have office hours, they remain in office, do paperwork, do their 8 hours shift and then go home everyday at the same time and forget about their job until the next morning. Real cop work requires to do long hours of work outside office hours, to be available 24/7, to accept to take risks and to end up in uncertain situations. All the guys in this squad are ready to do that, we don't belong to the category of civil servants that do a cushy job." (senior constable, HUNT squad)

The majority of our informants cumulate hundreds of extra hours of work. They can make up these hours in taking days off but many of them have cumulated more than they can make up.

"I have more a thousand of extra hours to make up… they won't be paid… I could retire one year in advance if I cumulate them until the end of my career." (group leader, HUNT squad)

Therefore, to compensate for the low self-esteem they may feel regarding other stakeholders - the public they perceived as hostile, the hierarchy they perceive as disdainful- they construct an extreme oppositional identity that need constantly to be reaffirmed in finding "villains" to fight against or other to be positively distinguished from. This confrontational force between the good and the bad is also supported by another force that is more "aspirational" (Thornoborrow and Brown, 2009), more idealized and that is extremely powerful: a **mythologized identity**.

The good

Our informants, as many of us, have been influenced by the fictional representations of this occupation in movies and series where the main character is a hero, not to say a super-hero. It counterbalances to a certain extent what some scholars have called the "desacralization" or the "demythologization" of the police force since the second World War (Reiner, 1992; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Reiner explains that modern society evolves and this changes the criteria and social expectations of what is right or wrong, leading to confusing and plurivocal demands towards the role of the police force. He thus states: "there can be no effective symbol of unitary order in a pluralistic and fragmented culture" (1992 : 779).

There is therefore a constant identity work that takes place when the police officers interact with the "Other"-whether it is the suspect, the victim, the lawyer, the prosecutor, the investigative judge, the witness- to balance the perceived negative image these actors may send back to them. This perception appeared clearly during the first interactions with our informants as on several occurrences they presented themselves somehow defensively. We perceived this primary reaction as a manifestation of a low-self-esteem that will contradict later another facet of their projected identity:

"Oh so you came here to observe us? Well, you're going to have some work! There's a bunch of stupid and weird people among us!" (senior constable, homicide squad)

"Oh boy… you want to observe us working? You're going to be disappointed. There's a bunch of lame people here…" (group leader, HUNT squad)

"Well, so you came here to observe how stupid we are in the police force? Because there are many weirdoes here!" (senior constable, HUNT squad)

After a few weeks of interaction with our informants, these comments did not occur anymore. On the contrary, they started to show a side of their identity that was positive and rewarding. Starting from the fantasized image of "bad-guy catchers", police investigators tend to see themselves as *equalizers*. They may have an idealized vision of their work because they have

to deal with many hardships and pain, for them and for the victim. They usually have a sharp sense of justice and they often think they represent the last resource of a victim to have justice to a wrong they underwent, particularly if it was a physically violent act.

"The suspects have more and more rights and if you think about it, what has been done to help and protect the victim? Nothing. They have to pay if they want a lawyer whereas the bastards have a free one provided by the system we finance through our own taxes." (senior constable, HUNT squad)

"The victims count on us, we are the only recourse they have." (senior constable, homicide squad)

"The bastard sexually abused several little girls… if we find him first, it's going to be rough for him during the arrest…" (senior constable, HUNT squad)

This hero-like equalizer identity is reinforced by the ***narratives of success stories*** of arrests of "bad guys". These stories constitute a resource they can draw from when they feel no recent cases were challenging enough to satisfy their identity need.

"Usually we have two or three good cases each year that we are happy about. It's very important for us to feel satisfaction, it helps us to keep on going…" (senior constable, HUNT squad)

"It's so hard… we didn't have any interesting case this year… I'm upset… I don't know why I'm here for anymore…" (constable, HUNT squad)

In the squads, many conversations deal with past cases that stage the police officers in a role of courageous and professional agents as the frames on the walls recall. Sensemaking for these police officers occurs when they feel adrenaline, thrill, and satisfaction of being useful, that is to say when they feel strong emotions. When there are situations where they feel these strong positive emotions, their heroic identity can be expressed and lived.

As many action heroes, they also have special ***powers and a costume***. Contrary to the lonely superhero, police investigators are superheroes as a team. They are stronger, more efficient, more impressive when they intervene in groups. To accentuate the psychological ascendancy of the surprise of early morning arrest, the HUNT squad members wear a dark *uniform* with a reinforced bulletproof jacket, gloves, a mask and a helmet. Police investigators are usually plain-cloths policemen, but the HUNT squad also has a special uniform for morning arrest and crowd control activities.

When they put on their uniform, our informants seem to set themselves in a particular mode; they are silent, concentrated, they prepare their equipment and weapons ritualistically. They know they are getting ready for action and potential violent encounters. At the same time, they are also aware that they become targets as the police sign is flashing on the back of their jacket. During an informal conversation on Halloween's day, one of the researchers was surprised by the answer of one of the squad members:

"- Researcher: So you're celebrating Halloween with your kids this evening. What are you going to be dressed up in?

-Police officer: Are you kidding? I'm wearing a costume for work all year long … I'm not going to dress up for Halloween!"

Another conversation reveals the pride of wearing an intervention uniform:

"It looks good… I mean, when you kick a door at 6am, the suspect is surprised but when he sees us all in dark uniform with masks and weapons, he is stunned and frozen. In some faces I could even see terror! These guys assault old ladies but break down when they see us in uniform coming to get them." (senior constable, HUNT squad)

These comments reflect the ambiguous representation police investigators have of their uniform. On the one hand it is an accessory, a prop, and on the other hand, it is meaningful and useful in their work and it supports their perception of police work as an action hero

activity. The HUNT squad wears masks when they intervene in uniform because, first, it is more impressive, and second they need to remain anonymous for two reasons: safety reasons as they may undergo reprisal, but also because of their tailing and surveillance activities, their faces need to remain anonymous and unknown from people in sensitive neighborhoods. Therefore the uniform is at the same time a protection and a tool of the superhero arsenal.

Completing the hero outfit, police officers have some prerogatives that are *powers* denied to the (French) ordinary citizen. One of the main scholars, who wrote about the theory of the police, built his argument around the issue that the police are legally allowed to use coercive force (Bittner, 1970). They are entitled by society to use force when required to maintain order. Furthermore, in France, citizens are not allowed to carry weapons, only very few occupations -that are very controlled- are authorized to use firearms.

In addition, some squads are more trained and armed. Intervention and operational squads, such as the HUNT squad, manipulate weapons and devices that are not used by regular police officers. They thus have an operational knowledge that other police officers do not possess. They master some fighting techniques and some of them are competitors in combat sports. This will to be physically superior to overpower their enemy and bring them under control with the use of their weapon or their body reflects this superhero identity of their occupation. However as the saying goes: no pain no gain; these police officers would prefer to engage in a physical fight than to arrest a suspect who does not retaliate as in this case, they would not be able to play their preferred identity of action hero even if it means to be in a risky or uncertain situation.

"It's too bad the guy didn't move… he just lied down on the floor when we came to get him… I'm frustrated, sometime I wish they would rebel a little…" (constable, HUNT squad)

Police investigators have also another power. They can legally penetrate a suspect's life and intimacy without him/her knowing it. They can wiretap suspects and tail them for days and

nights without them being aware of it. During our observations, we followed investigators during tailing activities. After such a mission, I took the following note:

"I felt as if there were two levels of reality, one on the surface and one deeper, less visible, that only some particular people, like police investigators, have access to. It was as if they had a deeper understanding of what was going on. People would pass by, not aware of us, not knowing that an anodyne urban scene had several interpretations. I felt as if police investigators at this moment felt more in control and powerful to have more information than the ordinary by-standers". (fieldnotes, 2013)

Their power consists in having information that nobody outside the police force have.

The Homicide squad, although members do not wear an intervention uniform, has also a special superhero aura. These investigators are dealing with corpses, violent deaths, assaults from insane people, etc. They are working with tainted materials and means (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2005; Hughes, 1951; Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). However, their work also fascinates as it represents an occupation that is one of the most staged in fictions, movies, books, etc. (Brodeur, 2010). As Brodeur (2010: 189) recalls "investigating murder is seen as confronting evil in its most violent manifestation (Hobbs, 1988: 2006) and 'has been constructed as the apotheosis of the police mission' (Innes, 2003: 276)". Homicide investigators perceive themselves as particularly strong, psychologically and emotionally as they may have to deal with difficult and sometime unbearable situations. One of our informants recalled:

"Many police officers don't want to join the Homicide squad because of the hectic schedule and the dealing with corpses… they just can't stand it. Autopsy is also a particular moment, especially difficult to observe when it's the corpse of a child or a baby. You never get use to it. You always think about your own children. But a police officer has to be there physically so the judicial investigation can be proceeded and eventually the culprit arrested." (senior constable, homicide squad)

These investigators perceive themselves as human beings but with the capacity and strength to overcome what is unbearable for the ordinary person and thanks to their courage in their work the culprit can be delivered in front of the justice. In her study on identity dynamics and workplace courage, Koerner (2014) explains: "courageous acts consist of three essential components: (1) a morally worthy goal, (2) intentional action, and (3) perceived risks, threats, or obstacles". Courage is part of the superhero personality traits and is often present in many activities police investigators carry on -long working days, difficult and risky conditions, violent physical and verbal confrontations, etc. The mythologized identity has to be enabled and enacted in the activities investigators daily do in their work and it is additionally supported by *symbols and artifacts*.

When the HUNT squad was created in the early 1980's, members chose the black panther as the symbol of the squad. This animal is perceived as powerful, beautiful, mysterious, dangerous, hunting down its prey. The Homicide squad we observed also is also represented by this animal. It stands as a blazon that the members wear on their police jackets or intervention uniforms. Because they do not have uniforms, the Homicide squad made an official demand to buy T-shirts with the name of the squad and the black panther on it. They financed the shirts personally and each member bought one. The purpose was to give a feeling of cohesion, of collective force, and pride during morning interventions.

Similarly, in the HUNT squad, T-Shirts and other objects with the blazon and name of the squad are on sale for other police officers to buy.

In this evolving work environment, our informants resort to another strategy to palliate to their identity tenions. Some adapt to the new criteria and seek to develop a high competency in procedural work, thus distanciating themselves from the action-oriented superhero identity. To be the master of the judicial procedure and its subtleties has become the new challenge to achieve.

The hybrid

In terms of identity there is a shift from action-oriented fieldworkers to procedural and more in-office workers. Although these two complementary activities had always coexisted in police work, the complexification and the managerialization of the judicial system have reached a point where the two activities are difficult to carry out at the same time. Becoming highly specialized squads in one domain seem to become a survival tendency but my informants seem to be still stuck in an in-between position.

As a resisting reaction to the imposed new identity of the less preferred work ethos, police investigators seek to appropriate themselves this new space of competency. As they evolve in an environment where they have to adpat and react to uncertain situations, it is allthemore difficult for them to stand passively in front of imposed changes restraining and modifying their conception of the "good cop". Therefore, some seem to proactively redefine the contours of the occupation and pride in delivering a good judicial work is also becoming a new driver of identity for investigators. This is particularly salient for aging officers or officers that do not have strong physical aptitudes. They often compensate for their less action-oriented profile in developing skills and knowledge in the procedural system and its subtleties.

"Today if you want to evolve in this occupation, you have to take the training to become a judicial officer[2]. But it also means to spend more time on paper work than on the field…" (senior police investigator, HUNT squad).

Although procedural activities are more individual than collective, the homicide squad we observed made it a collective activity. The group leader attributes a case to an investigation leader with a team of two or more according to the importance of the case and material to investigate. Then the procedure and investigation start. An enormous amount of reports and papers are produced –in 3 copies each- to build the case. All the copies have to be signed and stamped. Then all the printed reports are read and checked at least a couple times by different

investigators to avoid mistakes and oversights. Finally the group leader reads the whole procedure again before sending it to the prosecutor. This system of checks is not mandatory but was established as a practice of professionalism in the homicide squad.

"Prosecutors and investigative judges know we do a great and serious job. The other side of the coin is that they tend to give us cases that we are not supposed to take care of because they know we'll do a good job compared to other services in police stations…" (group leader, homicide squad)

"We do a good job here. We have resolved difficult cases. We have good procedural workers, they know what they are doing". (senior constable, homicide squad)

The building of this procedural worker identity implies sometimes to distantiate from the more physical and action-oriented identity.

"The HUNT squad it's more like the big-muscled-guys… in the homicide squad, we are doing more intellectual stuff…" (Homicide squad officer)

"Oh, you went to see the HUNT squad? So you've seen 'real' men there… (wink). They're big and strong, but they don't have much knowledge in procedural work." (constable, Homicide squad)

Inside the HUNT squad, this dichotomy is also felt as the squad is composed of two groups: one dealing with field and operational work and one in charge of procedral work. Although both groups merged during morning interventions or crowd control missions, some members of the procedural group feel put aside by their more operational colleagues.

"I'm fed up with Tony. This morning while we took position to stop the car of a drug dealer, he deliberately put his car in front of me to be the first one to intervene as if I was not able to do it… I mean, I took the same tests as he did to join this squad… I can do this!" (constable, HUNT squad)

"The operational group thinks they do the biggest part of the job in the field but it's wrong! I'm the one that struggle to make it appear good and legal on the report so the case can be proceeded." (senior group leader, HUNT squad)

This hybridity creates tensions as the two groups compete for the best 'cop activity', both considering they are doing the most important part defining their work.

At the moment this hybrid identity has not yet found its collective balance and legitimacy in the police investigators world of my informants. However distinct groups with different perceptions of work have started to emerge in a work environment that was previously more homogeneous.

Discussion

Identity work and the collective

This paper has examined the specific strategies undertaken by police officers to resolve the emerging conflict between two competing work ethos, given that the new bureaucratic culture is likely to marginalize or constrain them to adopt new occupational identities to which they do not aspire (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Our findings underscore the importance of identity work to police officers, as well as their efforts to maintain self-esteem through the strengthening of valued identities, particularly around the collective dimension of their work. In the strategies they use, they strive to maintain their preferred versions of the "good cop" through activities that are "especially critical for their survival" (Snow and Anderson, 1987, p. 1365). Shaping cohesive practices at the team level - where they demonstrate the uniqueness and efficiency of their skills – helps them to resist the imposition of the new and unwelcome work ethos. In devising collective strategies to regain autonomy and movement through sports and intra-group practices, police investigators counterbalance the identity tensions generated by scrutanization and slowing down processes. In maintaining emotional and mythical

substance to buffer their collective perception of the "good cop" from the new work ethos, they secure their preferred and mythological identity that needs to be lived and enacted to face the sanitization and depersonalization processes.

Such identity work at the collective level represents neither overt affirmation nor contestation of the police institution's legitimacy, as might be the case elsewhere (Brown and Toyoki, 2013). Rather, I argue that police officers devise strategies to remind themselves of the sacred symbolic and operational dimensions of some aspects of their work (e.g., expert marksmanship, extreme physical fitness, or passionate commitment to the task).

Furthermore the "demythologization" of the police force through sanitization, scrutanization, or depersonalization, not only has an impact on the identity of the police officers but also on the institution itself. Thus in their book, Loader and Mulcahy (2003: 291-292) warn: "The managerialization of the police is based on the assumption that in many respects police organizations do not differ from any other business organizations. According to this view, police organizations should primarily be evaluated in terms of their output performance. However in the long run and almost unnoticed, this may undermine the symbolic power of the police. In this sense the managerialization is a form of demythologization, which may erode police legitimacy and authority".

The resistance done by police investigators of the Regional Security Department is neither an oppositional tactic nor the strategizing of their subordination to new rules (Burawoy, 1985), but rather a subtle though deeply rooted dissent, an implicit questioning of the very validity of the new work ethos. It could be associated to what Scott (1990) calls infrapolitical resistance, a "disguise, low-profile, undeclared resistance" (p. 198) that is "designed to obscure their intentions or to take cover behind apparent meaning". Trainings, sports, intra-group practices may appear as regular and official spaces linked to the job, but they may also represent and

allow another level of activities, more in depth and less controlled by the hierarchy, where police officers sustain and enact their preferred identity.

Police officers try to maintain the identity of the "good cop", at least among themselves, while denying the meaningfulness of practices like *sanitization* or *slowing down* associated with paperwork. I contend that the conflict between the competing work ethos reveals a tension that is particularly acute between the expectations of police officers' identity and the lived experience of their work today.

Another finding suggested by this study is that police officers cannot just be themselves at work. They have to act as the face of an institution that is intervening in some crucial areas of social life: security, crime, justice and punishment. They must be seen as authoritative and in control (Watson, 2008), which explains why they do not openly contest new working practices. At the same time, they are also human individuals confronted with dramatic changes at work. Deep frustration results as new constraints are produced by the very institution to which they are attached. The specific value of studying the identity work of police officers is that for many of them, work is (or was) *the* major part of their lives. Police officers have been historically self-identified as highly committed workers, an image that has corresponded with their aspirations. That is why such drastic institutional transformations generate personal troubles for them. This paper examines how these troubles are absorbed by the power of the collective. Identity work is not done individually, but at a collective level where aspirations can be shared and solidarity verified every day through the very activities achieved in the work and rituals. Identity work is a process through which a collection of individuals engage, through actions and creations of rituals and initiatives, in forming a connection between their internal self-reflection as individuals and their "external" occupational identity as teams of police officers for whom the role of the collective is central in their identity construction. According to Jenkins (1996, p. 20): "Individual identity –

embodied in selfhood – is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. Individuals are unique and variable but selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed (…) in the ongoing process of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others throughout their lives."

If they can continue to see and feel the value and power of the team to which they belong, then they can see reasons to continue of being a cop. If they can touch the emotional density of being together in risky and difficult moments, then the extreme work environment in which they evolve is meaningful. If they can see that their symbolic and practical achievements are shared by other colleagues (such as language, hygiene, codes, or myths), then the group has the strength to support the identity threat.

This suggests that collective struggles stemming from attacks by the new work ethos upon existing occupational practices and skills has to be analyzed in the context of a changing institution, and not exclusively with respect to inward self-reflections or outward discourses imposed on people. It exemplifies how people can actively come to terms with a changing work environment not only through direct resistance – such as refusing tasks or withdrawing from missions - but by creating strategies where their collective selves remain true to the initial reasons for their vocational choices.

This paper acknowledges that while individuals are partly shaped by the discourses around them - both managerial (i.e., performance) and public (i.e., police efficiency and connection to the work organization) - (Knights and Willmott, 1989), they are not passive vehicles of these discourses (Collinson, 2003). Their identities are located in tensions and contradictions existing between competing work ethos and defined through these "competing bases of identification" (Knights and McCabe, 2003, p. 1589). This is particularly salient in police work: The new occupational culture leaves officers feeling unable to prove themselves as good cops catching bad guys – an image that is central to both their masculinity and their

initial vocational impulse. The mechanisms I described allow them to reclaim their dignity, masculinity and aspirations.

Identity work as a relationship of power and resistance

Police officers' subjectivity is enmeshed in relations of power and resistance with a newly constructed system of control over their day-to-day practices. It is transformed within frameworks affording some discretion regarding the use of symbols and rituals they develop collectively, and the centrality of physical performance during work hours. Pockets of power and skills linked to the former work ethos are maintained by people who can subtly modify and shift certain meanings of their work (Brown and Lewis, 2011; Thomas and Davies, 2005). Police investigators are "reflexive appropriators" of the new work ethos in pursuit of valued work objectives (Brown and Lewis, 2011, p. 886). In this light, I see the police squad as a context of competing rationalities: work centered on technology-facilitated procedural action versus the physical autonomy that characterized traditional police work. Through the coping strategies used by police officers we see an interactive conflicting relationship where the intransigence of the new work ethos meets the resistance of occupational groups in a continuously manufactured "agonism" (Brown and Lewis, 2011, p. 886; Foucault, 1983).

I therefore tried to show that movement and symbols are at the nexus of a collective identity work through which the conflict with the police institution can be temporarily released. I also suggest that identity work is a resisting process that aims not necessarily to transform the power structures (Courpasson *et al.*, 2012), but to help working subcultures to weather the change. Previous research has shown identity work to be an important source of resistance against change (Meyer and Hammerschmidt, 2006). For instance, Marquis and Lounsbury (2007) show how professional identity significantly drives action, especially when autonomy is threatened. I try to show that to succeed in identity transformation or maintenance, it is

crucial to understand the everyday collective, ritualistic, symbolic as well as practical experiences at work and that the constructs elaborated by police officers at the team level are central to this achievement. The findings also suggest that physical activities such as sports or trainings may function as process and product of identity work (Aschcraft and Mumby, 2004). These acts, which reflect the image of police work frequently portrayed in the media, combine with symbolic and mythologized formations to construct a status shield and maintain an emotional and meaningful substance they perceive is extracted from work by their hierarchy new demands. Although this cannot protect them from what they view as emasculating and meaningless demands, it nevertheless allows them to maintain their identity to a degree (Tracy and Scott, 2006), thus pushing the boundaries of what is permissible (Scott, 1990: 200).

Conclusion

This paper has suggested how members of the two police squads are crafting specific strategies in order to compensate for new work demands that contradict their own occupational values. I described the emerging bureaucratic model of work based on sanitizing, scrutanizing and slowing down the working process, thus obliging police officers to function more as administrative clerks than fieldwork investigators. In response, squad members are devising non-confrontational and intra-group actions intended not to subvert the prevalent order, but to defend a subculture through activities that are outside the control of the hierarchy (or tolerated by it). This ethnography helps us to engage with the distinctive character of identity work as a form of micro mobilization at the collective level, while shedding light on the creation of specific strategies that serve as the fulcrum of a hidden subculture.

Identities need to be enacted, lived, performed, supported (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996) otherwise they may become meaningless, ridiculous, or frustrating. The belief in the existence of "bad guys" and the conception of their work as a heroic activity create cohesion in the team and commitment to the work. This collective commitment tends to collapse when the work activity decreases, particularly when these activities used to allow them to perform their preferred identities. When there are no more 'enemies' to fight, no more situations where they can prove their courage, I observed a loss of meaning in the work and a loss of identity at the professional and at the personal level. Danger is the cohesive element and part of the hero identity. When police investigators are dispossessed from their extreme work elements, they lose their motivation and engagement.. To absorb this changing work environment, identity work appears as very important to balance tensions and the coping mechanisms created gather team members and help to support the hardships at the collective level. Courage, loyalty, and the will to take initiatives can only happen in an environment where occupational members feel secured and confident in the legitimacy of their work, and where they can fulfill and satisfy their identity needs. The police are becoming schizophrenic, it is oscillating between a demand to become a bureaucratic judicial institution that is run as a business organization and a need for a less visible and more specialized operational police. The change in the nature of certain aspects of the work and the loss of traditional standards such as symbols and jargon tend to transform a work environment that used to allow autonomy, action, masculinity, and that was celebrated as such. This change may lead police investigators to feel estranged from their vocational occupation and consequently from their identity leading to a deep transformation of the conception of their occupation and of their collective self.

Findings suggest further exploration into the cultural dimension of appropriated activities, like those developed and used by police officers in their identity work. Such study is important because it can help us to understand how certain occupational groups develop a collective

identity that is based not only on social links, but on the actual expression of their job-related values. The examples of the unofficial charter, the internships, the sport training sessions, or the mythologized identity represent strategies that illustrate the politics of the interstices - areas of political activity in the cracks and fissures between public policy and official discourse about proper police work. These moves can be classified as "political" because they float below the official radar and cannot be controlled by the hierarchy, although they may seem on the surface to be all about fun and social bonding.

Admittedly, the police squads' strategies of subversion of the prevalent work ethos may seem like a marginal effort that is incommensurate with the power of the police institution to impose new rules. Perhaps their impact will not reach beyond a specific sub-unit and squad. Conversely, it might foretell of an emerging critique within the police body, enabling a kind of infrapolitical oppositional force relatively unbeknown to the representatives of the institution (Johnston, 2005).

The police body in its corporeal sense may also represent a dimension to investigate more in depth. As the collective draws the contours of the preferred identity of police investigators, the physical dimension of identity work reaches deep inside the police self and its relation to the other. This is the focus of the following paper.

Notes
1. Un mis en cause in French
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CNIL
3. Fieldnote from a conversation with a superintendent
4. Following a case of corruption in the County Directorate of the Judicial Police (CDJP) in 2011, the top management team was replaced and the new director changed the local

practices. He assigned all homicide cases in the county to his own directorate, leaving the homicide squad of the Regional Security department (which belongs to the Regional Directorate of the Public Safety) with no homicide cases to follow.

5. Name was changed for anonymity

CHAPTER 4 : FROM THE GYM TO THE STREETS: CORPOREAL IDENTITY WORK OF POLICE INVESTIGATORS

Introduction

Identity work is defined as a dynamic interaction between an individual and his or her social context (Snow and Anderson, 1989). It aims to achieve a balance between the "self" and the social roles that are relevant to individuals in a given social and organizational milieu (Kreiner et al., 2006; Patriotta and Spedale 2009). Previous research has depicted it as a maneuvering in relation to available discourses to revise or maintain self-narratives (Watson 2008). Other studies have portrayed it as a process used by individuals to create coherent narratives about who they are within constraining environments (Curchod, Patriotta & Neysen 2014) or when their identity is threatened (Petriglieri, 2011), or to compensate for the "taint" linked to their work (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1951). Although useful to understand how individuals mobilize discourses and ideational media in the face of workplace threats and tensions, usual modes of enquiring into identity work have expurgated the corporeal quality of occupational life.

Our contention is specifically that the body tends to be omitted from identity work research, which has focused almost exclusively on discursive elements while marginalizing corporeal ones. This obfuscates our understanding of certain occupations deemed to be tainted (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2008; Hugues, 1951; Tracy and Scott, 2006). In these occupations, corporeal elements are particularly central in the affirmation of identity (Tyler & Cohen, 2010). Therefore, we investigate how identity work can be manifested in and around the body, and more particularly how the use of the body at work affects the construction of police officers' occupational identity.

This study took place in the police headquarters of a big French city where we followed two investigative squads for eleven months between October 2012 and September 2013. We chose this setting for three reasons. First, the work of police investigators seems to be evolving toward more judicial and clerical tasks and away from work done in the streets. This creates "identity tensions" (Van Maanen, 1974) as work that was historically based on a vision of being "always on the move" and action-oriented[1] becomes more procedural. Second, we observed how this tension led police officers to focus on their bodies as an essential component of their identity work. Third, the analysis of the relationship between the bodies of police officers and those of others helps to grasp how police officers affirm and reclaim their preferred identity.

We make three essential contributions to the study of identity work. First, we show that the relationship existing between bodily practices and specific spaces (such as the gym or the street) permits an officer to produce a corporeal efficiency distinct from emerging alternative working practices. Second, we demonstrate the use of police officers' bodies in identity work, as it is strongly related to an ethic of police craft permitted by the control of confined spaces. Third, we complement a field of research that usually defines identities as fluid and malleable by showing how they can be crystallized through the creation of a corporeal capital glorifying selves and enhancing the masculinity of police identities. Overall, we show that police officers' identity work cannot be understood outside of the carnal situations in which they function.

The paper proceeds as follows: We begin with a literature review on the body's role in identity work. Next, we articulate our findings concerning the relationships that police officers have with their own bodies, the bodies of others, and the spaces in which they make use of their bodies. Finally, we discuss the findings in terms of a "carnal" perspective on identity work.

Theory

Identity work and the body

Identity work refers to the process through which human beings are "engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003, p.1165). It aims to achieve a balance between the "self" and the social roles that are relevant to individuals in a given social and organizational milieu (Kreiner et al., 2006; Patriotta and Spedale, 2009). Identity work is usually viewed as the process of developing "plausible understandings" of one's own self (Brown & Toyoki, 2013, p. 875).

Much identity work research focuses on "talk-in interactions" (Symon & Pritchard 2015) and how we articulate our identities (Ybema et al., 2009). Research mostly highlights how we develop our identities as we discuss our experiences and justify discursively our interpretations of what we live. The role of narratives in creating and justifying our identity plays a prominent role in this perspective (Beech and Sims, 2007; Brown, 2006; Somers, 1994; Watson 2009). These narratives help us to provide meaning and structure to our selves (Rhodes & Brown 2006). This frame also appears in studies on identity discourse (Hardy et al., 2005; Kornberger and Brown, 2007; Thomas and Linstead, 2002) and identity talk (McInnes and Corlett, 2012; Snow and Anderson, 1989; Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996; Van Maanen, 1978).

Identity work through talk and narratives is particularly relevant in an organizational context, where people are expected to justify their acts and explain why they value particular behaviors. It has thus been linked to important organizational outcomes such as motivation (Ellemers et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2010), ethical issues (Anand et al., 2004; Dick, 2005), identification with organizational culture (Ashforth et al., 2008; Heinsler et al., 1990),

decision-making and meaning of work (Cornelissen et al., 2014; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003), or institutional change (Creed et al., 2010; Leung et al., 2013).

Literature on identity work has therefore emphasized the ideational nature of such discussion and addressed the reflexively organized narratives developed by workers who negotiate multiple discourses (Fenwick, 2002, p. 708; Brown, 2006; Pratt, et al., 2006; Musson and Duberley, 2007; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). However, relatively little has been written about the physical and material work through which workers defend, assert, or construct their identities. Embodied aspects of identity work have been largely ignored in the literature (Bardon, Clegg & Josserand 2012; Creed, *et al*. 2010; Iedema 2007). With a few exceptions (Elsbach 2003; Glaeser, 1998; Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2009; Symon and Pritchard 2015; Tyler, 2006), research rarely highlights how material elements, including places, bodies, or technologies, can serve as the fulcrum of identity work in certain cultural and occupational contexts. For instance, if as Symon and Pritchard (2015: 256) suggest, "We are produced by our technologies as connected selves," it is also important to account for identities performed by our bodies, as they interact within specific spaces and places. More particularly, we aim in this paper to capture the meanings that people borrow from to construct and convey their experience of simultaneously being bodies and building a corporeal capital that help them to sustain a legitimate occupational identity.

We argue that it is all the more important to understand how this corporeal component relates to identity in occupations deemed to be "dirty" or "tainted" (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Bittner, 1970; Emerson and Pollner, 1976; Hugues, 1951). The social construction of "taint" may appear in one or more dimensions: social, moral or physical. In the case of police officers, work appears tainted at all levels (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2005), particularly in the relationship between the police officer and the use of coercive force involved in the contact with criminals (Brodeur, 2009).

Workers use various mechanisms to compensate for the hardship associated with their profession. Ashforth and Kreiner, (1999: 421-423) describe a few examples of these mechanisms, including *reframing* (defined as "transforming the meaning attached to a stigmatized occupation"); *recalibrating* ("adjusting the implicit standards that are invoked to assess the magnitude [how much] and/or valence [how good] of a given dirty work attribute"); and *refocusing*, where ("attention is shifted from the stigmatized features of the work to the non-stigmatized features") (). Workers may also use what Tracy and Scott (2006: 10) label *depersonalization*, a process consisting of "distancing themselves from clients" when the work involves contact with others' bodies. They cite the examples of healthcare workers using gloves when bathing clients (borrowed from Twigg [2000]) or strippers "maintaining vigilance about boundaries with clients" (as described in Maticka-Tyndale et al. [2000]).

To complement the research cited above, this study contends that police officers try to form an occupational self-image by using the body as an instrument of control (both internally and externally). Utilization of the body as a rational, highly skilled, and pure tool counterbalances the social, moral, and physical taint associated with their profession while also helping them to better cope with the hierarchical submission characteristic of a highly bureaucratic institution. Grassroots police officers, we argue, perceive their hierarchy to reduce them to "physical instruments" - or the armed wing that silently obeys orders in the field. They react to this perceived threat to their job image by invading the corporeal component of their occupation over which they retain control, transforming it into an attribute of pride and professionalism that is aligned with their perception of a "good cop". In addition, the boundary between the professional and the personal sphere is often blurred in this occupational context. For many of the investigators we followed, the term "police officer" refers not only to what they do, but what they *are.*

Furthermore, this corporeal dimension of identity work is revealed and performed in particular spaces in which police investigators are able to construct and display their preferred identity. These spaces foster the construction and maintenance of an identity (Glaeser, 1998; Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2006) that is threatened by the evolution of their bureaucratic work environment. This identity work is manifested in the building of a corporeal capital that is expressed through interactions with both fellow officers and "external" others.

A carnal sociology of identity work

To address these issues, we build on the "carnal sociology" developed by Wacquant in his ethnographic study of fighters (1995; 2000; 2005). This approach is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, it suggests that intimacy with hardship involving specific uses of the body is a powerful ingredient of the identity work of police officers confronted with pressure to adopt alternative work habits with a lighter physical toll, such as bureaucratic work (Jermier et al. 1997). Second, it helps to conceptualize policing as a sensual and "body-centered" occupation: Seeing police officers devote their energies to an occupation they regard as a purposeful bundle of "flesh and blood" activities captures how they fashion their self-worth in the face of threats to their preferred identity by increasingly bureaucratic job requirements.

In this perspective, Wacquant (1998: 333) stated that a body can be regarded as "an instrument of work that must be continually refitted for its designated purpose" so as to never become ineffectual and eventually worthless. We study the relationship between the body and identity work in the radically instrumentalist conception of the former as developed by police officers. This conception is congenial to their working practice because of its affinity with the conditions of the milieus in which they have to intervene. That is, an assertion of "plebeian masculinity" (Wacquant 1998: 333) and the perception of deviant behaviors (Van Maanen, 1974, 1977) of "bad guys" shape the space in which police officers operate. It is therefore no

surprise that they regard the body as a potent means of intimidation and serviceable hardware: it moves from a mere instrument, subordinated to a form of occupational efficacy, to an identity stake – valued not only in itself but because it expresses social recognition of the mark of what is a "good cop." We argue that such conflation of instrumentality, efficacy, and symbolic dimension of a code of ethics materialized by a fit body lies at the center of the analysis of identity work through corporeal activities.

In this light, identity work can appear as the fusion between the pragmatic dimension of the instrumental body and the symbolic dimension of a work ethic: it is done through a large array of activities and techniques (Berthelot 1983) that this paper shall describe. The identity work, based on corporeal maintenance, constructs an empowered self, willing and ready to fight or run and chase. Bodily training therefore becomes the bedrock of professionalism of the good cop, consisting of self-control and corporeal proficiency. We follow Wacquant's (1998: 346) contention that police officers' identity work is done "with and through [their] bodies, by attaching deeply felt, visceral … reactions of disgust or attraction, rejection or assent, sympathy or antipathy, to definite classes of events, actions and circumstances; by reshaping [their] inner sensual and emotive registers according to shared rules creating a sphere of recognition and therefore a collective existence." Identity work is analyzed in this paper as the process through which corporeal activities – as opposed to discursive ones – are accomplished in specific spaces that permit police officers to maintain a preferred vision of themselves and their preferred work milieus.

Method

An embedded and embodied ethnography

Our ethnographic work spanned from October 1, 2012 to August 30, 2013. We followed 39 police officers composing two squads dedicated to investigations. One squad, composed of 19 members (16 males and 3 females) was in charge of homicides and cases involving firearms.

The other squad, which wished to remain anonymous, was assigned the pseudonym "HUNT".

They are an operational and interventional squad which specializes in carjacking cases. This

squad included 18 men and 2 women. All homicide investigators were plain-clothed police

officers, while the HUNT squad issued a uniform and additional equipment for specific field

missions (its members may also appear in plain clothes as well). We observed the

investigators of the two squads during their daily activities, lunchtime breaks, and social

gatherings inside and outside police headquarters on an average of three days a week,

accounting for more than 1200 hours of observation.

During our first contacts with the members of the two squads, we had to take certain steps to

gain their trust. First, it was necessary to (re)assure them that we were neither journalists nor

spies in the hierarchy's pay. Second, since an average of 50 police officers commit suicide

every year in France, we had to assure members that we were not psychologists examining

psychosocial risks in the police force. Additionally, since racism, violence, and sexism within

the force are also recurrent themes of social investigation, the members wanted our assurance

that we were not sociologists. We also had to avoid the word "management" when

introducing ourselves, as this word was negatively associated with the hierarchy, which

evoked negative feelings among squad members. As Van Maanen (1978: 311) noted, "Access

is continually problematic for the field researcher. Entry into the police system is no

guarantee that one will be allowed to remain." We decided that the best way to be accepted

into this challenging work environment was to be as transparent as possible - both literally

and figuratively. For people whose work consisted of observing and investigating people's

lives, being observed and analyzed themselves could seem unbearable. Gender issues further

complicated our work, as one of the authors was a female observing an almost exclusively

male environment. However, this ultimately turned to our advantage as the subjects confided

in her more easily. Most officers came to trust us over time and seemed to behave naturally in

our presence.

We began our fieldwork with the idea of shadowing (Czarniawska-Jeorges, 2007) the actors in their daily practice, as the law could not allow us to participate in the work itself. However as we gained the trust of our informants, we became more engaged in what Lewis and Russell (2011) call *embedded* ethnography. Showing up for work alongside our informants three days a week, more than 10 hours per day over an eleven-month period allowed us to develop a co-presence characterized by independence and familiarity according to the study cited above. We therefore acquired some knowledge of the daily practices and work routines of police investigators. Although the law barred us from participating directly in police work, we were nevertheless able to assist in some specific tasks or activities. This is important for ethnographic observation of corporeal elements of work because as Stoller (2010) suggests, there is a need for ethnographers to be sensually and emotionally immersed in their focal setting because "comprehension demands the presence, not the absence, of the ethnographer (…) that ethnographers open themselves to others and absorb their worlds" (p. 23). An instance of this requirement can be found in the following:

"*I was sitting in the small office packed with the two desks of the investigators, where you could barely fit two more chairs (one for the suspect and one for the lawyer). I was sitting facing the suspect behind one desk. This time, the lawyer was not there. Once the investigator finished typing the interrogatory report on his computer, he sent it to the printing machine located in another office. As he left the room to get it, he asked me to 'keep an eye' on the suspect... I felt some anxiety... I was not prepared to take action if the suspect started to move. I heard that recently, some suspects have tried to jump out the window to escape. After a few similar occurrences, I got accustomed to this' task' and the fact that they had entrusted it to me*" (fieldnotes, December 2012).

The female author of this study was sometimes solicited to accompany one of the male

investigators during surveillance or tailing. The two posed as a couple to appear less threatening than a pair of men (the usual configuration for such operations since there was no female in the operational group apart from the captain of the squad). As one of the investigators explained after a recon mission:

"*It's really an asset to have a woman in the car with us. We drove by the guys and they barely looked at us whereas usually they spot us right away... I mean, two guys in a car that are not usual faces in the neighborhood... they detect us in two seconds... but with a female on board it's different... it's less suspect...*" (constable from the HUNT squad).

We attended interrogatories and field operations –sometimes wearing a bulletproof jacket - but we could not use audio recording devices or videotape. Our study material was derived from four sources: official documents (reports, internal memos, and various correspondences); field notes (we wrote about a hundred pages following the daily observations, sometimes delayed by the need to isolate ourselves from the squad); informal semi-structured interviews of all officers, conducted during quiet moments of surveillance or over lunch; and the richer, more intimate discussions that took place in cars, away from the hierarchy. Most of the verbatim material transcribed in this paper consists of recalled and reconstructed conversations between one researcher and the police officers (Effler 2010). At the earliest opportunity, we wrote in a small note book the sentences we found to be useful in illustrating the emerging themes. Although most of the officers readily engaged in informal discussions and sometimes even confided in us, it was neither easy nor natural for them to open up to someone "external" to the police organization.

Similarly, we sometimes felt uneasy in certain situations. Quite unexpectedly, one of the researchers felt disturbed by the sight of firearms and handcuffs. The use of firearms in movies had made them somehow banal, but seeing and using these objects in a real-life situation made the researcher suddenly conscious of the violence they represented. Until

firing her first bullets she had not been prepared for the metallic noise of the trigger, the struggle to correctly position the finger on it, the deafening sound as the bullet was expelled, or the smell of the powder. Only then did she experience the accelerated heartbeat, weakness in the legs and the sensation of heat traveling through her body. When she asked how they felt about these objects, the officers responded, *"I don't even notice my gun anymore; it's part of the routine."* Another one explained: *"I sometimes forget I wear my firearm and I go home with it!It feels weird at the beginning but then you get used to it."* She wondered how police officers could be comfortable with their firearms when they attended only three shooting sessions a year. Through the perception of this bodily experience, we engaged in a reflexive analysis that helped us to access a deeper understanding of our fieldwork.

A "tainted" setting

Many of the police officers we interviewed regarded their work as not only an occupation but an integral part of their being. They *embody* the profession in full and "in the flesh.. The "demanding" nature of their work (Kreiner et al, 2006) blurs the boundary between what they do and what they are. As with the priests in Kreiner's study, the professional and the personal spheres overlap. Police investigators' work consists of not only procedural work but also corporeal activities; the occupation requires regular physical engagement in situations that are potentially risky. In the officers' own words many things occur at the "gut level," making changes to their work routine difficult. They develop corporeal competences that become part of their identity. We analyzed these competences in order to reconcile their own vision of their occupation with the perception of "external" people often conceiving police work as "tainted" (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Bittner, 1970; Hughes, 1951). According to the Kreiner study cited above, "police officers often work in dangerous conditions (physical taint), work with criminals (social taint), and use coercive methods (moral taint)." However, the "taint" associated with police work is not all negative; some is ambiguous. There is a

general fascination with this occupation, as evidenced by the countless movies, TV shows, books, etc. (Brodeur, 2009) that portray police officers or policing agents as heroes. In analyzing society's attitudes toward police officers, Tyler (2011) describes simultaneous feelings of attraction and repulsion. They appeal to our intense moral passions and our desire for adventure to escape the monotony of life. On screen they are portrayed to fight, shoot, and survive improbable risky situations that most of us will never experience – images that provide a thrilling adrenaline rush. As for the officers themselves, not a single one that we observed felt his or her work to be tainted. On the contrary, they considered it as a vocation and a noble cause.

Data analysis

As the ethnography advanced, we began to notice recurrent themes throughout our discussions with the investigators as well as our direct observations of their work.

A major theme that rapidly emerged was the tension between the work in which the officers were actually engaging (or asked to engage) and their own conception of what they were supposed to do as "good cops" belonging to the homicide and intervention squads. We observed considerable frustration and anger concerning the nature of the work they were asked to perform as well as concerns regarding the evolution of the work.

Following this observation, we wondered how police investigators drew their motivation since their actual work no longer corresponded with their desired work. We tried to understand the difficulties they had in adapting to the new expectations and the increasingly judicial dimension of their work. Following Wolff's (1976: 22-23) advice, we tried to "surrender" to our field to grasp a deeper and subtler understanding of our informants' behaviors and values. For Wolff it implies a "Total involvement in surrender as in love itself [...]. In surrender as in love, differentiation between subject, act, and object disappears". It involves the "suspension of received notions", that is to say nothing is stable anymore in what

we think we know; we have to free ourselves from our cognitive frame, thus everything becomes "pertinent". We have to allow "identification" to overwhelm us and be ready to take the "risk of being hurt" (pp 22-23).

We aimed to understand what was important to grassroots police investigators in their work, what they felt to be their space of discretion, and how they were able to find interstices to practice and maintain their preferred identity.

Analysis focused on two dimensions: observations of the officers' at work (team activities, interactions with each other, etc.) and our own emotional interaction with the field. As described above, one of the researchers realized that the corporeal elements of identity were perceptible through her own bodily reactions to certain situations. Indeed, following the observation of our own condition in "surrendering," we started to reflect on the physical dimension of the ethnographic experience. By the end of the day on the field we felt physically and emotionally exhausted, leading us to consider analyzing corporeal elements as a central dimension of police work. The body of the police officer also appeared as a key theme when we realized the value our informants placed on fitness. We also reflected upon our own physical sensations in certain situations, hoping to gain insight into the bodily relationship between the officer and the "other." Finally, we focused particular attention on what happened in certain spaces where bodies were intensely solicited (e.g., the gym, cars, offices, etc.). A deeper analysis revealed the corporeal nature of the work and its entanglement in the identity work process engaged by police investigators.

Based on these first observations and conversations, some themes related to identity and corporeality had emerged. Field notes were analyzed with those themes in mind, and they were considered throughout our new field observations. After almost a year, we had gathered rich materials and thick descriptions of the phenomenon we investigated: the corporeal nature of the work done by police investigators. Since no two days are the same in this occupation, it

appeared difficult to evaluate whether we had arrived to a state of data saturation. However, we decided that we had enough robust material when new elements no longer emerged from the field. Results were refined to produce a coherent construct that reliably interpreted what we had observed in the field. In zooming out from our data in a last step, we identified some particular confined spaces that the investigators re-appropriated to foster their preferred identity manifested through the corporeal practices of what they considered to be a "good cop."

We organized the results in three intertwined parts. First, we focus on the body of the investigator, how it is used and what it represents in this occupational context. Second, we address how the relationship between the bodies of the investigator and of the "other" reveals this corporeal identity work. Finally, the two preceding constructs are linked to demonstrate how these relationships are staged in particular spaces (i.e., the gym, the office and the street).

Findings

Our observations led us to investigate the body as a mediator of the identity work performed by police investigators to re-appropriate to themselves the vision and associated competences of what it means to be a "good cop." We develop first the idea that the body of the police officer is a tool in the work context (Van Maanen, 1974), similarly described by Kondo (2009) as an artifact in the crafting of identity. The identity work resides in the mastering and maintaining of competences. Then, we argue that the body of the other (i.e., any person who is not a police officer) is an object of distancing; it becomes a subject of knowledge and control as a competence that frames their occupational identity buffeted by institutional changes. Then, the identity work done over the body is fostered in particular identity workspaces (Pietriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010).

The corporeal nature of work

The body as an efficient tool

Far from the stereotypical image of the fat policeman eating donuts or hiding a whisky bottle in his or her drawer, the members of the two squads we followed placed a high value on physical fitness. Although they occasionally shared convivial moments over a beer or fine wine on special personal occasions or to celebrate a resolved case, the only beverages to circulate in the offices were coffee, water, and protein shakes. Indeed, for some squads more concerned with operational work and physical contact with suspects, the performance of the body has become a central focus and an integral part of their (squad's) identity. Almost to a person, the members of the observed squads spent their daily two-hour lunch break practicing sports. Some were professional athletes who competed in national sports events. Several members of the HUNT squad had an extensive mastery in fighting sports. They maintained these competences outside of the police work environment, which had no internal structures for doing so.

"*The first day I was in the field, I found myself in deserted halls at noon. Minutes before, all the investigators were busy working and running from one office to the other. All of a sudden, they were all riding their bikes or putting on their running shoes and were gone in an instant. The offices went back to life two hours later. After two days of lonely lunches, I thought I was missing something important related to my field observations. The next day I brought my sport equipment and went with them to practice*" (fieldnotes, July 2012).

The preponderance of the body in the work of police investigators is also reinforced by the internal training seminars and internships they develop to maintain mastery of official protocols as well as informal practices. The uncertainty and unexpected situations they may face at work require the repetition and acquisition of corporeal automatisms that will help police officers to react more quickly and appropriately. The consequences of a wrong move – or inability to make the proper one - may be dreadful.

"*After police academy, regular police officers don't get much training, particularly in developing their operational competences. Our squad allows us to have instructors, therefore we train regularly. But we don't like to intervene with colleagues of some other squads because they don't know what to do in the field… and it's dangerous for us*" (senior police officer).

Another example of corporeal prevalence is the shooting. Police officers are required to attend shooting sessions three times a year, firing 30 bullets at paper targets. However, HUNT squad members attend specific shooting sessions every week to enhance their operational competence (as well as performance, since some of the investigators participate in internships qualifying them as sharpshooters).

The importance of corporeal fitness is also evident in the HUNT squad's recruitment process.. The only squad in the directorate to recruit its own members, they plan and administer the tests over several days when new members are needed. Committed to sustaining an image of an elite work force (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), they select applicants with such characteristics as superior training, strength, speed, etc. who share the squad's values. Over a period of three full days, applicants are tested on a range of capabilities including physical (e.g., speed, boxing, etc.), technical (e.g., tailing, shooting, handling of violent suspect, etc.), and psychological (e.g., functioning under stress, group behavior, etc.). Upon the conclusion of testing, as an ultimate and cohesive test of courage, all the candidates go through a wall of tear gas along with some squad members. All applications are then reviewed and discussed by the chief of the squad, the captain, the two instructors and the group leaders. The selected candidates may then join the squad as needed.

The value of a member is often measured through his or her capacity to endure physical ordeals. Actually until very recently, the entire French police force required that certain physical criteria be met, such as a minimum height. Challenging physical tests were

administered to eliminate unfit or overweight candidates. Since 2010, these criteria have been removed and physical tests relaxed. Police instructors deplore this tendency, believing it will attract new recruits capable only of doing "paperwork" and not able to "run after suspects in the streets and arrest them." One experienced investigator who also works as an instructor noted:

"When I joined the police force, we were required to climb up a rope and down. It used to eliminate people that did not have the right physical condition! Now they suppressed this test and eased the other physical tests so that anyone who can put a foot in front of the other can pass them".

In the basement of the police headquarters, HUNT squad investigators develop their physical strength by lifting huge tractor tires that they use as a fitness instrument. They practice this activity to prepare for handling heavy bodies if necessary and remaining mobile while wearing a heavily reinforced bulletproof jacket. The regular intervention equipment may weigh up to 30 kilos[2] and members must remain quick and alert despite their load in order to "neutralize" suspects. They might have to climb several flights of stairs, as they do not use elevators when preparing for an intervention mission. Some wear additional shotguns and one carries the metallic ram of 35 kilos on his back. They may also have to carry a colleague in case of injury or danger.

Physical stamina

Physical endurance is also tested in everyday missions. This may involve such scenarios as hours of surveillance in an unmarked car with no air conditioner on a hot summer day or no heat during winter (the car's engine must be stopped to remain concealed). They may have to stay inside the vehicle with tinted glass windows, unable to use the toilet or get a drink. A senior investigator recalls, grinning:

"I remember once we were stuck in the car because the guys were close by and we could not leave without being detected, so we remained inside this damned car all day, under the sun in the middle of summer. We ended up in underwear, soaked and dehydrated… but you have to be ready to endure this kind of situation if you want to do this job correctly."

Biological rhythms are also put to the test when activities require going out into the streets often. Fieldwork is a demanding activity, requiring availability at any time of day or night. Officers are required to work outside of normal hours and to remain quiet for hours in difficult conditions, as described above. The following example describes a HUNT squad intervention during a routine mission:

"Some members of the HUNT squad awoke at 3am to put a tracking device under a suspect's car, then went on another mission. At 5am, they met at the headquarter to get equipped for an arrest at 6am. It was still dark when they arrived at their destined apartment, where they were informed by the suspect's mother that her son/daughter was not there and gave an alternate address. They went to that address, but the suspect was not there either. Someone at that address gave yet another. The day was breaking and it was pouring. They drove fast with low visibility in the rain. The address was in a notorious suburb with a bad reputation. By this time it was daylight; police officers were not comfortable intervening while people were awake and walking around. It could degenerate into a confrontation. The door was broken under the amazed look of construction workers already working on the decrepit facade of the building. The suspect was still not there. The squad returned to the headquarter, worn out by the work, the heavy reinforced equipment they'd been wearing for 4 hours, and the feeling of being useless. It was 9am and some of them had already worked for 6 hours. Their work day would not end until 6pm. Some would be able to take the following morning off, barring any emergencies. However, there were not enough investigators in the squad to afford that luxury to all of them" (fieldnotes, April, 2013).

According to the criminal activity and the availability of the magistrates, these early morning interventions may happen once, twice, or three times a week. Most of the investigators we observed did not complain about the intensity of their work; on the contrary, they felt honored to be ready for action whenever their colleagues needed assistance. They regarded such reactivity, availability, and commitment as constituting "real police work," thus distinguishing them from other police officers who "remain in the offices only doing paperwork."

"There are 3 categories of policemen. First there's the civil servant, with a low level of job involvement, who wants to do office work and that's all. Then we have the police officer: someone more committed to the job but still not ready to sacrifice their lunch break or allow the job to impede on their personal life. Investigators of some squads fall into this category. Finally you have the cop: the one that is involved in his job 24/7, does overtime, and is always ready for action. Unfortunately we are now recruiting more and more of the first category" (senior constable HUNT squad).

Body and soul: Being courageous, being impressive

Police officers regard physical performance and strength as an indicator of mental fortitude, and inseparable from such. A "good cop" is expected to endure extreme hardships, both physically and emotionally. Courage is a *sine qua non* value in the identity of a good cop. It is composed of three features: "a morally worthy goal, intentional action, and perceived risks, threats or obstacles" (Koerner, 2014). Courage is revealed in the actions taken by police investigators in the field while their physical and mental integrity are placed at risk.

For instance, preliminary findings in a homicide case must be conducted by squad investigators who sometimes work under extremely challenging conditions. They attend autopsies; they work around rotten corpses; and when the findings are done outside, they may

have to work in freezing cold temperatures or rain. A senior investigator of the homicide squad recalls a particularly difficult moment:

"More than 10 years ago, we were called to a crime scene by firefighters who had been called by neighbors. When we arrived, firefighters were standing in front of the entrance door. They told us there were four corpses inside, a whole family with two children, probably dead for two weeks. They told us that they refused to go in because of the smell and the horrible vision of these rotten bodies. They aren't required to go in, since there's no active emergency, but for us it's different. We have to go - no choice. We have to get the information, take pictures, look for evidence, and be around this unbearable vision and smell. Nobody but us can collect evidence and make preliminary findings. Later in the evening, I showered several times and washed my clothes at least three times. The smell of death is very persistent, I could still smell it on me after a week."

This physical resistance was also evident in the officers' posture. Most of the investigators we observed appeared assertive and self-confident. All gave an impression of control. Police officers talk about a "training that becomes natural after some time." This refers to the way they learn to look at things and people, focused on every detail. As one officer stated, *"Even when we don't wear uniforms, thugs recognize us in the streets because of the way we look at them - straight in the eyes. We don't look down as other people do."* Specifically, this meant that "other people" may feel some fear, but they did not. The potential physical control they can project onto the suspects by showing their readiness to engage in a physical response or "attack" (Van Maanen, 1978) is sometimes enough to dissuade aggressive behavior. According to some, *"the guys aren't afraid of the penal response for beating up a cop, but they pee in their pants when we go after them"* (senior investigator).

Such assertive positioning mainly works for male police officers. For female officers, the body may become a "liability" that is best "used" differently. During missions in which

physical altercations are likely, female police officers are not positioned up front. According to their male colleagues, this is not due to doubts about a woman's ability to control a suspect but rather to the likely reactions of the suspects themselves when they realize they are facing a female. An experienced HUNT member explains:

"Those policemen physically able to control the suspect right away are the ones we usually put up front. We avoid putting skinny colleagues or female colleagues in those positions not because they lack the necessary physical strength, but because a suspect – whether male or female – would be more inclined to rebel upon seeing a short skinny guy or, even more so, a woman. Many of our "clients" would find it simply unbearable to submit to a woman, so we put the big guys up front to avoid problems."

A female police officer recalls: *"It is sometimes very obvious when you interrogate a suspect that the fact that you're a woman is disturbing or upsetting them. They sometimes ignore you and only address male police officers."* Another one adds: *"Being a female can be used to our advantage in certain ways. For instance, we can play a sort of "seducing" or "smooth" act with the suspects to make him feel comfortable enough to open up to us. It's a different but complementary technique that our physically impressive colleagues can't do!"*

Their bodily performance, courage, and ability to master field operations in the streets comprise a professional self-concept for police investigators as professionals with extra-ordinary capacities, as well as equalizers who use their body as a weapon to balance the violence that has been done to innocents. This fantasized image –which is part of the social collective memory- appears as a strong driver of intrinsic motivation and identification of what is "a good cop." This image is today challenged by the increasing weight of the procedural system, which obliges police investigators to rethink their identity away from their preferred vision of action-oriented fieldworkers. However, the body of the police officer is not the only signifier of identity: the body of the "other" also plays a role.

Identity work through and by the body of the other

First of all, in investigations the body of the *other* is an object of work. The identity of the "good cop" is manifested not only in the way he or she builds knowledge and control over this body, but also in the construction of distance with this body and assignment of negative features to the body of the criminal to build an identity in opposition.

Body of evidence: object of investigation

To know detailed and specific information and to have a keen understanding of human beings are part of the work of investigators. When a suspect is arrested, he or she undergoes a full identification process in which personal physical data are taken and recorded. These include such features as fingerprints, height, weight, color of eyes, skin, hair, ethnicity, gender, DNA, scar or other visible features such as tattoos or malformations but also more surprising characteristics such as ear prints and body odor. Body odor is an element that cannot be falsified. Although not yet recognized as evidence in a court of law, it is nevertheless used by police officers to orient their investigations and help narrow down their list of suspects.

Police investigators take great care to remember the exact names and faces of suspects or their network, as this information may be useful in other cases involving different people. The more the officers can recall, the better and faster they will be able to make connections between suspects in various cases. Knowing the moves, habits, relationships, and intimate details of suspects' lives gives them an advantage over such individuals, especially in uncertain or risky situations. Further, we observed that many investigators also developed a subtle competence in the "reading" of people and behaviors. But the body of the suspect is not the only source of work material for the investigators: the body of the victims is also an element of investigation.

The homicide squad has a particular relationship with the victim's body which, along with other materials and evidence, constitutes the story of the facts that occurred. This material is

"tainted" in the sense of relating to death; it is also a source of great pressure and responsibility. One investigator explains that "outside" may be a source of stress for some police officers *who don't want the responsibility of conducting the preliminary judicial findings*" and prefer to stay "inside" in the offices and not join the homicide squad. As a senior homicide investigator explained:

"*You have to learn to put a distance between you and the people and material you work around. You have to remain focused on what you're asked to do: gather the concrete evidence and formalize it in the judicial reports.*"

Another squad that handles tainted material is the one dedicated to cases of rape, incest, pedophilia, and intra-family violence. Objects in these cases are intimate and sexual in nature. This squad has been regarded as "special" by many police investigators we observed. With a specific configuration of rooms, it is located in another police station spatially apart from the department's other squads. The identity of this squad is closely linked to the nature of the material they deal with. Its members appear to possess a strong solidarity, and turnover rate is quite low. Surprising as it may seem at first, sexual humor is common among squad members. This coping mechanism helps to strengthen bonds among them while distancing themselves from the sordid and unbearable situations they face. This act of distanciation, or opposition, represents another important role played by the body of the "other" in shaping police officers' identities.

The bad-guy catcher

"Catching the bad guys" is given by police officers almost unanimously as one of the first recurrent motives to join the force. To fulfill this urge, they construct a binary world of "us against them" (Van Maanen, 1978). As Dick (2005: pp) explains, "To protect and defend the moral and ideological boundaries of the profession requires in-group affirmation and both spatial and moral distanciation from out-groups, who pose a potential threat to this identity."

Following these studies, we propose that police investigators construct their identity in terms of not only 'We are different from them,' but 'We are contrary to them.' Investigators then attribute some corporeal attributes to the "bad guys" with whom they interact daily, and construct an identity for themselves opposed to these features that they consider degrading or socially undesirable. For instance, the police officers we observed attend meticulously to their surroundings and personal hygiene: they wash their hands and shower sometimes several times a day, clean the common space and wash the dishes after each meal, dust and tidy their offices, etc. They often discuss how they decorate or fix their home on weekends. By contrast, when we followed them into the homes of suspects, they often commented on the state of cleanliness:

"Some houses are clean and nicely arranged, but most are filthy and smell bad. There is stuff everywhere, dishes all over the kitchen, toilets stink, and I haven't even started on physical hygiene."

"It did happen a couple times like in the movies. As I entered an apartment, I felt crunchy stuff beneath my feet. When I reached the sofa I noticed the body, covered in cockroaches. I thought she was dead, but as I shook her she started to move. It was disgusting."

"We have to be careful. We use gloves when we intervene in certain places and we disinfect our offices regularly. We avoid sitting on the same seats as our suspects and thank God we have separate toilets. You never know, some have contagious diseases. In fact, some of us have gotten infected by tuberculosis, scabies…"

Because of the exposure to frequently unhealthy conditions, police officers hold themselves to a high standard of bodily purity. Some exhibit extreme behaviors toward this end, such as constant hand-washing (not in a professional manner like medical staff, but in a relationship with their body in an attempt to keep it pure and clean). As North (2008) explains while reviewing Virginia Smith's (2007) book, "[Cleanliness] has an aesthetic foundation in the

human love of order and beauty and the exercise of such on the body; and it has a moral dimension in perceptions of purity, that of the body in harmony with the soul."

The body of the other is somehow dispossessed from a part of his/her humanity, helping to smooth the other feature around which most theories on the police are built: the use of coercive force.

Power relations and corporeal subjugation.

In certain circumstances, the body of the other may be viewed as an object to subdue. The culminating point in the tension occurs when police investigators arrest suspects, thereby depriving them of their freedom. While it may happen occasionally, the majority of people suspected of violent crimes do not surrender willingly. To prevent suspects from running away or committing fresh acts of violence, police officers resort to surprise tactics (such as kicking down a suspect's door at 6am) to gain control quickly and make the arrest. After a few morning interventions, the researchers asked about what seemed to be a ritual: shouting upon entry and making rough physical contact (labeled by some as the "administrative slap"). An experienced investigator explained: *"If the guy feels surprise, fear, and pain, he will submit right away. We take no risks: we can't afford to leave room to rebel. We don't really hurt them; it's just to disturb them so they don't think about escaping."*

The following scenario illustrates one such example of warding off potential aggressive behavior before it occurs. Here, the power relation between police investigators and potential suspects, although not yet acted upon, demonstrates the thin edge of critical situations that could evolve into either submission or physical confrontation:

"We left to search for a house inhabited by gypsies after several shots were reported to the police. When we arrived there were around 10 people in the house - men, women, and children. After some time, one of the young men started saying unpleasant words to police officers. He was quickly and firmly told off. Actually, he had been under the constant and

pressing scrutiny of two police investigators during our entire time in the house; they had quickly determined this person would look for trouble. It appeared as if this constant "surveillance" had restrained him from acting aggressively, as he perhaps felt a physical response could immediately follow. In fact, we had observed such "testing of the limits" on several occasions (the limit being the point at which the officers would respond physically). Witnessing this tension always made us uncomfortable, as if the intimidation tactics were directed against us. The power struggle was really palpable" (fieldnotes, May 2013).

In this study, the body of the "other" is also the body of the researcher. As researchers coming to observe police investigators' work, we initially anticipated that we would be external actors, shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007) policemen and coldly analyzing the scenes that would unfold in front of us. However, because there were no distinguishing features between us and the police investigators (such as a uniform, visitor's badge, etc.), external people (including victims, criminals, lawyers, etc.) often confused us with them. This helped us to experience, in real terms, the relations between the officers and their environment. Particularly surprising were the seemingly perverse effects of the former on the latter, which sometimes were the exact opposite of what we expected. For instance, it felt quite strange to wear a bulletproof jacket during intervention missions. While helping one of the researchers put on her jacket, a police officer warned: *"You have to wear this for security reasons, but you must also be aware that it makes you a target for criminals."*

Another situation that made one of the researchers uneasy was when handcuffed suspects would walk in the halls and offices, staring at her and everyone they encountered. . It felt as if they were scrutinizing the faces to commit them to memory, so that if they came across them later they could immediately identify them as police officers and possibly sabotage future missions or endanger the officers physically.

During morning interventions, members of the HUNT squad wear masks to conceal their face. This was done not only for intimidation purposes but for safety as well in order to remain anonymous to the suspects and others who might witness the intervention. Despite their high profile among fellow officers, police investigators doing field work (such as tailing and surveillance) must be as invisible and hard to identify as possible. In other words, the body must "disappear" from the sight of others, able to reappear at a moment's notice. Many HUNT squad investigators therefore refused to appear in pictures we took during our fieldwork.

Our last section reveals how the corporeal identity work of police investigators is enabled by the existence of particular spaces. They appropriate these spaces to themselves and shape activities to reinforce their preferred identity, in accordance with their conception of a "good cop."

Body and identity spaces

The corporeal efficiency of police officers relates to the use of bodies in specific spaces. We use the term "space" in its physical dimension, to support our argument on the corporeal element in identity work. We identified places where the identity material of the use of the body is revealed (Tyler, 2011).

The gym

The gym is a space that fosters a collective dimension in the officers' conception of a "good cop," as they all gather there for the same reason. This space allows the construction of a system of shared images of what it means to be a "good cop." It also functions as a place where police officers develop their bodies and compare their performance in weightlifting. As explained above, the maintenance of physical ability is an important part of the identity work of police officers. Sports are a central topic in everyday conversations. Investigators of the

HUNT squad even appropriated a space in their office area and transformed it into a workout room where they bring their own sports equipment.

Several police headquarters provide a sport facility close to the building, but that was not the case for the one in which we conducted our study. Thus, some officers created an association run by and for police officers (although persons external to the police may opt to join). This organization then rented a space and transformed it into a fitness room. Officers wishing to use this facility pay a yearly fee and can work out during their free time. Sport activities are usually practiced during the two-hour lunch break. Most investigators have organized their workday around this two-hour break, and for some it has become the major topic of discussion. Activities include both individual and team sports. Some investigators are in fact athletes who train regularly.

"It's been three days since I have gone for a run because of work… I feel physically bad and I'm going crazy because of the lack of physical activity!" (officer HUNT squad_)

Since the institution does not provide equipment or facilities, officers must negotiate with the city hall to access some facilities such as a gymnasium or football fields.

The gym is a space where personal and occupational identities overlap. Also, in the common rooms of the squads, trophies and medals recall victories and notable performances during police tournaments as well as outside sporting events attended by several members of various squads.

Another benefit of sports practice for members of the observed squads is that it helps to support the competitive, aggressive and masculine dimension that remains an important integrative component of the identity of police officers. The physical challenge affords them a sense of extreme accomplishment and satisfaction that is becoming increasingly rare in police work itself.

Corporeal activities accomplished in spaces devoted to sport and drills do not aim to generate "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977) as in the military (Godfrey et al., 2012). Instead, officers use the physical discipline and performance to escape the constraints imposed by their institution. In other words, the gym and training sessions are not spaces for nurturing compliance with the institutional expectations, but rather freedom and defense of identity.

"If we teach only what is written in the official books, nobody will learn to neutralize a suspect in real-life conditions. The institution teaches these gestures in order to legally cover their ass in case of problems, but they aren't efficient. We therefore present the official techniques and practice them a few times, then we show our colleagues other techniques that we consider more useful and appropriate under realistic conditions" (senior instructor).

"Don't get pissed off by the senseless orders; you'll be paid the same at the end of the month. Just obey and focus on what you enjoy doing. We'll go for a practice run at noon" (constable, HUNT squad).

The investigators and instructors we observed nostalgically conceded that the work they are increasingly asked to perform no longer requires the level of fitness and training that they possess. However, they still value the special opportunities to display their physical skills and thus concretely demonstrate their collective conception of a "good cop."

The office

Interrogatories represent a moment where the relationship of power favors the investigator over the suspect.. Although the work performed in this setting is primarily psychological in nature, there is a salient corporeal dimension that supports this work. It is revealed in the physical configuration of the office space – or more accurately, the absence of such.

The offices where we conducted our observations consisted of small and confined spaces, packed with desks and papers concerning current cases. There was no resemblance to the wide, empty interrogatory rooms depicted in the movies. Many of these rooms contained

adequate space for only four chairs – two for investigators, one for the lawyer, and one for the suspect who was usually handcuffed on one side to a ring in the wall (or to the chair itself when no ring was present). Many times when one of the researchers assisted with the interrogatories, one of the investigators would offer to stand and leave the seat to the researcher.

During the interrogatories, investigators could be cold as ice or aggressive. They could scream, use slang, bang their fists on the table figuratively and literally, etc. Although it was prohibited by law some smoked cigarettes, perhaps to demonstrate to the suspect that they controlled the space. While we witnessed no physical contact during these events, the various tactics employed by the investigators combined with the close proximity in the room created a tension that was palpable. The emotional state of the room's occupants was apparent in every little movement. Suspects often appeared to grow nervous, restless, or defensive. Some sunk into their seat as the interrogatory progressed.

"*Elvin, a large and experienced investigator, began interrogating a suspect whose flight by car had caused the accidental death of a police agent. As Elvin opened the window slightly and lit a cigarette, smoke quickly invaded the confined space of the small office. He bent towards the suspect and looked at the man already prostrated in his seat, as if the weight of his actions were crushing him. Elvin said in an authoritative tone: "Ok, we start the interrogatory now and you'd better not bullshit me. If you bullshit me, I'm going to be angry and it won't go well for you*" (Fieldnotes, November 2014).

The street

In police missions, there is an exclusive moment that belongs to intervention squads such as the HUNT squad. This moment is framed by a rule: Once the intervention group has kicked the door, nobody enters the place before the door is secured and the group leader gives the authorization to come in, whatever the rank of the police officers waiting outside:

"Whatever happens inside during this moment belongs to the intervention group. Nobody gets in without our green light" (senior operational investigator, HUNT squad).

During preparation, group leaders and members decide who does what, with whom, and where. Once the metallic sounds of the ram on the door have announced that the intervention has begun, time seems suspended for those standing outside. They can only imagine the progression of the group and try to make sense of the sounds and voices heard. Group members take physical possession of the space and gain control over people inside. The suspect is always separated from other occupants. The thrill of the intervention and the satisfaction of arresting a suspect (a challenging task, as suspects are often not found at the expected location) remain the favorite moments of police investigators' work.

Researcher: "What do you prefer to do in your work?"
Investigator 1: "To get the guys at 6am!"
Investigator 2: "I like both procedural and field work, but I have to say that I largely prefer the adrenaline rush of getting the guys at 6am."
Investigator 3: "When we go after the guys to get them is when we feel the excitement!"
Contrary to Tracy and Scott's (2006) firefighters who preferred "being seen riding on the fire truck," police investigators derive most gratification from actions that happen outside the public gaze, such as kicking doors at 6am, setting up traps for suspects, or extracting a confession during an interrogatory. Therefore, these spaces are important to police officers in the construction and maintenance of their vision of a "good cop." These are the places where their own bodies are put to the test as well as the bodies of others. It is here that body-centered identity work produces a system of minimum criteria, or rites of passage to reach the category of "good cop."

Thornborrow and Brown (2009) wrote of aspiring paratroopers who begin to identify as actual paratroopers after confronting real-world situations In the same way, physical tests during moments of intervention or interrogation might also be interpreted as a rite of passage to join the "tough ones." Working in the streets constitutes another such rite. It is the corporeal experience of the field – comprised of fears, doubts, physical wounds, lessons

learned, and cohesive effect - that builds the "good cop" identity. Police officers who have not experienced the streets in rough neighborhoods do not garner the same respect as those who have; frequently they are not considered "real cops." In France, commanding officers such as lieutenants, captains and superintendents do not start as simple constable or patrol officer. Anybody with a graduate degree can take a competitive exam and enter the police force immediately as a commanding officer. Even without early field experience, they can gain respect by demonstrating strong will and courage in the field and leadership qualities within his or her squad.

"When the Captain arrived, we didn't know what to expect because she came from a department whose investigative work was mostly clerical.. But she demonstrated a strong will, fought to get us cases, and engaged in the field with us. We all respect her for that" (senior investigator, HUNT squad).

Street contacts and intervention missions appeared to be the main motivating factor for most of the investigators we followed. The increased time spent in offices doing paperwork negatively affects the motivation and commitment level of the investigators to the point that some no longer see any value in their work. Furthermore, after an internal note circulated constraining the use of the tracking device, most of the HUNT squad's activities were called into question. The tense days following that announcement featured many concerned discussions about the future of the squad, whose work depends largely on that device. A senior investigator specializing in field operations said: *"I don't know why I come to work anymore. I don't know what is expected from me now."* Another investigator complained: *"I've been in the office for the last month, doing paperwork. I haven't gone out, I'm stuck to my seat. I'm going crazy."*

The chief of the squad also explains that since he took on managerial responsibilities, he spends less time in the field which has changed his view of the occupation. He recalls: *"In the*

beginning, I was more engaged in the field and I felt that "police officer" constituted my identity. Since I've taken on more managerial responsibility over the last three years, I feel more distant. I see it as an occupation; it is what I do and no longer what I am." The above statements typified the emerging tensions that we witnessed between the chief and the squad members over conflicting conceptions of work.

Discussion

This section returns to the questions outlined at the outset – questions that, we argued, had remained relatively neglected within identity work research. Specifically: How can we restore the body's role in the study of identity work? How does the body at work affect the construction of police occupational identity and their identity work? Reflecting on their experience and their feelings about the changing nature of their work, police officers outlined some of the ways in which corporeal practices are central to their identity, and how these practices are achieved and lived within spaces that they appropriate.

Practices such as recruitment into the squad, shooting, and bodily performance at the gym underscore some components of a "corporeal intelligence that tacitly guides social agents in their familiar [occupational] universe "(Wacquant 2005: 465). Data show a corporeal entanglement with a set of forces pregnant with silent struggles between bodies and confined spaces like the car, resulting in invisible physical pressures (intimidating interactions with arrested people in the offices). The work of police officers looks like an incarnate, sensuous situated accumulation of specific moments during which bodies serve as the fulcrum of their action and their selves. Another example of this process is the extreme synchronization of the bodies in the space of the early-morning intervention site, as well as other spaces such as the gym or the pressing ambiance of increasing temperature in offices and cars when arrested people are watched or brought inside and start to play the game of physical intimidation. We see a combination of elements that produce what Wacquant calls a "sensuous intoxication"

that is key to understanding identities in occupational structures characterized by the adequate fitness of bodies (Eliasoph 2005; Godfrey et al. 2012). To understand the identity work of police officers, we must therefore "enter" their bodies as they act through and with them. Understanding identity work as a way to construct meaning (Brown & Toyoki 2013), we propose that these practices are central as they materialize in real bodies.

Moreover, the everyday interactions involving police officers' bodies cannot be understood outside of the material lived contexts in which they unfold: e.g., cars, offices, gym, streets. It is impossible for police officers to coordinate their action in disembodied ways; the social situations in which they function are necessarily incarnated. Policing is an occupational experience of corporeal self-production (Wacquant 2001: 188). The police officer uses his or her own body as the raw material as well as a tool to refashion that very body in accordance with the peculiar requirements of the job. He or she engages in specialized body work aimed at producing a specific type of corporeal capital that constitutes a good cop, apt to face the physical threats associated with the job. Through physical workouts, the police officer transforms his body, appropriates his capacities and produces a new embodied being. The spaces give him a stage on which to prove and affirm his valor and construct a self that allows him to compensate for the tainted reputation of his work (Tracy & Scott 2006). Additionally, the skills that police officers acquire in the course of their occupational activities are inscribed in their organism (e.g., being a skilled sniper, a strong fighter, an astute car driver, etc.) and thus constitute not only part of their identity, but their valuable resources to cope with alternative occupational requirements.

In that instance, identity work is a management of relationships between bodies and certain spaces. These relationships aim to both conform to what is appropriate according to the police institution (a good cop has a trained body) and deviate from what is deemed to be occupationally appropriate (a good cop is an expert in procedures). According to Tyler and

Cohen (2010: 192), police officers "do not simply occupy space, but rather [we] become ourselves in and through it." We show that this spatial element is driven, in the case of police officers, by corporeal practices. Identity work should therefore be understood within the broader context of the role of bodies in the present organizational context, where bodies are situated with respect to competitive alternative legitimate practices of the [future] good cop. We make three main contributions to the study of identity work.

Body-Space Connections

First, we highlight the connections between the bodies of police officers and the spaces in which they use them.

The study of identity work has paid less attention to the role of space than to discourses. This paper demonstrates that the identity work involved in the appropriation and use of space is dependent upon the corporeal reality of certain occupations, particularly those with "impure" reputations (Tyler and Abbott 1998; Tyler 2012; Brewis and Linstead 2002). Therefore, it is difficult to study the corporeal aspects of identity work without understanding where bodies are located and where they are used by workers. Recent interest in organizational space has tended to conceptualize it as simultaneously a mechanism of organizational control (Dale, 2005; Kornberger and Clegg 2004) and a site on which such control can be resisted (Brown and Humphreys, 2006; Fleming and Spicer 2004). Space is thus considered to be linked to the management of identity as a form of control, or to focus on the precarious process of the regulation of identities (Taylor and Spicer 2007; Tyler and Cohen 2012: 180). Neither of these works, however, places any sustained focus on bodies in relation with the norms that govern how people see themselves. They neglect to analyze how bodies are likely to become key objects in the fabric of identity in and through spaces, and how this fabric influences the solidity of threatened occupational identities. This paper highlights how the inhabitation by

individual bodies of specific organizational and occupational spaces is a practice involving active identity work.

We show that bodies are intelligent and transient assemblages of shared skills, enabling the creation of individual corporeal proficiency and its relation to the occupationally constituted power held by many police officers despite growing pressures to change their work image. We offer a view of identity work which regards spaces as relational settings where bodies are constantly in action, in accordance with the spatial configuration at disposal. For instance, the bodies are instruments of physical resistance when police officers are constrained to stay for hours in cars to conduct surveillance. They are instruments of performance and interpersonal competition at the gym; they are instruments of intimidation during an interrogatory when another potentially threatening body is likely to engage in a physical confrontation. The occupational identification that occurs at these space-body connections is relational: identity work is based on the relations between bodies. Examples include performing in the gym, struggling or running in the street, coping with extreme temperatures, and confronting other bodies. Identity work produces a spatially located corporeality: officers form a sense of self based on where their bodies act and are prepared to act. The corporeal construction of relationality among police officers - as well as with certain parts of the "outside world" (e.g., victims, detainees, etc.) - generates a common carnal vocabulary of occupational experience, laying guidelines for behavior in specific spaces. We complement research on identity work by suggesting that it is not simply a virtual discursive center to which one could refer to explain certain aspects of their experience (Watson, 2008; Kreiner et al., 2006); it also encompasses a corporeal dimension through bodies. Through this analysis, we go beyond "soft" approaches to identity work which stipulate that identities are fluid and multiple, and constantly malleable (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001; Thoits, 1983). These approaches, although key to understanding identity dynamics, are ill-equipped to examine the hard,

concrete dynamics of identity politics in a changing bureaucracy like the police force. In that instance, we agree with Brubaker and Cooper (2000:1): "if identity is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize?". Understanding the peculiar entanglements between specific spaces of action and police officers' bodies offers a view of identity work as the construction of a relational ordering between what counts as a suitable body to fit in the job, and the relatively stable spatial boundaries within which this fitness is evaluated by police officers. The body is not reduced to mere physicality; that is to say, an instrument of performance or a technology (Symon & Pritchard 2015). Rather, it is in a relational interdependency with the spaces in which it operates.

The body as ethic and as capital

A second contribution of this study is to show that the body affects identity work by materializing an ethic of the good cop, based on the control of confined spaces.

Our idea is that the gym and other spaces used daily by police officers are constructed not only for the purpose of developing or using techniques and skills, but also to transmit a collective mystique of what is a good cop. They help to instill the embodied ethics of the police craft (Wacquant 2000). The gym, the car, or the office must isolate themselves from the outside world, at least momentarily, to submerge its occupants in its specific rules and requirements, thus shaping the range of capacities of those individuals.

More specifically, our data suggest that this identity work is enabled by the use of confined spaces like the gym or the office. Spaces can be seen as constraining when they are experienced as confinements (Tyler and Cohen 2010). Our study shows that when police officers appropriate certain confined spaces, this very confinement establishes strong ethical boundaries around such spaces that entitle the officers to be seen as their legitimate occupants. The identity work resides in the fact that the appropriation of the spaces through

bodily practices prevents any invasion of the spaces by outsiders, precisely because they are confined. Police officers control their space of action so as to express the self-image they want to portray: strong, fast, intimidating, fearless and enduring bodies that other individuals are not able to produce. The interplay between corporeal practices and spatial control is therefore a key facet of identity work, as if the appropriation of space through the corporeality of the police officer's job conjures up his or her preferred identity. Those corporeal spaces represent the materialization of what ought to be done to be a "good cop," displaying the kind of ethic that police officers want to maintain at work.

We draw from Wacquant (2000) who describes the boxing gym as a "small-scale civilizing machine," fixing threshold of acceptance of skills and behavior, promoting the internalization of control and obedience to the endogenous rules of the good [boxer/cop] ethos, instead of submitting to the outside control of bureaucrats and managers (Wacquant 2000: 459). Drawing from this notion, we show that police officers use spaces to define themselves in a double relation of symbiosis and opposition to the new working rules that threaten the corporeal identity of good cops. The body connected to these confined spaces is a life- and identity- affirming medium because it holds police officers into its grip, offering a temporary shield for constructing a glorified self within the parallel occupational new universe of the police institution.

A third contribution of this paper is to show identity work as depending on the production of a specific corporeal capital. The regular practices of sport, physical confrontation and body endurance that compose the body-centered identity work of police officers ostensibly aim at maximizing the fructification of "corporeal capital" (Wacquant 2000) and the readiness of the police officer for battle in the street, car races and other risky ventures. They also have the practical effects of sharpening the occupational and symbolic boundaries between police officers and those around them – especially those other police officers working according to

the bureaucratic ethos – and strengthening their ties with one another. As a result, these practices serve as vehicles of a heroization of occupational everyday life (Wacquant 1995). They allow for a series of tests that - together with daily training and periodic concrete physical confrontations with the bodies of others in the street, car or office - enable the police officer to affirm his valor (Wacquant 2000: 462). It is important to note that this work promotes masculinization by entailing a systematic accentuation of those properties deemed demonstrative of virility. The connection between bodies and their spaces of activation extoll the distinctively masculine virtues of assertive action, competitive control, deliberate deprivation (for instance, being confined inside a car for an entire day), decisive risk-taking, or decision-making, thus establishing masculinity as "a prize to be won or a land to be conquered" (Wacquant 2005: 462; Godfrey, Lilley and Brewis 2012). The body in action in these spaces provides access to higher grades of masculinity, sublimated in the confrontation with other masculine potentially belligerent bodies - those of the criminals, who somehow follow a similar type of masculine pattern.

This complements research on identity work in two ways: first, it shows that bodies can replace discourses and narratives to construct a glorified vision of a given occupation. Police officers do not use words and discourses but corporeal activities to specify who they are and who they want to be. Second, the notion of corporeal capital is important because it complements the vision according to which identities are always fluid and malleable (Beech, 2008; Brown and Starkey, 2000; Gioia et al., 2000; Sillince and Brown, 2009). Building a corporeal capital helps to stabilize an occupational identity. Our study suggests that in certain occupational contexts, the balance between self and social roles (Patriotta and Spedale 2009) can be achieved through the crystallization and stabilization of occupational practices (Brubaker and Cooper 2000), thus avoiding the constant negotiations that often end up in profound and durable identity tensions.

Conclusion

This paper enables the re-embodiment of identity work literature, which has primarily emphasized discourse over physicality in understanding how people maintain their self-image, forgetting that certain occupations are immersed in a sensuous corporeal world. While for many workers in contemporary jobs work may become increasingly spatially malleable - even disappearing with the advent of digital forms of work (McGregor 2000; Fleming 2013) - the case of police officers shows a very different picture. Here, the corporeal dimension of the working space remains relevant because it is the fulcrum of their identity work. As Tyler and Cohen (2010) stated, workspaces matter in a myriad of ways in which workers strive to accomplish their tasks how they think they ought to accomplish them.

Notes

1. Fieldnotes: I transcribe here what some police officers said during informal conversations.
2. The intervention equipment is constituted by a reinforced bulletproof jacket, a bulletproof helmet, a shield, a tactical jacket with diverse objects (flashlight, telescopic stick, handcuffs, sometime a taser –conducted electrical weapon-, etc.)
3. The National Police in France are a state police. The police institution is an administratively centralized body divided in eight directorates, each in charge of specific missions, with sub-divisions at the county and regional levels. Several of these directorates are entitled to investigate cases, leading to regular disputes over the attribution of those cases. To sum, investigative bodies in a determined area are the County Directorate of Judicial Police (CDJP), exclusively dedicated to the investigations of serious and complex cases; then the Regional Directorate of the Public Safety (RDPS), including the Regional Security Department (RSD) in which we carried our observations, exclusively composed of investigators that deal with the same crimes as the CDJP but less complex. All the police stations of a determined area are under the authority of the RDPS and some teams in the police stations are dedicated to investigations but concerning less serious crimes than the ones followed by the RSD.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I contend that identity work in the police occupational setting is produced through and enacted within sets of (identity) ritualistic strategies that confer some symbolic significance (Goffman, 1967; Van Maanen, 1992). These strategies may be informal (e.g. practice of sports together during lunch time), unofficial though providing a frame (e.g. the Charter of the Wain), or highly formal (e.g. the internal recruitment, the delivering of a judicially strong case to prosecutors); they may also be relatively symbolic (e.g. the intervention equipment, the equalizer identity) or deeply embodied (e.g. the tailor-made trainings, the appropriation of particular spaces).

As Lawrence (2004: 119) explains these rituals "constitute the membership boundaries of fields: through participation in these rituals actors negotiate and signal their institutional membership". What is interesting here is that in a highly formalized environment, actors developed strategies to resist a new conception of work with which they do not identify.

In keeping a strong formal frame that is inherent to their work environment, police investigators devise unofficial strategies that allow them to focus on primordial elements in the maintaining of their identity as "good cops". They increased the intensity of certain rituals such as developing internal trainings that suit more the situations they may face in the field compared to the ones proposed by the institution. They also developed unofficial systems that frame their work environment and reinforce their conception of their occupational field that has been evolving in recent years. These non-confrontational or infrapolitical (Scott, 1991) strategies are processes of resistance that are supported and enacted at the collective level. These resisting mechanisms are all the more important as the conception of this occupation is deeply rooted in the body. The identity of the police officer is not only supported by his/her uniform, or mastery of the procedure, but also through the carnal and corporeal relationship

they have with their environment. The body has become a professional tool that produces performance and provides an identity feature that is beyond the control of the hierarchy.

Another contribution of this dissertation consists in its focus on the dynamic interaction between the individual level and the environmental level that has not been much addressed in the management literature. My informants contribute to the construction of their environment and the shaping of their occupational identity. They are active craftspersons in the conception and enactment of their occupational identity and its internal practices. What is also interesting and was revealed in the ethnographic study is that the identity work of police investigators emerges from the corporeal and carnal relationship they have with their work and their environment.

The overlap of the personal and the social identity makes the two indivisible from each other. However I may have observed some signs of dissociation as the occupational codes and parameters are changing toward more professionalism according to the new criteria and less affect and closely-tight groups.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the identity work dynamics of occupational fields, as well as organizational and personal fields. Theory building emerged from the in-depth and corporeal experience of the field. In the same way as Wacquant (1998) became a boxer, Van Maanen (1978) a patrol police officer, or Kondo (2009) a member of a family-owned Japanese firm, I came as close as I could from being a police investigator to be able to talk about them and through them. My findings have been obtained and have depended on my relationship to the field: my incorporation by the group as well as the intimacy that resulted from it was a necessity to conduct a true ethnography.

Limitations and future directions

This dissertation is based on ethnographic data collected during observations/immersion in two police squads of one department dedicated to investigations in big French city. The study could be extended to other departments also dealing with investigations but with a different institutional status, such as the Regional Directorate of the Judicial Police. Findings could be different in terms of identity expectations and strategies as different services may have different perceptions of their work and of themselves as police officers. The spaces of identity work may be different in an environment that provides less autonomy in the work and create other symbolic rituals.

It could also be interesting to investigate whether gender or other physical characteristics impact the findings in ethnographic work and how the data are gathered in fields where the corporeal aspect of work is very present or on the contrary absent.

Because the police institution seems to be in a transitional phase, it could be interesting to continue a longitudinal study to observe its evolution and the adjustments that occur at the occupational level. The change of persons at the head of the different directorates also impacts significantly the practices and expectations. It could therefore be interesting to observe such a change and its consequences in terms of rituals and adaptive strategies devised to cope with an unwanted change that would threaten the occupational identity as it is conceived by grassroots police investigators.

Another area to develop would be the perspective of the hierarchy. Since I deliberately chose in this dissertation to present the point of view of grassroots police officers and their close hierarchy, the discussion could be enriched with the vision of the superintendants and chiefs of superintendants. It could be interesting then to compare their perception of the work, what are their levers of identity and in which respect they consider themselves as "good" policing agents.

Concluding thoughts

The police institution seems to be engaged in deep changes regarding the conception of the work and how it is carried out in practices. These changes have been triggered by endogenous factors (e.g. willingness of transparency and sanitization) as well as exogenous factors (e.g. new public management policy, standardization of police practices in the European Union). More particularly, the managerialization of the police supported by reforms engaged to manage the police institution as any other organizations seem to have accelerated the demythologization of the police force which may ultimately leads to its loss of legitimacy (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Reiner, 1992) in the public's eyes. The resisting strategies used by our informants to counterbalance these tensions are somehow weak signals from the field that warn against an evolution of the institution that may lead to its collapsing. At the same time it may also reveal what is important in police work to carry out a good job in an environment where threats assume new shapes and where the judicial system has reached a saturation state. As in other organizations, the motivation and commitment to the work is not supported by financial means but through intrinsic levers anchored in meaning and affect. Because the work environment of police officers is tainted (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2005; Kreiner et al., 2006) and extreme (Bouty *et al.*, 2013; Turnbull and Wass, 2015), they all the more need a strong cohesive and meaningful frame to carry on. The shrinking space of autonomy and of the grey zone of legal lawlessness (Brodeur, 2010) may lead to marginalize some categories of police officers that may feel estranged from the direction that their institution is taking. The loss of identity and consequently the meaning of the work may alienate these skilled professionals. For the moment they have engaged in identity work manifested in the appropriation of interstices and cracks of resistance to maintain their preferred work ethos through non-confrontational strategies aiming at stimulating their senses, their sense of duty, and their self-esteem.

The current social context of changes constitutes a liminal space that allows these identity strategies to take place. In this transitional moment, the police institution will need to stabilize the new contours of work but should be aware to leave some spaces and interstices of grey zones to permit the mythologized, corporeal, and emotional substance, inherent to police work (Henry, 2004), to be lived and enacted.

This work has contributed to the extent of knowledge on the process of identity work and revealed its corporeal and collective dimensions. I provide a theoretical framework that may help to understand the reproduction and evolution of occupational members' identities that strive to stabilize and enact their preferred identity against and within the institutional machine. Such as the homicide squad that had no homicide case to investigate during my observation period, investigators are dreading that their occupation becomes an empty shell. The strategies and mechanisms described in this dissertation reveal how occupational members with a strong identification with their demanding work create spaces of autonomy and ritualistic action where they can draw on the emotional and symbolic substance to carry on with their tainted and extreme work.

ANNEX : FIGURES

Figure 1: HUNT squad

Figure 2: Shooting training

Figure 3: paper work

Figure 4: work out equipment

Figure 5: Hall of fame: journal articles of solved cases

Figure 6: HUNT squad: morning breaking door mission

Figure 8: homicide squad: the new weapons

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