DELIVERING MORE THAN SECURITY SERVICE: NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN THE UK PRIVATE SECURITY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Organisation and management studies often consider the notion of identity in relation to profession, professionalism and professionalization. What is under-developed is how professional identities are constructed in domains that are contested, under-defined or in transformation. Private security offers a unique research site. Contested yet increasingly legitimised following the Private Security Act 2001, the UK private security industry is under-researched as a site of meaning in professional lives. Using identity as analytical bridge between self and sociality, this thesis investigates the relationship between broader discourses of security and professionalization processes in the development of professional selves at different levels of analysis.

Processes of professionalization have been expedited since the founding of the Security Industry Authority (SIA), tasked with 'ensuring only fit and proper people and organisations deliver regulated private security services' (SIA 2019). There are numerous stakeholder perspectives that in a fabric of connections inform what might constitute 'fit and proper'. Challenges to professionalization are numerous and seem persistent: with 90% of the workforce as estimated to be male, the industry provides mostly insecure jobs on low wages for frontline security staff, disproportionally recruited from the immigrant population, and offering little in terms of career structure. Sector stigma seems hard to shed and the industry remains undervalued by state law enforcers and profoundly mistrusted by the public. Nonetheless, scholarly work on security, hitherto mostly located in conflict zones - construing security work as 'dirty', 'stigmatised', and 'hypermasculine' - seems insufficient to capture the complexities and new possibilities for the development of professional selves in modern, UK-based security landscapes.

Broadly located in an interpretivist paradigm, and drawing on a postmodern version of grounded theory, discursive materials were curated and analysed to identify macro level narratives of professionalization. In addition, interactional data collected via semi-structured interviews with 28 participants explore accounts security workers give of themselves to make sense of their working environments. With a key focus on constancy and change, 20 women and eight men were invited to talk about their experiences of working in the sector, issues of professionalization, and perspectives of (in)security more broadly.

Presented in three distinct chapters, the findings organise private security narratives at different levels of analysis. The first findings chapter presents narratives at the macro level, identified in extant discursive materials in so-called programmatic texts. Identified tropes demonstrate a shift in vision of (frontline) security as a, by and large, masculine, unregulated, physical role toward security

roles reimagined as regulated, intrinsically social, anti-heroic and mundane, culturally and gender diverse, and servicing the needs of customers. However, in the broader UK civil security space the industry continues to think of itself as stigmatised; the quest for legitimacy as a bonafide security provider is ongoing, and the notion of professional security - that which distinguishes the profession from other security providers - remains ill-defined. For the purpose of the development of professional selves, at best there are customer services identities but also distinct sites of silence, i.e. an absence of directives and how to be a professional; at worst, there are *negative* directives, such as 'don't be a criminal' promulgated, in particular, by the SIA. The second findings chapter presents narrative dimensions at the micro level with regard to the development of professional selves, largely informed by identity talk in interactional data collected via 28 semi-structured interviews. Five dimensions of security careers are discussed: belonging versus "not forever"; serving customers versus 'dirty work'; uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence; being invisible versus standing out; and professional selves versus cowboy others. The third findings chapter presents 'sedimented' narratives of culturally appropriate selves of which the research identifies three: private security as the helping profession; private security as a feminist project; and private security as global safe keeping.

It is proposed that precaritising conditions - both discursive and material - that organise much of private security work offer fertile ground for the development of alternative narrations of professional selves. These alternative professional selves can be construed as a response to a breakdown of recognition by inadequate (customer services), infelicitous (hyper-masculine, dirty), and negative or empty (not-criminal) identities of a previous horizon of normativity. Together, they mitigate particular negative effects such as invisibility. These identity development processes differ from *seeking to be a professional*. The notion of professionality - giving account of oneself and seeking recognition in precarious worlds of work - advances an understanding of drivers of identity work in the development of culturally appropriate, professional selves. The thesis ends with a number of suggestions for future research on the macro and micro relationship in matters of professional identity.

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List of abbreviations

BSIA – British Security Industry Association

EU – European Union

FSO – Frontline Security Officer

IPSA – International Professional Security Association

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

SIA – Security Industry Authority

UN – United Nations

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1 INTRODUCTION

"Security? You're better than that, Dave" - The Full Monty (film by Peter Cattaneo, 1997)

'Identity is… both an utter illusion and a material reality' (Engelke 2017, p. 196)

On 23 March 2020, at the start of the first lockdown, the UK government confirmed on its webpages (Gov UK News, 2020) that some frontline private security roles would be given key worker status. A pivotal moment, it seemed, which many in the industry hoped would herald a new dawn of acknowledgement and recognition for the private sector in the delivery of security functions. Private security organisations were quick to highlight and publicize this newfound social standing, and on their social media feeds and websites posted photos and articles of frontline security staff being helpful, for instance by distributing food parcels, checking on the elderly, guarding deserted office buildings, and later, working at vaccination centres. There were many stories of private security workers assuaging pandemic mayhem and anxiety-ridden populations, and a few stories on frontline staff suffering with PTSD and other mental health issues. Some were about being disproportionately affected by Covid. Overall, however, for the security industry the pandemic seemed cause for tentative optimism: "Being a security guard and bouncer is the role I was destined for…" wrote George Bass in the Financial Times magazine (19/20 June 2021), "maybe our increased duties over the pandemic will make others see us differently... I hope regard for key workers improves, especially as lockdown restrictions are lifted, but also that staff go back to being less visible, rather than punch bags for people's frustrations". Although ubiquitous, in ordinary times largely *in*visible and undervalued is how the industry tends to refer to itself and its frontline workforce, and mainstream media with some regularity report negative storylines in relation to private security organisations, for instance, on breaches of human rights and bad behaviour by frontline staff in detention centres.

This thesis investigates matters of identity in the private security industry. How the macro and micro are related to create, challenge or maintain social order has long pre-occupied scholars in the social sciences. In a number of research traditions, the concept of identity is used to theorise such a relationship. Under the influence of postmodern thought and cultural relativism identity has become a 'meta-concept' (Jenkins 2008, p. 16), connecting and structuring as much individuals as the collective. In organisation studies, which foregrounds the social, symbolic, and discursive elements in research of organisations (e.g. Clegg et al. 2006), the identity concept is well-established (e.g. Brown 2020a; Kenny, Whittle and Willmott 2011; Ybema 2010; Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas 2008;

Cornelissen, Haslam, and Balmer 2007; Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003), and conceptualised as 'analytical bridge' between the self and sociality (Ybema, 2020, p. 65).

Work and work places are an integral part of people's lives, and living lives with purpose is often derived from job roles they occupy in the professional fields in which these are located, and the careers workers build over the course of their productive lives. However, how workers are categorised and the meaning individuals are able to derive from their working lives is in part informed by ideologies of the professions and professionalism (e.g. Evetts 2013), as well as a complex interlacing of temporal, cultural, social, and economic resources and events (e.g. Hatch 2018). For instance, it is probably true to say that the pandemic profoundly changed workers' experience of work and for many sectors disrupted organisational practices and working relationships. Such broader movements have the potential to reconfigure knowledge and power dynamics, with knock-on effects, both positive and negative, on professional identities. Identities in organisations as increasingly 'less fixed, less secure, and less certain' (Brown 2020a, p. 1) have emphasised the salience and continuing relevance of the topic. For some sectors like the private security industry, however, there was already a contested professional space, hitherto only partially resolved. If anything, the pandemic further articulated characteristic challenges associated with the industry (White 2022), such as the lack of recognition by the wider public. Some of the discourses and ideologies that inform identities in worlds of work are about what constitutes a profession and doing professional work. But how do workers become professionals? And how do they do that in a sector the professional status of which is at least ambivalent and in working worlds that seem increasingly precarious? What is required to craft professional selves with longevity potential?

What is under-developed in organisational studies is how professional identities are constructed in domains that are contested, under-defined or in transformation (Brown 2015). Private security offers a unique research site. Contested yet increasingly legitimised, the UK private security industry (PSI) is under-researched as a site of meaning in professional lives. Seemingly on a trajectory of professionalization, processes of professionalization of the industry have been expedited by the introduction of the Private Security Act (2001) and the founding of the Security Industry Authority (SIA). Although the private security industry continues to grow, diversify, and claiming some of the regulatory security space, challenges to a professionalised industry seem numerous and often acknowledged by the industry itself. With 90% of the workforce as estimated to be male (e.g. SIA, 2022), the industry appears 'gendered' providing mostly insecure jobs on low wages for frontline security staff, disproportionally recruited from the immigrant population, and offering little in terms of career structure with knock-on effects on retention. Sector stigma seems hard to shed and the industry is profoundly undervalued by the public, even in times of national crises. Of note in this

regard, is a YouGov poll, commissioned by the British Security Industry Association during the pandemic, which saw the essential role of private security officers as ranked just 'slightly ahead of traffic wardens' (BSIA 2020). There are multiple discourses as to what counts as security expertise (e.g. Lund 2013; Berndtsson 2012), with fuzzy boundaries in the configuration of security and insecurity (e.g. Bigo and McCluskey 2017), and 'security' itself referred to as an elusive notion (e.g. Kirsch 2016; Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014). There are a number of perspectives in and outside the industry on how the industry ought to be professionalised further; however, these perspectives are often opaque, ambivalent or ephemeral.

Nonetheless, existing literatures of security in international relations or sociology, using theories of dirty work, stigmatisation or hyper-masculinity, do not capture possibilities for the development of professional selves in the new security landscapes. In addition, literatures of identity insufficiently explain how professional selves develop in contested/precaritised worlds of work and how discourses other than those at the macro level inform the development of professional selves, creating the conditions for alternative narrations. As Brown (2018) observes: 'how the macro performances of groups, organizations, industries and professions are connected to the micro identities processes associated with their participants is still largely a mystery' (p. 11). Identity in the context of workplaces is often explored via 'identity work'. The identity work concept has mostly been developed in the discipline of organisational studies and is used to describe the dynamic interplay between personal, work and broader identities (Watson 2008). Construed as identity-in-action, identity work explicitly acknowledges employees' agency in processes of identity formation to shape broader social identities in environments in which they live their lives (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Brown 2015; Watson 2008).

1.1 Research aims, questions, and objectives

Using identity as analytical bridge, the overall aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between broader discourses of security and professionalization processes in the development of professional selves. I will take the notion of identity work – actions taken by actors to make sense of their environments and give an account of themselves– to the private security sector at various levels of analysis: state and sector-level stakeholder groups (macro) and individuals employed in the sector (micro). The focus is on women to explore, and come to an understanding of issues of continuity and change. I propose the concept of identity work can advance security and identity research in the following ways: it allows an investigation of security work as practised, as well as looking at the discursive positions in discourses in and outside of security more broadly. Secondly, it has the potential to capture the micro social of the everyday. Thirdly, it focuses on identities-in-

action so is able to capture processes of change, rather than end states. Finally, it troubles hegemonic discourses, for instance, those of private security work and workers as 'stigmatised'. The thesis asks:

In the modern UK private security industry, a contested domain, how are macro and micro processes of identity formation configured to create conditions for professional selves?

Three sub-questions are formulated as

1. At the macro level, how does the private security sector present itself narratively to internal and external audiences?

2. At the micro level, how do private security workers talk about themselves in relation to 'others' (e.g. other private or state security workers, other organisations), times (e.g. pre-SIA vs post SIA), and locations (e.g. types of organisation and role)?

3. At the negotiated macro/micro level, which professional selves seem culturally appropriate in modern private security landscapes and why?

Research objectives are formulated as follows:

Theoretical objective

To develop an understanding of current theoretical debates of professionalization, identity and security research to assess where and how a study of identity, identity work, and professional selves in the private security sector could be making a contribution

To review the literature in three domains:

a) Sociology of work: current debates and perspectives on profession, professionalization, and professionalism; stigmatisation and dirty work;
b) International relations: critical security studies literatures, in particular with regard to feminine/masculine articulations of (private) security work and workers; empirical (private) security studies;
c) Organisation studies: theories on (organisational) identity, identity work; theories of self; empirical research on professionalization

Special attention will be given to a number of cross-disciplinary themes: the everyday, identity and self in the work domain, security, and interpretivist/postmodern perspectives.

Empirical objective

a) To curate extant data - including training manuals, policy documents, trade journals, websites, and social media content - to identify stakeholder industry-specific narratives on professionalization and professional identity;
b) To collect empirical data via semi-structured interviews with individuals (mostly women) employed in a variety of roles within the private security sector on their careers, security professionalism, and perspectives on security and threat more widely; to collect additional observational materials of private security events and training.

Analysis objective

To present narratives at different levels of analysis:

a) Ways in which organisational stakeholder texts at the macro level foreground particular understandings of private security workers and professionalization (Findings chapter 1);
b) Dimensions of identities at the micro level (Findings chapter 2);
c) Culturally appropriate, professional selves that successfully negotiate the macro and micro level (Findings chapter 3).

Outcome objective

a) To integrate the findings at different levels of analysis to theorise the macro-micro relationship in a contested professional domain; to outline contributions to knowledge;
b) To make recommendations for future research to cement a research agenda on identity and private security in matters of professionalization.

1.2 Background: private security and identity

Regulation of the private security industry, and with that acknowledgement of it, was a long time in the making. It is argued (White 2010) that the quest for legitimacy by the private security industry is mainly fought in one particular domain, that of normative legitimacy. The British public have 'state-centric expectations of how security ought to be delivered' (ibid, p. 17) and paradoxically, institutions that threaten these beliefs such as private security companies, are intrinsically mistrusted. Therefore, processes by which some of the security functions have come to be formally outsourced to the private sector were complex and drawn-out, in part because of a seemingly well-founded fear - judging by the never-ending stream of negative publicity in national media - of loss of control of the security function. Nonetheless, stricter regulation of the private security industry in the UK materialised in the early 2000s with the founding of The Security Industry Authority (SIA). Reporting to the Home Office, this non-departmental public body is tasked with 'ensuring that only fit and proper people and organisations deliver regulated private security services' (SIA 2019). There are numerous governance organisation, certifying bodies, professional trade magazines, NGOs, and

training and development providers that in a fabric of connections inform what might constitute 'fit and proper'. Training materials explicitly take the Equality Act 2010 into account in how private security ought to be practised. There are, nonetheless, competing managerial, policy, and social discourses on how the private sector should operate, what it is that should be secured and against which type of threats, and how employees within it should be professionalized.

The private security sector in the UK is particular in a number of ways: before the UK left the EU, out of all EU member states the UK private security sector was the largest in terms of numbers of employees, turnover, and 5-year predicted growth (Ecorys 2015); as a former colonising country it is able to capitalise on the reputation of the armed forces in ways many other countries cannot and many private security companies are founded by former armed forces personnel (e.g. The Independent 2017); finally, and related to this, it has a long and well-documented history of legitimisation (White 2010). Furthermore, the sector seems to be battling identity struggles of its own. In a recent, industry-sponsored research (Gill, Howell and McGreer 2020), which surveyed (n. 376) and interviewed (n. 46) mostly 'senior professionals' in the sector, 83% of the respondents believed that security is thought of as an 'industry' rather than a 'profession'. Respondents agreed that the security sector is bad at selling itself, and felt there is an unjustified public perception of private security roles as unskilled, poorly paid, and associated with violence. Regulation of the industry, therefore, does not (yet) lead to becoming a profession, or not necessarily. Professionalization is regarded as the trajectory that via inclusion and exclusion mechanisms leads to recognition as a profession. This is 'the process to pursue, develop, and maintain the closure of the occupational group in order to maintain practitioners' own occupational self-interests in terms of their salary, status, and power as well as the monopoly protection of the occupational jurisdiction' (Evetts 2013, p.782). Although 'profession' and 'professionalism' are somewhat contested notions - part of what will be explored in this thesis - in referring to reciprocal processes of institutionalisation and professionalization, Suddaby and Viale (2011) propose four dynamics where particular professional groups reconfigure and occupy organisational fields: 1. In challenging the established order, find a new uncontested space; 2. Use social capital and existing skills to occupy the new space, creating new professional identities; 3. Confirm the new field by creating new regulations and standards; 4. Through management of social capital, create new social orders. This thesis is in conversation with these dynamics, notably with the second, that of the creation of new professional identities.

Processes of identity work in the workplace are facilitated by professional domains with particular inclusion and exclusion mechanism (Evetts 2011). At the same time, it is argued (e.g. Hatch 2018) that identity development processes in individuals or organisations do not vary significantly; both

address questions of 'who we are', and by implication, 'who we are not' (Ybema et al. 2009a; Ybema 2020). Therefore, identity and identity-in-action theories such as identity work, can be used at different levels of analysis. It is the contention of this thesis that in the case of the private security sector, theories of identity work can be extended to the sector level, too, for instance with regard to professionalization processes, a kind of identity work. Although regulated by the state, in defining boundaries, remit, expertise, and professionalism *in opposition* to state-level security, private security stakeholders shape dominant discourses in which professional identities at the individual level become possible, i.e. the conditions to be 'who we are' and what is appropriate. However, how the different levels are related in the development of culturally appropriate selves (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010) is in part the puzzle of this thesis.

Studies on the symbolic dimensions of private security work and workers that an organisational studies perspective and the concept of identity work could offer, are few and far between (Grey 2009, Godfrey et al. 2014, Brewis and Godfrey 2018). This is surprising as the private security sector offers a unique research site in which to look at processes of identity construction in relation to macro shifts. The industry is worth an estimated £140bn worldwide and relatively recent analyses showed that private security officers now outnumber public security officers in the majority of countries in the world (Provost 2017). The tremendous growth of this ubiquitous industry has been attributed to processes of globalisation and commoditisation that penetrate and replace state functions in neo-liberal governance regimes (Abrahamsen and Leander 2016). In the UK, however, there are three, relatively recent developments that seem influential: the end of overseas deployment of armed forces; prolonged government budget cuts in defence and law enforcement in the austerity era that vacated security spaces; and a new kind of home-soil terrorism. Therefore, although contested, the sector seems increasingly legitimised, in no small part further facilitated by the industry's own efforts to widen the gap between, on the one hand military activities such as armed combat, and on the other civil security activities such as close protection, surveillance and intelligence (Ecorys 2015). Sometimes referred to as 'nodal governance' (Mawby and Gill 2017), civil security is increasingly delivered by a range of agencies of which the state is just one. This new governance is characterised by hybrid alliances and partnerships rather than bureaucratic, hierarchical state commands of an old style of governance (Crawford 2006, Schuilenburg 2015, Jarvis and Lister 2015).

1.3 (Private) security in academic perspectives

The study of security has been predominantly located and developed in the political sciences, notably in international relations (IR). Over the past two decades IR has moved away from framing

security in essentialist terms, critiquing the idea that security agencies at the state level were merely offering security responses to threats coming from external environments. Central to this argument was the so-called Copenhagen School and securitization theory (e.g. see Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998). In this theory, it is argued that security and security threats are socially constructed in intersubjective processes, i.e. what is seen as a threat or what is considered to be secure is defined 'among the subjects' (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, p. 31 in Côté 2016, p. 541). This way of thinking critiqued the legitimacy of identification by the state of, and declarations on common enemies, the threats of which had to be mitigated by security responses at both state and market level. Instead, in so-called 'de-securitisation', security as focus is moved from state-level emergency to political action (see also Schwell 2014). Such approaches to the study of security have been able to highlight processes of 'responsibilization' (Garland 1996 in Schuilenburg 2015), which sees the responsibility for security increasingly transferred in intentional and non-intentional ways to non-traditional securitising agents such as schools, hospitals, businesses, and citizens 'by techniques that are mobilized by a multiplicity of authorities with the intention to making the future secure and certain' (Schuilenburg 2015, p. 290).

A critical security studies perspective unpicks processes by which security actors have authority to 'secure', with a focus on security agencies and political actors. The history of security studies and the development of a more critical inquiry of security is broadly aligned with historical developments in other subjects within the social sciences, and a move to postmodern analyses after the 'linguistic turn'. Discursive approaches to security analyses emphasise the performative elements of words (based on Butler, e.g. Salter and Mutlu 2013), the fluidity of realities because always mediated by language (e.g. van Duijnhoven 2010) focusing on the 'in-between' or inter-mediate, stable yet changing systems (e.g. Schuilenburg 2015), the 'ephemeral' or 'speech acts' (e.g. Guillaume and Huysmans 2019; Huysmans 2011), in assemblages of human and non-human elements (e.g. Abrahamsen and Leander 2016; Schuilenburg 2015). Yet in IR and sociology literatures, there is less attention for how human and non-human elements come together to create professional identities.

1.3.1 Professional identity and security

In critical perspectives such as critical securities studies, scholarly work on identity and security work in conflict zones often draws on theories of gender and masculinities; for instance, it is argued that the private security industry relies on 'hypermasculinity' that romantisises the male bond (Stachowitsch, 2014). However, scholars who explore the gender elements observe that women in private security are growing in number and importance for the industry as a whole. Seeing gender as 'good for business' (Eichler, 2016), women officers can conduct specific, useful tasks, such as foster

positive relationships with local populations in conflict zones, and are thus viewed as instrumental to operational effectiveness. Additionally, women could be construed as mitigating the extremes of 'fratriarchal' behaviours (Higate 2012a). Finally, when not themselves employed in private security firms, women are seen to support male private security employees through a traditional, colonial division of labour and in support of global supply chains of private security (Chisholm and Stachowitsch, 2016), to augment the 'profitability of insecurities' (Eichler, 2016, no page number). Although this thesis does not offer a gender perspective per se, there is an explicit focus on women to explore what has changed in terms of professional identity and simultaneously, what has remained the same. In sociological perspectives, scholarly work of security often draws on symbolic interactionism and theories of stigmatization, and the concept of *dirty work*, building on the work of, respectively, Erving Goffman and Everett Hughes (e.g. Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016). Private security work is seen as ticking all boxes of a categorisation as dirty work (Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016). When doing dirty work in stigmatised occupations, employees are seen to require defensive tactics (Ashforth and Kreiner 2014), and resort to taint and impression management to develop positive identities (Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016).

One of the professionalization narratives employed in the private security industry is 'the promise of regulation' (Thumala, Goold, and Loader 2011, p. 290) to separate the 'Blackwater cowboys' (Higate 2012) from the 'true professionals' (Joachim and Schneiker 2012). In creating the Private Security Act in 2001, the UK state aimed to develop *suitable* private security personnel that could replace depleted state security operations, provide more flexible solutions for austerity-affected public services, and develop an industry that was to offer employment to thousands (see the next chapter). It is argued (Thumala, Goold, and Loader 2011) that the promise has not (yet) materialised because regulation does not necessarily raise the standard, just the credibility. In critical security perspectives, where research is predominantly located in conflict zones, professionalization processes are conceptualised as distinguishing 'cowboys and professionals' (Higate 2012a), where private security employees become the 'new humanitarians' (Joachim and Schneiker 2012) or 'ethical hero warriors' (Joachim and Schneiker 2012a).

1.3.2 (In)securities

Even in critical security studies that see security as socially constructed, securities are construed as responses to insecurities or threats from the 'real world'; insecurity itself is not problematised enough (Bigo and McCluskey 2017). This seems particularly pertinent to countries essentially at peace, such as the UK, where ubiquitous commoditised security can only thrive in an imagined world

of insecurity and threat. A 'Paris school' of thought (Bigo 2014 in Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014) unpicks not only security responses as socially constructed but also security threats, which it is argued, do not exist in and of themselves. This school emphasises the importance of the study of everyday security and lived experience to investigate how security and insecurity are mutually constitutive, and the role of multiple security/securitising actors in this process. Bigo and McCluskey (2017) compare security and insecurity to a so-called Mobius strip, a figure without a beginning or end, indeterminable and un-orientable with regard to which way is up, and what constitutes in- or outside. In this way, security and insecurity are one and the same phenomenon, denoted by *(in)security*. Construed as processes that in constantly reinforcing each other create each other's conditions in which to exist…:

> …[I]t is not possible to assert for sure the territory of the security enclosure (circle or domain) and to exclude, to purify it from insecurity, because in a Mobius strip someone will just affirm the exact contrary concerning the place of the inside and the outside […] [Actors] look for the distinction between security and insecurity and they find only (in)security as a practice, as the practical sense of their everyday life […] It has not much to do with a feeling, a psychological move, a psyche of anxiety, or with discourse and communication. It has to do with their places into different fields of power and where they are positioned (Bigo and McCluskey, 2017, p. 10)

But what if the actors are workers in the private security sector? What does 'the practical sense of their everyday life' look like? It is argued that an interdisciplinary approach involving anthropology, sociology and sociolinguistics is best capable to capture lived experiences of people affected by security practices whilst seeing symbolic power as the main unit of analysis (e.g. Bigo and McCluskey 2017). Such an approach requires an interdisciplinary methodology that shares a negotiated and reconciled epistemological problematization in discourse and practice. I take this recommendation forward in my methodological principles and the development of my research design.

1.4 Methodology

Broadly located in an interpretivist paradigm, the thesis is informed by situational analysis (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), a postmodern version of grounded theory, with a material constructionist ontology and multi-perspectival epistemological approach to empirical analyses. The project draws on extant discursive materials, as well as observations and interactional data acquired via semi-structured interviews with 28 individuals employed in the sector, with an emphasis on everyday, frontline security roles. The 28 interviewees, 20 of whom are women, occupy a variety of roles and career histories include government, law enforcement, journalism, and training; 19 participants are frontline security staff or have frontline experience. Interview participants were

asked to talk about their experiences of private security work, issues of professionalization, and their perspectives of (in)security more broadly.

1.5 Thesis outline

Chapter 2 *New Security: Situational Elements of (Post-) Regulatory Private Security* presents an overview of developments in broader contexts of private security regulation and their effects on professionalization. It discusses wider policies at EU and UN level, the drivers of private security growth in the UK, and the birth of the Security Industry Authority.

Chapter 3 *Conceptualisations of Security Work, Professionalization, and Identity* discusses academic literatures in the domains of sociology of work, international relations, and organisation studies. It presents recent debates on concepts of profession, professionalization, and professionalism. It then moves on to the literatures that have hitherto informed private security research and characterised private security workers, i.e. symbolic interactionism and theories of *stigmatisation*, and the concept of *dirty work*, as well as international relations literatures and gender perspectives of security work and masculinity. The final section of the literature review discusses current thinking on concepts of *identity, (professional) selves and identity work,* and what these concepts could offer a study of identity in the private security sector.

Chapter 4 *Methodological Dimensions* is divided in to two distinct sections. In the first section, I give an account of how I have come to adopt the methodological and philosophical positions that I hold and how these have informed the choices for the research at hand. To this end, I briefly revisit historical developments in my student and professional life, singling out key texts both consumed and produced that made me the researcher that I am. These developments culminated in the adoption of five principles that I describe in some detail, and which have specific consequences for the way I approach my research topic. The descriptions in the first half of the chapter aim to explain the second half of the chapter, where I outline the mechanics of the research process. Included are sections on data sources, access and ethics, data collection, and data analysis, ending with a brief section on research reflexivity and the relationship between researcher and research topic.

Chapter 5 *Narratives of Private Security* organises findings in three separate chapters. The first chapter presents narratives in extant discursive materials produced by key voices in the private security sector at the macro level: the Security Industry Authority, the British Security Industry Association, The Security Institute, International Professional Security Association, and two trade magazines *Professional Security* and *City Security*. The second chapter presents narrative dimensions at the micro level with regard to the development of professional selves, largely informed by identity

talk in interactional data collected via the 28 semi-structured interviews. In considering analyses from Findings chapters 1 and 2, the third Findings chapter presents 'sedimented' narratives of selves that more or less successfully navigate the private security work landscape.

Chapter 6 *Discussion – Identities And Professionality in Contemporary Security Landscapes* draws together the three Findings chapters and explores their significance in relation to the literatures on professionalization, identity and identity work. First, it identifies hegemonic narratives in contemporary security landscapes and assesses their potential for shaping new security identities and professional selves. The section thereby outlines opportunities a regulated security sector has to offer but also a number of challenges. Second, based on these opportunities and challenges, it considers ways in which the discourses and institutionalised conditions and mechanisms in the private security sector precaritise working lives with a particular effect of invisibility, creating the conditions for alternative narrations of professional selves. Third, to make sense of these alternative narratives, the chapter turns to the work of moral philosopher Judith Butler. In particular, it considers her ideas espoused in *Giving an account of oneself* (2005) as driver of identity work.

Chapter 7 *Conclusions* revisits the aims and objectives and outlines contributions to knowledge: demystifying the macro-micro relationship in processes of professional identity development, the notion of professionality advances an understanding of drivers of identity work in the development of culturally appropriate, professional selves. Identity work research is expanded with the notion of giving an account in precaritising worlds of work. The chapter ends with three suggestions for future research.

2 NEW SECURITY: SITUATIONAL ELEMENTS OF (POST-) REGULATORY PRIVATE SECURITY

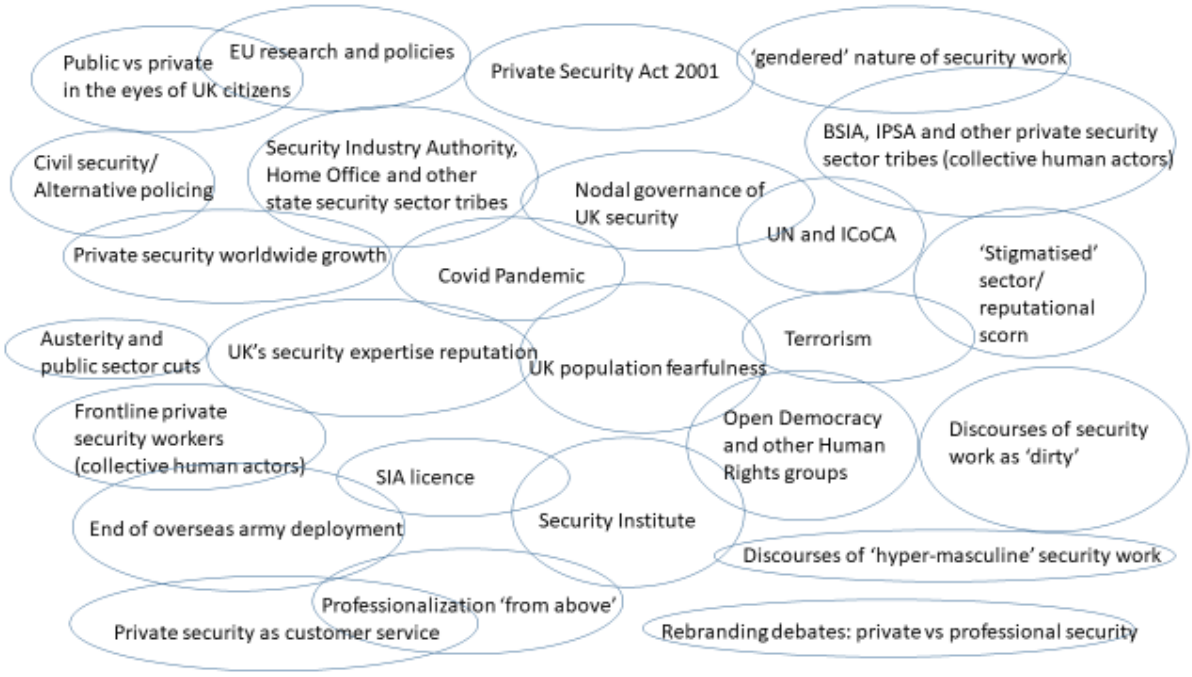


Image 2.1 - The situation of inquiry on professionalization in the private security industry

The research uses a situational analysis approach, a post-modern version of grounded theory (Clarke 2005; Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), see also the Methodology chapter. This approach holds that there is no such thing as 'the context' of research but that the conditions of the situation of the research topic are *in* the situation, and co-constitutive of the elements in it. It does not privilege human over non-human elements per se. In this way, it aims to overcome the internal-versus-external binary to demonstrate how specific actors but also non-human elements because of their ontological properties can have particular, material effects. Therefore, to present arguments that make sense and are persuasive, and to make visible what has informed them, the researcher needs to be explicit about the elements they think of as residing in the situation of inquiry from the onset. In this project on professionalization and identity in the private security industry, the situational elements are not irrelevant – they matter and co-create the conditions for identities and culturally appropriate selves to materialise and show up. Situational analysis often uses cartographic representations of situations (macro), social worlds (meso) and positions (micro). A situational map can include political/economic elements, collective human elements/actors, individuals /actors, major issues/debates, sociocultural/symbolic elements, spatial elements, and so on (e.g. Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018, p. 131). At the onset of this this project, I produced a situational map,

an updated version of which I include here in in Image 2.1. What makes it onto the map is based on immersion in the situation, see the Methodology chapter for a further rationale and how immersion was achieved. This chapter provides descriptions of the elements on the map; a 'what matters' in a research inquiry on professionalization and identity in the private security industry.

2.1 EU and the UN: private security regulation at the international level

Worldwide, the private security industry has seen tremendous growth. In a large-scale study for The Guardian and Open Democracy (Provost, 12/05/2017), the global industry was estimated to be worth $180bn (£140bn), projected to have grown to $240bn by 2020. Furthermore, it was found that half of the earth's populations live in countries where private security officers outnumber state security officers, see also Figure 2.2. In the UK, private security revenue has risen from $8.06bn in 2010 to a projected $11.61bn in 2022 (Statista, 2019). Drawing on the Provost study, Forbes (2017) further reports that growing inequality leads to more individuals accumulating ever growing personal wealth. This wealth needs to be securitised, contributing to ever increasing profits for private security companies, for instance, companies like London-headquartered G4S. Now one of the largest providers of private security, G4S employs nearly 800,000 people world-wide (25,000 in the UK, www.g4s.com), and has an annual, worldwide revenue of £6.96bn in 2020 (down from £7.8bn in 2019, Statista 2022). Although the thesis is situated in the UK and therefore analyses take into consideration predominantly national policies, regulations and political developments that affect professionalization, these cannot be studied in isolation. To make sense of them, broader international developments also need to be taken into account, for instance those with an effect on distinctions between conflict and civil security and regulation of human rights abuses, and more broadly, to understand how the UK private security market is particular.

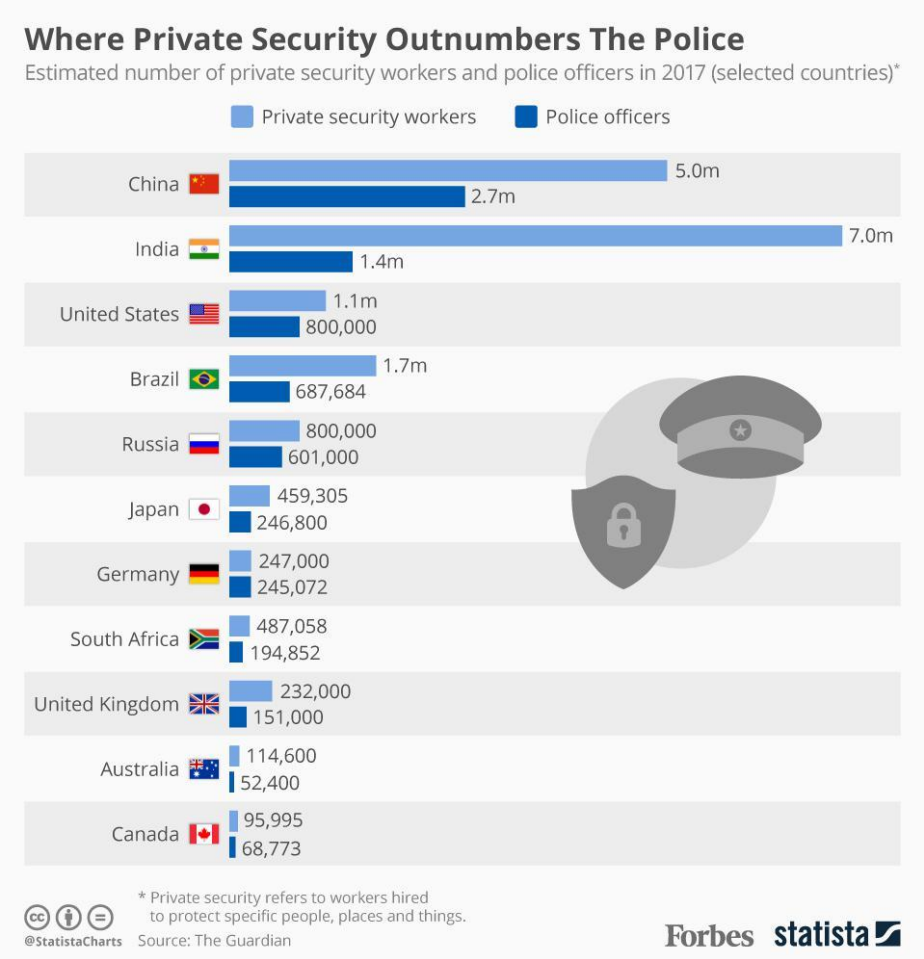


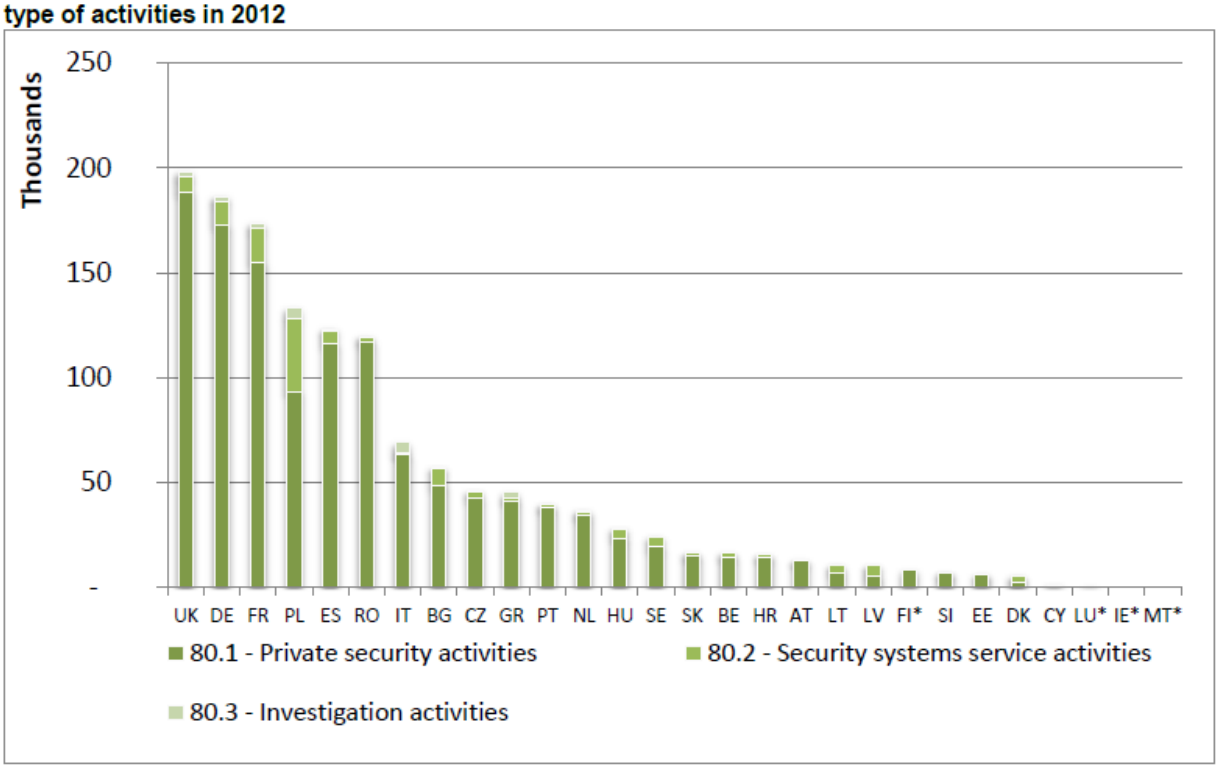
Figure 2.2 – Countries where private security outnumbers state security (Statista/Forbes, in 2017)

For clarity of argument, I borrow the definitions for core security concepts from a European Commission DG Migration and Home Affairs-commissioned report (Ecorys 2015), adopted throughout this thesis. The report speaks of *civil security (*or internal security), which it defines as security concerned with citizens, enterprises, and public and social institutions, *within* the territory of a state. *The private security industry* is defined as private enterprises that develop or support products and services *to deliver civil security functions* (my emphases). Finally, a *security market* is seen to include both state and private actors that either produce or consume security industry-supplied products or services (see pp 8-9). The report was commissioned in support of the development of an EU-wide industry policy for the security sector. Some of the aims of the study illustrate very well what was missing in an understanding of the industry such as a clear definition of the security sector and fuzzy separations between security and non-security-related activities.

Traditionally concentrated in so-called *weak* states, the private security industry in the European Union is estimated to offer employment to 1.4 million individuals (Ecorys 2015), in over 40,000 companies (European Parliament 2017). Still a member of the EU at the year of publication, the UK's

share in the industry topped the list of member states in terms of turnover (€9 billion), predicted growth in the next five years (16%), and number of people employed (just under 200,000), see Figure 2.3. However, not included in these calculations are people employed in the private sector market 'not falling under the definition of publically available statistics' (Ecorys 2015, p. 11). Therefore, the lower and upper limit of private security employees is estimated to be 268,000 and 602,000, respectively (p. 16), 91% of which are men (CoESS, 2017). Cybersecurity appears to be a 'stand-alone activity' (Ecorys 201, p. 12) and the market share is relatively modest at just over 10%. However, the UK cybersecurity workforce has seen the strongest year on year growth, now offering employment to 46,700 fte, up 9% from the last 12 months (Ipsos Mori, 2021 for the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport).

Number of persons employed in NACE 2, 80 - Security and investigation activities by Member State and type of activities in 2012



Source: Ecorys based on Eurostat

*no or limited data available

Figure 2.3 - Number of people employed in private security per EU member state in 2012

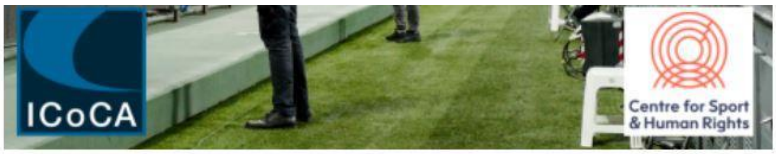
Problematic issues associated with the private security sector worldwide, notably trafficking (Bastick and Grimm 2007), other human rights abuses, and a governance gap are well documented (see Buzato, 2015, for a comprehensive overview), seem persistent, and are not limited to conflict zones outside of Europe. Relatively recent examples of these in the UK are the 2016 and 2017 BBC

Panorama documentaries on abuse in a young offender institution and an immigration removal centre respectively. Both were run by G4S, which has been charged with human rights abuses on a number of occasions, see the Liberty G4S dossier for a comprehensive overview (Liberty 2016). In recent years, however, there have been a number of developments at international governance level that seek to address lack of accountability and malpractice in the sector. In addition, private security companies themselves see it in their interest to widen the gap between on the one hand involvement in security activities such as military activities and armed combat, and on the other, activities such as close protection, surveillance and intelligence (Buzato 2015).

The most tangible development is a UN-endorsed, human rights-based International Code of Conduct Association for private security providers (ICoCA 2019), operation of which is based on three membership pillars of governments, privates security companies, and civil society organisations. Initially, many global companies subscribed (700 in 2018) until being a signed-up member required three stages of membership: 'affiliate', 'member' and 'certified member' with various levels of obligations. At the time of writing (2022) there were 224 companies in total. A multi-stakeholder initiative that included civil society, academia, states and non-state clients, representatives of the private security industry itself were key in its development (Buzato, 2015). The Code explicitly addresses gender in three areas: gender-based violence including sexual exploitation and harassment and the obligation of reporting such incidents; gender bias-free selection of personnel; and the provision of sexual harassment-free work environments.

A key result of the code is that currently, any outsourced security operations by the UN to the private sector is only permitted to organisations who are subscribed code members. Affiliate membership, however, only signifies *intent* of becoming fully certified and denotes a transitional membership stage. This stage can last a maximum of two years after which certified membership is granted, provided a number of criteria have been met. At the European level, the most recent development is a resolution adopted by the European parliament in July 2017 that states the EU is to establish its own international legal regime to regulate services, the contracting of which should be based on common guidelines informed by the International Code of Conduct (see European Parliament news, 2017). Although explicitly acknowledging deployment of private security organisations overseas *and* in domestic provision*,* this resolution seems mainly aimed at organisations operating in combat zones seeking to limit their involvement to providing logistical

support and protection of installations.



Private security companies provide a range of services at many of the world's biggest sports tournaments. Whether providing stewards for stadiums, safeguarding the hotels where players and spectators are accommodated, or providing bodyguards for the sports stars themselves, private security providers are the unsung heroes that help secure the world's biggest sporting stages. So how are the private security companies providing these services chosen and what factors influence the procurement process? Once providers are chosen, how can clients be confident human rights and international labour standards are being respected? Whether it's related to the recruitment, training or treatment of security personnel, how can tournament hosts, teams and sponsors be assured their brands and reputations won't be on the line?

Join the Centre for Sport & Human Rights and the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) as we kick-off a discussion about how it takes a team to understand and manage the human rights risks at play in ensuring the contracting of responsible private security providers. We'll consider the cases of the FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar and the Commonwealth Games. We'll ask how the organisers of these events can best be assured human rights are respected throughout the tournament's security supply chain. Reflecting on the role of stakeholder engagement, we'll also ask about long-term sustainability beyond the events themselves. We'll provide concrete tools for those procuring the services of private security providers to guide them in conducting rigorous human rights due diligence and influencing strategies to help persuade decision-makers of the need to select top performing companies, worthy of securing the stage for the world's top performing athletes.

Date: May 31st, 2022, 15:00-16:30 CET

Click here to REGISTER

Table 2.4 - ICoCA - text of webinar invitation combining a number of dominant themes in current global security debates at the governance level

A number of NGOs such as Liberty, Action for Armed Violence and Open Democracy are critical of international and national governance initiatives, and for instance question whether the voluntary and self-regulatory nature of ICoCA can address governance and human rights issues, and the lack of transparency of organisations' operations. In the UK, no central registration point of security providers exist. Similarly, although the Security Industry Authority (SIA, see further down) encourages providers to apply for the Approved Contractor Scheme, this is voluntary. However, recent research into British-based organisations (Open Democracy, 2018) used Company House as a starting point where organisations that offer security services are assigned a particular code. Thousands of small companies are registered under this code, offering a range of services, from door security at nightclubs and events, bodyguards and close-protection, to industry sites protection. Open Democracy identified 235 companies as offering higher-level military security work. Detail was often lacking, for instance, what type of work and in which territories it was carried out, with 32 companies found to be using virtual offices (Open Democracy, 2018).

A number of UK-based security companies that operate in the UK also operate internationally and often have origins in security operations in conflict zones. Companies such as G4S have both UK-based and overseas organisational activity offering 'bespoke security solutions' (G4S.com) where the former is sought to give some legitimacy (as possibly more scrutinized) to the latter. Nonetheless, a significant share of profits is gained from work located in the UK itself. For instance, The Institute for Government (2019) reports that in 2018, G4S generated around a third of its 2018 revenue from UK work and 21% from public sector work. In a report on 11 high profile contract failures with the government between 2012 and 2019 (Institute for Government 2019), six concerned the private security industry, notably G4S. In the media this is often attributed to a lack of standards and professionalism (e.g. Huffington Post 12/04/18).

2.2 UK security landscapes: end of overseas deployment, austerity, and home-soil terrorism.

The increase of 'private policing' (Wakefield, 2003, p. 3) in the delivery of civil security is attributed by a diverse range of stakeholders to a complex set of intertwining shifts and movements. Broadly speaking, however, there are three, relatively recent developments that seem influential: the end of overseas deployment of armed forces; prolonged government budget cuts in defence and law enforcement in the austerity era vacated spaces; and a new kind of home-soil terrorism. Although the numbers were already much reduced, overseas deployment of military personnel in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars ended formally in 2011 and 2014 respectively (BBC 2011; BBC 2015). These events occurred alongside a dramatic reduction of 27% of the armed forces between 2000 and 2018 (see House of Commons briefing paper CBP7930, 2019), culminating in a recruitment crisis and a 17% shortfall of frontline troops, reported on in The Guardian (2019). A redundancy programme, developed and implemented during the conservative and liberal democrat coalition government, ran from 2010 to 2015. Max Hastings, a well-known journalist in matters of national defence, writes in the Daily Telegraph on 9 November 2012:

> It was obvious at the time that Margaret Thatcher's South Atlantic adventure was a last imperial hurrah. But none of us would then have guessed that today, not merely the ships and planes, but the very Armed Forces which fought the war, would be on their way to the scrapyard. Soldiers are being made redundant (…) Britain's entire Armed Forces are shrinking towards a point where, like Alice's cat, soon only the smile will be left

This represented a big cultural change as some would argue (e.g. Paris 2000); amid disillusionment following perceived military failure in Iraq and Afghanistan, the British people had lost enthusiasm for its traditional role as a warrior nation where the notion of war is used for national goals, chivalrous enterprise, and rites of passage to manhood. 'A warrior nation'… the reputation of the

armed forces is often offered as an explanation why the UK is such a prominent player in the private security market (e.g. The Independent, 2012). The industry grew enormously in the aftermath of notably, the last Iraq war (BBC 2010). Quite how many former military personnel ended up in the private sector is not known, although a survey (Gill, Howell and McGreer 2020) stated that 64% of professionals respondents had had careers in the military or police. There are a number of NGOs (e.g. Action on Armed Violence; Open Democracy) that investigate exactly this issue and some of the security implications of this, although mostly in territories outside of the UK. See for instance the shooting of two colleagues by a former soldier employed by G4S in 2012 against advice, which highlighted poor vetting processes in the private sector (BBC 2012).

With regard to austerity, government budgets were severely affected by the 2008 financial banking crisis. Public spending cuts under consecutive conservative governments dramatically affected law enforcement organisations. Outsourcing policing, a much more cost-effective ad hoc deployment of security forces for temporary needs, made the private security sector an attractive option. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (2017) calculated that between 2009 and 2016, the number of full-time-equivalent police officers in England and Wales fell by 14%, or almost 20,000 officers (p.2), although a more up to date source (House of Commons briefing paper SN00634, September 2021) reports a rise of a full time equivalent (rather than headcount) to 160,000 police officers. The private sector is increasingly deployed in a wide variety of roles, from frontline security as door supervisors (of nightclubs, events, sports venues), door guards (of hospitals, warehouses, office buildings, private property), CCTV operators (of businesses and public spaces), and close protection officers (bodyguards for private individuals) to assisting the National Crime Agency to solve more complex crime like child exploitation via complicated IT operations.

Finally, the 2005 London bombings, the Manchester Arena bombings as well as the London Bridge attacks in 2017, in the eyes of many legitimized the need for increased security spending. According to a pre-pandemic Ipsos Mori global prediction poll (2018) of 28 countries worldwide, UK citizens are particularly fearful of terrorism. Sixty-five percent believed a terror attack on British soil was likely to happen in 2018, which was a higher percentage than for instance for Turkish citizens (60%). In terms of optimistic outlook at the individual level - i.e. perspectives on how personal life was to improve in the coming year - the UK was in the bottom five. At the same time, until the pandemic, there has been a regular stream of messages from government agencies communicated via public channels about ongoing threats faced by citizens. Indeed, since 2006, MI5's Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre regularly publishes the UK 'threat level' and at the time of writing sets the level as 'substantial',

meaning that a terrorist attack is 'highly likely'[1], downgraded from 'severe' from before the pandemic. In a recent address on the topic of counter-terrorism and security (20 May 2019 to Scotland Yard, see Gov UK 2019 for the full speech), the former Home Secretary Sajid Javid highlighted thwarted attacks and increasing global terrorism that knows no borders and makes no distinction between nationalities: "Globalisation and the indiscriminate nature of terror means that *we are all potential victims*" (my emphasis). At the launch of an exhibition celebrating its 100th years of existence, GCHQ speaks of 'whens' rather than 'ifs' with respect to a next terrorist attack (The Today Programme, 9 July 2019). The messages about threat and measurements of public moods in survey results stand in contrast with the long-term decrease in government reporting of terrorism-related deaths. Of the 3,262 deaths in the time period 1970-2016, the majority occurred in northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s (86%), with the exception of the Lockerbie incident where 271 people died, as per the Global Terrorism Database reported on in House of Commons Briefing Paper (CBP7613, 2018). Notwithstanding the 2005 London and 2017 Manchester bombings and London Bridge attack, the paper concludes: 'The general trend from the 1980s is a decline in the number of people killed due to terrorism' (p. 7). At the same time, the Office for National Statistics also documents the long-term decline in crime, robbery, and theft (e.g. ONS 2019a). Fear of immediate terrorist attacks seem to have subsided since the 2017 Manchester arena bombing and London bridge attack, perhaps put on hold during the pandemic, and overtaken by the war in Ukraine and climate change concerns, although these still are of a relatively minor concern compared with the current top concern of the cost of living and energy crises (Ipsos Mori 2022). Nonetheless, civil security – security *within* the territory of a state (Ecorys 2015) - is seeing tremendous growth, described as 'exponential' (Provost 2017).

The underlying contradictions of some of the messages and numbers is nothing new to academics and policy-makers alike. Security control - practices to mitigate negative effects of security threats – has been described as 'irrational', and pandering to societal approval: 'The social perception of threat becomes a function of the security mobilisation itself, not crime rates' (Davis, 1998 in Wakefield 2003, p.10). Some argue (Goold et al. 2010) that anxious individuals turn to the market for security solutions, with the very act of doing so, i.e. taking control of one's own protection providing a feeling of safety. However, the sector's challenge (and arguably its opportunity) is that security is a

[1] https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels. Since its first publication in 2006, out of 19 threat level publication dates, 4 were set as 'critical', the highest level; 10 as 'severe', the next level down; and 3 as 'substantial', the level below the previous. Since 23/7/19 threat levels are also informed by right-wing extremism activity, not only 'international terrorism (see for the reporting of this story https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49088293)

slippery concept: '…fashionable yet elusive, elastic yet operational' (Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014, p. 1), and people's craving for it can perhaps never be fully satisfied.

2.3 The Security Industry Authority

Alongside the broader shifts outlined above, governance of civil private security in the UK comprises a colourful history of complex and dynamic processes. In part, these processes form a part of broader developments of a new style, decentered regulation propagated by various (both Labour and Conservative) governments in neo-liberal governing regimes that sees public sector services increasingly outsourced to the private sector. This new style of security governance is characterised by hybrid alliances and partnerships rather than bureaucratic, hierarchical state commands of an old style of governance (Crawford 2006, Schuilenburg 2015, Jarvis and Lister 2015). 'State' or 'public' on the one hand, and 'corporate' or 'private' on the other, have become not easily distinguishable categorizations, although these developments do not necessarily signal withdrawal by the state (Crawford 2006), nor are alliances static (Schuilenburg 2015). Regulation, and with that acknowledgement of the private security sector, was a long time in the making. It is argued (White 2010) that the quest for legitimacy by the private security sector is mainly fought in one particular domain, that of normative legitimacy. The British public have 'state-centric expectations of how security ought to be delivered' (p. 17) and paradoxically, institutions that threaten these beliefs such as private security companies, are intrinsically mistrusted. Police officers, i.e. those seen as legitimate law enforcers, are also ambivalent towards outsourcing security to the private sector, particularly when their deployment is to do with policing public areas or dealing with serious crime (Gill 2015). In addition, institutions from *within* the sector demonstrated ambivalence towards regulation, and changed positions from time to time. For instance, the British Security Industry Association during the Thatcher era was of the positon that the industry was better off self-regulating its trade (White 2010). Therefore, processes by which some of the security functions have come to be formally outsourced to the private sector were complex and drawn-out.

Stricter regulation of the private security sector in the UK materialised in the early 2000s with the founding of The Security Industry Authority (SIA). A non-departmental public body reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001, the current (interim) chair of the SIA board comprising executive and non-executive directors, is Michelle Russell. Russell has "longstanding experience of working in regulation and regulatory environments in both the public and private sector" (as per her LinkedIn page and SIA press announcement of 12/11/21). Russell was preceded by Elizabeth France, a former Home Office civil servant. The SIA has two main tasks: licensing of individuals seeking employment in the private security industry - a *compulsory*

requirement for individuals and organisations employing them - and managing the contractor scheme - a *voluntary* requirement for organisations - which assesses private security contractors against a number of assessment criteria in seven different categories, such as 'commercial relationship management', 'financial management' and 'people'. The latter category includes sub criteria such as the existence and implementation of policies on diversity and equality, health and safety, and staff performance appraisals; and establishing whether organisations comply with legislation on for instance minimum wage and working hours, see the ACS Self-Assessment Workbook on the SIA website, recently (December 2020) moved to a Home Office domain name (sia.homeoffice.gov.uk).

The birth of the SIA and its remit has resulted in the stipulation that in the UK, in carrying out any kind of security function all officers – door supervisors, security guards, close protection officers, key holders, CCTV operators - have to carry visibly an SIA badge, which signifies they have completed the relevant training. By March 2006, the deadline for compulsory registration following the new legislation, there were 91,000 licensed private security officers (Crawford 2006). This number was 394,401 in 2021 (SIA 2021). The SIA itself does not deliver training; it approves training awarding bodies. These bodies in turn approve training organisations, which deliver training to individuals. Therefore, alongside the development of the SIA, there are also a number of certification processes for organisations and individuals, the creation of educational or training organisations to facilitate these certification processes, and professional bodies to vet certified organisations or individuals for professional membership.

The number of licences over the last 5 years has seen a steady rise, with *door supervision* the biggest category. In 2017, there were 203,411 in 2017, in 2021 this number is 279, 231, despite the pandemic (SIA 2021a). Recently, the SIA monthly statistics have started to break down the numbers, and via license applications adding categories for age, gender, nationality, sector and UK region, although not ethnicity. We now know, therefore, that the number of non-UK national license holders in May 2022 is 135,203 of a total of 394,401, i.e. 34%. This suggests the private security industry attracts a disproportionate segment of the migrant workforce, non-UK born workers, quoted to account for just 18% of the labour force across the board in 2022 (Migration Observatory, 2022). Also since May 2022, gender is further broken down by security domains, see the table below, although it is not clear why the totals here do not correspond with the totals in the nationality categories:

Number of active licences	Female	Male	Total
Door Supervision	30653	266380	**297033**
Security Guarding	5460	57708	**63168**

Public Space Surveillance (CCTV)	6969	48620	**55589**
Close Protection	1004	14373	**15377**
Non-Frontline	2383	6591	**8974**
Cash and Valuables in Transit	232	4874	**5106**
Key Holding	145	1292	**1437**
Vehicle Immobilisation	1	12	**13**
Total	**46847**	**399850**	**446697**

Table 2.5 - SIA statistics, May 2022

The SIA has a 'statutory responsibility to license individual security operatives' and do this by 'applying criteria relating to identity, conduct and criminality' (SIA Annual Report and Accounts, 2020-2021, p 9). The body reports annually to parliament on numbers, activities, and due diligence matters, such as the number of licences in circulation, which of those were awarded in that year, detected license offences, number of site visits, action on reports of concern, performance analysis and financial review, and parliamentary accountability disclosures. Via the SIA reporting, it is not difficult to spot a number of challenges with which the industry is presented.

With 10% of the license holders reported to be female (pretty consistent in the various categories), the table makes the 'gendered' nature of security roles very visible. Another SIA-researched and reported challenge for the industry (SIA, 2021b), is the problematic recruitment and retention challenges in the sector, citing low pay, unsociable hours, job insecurity, and high levels of physical and verbal abuse (exact numbers not provided), often described by the industry itself as 'race-to-the-bottom practices' (e.g. Amulet 2018). The SIA report quotes a figure of £10-£12 as an hourly rate for door supervisors, *unchanged* since 2006, the last time they conducted such a study. The International Professional Security Association (IPSA), recently remodelled to become the voice of the frontline, conducted a survey and reported (Security Matters, 2021) that amongst their 3,000 members, 1 in 5 frontline staff earn below £9.50 per hour, i.e. below the national minimum wage of workers of 23 years of age and older.

A central thread through SIA reports make it clear that regulation is the overriding concern. However, regulation is not the same as professionalization and one wonders to what extent a regulation agenda that foregrounds increasing public confidence in the sector (e.g. Mawby and Gill 2017) is facilitative of professionalization processes outlined in Suddaby and Viale's (2011) four dynamics. Nonetheless, the developments and events described above in their fabric of connections may have opened up possibilities for a new kind of security worker in particular identity formation processes. The next chapter will delve into scholarly debates that could inform an approach to an empirical study on what these identity formation processes could look like.

3 CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SECURITY WORK, PROFESSIONALIZATION, AND IDENTITY: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

A thesis on professionalization and identity in the private security sector may usefully consult key debates that straddle three academic domains: sociology of work, international relations, and organisation studies. As outlined in the Chapter 2, there have been a number of gradual developments as well as watershed moments that propelled the private security sector on a journey of legitimacy. These processes could in part be seen as processes of professionalization: 'a systematic attempt by occupations to translate a scarce set of cultural and technical resources into a secure and institutionalised system of social and financial rewards' (Larsen 1977 in Muzio, Kirkpatrick, and Kipping 2011, p. 810). However, since regulation of the private security sector was not straight-forward and long resisted by the sector itself (White 2010), is professionalization equally contested? Who demands professionalization? Who are the stakeholders in the professionalization process? Who benefits? Who loses out? To investigate the relationship between broader discourses of security and professionalization processes in the development of professional selves– the main aim of the thesis - the literature review starts with an exploration of key debates in the sociology of work and organisational studies literatures on professionalization, and explores theoretical frameworks against which to assess the private security sector's professionalization activities. Although this thesis distinguishes security work in (post) conflict zones from civil security work, focussing on the latter, theoretical perspectives conceptualising either clearly overlap. There have been historical, political, and economic developments in private security industry growth - commonly shared by industry analysts and academics alike – that explain to some extent why this is the case (expanded on in the Introduction and Chapter 2). Of relevance for this review is the cross-over from military personnel formerly employed in conflict zones overseas to UK-based civil security work, ubiquitous and increasing private security, and the associated reputational damage and stigmatisation at both the individual and sector level. It is perhaps little surprising therefore, that security work and professional selves in disciplines of sociology and international relations have hitherto been conceptualised as, respectively, 'dirty' and 'stigmatised' or as 'hyper-masculine' and 'gendered'. The literature review continues with an evaluation of scholarly work in those disciplinary perspectives. However, as outlined in the Introduction chapter and Chapter 2, the UK security

landscape is undergoing fundamental changes that affect how private security is regulated, organised, and practised. Could it be that conceptualisations of the stigmatised, dirty, and hyper-masculine private security worker are somewhat outdated or at least incomplete? Do they sufficiently capture how diverse UK-based civil security work is construed, experienced, or practised? A focus on identity can throw light on what has changed (or remained the same), the way in which the private security sector construes professionalism, and how it is interpreted and enacted to develop professional selves. Professionalization processes can therefore in part be conceptualised as questions of identity and identity work at different levels of analysis, where intersubjective and dynamic processes inform identities development appropriate for private security sector work and accepted by wider societal cultures. Theories of identity and identity work have been largely developed in the field of organisation studies, the section which ends the literature review, but not before drawing together the various theoretical developments that build the case for the empirical work of the thesis.

3.2 Private security as a professionalization project

> '[A] set of themes in professionalizing movements has to do with a change of status of the occupation in relation to its own past, and to the other people - clients, public, other occupations - involved in its work drama' (Hughes, 1963, p 661).

3.2.1 Sociological traditions, boundary shifts and analytical constructs: from social closure to discourse

How do occupations become professions? How are professionalization processes connected with broader ideological changes? What does it mean to have professionalism? And, in relation to the central research question, what are the implications of these considerations for the development of professional selves in security work? Conventionally, sociological debates in the Anglo-Saxon world have concentrated on broader *social* issues in relation to the formation and organisation of professions as social category (Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011; Evetts 2011). The origins in scholarly work of profession and professionalism and seeing both as socially construed, is often attributed to Everett Hughes and his work on professional socialisation processes (e.g. Evetts 2013).

Martimianakis et al. (2009) remind us that in Hughes' work, the essence of the professional claim is that professionals *profess* – they profess to know better than others in certain domains, and they know better than their clients what is good for them. *Profession* as analytically separate from *occupation* is conventionally seen as the 'knowledge-based category of service occupation' (Evetts 2013, p. 781). *Professionalism,* a profession's knowledge base, is considered to be esoteric (Hughes 1963) and largely regulated, observed, maintained via professional bodies that vet individuals for

(continued) membership suitability in terms of desirable traits and behaviours (e.g. Evetts 2013; Dahle 2012), for instance in classic examples of medicine and law (Hughes 1963; Martimianakis et al. 2009). Ideologically construed as safeguarding discipline-specific knowledge against attacks from market and capital (Freidson 2001 in Timmons 2010), professionalism usually involves an ethical code for behaviour, which is considered observable and certifiable. As external rules imposed on the profession are minimal, professionalism is therefore sometimes referred to as the *third logic* that controls and orders work and workers by occupation, rather than markets and organisations (Freidson 2001 in Evetts 2013).

To become a member of a profession, knowledge is acquired via tertiary education followed by vocational training and experience; in return, members receive occupational recognition, social status, and financial reward. Education, training and experience are therefore essential but once acquired these serve as the foundation on which professional members can exercise discretion based on their competencies and thereby legitimise their professionalism. Societal notions of what it means to be a professional have been a long time in the making. As Eggington and Thomas (2021, p. 5/6) note: 'Twenty-first-century notions of a professional 'career' – defined by elements such as the expectation of progressive promotion and incremental rewards, an income awarded on a sliding scale, holiday entitlements, sickness pay and an occupational pension, as opposed to the structural insecurities of traditional working-class employment – have their origins in the mid nineteenth century'.

A positive perspective of professionalism is where it refers to work that is of importance to the public or in the interest of the state, or both (Evetts 2013). *Professionalization* is regarded as the trajectory that leads to recognition as a profession, i.e. 'the process to pursue, develop, and maintain the closure of the occupational group in order to maintain practitioners' own occupational self-interests in terms of their salary, status, and power as well as the monopoly protection of the occupational jurisdiction' (Evetts 2013, p.782). Elsewhere professionalization is referred to as an 'endogenous mechanism of institutional change' (Suddaby and Viale 2011, p. 424).

3.2.2 Theoretical critiques and the new professionalism

Under the influence of continental postmodern thought, as well as economic and regulatory shifts in liberal economic capitalist societies, a more negative view of profession and professionalism was developed in the 1970s and 80s. Theoretical approaches drawing on Bourdieu (e.g. 1986) began to think of activities of professionalization as social stratification and exclusion mechanisms to acquire and retain symbolic and economic capital (e.g. Dahle 2012; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Sciully and Halley 2009). Professionalization came to be considered as promoting elite professional groups'

own interests in terms of salary, status and power (Evetts 2013). The meaning of profession is seen as contested; even though academic literatures share similarities - such as that professions are knowledge-based, management of knowledge is ruled by a code of ethics, and autonomy is the core criterion (i.e. not subjected to employer control) - these elements are protected by gatekeepers and structures that privilege certain social groups and with that, certain types of knowledge (Dahle 2012). Increasingly, therefore, it is proposed that *profession* - a 'slippery and pejorative concept'' (Watson 2002, p. 95) - is not considered in essentialist terms. What becomes important is to unpick the mechanisms of control that lead to privileging, and critically analyse the ideological and political discursive devices professional groups draw on to legitimise their existence (Watson 2002), although such an aim is beyond the scope of this thesis. Additionally, professionalization as an analytic construct has been critiqued for its blind spots in terms of the broader political or ideological dimensions of the professionalization process. More neo-institutional approaches (Suddaby and Viale 2011; Muzio, Rock and Suddaby 2013) seek to address this. For instance, Suddaby and Viale propose four dynamics where particular professional groups occupy organisational fields and become institutionalised: 1. In challenging the established order, find a new uncontested space; 2. Use social capital and existing skills to occupy the new space, creating new professional identities; 3. Confirm the new field by creating new regulations and standards; 4. Through management of social capital, create new social orders. However, it is not clear which social groups, with which kinds of professional credentials and social capital already acquired elsewhere, allow the occupation of the new space. Indeed, what counts as institution is not clear either with conceptualisation residing on a spectrum of the profession itself at one end and the organisation of social life at the other (Alvesson and Spicer 2019).

It is argued (Evetts 2013) that traditional Anglo-Saxon sociological analyses over-emphasized the power of archetypal professional groups (e.g. medicine, law) in the formation of a capital economic order at the expense of attention for other social mechanisms and phenomena that explain such an order, and also why, for instance some occupational groups are less successful. Furthermore, it is debatable that professionalization is always a desirable outcome in terms of benefits to occupational members. In the case of a relatively marginal occupational group in the field of medicine, Timmons (2010) argues that professionalization was a mixed blessing: on the one hand it helped in acquiring status and offering some defence mechanism against managerial attacks; on the other, it resulted in professionalism becoming equated with regulation, at the expense of an emphasis on the (development of) skills set of the occupational group. Sometimes professionalization is seen as a process that could benefit certain weaker social groups and readdress gender imbalance, especially for the newer professions. However, gender perspectives tend to highlight ideologies that explain

dominance of particular groups in the first place, for instance, those that explore gender dimensions of archetypal 'masculine' or 'feminine' professional fields, such as archaeology (Moser 2007), further education (Leathwood 2005), IT and digital knowledge (Griffin 2019; Ruiz Ben 2007), social work (Dahle 2012), and engineering (Powell, Bagilhole, and Dainty 2009)

There are observations around a *decrease* in professionalization with further implications for theorisation. It is argued (e.g. Diefenbach, 2009; Evetts 2009; Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011) that in the public service sector under New Public Management, increased privatization leads to a diminished, or erosion of professional expertise required to fulfil roles (e.g. Kirton and Guillaume 2019;) and the corrosion of (professional) character (Sennett 1998 in Benjamin 2015), for instance because of fragmentation or isolation. Elsewhere, these observations are conceptualised as a shift of professionalism from 'within', to professionalism from 'above' (McCelland 1990 in Evetts, 2013). In the former, the profession has been successful in organising its expertise and convincing the state in securing and retaining its regulatory powers and codes of conduct, for instance to reward and punish (in)appropriate conduct (examples include legal practice and accountancy). In the latter, the state has taken over the certification of inclusion and exclusion processes. It is argued that professionalization activity is increasingly organised from 'above' (Evetts 2013; Andrew 2015; Timmons 2010). Some argue, e.g. see the 'supply' versus 'demand theories' debates (de Vries et al. 2009 in Timmons 2010), that this happens when recognition of a profession 'suits' the state, for instance when the market has failed at regulating and delivery of suitable people and service, *and* it is in the interest of the state to deliver these.

However, professionalism developed on the back of the scenario described above is considered problematic. With a discourse of autonomic decision-making and dedicated service at the heart of the appeal of professionalism, professionalization imposed from above, so argues Evetts (2013), is false or selective because autonomy or occupational control of work is not included. Rather, such a professionalization discourse is used to 'promote and facilitate occupational change and disciplinary mechanism of autonomous subjects exercising appropriate conduct' (p. 786). This different approach to professionalism draws on Foucauldian concepts of legitimacy and control of autonomous subject, seeing professionalism as a disciplinary mechanism (explaining the appeal of professionalism as a mechanism for occupational change), i.e. professionalism as governance 'at a distance' (Evetts 2013 p. 782). Therefore, where professionalism used to be interpreted as an occupational or normative value, in a further move toward a continental view and poststructuralists analyses, it is increasingly thought of as a discourse, combining both occupational value and ideological interpretations. Evetts (2011) proposes to refer to this kind of professionalism as *the new professionalism*, to contrast it with occupational professionalism. The claim is that a discursive

approach is better able to analyse political or power dimensions, occupational change, and social control at macro, meso, and micro level (Evetts 2013 p. 784). In this respect, professionalization could also be re-interpreted to emphasise its ideological or discursive properties, such as in Andrew (2015), of professionalization as 'an intervention in discursive power relations…to challenge how an occupation is categorised by those with access to symbolic power' (p. 306). Such an approach, I propose, can therefore unpick the dynamic professionalization processes at the private security macro level, as well as constructions of professional identity at the micro level, whilst also considering broader societal developments. Nevertheless, as Evetts (2013) points out, the concept of professionalization remains important, especially with regard to analyses of newly emerging occupations who seek status and recognition for the importance of the work, for instance via standardization of education and training.

3.2.3 Professionalism, organisation, and the service triangle

Traditionally, research on the professions is located in sociology (of work) literatures. Management research on professional organisations, which draws on sociological approaches, has been quite a distinct body of work (Muzio, Rock and Suddaby 2013). However, increasingly, professionalism is being looked at in relation to organisational contexts (Evetts 2011; Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011). In part, this is because of the notion of professionalism increasingly being studied in Business Schools rather than in the sociology of work (Muzio and Kirtpatrick 2011), with a resulting change in research agendas. In part, it is because expert or so-called knowledge-based occupations are increasingly located and developed in large organisations, rather than small-scale family business or partnerships. Scholars noted an accompanying paradigmatic shift from professionalism as based on partnerships, collegiality and informality, to professionalism as managed in managerial professional business (Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011). A neo-institutional approach with attention for agency is bringing together both sociology-based research and management research/organisation studies (Alvesson and Spicer 2019; Muzio, Rock and Suddaby 2013; Suddaby and Viale 2011). Such a framing sees professionalization attempts - by organisations as well as individual actors - as contributing to institutionalisation, i.e. in its broadest sense construed as the construction and ordering of social life (Muzio et al. 2013).

The upside of the increasing role of organisations in shaping professionalism, is that improved professionalization strategies might be better able to extend occupational control. For instance, Evetts (2011) explores the ways in which the combination of organisational logics and professionalization might create opportunities and positive outcomes for service work, as well as offer benefits to practitioners and their clients. These outcomes include improving the conduct of

the practitioner, transparency of professional powers, and a general recognition that organisational management and managerialism are complex and multi-layered processes that can have both negative and positive effects. For instance, management can be used to control and limit the power of practitioners, but also, practitioners can draw on management as a strategy to the standing of the occupation. An important possible benefit to practitioners lies in organisational human resources management entering professional employment practices, such as job contracts, work benefits, formal selection and interviewing procedures, and so on, the formalisation of which has gone some way in making working practices fairer. Some of the benefits are perhaps more difficult to pinpoint or quantify, which Evetts (2011) words as follows:

> It is possible to argue that identity, work culture, specialist team working, discussions among specialists, knowledge and expertise formation and its maintenance all improve the conduct of professional work and its practice while being of benefit to both practitioners and their clients (Evetts 2011, p. 416).

In analysing the professionalization activities of 'aspiring professions', Muzio et al. (2011a) contrast new, 'corporate professionalism' with old, 'collegial professionalism (p. 451) that is able to draw on professionalization as an occupational strategy for a collective good. Vast segments of the workforce in developed countries are now involved in frontline customer work, challenging conventional assumptions about the nature of work and employee relationships (Gabriel, Korczymski, and Rieder 2015; Shantz and Booth 2014), and the involvement of emotional labour in service work (Hochschild 1983/2012). As professionalization increasingly takes place in organisational contexts, there is more attention for the 'service triangle' of organisation, employee, and client, both in the private and public sector in relation to professionalism (e.g. Carollo and Solari 2019). Growing privatisation of public sector labour has had significant attention (Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011); for instance, see Kirton and Guillaume's (2019) study on the effect of privatisation on probation professionals. However, the private sector has been less explored and such a relatively new, triadic model of employment relationship in service work is not straight-forward and could result in tension and conflict, see a study by Carollo and Solari (2019) on customer services employees in banking. In this study, the authors explored the different ways in which a discourse of professionalism is used in relation to front-line service work in a bank. Although a number of competing discourses in the organisation were in operation, a discourse of professionalism was successfully used by front-line service workers who, in siding with customers rather than management and unwelcome managerial initiatives, were able to negotiate better working conditions.

The extent to which professionalization processes have thus far improved working practices or created conditions for professional selves in the private security sector is a contentious issue, the dimension of which are under investigation in this thesis (see also the context section in the

Introduction). It was noted in Chapter 2 that, in endeavours to secure increasing market share, large UK-based private security organisations compete in a race-to-the-bottom (Amulet 2018) by offering ever cheaper 'security solutions' at the expense of workers employment conditions. For on the ground security work, at least, there is little by way of career trajectory. Corporate professionalism in the case of private security work, therefore, may be an oxymoron at best, and something altogether unsavoury in the worst-case scenario. However, it may also be private security's service work and knowledge creation in collaboration with clients that may offer pathways to its redemption.

Insights into the issues highlighted above could be achieved by unpicking the ways in which practitioners adhere to, resit, or adapt a professional identity. In the past often 'reified and homogenized' (Cohen et al. 2005 in Barros 2018, p.5), current conceptualisation of professional identity is not construed in terms of having a fixed meaning or essential, static properties that go with a particular profession. Instead, in alignment with identity theories more broadly, a professional identity is a process of 'crafting' a self, inseparable from cultures and histories, and notions of power, see for instance Kondo's (1990) classic study on women employees in a family-owned factory in Japan. For a more recent reference, see also Pritchard and Symon's (2011) study of HR professionals in a call centre, where professional identity is situated in both local (organisational) and broader (institutional and societal) contexts, and seen as 'fluid and dynamic' (p. 437). Based on evolving political or cultural/social developments, professional identity is constantly (re-)enacted and performed. Nonetheless, *having* a professional identity remains an important vehicle for self-esteem, and identification or dis-identification with a dominant professional identity can have significant material effects (Costas and Fleming 2009; Barros 2018; Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011).

There seems to be a limited number of private security studies that specifically consider issues of professionalism and professionalization. An exception is a study by Thumala, Goold and Loader (2011) which uses 'legitimation work' - possibly a form of identity work although not labelled as such - to explore self-understandings by those involved in *selling* private security (based on data collected in 2007). A noteworthy starting point is the claim that boisterous confidence projected by the private security industry in public presentations is accompanied by expressions of ambivalence and insecurities in a continuous quest for legitimisation and self-justification. Legitimation work refers to 'rituals and claims intended to justify the activities and purposes of the security industry' (p. 284), with which the authors identify narratives of professionalization in regulation, education, professional associations and, drawing on Bourdieu, symbolic borrowing. The latter points to legitimation work via acquiring symbolic capital by alignment with other professions. In the Thumala,

Goold and Loader study, these professions include state police (being part of the 'extended police family', p. 294), but also medicine, by offering 'tailor-made' security solutions, a cure in response to a diagnosis, i.e. an assessment of security needs. However, those *selling* security seem to have different identity challenges to those *delivering* security services at the frontline, to which the review turns next.

3.3 Security work: dirty, stigmatised, and hyper-masculine

3.3.1 Dirty work, stigmatisation, and taint and impression management

In the literature on private security, especially those on private military and security companies (PMSCs), it is noted organisations are suffering from an 'image problem' (Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016). Employees are often referred to as 'mercenaries' or 'dogs of war' (Joachim and Schneiker, 2012; Sorensen 2015), operating in 'twilight policing' (Diphoorn, 2016), which can simultaneously support and undermine state functions. It is therefore not surprising that scholarly work often draws on symbolic interactionism and theories of stigmatisation, and the concept of *dirty work*, building on the work of, respectively, Erving Goffman and Everett Hughes (e.g. Ashforth and Kreiner 1999, 2013, 2014; Devers et al. 2009; Jensen and Sandstrom 2015; Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016; Paetzold, Dipboye, and Elsbach 2008; Reuber and Fischer 2009). When doing dirty work in stigmatised occupations, employees are seen to require defensive tactics (Ashforth and Kreiner, 2014), and resort to taint and impression management to develop positive identities (Johnston and Hodge 2014, Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016). It is argued (Ashforth and Kreiner 2013) that occupations that are seen as physically, socially, and/or morally dirty - with dirtiness as 'bad' and cleanliness as 'good - become stigmatised. Occupations face *pervasive stigma* where the '*breadth* of perceived dirtiness (the proportion of tasks that is dirty or the centrality of that dirt to the occupational identity) and the *depth (*the degree of dirtiness and the individual's direct involvement in the dirt) are high' (Ashforth and Kreiner 2013, p. 128, emphasis in the original). Stigma has also been conceptualised at the organisational level (Devers et al. 2009); for instance, Jensen and Sandstrom (2015) describe *organisational stigma* as: 'stigma associated with a particular category of organizations…that is transferred to a group of people… who have to conceal, transform, or resist this stigma transfer in social encounters' (p. 128). An example is Enron, where an association with this organisation could taint the reputation of individual employees or even affiliates (Devers et al. 2009). Challenges of stigmatisation in relation to identity formation can be profound. In this respect, Kreiner and Mihelcic (2020) distinguish image-based (outward-facing) challenges from identity-based (inward-facing) challenges. In the former, stigmatization by others

can lead to bullying and harassment of individuals and decreased opportunities for stigmatised groups and group members of getting and keeping work. In the latter, negative self-identities, for instance via association with stigmatised organisations, can be become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Building on Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader (2016) see private security work as ticking all boxes of a categorisation as dirty work: it is *physically* dirty as workers often deal with hands-on touching of people, fluids, objects, etc.; it is *socially* dirty as workers have to handle socially stigmatised people, for instance asylum seekers; finally, it is *morally* dirty because the broader industry is seen as tainted and disreputable. Considering the findings from two ethnographic studies in the UK and Sweden, the authors discuss the following themes in relation to how private security officers talk about their work: doubts about worth, being looked down on, confronting and dealing with immorality, demeaning servile relationships, and reclaiming worth among co-workers as internal coping strategies. In respect of the latter, Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader (2016) note, however, that security staff draw on an occupational culture that allows for a positive reframing of their work as necessary and important. However, such an occupational culture seemed to be mostly about shared experiences and constructing narratives of 'having ended up' in the security industry which they one day hope to escape, using income to fund other interests.

3.3.2 Gender and hypermasculinity

With an estimated 90% of the security workforce as male, there is little ambiguity around the dominant sex in the sector, see the New Security chapter. Scholars often conceptualise private security practices as inherently gendered (e.g. Tomkins 2005), notably in the context of conflict or post-conflict zones (Eichler 2015; Chisholm and Stachowitsch 2016). These practices are seen to be underpinned by broader understandings of masculinity and femininity, which in turn inform hierarchical organisational practices. Occupational security cultures are sometimes referred to as 'fratriachal' (Higate 2012), i.e. shaped by patriarchal values in environments characterised by close relations between men. Others see the private security industry relying on 'hypermasculinity' that romantisises the male bond (Stachowitsch, 2014). 'Othering' discourses draw on masculinity of which there is either too much or not enough, turning the concept into a point of reference vis-a-vis issues and problems in the private security sector, even though what masculinity itself might actually entail remains elusive. This is also noted by Joachim and Schneiker (2012) who observe that in contrasting themselves with the state military, PSMCs sometimes present themselves as 'super masculine' (p. 497). Stachowitsch (2014) observes that in the market sphere of private security, masculinities are not only reconstructed as necessary in global politics, they keep on being used as framework for theorizing international relations, even in discourses critical of private security. They

thereby reassert male dominance, and work as mode of exclusion. Therefore, is the assertion, masculinities and private security, in their perceived need of one another, legitimise and reinforce each other.

In relation to gender, in what could be construed as a particular professionalization effort, there is the development of an UN-endorsed, human rights-based International Code of Conduct, developed in 2011, to which at the time of writing (2022) 224 companies subscribe. A multistakeholder initiative that included civil society, academia, states and non-state clients, representatives of the private security industry itself were key in its development (Buzato, 2015), see the Introduction. The code addresses gender in areas of gender-based violence, selection of personnel, and harassment-free work environments. In an assessment of the International Code of Conduct and the voluntary nature of adherence to it, Eichler (2016) concluded that gender is seen by the private security industry itself as good for business, because it promotes the friendly face of private security and helps it to presents itself in opposition to an industry construed as masculine. Furthermore, employment of women in specific security tasks contributes to operational effectiveness, for instance having female employees on site to carry out body searcher. Eichler (2015) notes that the private security industry uses the notion of gender to further legitimise its existence.

3.2.3 From stigmatised and dirty workers to new humanitarians?

It is noteworthy that studies on stigmatisation and dirty work see a need for a redefining, expanding, or even reversal of the notion of stigmatisation, invariably to capture empirically observed agency of implicated employees. Nonetheless, these efforts are framed against an overall negative assessment of the workplaces involved. For instance, Ashforth and Kreiner (2013) observe a reframing, recalibrating, and refocussing of work as a defensive tactic by individuals to mitigate the stigma attached to their 'dirty' occupations, with a view to create positive meaning. Highlighting the difficulties for security employees in negotiating taint as well as different masters - the security company and the client – Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader (2016) noted some resolve in the development of male bonding and 'banter-infusing' tainted roles with meaning and value. A study of private security officers in a hospital (Johnston and Hodge 2014) highlights men's taint coping strategies of perceived masculine virtues of resiliency, emotional detachment and enthusiasm for morbid, disturbing and dangerous tasks.

Even at the organisational level, stigma is not always considered negatively. For instance, Paetzold, Dipboye, and Elsbach (2008) contend that stigmatisation can lead to challenges of the validity of the stigma, creating a call to action and overcoming injustice. Helms and Patterson (2014) suggest ways in which stigmatized organisational actors can persuade audiences to 'reconsider [attributes that are

the focus of stigma]'s negative evaluations, rendering their organizations more acceptable' (p.1453). Stigmatisation and dirty work are clearly being re-evaluated with new research questions generated, such as *can dirty work be satisfying* (Deery, Kolar and Walsh (2019) or *why cleaners are happy* (Léné 2019). These, mostly sociological studies frame change at the agency level, i.e. via agentic actions individuals were able to push against societal, negative perceptions of occupations. However, such a reframing of stigmatisation can also be observed at the discursive level, notably in IR studies. For instance, a discourse analysis on selected Private, Military, and Security Companies' (PMSC) websites (Joachim and Schneiker, 2012a) observes a repositioning of PMSC staff as the 'new humanitarians'. Using the same data, another study (Joachim and Schneiker 2012) looked from a gender perspective at ways in which the industry is trying to improve its image by drawing on social construction of identities. It uses the various forms of masculinities to argue that the success of private security firms not only relies on size, market share, and effectiveness, but also on increasing genderisation of security. It is through discursive processes of power that PMSCs distinguish themselves from, on the one hand, mercenaries and other private competitors by drawing on 'civilized' notions of masculinity, resulting in an image of security contractors as 'true professionals' (Joachim and Schneiker 2012). On the other hand, in a separation from state security forces, PMSCs present themselves as 'super-masculine', 'ethical hero warriors', and even peacekeepers (Joachim and Schneiker 2012a). The use of these two different types of masculinities - 'true professional' and 'ethical hero warrior' - positions the PMSC firm as normal yet different, and superior in comparison to state security which is conceived as 'weak, incapable, ineffective, and immoral' (Joachim and Schneiker 2012, p 507), which further legitimises the use of PMSCs.

These '(de)-stigmatisation' processes described above raise further questions with regard to whether conceptualisations of stigmatisation and dirty work still offer explanatory frameworks for security work today. Furthermore, part of the professionalization efforts of the civil security sector is to distance itself from the PMSC, as is often promulgated by the industry itself (see also Buzato 2015). However, even in the context of conflict zones and the scandals around private military companies at the time of the Iraq war, Higate (2012a) argues that a study of private security professionals should go beyond a typecasting of 'trigger-happy Blackwater cowboys'. In linking national and professional self-identities to security practices 'on the ground', he proposes a focus on identity to throw light on the way in which the private security sector understands professionalism.

3.4 Identity, self and identity work

The study of identity in management and organisation studies is well established, see for instance a relatively recent *Oxford Handbook of Identities in Organizations* (Brown 2020). Nevertheless, interest

in the identity concept has seen unprecedented growth (Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003; Mallett 2016; Corlett et al. 2017). Initially limited to studies with a more critical orientation (Thomas 2011), identity has become a pre-occupation in mainstream scholarly work (Brown 2018). In part, this is explained because of developments in the social sciences more broadly, where under the influence of postmodern thought and cultural relativism 'identity' has become a 'meta-concept' (Jenkins 2008, p. 16), connecting and structuring as much the self as the collective. Based on 20th century theorists like Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, and Deleuze, postmodern social sciences challenge the idea that identity is singular, stable, and acquired by dint of biology, and social or cultural factors such as class, ethnicity or race (Lindsmith, Strauss, and Denzin 1999). Instead, it sees identity as 'a relational concept' (Kärreman and Alvesson, 2001, p. 63). In part, it is argued (Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011) the focus on identity is due to the changing world of work in western societies where employees' jobs *for life* are in decline; work no longer offers a life-long hook on which to hang explanations of 'who we are'. Therefore, where professional identity used to be defined as a relatively stable self-concept of professional roles (Ibarra, 1999), increasingly workers tend to occupy multiple, uncertain, and fragmented roles. These shift raise questions about the nature of the professional identity concept as well as identification with particular organisations or occupations (e.g. Brown 2017; Ashforth, Moser, and Bubenzer 2020). Other explanations for an increased interest include the narcissistic tendencies of modernity (see Lynch 2016 for a discussion), and the decline in traditional sources of authority in the modern world necessitating inquiries on the resulting fluidity of identities (see Brown 2018).

Research on identity in relation to work or occupation draws on a variety of scholarly tribes within a number of research traditions, sometimes referred to as the 'registers of identity research' (Corlett et al. 2017, p. 261). Although often overlapping, distinctions can be made between psychoanalytic, functionalist, critical, interpretivist, and posthuman approaches to the study of identity. Within an interpretivist tradition, in which this study is broadly located (see Chapter 4), the emphasis is mostly on both meaning and positioning, informed by discursive and symbolic theories (see Corlett et al. 2017, Brown 2015, Brown 2017). Increasingly, however, studies using the identity concept have attention for material effects (e.g. Harding 2020), locating identity formation processes in posthuman conceptualisations where material elements are explicitly taken into account. See, for instance, Ashcraft (2020) who proposes that human and non-human bodies coming together in materiality '*participates* in activating identities in ways that exceed human will, knowledge, and control' (p. 852, emphasis in the original). Such a focus seems particularly important in industries characterised by inequalities and challenging material conditions, and therefore reflected in the methodological underpinnings of this thesis (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), see Chapter 4.

In theorising identity as multi-facetted, fractured and incomplete, where materiality is significant in information identity formation processes, where does this leave the notion of 'self'? How are identity and the development of professional selves related? The social sciences, notably in anthropological writings, have a long-standing awkward relationship with the idea of self. In critiquing the concept of self in essentialist terms, i.e. as an independent entity separate from historical, cultural and political contexts, the social sciences positioned themselves in opposition to the more psychology-informed theorisations of self. Sokefeld (1999) observes how anthropological analyses have used 'identity' *instead of* 'self' or denied 'self' as existing altogether. He argues how the disappearance of 'self' was the result of characterisations of 'the other' so that a Western self of relative independence, rationality and reflexivity, able to pursue its own goals became its inversion, i.e. a self of the other as dependent, unable to set itself apart or to pursue its own goals independently of the group's goals. Simultaneously, underpinned by thinking broadly grouped as the linguistic turn, the self became enmeshed in discourse, i.e. inextricably linked to discursive conditions that create it. However, a huge influence on methodological thought in matters of identity, Foucault in his later writings introduced an additional dimension to analyses of knowledge and power: the self (1988 in Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018). In his recent thinking, the subject became a more dynamic creation, i.e. not just a 'social construction' but a construction of the self reflecting on the self, where 'established forms of power/knowledge continually try to imprint with their crystallized patterns. The outcome of this struggle is always uncertain, never decided in advance, and never final' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, p. 313). Temporal outcomes could be thought of as sedimented narratives into 'visible' and 'sayable' strata (ibid.). For instance, drawing on Foucault, Kondo (1990) aimed to address the paradox in the discipline of anthropology at the time, of on the one hand, exploring cultural specificity of selfhood whilst on the other, working with narrative conventions of self/society distinctions. In her re-imagining, *crafting a self* is thought of as a set of processes that appear at both the individual and the collective within fields of power, and historical and cultural dimensions. In this way, she distinguished identities - nodal points (re)positioned in different contexts - from selves as 'performative assertions' (p. 304).

In the field of organisations studies, Ybema (2020, p. 65) conceives of identity as 'analytical bridge' between self and sociality. In mapping the terrain, he offers four social sites that theorise the self and sociality relationship: 1) 'inner' conversations' 2) self-other positioning 3) social interactions, and 4) institutional dynamics (p. 52). He advocates that identity analyses in this way should go beyond agentic accomplishments but need to integrate the relational dynamics – in social, organisational, management and societal circuits – that give rise to them. Scholars mindful of those dynamics often draw on Markus and Nurius's (1986) notion of possible selves (Ibarra and Petriglieri 2015; Knights

and Clare 2014; Slay and Smith 2011; Alvesson 2010; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Ibarra 1999). The self is used to theorise the relationship between individuals and challenging organisational contexts, and conceptualised as, for instance, provisional selves (Ibarra 1999), impossible selves (Ibarra and Petriglieri 2015) and culturally appropriate selves (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010, see also the next section). Invariably, however, identity is seen as an action process.

3.4.1 Identity work: conceptualising relationships between working life, occupation and identity.

For reasons discussed above, studies of identities as coherent and consistent selves are gradually being replaced by action-oriented, discursive approaches, i.e. identity constructed in relation to 'other' - where other includes discourses, and material and non-material objects - which is seen as multi-layered and dynamic. Such approaches transcend the structure/agency dichotomy; instead, what binds action-oriented approaches is the idea that analyses of social interaction, although focused on 'what is going on', should be mindful of historic and cultural contexts in which social interactions are produced (e.g. Edley, 2001). This principle is further elaborated in radical approaches, seeing identity as performed (Butler 1990) or negotiated as narrative (e.g. Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) and, as described above as 'crafting' a self (Kondo 1990), see also Chapter 4 for a further discussion of an action-oriented approach to identity.

In the field of organisation studies, the concept of *identity work* (e.g. Alvesson and 2002, Watson, 2008, Brown 2015) has gathered particular traction. The 'work' part of the identity work concept refers to the 'transformation of matter and/or symbols for human purpose' (Tsoukas and Knudson 2005, p. 7). Although used in other disciplines too, identity work as the 'most significant metaphor' (Brown 2015, p.20) in the study of identity construction in organisations, captures the dynamic interplay between personal, work and broader identities. Construing identity work as identity-in-action is an important move away from defining employees in terms of stable, personal traits, characteristics, competencies and skills in mainstream, mostly quantitative organisational research (Brown 2017). Instead, it involves:

> … the mutually constitutive processes whereby people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, *to influence the various social identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives* (Watson 2008, p. 129, my emphasis)

The quote suggests that identity work explicitly acknowledges individuals' agency in processes of identity construction (see also Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Brown 2015). Agentic activities that could be construed as identity work are conceptualised on a spectrum between polars of tacit and explicit, palpable and subtle, clear and ambiguous, intentional and habitual, and conscious and

unconscious (see Brown 2017; Corlett et al. 2017; Bardon, Brown, and Pezé 2017). Identity is therefore seen as fluid rather than stable, temporary rather than fixed, fragmented rather than coherent, context-dependent rather than de-contextualised (e.g. Corlett et al. 2017; Bardon, Brown, and Pezé 2017). Emphasising the 'work' element in identity work, Brewis and Godfrey (2018) describe this as a 'continual and often challenging endeavour which brings together multiple, perhaps conflicting, identities drawn from and limited by available discursive resources' (p. 4). Identity work in organisational contexts explores the ways in which identities are shaped 'in and through organizations' (Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011, p. 3).

The term identity-in-action, sometimes referred to as identity-in-process, denotes identity as an 'an ongoing project of revision, negotiation, retreat and (re)invention' (Mallett and Wapshott 2011, p. 273), i.e. where there is no end-goal, perhaps only a temporary fit with milieux. Most of the organisational identity literature is predicated on the view that people's identity work is motivated by a desire for positive meaning and social validation to avoid anomie and alienation (see Brown 2020a for a summary of drivers for identity work). Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) talk about identity work as fashioning a 'culturally appropriate self' (p. 136) during times of change in organisations or occupations to sustain feelings of authenticity, 'complete with stories deemed appropriate by a new professional group or community' (ibid). They advocate that more insights are needed into how actors 'story' their role transitions and speculate that individuals draw from personal narrative repertoires to accomplish identity goals that are part of the micro/macro role process. Successful repertoires - those that are recognised as having validity by their target audience and that generate feelings of authenticity in individuals - are those that are held on to for future use. Those that are less successful are discarded or alternatives sought.

Butler's *giving an account of oneself* (2005) could further make sense of what would count as successful or authentic, or what might entail 'positive meaning' and 'having identity goals'. As a 'social theory of recognition' (p. 30), it is Butler's contention that people give an account of who they are, going beyond 'story-telling', to elicit recognition. Giving an account therefore has a performative function that is both a reflection of a struggle of coming into being through a narrative endeavour, as well as in acknowledgement of the struggle as a response to being called to, or in Butler's terms 'hailed to', a particular direction. Recognition is seen as relational, i.e. people are recognised by some and not by others, and who recognises whom under which conditions matters. Giving an account, a form of identity work, and articulating ourselves to the other is a way of living a liveable life, therefore has ontological properties and effects. Butler's writings on recognition could offer a further framework for analyses, where giving an account and being recognized denote both the possibilities and limitations for the development of professional selves.

3.4.2 Professional selves and security work

In the context of professional selves, similar arguments are made, for instance, where under identity threats professional selves, although traditionally construed as relatively stable, change over time (e.g. Ibarra 1999; Ibarra and Petriglieri 2015; Chen and Reay 2021). What is particular about identity work in the context of private security work? What is known about identity in security roles needing to fashion a culturally appropriate self? Studies that look at this issue are few and far between, with a few exceptions. Of note is Brewis and Godfrey (2018) who in their analysis of five written memoirs by private security contractors thread all themes previously discussed: stigma, professional identity, and identity work. They argue there is a 'narrative fault line' (p. 12) in accounts that separate the 'cowboys' from the 'legitimate professionals' in, respectively, pre-invasion and post-invasion of Iraq in 2003. Such a fault line is also often located in the 2001 World Trade Centre attacks, and the ensuing war-on-terror as offering legitimisation for the presence of private security (see Chapter 2). For instance, in a study by Svedberg-Helgesson and Mörth (2019) on anti-money laundering and combating terrorist financing, has seen the positioning of private actors as 'resilient first responders', corporate lawyers in the UK and France in this case, in a security chain of events. The study explored discursive practices of resistance to protect professional boundaries and identity against a 'top-down command-and-control definition of securitization' (Svedberg-Helgesson and Mörth 2019, p. 264). It is concluded that for 'for-profit professionals' (p. 269) to gain new found status in the war-on-terror paradigm, they must relinquish some control and degree of self-determinacy.

Lund-Peterson (2013) particularly addresses professional identity in the case of private security *managers* in American companies. In analysing processes of both 'responsibilisising' of companies in the course of achieving national security concerns, as well institutionalisation of security expertise, she argues that the corporate security officer is required to present the business case for security. In so doing, the officer becomes a 'hybrid agent' making sense of the relationship between the political (security) and the corporate (the organisation), an 'otherwise-contested relationship' (p. 223). Furthermore, in examining the unanticipated effects of professionalization, Lund Petersen points to two forms of governance that emerge: neo-liberal and neo-republican. The former is to do with classic market logic thinking of security as cost and profit; the latter refers to a common moral 'we' that is able to 'embrace all possible contradictions between national security and business' (223). In this context it is interesting to note, however, Thumala, Goold and Loader's (2011) central observation, that practitioners in the business of selling private security are '*unwilling or unable* to justify their activities in market terms' (p. 300, my emphasis). Legitimation work, a form of identity work, was not just about economic objectives. For sure, regulation and professionalization via raising

the profile, and addressing sceptics' concerns, improve the industry's opportunities to create business opportunities and increase profits. However, the authors also noted that legitimation work - and associated processes of professionalization - was about self-justification, i.e. longing to be credible in performing activities of social value. Therefore, if there is such a thing as 'corporate professionalism' (Muzio et al. 2011a), focussing on competences and based on market closure via corporate practices, its ideology is not necessarily that of market logics. Thumala, Goold, and Loader (2011) offer a tentative explanation for an absence of a justification in market terms. They see this as the moral ambivalence that has besieged the private security industry, i.e. the question of what is being sold, exactly, and for whose end, to which they refer as 'an itch that cannot definitely be scratched' (p. 299), which is always going to stand in the way of legitimation. They propose scholars should devote some attention to this issue in the study of private security domains outside of those particularly tasked with selling it. There is evidently something else going on with regards to crafting professional private security selves. Lund-Peterson (2013, p.232) ends with the following observation:

> Professionalism in corporate security is still being negotiated and can develop in more than one direction, expressing different rationalities of governance and thereby different understandings of what makes up security expertise.

3.5 Bringing professionalization and identity (work) to private security studies

To summarise the previous sections, rather than in essentialist terms of the boundaries of the profession, or in terms of stages in professionalization processes, sociological approaches increasingly analyse professionalism and professionalization in terms of ideology and discourse. Such a 'new professionalism' (Evetts, 2013) is better able to capture the power dimensions in occupational fields, as well as document multiple interpretations of professionalism in single domains. Professionalism as ideology goes beyond a conceptualisation of professionalism as knowledge-work; instead it allows for an exploration of different perspectives on the raison d'être of the professional field, the existence of a shared understanding of professionalism of occupational members, the perceived core skill requirements, and what it means to be (a) 'professional'.

Theoretical shifts are accompanied by, and a reflection of societal shifts and marketization, where on the one hand, professionalization is increasingly informed by top-down regulation, managerialism, and standardisation, rather than social in- and exclusion mechanisms and professional codes of

conduct fostered by partnerships, based on collegiality, trust, and discretion. On the other hand, professionalism increasingly takes place in organisational contexts, a possible positive of which is that organisational logics may benefit professionals in terms of equitable, professional practice, for example, service work may offer pathways for redemption of the 'careerlessness' of private security work. Another development is that an increasing proportion of the working population deals directly with customers in service or other occupations (e.g. Gabriel, Korczynski, and Rieder 2015). This requires the development of core customer services aptitude, increasingly foregrounding those with sophisticated communication skills. Exploring professionalism in terms of professional-employer relationships and professional-client relationships, or as professional- employer-client triad, becomes more important. Although some see opportunities for a new, corporate professionalism, a paradoxical negative effect is that profession-specific professionalism and skills are eroded.

In the case of the private security industry, it is argued that perspectives explicitly exploring the effect of market-based forms of social control in the professions are lacking (Thumala, Goold, and Loader 2011), and these relatively new developments give rise to a number of questions. What effect does marketisation and commoditisation have on identity formation? In what kind of identity work/legitimation work do macro level agents engage? Additionally, in the case of the private security sector, it is the state that is now providing 'from above' regulation that shape the boundaries of professional conduct. Via licencing processes administered by the SIA, who is 'fit and proper' to work in the industry is being certified, and with that commoditised (see the Intoduction chapter). To what extent, in the absence of a shared professional ethic developed 'from within', do practitioners turn to ideologies and discourses found in broader societal patterns and movements to craft professional selves? And what do these selves look like? In light of professionalization as increasingly taking place in organisational contexts, to what extent are professional selves determined by employee-client relationships, rather than employee-employer relationships? I turn to the methodology chapter next to outline how these issues will be explored empirically.

4 METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

'Quantum mechanics…have taught us that the world is a continuous, restless swarming of things; a continuous coming to light and disappearance of ephemeral entities. A set of vibrations, as in the switched-on hippy world of the 1960s. A world of happenings, not of things' Carlo Rovelli - Seven Brief Lessons on Physics (2016, p. 31)

4.1 Introduction to chapter

In the first half of this chapter, I give an account of how I have come to adopt the methodological and philosophical positions that I hold and how these have informed the choices for the research at hand. To this end, I briefly revisit historical developments in my student and professional life, singling out key texts both consumed and produced that made me the researcher that I am. These developments culminate in the adoption of five principles, described in some detail, and which have specific consequences for the way I approach my research topic. The descriptions in the first half of the chapter, therefore, aim to explain the second half, where I outline the mechanics of the research process. Included are sections on data sources, access and ethics, data collection, and data analysis, ending with a brief section on research reflexivity and the relationship between researcher and research topic, and the limitations of this PhD research.

4.1.2 An account of self

My research is broadly located in an interpretivist perspective. However, within this perspective, I express no firm commitment to a particular methodological approach or research tradition. This is, in part, the way of the world where increasingly, research is interdisciplinary and scholars draw on a range of approaches to investigate complex social phenomena. In part, it is a reflection of my own development as researcher over time, the start point of which is located in the Anthropology department at the University of Amsterdam in the 1980s. The 1980s in The Netherlands were no longer the time of the 'eternal student' of the previous two decades; equally, the modern day set-up of the condensed 3-year bachelor degree with the possibility of a top-up Master's was some way off. The degree in non-western sociology/cultural anthropology, culminating in the equivalent of a Master's degree, was a four-year programme although students could take six years to complete it.

I took six years. I loved being a student and studied alongside my part-time job of staffing the information desk in the department. Student life was relatively gentle and intimate: year cohorts were small (about 80), and there were never more than 12 students or so in a seminar group. The academic essay was the dominant mode of assessment. I attended most Friday afternoon seminars -

short lectures given by members of staff or guest speakers on a wide range of topics, and open to everyone. These were followed by the Friday *borrel* - drink receptions that often involved heated debates between professors, lecturers, PhD students and undergraduates. Although there were many factions and frictions, Marxist perspectives formed the staple diet of the anthropology student within strong historical, feminist and critical traditions. However, there were also exciting new methodological and philosophical approaches in relatively unexplored territories - visual anthropology, anthropology 'at home', linguistic anthropology, and anthropology of elites easily spring to mind - and postmodern anthropologists as the 'hip young things' created new journals and started to influence programme directions. I tried to be hip by situating my project in the elites of Western Europe; my Master's dissertation was on cultural constructions of femininity for which I had interviewed Parisian 'career women' (this was the 80s!) in the *haute bourgeoisie,* supervised by a feminist anthropologist, Dr Anna Aalten (Aalten 1990).

During my time at the University of Amsterdam, no one talked about interpretivism or the interpretivist paradigm. There seemed to be an a priori assumption that ethnographies were the product of interpretations by anthropologists, whose own cultures and academic writing practices were instrumental in their production. With hindsight, I appreciate a bit better how the developments in cultural relativism and research reflexivity of the 1980s were infused by postmodernist thinking. These developments constituted a then relative recent response to the 'crisis of representation' that affected the social sciences more broadly (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018) and, as part of a post-colonial critique, the discipline of anthropology in particular (e.g. Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Rabinow and Marcus 2008). Crisis questions addressed at the discipline were - why should anthropologists be better able to describe other people's cultures, practices, beliefs than the people themselves? What does observation mean? What is the relationship between observer and the observed? What effect does this relationship have on what is reported, e.g. in ethnographic writings (for instance, see Hatch 2018)? In 1988, I attended an international conference in the memory of a then eminent anthropology scholar, Bob Scholte, which was held in Amsterdam. I do not remember much about the conference other than how much fighting there seemed to be and how little I understood the arguments. In 1991, the year of my graduation, a book appeared that featured a selecting of conference-inspired writings, including those by well-known anthropological scholars such as Dell Hymes (linguistic anthropology), Olivia Harris (feminist anthropology), and Johannes Fabian (anthropology and philosophy). The editors (and members of the conference-organizing team) commented:

> As we write this Introduction, we have become increasingly aware that the Conference portrayed to a certain extent the current state of the art of anthropology and reverberated the debates which are occurring in the other human sciences. The feeling of crisis could easily be attributed to the ingression of postmodernist thought and its tendency to undermine all efforts at legitimation of the scientific project. But this explanation ignores the fact that postmodernism in anthropology is a product of a history of critical and reflexive initiatives (Nencel and Pels 1991, p. 1)

Having a 'history of critical and reflexive initiatives…' it felt extra-ordinarily navel-gazing at times, i.e. to have personal research experiences make the cut of the central line of argument. I remember writing in my then dissertation about what I was wearing during the interviews, to contrast my self-conscious attempts at looking professional with the seemingly effortless elegance of my Parisian interviewees, and how my efforts were doomed to fail.

I first came across the term 'interpretivism' – an ugly, lazy name I thought! – in 2005 when I attended a one-year, postgraduate course in social sciences research methods at Oxford Brookes University, after a 13-year break from academia. Only then did I begin to get an appreciation of anthropological methodologies as part of a broader paradigm and within their historical context. For the first time, I heard about Berger and Luckman's (1966) *Social Construction of Reality* and their central argument that for anything to exist it has to be interpreted and also, that interpretation changes perspectives of reality. Building on the work of symbolic interactionists (e.g. George Herbert Mead, 1967/1934), interpretivism sees social everyday life shaped via inter-subjectivity, i.e. the co-existence of multiple realities and interpretations, of which the interpretivist researcher tries and makes sense (e.g. Mason 2018). It confused me, was this not what anthropologists had done since forever? I had always assumed that collecting other people's stories, interpreting these, and passing them on via storytelling - in essence, what anthropologist do (e.g. Van Maanen 2011) - was a legitimate way of developing knowledge. 'Romantropologie' was what Amsterdam academics called it (e.g. Verrips et al. 1979; 1984) - a portmanteau of the Dutch word for 'novel', *roman,* and the discipline of anthropology, *antropologie*. Anthropologists' tasks were to provide 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973), sharply contrasted with the thin (we thought!), one-dimensional and normative arguments of the quantitative method-loving sociologists, who resided in the building just around the corner from the anthropology department but who might as well have been located on the moon, such was the lack of interaction between the two disciplines.

My dissertation research as part of the anthropology degree was not particularly conducted in the spirit of anthropological fieldwork. Although I moved to Paris for four months and spoke French, I conducted only interviews, made no observations, produced no 'field notes', and very little context-specific, descriptive material made it into the dissertation; in short, it was not an ethnography. It was

not particularly postmodern either. Although the subtitle was 'cultural constructions of femininity' suggesting sensitivity to subjectivities as socially construed in broader (cultural) systems, the aim of the dissertation was to 'represent' my participant cohort in some way; rather than looking at the inherent contradictions or ambiguities I sought explanations for how my cohort was positioned with regards to wider cultural norms. Perhaps in broader social sciences paradigms, my then dissertation was the product of the symbolic perspective, i.e. wedged between modernism and postmodernism, that negotiates the objective macro and the subjective micro (e.g. see Hatch, 2018). However, over the last ten years, in- and output of research projects with which I have been involved has seen an epistemological and ontological shift, which has affected how I now look at research. Perhaps this shift can be summarised as, from making sense as researcher of people's experiences of phenomena, to *using* people's experiences to describe and better understand phenomena. This shift has methodological implications for the research at hand; however, before I discuss these in more detail, I outline a number of events and theoretical encounters that contributed to my shift in thinking.

Two key texts were instrumental in my development. The first one was Adele Clarke's (2005) *Situational analysis: grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. Clarke's field is the health sciences; however, she was taught by Anselm Strauss, a sociologist and with Barney Glaser, co-founder of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I was so enamoured with her approach that I wrote a methodology article about it together with two colleagues (den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013). In our published paper, we tell the reader that situational analysis is rooted in grounded theory, but that it aims to push grounded theory more fully around the post-modern turn as per Clarke's own phrasing (Clarke 2005 in den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013). Situational analysis is sometimes referred to as a method assemblage (Law 2004), which distinguishes what is there, what is notably absent, and what is hidden. It does so by including in its research inquiries a wide range of human and non-human elements, and is based on the principle that '[s]ituations become the fundamental units of analysis' (Clarke 2005, 22). Situational analysis uses maps to depict what is of consequence in the research at hand at the macro (the situation), the meso (social worlds), and the micro level (positions in discursive fields). The maps are not intended as end products - by Clarke's own admission, not even as methodological approach in and of itself but to be used alongside others - but as sites of engagement, a way into the research to encourage researcher reflexivity, i.e. critiquing ourselves in the various stages of the research process. Over the years, I have made many such maps - although sometimes mentally/in writing - to acquire clarity about social worlds ('universes of discourses', Clarke 2005, p. xxxvi), issues, clashes, paradoxes, boundaries, silences, and so on, which informed my analyses. In subsequent titles on situational analysis (Clarke, Friese, and

Washburn, 2015; 2018), our 2013 paper made it into the appendix under the header 'Selected exemplars of situational analysis by discipline' (p. 325/p.374). Clarke's approach was instrumental in two research projects in which I was involved on the practice of External Examining (my contribution), and is explicitly mentioned in two published papers based on these projects (Bloxham et al. 2015; Hudson et al. 2017), on which I am a co-author. At the start of my PhD research, I produced a number of maps to make visible the many elements in my own inquiry. Clarke's particular approach, further elaborated in a second edition (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), fundamentally changed my way of thinking, not only with regard to what matters in research inquiries and how they are developed, but also in terms of the limits of empirical research and representation of individuals' experiences to explain phenomena[2]. Although important, rather than the central focus experiences are now only one data source of a range of sources to inform my analyses. My ongoing engagement with Clarke's key text is a reflection of the realisation that there is just so much in it, covering such a breadth of knowledge. Every year I understand it a little more.

The second text was Alvesson and Sköldberg's Reflexive Methodology of which there have been three editions (2003, 2009, and 2018). As well as providing an overview of philosophies and methodologies in qualitative research to date, the organisation and management scholars also developed their own methodology for reflexive research practice, which we used to assess the value of situational analysis (in den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013). In our article, we compare and contrast situational analysis with Alvesson and Skolberg's reflexive methodology, drawing on the latter to critique some of the elements of situational analysis, notably in respect of the micro level, positional maps. It was not clear to us what informed the axes - the participants or the researcher - in the interpretation of the contested issues, and so our critique was about ownership and representation of data. Nonetheless, Clarke's approach made its way into the second edition of Alvesson and Sköldberg's Reflexive Methodologies (2009), and although discussed briefly, the authors were very complimentary about her attempt to produce a methodology in the postmodern tradition usually known for its anti-methodological stance (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009). In the third edition (2018), the section on situational analysis was expanded and ends with an observation: 'Somewhat humbly, Clarke presents her theory as a 'supplement' to traditional grounded theory, but the question is whether her programme does not signal an entirely new 'grounded theory'...' (p. 98).

[2] In 2008, I attended a workshop given by Kathy Charmaz at Cardiff University. Charmaz, who represents the social constructionist strand of grounded theory (e.g. 2014) told the workshop attendees: "I am not interested in the individual" – a bold statement that at the time, shocked me.

A second Master's in Mentoring and Coaching practice (completed in 2009) - for which I had to conduct a research project and produce a dissertation - developed my awareness of theoretical standpoints that I could *not* authentically adopt, mainly because they seemed so a-political. These were the more psychology-informed practices and explanations, for instance Piaget-based developmental psychology and stages of development in adult learning (e.g. Eriksen 1974; Kegan 1994; Torbert 2004), so often drawn on in mentoring and coaching practice (see Cox and Jackson, 2010, for an overview). Although I learned a lot from doing this second Master's degree, I could not see how these kinds of models could explain individuals' experiential developments *without* problematising the social structures that facilitated or impeded them. This awareness was sharpened further because I completed my second MA alongside the day job of research assistant at Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange (ASKe), the pedagogy research team at the Oxford Brookes Business School. I was involved in all stages of the research process for numerous projects about learning and assessment, including the two external examiner projects mentioned above. The projects shared theories of learning as situated in communities of practice, based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal text, which has anthropological and phenomenological underpinnings. I was therefore able to compare and contract *these* theories of learning (favourably) with adult learning and stages of developmental theories deployed in coaching and mentoring research.

4.2 Five principles

Based on the introduction above, which outlined my somewhat eclectic methodological encounters, I now present a number of philosophical principles, research tenets, which were shaped by these encounters. I think of the principles as 'embodied'; I cannot 'un-think' them. These, therefore, are my methodological backbone and inform the choices for the research at hand. As should come as no surprise, the principles have come from a number of traditions and texts although clearly overlap. Because of this, writing the sections under each principle was extra-ordinarily difficult with the possibility of content under each featuring under one or two other principles, too. However, in the way that I have categorised them, I think the principles say something about, respectively, 1) the lens, 2) ontology, 3) epistemology, 4 approach, and 5) text focus of my project, although the principles sometimes overlap where they do so. For each, I have tried to explain, briefly, their broader development, when and how I came to adopt them, and what the implications are for my research, summarised in a table at the end.

4.2.1 The everyday and making the familiar strange (mostly comments about the lens).

'To a common hero, an ubiquitous character, walking in countless thousands on the streets' (de Certeau 1984, p. i)

Although not one and the same thing, attention for the everyday and the notion of *making the familiar strange* go hand in hand (e.g Ehn, Löfgren, and Wilk 2016). As the study of cultures, anthropology has a long-standing tradition of observing the everyday, providing descriptions of how the exotic 'other' lives. Although not exclusively belonging to anthropologists, the purpose of making the strange familiar was the early 20th century ethnographer's *credo*. Increasingly, since the 1980s, this credo became its inversed version of making the familiar strange (e.g. Engelke 2017), i.e. 'looking at familiar phenomena with 'new eyes, turning the mundane into the exotic' (Ehn, Löfgren, and Wilk 2016, p.25), with a view that 'small things may produce new perspectives on large issues' (p. 23). The change reflected a shift in anthropology's object, from 'the other' to a more postmodern approach that problematized the subject-object dichotomy, and in so doing, did away with the notion of a core essence of the studied other that could exist as separate from the researcher self. The shift is often seen as emblematised in an edited volume *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Characterised as a 'milestone on the road to post-modern anthropology' (Fabian 2006, p. 141), in and after *Writing Culture* new conceptual frameworks were developed that drew on French theorists (Rees 2008) such as Foucault (governmentality and quotidian practices), Bourdieu (e.g. everyday practices and common sense that constitute the *habitus)*, and de Certeau (author of *The practice of everyday life, 1984*). Both as the object of study and as lens through which to understand broader structures, the everyday became an important focus across the social sciences, humanities, and linguistics, which facilitated de-privileging political, economic, or social elites. Instead, the focus on the everyday articulates and gives voice to marginalised cultures, vernacular languages, and private domain practices, in for instance, feminist writings and theories. In the studies of organisations, the everyday receives particular attention via organisational ethnography, see for instance Ybema at al. (2009b)

In the study of security, the everyday has relatively recently gained traction. Research in the field of International Relations, security studies' root discipline, increasingly emphasises the importance of the study of *everyday* security to investigate how security and insecurity are mutually constitutive, and the role of multiple security/securitising actors in this process[3] (e.g. Bigo 2015). Eichler's (2015) feminist security studies perspective advocates that security needs to be looked at from the

[3] See also, for instance, the relatively recently-set up research group of LIEP at Kings College, established in 2017, a conference on which I attended in September of that year. LIEP stands for Language and (In)security in Everyday Practice and "seeks to connect ethnographic descriptions of language and situated practice with critical accounts of the growing significance of geopolitical conflict and insecurity in everyday life" (downloaded on 28 April 2020 from https://www.kcl.ac.uk/ecs/research/research-centres/ldc/research/research-areas/language-insecurity-and-everyday-practice/language-in-security-and-everyday-practice)

perspective of ordinary women and men, rather than the state; see also Chisholm and Stachowitsch (2016) who argue that global security is dependent on the everyday, 'relying on feminised and racialised labour of both men and women' (2016, p. 826). *In Research Methods in Critical Security Studies*, a volume detailing new approaches to researching security edited by political scientists Salter and Mutlu (2013), 'everyday' has 31 index entries. In addition, a critical anthropology of security (Goldstein 2010; Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014) - seeing security as 'differently experienced and culturally imagined' (Schwell 2014, p. 88) - and notably, a 'Paris school' of thought (Bigo 2014 in Maguire, Frois, and Zurawski 2014) emphasise the importance of the study of *everyday* security. In considering notably women and men occupying a range of security roles, I look at the everyday and ways in which it is informed by broader discourses of (in)security and threat. Furthermore, I take the mundaneness and uneventfulness of security roles explicitly into account to explore how individuals develop meaningful working lives out of the ordinary.

4.2.2 Multiplicity and the limits of empirical data (mostly comments on ontology)

> '…realities overlap and interfere with each other…In a world that is more than one and less than many. Somewhere in between' (Law 2004, p. 61/62)

Multiplicity holds that elements - e.g. humans, objects - have particular ontological properties, but they need to interact with other elements to come into existence (e.g. Law 2004). I first came across this notion because of my interest in situational analysis. The origins of multiplicity in research approaches are located in Science and Technology Studies (STS) which in turn are informed by post-structuralist 20th century theorists such as Michel Foucault (*The Order of Things, 1973)*, Giles Deleuze (assemblages), Jacques Derrida (e.g. the notion of 'differance'), and Bruno Latour (Actor-Network Theory). Indeed, these thinkers and the theories they put forward are explicitly acknowledged in Clarke's approach. Multiplicity as used in Law's (2004) 'method assemblage' is particularly pertinent. Rather than tools for discovery, Law argues that methods are performative, i.e. they help *produce* realities. These realities, however, can only be seen via particular background understandings of the world, for which he uses the word 'hinterland'. Law offers multiplicity as ontological alternative to the singularity of the sciences and pluralism of the interpretivist approaches, although it has more in common with the latter than with the former in the way that it claims to address issues of one-sidedness, universalism and objectivism, the key problems levelled at positivism (e.g. Schaffer 2016). Multiplicity goes further. It is an ontology for the 'in-between'; we as humans, and objects, do not have single identities - there are only partial connections with others that create new formations. There is no subject-object dichotomy; equally, there is no holistic whole.

Multiplicity and security studies come together in assemblage theory (e.g. Deleuze and Guattari 2003; de Landa 2006; Abrahamsen and Williams 2009, Abrahamsen and Leander 2016), an increasingly popular way of looking at security practices[4]. In the discipline of criminal law, Schuilenburg (2015) uses the idea of assemblage, following Deleuze and Guattari, to depict security in contemporary urban landscapes as dynamic processes: 'the idea of assemblage draws attention to the fact that the practical significance and operational function of any specific elements tends to change when it is brought into contact with other elements' (p. 5). In the third edition of *Reflexive Methodology* (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018), there is a new section dedicated to assemblage theory, especially how it is developed by De Landa (2006), a Mexican-American philosopher. In his conception, assemblages are loosely connected and non-hierarchical alternatives to social sciences' central notions of 'system' or 'structure', and seen as 'dynamic, open-ended, complex configurations that develop and unfold in often abrupt and unexpected directions' (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018, p. 54). There is a 'flat' ontology: none of the things it includes, including humans, has a special place, status or worth. It does away with 'micro- and macro-reductionism' to challenge interpretivist or symbolic ways of thinking that still lets 'holism' in by the back door. These ideas can also be seen in Clarke's (2005) maps of the situation of the inquiry, as well as her critique of the symbolic interactionist version of Grounded Theory as still aiming to be normative. Instead, situational analysis favours positionality and situated knowledges.

Clarke's situational analysis can be thought of as an assemblage *method*, i.e. a way of mapping what is there ('in-there' as Law calls it), is absent (but still manifest, e.g. Clarke's notion of 'sites of silence', see further), and *other*, i.e. not thought of as interesting or not included. Although also using the term 'multiplicity', Clarke is not explicit about its meaning. She refers to her own approach as 'materialist constructionism' (e.g. p. 7), which takes into account human *and* non-human elements, e.g. technologies, objects, workplaces, reports, tests, and so on. Her argument is that through their material properties, these elements fundamentally shape interactions and humans' engagement with them.

The implications of a material constructionist, multiplicity or assemblage ontology in relation to my research project is fourfold: first, the assumption that security cannot be broken down into neat entities but has to be a study of configurations of a diverse range of actors, discourses, events, spaces, etc. that affect the organisation of security, and with that the development of professional

[4] See also, for instance, a relatively new research group at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands (urbanstudies.uva.nl/research/themes/urban-security). With particular attention for the private security industry, the website states "Increasingly, people's lives and property are protected by uniformed security guards […]. These private security providers don't necessarily compete with public security forces such as the police. Often, they collaborate. Together, they are central to what we call public-private security assemblages"

identities. Second, these configurations are not fixed; elements may fall apart, adapt, morph into different shapes, much in the way particles in quantum physics come into light to create new shapes (to then disappear again), as per the quote at the start of the methodology chapter. I draw on a range of text sources – interview data, PSCs' websites, professional bodies, policy documents, newspaper articles, opinion polls – the configuration of which, I argue, give rise to particular *professional identities*. Third, in so doing, I recognise the limitation of empirical data, e.g. the experiences and perspectives of individuals, to develop insights into what constitutes professionalism and professional identity. Analyses of trade magazines, professional trade organisations website texts, policy texts, own experience of the SIA training, objects (e.g. high-viz jackets, CCTV control rooms), and events (the 2001 Private Security Act and the advent of the foundation of the SIA) are explicitly taken into account as discursive resources. In so doing there is an acknowledgement that participant talk does not happen in a vacuum, even though the link between what discursive resources 'say' and what is 'out there' is difficult to evidence. My analyses of materials also provide insights into what I as researcher have considered and have knowledge of to help me interpret participant data. With this, I hope to address the charge that interpretivist researchers can somehow represent participant voice in an unmediated manner (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018).

4.2.3 Multi-perspectival epistemologies (mostly comments on epistemology)

The notion that seeing is inseparable from the perspective of the seer, whose seeing is grounded in background understandings of their social worlds, has been informing much of the social sciences since the second half of the 20th century (see Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2018). Perspectivalism characterised the epistemological shift from modernism and the grand narrative to symbolic perspectives of situated knowledges, developed in the new interpretivist paradigm of ontological plurality (see principle 2). Approaches problematize epistemology, i.e. what counts as evidence or knowledge, in relation to the ontological features that comprise the social world (e.g. Belenky, Blythe, and Goldberger 1986). Many of the approaches social scientists in the qualitative traditions work with today were developed in the latter half of the previous century, such as symbolic interactionism, grounded theory, phenomenological approaches, ethnomethodology, critical theory, narrative approaches, and action research (see Mason 2018, p. 8 for an overview). Informed by critical perspectives – e.g. critical theory, feminist and post-colonial perspectives - they puncture the value of the (metaphor of) the normal curve, embracing instead the inclusion of 'negative cases' or 'outliers' (see also Clarke, 2005). Postmodernist or critical realist influences developed the notion of perspectivalism further to include *multi*-perspectivalism, a 'polyphony-driven mode of research' (Alvesson and Sköldberg2 2018, p. 345) that includes multiple voices, multiple ways of seeing, and

'multivocal' (Mason 2018) explanations. Multi-perspectivalism hereby reduces the possibility for development of grand narratives, however, as a result also suppresses researcher authority. In postmodern approaches, paradoxically perhaps, the researcher becomes less visible, 'decentered' because they are enmeshed in the text, constituted by it (e.g. Usher 1996).

Clarke's (2005) situational analysis allows for the simultaneous existence of divergent perspectives, visualised in a map at the meso level, which aims to depict different social worlds that co-exist in a given social inquiry. Each of the social worlds have particular perspectives vis-à-vis the phenomenon under study. Clarke's staple questions to interrogate social worlds include: what is the work of each world? What are its commitments? How do participants believe they should go about fulfilling them? How does the world present itself? Are there particular sites where the action of the world is organised? Subsequent analysis can then focus on how social worlds maintain themselves and legitimise their existence. I use the notion of social worlds to denote the programmatic sources responsible for the production of texts analysed in the first Findings chapter.

What does awareness of multi-perspectivalism mean for the analysis and presentation of my data? I like Clarke's central epistemological questions of whose knowledge about what counts to whom and under what conditions (e.g. 2005). Apart from our article on her methodology (den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013), I further developed my understanding of multi-perspectivalism in two publications for a research project in which I was involved on knowledge economy 'older' workers, employability, and the notion of *potential* (Handley and den Outer, 2016 and 2020). A narrative inquiry, the sample size was 24 interview participants, for which we identified four distinct narrative repertoires our participants drew on to create 'stories of purpose' (2020, p. 11). We did *not* try to explain these differences away by referring to participants' particular experiences; rather, we referred to these as cultural and discursive resources on which people in the age category we explored can draw to anticipate futures, including employment. We thereby did not make 'truth claims' for the age category in relation to employment; instead we pointed towards the ways in which narratives through emplotting events created a coherent self. In the third Findings chapter, in similar ways, rather than considering (elements of) biographical accounts per se, the focus of my analyses are participant stories about events and experiences as cultural and discursive resources, employed to develop narratives that make sense, a kind of identity work.

In this research project on private security, perspectivalism is visible in the a priori acknowledgement for the existence of different social worlds, each with their own agendas and commitments, although sometimes with common features, for instance in the macro stakeholders perspectives (presented in Findings chapter 1). Furthermore, in presenting security identities as

dimensions of spectra (in Findings chapter 2), this research explicitly acknowledges the simultaneous existence of a range of positions, each given equal weight.

4.2.4 Democratising methodologies and heterogeneity (mostly comments on approach)

How can making visible of under-represented voices be encapsulated in methodological choices? Again, situational analysis (Clarke 2005) offers an attractive approach. At the micro level, positional maps help to articulate a particular issue or controversy in the research inquiry. The way the maps are constructed encourages the researcher to include any position onto a visual depiction of contentious issues. The positional map does not represent individuals (or particular social worlds) but the 'heterogeneity of positions' (p. 126) *for individuals to take up*. Clarke's argument is that positional maps move away from the 'politics of representation'; there are no 'negative cases' where the researcher makes value judgements about these being either 'good' or 'bad', as this would mean an a priori commitment to a particular position (see den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013). These ideas can also be found in writings on organisational ethnography (e.g. Ciuk, Koning, and Kostera 2018) where there is a commitment not to be casting aside voices as illegitimate. In this thesis, these ideas are particularly made visible in the second findings chapter where I order my interview data in dimensions of tension that accommodate a number of stories and themes, rather than a claim as to what happens *most often* or is the norm. The maps also lay bare the workings of the researcher, and our role in the construction of the data, rather than assigning data an autonomous nature, as per the above notion of methodologies as performative. This way, it is made clear what data are absent or which perspectives are under-represented. At the micro level, Clarke (2005) refers to this as the 'sites of silence' (e.g. p. 85), i.e. what researchers as situated knowers believe ought to be there but what has hitherto not shown up in the data or been articulated by research participants.

I used the notion of 'sites of silence' in a project (with Juliette Koning, the principal investigator) for a presentation at the conference 'Silence, Significance, and White Space - 12th International Conference on Organization Discourse', at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, in 2016. To get insights into organisational worlds in relation to sustainability commitments of members, we conceptualised the silences in our data as what are the 'tellable' stories and which are 'less so'. Clarke's approach allows me to ask questions like, what are the interviews stories of? Who are our participants in dialogue with? What discourses do they draw on? What commitments do they share? I have in my dataset a range of participants who occupy a diverse set of roles in organisational hierarchies with access to different economic, social and cultural capital, resulting in different identity possibilities. To honour a democratising effect of a selected methodology I depict professional identities in private security as a number of culturally appropriate selves that can be taken up by individuals in

the private sector and to show under which circumstances these develop and become more visible and where they are silent or invisible.

4.2.5 Identity and narrative (mostly comments on text focus)

> 'It has become clear that every version of an 'other', wherever found, is also the construction of a 'self'' (Clifford 1986, in Fabian 2006, p.140)

As discussed in Chapter 3, theories of identity and identity work inform this thesis in fundamental ways. The identity section observed that better insights are needed into how actors draw from narrative repertoires to accomplish narrative identity goals as part of the micro/macro role process. A methodological principle based on which identity could be investigated in this way should acknowledge that speaking with individuals, investigating their experiences, may generate only limited insights into identity work processes. Identity analyses, additionally, need to focus on developing an understanding of how individuals or communities *come to be* associated with particular features of job roles that are constructed in cultures, discourses, and ideologies (e.g. Rampton, Maybin, and Roberts 2014). In a study on professional identity that builds on a situational analysis approach, identities are seen as largely constructed in discourse, although with possibilities for agency. Identity processes take the shape of negotiated positioning in contested domains. My project, ultimately, is therefore less interested in who becomes professional private security employees and why, i.e. in biographical accounts. Although valued for their illustrative capabilities, personal accounts are there to demonstrate how has it come to be that particular private security identities are taken up, and when and under which conditions particular understandings of professionalism become foregrounded, for instance, to explain how it has come to pass that masculine identities have been hitherto preferred, and if and how this might be changing.

Organisation studies have a longstanding engagement with a narrative approach (for instance, see Czarniawska 1998). In this thesis, whether at the macro or micro level, identity comes in a narrative form. As the result of my development as researcher and reading of numerous texts on discourse, I rarely read a text, academic or otherwise, without thinking about what might be going on, narratively, even when the text is written in the passive form and there is no obvious voice or person talking (e.g. Smith 2010). I am intrigued by and assess the resources, linguistic or otherwise, that are employed in the text to present an account of the self. It is suggested (e.g. Watson 2002) that good professionalization research is to explore how members of occupational groups talk about professionalism to make sense of or manipulate their social world, to achieve certain social

outcomes. In this way, (differences in) professional talk becomes the main focus of analyses, as well as the notion of profession as a resource social actors use to further their purpose.

A useful way of capturing professional identity is through self/other positioning in talk: 'defining a person by defining others' (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, p. 629). Self-other talk is recognised at both the organisational level (Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011) and the individual (employee) level (Ybema et al. 2009a; Ybema 2020) as a good way of exploring identity construction processes, for instance in relational positioning and situations of inequality and power, or when identities do not fit norms (Ybema 2020). I borrow from social linguistics (e.g. Rampton, Maybin, and Roberts 2014) and close inspection of texts (e.g. Hermes 1995), for instance interview transcripts or policy documents, to explore self/other positioning in (con)text, i.e. as linguistically observed but also considered in the broader context of the text production. In search of professional identity and professionalization activities, I explore how individuals and organisations talk about or position themselves both as social and organisational beings, and how they do this within the contours of the textual representation as narrative endeavours. In relation to the interview as the 'narrative production site'(Czarniawska 2004, p. 47), I consider how interviewees present themselves as performative, i.e. in acknowledgement of Butler's (2005) point of the difficulty of giving an account of oneself without a consideration of the conditions in which an 'I' emerges.

Methodological principles	**Application to research**
(1)Everyday	Focus on women in everyday security roles, and everyday experiences of private security practices; mundaneness of frontline private security roles
(2)Multiplicity and materiality	Security cannot be broken down into neat entities; configurations are not fixed but elements may fall apart, adapt, morph into different shapes with material effects
(3)Multi-perspectivalism	Inclusion of agendas and commitments of multiple social worlds in and outside of the security domain; data presented as narratives; de-centred, enmeshed researcher
(4)Democratising methodologies	Not casting aside of 'illegitimate' voices in the private security sector; attention for what makes 'legitimate' narratives and account of selves
(5)Identity and narrative	Private security identities constructed in discursive narratives but with possibilities for agency; attention for self/other talk

Table 4.1. Summarising table of the five principles and the implications for the research design

4.3 Research Design

This part of the methodology chapter outlines practical and technical aspects of the research, notably about the empirical part of the project, and provides further philosophical and theoretical reflections that have informed them. It includes sections on ethics, access and participant recruitment; data collection and the different data sources I curated; a justification of analysis methods of both primary and secondary data sources; data representation; and finally, a section on limitations.

4.3.1 Research ethics and access

I sought ethics approval from the Oxford Brookes University Ethics Committee on two occasions. I had divided my data collection in two stages, a so-called scoping stage of interviews with a range of 'experts', followed by a second stage with plans for observations and interviews with on the ground security staff. In my analysis, I have combined the two, and for reasons to do with the pandemic and pressures of work, abandoned the idea of observations. I review and evaluate my ethical practices as a researcher from an ethics of care perspective (Gilligan 1982 in Okkonen, Takala and Bell 2021). This approach to ethics holds that ethical decisions should be based on care for participants, ensuring any action taken as part of the research will be of benefit to the individuals that took part in the research, in some way. An ethics of care acknowledges the interdependency and relationality of researchers and research participants. Unlike consequentialists (e.g. utilitarianism) or deontological (e.g. Kant) approaches, ethics of care does not draw on rules or principles to address ethical dilemmas but considers the situation of the research and the needs of participants, whose views it seeks, in making decisions, see Wiles (2013) for a discussion. I have understood this approach to mean that a) ethics are continuous rather than a one-off event, and acquiring formal approval from the university ethics committee is only a start point, and b) ethical issues can potentially be present in any stage of the research process, e.g. access, data collection, data analysis, research dissemination, recommendations. Ethical actions I have undertaken, in line with the university ethics stipulations, include decisions with regard to the openness of recruitment texts, the use of pseudonyms and de-identifying particulars in transcripts, and choice of interview sites. In addition, with regards to my interview style, I consider an ethical approach to include making sure participants feel listened to and are given the space to tell their story. I tried and make participants feel that what they say is important and of consequence. I have adopted a starting assumption that everybody has an interesting story to tell; it is my responsibility to tease it out. To this effect, I tried and ask open questions and, although not purposefully sought, I acknowledge and accommodate

emotion. My ethics of care approach also extends to the manner of reporting the findings and the discussion. Following Clarke's (2005) approach, I aim to represent the heterogeneity of positions, rather than discard some as marginal, deviant, or uninteresting, see also the principles above. The use of vignettes, see the data analysis section in this chapter is an ethically informed decision: I honour my participants and accommodate the complexities of their stories by leaving some of these intact. All my actions are recorded in my research diary – an essential ethics tool for a reflexive methodologist, see the data analysis section.

4.3.2 Participant recruitment

I recruited participants via contacts in the network of my supervisor Professor Juliette Koning (2), my own contacts (4), writing to people in the public domain (5), Twitter (1), and subsequent snowballing from those first contacts (16). The editors of City Security Magazine and Professional Security magazines waived their rights to anonymity; nonetheless, I have to some extent de-identified and edited their comments. My original idea was to focus the second stage of my project on *female* frontline security officers only. However, even though I located specific networks and platforms on social media – e.g. Calypsa Women in Security, Women in Security Society, Women in Security Awards - recruitment success was limited. Regardless of gender, frontline security officers were difficult to recruit full stop. Often they would agree but then pull out or not respond to reminder emails. This may be the result of a combination of the following factors: a large proportion of frontline officers are part of the immigrant population with English as a second language (see the Introduction chapter); educational attainment in the frontline officers is low (ibid.) and therefore digital literacy may be relatively under-developed; in low-status jobs, they may not have felt entitled to speak; they had concerns about the researcher making judgements of their level of productivity or security acumen. Some support for the last of these arguments comes from my efforts to recruit participants at one particular location. I had interviewed the manager and had permission to recruit frontline staff; however, it took stopping officers on the street at the location and asking whether they would be willing to take part in my project to be able to get them to agree to be interviewed. After an interview with one, I asked why so many of his colleagues cancelled the interviews. He said that was because they worried I would be making an assessment of their job performance. I explained in emphatic terms that this was not what I was doing, that I simply wanted to hear about security guards' perspectives of their job roles and how these had changed, and that none of the information they shared with me would find its way back to their bosses. He said he would put in a word for me with some of his colleagues, which led to one additional recruit.

Recruiting female officers involved an additional complexity: there are very few of them. One female frontline officer agreed because another officer had recommended her; two other female members were recruited via one of my extended family members. I was able to recruit two women via the Women in Security Award ceremony, which had taken place online. I made a note of the name and organisation, widely advertised, and then subsequently made contact. The fact that many of the frontline officers chose to be interviewed via a phone call rather than via Zoom evidences the reluctance further.

4.3.3 Data collection

4.3.3.1 Interviews

The data I collected for the empirical part of the research comprises 28 interviews conducted between September 2018 and December 2021, see table 4.2 for a participant overview. Participants held a variety of security roles with difference in security remit and associated tasks, performed at different levels in employing or client organisations. Nonetheless, interview participants fall broadly under two categories, with data collected in two stages, i.e. the interviewees recruited for the first stage/category tended to have different types of roles to the second. The two stages were in the original design imagined as where the first informed the second. For the first stage, career histories included government, law enforcement, training and journalism, see table 4.2 for interviewee particulars. Now working in the private security sector for corporate organisations, they often occupy additional roles in trade or advocacy bodies. In recounting their careers to date, interview participants were asked to give their perspectives on the nature of security and threat, challenges and changes in the private security sector based on their own careers, professionalization and different types of security worker and work, and within those on positions and possibilities for women. A key focus therefore was on (sector level) change and opportunity to develop my understanding in preparation for the second stage of my project.

By contrast, the second stage/category involved mainly interviews with frontline security type workers or those with frontline experiences in the past. To consider issues of professionalization, identity and change, the emphasis was on descriptions of everyday security activities, experiences of security work to date in specific security organisation and client locations, expertise and acquired skills, and expectations for future careers, either in or outside the security sector. Nineteen participant work or have worked in frontline security roles: frontline experiences from those who have progressed their careers to, for instance, manager have been included too. Of those currently in frontline roles, four work as supervisors, and two are also trainers. Frontline security roles and

past experiences include premise and door guarding, city/town centre patrolling, dog handling, nightclub door work, close protection, and CCTV monitoring. In my data set, the age range of frontline security officers was between 21-58 years-old, with an average age of 36. Length of experience varied from 2 years to nearly 30 years. One participant had had an ad hoc, summer security job only. The gender split was 20 women and eight men. Of the 19 interviews with participants with frontline experience, seven were conducted during the first two lockdowns of the pandemic.

The duration of the interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 90 minutes. I interviewed my participants in different locations based on the interviewee's preference, our joint assessment of issues like confidentiality and psychological safety, ease of access, and later, the social distancing required because of the pandemic: at their home (1), at my home (1), in cafes (6), at their place of work (7), via Zoom/mobile phone (13).

A group of participants (five) are former civil servants who have had relatively senior roles in government (Foreign Office, Cabinet Office, MoD, DfID) or in the London police, and who are now working for big private security organisations. These participants often have additional roles in trade or not-for-profit organisations with particular advocacy agendas. The data therefore comprises a wide range of organisational roles and expertise - from high-end strategic, diplomacy and mediation, via middle management, to training and front-line officers – as well as journalist and advocacy roles. Given the length of time a considerable number of participants had been working in the their particular domain, I imagined that collecting data from these participants would offer an additional historical or temporal dimension to the materialization and growth of the private security industry and the creation of new kinds of private security roles from their particular vantage point. In the case of the former civil servants, the interview included a focus of how their line of work in the private sector compared to the public sector. I wanted to get to 'us' and 'them', the 'self' and 'other' in their past and current roles, and the changes that had taken place. I was interested to identify discursive devices that legitimized such a transition and that gave further insights into the distinction between security as a state function and security as a commodity from their views of security and threat, which had, in turn, informed their perspectives on professionalism.

No.	Name	F/M	Age	Role	Former roles/background/career to date
1.	Alison	F	60s	Advisor/lawyer in private practice/lecturer on security at a university	Government lawyer in Foreign Office; private practice City lawyer; Territorial Army (Oxbridge).

No.	Name	F/M	Age	Role	Former roles/background/career to date
2.	Andrea	F	50s	Editor City Security Magazine	IT trained. Partnership community officer in London police force. Took over magazine and turned it into a national publication.
3.	Anna	F	30s	Customer Relationship Manager/Cyber Security Organisation	Worked her way up in various admins/customer relationship roles for a number of different companies.
4.	Bert	M	50s	Frontline Security Officer	Worked as frontline security officer employed by different PSCs and for a number of different clients.
5.	Beth	F	36	Account holder PSO	Winner of an award for women in security. Worked her way up via frontline security experience and further education. Has Master's in security studies and numerous work-related certificates for extra courses.
6.	Carrie	F	22	Frontline security officer supervisor	Three years' experience of frontline security roles, including nightclub venues. Loves/does not love the job and wants to stop, and do something more meaningful.
7.	Claire	F	30	CCTV Operations Manager	Did a degree in early childhood education with a view to work in a nursery. As interim/student job she became a CCTV operator, where after 10 years, she is now Operations Director. Wants to become a security expert.
8.	Clive	M	49	Frontline Security Supervisor	Worked as frontline security officer employed by different PSCs and for a number of different clients
9.	Dan	M	21	Frontline security officer	School dropout, in with the wrong crowd, 'Security saved me'. Done a variety of frontline security roles, now security supervisor but making ends meet still a struggle.
10.	Dana	F	35	Frontline Security Officer	14 years as a police officer in an East European country; came to the UK in 2019. Now works as a security officer in a salaried role on a university campus.
11.	Daisy	F	22	Frontline security officer	Three years' experience of frontline security roles, including nightclub venues. Has stopped now and to become a carer. Mother was a security officer.
12.	Diane	F	50s	Security Manager large hospital (public sector)	Retail frontline security guard; then worked way up to security manager at a hospital.
13.	Emma	F	40s	Security Solutions Managers, PSC	12-year Army career (intelligence corps); private security in Finance sector, employed by big private security corporate.

No.	Name	F/M	Age	Role	Former roles/background/career to date
14.	Gary	M	40	Account Director PSC, working closely with government	Ministry of Defence policy adviser; fast track civil servant (Oxbridge). Left government 3 years ago.
15.	Jason	M	42	Owner training company/trainer/frontline security officer	Owner and founder. Frontline security work in private security for 20 years. Went to university (sports science).
16.	Kath	F	27	Trainer/frontline security officer; Occupies a number of roles	Held variety of jobs of jobs. No A levels. Chose private security to fit with parenthood.
17.	Keira	F	50	Vice chairman Not-for-profit/Director PSC	Whitehall civil servant; fast track civil service career (Oxbridge liberal arts subjects).
18.	Lisa	F	25	Sales and client consultant/frontline security officer	BA in Music; did security work on the side before deciding private security was for her.
19.	Manish	M	58	Frontline Security Officer	Gurkha Army career for 15 years, stationed mostly in Hong-Kong. Then became a private security guard, working in the Middle East for 12 years, before coming to the UK, where he worked for different PSCs as frontline security officer.
20.	Mary-Jane	F	62	Head of security department in big consultancy firm	Foreign Office (30-plus year career); Oxbridge (languages). Transferred to private sector 6 years ago.
21.	Megan	F	26	PR Manager, large private security membership body	Landed this job straight after university where she did a Master's in PR. Comes from army family.
22.	Michael	M	52	Editor PSM	History graduate; interest in wartime history (published books); 20 years as editor of PSM; comes at it from a journalist perspective; interested in good news.
23.	Mollie	F	49	Frontline security officer	Started at 21, "before the SIA", alongside packaging job in pharmaceutical company. Door supervisor at night clubs, which she still does alongside being a dog handler. Tremendously experienced yet earns the same wage as she did at 21: £12/hour.
24.	Pat	F	58	Strategic Account Director PSC	Superintendent with 30-plus year career with London police. Transferred to private security seven years ago.
25.	Saskia	F	25	Ad hoc Frontline Security Officer	Did a summer job at Wimbledon two summers in a row with a major security firm. Money on the side.

No.	Name	F/M	Age	Role	Former roles/background/career to date
26.	Sophie	F	25	CCTV Operator/frontline	Got a security job at an airport straight out of school; then transferred to the company she is in now where she hopes to become a manager.
27.	Steve	M	41	Security Manager/University campus (private sector)	Army medic; prison service; frontline security officer; private security manager for different organisations.
28.	Sylvia	F	70	Doyenne of PSI, business owner; founder of a women's security organisation, chair of trade organisation	Set up own alarm company in the 1970s. Often represented the PSI in trade/advocacy issues; writes columns for PSM; now chairs a trade org that represents the interests of the frontline.

Table 4.2 - Participant overview

4.3.3.2 Interview challenges: recruitment, limitations, and language

"Sometimes our language meets our participants, there is a meeting ground, sometimes we need to do a lot more work to understand it, to interpret it" so said Kathy Charmaz in a YouTube interview on her social constructionist version of grounded theory (2013). 'Semi-structured' is a somewhat inadequate, hold-all term to convey the variety of what happens in an interview, and what goes on between the interviewer and interviewee. The structure for the interviews I set up was very loose and informal: there were set topics that I wanted to talk about and the interviewee was made aware of these via recruitment texts, the participant information sheet, and the introduction at the beginning of the conversation. The interview usually started with the same question: "can you describe what it is that you do?". However, similarities ended there; the diversity in each of the 28 interviews was huge, for instance in terms of how interviews unfolded, where and how we met, how long interviewees spoke uninterrupted, and so on. The overall mood of the interview could be relaxed, informal, authoritative, conversational, tense, defensive, timid, brazen, sad, or defeatist, or change between these moods over the course of the interview.

The interviewees that took part in my project were far from a homogenous group; they occupied organisational roles on a broad spectrum, from senior leadership with previous Cabinet Office civil service or law enforcement careers, via middle management and army backgrounds, in journalism or training roles, to non-native speaking immigrant population frontline officers on zero hour contracts. Age and experience were additional intersecting categories, for instance, of the 19 interviewees with frontline experience, a number were relatively young with short frontline experiences; others had 25 plus years under their belt and/or had progressed to team leading roles. All these elements - status, age, experience, cultural capital – I assumed as having a bearing on an interviewee's entitlement to

speak. Some participants with powerful, organisational roles built on illustrious careers, felt they shared their security expertise with me right from the beginning of the conversation. They were good storytellers and employed the communication skills that these kind of roles require. These types of interviews tended to take place at the beginning of project, and although not an inexperienced interviewer, I had not quite nestled into my topic in the way that I became in the latter part of the data collection phase. My scene-setting and control of the interview may have been less confident during these interviews, perhaps further enhancing interviewees' entitlement to speak. Conversely, most of the frontline interviews took place in the latter part of the data collection stage when I rarely consulted an interview script, and my confidence may have intimidated some participants. During these interviews, it could take quite a long time for frontline officers to feel comfortable enough to realise that what they knew and had experienced of was of value (to me). Furthermore, frontline participants often also were not quite sure whether they were somehow to act as 'poster boys or girls' for the industry – when some in other roles explicitly were and positioned themselves as such (Megan in PR, Sylvia the Security Consultant). They would start out with positive stories, what they liked about working in private security roles, and why this was a great career, to then, over the course of the interview, provide much more nuanced perspectives on sometimes very challenging experiences. Additionally, I had not quite anticipated the lack of digital literacy for some of the frontline staff. Email was not a good recruitment tool; therefore, to recruit frontline participants, I started to approach officers on the street, with some success. During the pandemic, frontline officers did not want to have the interview recorded via Zoom but audio only. With some, I had to obtain consent verbally as they did not know how to complete these forms online and send them as an attachment.

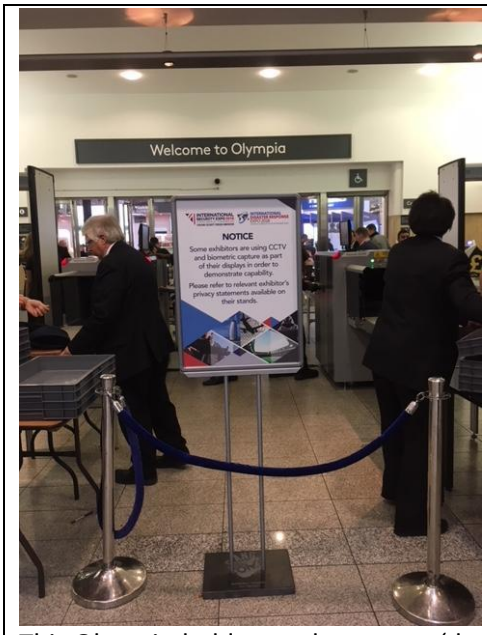
4.3.4 Data Analysis

4.3.4.1 General comments

To help with analysis, I keep a *research diary* that I update regularly and at the time of writing, is 85 pages long. Included, for instance, are notes on my meetings with supervisors and interviewees, my impressions of the 5-day private security door supervisor course that I completed, the International Security Expo in London (the topic of vignette 1), and the Summer School in Athens. Furthermore, any thought that comes to mind about the analysis process and for which I do not have an immediate purpose ends up in the diary. In addition, I produced a 45-page *glossary* of professional bodies, policy groups, and think tanks; magazines; third sector and academic research groups;

government and international governance organisations; and 50-odd concepts and theories of relevance to my project. Some of these concepts include mini-memos: I add thoughts on how and where these are useful to think about my own data, or which part of the literature they could help to develop (see Appendix I.a for a few example pages).

4.3.4.2 Vignette 1 - Diary entry 18 November 2018



This Olympia-held, two-day expo – 'designed by the industry for the industry' - is free of charge. However, expensive train travel to London means I can only go for a day. But anyway, I feel that one day is plenty to get an idea of what kind of event this is. I had to sign up beforehand and received an entry badge with a barcode via email. Olympia can be reached by Kensington Olympia but apparently, tubes rarely go here. When I try catching a bus at Earls Court (and wait a long time), I am offered a lift in a taxi by another conference attendee. He asks me what my interest is, and I tell him about my PhD. When I ask him the same question he says to me, "we don't tell where we're from at this kind of event, but on my badge it says I'm representing [name company]" (a company in security cloud technologies). At the venue itself are long queues, airport style security by the doors (bag searches), and strictly no photography - I take the photo on the right before I find this out by checking with the reception stand. Inside, there is an eclectic mix of private security providers, clever gadget guys, law enforcement agencies, and private sector-sponsored government/NGO crisis response management initiatives. The 'artisan bakery' – using organic ingredients only – in its hippy-ness seems to clash with the expo topic of private security. The first few stands the visitor notices on entering are those with protective gear, night-vision cameras, and crowd control gates. Further into the venue space, there are a few security education providers such as Kings College and UCL with MSc courses on countering organised crime and terrorism, or policing, forensic and crime science. There are a number of government/police initiatives stands.

Throughout the day, there are many mini conferences and round table discussions on topics like cybersecurity, safer cities, and maritime security. The one on crisis response management includes government departments (DfiD) and NGOs and is sponsored by Garda, a private security company. Another mini conference is titled 'Facilities Management' and includes a presentation by Crisis Cast, a theatre organisation that provides specifically trained actors to behave like criminals and terrorists to be used in scenario planning exercises by organisations/corporates. They call themselves 'theatre of the real'. Throughout the day there are a number of speakers; some are really quite interesting,

i.e. the deputy head of the Parliamentary Security department with an account of the terrorist attacks last March, and the chair of the Borough Market.

I don't understand all the macho security about the event. Why is this not a more public event, open to members of the public? Wouldn't they want to know about the many security hybrid (gov/corporates) initiatives? And anyone can register anyway…Why do our bags need to be searched by 'heavies'? Why can we not take photographs? Surely if people want to know about who sells what and what kind of products are available, they can just visit the company websites? What is with all the secrets? I wonder if it all adds to security's cachet. Just when I thought I could not feel more out of place, I get recognised (I am never recognised, well, never for anything to do with academia). Two Master students from the University of Birmingham tell me that they saw me speak at a gender, violence, and security event and wanted to know how my research is progressing. I also see to the editor of City Security Magazine (the magazine has a stand). She is very friendly, as she was during the interview, and offers again to introduce me to people. We talk about my writing a small column, 300-400 words on my project, to gather interest. I decide to distribute research participant recruitment ads, which I leave lying on tables and flyer racks.

4.3.4.3 Narrative discourse analysis of the macro – presented as common tropes

My finding include the analyses of so-called extant narrative discursive materials (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), i.e. materials that are already in the situation of inquiry but curated by me. Such an deployment of narrative therefore, should not be confused with 'narrative' in narrative inquiry, which usually considers biographical elements, and linguistic elements of the story-telling that produce the narrative, for instance, emplotment (see Czarniawska 2004). Instead, extant materials convey through their narrative properties something of existing discourses. My key focus is on 'programmatic texts' (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018, borrowed from Foucault): existing texts that 'clearly try to impose a vision or spell out mostly clearly a new way of conceptualising a problem' (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p. 144 in Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018, p. 245), often in 'constructive, proposal-driven contributions to a debate' (Mische 2014, p. 450). Applied to my project, I consider texts that provide both descriptive and normative statements - often conflated (Bowden 2014) - about professionalization and professional identity at both the security sector and at government level, here considered the 'macro'. Text-producing sources can be thought of as distinct social worlds (e.g. Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018), i.e. groupings with particular commitments, agendas and activities that connect social world members. Selecting materials is a daunting task; in the private security domain there are numerous professional bodies, trade organisations, think tanks, NGOs, and trade magazines that churn out texts with regularity, each of which could be construed as providing descriptive accounts of or normative directives for professionalization or professional identity.

For my analyses, I distinguish programmatic *sources* – locations of text production - from programmatic *texts* of which there may be many in one location. For each source, I review one or two programmatic texts. In addition, I draw on further materials - images, observations, and

interviews – to help me make sense of the texts. There are a number of organisations that could be thought of as programmatic sources; decisions with regard to which sources made it to the final cut in this thesis were based on my long-term immersion in this field and a consideration of which of these seemed to be referenced frequently, either in 'reference communities' in the materials themselves or by participants I interviewed. The groundwork for this chapter was done via initial situational maps and the glossary document that included descriptions of organisations, magazines, and other materials (see earlier in the Data Analysis section). Working in this way helped me negotiate the challenge of (private) security as residing in 'multiple and dispersed locations that often refuse conventional notions of 'locality'' (Macguire et al. 2014, p. 3). Many materials appear in a social fabric of connections – at the basic level they refer to each other's existence, at a more profound level, they deeply affect each other's text production.

There are also practical reasons for the inclusion of materials - i.e. programmatic texts and the additional materials to help me interpret them - to do with sometimes serendipitous encounters, internet searches, and/or access opportunities. For instance, for some programmatic text-producing organisations or publications, I was able to secure additional interviews with representatives that I then decided to include, or provide other materials, for instance my observations for the door supervision course that I took myself. Practical reasons also include the need to limit my analyses for both time and space purposes. Nonetheless, I can defend my choice for each of the materials in terms of their significance, and in the first Findings chapter provide first, a basic description of the sources or texts and targeted audience before delving into their commitments, agendas, ways of working, and influence. In search of professional identity and professionalization in relation to the private security industry, I explore how organisations, editors, and other individuals representing organisations narratively position themselves both as social and organisational beings, how they construct professional identities, and how they do this within the contours of the textual representation. This means that the context of communication (for instance, who speaks and who is being spoken to about what) is investigated rather than assumed. An analysis of texts in this way aims to 'pull narratives apart analytically' (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018, p. 366) along dimensions of tensions, further developed in Findings chapter 2, to develop a few dominant narratives, developed in chapter 3.

For each of the materials I carried out multiple readings with a purpose of text familiarisation, ordering themes and connections, and interpretations of how words, images, and structure together produce meaning (Handley 2018). I consider traditional elements of discourse analysis such as metaphors, antonyms, tenses, pronouns, style, rhythm, and so on (e.g. Fairclough 2003), but also more holistic elements such as the *mood* of a text (Gumbrecht 2012), in the realm of security studies

perhaps increasingly looked at via the concept of 'affect' (e.g. Åhäll and Gregory 2013, Massumi 2010). Ultimately, the programmatic text analyses aim to map common tropes at the macro level, and within that, the possibilities for identity formation at the micro level. Bringing a discursive lens to narratives in this way anchors these to the situation and can achieve insights into issues of constancy and change, as well as demonstrating the possibilities for agency in manipulating dominant discourses (e.g. Bamberg 2011; Clarke 2005).

4.3.4.4 Narrative analysis of the micro

I interrogated data collected via the interviews in a number of stages: from initial reading (1), via Nvivo coding (2) and interview summaries (3), to producing reflections and meaning in memos (4), i.e. from close reading to higher level analysis. Recorded with permission, I first transcribed the recording, initially an intense and time-consuming process. However, the silver lining of the pandemic was working with software (Zoom) where transcripts are automatically produced, which could then be copied to a Word document. Although the editing process – working out who had said what, adding full stops and commas, and getting rid of pauses, ums, repetitive words, and so on – was still time consuming, it was a lot less time consuming than transcribing from scratch. I read each transcript a few times, making notes about anything that stood out on a printed version of the transcript. For the first five transcripts, I colour-coded in Word, using very broad coding categories: anything of note; purpose/description of the organisation; self/other talk (particular to the participant); perspectives on drivers of growth of private security/changes in the sector; professionalization of security, including changing landscape for women; perspectives of importance of security and own role; perspectives of the future of security (including nature of threats), see Appendix IV.b for an example. I then uploaded first nine, but in the end all but one interview transcripts on Nvivo, for which in the meantime, I had designed a detailed coding framework (see Appendix IV.c), derived from both the themes in the literature and from the transcripts. I do not attach particular methodological assumptions to these initial actions other than to consider them as ways into the data, as getting to know my participants.

A third stage of data interrogation involved writing summaries of the interviews. As well as telling the 'story of the interview' (what happened), and providing 'signature quotes' (quotes that sum up the participant just so), I also analysed interview texts narratively. By linking 'language-on-the-ground (Bamberg 2011) to broader discourses of 'tellable' stories, I address Clarke's (2005) and Czarniawska's (2004) questions of with whom is the participant in conversation (apart from with the interviewer), what are the interviews stories of, and how is the speaker narratively positioning him or herself vis-à-vis the phenomenon under study.

A fourth stage involves the production of memos, a well-established practice in the grounded theory tradition, although I used a social-constructionist (e.g. Charmaz 2014) or situational analysis version of this (e.g. Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2015). These versions of grounded theory are much less prescriptive than the original with regard to what is meant by memo production. Charmaz (2014), for instance, refers to memos as researchers' reflections on codes, higher level analytic meanings. Clarke, Frieze, and Washburn (2015) are even less prescriptive: '...writing up ideas, thoughts, analysis of a set of data, almost anything valuable to the project' (p. 180), see also Clarke's (2005) description of memos as '...partial, tentative, full of questions to be asked and answered about the nature and range of particular sets of social relations' (p. 102). In my writing of memos, I usually have a few theoretical concepts that are of interest, for instance, around professionalization, and try and see how these would link to my dataset; or vice versa, I see something in the data and then consider how this has been approached, theoretically.

In summary, analyses of data are presented into three separate Findings chapters based on narrative analyses as per table 4.3 below.

Chapter/level	**Analysis**	**Source**
Findings chapter 1: the macro	Narrative discourse analysis resulting in five common tropes	Extant materials (supplemented by images, observations and interviews)
Findings chapter 2: the micro	Narrative analysis of interview data presented as five identity dimensions	Semi-structured interview transcripts
Findings chapter 3: negotiated macro/micro	Narrative analysis of identity talk presented as three accounts	*Culturally appropriate selves* (higher level analyses based on analyses of chapters 1 and 2)

Table 4.3 - Data analyses and sources

4.3.4.5 Data representation and vignettes

For ease of comprehension, notably for the second chapter I have categorised participants into three roles: 'Security Consultant' (those in advisory, advocacy or journalist roles), 'Security Manager' (those with selling, training and/or recruitment responsibilities), and Frontline Security Officer, abbreviated to FSO. I already outlined the diverse ways in which I interrogated my data above; the way I represent my participants has to be equally diverse. To bring the dynamic nature of identity negotiations in security landscapes to life, I present some of my analyses of empirical data as 'vignettes', my methodological approach to which is a shameless pick and mix from existing, but still

limited deployment across social research more broadly (e.g. Langer 2016, Humphreys 2005; Mitchell et al. 2018), and in the study of organisations in particular (e.g. Muhr 2012, McCarthy 2018; Ybema, Kamsteeg, and Veldhuizen 2019). Vignettes seemed to be used in three distinct ways: as *data eliciting*, for instance as situated scenarios in which research participants are required to make judgements (e.g. Desautels and Jacob 2012) or give perspectives grounded in 'real-life' (e.g. Sampson and Johannessen 2019); as *research outcomes* with the purpose of achieving shared participant understanding of particular phenomena (e.g. Holly and Gillard 2018); and as a heuristic to negotiate the complexity *of data representation* (e.g. Muhr 2012, Ybema, Kamsteeg, and Veldhuizen 2019). My deployment is in the final category. I contend that the use of vignettes, of which I produced 11, goes some way to address the 'impossibilities of representation' (Bright 2018, p. 751) by capturing subtlety, complexity and ambiguity that provide historic or temporal perspective to otherwise static accounts, and shows how individuals in developing career or identity narratives draw on a variety of discursive resources (see Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003).

Nonetheless, vignettes do not simply report on what people say. I as the researcher curate them and decide on the mode of presentation, although these decisions are informed by the interview and interviewee. For instance, when the vignettes are about participant security careers, the way they are put together relies on different modes of storytelling. Some interviewees were competent storytellers with an engaging story to tell based on long careers in the industry. For these stories, the vignette has the form of a first person account to illustrate some of the complexities, and issues of constancy and change. In other vignettes, I am the 'I' and tell the story of the interview, presenting the interviewee's story of their complex careers and career transitions, in two occasions my own observations. In the third Findings chapter I present three narratives each illustrated by a particular vignette. For the first of these three vignettes, my approach comes perhaps closest to that of Ybema, Kamsteeg and Veldhuizen (2019): composite non-fiction accounts that represent a larger dataset, rather than individuals. However, unlike Ybema, Kamsteeg, and Veldhuizen (2019) who use the vignette to illustrate a 'typical day' in their ethnography of a police station, I developed a composite vignette as a heuristic to capture *a professional self* in private security. Each participant in my data set could be associated more strongly with one particular narrative over the other two, although sometimes they could be associated with two.

The benefit of capturing data as described above is to portray more clearly the different ways in which individuals are pulled towards, hailed to, particular identity positions in security careers (e.g. Weldes 1996), how they attach meaning to the work that they do, and what changes over time, i.e. narrative vignettes as 'illustrative' of identity work (Muhr 2012, p. 55). In their inherent property of capturing the nature of people's storytelling (including that of the researcher!), vignettes, therefore,

are better able to demonstrate the extent to which identities are fluid, ambiguous and fragmented (e.g. Sveningsson and Alvesson 2003; Brown 2017).

4.4 Researcher reflexivity and the topic of security

The point of the five methodological principles in the first half of this chapter is to show that the research cannot be separated from the researcher and their experiences and traditions. This assumption is integral to the interpretivist paradigm regardless of the chosen methodologies; researchers are required to give accounts of the social construction of their research topics because we are already situated in the situation of the inquiry (see Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018). However, I realise that hitherto, little of my writing has referred to how my interest in the topic of private security, professional selves and identity has come about. One of the key questions a reflexive researcher needs to ask is: how am I positioned vis-à-vis the research topic and how is this positioning consequential in the research process?

I have an aversion to security. I realise I can say this because I grew up in a country (The Netherlands), and have lived in another (the UK) for nearly 30 years that are both essentially safe and secure. There is no immediate threat to my life; in both countries there is a functioning security apparatus and a democratic political system; there are no shortages of food, healthcare, and education (now somewhat challenged in post-Brexit, post-pandemic, cost-of-living crisis UK!). Although I am usually affected by events on the world-stage, the moments in my life I have felt profoundly insecure or unsafe can be counted on one hand. As pointed out by van Duinhoven (2010), the Dutch language does not distinguish between safety and security and uses the same word for both: *veiligheid*. Safety and security are therefore intertwined in my original experiencing of them. However, the distinction in the English language allows me to explain more easily my aversion, or, at best my awkward relationship with security. I consider security and securitising (*beveiligen* in Dutch) *as done to me*, a practice that controls me, as opposed to safety, which to me is a *state of being*, the outcome of security practices, but not necessarily done to me. Few people would argue against safety; yet, in my view there are convincing arguments to be made against security.

I locate the start of the awkward relationship in my move to the UK in 1993. I noticed that in my newly adopted country, citizens seemed more fearful than the Dutch; to some extent this is borne out by survey research, see the New Security chapter. I blamed the front pages of mostly so-called tabloids but also broadsheet newspapers where crimes in screaming headlines were the order of the day. I felt this reflected, and in turn affected how people around me felt and talked about security

and threat. I found raising my two children in British society challenging in this respect, and my way of raising them to clash with cultural norms on what constituted good parenting. For instance, from a young age, my children were allowed to cross a busy junction and walk to the local shops in our tiny town - then about 2,000 inhabitants, a village in all but name - when other parents would not allow their children to do so. In an era where the disappearance of Madeleine McCann was rarely off the front pages of the newspapers, I advised my children that when they found themselves lost to ask an adult for help, reasoning that the benefit of doing this outweighed the risk this person would turn out to be a paedophile. My parenting style, perhaps, became a way of expressing Dutch identity. I began to resist what Huysmans (2011) refers to as the 'little security nothings', everyday small practices and processes that nonetheless shape securitisation in my children's lives and my own in considerable ways. Although Huysmans particularly refers to practices such as 'programming algorithms, routine collections of data and looking at CCTV footage' (p. 372), I thought of little security nothings as the many ways in which an overzealous concern for child safety was amounting to control and impeding my children's development and sense of well-being. I saw the playground's soft tiles as depriving my children of the 'right' to make mistakes and hurt themselves when other parents saw this as being kind. During secondary school, I felt young people were overly protected; for instance the stipulation of having to be in school for 'safety reasons' even when they did not have any classes was preventing young people from learning how to make sensible decisions about where to be and what to do with their time.

Later in my university teaching, in my view the many little teaching and learning practices inadvertently prevent and erode young people's autonomous decision-making and development, as part of a what Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) termed the 'therapeutic turn' in education. For instance, for psychological safety reasons and encouraged by ubiquitous accountability and transparency demands in an era of standardisation, students are given the right to evaluate modules and teaching *anonymously*, i.e. in a relationship vacuum. Likewise, with a University-outsourced security service patrolling routes between student accommodation and pubs in central Oxford to guide drunken students back home, one wonders to what extent this helps character or resilience building, which is what universities so often claim their programmes offer (see Brewer et al. 2019 for a discussion). Huysmans (2011) argued that security nothings in everyday life are highly significant in creating securitising processes; furthermore that they do 'the immense work of making and circulating insecurities' (p.380). For every security act, I could see the creation of insecurity and fearfulness, referred to by Bigo (2017) as a Mobius strip: security and insecurity are intertwined in such a way that it is difficult to detect where one ends and the other begins. In my view, the many security practices deplete individuals' agency and opportunity for the development of resilience, and with

that create far greater risks of insecurity. Because one cannot regulate or train for every eventuality. There is a risk people do not learn to make (right, ethical) decisions as sentient, experienced human beings in their situations, but feel compelled to act according to protocols that do not account for the situation at hand, which impedes development and mastery in particular domains (e.g. Dreyfus and Dreyfus 2004). I felt justified in holding the perspectives and approach that I did by report after report that identifies Dutch children as one of the happiest in the world (e.g. a recent UNICEF 2020), and British children as one of the most anxious in high-income Europe (e.g. Children Society 2020, reported in The Guardian 28/08/20).

Therefore, when I became research assistant to Prof Juliette Koning, tasked with producing a literature review in preparation for a project on scenario planning and law enforcement organisations, the recommended international relations literature on security and securitising, and the sociology literatures on stigmatisation and dirty work talked my language. I fell in love with the topic because of my awkward relationship with it, fuelled by my education in the social sciences, my middle class, secure life, and a desire to cling on to a Dutch identity of relaxed parenting and issues of *veiligheid*. Being drawn to what makes me uncomfortable and being able to channel my frustrations, designing my own research on the topic felt like a natural progression of threading the many tropes in my life, both academic and personal. My PhD project proposal was entitled: 'Female employees in private security organisations: identity construction in a stigmatised industry'. Early on in my PhD, I took the topic imagined in this way to a number of workshops and conferences, both inside and outside Oxford Brookes University. Until I met Felix.

4.4.1 The Felix moment – my field 'Aha-Erlebnis'

In 2018, my supervisors put me forward to represent the Oxford Brookes Business School PhD cohort at the EDAMBA summer school in Athens. EDAMBA stands for European Doctoral Programmes Association in Management & Business Administration, the summer school for which takes place annually, and aims to 'contribute to the emergence of PhD student independent intellectual identity through academic discussions and presentation' (see https://edamba.eu/summer-academy as per 04/05/2022). Fifty or so students from all over Europe attended tutor presentations on the philosophies and methodologies in the social sciences as well as student presentations, i.e. our own. Two more Oxford Brookes students had been selected, one of whom was Felix Shaba. Felix is a Nigerian PhD student, looking at micro finance interventions and women empowerment. Growing up in a remote, single parent household, Felix came to the UK in 2015 with his family, his wife and three young boys. In an interview, published on the University webpages, Felix is quoted as saying that he sees his PhD "as a way to stand up for the helpless

women and their children, to support them all the way and to bring out the best in their children. I intend to do this through projects and programmes and this will be achieved by liaising with governmental and non-governmental organisations" (Oxford Brookes Business School, research profiles, see this link, accessed on 5 May 2022). He attended my presentation where I talked about women and identity work in what I saw as 'dirty work' in stigmatised industries. At the end of the presentation, attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of us presenters and make suggestions to improve the line of argument. Felix raised his hand. He explained that in the UK, to support his family, he had worked for a number of years as a private security guard and supervisor. He was *puzzled* by my negative portrayal of the security sector, which had given him only positive experiences. He told me: "I was a security guard - I didn't feel stigmatised!". It was an 'aha-erlebnis' as the Germans say, an important eureka moment; it made me realise that an assessment of a sector is one thing. However, individuals doing the jobs may not necessarily share society's evaluation, never mind dominant academic perspectives of them; and that anyway, others' evaluations may be multiple, complex and ambivalent; that 'stigmatised' may be a somewhat problematic adjective, offensive even to those who work in the sector; that there will be many experiences, which can be simultaneously positive and negative, or anything in between. From then on, I approached my topic more openly, and with genuine curiosity.

4.5 Limitations

There are a number of limitations of this research. As with many research projects, practical constraints usually get in the way of good intentions. I intended my project to be about women in everyday security roles in a few organisations, using the first stage interviews with high-end security participants as having a scoping function only (9 in total). The pandemic, the pressures of the day-job as a lecturer at the University, as well as the shyness, invisibility (to me), and reluctance of frontline staff in general, never mind female frontline staff, all hampered my recruitment efforts. I therefore decided also to include some of my scoping material. The thesis is therefore less grounded in and on organisations as I imagined. However, based on this decision, there were a number of silver linings. Firstly, the interviews in the scoping stage were fascinating, with many colourful stories of mainly women in a man's world. These interviews gave me the impetus of thinking about accounts people give to make sense of and legitimise their working lives that go beyond organisation identification. Secondly, the pandemic meant I conducted interviews, as second best in my initial assessment, via Zoom or by telephone. However, this way of interviewing suited reluctant frontline staff, see above, of which in the end, I still managed to conduct 19 (including managers with frontline experience). I also managed predominantly to interview women: 20 out of the 28 participants are female. Based

on these interviews, I acquired better insights into what has changed and what remained the same. Finally, another positive aspect of only recruiting a limited number of participants was, by way of compensation the inclusion of and renewed focus on analyses of a large number of extant discursive materials, now included as a separate Findings chapter. This chapter became an important part of argument development and central thread of this thesis.

Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the interview participants - frontline staff, managers, consultants, journal editors - may dilute the findings or truth claims I am able to make. Some of the interview accounts meant as background became one of the central narratives. It could be argued that further homogeneity among the frontline participants would have strengthened my findings. Although a number of the frontline participants had door supervisor roles in the night-time economy, some had roles as CCTV operatives or security guards on a university campus. Experiences are therefore quite diverse. Furthermore, most of the negative press on bad behaviour by security officers refers to those providing security at state-outsourced prison and detention centres for, for instance, asylum seekers. Yet, this segment of frontline security work was not included. This was not on purpose – I just have not been able to recruit participants with those kind of frontline security roles

Finally, the methodological upside (anti-limitation?) of doing my PhD, perhaps, is that I no longer subscribe to our critique (den Outer, Handley, and Price 2013) of situational analysis on matters of perspective and representation of data, and identifying the contested issues, see earlier in Chapter 4. In describing the conditions, the reflexive elements in the research that produce our methodological narratives, we can never be complete and conclusive and give an account of *everything* that informs our analyses and truth claims; we can only try to be as transparent and persuasive as possible, as with any other narrative.

5 NARRATIVES OF PRIVATE SECURITY

'When someone tells us something, it always seems like a fiction, because we don't know the story at first hand and can't be sure it happened, however much we are assured the story is a true one, not an invention, but real. At any rate, it forms part of the *hazy universe of narratives*, with their blind spots and contradictions and obscurities and mistakes, all surrounded and encircled by shadows or darkness, however hard they strive to be exhaustive and diaphanous, because they are incapable of achieving either of those qualities' - Javier Marias, The Infatuations, *p. 310 (my emphasis)*

5.1 Introduction

The next three chapters organise the findings in three specific ways. The first chapter presents narratives in extant discursive materials in so-called programmatic texts, images and observations, with a vision for professionalization and professional identity produced by key voices in the private security sector at the macro level. The texts have been produced by five sources: the Security Industry Authority, the British Security Industry Association, The Security Institute, International Professional Security Association, and two security magazines, City Security Magazine, and Professional Security. The second chapter presents narrative dimensions at the micro level with regard to the development of professional selves, largely informed by identity talk in interactional data collected via the 28 semi-structured interviews. Five dimensions of security careers are discussed: belonging versus "not forever"; serving customers versus dirty work; uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence; being invisible versus standing out; and professional selves versus cowboy others. In considering analyses from Findings chapters 1 and 2, the third chapter presents the negotiated macro/micro as 'sedimented' narratives of culturally appropriate selves. These are selves that navigate more or less successfully the private security work landscape, of which the research identifies three. In order of prevalence these are: private security as the helping profession; private security as a feminist project; and private security as global safe keeping. In each of the three Findings chapter, a part diagram is presented at the end. The three part-diagrams are put together to form a complete diagram, presented in the Discussion chapter.

5.2 Findings Chapter 1 – Possibilities in new security landscapes

5.2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of extant narrative discourse materials. These are materials that are already in the situation of enquiry, i.e. curated but not produced by the researcher. For the analyses in this chapter, I distinguish programmatic *sources* – locations of text production - from programmatic *texts* of which there may be many in one location. For each source, I review one or two programmatic texts supported by further materials - images, observations, and interviews – to help make sense of the text. The selected programmatic texts provide descriptive and normative statements that outline a vision of a phenomenon. The two questions I ask are: how does the text producer think private security should be professionalised (largely descriptive) and what professional identity is being encouraged or facilitated (largely normative)?

The five programmatic *sources* I will explore are:

1. Security Industry Authority
2. British Security Industry Association
3. The Security Institute
4. International Professional Security Association
5. Security magazines: City Security Magazine and Professional Security

Before presenting my analyses, I briefly describe each source below.

The *Security Industry Authority* (SIA) – From the website: 'The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry. It is an independent body reporting to the Home Secretary, under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. The remit covers the United Kingdom, where they have two main duties. One is the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities within the private security industry; the other is to manage the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme, which measures private security suppliers against independently assessed criteria' (gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority). Included in my analyses are a draft code of conduct document circulated to frontline officers for comments, the report written about it, and a training manual of the SIA Door supervisor course. Furthermore, I undertook the SIA door supervision course, for which I include an observational vignette.

British Security Industry Association (BSIA) – from its website: 'The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) is the trade association for the professional security industry in the UK. Members

are responsible for more than 70% of privately provided UK security products and services (by turnover) including the manufacture, distribution and installation of electronic and physical security equipment and the provision of security guarding and consultancy services' (bsia.co.uk). As a programmatic text, I have used materials for a recent campaign called 'The Hidden Workforce'. This is supplemented by material based on an interview with a spokesperson of the association, who comments on the campaign and on the mission of the association more broadly. Furthermore, I looked at award ceremonies either hosted or endorsed by the BSIA. The association often collaborates with the Security Institute.

The Security Institute – Claims to be the UK's largest professional membership body for security professionals (security-institute.org), with over 4100 members. Since 2000, its aim is to promote the 'standards of integrity and professional competence in the business of security', to which it offers courses and a point system for certification. Until 2021, the chair was an academic, Dr Alison Wakefield, who in the early 2000s conducted her PhD research on 'alternative policing'. She has a relatively high profile and for instance, regularly features in the City Security Magazine where she comments on what the Security Institute aims to achieve. The institute is affiliated with both the BSIA and the two magazines discussed in this chapter. Included in my analyses are website texts, articles by and about the chair and her visions for the institute, and other articles about the institute in trade magazines.

International Professional Security Association (IPSA) – One of the oldest private security associations, it recently reinvented itself to become the voice of the frontline workers. Members broadly come from three categories: installers of security systems, security personnel, and fire systems installers (see Ipsa.org.uk). In recognition of challenging working conditions, it offers free membership to those with an SIA licence, and conducts research via an app on frontline wellbeing. I interviewed a spokesperson for this organisation to talk about recent IPSA developments.

Security magazines - finally, I compare and contrast two trade magazines: *Professional Security and City Security Magazine*. I interviewed the editors for both magazines, who waived their right to anonymity, and whose comments are included in two separate vignettes.

I will now present my analyses of a number of texts within the five sources, introduced by further descriptions and supplemented by additional materials of images, interviews and observations.

5.2.2 The SIA

> 'One of our key strategic objectives is protecting the public - ensuring that only fit and proper people and organisations deliver regulated private security services. We make a contribution to making communities safer, helping people feel secure and cutting crime, protecting the public from terrorism, controlling immigration and safeguarding identity.'
>
> (www.sia.gov.uk 20 October 2020)

Image 5.1: The front cover of the 2017 SIA approved training manual

The SIA training manual for door supervisors (2017) could be meaningfully construed as a programmatic text. This particular version, written by Andy Walker and published by Highfield International, a SIA-approved training awarding body, depicts on its front cover a woman of colour in some kind of uniform. She is wearing a badge on her upper arm. The image in itself could be considered as programmatic: there is a vision of a security working population as ethnically diverse, to include both men and women, who are appropriately trained and wear uniforms. Designed to accompany a face-to-face course, the 124-page course book includes three modules: working within the private security industry (module 1), working as a door supervisor (module 2), and conflict management within the private security industry (module 3). It lays out the remit of the security *operative,* the term used to refer to frontline staff, and provides short course content on legislation, i.e. health and safety, crime (civil and criminal law), licensing laws, as well as the Private Security Act 2001 and the Equality Act 2010; law enforcement policies and procedures; and risk assessment, communication and conflict resolution. Course participants are told they play 'an increasing role in the fight against crime' (p. 11). Key purposes of the Private Security Act of increasing 'the public's confidence in the sector', as well as public safety, are mentioned alongside one another (p. 12). There seems to be a considerable amount of information course participants have to absorb and, as courses usually take three to five days, embed in a short amount of time. Pronoun use throughout includes a third person plural (they/them) when referring to participants and a first person plural (we/us) when referring to the general public, an interesting deployment in and of itself. It could be

construed as 'othering' future private security officers; the other way around may have felt more collegiate to the course participant. There are specific chapters on 'communication and customer services'. The second page of the first module provides a list of qualities, 20 in total, the security operative should possess. These include being professional, honest, reliable, courteous, helpful, approachable, observant, and loyal, none of which seem to be about security per se, and all of which could be associated with a customer services role. The vignette below contains my observations of taking the course myself, and provides further interpretation of the course book and SIA messages.

5.2.2.1 Vignette 2 – Observation of the 5-day SIA Door Supervision course

It is a Bank Holiday Monday morning at the local Workers Social Club and the start of the 5-day SIA-approved Door Supervisor course, delivered by a commercial provider. The course is held in the backroom of the club, where there is also a covered-up Snooker table, a few shabby-looking tables and chairs, half-peeled wallpapered walls. The loud music and bingo caller in the adjacent room at times drown out the voice of our instructor Steven. There are 11 of us but two guys don't come back the second day, so then we are only nine: 3 university library guards; Thomas, who is about to open a new club in the city centre; Jack, an 18-year old looking for work as a bouncer; a few older guys looking for a late career change; Aisha, a single mother in her early 30s, who moved to the UK as a teenager and originally from Pakistan; and me. Aisha and I are the only two women. Apart from Steven, there is also Lisa who deals with the admin site of things, and later on in the week, helps us practise the physical routines.

We work through the Door Supervisor Course Book. Steven's teaching style is informal; he uses a large screen to type out questions on Word that small groups of three have a go at answering before he tells us the, often very precise, answers. The atmosphere, on the whole, is friendly, giggly at times. There is a lot of banter in which Aisha enthusiastically participates. It is clear she is treated as 'one of the boys', particularly so as she is the only one of the tutees with actual security experience under her belt. She is therefore a bit of an authority on the subject and often interrupt tutors to offer her experiences by way of illustration.

We get courses and are tested via multiple-choice, closed-book exams on criminal and civil law, the Security Industry Authority, the tasks and responsibility of the door supervisor, the licensing act, drugs classifications, conflict management, and so on. Aisha tells me she does the course 'in between' her night shifts at a newspaper distribution centre and looking after her 4-year old (looked after by her mother when she is not around). She starts there at 11pm, works until 7/8am, goes home to see her child, then comes to the course. She sleeps from 7pm until 10pm. She seems able to function – it is difficult to see how. Aisha tells me she always worked hard. She used to work in security but then didn't think she could go back to it after she had her child. When I ask her why this might be, she says she felt she would not be able to cope emotionally. She shrugs it off with a "oh, it's probably my hormones". Now that her child is 4 years old, she thinks she will be okay with it. Another day she tells me she has not had experiences of violence particularly but when she became pregnant, the possibility of it, as well as the unpredictability of the nightlife, was what turned her off.

In his lesson materials, Steven is very serious about the 2010 Equality Act and the 1954 Human Rights act; no one in our group makes any jokes about it. "You just don't discriminate anyone, alright?", says Steven. The second tutor, named Richard, who is being brought in on Thursday and Friday to deliver the physical part of the course has a similar approach. Richard works hard at involving all of us. He emphasises on numerous occasions, as has Steven, that people have different skills sets and characteristics that suit different situations.

The physical part of the course, unsurprisingly, is not taught via PowerPoint. We learn about differences between defence techniques - usually no use of force and can include just talking to people - and physical intervention. For the latter, we are taught six different ways to physically handle customers, four of which are 'non-restraint' - the customer can still walk/walk away - and two restraining techniques where the customer is taken somewhere, either because they are being evicted as dangerous or because they are too drunk or drugged up to walk upright. We are also taught a series of 'disengagement' techniques to escape a physical attack, i.e. from being choked, or having our hands held behind our back. We practise these techniques endlessly on each other.

I manage to speak to Lisa in the break time on Friday and ask her how she ended up where she is. She is tall and broad-shouldered, somewhat quiet but friendly. She tells me she has a BA in Music, which seems like a world away from security. She explains that she did a bit of security work during her student years. This interested her enormously, so much so she decided to become further qualified in it. When I ask her why she likes it so much she says that she really enjoys helping people. She illustrates this with a story of how she once talked a customer out of killing himself. She thinks her organisation goes about training of officers in the right way – there are other organisations that don't take exams seriously and sometimes help trainees with answers to exam questions.

During the course, no one questions the need for security, or the need for increased professionalization. The tutors sometimes refer to the 'bad old times' before the SIA', i.e. when security staff were 'free to assault someone' if they felt threatened. Both tutors have been doing their jobs for about 20 years so are able to reflect on how things have changed. There are little, unintentional ways in which I am made to feel older or a woman, for instance, every time Richard needs a guinea pig to demonstrate what he is talking about, he will use someone young and male. Aisha offers herself a lot but rarely gets picked. All through Thursday and Friday we practise our techniques with the threat of an external examiner called 'Rod' coming to test our newly acquired skills on the Friday afternoon. In the morning, we had to sit our fourth exam, which requires a 100% pass rate. 3pm arrives and there is still no Rod; we have also been given the promise of an early release of 4pm so how they are going to individually test us and give us feedback becomes ever more mysterious. Then Richard announces that he is in fact Rod and that everyone has passed the physical examination part of the course. He says exerting a little psychological pressure makes everyone work that much harder. Everyone seems relieved and exchanges friendly goodbyes. The notification of having passed and my certificate arrive in the post a few weeks' later.

My certificate for the door supervisor course

5.2.2.2 Draft code of conduct for SIA-licences frontline workers

Early in 2020, the SIA developed and circulated for comment via a survey a draft Code of Conduct (Gov UK 2020a). A code of conduct - 'sets of professional norms' (Bray et al. 2021) - is perhaps an

archetypal programmatic text. In an organisation and labour context, codes of conduct do many complex things and who codes whose conduct and with what purpose can be unpicked in a number of ways. Organisational or professional code of conducts are often contested with limited consensus on purpose, internal and external target audiences, and processes of implementation and evaluation (e.g. Braun and Gearhart, 2004). Nonetheless, codes of conduct are seen as important instruments in improving labour relations and processes, and are often the outcomes of years of campaigning by international governance organisations, well-meaning leaders in the corporate world, and NGOs and activism groups, for instance in the field of global supply chains. The development of the International Code of Conduct (ICOCA), the oversight and governance mechanism for European-based Private Security Service Providers, offers an interesting comparative perspective. Described as a multi-stakeholder initiative (Buzato 2015) that included civil society, academia, non-state clients and states, representatives of the private security industry itself were key in its development. Key to industry involvement, it is argued, was to be able to rescue damaged reputations in conflict zones (e.g. Eichler 2016). Clauses here, for instance, address gender in areas of violence, selection of personnel, and harassment in work environments. At the corporate level, codes of conduct, it is argued (Erwin 2011) are a Corporate Social Responsibility instrument, 'commonly used to govern employee behavior and establish a socially responsible organizational culture' (p. 535). However, some would argue that codes of conduct not only reflect inequality in the workplace, they also shape it in the way that they legitimise and maintain unequal working relationships (Taylor 2011). For instance, a critical assessment of the International Code of Conduct would be that the inclusion of gender is good for business, but will not fundamentally address inequality or gender violence, and may therefore have a sanctioning effect. Whatever the arguments, although textually designed to govern *behaviour* of various organisational stakeholders, codes of conduct are intrinsically normative and therefore a useful source with which to explore the visions of the text producer.

The SIA code of conduct, so it is proposed, is to regulate expected behaviour of frontline licence holders. From writings published on the website, it is not clear who were involved in the draft text and what prompted its creation. The code of conduct includes six commitments:

1. Act with honesty and integrity
2. Be trustworthy
3. Protect the people and property you are entrusted to protect
4. Be professional at work
5. Act with fairness and impartiality at work
6. Be accountable for your decisions and actions

Each of the commitments is expanded in a series of between three and six statements, 27 in total, as well as examples of where workers meet the commitment and where they contravene it. The statements include a number of 'do's', ten in total; for example, frontline licence holders should be honest with their employer, respect and protect confidential information, take all reasonable steps to prevent and reduce crime, report incidents to the appropriate emergency services, and act with self-control. In comparison to for instance the relatively recently devised Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014) for state law enforcers, the draft code of conduct seems to have followed a generic code of conduct structure in the way that it has included principles, expanding statements, and examples to illustrate the statements. However, again in comparison to the Police code and also the Code of Conduct for the Chartered Security Professional (owned by The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals, managed by the Security Institute), the proposed code of conduct *also* includes a seemingly disproportionate number of conspicuous 'don'ts', 17 in total (Gov UK 2020a). These include, for example:

- do not take bribes;
- do not associate with a member of an organised crime group;
- do not carry or use a weapon;
- do not exploit people for personal satisfaction;
- do not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- do not endanger people by being reckless;
- do not destroy or tamper with evidence.

The draft text was sent out for consultation between 9 January 2020 and 23 February 2020, notifying licence holders, SIA approved contractors, and other interested parties in advance. The consultation outcome appeared in a report, published on government consultation web pages on January 2021 (Gov UK 2021a). The online consultation received 3,853 responses, 98% of which were current SIA licence holders. Of these, the majority were door supervision license holders (nearly 2500), and security guards (about 800). The survey asked questions about the content as well as the technical aspects of the draft code, for instance whether the text was easy to understand, to which 91% of respondents stated that it was. 86% liked the six commitments. 28% of respondents felt something was missing and comments here included particular requirements in relation to professionalism (11%) but also to terms and conditions, for example wages, and shift work, explicitly mentioned in the consultation report. This does not seem high - perhaps because respondents felt that the code of conduct was not the right place to voice those demands and the code seems to have been explicitly developed for licence holders. Interestingly, 33% of respondents felt the code *would bring them no benefits*, and 36% did not know whether it would. Only 9% of respondents felt the code would

improve the image of the security sector, although respondents were not asked this question directly.

There are a number of assumptions in the training manual, the draft code of conduct, and the consultation report, which together provide interesting insights into where currently and in the recent past, SIA professionalization efforts seem to be directed, and what the possibilities for security identities are. I outline these now.

Via the SIA the state recognises, albeit ostensibly reluctantly, that the private sector is claiming some of the formal security space

For a long time, the state held a position about the deployment of the private sector for security purposes that could be seen as deliberately ambiguous (White, 2010). In the latter part of the previous century, it did not want to formally acknowledge, which legislation would have done, that it was relinquishing some of its security remit to the private sector; simultaneously, there was a network of cooperation between the state and private sector so that the latter could effectively carry out some of the security tasks that met the deep-rooted public norm of security as state-owned, but that the politics of a small state did not want to cost. Such an ambiguous position became untenable, in part because the private sector in conflict zones, notably in the Gulf and Iraq wars, had committed a number of high profile wrongdoings that had severely dented already fragile public confidence (Buzato 2015; The Guardian 2007). White (2010) argues that the regulation agenda in the form of the Private Security Act 2001 combined the preferences of both state and the private sector; the private sector needed the state's endorsement to be acceptable to the British public; the state needed regulation to be able to, at least symbolically, assert its power over the private sector, and with that maintain in the eyes of the public its monopoly of the security space. With the SIA in place, a 'state-deputised actor' (White, 2010, p. 16), such a regulation agenda could be executed.

The three texts of the SIA manual, the draft code of conduct and the consultation report seem a continuation of the regulation agenda. Nonetheless, there is mention of a higher purpose that could be construed as claiming state security terrain, on a number of occasions. For instance, the training manual states that the Private Security Industry provides 'manned and technical protection in an effort to prevent and detect crimes and other unauthorised activities' (Walker, p.7). The individual modules often end with a positive directive with regard to the public expectations of a door supervisor, for instance the need to remain calm when the public are not and ensure procedures are followed to keep the public safe. The draft code of consultation covering letter talks about licence holders whose 'professionalism and dedication keeps the public safe and tackles crime' (p. 1,

grammatical error in the original). However, this paragraph is immediately followed by a paragraph on how there are those who behave in ways different to the standards and who put the industry into disrepute. The quote at the beginning of the SIA section was taken on 20/10/20 from a previous SIA website address (www.sia.gov.uk) that is no longer available (now www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority). It includes the sentence 'We make a contribution to making communities safer, helping people feel secure and cutting crime, protecting the public from terrorism, controlling immigration and safeguarding identity'. As it follows 'controlling immigration', the 'about us' quote seems reflective of a very recent past of home-soil terrorist acts and painful Brexit negotiations of various Conservative governments that were anti-immigration, anti-EU, pro-Britishness. Whatever it was, it is now nowhere to be found on the new website pages; indeed, any kind of higher purpose has been stripped off, and the messages are now purely about regulation, certification, and setting standards. Might the absence of a moral purpose indicate the SIA has conceded defeat in the battle for normative legitimacy? Might this become hinder or help the acceptance by the British public in the future? And what would be the knock-on effects for the development of professional selves?

The sector is full of unfit people, the state/SIA needs to be seen as the arbiter of the 'fit-for-purpose' question and to remedy the situation.

This message is hardly subtle in much of SIA communication, and indeed many people I speak with within the sector describe *the* purpose of the SIA to be as addressing some of the criminal activity of notably door supervisors or door guards. The question is whether the disproportionate number of negative instructions in the code addresses this issue, and whether these then would increase the confidence of the general public. There is a risk that what it does is emphasising there *is* a problem, the most important one of which is that frontline officers have undesirable behaviours that need rectifying, *and* that it is within the state's remit to do so. The symbolic content of such a message could at least be construed as the SIA as deputising state showing it is, or wants to be, in control of the private sector, and not the other way around. The anomaly code of conduct survey question alludes to this also: 'Q8. Please describe any examples you have of behaviour that you think shows that someone is not fit and proper to hold an SIA licence'. It is an anomaly question because it is not directly about the code of conduct and instead, it is as if the consultation survey not only had as purpose to gauge views on the code but to educate survey respondents in some way, for instance testing their knowledge. However, judging by the responses to the 'benefit of the code to participants' question, bad people are conceived as *other*. The respondents, collectively, seemed to say "we like the commitments but we are committed anyway".

Raising standards is about excluding unfit people However, it may not be about professionalization. At time of writing, the code of conduct is yet to be implemented. One wonders about the intended audience. The negative instructions in it could be in part directed at the wider public, i.e. “see, we’re telling security officers not to carry arms, steel, or hurt people”. The many ‘don’ts’ in the example statements accompanying the six commitments sound extraordinarily defensive, and one can imagine that security professionals may feel somewhat offended by these explicit instructions and/or abiding by the commitments may not necessarily generate feelings of pride. The five out of the six commitments basically say “be a good person”, the many negative instructions could be summarised as “do not be a criminal”. The training manuals and code of conduct could perhaps best be described as (knowingly) naïve. As if a code of conduct and a 5-day security course could address the structural problems of attracting, developing and retaining a skilled security workforce that can compete with state security, or at least be able to execute competently some of its functions. Although there are different entry routes, to become a police officer usually takes three years see for instance nationalcareers.service.gov.uk or UCAS.com.

It is highly likely that the Security Industry Authority via its accreditation powers creates opportunities for professional identities in private security. However, the explicit and implicit messages in the three documents may have an adverse effect on professionalization because imposed from above in this way, they go against the appeal of the professionalization project of autonomic decision-making and dedicated service (Evetts 2013). It is argued (ibid.) that such a professionalization will ultimately not be successful because it does not include autonomy or occupational control of work. Instead, it could be argued it is used to control the workforce, and to promote or facilitate disciplinary mechanisms. The texts also explicitly put the onus for security officers ‘to behave’ on the individuals rather than on the sector as a whole, and employers in particular to create the terms and conditions to facilitate it. However, one of the purposes of the SIA in general, and the Code of Conduct in particular is, explicitly, to increase the confidence of the public in the private sector. As White (2010) argues, economic and legal legitimacy do not pose particular barriers to the private sector; it is the normative legitimacy in the face of a private security-resisting public that forms the biggest obstacle to the public’s acceptance. The British Security Industry Association seems astutely aware of this, and I turn to this organisation next.

5.2.3 British Security Industry Association

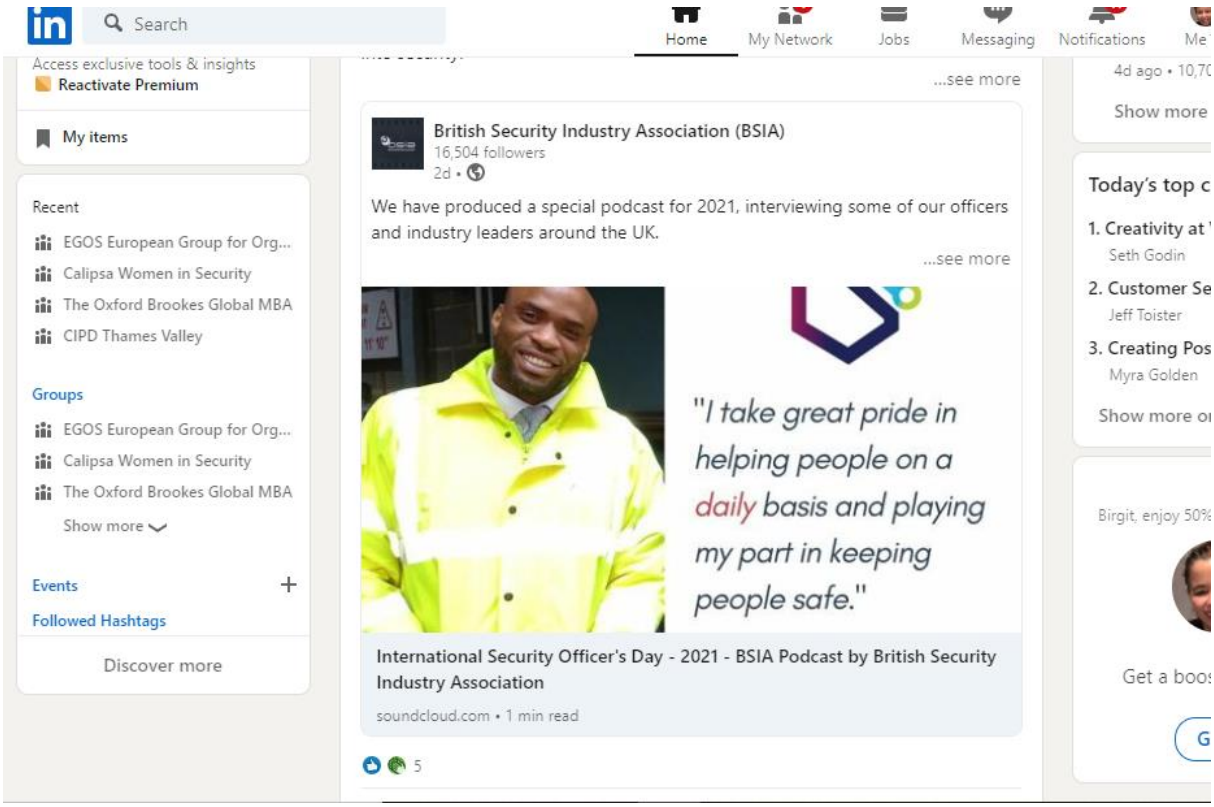


Image 5.2: LinkedIn post on one of the BSIA campaigns

The British Security Industry Association (BSIA) was set up in 1965, the result of a Home Office strategy to have the industry establish a body with which it could communicate ("provide a medium for dialogue between central government and the security industry", bsia.co.uk, 2023) and possibly exercise some control over (e.g. White 2010). Although initially representing large organisations only, it now claims to represent anything from large global companies to small and medium enterprises, with members being responsible for 70% of UK products and services by turnover (see bsia.co.uk, 2021). Separating security member organisations into three sections - personnel, electronic, and physical security - it also includes an 'export council', which promotes the relationship between the UK-based industry and overseas buyers, see bsia.co.uk (2021). It also has a training arm 'Skills for Security', which has as its main task to bring business apprenticeships and apprentices together (see skills4security.com). Initially lacking a firm identity but increasingly defined in its relationship with the state, the association over time changed its position from lobbying for free market security that would best be served under a regime of self-regulation, to *demanding* regulation and legislation. Regulation became its route into improving the sector's then damaged reputation and with that, its capacity to grow (White 2010). The BSIA's representation of the market, its longevity, and colourful history make it a noteworthy source of programmatic texts.

Although the association is a trade organisation, representing the interests of security *businesses* rather than workers, it needs to 'sell' the value of the private security industry. Therefore, it not only represents the economic interests on behalf of its membership, it also promotes values and cultural norms, seeking to inform public opinion that will enable it to do so (Loader and White, 2017). To this end, it regularly produces texts that report on what could be conceived as the value and virtues of private security work and workers. Notably the recent campaigns provide interesting discursive materials. In a private interview with an association spokesperson, the point was made that the campaigns are largely run to change public perceptions of security in a number of different areas with a view to improve the sector's image. At the time of my engagement with this organisation, over the summer of 2020 and in the middle of the pandemic, there were three: 'Security, Career of Choice', 'Safer Cash', and 'The Hidden workforce - resetting the perception'. Whilst the first campaign was set up to plug the 40,000 plus engineer gap in security roles, the 'safer cash' campaign was to promote the use of cash to mitigate the losses in 'cash in transit' revenue for many security providers because of the decrease in cash transactions during the pandemic (see for instance The Guardian 2020). The 'Hidden workforce - resetting the perceptions' campaign has particular salience with regard to professional identity, and includes a collaboration between three key organisations, see the joint press release below. It aimed to, in the words of the spokesperson, "go back to the basics, reintroducing ourselves into the public - because security has always been in the background - and have the public learn to love security". The spokesperson saw the public at large as under-appreciating the many security measures provided by the sector, and the activities of the thousands of private security workers to prevent (terrorist) attacks and crime. This under-appreciation of being 'rarely acknowledged' as per the press release is why the campaign was entitled the hidden workforce. A number of activities were set up as part of this campaign, for instance *24 July International Security Officers Day* (24 July to denote the 24/7 nature of the security role), a webinar on the use of the word 'officer' over 'guard' chaired by academic Martin Gill, a podcast featuring a security guard, and so on. Many organisations promoted the campaign on their pages.

> The British Security Industry Association (BSIA), has joined forces with the Security Institute and the Security Commonwealth to run an *awareness campaign* to highlight the essential role that Security Officers play in public life and to increase respect and recognition for their capabilities.
>
> The private security industry has developed vastly in the last 10 years and this campaign is designed to reset the public perception of the security professional. The campaign will showcase security professionals as a respected, valued, *professional service provider* contributing to and creating a safe and secure environment: critical to protecting people, places, and property – a key worker that is acknowledged and embedded in our daily lives.
>
> Within the last few months, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, security officers have been working in critical settings playing key roles whilst remaining unheralded, such as; working at testing centres and the NHS Nightingale Hospitals, ensuring critical food deliveries from warehouses and

managing queues and customers at supermarkets. They have also been involved in safeguarding the homeless in new sheltered accommodation, physical security at factories and premises, protecting industrial estates from illegal fly-tipping during lockdown; and supporting police patrols in London. These are just a few examples of roles the industry and their officers provide that the industry believes are rarely acknowledged by the public.

Mike Reddington, Chief Executive, BSIA, said: "The recognition of security officers as key workers is the start of a re-appraisal of what service they provide to the community in keeping the public safe and secure. As we exit lockdown and have to navigate public spaces again, they will have a crucial role in supporting public confidence. We are working closely with the Police and all other public bodies to find the best way to achieve this."

Rick Mounfield, Chief Executive, the Security Institute, said: "The security sector is vast with specialisms from Cyber and Engineering to protective services including both technical measures and security officers. The latter engages with society more than the rest but is often overlooked and unappreciated. Great effort has been invested in the professional standards and capabilities of frontline officers and they have proven their worth during the Coronavirus crisis in the UK. They, along with the wider security sector deserve to be recognised, respected and appreciated for the safety and security they provide across the UK.

Guy Matthias, Chairman of the Security Commonwealth (SyCom), said: "SyCom is comprised of some 40 organisations from across the security landscape all of whom share common objectives. These include building professionalism, raising standards and sharing best practice in order to help develop a more effective security response to keep people safe and secure. I hope that this campaign can make more people recognise the changes we have all made and continue to make."

During July the BSIA will be holding its annual British Security Awards (online for 2020), which is its annual showcase of celebrating security excellence, that highlights many great security officers who, on a daily basis across the United Kingdom, exceed expectations through *customer service, teamwork, innovation and outstanding acts in the face of adversity.*

These achievements are celebrated across the industry which the public do not know about and part of the campaign aims to bring these examples of professionalism to a wider audience. The BSIA and its partners are keen to work with the SIA as the industry regulator and are also encouraging the industry to engage with the #SIAHeroes campaign to recognise the great, and often unseen work that is being carried out by security officers.

The BSIA have also opened up a consultation on what to call the service that security officers provide, as Manned Guarding fails to reflect increasing numbers of women in the workforce and the scope of services provided. Today, the industry universally calls its staff 'security officers' to reflect a far wider safeguarding role than just guarding and reviewing other terminology is part of the overall campaign.

To respond to this please go to www.bsia.co.uk/hidden-workforce

The industry will be reaching out to all companies, professionals and organisations in the sector to participate in the campaign, and hope that over the coming challenging weeks as lockdown is eased, the industry can play its part in ensuring that the country emerges with confidence to start to recover and build for the future.

Table 5.3 - BSIA news item of 12 June 2020 (italics are mine).

The press item above illustrates very well not only the connections between various organisational actors, for instance those between the BSIA and the Security Institute. It also talks to the dominant theme identified in earlier analyses of the private security as claiming some of the formal security

space. The pandemic offered an opportunity to renew demands for further recognition, notably on the back of the newly awarded status of key workers for frontline security staff (see Gov UK News, 2020). However, the press release clearly positions the industry as underdog: invisible, misunderstood and unacknowledged by the general public. The quotes from the BSIA and the Security Institute seem defensive in tone; the onus is on the public to acknowledge key services the sector provides and it should allow the sector to share the security space with traditional security providers, on which the public can no longer solely rely. Via the SyCom quote, although seemingly slightly off-piste in relation to the main messages, another message of raised standards is squeezed in. Overall, the news item presents the security sector as a serious contender for pressing security needs, for which it is appropriately equipped. However, at the same time, the item seems to perpetuate a central narrative of the sector as lacking in recognition, and with that in legitimacy. A BSIA-commissioned YouGov poll (BSIA 2020) among the general public as part of the campaign confirmed what the industry already suspected:

- Only 31% believe that security officers are fundamental to keeping the UK safe
- Only 41% respect the role and feel safer for the presence of security officers
- Security officers rank 9th out of 10 essential services, below postal workers and just ahead of traffic wardens

These perceptions are deeply problematic for the industry and professionalization efforts and may in turn affect the possibilities for crafting positive professional identities for individuals. The unfavourable results were lamented by the industry who sought government commentary to mitigate possible negative effects, for instance, in this press release: “James Brokenshire, Minister for State for Security at the Home Office, issued a statement confirming that “Security and fire safety personnel can play a vital role at this time of national challenge. People working in these sectors are essential to national infrastructure and are key workers.” (Securitas 2021). The added word ‘can’ is noteworthy.

One of the BSIA’s key re-branding goals (shared in a private interview), is no longer to refer to the sector as *private* security but as *professional* security. The spokesperson thinks the media do not appreciate the hard work that goes on to transform the industry and only report on the negatives, by which she meant the regular reporting in the media of the running of institutions by private security providers and frontline officer misconduct within them. The re-branding is also meant to attract more women and people ‘of colour’, the spokesperson told me, although why this would be the case was less clear. The #SIAheroes campaign the press release refers to is part of an aim to emphasise the positive actions of individual security officers, as do the industry’s lavish and much

publicised award ceremonies. To assess what is valued in the industry, Loader and White (2018) problematize one of these awards, for 'outstanding act', by distinguishing between contractual and non-contractual heroic acts. The former refer to acts that could be conceived as belonging within the officer's contractual obligations and the latter to those that are outside of it. The purpose of the two categories is to highlight the tension between economic responsibilities and moral obligations. The nominees are assessed by an elite panel – those with longstanding expertise in the security sector – based on the following criteria: dealing with a violent individual, using detection skills to solve a crime; fighting a fire; performing life-saving first aid; preventing an individual from committing suicide. A particular finding is of note: in the 18-year history of the award, non-contractual heroic acts have become less desirable as they are considered an organisational risk: 'the officer's moral obligations threaten to undermine their economic responsibilities and, as a consequence, the judges are less likely to recognize and celebrate the resulting acts of heroism' (ibid. p. 1413).

Similar observations can be made of the Women in Security Awards. The 2020 award ceremony - analysed for the purpose of this thesis because it was held during the pandemic and therefore held online, recorded and posted as a YouTube video[5]- is hosted by Yasmin Stratton, Master with the Guild of Security Professionals, now WCOSP (West Company of Security Professionals). Although these awards are not hosted by the BSIA but by Professional Security Magazine (see further down), the BSIA is listed as the magazine's partner, and in 2021, one of the judges on the panel was BSIA chief Mike Reddington. As with the 'main' BSIA event, the award ceremony is a glamorous and glitzy affair, and in 2021, was held at the Shakespeare Underglobe, South Bank, in London. There are several categories in which women can win awards. Nominees are largely praised for what could be considered part of their contractual obligations. However, there is *no* category for 'heroic acts'. There *is* a 'frontline' category where nomination rationales also include a few acts that could be thought of as heroic as per the criteria described above. However, these seem of lesser importance. Prize winners tend to be praised for 'going beyond the call of duty'; however, this refers to engaging in civic duties such as volunteering, investing in their own development, and having exemplary customer services behaviours. The nomination rationales in other categories, for instance the 'security manager of the year', also include 'volunteering in industry roles'. The winner was introduced as dedicating free time to volunteering for the industry, e.g. the 'knife prevent' campaign and other anti-knife crime activities, volunteering as 'active citizen' as holder of SIA licence; and volunteering with Essex police. In addition, further winning qualities were 'successfully manages full-time role with family', 'was physically assaulted but gave evidence in court', 'true inspiration to

[5] See here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaQbJ01VN3w

women', and 'helped struggling colleagues during the pandemic'. If the emphasis for the, mainly, men in the main event is on contractual heroism that privileges economic responsibilities over moral obligations, for the women in the Women in Security Awards ceremony, moral obligations in relatively non-heroic roles are a way into facilitating economic obligations, not least because their employing organisations are highlighted during the award ceremony and in any press communication about the event. The effects are the same: neither frontline officer is permitted to shine; the 'hidden workforce' seems 'hidden' in part because of the ambiguous role played by the BSIA (and its partner organisations) itself.

5.2.4 The Security Institute

There are a number of organisations in the UK in which training and development, and with these also certification efforts ('raising the standards') are concentrated. Those of note include: the Security Institute - a professional membership body for security professionals; the Chartered Security Professionals – applications for which are managed by The Security Institute; and Skills for Security - a BSIA-based skills development not-for-profit organisation, also affiliated with The Security Institute. The Security Institute therefore has a central role. For the purpose of this chapter, I reviewed a number of texts. The first one is the welcoming YouTube video[6] on the home page, which offers an introduction, rich in description and normative messages, such as private security as 'respected, recognised, professional'. The institute seems to offer certification for individuals via continuous professional development (CPD) and corporate partnership for organisation to 'promote the highest possible standards of integrity and professional competence in the business of security' (security-institute.org). Member benefits include access to a membership platform and further development, discount on a number of courses, membership of the London Chamber of Commerce including legal advice, free subscription to Professional Security Magazine. Individual members pay a one-off registration fee and then an annual subscription fee, which entitles them to a membership grade, of which there are five. To go through the ranks, a certain number of Continuous Professional Development points need to be scored and experience evidenced. Scoring occurs via a wide range of formal or informal activities, such as delivering a course or presentation, or gaining a management or security qualification, to reading of trade magazines, mentoring, attending a conference, judging an award, writing an article, and so on. Training is exclusively delivered by Perpetuity ARC and Perpetuity Training, companies run by David Gill, the Institute's vice chairman between 2007 and 2012. In a recent interview (see the Introduction in table 5.4) Gill, who is also the CEO of a global

[6] See here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YUafbRnCVg&t=26s

security training organisation, talked about a new register, the Certified Technical Security Professional (CTSP), to which 700 people applied to be signed up.

An exclusive interview with David Gill, Group Managing Director of the Linx International Group discussing the need for effective security training. At the beginning of 2019 a report by MarketWatch projected that the global commercial security industry will grow by 10% annually until 2023, reaching a value of US$187 billion by the end of that period. This fantastic rate of growth has of course created huge employment opportunities throughout the industry, but *it is imperative that those individuals who choose to work in security are trained to the appropriate standards and competent to carry out their role.* The provision of training has become an interesting talking point in recent times with the National Police Chiefs Council even opening up free online counter terrorism training to the general public in the aftermath of the London Bridge attack in November 2019. However, for security professionals, Linx International Group is the leading provider of security training courses. Its constituent companies, Tavcom Training, Perpetuity Training and ARC Training International provide a comprehensive range of security, risk management and investigative functions together with operational, procedural and strategic advice and training.

Table 5.4 - International Security Journal 27 January 2020 (my italics)

Requirements to be certified are a level 3 qualification in a relevant security discipline, two years' experience and a portfolio with references. However, Gill is also quoted as saying: "Furthermore, each registrant is required to sign a self-declaration for the absence of criminal convictions as well as adhere to a professional code of conduct, both of which will provide *peace of mind for end users*"(my italics). The Security Institute is also connected to Martin Gill (not clear whether there is a relationship to David Gill) a criminologist academic, who is the Director of Perpetuity Research, a spinout company from the University of Leicester (see perpetuityresearch.com). From his LinkedIn page: 'In 2010 he was recognised by the BSIA with a special award for 'outstanding service to the security sector''. A fellow of the Security Institute, prof Gill seems hugely invested in the professionalization and legitimisation of the industry, and takes an industry-sympathetic perspective (see for instance Mawby and Gill, 2017). He regularly publishes in trade magazines, set up a business excellence award (OSPA – the Outstanding Security Performance Award), and chairs webinars with industry experts, for instance, the recent 'What is in a name: security officer or security guard?' (hosted by theospas.com). At the same time, he is part of a citation community that includes international relations scholars Adam White and Ian Loader, whose various publications take a much more critical approach to the industry (e.g. White 2010, Loader and White 2018, Thumala, Goold, and Loader 2011).

Image 5.5 - International Security Journal (June 2021 – Issue 28) featuring Dr Alison Wakefield on the front page: 'Demonstrating the power of diversity'

At the time of writing, The Security Institute is chaired by Dr Alison Wakefield, an academic, whose PhD was an ethnographic research on private policing in public spaces in the early 2000s, and therefore before the SIA. In the published monograph (Wakefield, 2003), Wakefield outlined how the impetus for her research had come out of a concern about security outsourced to the private sector, as well as the absence of research on accountability and standards. Wakefield felt her initial assumptions were fundamentally challenged; she became impressed by the 'omnicompetency' (p. 84) of frontline staff and broadened her study to develop a framework for 'understanding the contemporary role of private security in policing' (ibid). In light of her appointment as The Security Institute's chair, Wakefield was interviewed for City Security Magazine (Autumn 2018). In a world full of 'threats and challenges' (p. 9), she advocates the need for businesses and the general public to work together to respond to, and recover from civil emergencies. A goal is to sell security careers to young people, 'from whatever background' (ibid.) for which clearer pathways need to be

developed. In the interview, Wakefield is quoted as saying that 'the sector relies too heavily on the investment that has been made in training in police and military' (ibid.). The Security Institute seems to want to try and address this issue by introducing the five stages of membership, building on accumulative expertise. In addition, it also keen to promote a softer, more diverse security worker, as highlighted in the boxed tweet text below. The interview with Wakefield published in the International Security Journal (June 2021) further highlights this new direction. In looking back on her career, the interview in quick succession tackles inequality in the sector, promoting a more diverse, kinder security, enthusiastically selling the need for security by highlighting threat, and selling her own book. In simultaneously sounding defensive and positive, the article seems to epitomise the tensions and ambiguities in much of the text production in the sector.

This week Simona Mortolini is sharing her professional journey as part of our Inclusive Security SIG's #OurSecurity Campaign:

'My story in the security sector is atypical, to say the least. I was born in the 1970's in Italy, I was the first one in my family to study at a University. With a degree in Cultural Anthropology, my first jobs ranged from working as a schoolteacher for children with disabilities to collaborating with an association fighting organised crime.

After several post-degree studies, I started my career with International Organisations, initially in development and then in the humanitarian sector. I spent thirteen years in Operations Management across the globe.

A few years ago, I moved to the UK, where I started to work in the Safety and Security department of the organisation I have been with over the last seven years - Save the Children. My actual role as 'Gender and Diversity Safety and Security Manager' was created in the organisation as result of the combination between staff requests and leadership vision.

The reality is that the more diverse we are, the better we are equipped to understand, represent, protect and serve both the staff and the communities we work with.'

Members can get involved with the ISSIG on our Community Platform.

Table 5.6 - Security Institute post, distributed via Twitter on 25/3/21

5.2.5 International Professional Security Association (IPSA)

Like the BSIA, the International Professional Security Association (IPSA) has been around for over half a century (1958). It was founded to promote professionalism in the industry and initially sought to represent small and medium-sized companies only (George and Button 2000 in White 2010). It became somewhat inactive over time, when professionalization efforts had been taken over by 'from above' regulation, and without intervention may have ceased to exist. When the reign of the previous chair came to an end in July 2021, the new chair Simon Pears proposed a new direction for the association, which was to become the voice of the frontline workers. I had a number of conversations with representatives of this association and one formal interview, at the time of which, reinvention was in full swing. The central thread in the website materials, the conversations, and the interview is one of 'let bygones be bygones', which not only refers to the industry's illustrious past but also to infighting between the various industry associations, including the BSIA. Although sponsored by big corporations, IPSA claims explicitly, to want to move away from large corporate organisations. In recognition of challenging working conditions, one of the key actions is to offer free membership to those with an SIA licence, support the frontline with advice, and collect data via an app on frontline wellbeing and working conditions. The app can be downloaded free of charge for anyone who becomes an IPSA member, and anyone with an SIA licence can obtain free IPSA membership. Members are encouraged to log their days at work in terms of their mental and physical well-being. The logging process works with images to help the non-native English speaking membership. The board includes a frontline representative, who is appointed for a 6-month period, and mentored in the role. The IPSA website (ipsa.org.uk) is full of statements to these effects. For instance, Simon Pears is quoted to say:

> *"This vision is inspired by the hard work and commitment that front-line services offer the public to help keep them safe and secure. The free membership of IPSA is our 'thank you' to them. We want to become the voice of security front-line workers […]IPSA was the first security trade association and it will be the first to revolutionise and recognise front-line workers in this way".*

Pears is supported by a new chief executive, Una Riley, a well-known person in the private security world, who is simultaneously very embedded in the industry *and* who promotes voices outside of what could be construed as an *old boys network*. Riley founded the Women in Security Award, is First Lady in the Company (The Worship Company of Security Professionals), writes regular columns in Professional Security Magazine, and can often be seen to present at award ceremonies. On the website, Una Riley is quoted to say:

> *"Security is a credible and professional career path but, sadly, it is so often misrepresented by some organisations and the broader media. We want to welcome members who are interested in personal and career development. We want IPSA to be driven by their needs…their voice…their association."*

In a private conversation, the representatives lament the industry's poor treatment of the frontline workers, want to enhance quality in working standards, educate client organisations, and be accommodating to a new kind of security worker. They are keen for IPSA to be seen as warm and welcoming, cuddly even, presenting a softer kind of security than the public is familiar with, by looking after frontline staff. The IPSA twitter feed reinforces those messages, and on an almost daily basis, tweets information of use to frontline officers, for instance, articles and links for medical information and check-ups such as breast cancer screening, but also tweets about modern issues of mental health and gender identity, see Image 5.7 for a selection.

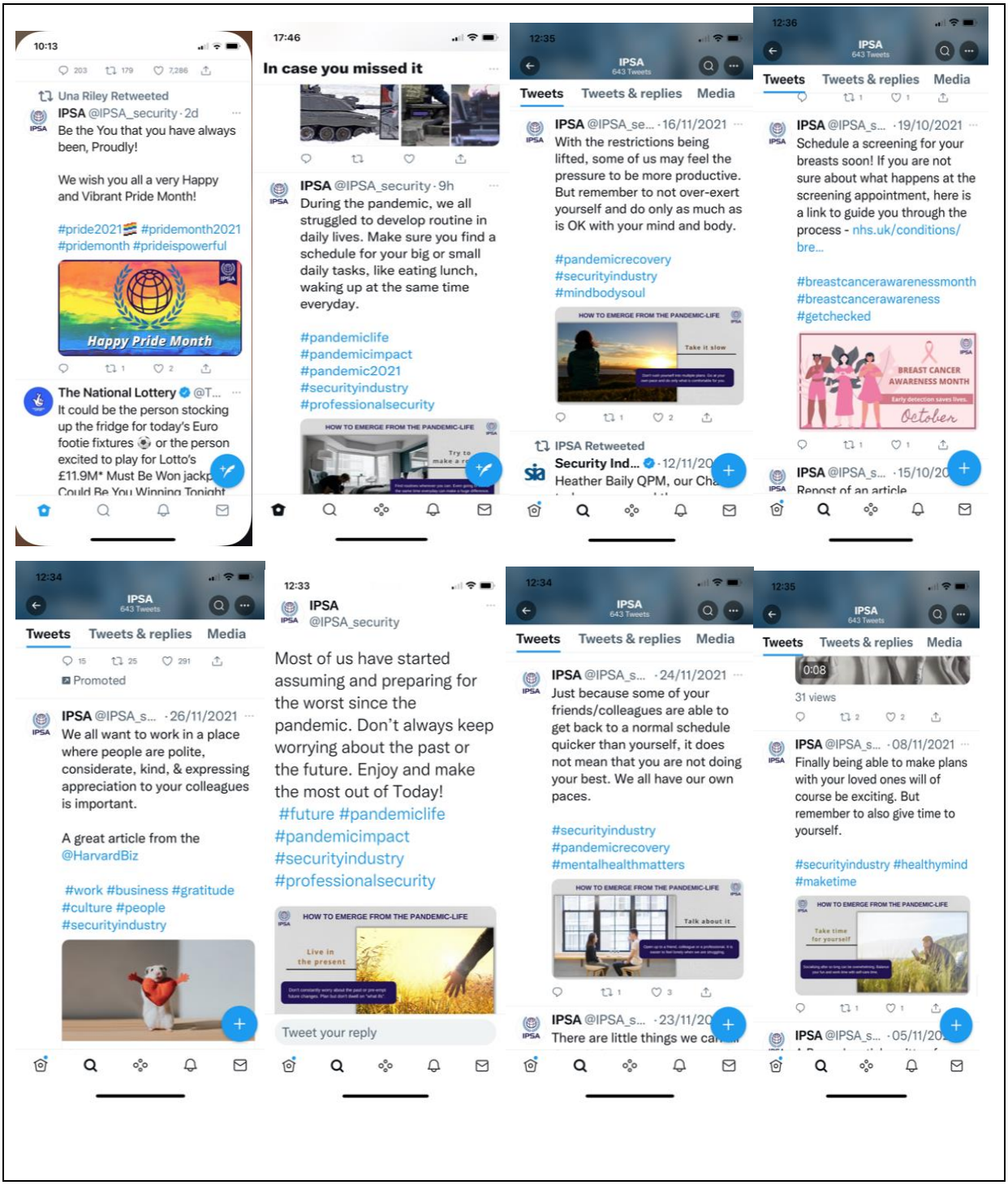


Image 5.7 Collage of IPSA tweets showing the softer side of private security

From the back page of the second newsletter, published 15/12/21, membership benefits are listed to include: 'to be part of a professional association that allows you to be proud of your work within security; access to a wide range of industry experts that can help guide you; complimentary subscription to the 'Professional Security Magazine'; complimentary counselling helpline available 24/7 via our partners; complimentary tax & legal helpline available 24/7 via our partners, access to the IPSA Welfare Fund in times of need; preferential rates on Private Medical Plans via our partners

at HMCA'. The benefits further give a good idea of what IPSA imagines frontline security is, or should be about and what is currently lacking: it should be seen as a proper job and career, but training and recognition is not provided by the employing organisations, and frontline officers are largely unsupported, suffer with mental health, and struggle to make ends meet. Based on a private interview, the idea is to collect baseline data via the app so that arguments to client corporations are better evidenced. Client organisations, in turn, as part of a CSR agenda, may assert pressure on employing private security companies to provide better working conditions. However, client organisations currently can hide behind security provision which is largely and increasingly outsourced to the private sector, for instance in the case of UK university campuses, where reportedly, there have been huge increases in spending on outsourced security provisions (e.g. The Guardian, 2019). Furthermore, much of the domestic private security is delivered by global organisations, see the second chapter.

IPSA's intention is making the private security industry a good place to work for frontline workers: "we want to make their lives better in any way we can" (from a private interview). Based on my conversations and interview, there is no doubt this intention is sincere. The problem lies perhaps in that IPSA needs to exist at all as a , 'from above' imposed platform because with a relatively high proportion of a non-native English speaking contingent and a zero-hours culture, there are limited possibilities for a bottom-up unionised workforce[7]. Tweets do not seem to get particular traction; one wonders to what extent frontline security workers are or will be making use of the services, for instance via the well-being app.

5.2.6 Comparing security magazines - small worlds of discourses

Magazine	**Editorial Office**	**Circulation**	**Publication cycle**	**Target audience**	**Partnering with**
City Security Magazine	London	Distributed free to over 10,000 security professionals in both print	Four times/year	Businesses (security consumers); security consultants. Also frontline officers, public law	(among others:) City Police; The Security Institute

[7] At the time of writing (Autumn 2022), a new union for frontline private security workers has only just been set up, see here: https://securityjournaluk.com/security-industry-federation-union-launches-for-frontline-workers/

		and digital format		enforcement, public at large	
Professional Security	Manchester	On subscription, delivered to '10,000 desks' – free to Security Institute members	Monthly	Businesses (security manufacturers and distributors); security consultants Also security consumers; frontline, public at large	(among others:) International Expo; The Security Institute; IPSA

Table 5.8 - Comparison table between City Security Magazine and Professional Security Magazine

My analysis of the two security magazines considers interviews, columns, ads, and images, further exploring messages - overt, opaque, or subliminal – of what constitutes professionalization and what professional identities are being foregrounded in private security. Although I assess the magazines as programmatic sources in a similar manner to the previous institutions, there is something particular about a regular publication where a number of different text modes come together. Analysis will therefore additionally draw on ideas in visual analysis and cultural media studies (Rose 2016; Porteous 2016; LeCreco and Tracy 2009; Hermes 1995) and focus on 'visible traces of opaque discourses' (Handley 2018, p. 243) in structures of words and images. Furthermore, I also interviewed the two editors for both magazines, which offered additional materials for interpretation. Because of the dispersed nature of my data collection, the interviews and the magazine content analyses were conducted in two distinct periods, a number of years apart. The first interview with Andrea Berkhoff, editor of City Security Magazine, took place in the autumn of 2018, a year after the Manchester Arena bombing and London Bridge/Borough Market terrorist attacks. Most of the content analysis stem from that period although for future possibilities purposes, I have also included an issue from during the pandemic. The second interview, with Mark Rowe from Professional Security, took place in April 2021, just after the third lockdown.

5.2.6.1 City Security Magazine

> 'City Security magazine covers the most important and latest security issues for your company and your customers - making it essential reading for everyone concerned with business security […]. Like no other publication of its kind... we only cover the security issues that matter to your business including: Terrorism, Manned Guarding, CCTV, Contingency Planning, Project Griffin, Community safety partnerships, International Security, Emergency Services, Business & Retail Security, Fraud, ID Theft, Office Crime, Business Travel, Info Security, UK Police Forces, Organised Crime, Crisis Management and more'.
>
> (From the magazine's LinkedIn page)

City Security Magazine is a publication for producers and consumers of security. Free of charge, subscribers receive either a digital or a physical copy of a full-colour glossy magazine. Initially a publication of the City of London Crime Prevention Association, a network of organisations that meet in the City every month, City Security Magazine is a good illustration of a platform where different security agents come together and lines between the public and private sector have blurred. The magazine is a high-quality production, with original graphics and photos. Issues feature a variety of topics written by a range of authors in both the public and private sector. For instance, the 2019 Summer issue includes articles on managing insider threats, physical security technologies, and fire safety – all written by representatives of private providers; Cyber Griffin, a City police-initiated training programme open to the public; and an interview by the editor with the kidnapped IT consultant Peter Moore in Iraq in 2007 on 'the lessons learned for security'. A range of public, private and third party organisations advertise in this particular issue, for instance The Security Institute, National Security Inspectorate (certification body), Guardforce Security Ltd (close protection), and SSR (a security recruitment specialist) who also feature in an article entitled 'Articulating your worth to the boardroom', which reports on a salary survey for middle management jobs. Although the magazine portrays a range of voices with different aims, it is not always clear who is speaking and which audience is addressed. Much of the language of the articles is about 'equipping organisations', 'being prepared' and 'tackling threat' - data theft, fire, cybersecurity, GDPR – the topic of 'diversity', the importance of having a diverse workforce, is a recurring theme. Terrorism is a thread throughout most of the pre-pandemic issues, for instance, the Spring 2018 issue has three articles listed on the front page: 'Combatting the evils of terrorism', 'Business must be on alert', 'Understanding the Jihadist mindset'. Dominant narrative about terrorism are that it is Islamic (various images in the magazine support this, as well as one of the main articles) and not caused by socio-economic issues but by ideology. It is 'urban warfare' as it prevents business as usual, and businesses should become good neighbours and engaged citizens so that they help combat terrorist threat.

5.2.6.2 Vignette 3 - City Security Magazine

I interview the magazine's editor, Andrea Berkhoff, in a café in the City one December morning, around the corner from the magazine's office. A former partnership officer with City police, a civil role, Berkhoff took over the editorship six years ago. She explains the workings of the magazine and how content is developed. The first port of call for features in the magazine is the Crime Prevention Association. However, over the years, she has built a large network of contacts in private security organisations, law enforcement, trade organisations, interest groups, academia, and so on, and she invites representatives to write for the magazine to promote their interests or advance particular agendas. She makes the magazine profitable through advertisements. Although she wants the core of the magazine to be about sharing good practice and ideas, Berkhoff recognises that the

organisations she features are ultimately commercial entities needing to sell their products or services.

Despite a clear, targeted audience of businesses, an important purpose of the magazine, Berkhoff argues, is to create developmental opportunities and be a knowledge bank to people in low-level, badly paid jobs so that they feel part of the 'security community'. She explains: "…when you talk to some of the security officers and you hear about their dedication, their commitment to the job, you know, I think it is really moving. They are putting themselves out there, on the frontline, they are where police officers ought to be, and they are paid a lot less, are supported a lot less, and they still want to do it, and … want to do a really good job. And they should be rewarded for doing it, you know, recognized for it […]they are not getting a lot of input managerially, or educationally, career-development wise, and […] when they say they are enjoying reading the magazine and the magazine is bringing that helpful information to them, then that is really satisfying".

As to women in private security, Berkhoff thinks it is a very masculine, very male, hard-nosed industry. However, she reckons things are slowly shifting. People increasingly are transferring from backgrounds other than military or police, although she does not recognise the flow from government to the state sector like some of my other interviewees. Andrea is enthused by the notion of diversity and feels there is a culture shift, where the lack of diversity is acknowledged and initiatives are being developed to promote it. Nonetheless, a lot of security domains she thinks are "pale, male, and stale". Corporates are also the driver in that change – they want security people who look presentable, attractive and with communication skills, not somebody "from a nightclub". She is a member of Women in Security Society - the society is not very active at the moment – and thinks her magazine is a good vehicle to promote women's interests. She thinks women are ill-served by talk of their supposedly particular skills set - for Andrea the goal should be about fairness of representation: "I think the cliché-ed view around soft skills, women being softer and more approachable, is a view a lot people will understand, but that is not necessarily all that helpful to women. I think it is more about saying that women can do this, and they bring what they will bring as an individual. So some women will be soft, and gentle and kind, but not all will be. Some men will be hurley, burley, and other men will not be".

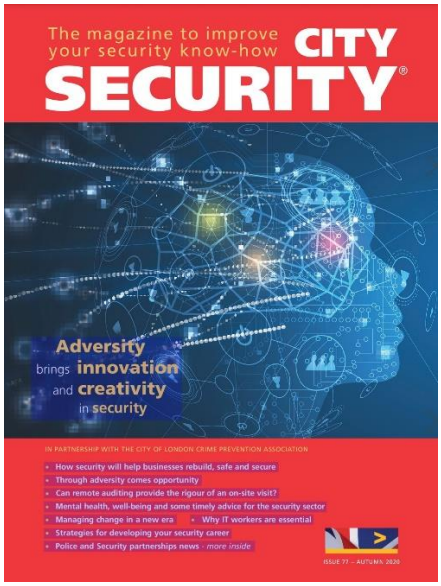


Image 5.9 City Security Magazine (Autumn 2020) – 'There is opportunity in adversity'

Looking at the first issue post lockdown, but ahead of the second wave (Autumn 2020), there is an article entitled 'How security will help businesses rebuild…Safe and Secure' by Darren Read (Managing Director Amulet, www.amulet.co.uk). It is rich in speech on creating communities, repositioning the sector as a safe pair of hands in turbulent times. It offers relatively cheap solutions to Covid-related issues, e.g. empty office buildings that could be protected with CCTV, and urges the sector to 'capitalise on the pandemic', highlighting the work of the BSIA and their campaign to raise the profile of the security worker. Implicit messages seem to be, 'when times are tough for client organisations security is the first to go'. The sector needs to respond in two ways to prevent this from happening: raise awareness of all the good work they do, and offering security solutions that are cheap, e.g. CCTV instead of guarding, and technologies for data analytics. There is a plea to the audience: please notice what we are doing – which is 'keep the country stable since March', we can protect your assets, but also, we can calm everyone down, for which we have 'soft skills' in place. It uses 'othering strategies' to make this point: 'we have all seen viral videos of people angrily refusing to wear a mask and again, it will fall on to security officers to deal with these situations in a professional manner' (City Security Magazine, Autumn 2020, p. 4).

5.2.6.3 Professional Security Magazine

Professional Security magazine has been successfully filling the growing need to voice the opinions of the security industry *and its users since 1989. We pride ourselves on our ability to drive forward the interests of the industry through our monthly publication of Professional Security magazine.*

(From the magazine's website, professionalsecurity.co.uk, my italics)

Professional Security Magazine is a different type of magazine. Like City Security, it is very business security focused, clearly targeted at organisational consumers of security products. But where City Security magazine explicitly tailors to the hybrid community of state law enforcers and private security providers – it is produced in partnership with the Crime Prevention Association - Professional Security magazine aims to represent the private sector itself. The magazine feels a little like a women's mag: there are gossip pages (literally called 'Roy's Gossip), regular columns ('Una says'), letter pages ('The things you say'), and so on. Many pages, typically at the front of the magazine, are dedicated to news items on new appointees ('Put a face to a name'); there are numerous ads - mainly in electronic security products companies. Like City Security magazine, Professional Security magazine includes a number of interviews, although these typically appear in the second half of the magazine. Where the magazine is different however, are the editorials. Where City Security editorials are rather measured, matter of factly, Professional Security magazine

editorials ('editor's comment') are strident, full of rhetorical questions and exclamation marks, sometimes overt anger - directed at government, police, criminals – for instance, expressing outrage at proposed government policy 'Protect Duty', or the creativity and opportunism of criminals during the pandemic. They are war references and encouraging comments for society to pick itself up after the pandemic in the way that it did in 1945, a call to doing what is morally right, criticising the *pro*-statues protestors ('hooligans') but including them in a list that include BLM, anti-poll tax, and anti-apartheid protestors. It often sings the praises of frontline staff. At the same time, it aligns itself with invisible security work: 'Those who provide a service – I suppose what we at Professional Security do for readers – are, like security officers and cleaners, easily taken for granted' (Professional Security Magazine, 2020). Although not easily categorised, Professional Security editorials do not seem to be as neutral as the editor's vision for the magazine would suggest (see vignette 4).

Image 5.10 - Collection of pages of Professional Security Magazine

At the time of the interview with the editor, the April 2021 publication features an interview with an award-winning frontline officer at a University campus, praised for the delivery of first aid to a student who had fallen down the stairs. The interview with the frontline officer in question was awarded an AUSPA (Association of University Chief Security Officers) award for what seems to be in

Loader and White's (2018) terms, a 'contractual heroic act', i.e. part of the terms and conditions of the job and quite possibly, what any member of the public may have done. Image 5.10 featuring a collection of pages, includes Roy's gossip, a Mark Rowe editorial, and an 'Una says' column reporting on the Women in Security Awards ceremony 2021. Michele Russell, interim SIA chief, is bottom right left.

5.2.6.4 Vignette 4 – Professional Security Magazine

I interview Mark Rowe just after the third lockdown, in April 2021. He joined the magazine in 1999 "knowing no more about private security than the next person". He learned about the industry on the job but thinks to be ignorant has certain advantages as it gets you to ask all the right questions. Rowe makes the point, emphatically, that he does not work for the magazine because of a passion for private security and could have joined other regional papers. He does think it is lucky he chose the magazine – the growth in the industry at least meant the magazine is still going, unlike the regional press in general the demise of which is symptomatic of journalism under pressure from the advent of the internet. Even so, there are no more editorial offices and everyone works from home. Rowe's commitment, he suggests, is to bring a journalist perspective to the industry: he brings people the news. His purpose is to serve the readership, although he is not altogether sure who the readership is. He assumes it is diverse, e.g. security managers, installer of security products, security consultants, or someone in the police or the army with a specialism in private security. Rowe sees it as his job to write something for all audiences whose interests overlap somewhat but who are nonetheless different.

When starting out, what was inculcated in him was that the magazine represents the industry: it canvases opinion and prints what readers tell it to. He therefore thinks of his role as neutral. However, he concedes that unlike national newspapers, trade magazines for their income predominantly rely on advertising rather than subscriptions, and he needs to do a good job otherwise he would not get the advertising revenue, and therefore cannot be too controversial. Advertising mainly comes from manufacturers or distributors of CCTV products, and also access control and intruder alarm systems. Very little income comes from frontline security companies, another difference with City Security magazine. Rowe therefore would not necessarily report on negative press about, for instance, detention centres run by private security companies. There is one issue he is passionate about and which has taken quite a bit of column space in the past year, which is the 'Protect Duty'. The proposed legislation (now passed), also known as Martyn's Law, had come about in the wake of the Manchester Arena attack, and is named after one of the victims. It requires businesses staging events in public places to carry out risk assessment of terrorist-vulnerabilities and put in place actions that mitigate these risks. It was sent out for consultation to various stakeholders. A passage from a strident editorial reads as follows:

"It is not sensible to let political things get you down – whichever way you lean politically, the chances are that some years you won't like what's done. However, I do feel dispirited by the upcoming Protect Duty. It seems to me unnecessary, uncosted, and won't stop a terrorist knife or bomb […] Likelihood of a terror attack against a cinema, supermarket, music festival, and so on is, thankfully, small. Other risks will harm and even kill people this, and every summer: drug overdoses and sexual assault at festivals, knife crime. Yet the Home Office does not propose a 'duty' to combat those. In truth, the protect duty has not arisen from actual risks from terrorism – the official threat level went down recently; but to give the government something to point to come the end of the Manchester Arena bombing inquiry. The trouble is, no one wants to argue against a responsibility to do more to prevent terrorism. *The security industry, if it goes along with the Home Office, is running*

the risk of becoming a scapegoat when the next terror attack happens. It's only the latest example in a pernicious trend in society of blaming businesses for the crimes of others" (my emphasis, BdO).

During the interview, I invite Rowe to comment on his editorial. He felt that in all his years on the magazine, this the one issue where he has been the most outspoken, going against the readership to voice a position against the proposed legislation. After all, the proposed legislation might present new opportunities for the private sector. Rowe feels that putting a few camera's up would be a cheap, but also ineffective solution. Moreover, the disproportionate attention for terrorist attacks which the consultation and publicity around it would lead to, would detract from other security risks such as the safety of women. We meet at the time of the Clapham Common vigil for Sarah Everard, the woman murdered by a policeman. He says: "while the terror threat is officially set at 'substantial', the fact is that, thankfully, terror attacks are so rare that loss of life is actually very seldom. So, the sensible think to do would be, in a utilitarian sense, to promote the greatest good for the greatest number, which is doing something about women's safety, rather than counterterrorism".

5.2.7 Professional security and collective identity

"Nobody wants security, it's not a product that anybody wants, ever. […]But I'd like the consumer to change their mind, I'd like them to start paying a decent price for the product or service they are buying"

(from a private interview with an industry representative)

At the beginning of this chapter, I asked two questions: how does the text producer think private security should be professionalised and what professional identity is being encouraged or facilitated? Although the programmatic texts analysed in this chapter represent a wide range of views, I propose that collectively, they hold a vision for professionalization and professional identity that share a number of tropes. In this way, they contribute to a collective identity, even when members in the collective do not necessarily know each other. Although a collective identity as 'discursive enactment' (Ybema 2010, p. 483) is not formed within the boundaries of organisations, what binds members in a private security collective at the sector level, is identity talk in reference to particular others: the regulating state, law enforcers, the wider public, criminals. There is therefore a sense in which members in a fabric of connections, take on identity struggles in professionalization trajectories.

5.2.7.1 Trope 1 Private security workers do everyday jobs

The sector wants to be seen like any other. Notwithstanding glitzy award ceremonies, what is preferred overall are frontline workers who are ordinary, hardworking, and not too heroic. 'Society needs security workers for everyday security and state security has bigger fish to fry' – is what many

voices seem to say. There is a collective desire to move away from private security's shady past. To appease the public, there is a deliberate distancing from private security as related to conflict, the military and sometimes even the police. Terrorism-related themes do feature; however, not everywhere is this the case and the more distant we become from the last terrorist event, the more terrorism-related themes are backgrounded. For instance, although mentioned on websites and in the training manual from a number of years ago, references to terrorism have been largely removed in current SIA website texts, with the SIA increasingly emphasising its regulatory function only. An additional speculative rationale for this could be that 'terrorism talk', and possibly also the 'controlling immigration' theme (see the 2020 quote from the SIA website at the beginning of the SIA section) distracted from the central messages of regulation. These messages are ubiquitous and delivered using different modes of communication, including social media in ways that Rasmussen (2021) might describe as the 'marketable ordinariness of security'. See for instance the tweet below from the Oxford Brookes University twitter feed; note the hashtag of #theexceptionaleveryday, which sums up perfectly the paradoxical nature of security work: yes, it is do with security perhaps but it is nonetheless ordinary.

Image 5.11 - Oxford Brookes University Tweet (April 2022)

5.2.7.2 Trope 2 Private security workers are customer service agents that deliver the human touch

Although the sector offers a variety of regular security roles requiring a range of skills against a variety of threats, what binds these is a customer services approach. Service to customers is a central concern; civic duty is celebrated. Although referring to *public* security services, Rasmussen (2021) noted that there was an increased use of the 'human touch' in social media content, a mode of action with a purpose of drawing the attention of as many people as possible and promoting a positive image of organisations. An example is the image here below of the Oxford Brookes University Security Instagram page, featuring chocolate eggs and 'thief' teddy bears. Could the cuddly side of security have been imagined any better?

Image 5.12 - Oxford Brookes University Security Instagram page (March 2022

Work itself is about prevention rather than tackling crime head on. Via the marketization of security services to paying private clients, customer services skills (and digital marketing skills!) have become key. However, although workers who have those kinds of skills are foregrounded, the symbolic

capital of those with military or law enforcers' pasts is still valued and celebrated, for instance, war heroes, retired police employees, Ghurkhas. Training and development are there but these seem to exist largely outside of contractual obligations of the employing organisation (apart from the basic SIA badge training), and not routinely offered to frontline staff. To get ahead in security careers, frontline staff are expected to invest in themselves, via volunteering or self-funded educational programmes, although some big companies offer free online short courses in company time. There is an acceptance of frontline security roles as low-paid and insecure, attracting a largely unskilled workforce.

5.2.7.3 Trope 3 Private security work is for everyone

Alongside ordinariness and customer services skills, diversity and inclusion agendas are key messages, pushed very hard, and therefore difficult to ignore. Evidence of this is in most materials considered in this chapter. Training materials explicitly refer to the Equality Act 2010, and images, interviews, and articles in various channels including social media content portray a diverse, softer side of security. Women have columns in mainstream security magazines, present prizes at award ceremonies, and head up the SIA (two consecutive appointments). Ethnic minorities feature, almost disproportionately in training manuals, social media posts, and organisational websites. Pasts in the military and police are still valued but only in terms of symbolic capital and how the sector presents itself; experiences acquired here are conflicting with what the industry actually feels it needs, which are customer services skills. Via various campaigns it is trying to distinguish itself from its 'unprofessional past', see for instance a recent BSIA campaign 'People, Property, Places: Professionally Protected', which launched November 2022. The campaign highlights that 'a career in security is open to anyone, from any background, ethnicity, sexuality and age group' (bsia.co.uk, 14/01/23).

Customer services roles are often construed as gendered (e.g. Dempsey 2021, Pettinger 2005 Belt 2002,), requiring emotional labour (Hochshild 1983) that is traditionally undervalued. Paradoxically, therefore, although processes of conceptualising security work as customer services may slowly attract more women, in doing so, it may devalue frontline security work even further. On the other hand, anecdotally, research participants with recruitment responsibilities speak of the extra challenges recruiting female ethnic minorities present. As many private security organisations also operate a cleaning arm[8], gender divisions among some ethnic minorities are such that the men end

[8] See for instance Mitie's 'Cleaning and Hygiene Centre of Excellence (https://www.mitie.com/all-services/cleaning-and-hygiene-services) or G4S' Facilities Management (https://www.g4s.com/en-gb/what-we-do/facilities-management)

up in security roles, and the women in the cleaning roles. It may therefore be the case that women who are recruited in frontline private security roles are overridingly white, although SIA statistics as yet are unable to show this. Organisations like IPSA heavily promote the security industry as culturally diverse, where anyone is welcome, whilst recognising the challenging conditions such as misogyny and racism many workers from diverse backgrounds face. Almost bland in its universal diversity support, it regularly tweets on events as diverse as Pride, Holi festival, and mental health awareness, and reports on issues of low pay and insecure jobs. As a free magazine, City Security magazine aims to be the source of knowledge for frontline workers. Gender - , ethnic - , and sexual diversity are seen as marketable because these promote messages of private security as a non-conflict role, requiring mostly customer services skills.

There are a number of security apprenticeship schemes, for instance via Skills for Security and in Security Companies themselves. However, most frontline security roles only demand an SIA qualification as entry requirement. At the same time, security expertise, so it is argued (e.g. City Security Magazine, Autumn 2018), is too reliant on expertise developed in the public sector, and not enough on its own programmes and institutions. Although the Security Institute is making some inroads, the lack of sector-owned educational programmes is seen to be impeding diversification and innovation because access routes are therefore limited.

5.2.7.4 Trope 4 Private security lacks distinct professional character

There are few directives 'from above' (Evetts 2013) as to what being a professional in the private security industry entails. 'Making people *feel* safe' is a ubiquitous message in many texts, but what could it mean? Public sector workers such as firefighters, nurses, police officers have clear remits. If the SIA were the only voice, private security workers' professionalism is about regulation only, and about what *not* to be, i.e. do not be a bad person or criminal. Frontline security officers are required to blend in, being seen to have the 'human touch', possibly to compensate in the eyes of the public for shady character selves of dodgy pasts. Such a narrative could be construed as part of de-stigmatisation processes, or identity work at the macro level. The challenge, as perceived by the sector itself, is to define professionalism in a way that makes it distinctive from state law enforcers. The pandemic offered an opportunity for repositioning: acquiring key worker status was an important move toward recognition, at least by the state. Even the SIA began a Twitter hashtag #siaheroes. However, although a superficial analysis of the hero stories on the website (https://siaheroes.mailchimpsites.com/) does point to the occasional celebration of the extraordinary, it is mostly acts that could be thought of as doing one's civic duty, paradoxically emphasising private security workers as ordinary civilians. This is illustrated by this tweet of 21 May

2020: ‘A big round of [applause emoticon] to all our SIA Heroes during the pandemic, but a specific shout out to Elmas Housein in Eastbourne who has been helping the vulnerable and also delivering baby milk to an in need mother. We salute you all and we thank you #siaheroes’. On closer inspection via the website, Elmas Housein had carried out these acts as a *volunteer,* i.e. not part of his security role.

5.2.7.5 Trope 5 Private security industry is the underdog

Despite the multi-million dollar industry’s ‘loud confidence’ (Thumala, Goold, and Loader 2011, p. 286) in how it presents itself, this is regularly at odds with writings that could be seen as one big lament of not being valued. There are many industry voices that present the sector as the underdog: unloved, un-appreciated, undervalued, and unseen by the public at large, and only just about accepted by the state. To the sector, it feels the public is unable to look past its occasional misdemeanours and shady past. The keyworker status, awarded by the government on 23 March 2020, was jumped on by many industry stakeholders; articles appeared and photos were shared on social media of frontline security staff helping out. However, as acknowledged by the sector itself, the public remained unconvinced (BSIA 2020). With the keyworker status diminishing in importance, the recognition may have been short-lived. Normative legitimacy (White 2010) and receiving recognition, therefore, continue to be an uphill battle. From the writings analysed in this chapter, it seems that the industry’s stakeholder organisations collectively hold that changing the public’s perception with regard to private security (“we want the public to love security” – BSIA), to see and acknowledge it, is key to raising quality and improving working lives for the thousands of frontline workers in precarious jobs. It thereby seems to be putting the onus on the public, rather than on the security sector itself, for instance to improve its race-to-the-bottom working conditions, often identified by the sector itself as problematic (e.g. Amulet 2018).

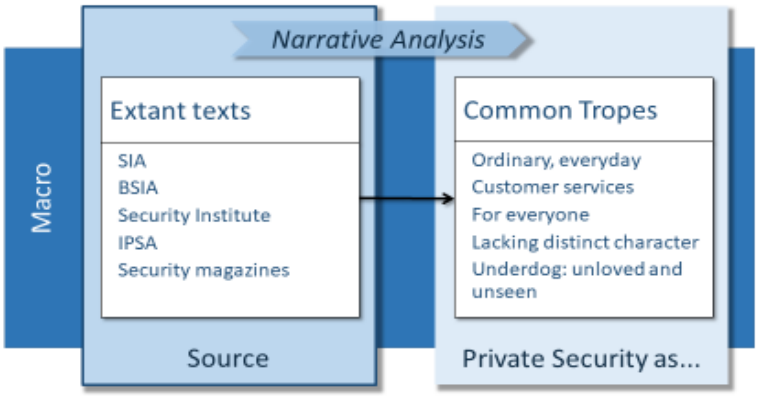


Diagram 5.13 - Part-diagram on narrative analyses of extant texts at the macro level presenting five common tropes

5.3 Findings Chapter 2 – Security talk: stories of security work at the frontline

5.3.1 Introduction

Unlike the first Findings chapter, which mostly draws on extant narrative materials, this chapter is predominantly informed by different kinds of security talk, collected empirically in semi-structured interviews with 28 participants. Rather than considering (elements of) biographical accounts per se, my analyses look at participant stories as cultural and discursive resources, employed to develop narratives that make sense, further developed in Findings Chapter 3. With Clarke (2005) I ask, what are my interview data stories of? How do my participants position themselves narratively? In order to present my data, I have grouped participant talk along narrative dimensions, representing contentious issues, although the ends of which should only loosely be considered as polar opposites. For ease of comprehension, I have categorised participants into three roles: 'Security Consultant' (those in advisory, advocacy or journalist roles), 'Security Manager' (those with managing staff, selling, training and/or recruitment responsibilities), and Frontline Security Officer, abbreviated to FSO. The key focus in this chapter will be on *frontline* security talk, although sometimes this is delivered by security managers because they had such roles in the past, sometimes by security consultants because they hold a particular perspective on the frontline. In the representation of the data, I use longer individual work (hi)stories where these seemed to illustrate a dimension particularly well. I have put these texts in boxes, which I have labelled vignettes; short stories – i.e. *re*-written interpretations based on interview text - of particular participant experiences that illustrate the section using either the first or third person pronoun, see also Chapter 4. Very often, stories could have been used elsewhere too – but this illustrates the point: stories are complex and narrative dimensions intersect; individuals can be observed as having identity negotiations alongside different dimensions simultaneously, sometimes expressed in seemingly incongruous experiences and perspectives.

The five dimensions that follow are:

1. Belonging versus "not forever"
2. Serving customers versus 'dirty work'
3. Uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence
4. Being invisible versus standing out
5. Professionals versus cowboy others

5.3.2 Belonging versus “not forever”

“You have really good relationships with your team, and it becomes a very social job. You make friends with all the bar staff and then once you finish work, you'll sit around and have a pint together and you feel like a proper little team. Everyone looks out for each other, if anything ever happened, everyone's all there and we've all got each other's backs” (Daisy, 22, FSO)

As per various sections in the previous chapter, the industry is keen to promote the security sector as a good place to work, with a diversity of security roles, requiring a variety of required skills. As the previous chapter also attests, the Security Industry Authority (SIA) does not necessarily promote these messages very well. However, the fact that the SIA exists, a proxy government endorsing the industry and acting as the gatekeeper to the labour market, offers possibilities for the development of professional selves. Even though not all old enough to remember, almost all participants in my dataset construe the arrival of the SIA in the early 2000s as a watershed moment with largely positive effects for professionalization of working practices and acquisition of professional status. Frontline security officers (FSOs) talk of a bygone era of *before the SIA* as unregulated, unprofessional, and violent where the only way of dealing with violence was the threat of counter-violence (physical labour); indeed “security was about ‘beefy bouncers’” (Andrea) and physical prowess, either real or symbolic. As outlined in Chapter 2, the SIA is tasked with overseeing regulation of the industry and for instance, adherence to the 2010 Equality Act. Frontline training and courses, and organisations that supply these, are regulated and certified. There are codes of conduct. Having an SIA license badge means individuals can work anywhere and will have had training, usually in the form of a 5-day training course. A license needs to be renewed every three years. There are specific courses and licences for specific security work, such as door supervision, CCTV, and close protection. All security officers need to wear their SIA badge visibly on their work clothing, normally a uniform and high-viz jacket. Frontline security staff are therefore easily recognisable. Jason, an FSO and trainer with 20+ years’ experience, sees the changes as follows:

> *“I used to work with teams pre-SIA, they went a little bit over the top and were heavy-handed. I don’t think there is anybody who would say it wasn’t like that before the SIA. When there was trouble, it was very different, there weren’t the control aspects. I was lucky because of my martial arts training I wasn’t heavy handed anyway. When the SIA came in, it has been a good thing*, it has made it a profession. *[Before it was] a bit of extra cash…it was [shady], what it is in a lot of other countries. Because when people come on the course from Poland or Albania they talk about their door staff and we say “well that is what it used to be like here but fortunately, it has now been made this professional industry” (Jason, Security Manager).*

Of the older generation of frontline workers, Clive, Bert, and Jason have had long careers in security roles, although only Jason declared it a 'love at first sight', citing an interest in martial arts as the initial driver. Clive and Bert as young men were 'invited' by mates to escape what they felt were dead end, boring jobs and then stayed on for another 30 years, now thinking of the security world as their natural home. Bert feels proud of his job, and says his life is security, "that is what I do". He thinks it's a shame his parents died before they knew about his job as security guard. The manner in which participants in this study acquired frontline security careers varies – some are accidental, some reluctant, some intentional although became so after an accidental encounter.

To the younger generation, the industry struggles to present security as a serious career. FSO participants had often started out in security as a job on the side, for instance doing so alongside being a student. Nightclub door work tends to be on offer during weekends, which allows for other type of work or study for the weekday. However, few had imagined a working life in security, which chimes with security research more broadly (see Gill, Howell and McGreer et al. 2020). For instance, Lisa and Beth started security jobs to finance their undergraduate studies and then switched to the sector permanently after finishing their degrees. Claire did a CCTV security job in between her bachelor's degree and planned Master's but then decided to stay on with the monitoring company. Sophie's account, see vignette 5, is one of an accidental career but also of belonging.

5.3.2.1 Vignette 5 – Sophie, 26, FSO, on belonging in the private security sector

The company Sophie works for paid for her SIA CCTV license. Although she never set out to work in the security business – she had dreams of becoming a professional footballer at one point – at 26 years old, Sophie says she cannot think ever leaving the security world. She feels very much at home in the organisation, which she describes as one big family, and where the CEO is someone she has a coffee with and who has helped her on a number of occasions. The work itself she describes as important; she wants to help people and make sites safer. The security sector is a good place to work ("better than stacking shelves" – a job Sophie did in the past) – it's confidence building and somewhere where you can have a laugh and a chat, a friendly sort of place. Operators do 12-hour shifts, four days in a row, then have four days off. Sophie likes to earn a little extra so does lots of overtime and works between 60-70 hours per week. Tasks include monitoring the alarms, writing incident reports, and speaking to customers. There is more than one platform to monitor the incoming alarms – an alarm can mean that there is an intruder on the site of the client. If an alarm goes off, the operators are meant to scan the cameras to see if they can see anything untoward. CCTV operators can try and ward off intruders by shouting through the audio system. If a crime is committed, for instance if an intruder trespasses, or worse, steals something they can ring the police. Sophie's ambition is to stay with the company, become a team leader, then controller, and then hopefully a manager. She credits the industry with giving her self-belief: "I got a bit of a confidence issue, and am working on it, and security really helps me, you've got to be out there, you've got to do that job, you've got to talk to police, you don't have a choice. I have a lot of respect for this place in this industry because it brings people out, and it does help you mentally, it helps you in everyday life".

The industry particularly struggles to sell security as a career to women. Being a female frontline officer means you're almost never out of work as only women can search other women's bodies or even look inside their handbags. Daisy and Carrie, two best friends who started working straight after school, considered security work as "a bit of a laugh" (Carrie) and an excellent way to earn more than their friends in other school leaver jobs. With people in their immediate environment already working in the industry, they saw themselves as 'girls with attitude' who enjoyed bossing their peers about in clubs they'd frequent themselves. At first, their friends teased them. Although they both talk of their love of the job and how much they got out of it (see elsewhere) - staying much longer than planned - the notion of security as a serious career is not one that featured very prominently for them or their security friends. Daisy no longer works in security, she recently became a carer, and Carrie is planning to go back to studying, nursing perhaps, or something in the life sciences. In answer to my question whether she intends to stay on in security roles, she says:

> *"God, no, I think I have more potential than that. Not that there is anything wrong with it but I don't want to be in security until I retire, that's insane. That's like 50 years of one thing and it's a fun job, but you know if I want a mortgage or… I just, I don't want to be doing night shifts at a club you know. It's not for me to do forever. It was a great job for five years or however long I'm gonna do it for, but it's not a forever thing" (Carrie, 22, FSO).*

To Mollie, the fact she is still a 'doorman', as she calls herself, at 49 years of age is somewhat of an embarrassment, a personal failing on her part. She has been doing nightclub door work since she was 21, always at weekends alongside her full-time job in the packaging industry, until 6 years ago, when she switched to security roles full-time. She feels she is at an age where the weekends should be for putting her feet up, not for watching over drunken young people on a fun night out. The punters seem to agree and she often gets comments about being too old:

> *"It's humiliating. I get people that say 'shouldn't you be at home with your family enjoying a takeaway and the television', and I'm like, 'shut up' and it makes you stand there for the next hour questioning yourself, 'yeah, what are you actually doing here'. I still do it because…. I don't know, I think I'm stuck in a rut really" (Mollie, 49, FSO).*

To some, career progression or new opportunities remain a pipe dream, even with experiences that at first glance seem to fit. Manish, a Gurkha, moved to the UK in 2007, having been given settlement rights after a 15 year-career with the British army, and 12 years in Brunei in private security. Ultimately promoted to corporal, Manish was mainly stationed in Hong-Kong but travelled a lot, visiting many European countries, including the UK. When he brought his wife and two sons over to settle in Britain, he felt security work was his only option. Despite all his experience and training, he still had to do the SIA door supervisor course and now works as a security guard on a university

campus. Both Manish's sons were able to attend the university where he works, completing degrees in accounting and finance and bio-medical sciences respectively. They are now in jobs and no longer dependent on Manish's income, in fact, support their parents. Even so, Manish does not feel he can retire yet. He is 59, does an average of 56 hours per week on a zero hours contract: "in security, everyone works on a zero hours contract", he says. As a supervisor, he earns a £0.50 per hour more than ordinary FSOs and does not expect to get a further promotion - because of the language, he thinks. To Clive and Bert, progression in frontline security roles feels difficult with few opportunities between 'officer' or 'supervisor' and management type roles. Bert thinks he has not been promoted over the 18 years of working in security because, unlike his brothers, he does not drive. And does not have a degree, either, like the manager he reports to; he speaks with envy of the students and their student life, and when he was younger, wished he was one of them.

Zero hours contracts, and the associated flexible working times and unsociable hours, seem to be the norm, and although companies try to get rid of them, the SIA reports a rise again (SIA 2021). Those selling security or tasked with recruitment sometimes construe zero contracts as a positive: they suit 'lifestyle choices' claims one of the participant managers (Jason), and he included being a parent in this. FSOs, too, sometimes talk about flexible hours in positive terms, for instance, to Lisa this means working life is never boring. And as Kath, a parent, says:

> *"To me, [security work] fits really well. I can be there to drop off and pick up from school, night shifts I can do when he is asleep. He is none the wiser and he doesn't know that I am not there. My first priority is my son. And security fits around that. The position I am in now I can pick and choose what I am doing, and balance my work and home life" [Kath, FSO]*

It is not just the frontline where there are obstacles to career progression. There are a number of manager stories that talk of being stuck, where participants think of their own career development as problematic. Even industry recognition does not necessarily translate into promotion. Although winning 'Security Manager of the Year' a number of years ago at the main British Security Industry Association (BSIA) event, Steve feels disappointed that this national award, regarded as prestigious to those in the industry, has had such little effect. To boost his career opportunities, he has started a Master's in Security studies:

> *"I mean, people do know me, bosses still remember me, it just hasn't translated into anything tangible. […] I thought at the time 'oh, this has been a big success, this is really going to help me', but after the initial interest it just died off. You can easily get stuck… and you can very quickly get forgotten about. It has pushed me into the direction that I am now doing, which is to get some qualification behind me, not just relying on [the industry]." (Steve, 40, Security Manager)*

5.3.2.2 Recruiting FSOs that fit

Security as "not forever" is in part explained by the nature of the majority of security roles, notably in the frontline. The precarity of these roles in terms of job security and career progression is problematic for Security Managers with recruitment responsibilities - in my data set represented by Steve, Pat, Diana, Emma, and Beth. With frontline experience themselves, Security Managers are positioned as conduit between the client organisation and the security officers on the ground, and directly confronted with the negative effects of race-to-the bottom practices of ultra-low wages demanded by economising clients and potentially delivered by the competing PSO. Security Managers have particular ideas of what they value in FSOs but the demand is such that they regularly do not get the high quality staff that they feel the job requires. At the same time, they often describe in very compassionate, empathetic language the predicament in which the on-the-ground security staff find themselves, in terms of low pay, unsociable hours and insecure jobs. Staff turnover is perceived as particularly problematic. Steve talks about the issues as he sees them and what he does to address them:

> *"The biggest issue I have is recruitment and finding the right people. Because, the opportunities [in other industries, BdO] in this city are really good. They have a lot of vacancies out there, which puts the salaries really up. And they can easily earn one to two pound an hour more somewhere else. So I have to look at trying to retain them as best as I can. The easiest way is to look after them […] making sure they got what they need to do the job. Have they got the uniform and equipment, are they paid correctly, so don't mess up their wages, do they get their holidays as and when they can. They get seen by management as often as possible. And when I see them, it is more of an informal thing. Stopping and talking to them for five minutes, seeing how they are. You know, ask them have they got any problems. Always making sure I have got an open door for them" (Steve, 42, Security Manager)*

Steve thinks that fixing the turnover problem requires more money, which client organisations refuse to provide. For Pat, a former Superintendent with London police, precarity coupled with the flexibility of the licence leads to a vicious cycle:

> *"I'm dealing with people who are not as committed to their job. So in the police, people tend to be there for a lengthy period … people consider it to be a worthwhile occupation, even though it's not particularly well paid. Whereas in security, people very much come and go. People tend to come to security because they can't do anything else or they can't think of what to do. So they'll get a job as a security officer, they get a license quite quickly, and then they can go and work anywhere as a security officer. And if they can get 10p an hour more over there they move over there. So they haven't got a commitment to the company really" (Pat, 62, Security Manager)*

On the other hand, Emma thinks the security industry is good at offering at least something, an opportunity to get somewhere to those who can't do anything else, perhaps because of a lack of

educational achievements or having English as a second language. She thinks that for many of the 5400 officers on her company's books, the SIA badge is the highest qualification they have:

> *"There is plenty of opportunity, but it's starting from that really low level. So for example, in our business, there are lots of e-learning courses you can do, lots of apprenticeships you can do, all for free, all to climb the ladder to supervisor, for instance. If someone is coming in at that start level and they are capable, they quickly fly. I have a current Director of Operations, he has been with [name company] 17 years now. He started off as a security officer, although he had served in the military for the six years previously, and basically, did every single rank, every promotion in the business […] So if you have that capability and capacity, the opportunities for learning and development are really endless" (Emma, 42, Security Manager)*

5.3.3 Serving customers versus 'dirty' work

The notion of the new security professional as a customer service-type role is ubiquitous, featuring in many participant accounts, both of those who have to practise it as those who engineer it. In the frontline, to some extent, a customer services approach is driven by a 'from above' (Evetts 2013) directed requirement communicated via for instance course material for the SIA badge where aspirant door supervisors are trained in communications skills and customer care, see Chapter 2 for a description. It is not difficult to see how, in the quest for public acceptance, 'bouncer' needed to be replaced by 'security officer', and physicality by 'customer services', see the first findings chapter. However, it is also there in participant talk, including the frontline, mostly used to illustrate what changed over the last few decades, and how things are better now. Jason's take summarises frontline talk just so:

> *"I always worked in that way but [the arrival of the SIA] made things more about the customer, customer services, because some security staff didn't do it for those reasons before the SIA, and now that is made right, we're there for the customers. That was a major change, for some people. Some of the old school doormen didn't bother to get their SIA badge, whereas some did. Depended on their mindset" (Jason, Security Manager).*

For Jason, having professional standards means not to go in heavy-handed and have a customer-services approach. To this end, he ensures that the four trainers in his organisation, three men including himself and one woman, do a minimum of 300 hours of client work a year. To participants in this study, being good at customer services is a core skill and is often offered in response to the question "what makes you good at your job?". Manish values his job as an FSO and how it is different to an army role, his previous career. In swapping commanding subordinates for a customer services approach in private security – learned at the SIA course - he now knows how to communicate with customers - visitors, staff, and students - for his security guard role at a university campus: "in the army you only shout orders, here you have to be polite" and it is not good for the

customers if the security officers he supervises are unfriendly or stressed. Although more proud of his army career than his security work, Manish values the importance of good relationships, and how to deal with people in his security role at the University. As per Jason's quote above, having a customer services approach is often used as a way of *othering*, i.e. a mechanism to identify as a security professional, see also the section on *professional selves versus cowboy others.* For instance, Sophie offers friendliness and kindness as the attributes that have built the business in which she works and a stellar customer services is what separates this company from others.

5.3.3.1 Client work

"…all jobs have good things and not so good things, there's no such thing as a perfect job. Because it's not created for you, it's created for them" (Bert, 56, FSO)

In management talk, security practice is linked to the commoditisation of customer experiences, for instance the 'visitor journey' or 'student experience', or to another ubiquitous discourse of 'health and safety'. Security Managers seem aware that if security is badly organised, or security officers do not behave appropriately, this might be reflected in low customer ratings. In participant talk, this link is sometimes made quite explicitly, for instance by Steve whose account includes a university campus and who sees security as directly contributing to metrics that assess the client organisation, for instance which capture negative or positive customer assessments under the, now ubiquitous 'student experience' header: "From a client point of view, you know, the NSS [National Student Survey, BdO] scores are high priority to the University, we have a part to play in that because quite often, we are the first person they might interact with, especially out of hours, so *how has that experience gone".* This can also be seen in organisations in corporate buildings, who besides having a welcome desk and a receptionist, increasingly employ a security guard, the first person customers come across when they seek physical access to the organisation. Customers want a presentable, attractive professional, not "a big 6ft 5, scruffy guy" (Andrea, Security Consultant). Claire, an operations manager who relatively quickly progressed from CCTV operator, attributes her career progression in her organisation, a CCTV monitoring company, to her customer services-focused approach: she knows how to talk to clients and solve their problems. Diana, a middle manager in charge of security at a large hospital, reflects back on the changes in security roles in terms of customer services:

> *"…when I started you just got on with it. Health and Safety side of things became more and more developed and then the training was put in place to ensure the officers on the ground have the right skill set to be able to deal with people. Because we very much work on a customer service point of view. And obviously any physical intervention is very much a last*

resort. So it very much must be the right temperament of the person to work here." (Diana, Security Manager)

Individuals with hiring responsibilities provide particular insights into how customer services skills are being foregrounded. For instance, Kath sees herself as very customer-driven and aware how security has changed over the years. It is now all about the service to customers and building rapport with clients, and the more you get to know the client, the less likely there will be trouble with the account. Therefore, Kath's company even hire people without experience as long as they "come across as nice". Training happens on the job. The customer service approach is also visible in Steve's recruitment practices who has particular ideas in what he values in new recruits:

> *"I am* not *looking for security experience per se, because I like teaching somebody how we do it. Every niche of security is different – someone with only retail security wouldn't get what we're trying to do at the University. The University is much more customer service focused […]what I'd rather have is someone with a customer services background, who knows how to talk to people. I don't have a rigid question sheet for recruitment…I prefer to have a conversation with them, […] within a few minutes I know if they fit within the way I'm thinking… Then when they come for interview, what I look for is* presentation*. I have had people turn up in jeans and a t-shirt and the t-shirt has dirty stains on it and you think 'If you find a dirty t-shirt acceptable, then you're not the right person for me'" (Steve, Security Manager).*

Private security work by its very nature is situated in a so-called service triangle (Carollo and Solari, 2019.), i.e. workers are employed by a private security provider who, in turn, sells security services to a third party, the client. As noted in Chapter 3, the private sector is relatively unexplored in a comparatively new, triadic model of employment relationships where service work, typically, is not straightforward and there is potential for tension and conflict (Carollo and Solari 2019). Commoditisation of security requires the existence of clients to whom to sell security, which in turn leads to, often, intricate and complex relationships with client organisation and their customers. Such a triadic relationship is differently perceived by security consultants and managers on the one hand, and FSOs on the other. In charge of security of an iconic building in the City of London that houses 80 plus organisations, Pat uses 'market-oriented' talk of professionalization, customer services, and health and safety, for instance, in seeing part of her remit as making sure that the visitor 'journey' of arriving at the building to arriving where they need to be is a pleasant and safe one. Pat feels that the purpose of her job is to serve the client:

> *"Well I'm trying to earn a profit, and I'm trying to keep these contracts for my company. So I need to keep the client happy, I need to keep the guys on site happy, I need to come up with innovation. You know, what can I do to make this building more secure, what's going to make my client happy? So, I'm always having to try and think of new things and new ideas to do. With each of my contracts, because I can walk in to [other building/client], and my client*

is very different there to my client on the [other building/client], they're all very different people". (Pat, Security Manager)

Steve's account is a good illustration of how client and security work interact, and the 'innovation' required to make that work. Steve has been a business manager with a large outsourcing company for a number of years. With security just one of the arms the 250 FTSE-listed public limited company provides, Steve's main client is a large university campus (see the earlier section), the work for which has now morphed into a full-time on site role. Delivering security to clients is about the increasing use of technology, and about continually thinking of how the business can offer 'added value' services to clients, for instance the checking of fire extinguishers, or turning off lights when members of staff have forgotten to do so. However, it is also about perception, and making people *feel* safe. All the same, Steve feels that the service his organisation delivers is "far superior" than what the police could have done. Whereas the former is about being visible and approachable, his team will actually drive around, or be on foot patrol, not just on the University's premises but in the surrounding streets and alley ways used by students and staff members, so that they feel safe. There are five security officers on site at any one time where, says Steve, they use a 'pro-active' approach by monitoring the cameras and looking for problems. He proudly announces that the number of reported incidents goes up month on month which, he concedes, is in part the reporting that has increased (rather than the number of incidents): now 250 a month. Steve is very keen to make security a shared concern between the University, student union, halls of residences, and the community engagement team, and have these different stakeholders talk to each other and share problems. He sees it as within his remit, and feels supported by the University in doing so, to approach security in a much more strategic fashion, and make it part of the University's overall strategy. However, manager participants like Steve struggle to identify what constitutes professional selves or point toward good security practices in their organisations, and may hook these on to what is happening in broader contexts, or again, to customer services work. Steve contrasts professionalization of modern security with what the sector leaves behind, which is the 'bums on seats' type of security, i.e. one individual, usually an older man, being located in the building who opens and locks the building and who sleeps on site. He offers a tentative perspective, linked to broader notions of threat and as well as customer service:

"I think the professionalism is actually taking the whole thing seriously, that's a big step. And actually acknowledging…the industry as a whole has really grown over the last 10-12 years. Terrorism has had a big impact on that, people seem to be more focused on security. But when you look at [uni], I think the professionalism, it is hard to pinpoint*, it requires flexibility, being able to change at a moment's notice, to react to whatever the problem is, but also pre-plan, how we deal with our customers, whoever the customer is, it is not just the staff members, it is also the student, the visitor, it is also the bad guy who might be trying to break*

> *into the place. It is how do we deal with each of those people so that they feel* they have received a good service" (*Steve, 49, Security Manager, my emphasis)*

A customer services label is a useful shorthand to describe security work because people outside of the industry understand it. However, it is often contrasted with what 'real' security people do. Anna, whose job title includes 'customer relations', works for a big cyber security firm. Her husband works in the army ("there is something about army guys"). Anna would describe her career to date as something out of which she derives a lot of value. However, she says:

> *"To compare to what my husband does, no, he has been on the frontline, he has seen people being killed. He is doing a really busy, important job now. It is very tangible what he does. It protects people, and the whole country really […] We're a business at the end of the day. We might be aligned with government and trying to help them achieve those things, but at the end of the day, it is profit that is most important to shareholders" (Anna, Security Consultant)*

5.3.3.2 Dirty work but someone has to do it

In the frontline, being engaged in client work, i.e. the notion of a reciprocal relationship between the client and service provider, sometimes overrides the challenges frontline security work presents, as Mollie's comment illustrates:

> *"Although I am getting older and I don't appreciate rolling around on the floor some weekends, and trying to split up a fight, I know I'd rather still be out and do the job, because you just don't want to let people down, I'd hate to let my venue down, I'd hate to let the management team down. And when I have taken time away from the job, and management rang me and said, 'whoever they sent was absolute hideous', it makes you think 'oh God, no'. You know, you really feel like you've let them down." (Mollie, 49, FSO)*

"Rolling around on the floor…", the association of cleanliness and *presentability* in a customer services approach required for modern day security roles seems to stand in stark contrast to some of the tasks involved. In Ashforth and Kreiner (1999)'s categorisation of dirty work and associated low social status, these tasks could be construed as physically dirty. Female FSOs offer particular salient perspectives here, with experiences including the removal of customers covered in faeces or vomit, picking up of needles, or the wiping up of blood or semen. Although some of the female participants feel they are "not getting paid enough" (Carrie) to deal with this kind of 'dirt', they also feel that they are there to have these kinds of tasks – i.e. dealing with dirt - assigned to them, either implicitly or explicitly. For instance, "to go and get drunk girls out of the toilets" and to search women's handbags and bodies for drugs is how Carrie describes the remit of her job. Furthermore, drugs and drug users are such an ingrained feature of nightlife security work that they are not necessarily considered negatively. For instance, drugs may only temporarily be confiscated to be returned to the customer on leaving the club, although class A drugs always have to reported to the police. Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader (2016) argue private security work can be construed as 'socially dirty'

because workers handle socially stigmatised people, for instance asylum seekers. Although few of the participants in this study worked with clients or in venues that are stigmatised in this way, most seemed acutely aware of the low social status of their jobs, often in relation to their (female) bodies. It was therefore not so much the actual work that makes the work 'dirty' to FSOs, but others' attitudes towards them. Particularly for the female FSOs, verbal abuse encountered in the execution of their job roles is often talked about as something that needed to be negotiated. Being addressed as a "short, man bird" by customers, Beth feels she has become particularly thick-skinned against customer comments: "I get called all names under the sun – it's only words". The 'man-bird' comment could perhaps be construed as particular to security roles and women doing jobs that are seen as masculine. But Carrie finds it hard:

> *"I've cried loads on the job. Things I don't know scare me - somebody's called me something ugly that always really affects me because you're 18 and, like, your appearance is everything. It's still a bit but you know, but somebody's called you fat when you're 18, that's not nice." (Carrie, 22, FSO)*

To Daisy, abuse from female customers is the worst. Women, she says, cannot cope with an 18-year old standing in their way of what they think of as having fun. Sometimes misogynist comments would come from colleagues rather than customers, but somehow, Carrie finds these easier to "laugh off" – in part because they make her feel as "one of the lads". However, she talks about it as if these are remnants of a time gone by and that things will change in due course:

> *"My core team of people were really great and like family. But even most of the guys that I considered, you know, very close to me, they weren't racist but they were sexist for sure and that's just, I think,* old bouncer ways*. Just little things, like marvelling at girls' bodies or saying 'nice ass', 'nice tits' and you're just like 'Jesus'. It just… it was never ending. Nothing too awful that's jumping out with me but just those flippant remarks that they think are hilarious… I do understand where bouncers got their name from, but not everyone's like that." (Carrie, 22, FSO)*

How someone 'close to me' can engage in that kind of abuse makes 'dirty' work seem part of the job. Indeed, sometimes FSOs construe abusive comments as ultimately having a positive effect. For instance, Daisy credits the industry with 'toughening her up', and being an FSO has helped her anxiety:

> *"… after a while you do get used to people hurling insults at you. You see the best and the worst in the general public, you really do see how horrendous people can be, how foul people can be towards you, so it gives you thicker skin and opens your eyes to people […]. I've always been quite anxious but then, as soon as I put my coat and my badge on I was like 'okay, right, I'm in my uniform and now I'm working'. Shoulders back a little bit and you have a new attitude. " (Daisy, 22, FSO).*

There were other ways in which 'dirty' client work was not necessarily considered in a negative sense. Only female security officers can body search female customers and Mollie thinks this contributes to women being taken seriously as security guards: they can "prove their worth" by doing security work only women can do. Daisy feels doing female security work such as handling female customers is contributing to gender parity:

> *"If we want to move towards equality, then there has to be more girls being treated the same as the men because the girls think they can get away with murder until there's another female around. There was this one thing I remember we were trying to kick out this big woman once and then one of the men, bouncers, went in to try and kick her out and asked her to leave and she was like "no I'm not moving" and she was all drunk like "you can't touch me", it's like, "well he can't, but I can" (Daisy, 22, FSO)*

Furthermore, there is a sense in which nightclub frontline security work counts as the 'real' security and there is a certain cachet to the willingness to do this kind of 'dirty' work and exposing yourself to the risk of assault. A manager with extensive frontline security experience, Beth observes:

> *"You can always tell who's worked from the ground up in my view, and those willing to get involved and it's not just myself. It's hundreds of thousands of people in the industry, those willing to get involved and just work […] I know a lot of my old colleagues who are at similar managerial levels or who are directors. I know they would absolutely get their hands dirty…" (Beth, 36, Security Manager)*

Even so, it is one thing doing 'real security work' in a night club, taking too big a risk and getting involved in violent behaviour is not necessarily seen as part of the modern-day FSO remit. Carrie talks about not doing particular security work in places, times, and cities where she doesn't feel safe, for instance taxi ranks where a lot of night time violence tends to accumulate.

> *"I genuinely can't fight, I can't stick up for myself. The most I've got is what I learned for an hour when I was doing the [SIA] course how to restrain someone. But if somebody's coming at you with a knife or with a fist, I couldn't protect myself, honestly, I'm not like a fighter at all…so I wouldn't do them [the taxi-rank shifts]. I tend to only work when I'm with a team of people who I know and I feel protected, I won't do sole-jobs. Also, my family wouldn't want me to do that either…" (Carrie, 22, FSO).*

5.3.3.3 Being watched to watch others – moral dirt?

Sometimes serving customers leads to seemingly incongruent perspectives on the purpose of security to the wider good versus the service to the customer which, in Ashforth and Kreiner (1999)'s categorisation of 'dirty' work, could be referred to as 'moral dirt'. An operations manager with a CCTV monitoring company, Claire's dream is to become an industry influencer, and to sit on the SIA executive board one day. However, in recounting one of the more memorable events she had come across whilst watching CCTVs, she admits she does not want to be too concerned with what her clients might actually be involved in, in case it might not be altogether kosher: "…we haven't ever

said this but we would never look into who a customer is, and you kind of just have to get on with it regardless of who they are because your job is to protect their building or protect them." Another CCTV operator, Sophie, explains that clients vary from celebrities, gold traders to lottery winners, and from huge corporate organisations to small family business accounts, and sometimes, somewhat shady, obscure clubs. For some clients, the security services provided are for insurance purposes only. If there has been an incident, the client can demand not only the footage of the incident but also the footage of the control room, to check what the CCTV operators were doing at the time of the incident and whether they were doing their job. Sophie has been 'caught' once – i.e. there had been a break-in but the security organisation had not acted, and the client had demanded footage where it was shown Sophie had been on the internet and not looking at the screens. Sophie had received a telling off from her managers. She said she had felt very frustrated by the event because she had only been on the internet to check the news, so she felt it was a bit harsh. At the same time, however, she thought the reprimand was totally justified and understandable because security is serious business, even if it is the security of the premises of dodgy customers.

5.3.4 Uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence

5.3.4.1 Vignette 6 – First person account: Clive, 49, FSO describes his day to day

> During the day I am based in the control room. Two officers patrol the campus at all times. At night, my role changes and we have what we call a control room operator. At night we will go out to different sites. We have two officers during the night, same as day but we also have one mobile [officer]. So one of the officers based here goes out with the mobile officer. My shift pattern this week is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, day. Then Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday nights. So seven shifts. Then I get three days off. And then I do four days, three nights, then four days off. So it's a long shift pattern. […]I just have a good eye. It sounds weird but I am not actually looking directly at the cameras, I might be talking to someone opposite. You catch stuff from the corner of your eye. It's not just their body language, but how they are acting, how they are looking around. They could look like anyone but if people are looking around, if they are taking photos…anything like that. So what you'd normally do is monitor, watch where they going, what they're doing, 99 times out of a 100, they're completely innocent. Believe it or not, I've been here six years now, and I've not had anything to be honest, not even at night. The biggest thing that could happen is there will be someone asleep, especially when it comes to deadlines for exams. But no, touch wood, we're quite a quiet place.

Many security jobs are challenging possibly *because* nothing much happens. FSOs talk of past experiences in security jobs where it was the tedium of the role that they found hard - they'd rather be busy. The shift pattern and 12-hour shifts Clive describes seems pretty standard across the sector

and my dataset, and apart from watching screens in CCTV operator roles, include patrolling, door supervising, key holding, man-guarding (i.e. standing in front of a building), and so on. There are various ways in which participants make sense of the mundaneness of security roles. For instance, the absence of security threats are often explained in frontline talk by "that is because we are there" and FSOs on the whole feel they do an important job in preventing crime. In addition, on the ground security staff draw on imagined violence, imagined terrorism, i.e. what *could* happen and what their response would or should be, to construe the day-to-day activities of their roles as important, to give the uneventfulness of the day job meaning – there is no violence but there might be one day. Participants sometimes evoke past careers in conflict or violence combating roles as enablers for security work, whether embodied as 'physical capital' or not. As Manish puts it:

> *"It is not boring because I am enjoying my job. It is easy for me. Because my background is the army. This job is related to the army […]It is a security thing…if a gun man in the building was shooting at people, I'd know what to do. […]It has never happened. Never. But you'll never know, they might come." (Manish, 58, FSO)*

Management talk, perhaps more emphatically, draws on imagined threats to legitimise the need for (increasing) security and security staff, especially earlier on in the data collection stage when the Manchester bombing was fresher in people's minds, anti-terrorism programmes and initiatives were ubiquitous, and Covid had not yet taken over the main public debates.

5.3.4.2 Talking about violence

The majority of FSOs in my dataset have not experienced direct assault themselves but have seen it and managing the possibility of violence is strongly there in security stories – how they prepare themselves, how they would act, how they would cope, is what they see part of the job to be about. To some frontline security staff, however, especially those that do nightclub work, violence is part and parcel of the job and participants staff tell of violent experiences, and being hit, pushed, and choked. Some female FSOs use accounts of assaults to illustrate that they have the same experiences as their male counterparts; some use them as opportunities for learning 'good' security. Kath had her throat squeezed by a drunken customer, and she reflects:

> *"I think when a situation like that happens, I'm always disappointed in myself, you know, what could I have done better, or what have I missed, how did I let that situation happen. In situations like that, I sort of go in myself…that I should have probably…I mean every day is sort of a learning day, I guess. Obviously when you are in a situation like that, you learn from them and better yourself". (Kath, FSO, 25)*

The quote is perhaps also a good illustration of how insecurity or violence is managed by FSOs, i.e. not as something an employer or client is responsible for, but security guards themselves. Indeed

sometimes violence accounts are used to illustrate that FSOs are required to carry out tasks for which they are ill-prepared, unsupported, and underpaid, for instance in Mollie's and Carrie's account:

> *"There once was a big kick off outside one of the venues I worked at. It was a hundred-man brawl. We'd asked police assistance, they were short on the grounds. I think we had about six officers that attended, with a hundred men chanting and fighting. We had one canine police officer that arrived so we were all sort of splitting up fights, and as a team you'd like to try and work together, but we couldn't. They'll always go for the, what they think is the weakest in the team, which would have been the female, which was me. Obviously our communications is an earpiece and a radio that's on our back pocket and the cable was wrapped around my neck and I choked out when they threw me onto the car bonnet. That was quite scary because I think I sort of lost consciousness for about 30 seconds" (Mollie, 49, FSO)*

> *"I don't really want to get into consistent door work again, just because it's always really cold and because now I'm behind the bar, I have that barrier between me and the person. You are a lot safer I mean not to say that things don't still go wrong but, being outside on the door, there's a lot more knives around and people can be a lot more hostile. I just think the risks aren't worth it and actually the wages aren't even £10 an hour so it doesn't sort of balance up properly" (Carrie, 23, FSO)*

However, others use violence stories to make the point security work is for them *because* there is violence, as in the short vignette below (no. 7) about Dan's experience in the *Being invisible versus getting noticed* section.

5.3.5 Being invisible versus standing out

5.3.5.1 Vignette 7 – Dan is first on the scene

The person who lunged forward with a knife turned out to have a mental health problem, although this was initially not obvious. Dan had been called out to a disturbance in a store where a man was threatening the female staff. On seeing Dan in his high-viz security jacket, the perpetrator ran out of store into the shopping precinct with Dan in close pursuit. They both ended up in Sainsbury's where the assailant grabbed his knife. Dan only found out he had actually been stabbed when he was unable to get the stab vest off; the zip had been damaged by the stabbing. CCTV footage of the incident showed Dan had stepped forward when confronted with the knife. He impressed Police, who later commented on how crazy (brave) this had been, says Dan. To him, security work never feels like a chore. Over the three years of working in the sector, Dan has done a number of different jobs for different companies and client organisations, including night-time patrolling, alarm response, town-centre patrolling, and corporate security. He has enjoyed them all but found the loneliness of the night-time patrolling difficult; it not only meant not seeing anyone at work but also not during the day as this would be when he was asleep. What Dan enjoys the most are the jobs that include physicality, for instance nightclub doorwork or city centre patrolling on a Friday night. He sees it as his role to make people feel safe.

In new security landscapes, FSOs are much more present, not least because they are required by law to visibly wear an SIA security badge and a high-viz jacket. However, although CCTV technology can make visible and attest to good security work like in Dan's vignette above, it can also control and punish security work, like in Sophie's story and being 'caught' not doing her job. Furthermore, CCTV operators often become quite literally invisible: guidance documents on Government websites published by the National Association of Camera Managers, recommends an air lock door system and black-out blinds (see Gov UK 2018). The CCTV control room at Oxford Brookes University, situated at the end of a corridor on the ground floor with access only possible via prior arrangement, has no natural light. There is clearly a tension between the requirements to be more transparent in organisational practices and more visible in security work on the one hand, and the sector/SIA demand of 'blending in', not standing out in frontline security work. Sometimes this tension is talked about to outline what has changed. Diane is a security manager in charge of security at a large hospital where she is the only security official employed by the hospital trust. Although members of her security team of four security officers and CCTV operator receive additional training specific to dealing with vulnerable people, they are supplied by a large external security provider. She comments on the work she has done to make the security function recognised and her team respected, when it used to be considered a bit of an 'embarrassment' that it was needed in the first place:

> *"Well, we were always the service that were called upon when things were going wrong. But we were almost ignored, expected to crawl back under our rocks when things were going fine. So yeah, we're called out to deal with everything, but to melt away in the background and* to not be visible through rest of the time *[…]. We have done a lot of work…we are a respected department a lot more. I feel very strongly that I've worked towards that and the officers on the ground are recognised for the difficult work they do" (Diane, 49, Security Manager)*

To FSOs, visibility and invisibility are talked about in terms of respectively being physically and visibly present, and the 'behind the scenes' nature of security roles. As discussed above, the strong customer focus element of frontlines security roles and the type of client work that is part of the remit has pushed the FSO to the forefront, literally to the front of the building or venue. The notion of visibility is therefore enhanced in the sense that, should an incident occur, FSOs are first on the scene, *because they are already there*. This contributes to the status (but also the vulnerability) of the FSO role and to some, has 'one up' over being a police officer, as Lisa sees it:

> *"It's something about [being a private security officer], it is just one step higher […] the police is what we go to but we're there first if you know what I mean? If something major happened, for example, then we would be the ones dealing with it. If we then needed further*

assistance we'd be contacting the police. But equally, I've personally had situations where there was an intoxicated person, the police happened to be nearby and came over. They ended up handing it back to me. At that time I was more able to deal with that situation. To some extent, you could say we're on the same level with the police. We don't necessarily have the PPE that they have, but we deal with the same sorts of situations (Lisa, 25, FSO)

"Security is about so much more than that" is an oft-heard phrase in identity talk aimed at addressing perceived misconceptions about the role, and how the job is not just about 'bodies on doors'. Paradoxically, therefore, FSOs feel that what is valued, i.e. the customer service approach to security work and which constitutes the skilled part of their job, is largely invisible to the general public. FSOs are keen to talk about what goes on behind the scenes, and what they had to learn that makes them good at their job, see also *Professional selves versus cowboy others.* Having worked as FSO and then progressed to manager, Beth is able to reflect on the invisibility element in security work in more depth:

"…even with my parents, up until I'd say five years ago, when I had already been in the industry a long time, they realized, 'okay, you can actually get a career out of this', because they didn't understand it. And they just thought, 'oh right, it's Beth in the security industry, right, so you work the doors, and what else are you doing?' They didn't understand that there is a whole operation behind it, it's not just someone needs to go and stand on that two by two square in a shop, because that was their only experience of the security industry. I'd say, in my early career, I felt like I had to explain myself, particularly having done an undergraduate degree in something completely different, and people going 'you work in security', and sort of squinted their eyes, and I was like yeah, but it's not just standing on the shop floor" (Beth, 36, Security Manager)

Daisy thinks it is this 'behind-the-scenes' type of security work women tend to do, which is less conspicuous:

"If something was kicking off, it would be the men that would go in and sort it out, because I'm not the biggest girl so I wasn't there for the roles that you see bouncers do. But that's only a very small fraction of what actually happens and which people don't know about" (Daisy, 22, FSO).

The need to remain visible became more pressing during the pandemic, see also the first and third Findings chapter. Event security, door supervision at night clubs, cash transport, and so on, many security roles temporarily disappeared when public life ground to a halt. However, with public anxiety and general malaise in abundance, debates in trade magazines talked about how the sector could capitalise on the pandemic in the most effective ways, and premises guarding became a big focus. At the same time, there was some recognition for the sector: during the first lockdown, frontline security workers received key worker status (Gov UK News March 2020). Nonetheless, participants interviewed during the pandemic had either left the sector or had to resort to other type of security roles, like Carrie:

"I'm not doing doors currently, obviously with the pandemic and stuff. At the moment, I'm security guard in a private school, but I will be going back to doors. It's really boring, I'm there to do 12 hours a day, 8 a.m. till 8 pm. My basic job I suppose, is to protect the premises, and the people inside of it. So that involves patrolling, sort of just go around and make sure…funnily enough I look out for leaks. This job that I do currently, we've always joked and said it's more maintenance than security because I try and find problems*. So, I'll look out for leaks, things that are broken - it's really not security at all, it's really not interesting" (Carrie, 22, FSO).*

Dan's story in vignette 7 seems unusual: opportunities to shine in frontline security roles are limited.

5.3.6 Professional selves versus cowboy others

"what makes me a professional? Eh…your appearance, to begin with, you have got to have a professional, smart appearance. Doing the jobs to the best of my ability in a professional manner. Eh…being professional…just being professional, to the best of my ability" (Clive, 49, FSO).

"to be honest, not for myself, but for other door staff…It went from the big thing of 'can you fight?' to now, it's all about health and safety, fire regulations, the licensing laws, it definitely became a lot more professional, it gave it a lot more knowledge. The knowledge people need now is so much higher than before" (Jason, 40, Security Manager)

As argued elsewhere (e.g. Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011), legitimisation of one's (successful) working life is closely linked to the professional status of a job in society. Talk about 'being professional' featured heavily in my data set. In part this could be because discourses related to the re-positioning of the industry as *professional* security have filtered through to the micro level, see also the *Belonging versus "not forever"* section. In part it was because during the interviews I asked explicit questions about what being a professional security worker meant to participants or what professional security work looked like. Many in frontline roles, or those in charge of recruitment, responded to these kinds of questions by pointing towards the more tangible elements of professionalization processes - acquiring the SIA badge, having a customer services approach, vetting applicants for security roles (inclusion and exclusion criteria), taking or providing training (human capital), and so on - rather than the actual security work itself, such as carrying out bag searches, monitoring CCTVs, or mediating in fights, see also the *Serving customers versus 'dirty' work* section. FSOs often resort to other discourses, for instance being in the helping professions, which they cannot readily capitalise on as these are no formal requirements in recruitment processes, see also the final findings chapter.

The most obvious professionalization talk comes from 'before and after the SIA' - all current and past FSOs make mentions of how things are different now, see also the first section of this chapter. For

instance, Lisa, an FSO with additional training responsibilities, showed a seemingly deep-seated commitment to 'doing the right thing', the benchmark for which in her view is SIA regulations. She sees the success of the future of the private security industry lying in ongoing regulation, especially to weed out bogus trainers who, to cut corners on cost, do not train security officers properly. In Lisa's eyes, this means not instilling them with a customer focus. Clive thinks that before the SIA "they'd employ anyone", now FSOs have to go through various vetting processes. However, as the SIA badge has the function of giving access to security roles in the first place, acquiring it, therefore, seems like a threshold standard, to be let into the 'club', rather than crowning proven knowledge or expertise, and FSOs are dismissive of its function in frontline security roles. The SIA training is considered by many as inadequate, for instance Carrie does not understand the purpose of the SIA badge (other than teaching you the legalities), and how it can give you access to jobs that include patrolling school grounds looking for maintenance issues *and* dealing with the urban jungle that is the night club, both roles which she carried out but that could not be more different. Therefore, the relationship between the SIA and 'being professional' is not straightforward, and may not sustain professional identities, either not enough or not as time goes on and memories of an era from before the SIA are fading.

Ways in which being a professional could be signalled, perhaps more successfully, was via othering, i.e. identifying 'who we are' by pointing to 'what we are not', often not in equal binaries but to denote desirable, hierarchically-higher positioned identities (e.g. Ybema et al. 2009a). Self-other talk is a useful mechanism for the development of professional selves. For instance, the 'un-professionals' were bouncers from before the arrival of the SIA, other security providers such as the police with a different remit, and frontline officers engaging in bad practices, such as seeking excitement or sex, being after a fight, or displaying misogynist or racist behaviour ('cowboy others'). However, to many, the SIA badge/qualification is not necessarily a guarantee for professional conduct, and examples are there in abundance, in tabloids and broadsheet media, but also in participant accounts, as in Kath's perspective below:

> *"I guess there are companies out there, they have guys, they are badged [i.e. they did the SIA training, BdO], they are very cheap, and they are cheap for a reason. And in my opinion, they are not up to a certain standard. And I think that, if you own a bar or something, and you know someone who will do it for cheaper, and they'll undercut you. Obviously, probably, they are not putting in the time and effort that we are in recruiting the best staff". (Kath, 25, FSO)*

5.3.6.1 Skilful selves

FSOs feel what they do is skilful. Having a good eye (Simon, Sophie, Mollie), calming people down (Dan, Clive, Bert, Dana, Diana), but also drawing on a shared 'human-ness' is what FSOs could name and point towards as essential qualities for good security frontline services. In answer to questions

of what makes them good at their jobs, Daisy and Lisa describe how they use being human to good effect:

> *"I was just aware of what I was doing, what I needed to be doing, what I wanted the outcome to be, and I felt quite confident with that. I had dealt with things previously, you know, little things, friends arguing, you are aware how that has worked in those situations and you bring that out in customer situations. It sounds really bizarre, but it's little things like that, you know. It can be the smallest experience you've had and then you are suddenly faced with something and you think "hang on, that's like this" (Lisa, 26, FSO)*

> *"I'm a bit of a people person, I can talk to anyone. I think it's how you speak to them, being friendly, and also when you need to be more authoritative and the tone of voice that you use to certain people you speak to. You call this person 'mate' and then the next person you call 'sir' - it's kind of speaking to them how they want to be spoken to. And if they are a bit upset, having a bit of empathy, and understanding why they're annoyed, listening to them while also telling them what needs to be done. It is important to let someone rant if they need to rant and telling them "I hear you, but this is how it is, these are the rules. I don't like it either, but this is how it has to be done sometimes" (Daisy, 22, FSO)*

Few of the frontline participants considered themselves as having particular aptitudes for security-type roles from the onset, but most felt they developed skills *in the course* of doing their jobs. In Mollie's account, she talks about how these skills are acquired over time and become embodied; she can identify what counts as professional, what counts as skilled, and also, what does not. Her skills set is varied and includes: planning exit routes and developing fire procedures; training inexperienced/new team members; communicating with visitors, fellow security guards, and client organisations; crowd control, managing disorderly behaviour, and anticipating and responding to violence; and handling victims of assault. However, she has difficulty to capitalise on it: her skill set is not acquired via educational qualifications and therefore not easily recognised or commutable to economic capital. None of her experience or teaching wisdom is translated into formal recognition, such as increased wages or job security. Additionally, Mollie's account illustrates many of the salient features of security work: its precarity, its 'genderedness', its lack of training and development, the changes over time, and the pioneering roles of some of the women like Mollie. Her account, presented in her own words in vignette 8, is therefore given a little more attention than others', and ends this chapter.

5.3.6.2 Vignette 8 - Mollie, 49, FSO on what she knows

" When I first started doing door work I was 21. This was before the SIA even came into play. We weren't licensed back then, we were kind of assessed by the council. I worked Monday to Friday as a packaging technician trainer for a pharmaceutical company and the weekend was security, about 10 hours in total. Back then, it was just an easy way to make money, rather than going out and spending it! Now I do security full-time, mainly as doorman."

“There wasn't very many female door staff around then, it was quite frowned upon to be honest, to be a female doorman. It was like, ‘why would we want a female on this team, what can a female do that we can't, can they keep up the pace, can they cope with aggressive males’, that sort of thing. But that's not what door work is really about.”

“The security industry training is absolutely diabolical, it doesn't suit the job at all. Having said that, it’s that kind of a job: if you're not cut out for it, it doesn't matter what training you've had. You can't always teach someone to dance when they haven’t got rhythm. I wouldn't say that the SIA license was a bad idea, it's obviously an industry that needs to be governed, it needs to be licensed, it needs to be supported. It's never been supported. But I think that it attracts the wrong people. The licence is too easy to obtain”

“You've got people that are looking for work, that like the glamour of what we look like, but don't want the hard work involved. They look at us and think it's an aggressive job. You've got people coming on board that want to go out for a fight. They quite like that ‘look at me I’m a doorman, I’m in charge’ mentality, and when it kicks off, they get a little bit too heavy-handed and a little bit carried away”

“As a head doorman I pick my team. I have zero tolerance for someone coming to the venue and being paid to look after people’s safety, who actually wants to go out and date the customers! I’ve worked with a young doorman that all night long, wants to tell me how pretty the blonde is in the corner. And I think, ‘are you looking at anything else, are you looking at someone walking around with a bottle in their hand when they shouldn’t be, are you looking at who's coming in the exit when they shouldn't be allowed through that door?’ It's not professional and it's not what we're about”

“I think for a good security officer or doorman they need to ask questions about the venue, questions you ask before you even enter the building. Like, where are the fire exits, where's the fire call. You're there to support the customers, support the team doing the shift, and that's your top priority. You’ve got to keep your customers safe. If you get a young doorman that comes up and goes ‘so where’s all the security cameras’, I think ‘you’re obviously here for a fight and want to make sure the cameras don’t see that’. I will suss that doorman out - if he doesn't ask me any questions, then obviously he's going to get told what I expect of him. And if they don't agree, I’d rather they weren't there. You wouldn't leave them in charge of a pot plant let alone a venue of 200 people. I’ve done plenty of ‘one-man doors’ as we call it where it's one security officer at a venue. Depending on the venue, sometimes you’re better off on your own because otherwise you end up babysitting.”

“I like to take control of the staff that I have in the venue, I like to work a certain way. If they don't want to learn or they're not willing to listen then obviously, I’d have to report that back [to the employing private security company, BdO] because I’d feel that they wouldn't be suitable to work anywhere. Sometimes it is nice to feel you're helping a younger doorman, show them the ropes, show them the best way to be professional and how to deal with someone who's highly aggressive, highly abusive, without having to get heavy-handed. If it’s a young door team you can guarantee the mannerisms are going to be the same as your customers. And they lack that experience of how to control. You learn as you go along to be able to see things that other people can't see and hear things that other people should be listening to but don’t.”

“I think you get people that come into this security world thinking it's going to be a breeze, they've just got to stand in a venue all night long, they've just got to look the business, and if it kicks off, they need to remove someone in a professional manner. And that's what they think the job's about, and it's not. Well, it is and it's not, there is so much more involved. I’ve seen youngsters trying to muscle a big guy out and have not looked at the path to exit, ‘so how are you going to get him out, are you

going to knock people over on your way through, are you choosing the correct door that's nearest to you to get him out so you don't have to plough through 200 customers? Or are you gonna knock the old lady over in the corner that's still finishing her dinner…'. That's understanding your flight path and they just think, 'I've got to get this man out because he's being really abusive', and don't look at the bigger picture.

"Getting hands-on is the last thing you want to be doing. If you can't communicate with someone then you shouldn't be in the job. You need to be able to communicate, you need to be polite, you need to be professional. I'm not saying 'stand there and say please do this', when they're trying to punch your face off. But you need to know when you need to step it up, and when you need to stay where you are".

"I sometimes like to train a young, inexperienced team because you can ask them to work the way you want them to work. I like different characters within my team that have got different skill sets, so that everything that arises we can deal with. There's no point in having three doormen that are six foot tall and six foot wide that just deal with all the heavy stuff when you've got all these different things happening. I've dealt with guys that had heart attacks, I've had people that have been drugged, and have had epileptic seizures… you really do have to have quite a wide range of skills to be able to cope with that environment. And if you haven't got support from your team then you're doing the whole job with 450 plus customers on your own, and it's exhausting".

"I'm not saying that someone that's older is better. I mean, I've dealt with younger people with less experience but still got the same savvy… It's quite scary, when you've got someone trying to commit suicide. Some people like to run the other way, that's happened quite a few times, strong men have run the other way. But no youngster, in my eyes, should be in a nightclub, under that kind of straining capacity. You know, it's like learning to run before you can walk. *Go for something quiet you know, get your confidence, learn about yourself, you learn about yourself all the time when you're working. You learn to what degrees you can handle, you learn how professional you really do have to be, how well you can communicate*. Because, it's like anything you do in everyday life: until you try it you don't know. So you wouldn't really go, 'I've just passed the driving test I'm going to go and buy a Ferrari', you're just an idiot. But that's what they do, they go and get this license from the job centre, they go and get their little black trousers, a shirt and a tie. Put a tie on a bloke and he's turned into bloody Johnny Big Bollocks already, and it's like 'Jesus Christ, I don't want you here at all'. I've known doormen that have been stabbed because the other security member that they were working with ran the other way and hidden in the toilet. I've been bottled or beaten. It's different in the army, they soon weed them out, don't they, those types of people, which sounds awful but again you shouldn't be in that job role if you can't keep up with the pace"

"Things I deal with on a regular basis is actually outside the nightclub, when people have had a drink and they forget that there's a busy main road, they're on their phone or they're trying to chase a friend, and just run straight across, and I try and grab them before they do. I've had quite a few of those. I've had people trying to jump off multi-storey car parks three or four times. Why you would put multi-storey storage car parking in front of nightclubs where people are heavily drinking, I do not know. Sort of encourages drink driving, also encourages people who are not in the best frame of mind to go and jump off the top. So yeah, I've dealt with, hanging on to females while they've actually gone over by their wrists, waiting for police to arrive, I've dealt with a couple of them. I've also dealt with females that were gonna jump. I've sat down and we've talked for an hour before managing to calm them down. We've had people ringing up saying, 'it's a terrorist attack', and that they've put bomb in the venue. That's quite a hard one to call, whether if you believe them or not and how quickly you can get a night club emptied safely. So yeah, that's our job role as a doorman. It is nothing like a doorman, it's not what people think it is."

"I've been very lucky, the last venue that I worked at with the management there, where, to start off with, they were a bit like, they had a male head doorman and I was part of the team and he didn't meet their criteria. So he was asked to leave. They then advertised for a head doorman, and I was like, 'but I'm the second head doorman when he's not here, so do I step into the job?' And they're like, 'oh, can you do it for now', and I was like, 'no, I either do it or I don't', it's up to you. They're like, 'we'll give you a go but we've never had a female head doorman for such a heavy nightclub'. And I was like, well I've worked on part of the team for the last six months, you know how I work. *So I obviously showed what I was capable of, my professionalism, and how I wanted it run.* And they were over the moon, they were like, 'we can't believe that we had an issue with the fact that you were female'"

"The wages are diabolical. When I was 21 I earned 12 pounds an hour. I'm nearly 50 now and still on 12 pounds an hour. I'm a head doorman, so my staff are on 10 pounds an hour. It is dreadful considering what we do, what we put up with. You know, we give our weekends to other people for them to go out and have an enjoyable evening, when we'd quite like to be at home with our families. And we get paid a pittance to do it. I always said that there's no way on this earth I'd ever be doing door work at 50 years of age, but it does seem to be that that's where I'm gonna be".

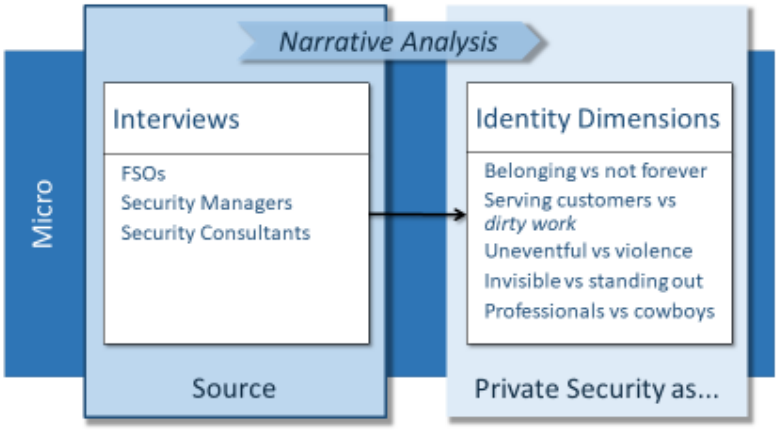


Diagram 5.14 - Part-diagram on narrative analyses of interview data at the micro level presenting five identity dimensions

5.4 Findings Chapter 3 – Three narratives of culturally appropriate selves in private security

'Telling one's stories in culturally resonant ways catalyzes the support from the community' (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010 p. 147)

5.4.1 Introduction

The aim of the first chapter was to present via an analysis of extant narrative discourse materials and programmatic texts visions for professionalization at the macro level that may facilitate (or hinder) the development of professional identities at the micro level. The chapter noted a shift in visions of frontline security as a, by and large, masculine, unregulated, physical (real or symbolic) role toward security roles imagined as regulated, intrinsically social, mostly anti-heroic and mundane, culturally and gender diverse, and servicing the needs of customers. However, the industry conceives of itself as stigmatised in the security space, the quest for legitimacy as a bonafide security provider is ongoing, and the notion of security professionalism, that which distinguishes the profession from other security providers, remains somewhat elusive. The second Findings chapter looked at identities dimensions at the micro level, i.e. negotiations in the development of professional selves, mainly vis-à-vis security work at the frontline. The chapter presented ways in which participants felt they belonged, imagined future security careers, and derived meaningful working lives. However, also highlighted were insecure, short-lived careers, invisibility, negotiating (the possibility of) violence and the gendered nature of the security profession, as well as that being a professional and having security expertise are not easily signalled or capitalised on across security roles. The notion of serving customers or satisfying clients, a mostly transactional, often fleeting activity, seems to sustain security identities to a limited extent. However, although private security as the new customer services profession may to some extent advance professionalization agendas and address legitimacy concerns, it does not necessarily facilitate the development of strong professional selves, a rationale for which is further elaborated on in the Discussion chapter. There is therefore not necessarily an alignment between macro level stakeholder messages on professionalization and professionalism, and how individuals position themselves at the micro level.

In considering analyses from chapters 1 and 2, the third Findings chapter presents narrative strategies that *do* navigate more or less successfully the new security landscapes. In that way, these

narratives could be thought of as the sediments of negotiations. I identified three that seemed the most prevalent and salient:

1. Private security as the helping profession;
2. Private security as a feminist project;
3. Private security as global safe keepers.

Building on the identity dimensions of Findings chapter two and against the broader professional security discourses of Findings chapter 1, these strands are successful because they are able to embed individual stories in a 'culturally accepted discourse, facilitating the identity's granting' (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010, p. 141). Private security as the helping profession was prevalent in participant stories to such an extent that to illustrate it I use a heuristic of a *composite vignette*: a fictitious participant security career using the first person singular based on elements from a number of participant stories. While it could be argued that the helping professions narrative strategy is a feminization of security roles to some degree, women in the second narrative, at the higher end of security roles, not only feel they benefitted from the changes of private security as less masculine but see themselves as instruments in their materialization; a transition to the private sector is in part construed as a feminist career move. Certain career histories story these transitions particularly well, and this section centres on a number of these, although one in particular, presented as a vignette. The chapter concludes with a less agentic narrative strand, that of private security as global safe keeping – it often features in wider stakeholder texts and also in some participant stories, but as a softer undercurrent that nonetheless threads many security tropes into a *tellable,* 'culturally sanctioned' (Ibarra and Barablescu 2010, p.143) account. The Discussion chapter offers a further exploration of what might be going on in respect to these alternative accounts.

5.4.2 Private security as the helping profession

"You know, it's a job where you either love it or you hate it, and for me I get a kick out of helping people" (Mollie, FSO).

Image 5.15 - Tweet by Oxford Brookes University Security Services during the pandemic

To illustrate the culturally appropriate self of private security as the helping profession I developed the vignette below (no. 9). Vignette 9 is a composite non-fiction narrative made up of elements from interview data from many frontline security officer interviews, both women and men. 'George' is therefore not an actual person in the dataset of this research. There are particulars in 'George's' story that are common to many accounts: not having tertiary educational attainment or training, being a little lost and not knowing what to do, an accidental security career. The vignette is mostly developed to highlight a caring approach to security and wanting to help people, which FSOs feel their jobs means to them. The point is, the story *could* have been told by any of the frontline participants.

5.4.2.1 Vignette 9 – Composite frontline security career of 'George'

"With my friends at school, I was kind of the go-to person when anyone was in trouble. I did martial arts in my spare time, skills you should never use to fight but to protect. People tell me I am reliable but I also know what it is like to be in trouble – for a while after school I got in with the 'wrong crowd', and although I wasn't the one doing the crime I became guilty by association. There were a number of incidents - after one particular incident, a police guy told me I wouldn't go far in life. Encouraged by a friend who already worked in the industry, I obtained an SIA licence to sort myself out. And the rest, as they say, is history. I'm an FSO for 8 years now - I've done all sorts of jobs, patrolling, supervising, guarding… I love the job I have now, I love the security world, and wouldn't do anything to risk having my licence revoked. I just want to help young people not make the mistakes I made".

"As long as I can remember, I have wanted to help people. I think I understand people, young people especially, as I used to be one of them not so long ago. I go to the same clubs they go to. I know what a bad reaction to drugs looks like, or what a panic attack feels like because I've had these myself. The job is all about drawing on your own life experiences to try and understand where customers are coming from and relate to them. I help people where they need help. It can be little things, it can be problems at home. They see you as someone they can talk to. Someone'd stand

next to me, I'd have a cigarette with them and then they might tell me their whole life story. It makes you understand people a bit more and doing this a lot makes you a good listener, especially if they're on drugs or drunk, or both, and you can't quite understand what they are saying".

"I have helped many people. What gives me the biggest job satisfaction is to notice my calming words are landing with violent people, individuals who want to harm others or themselves. For instance, I once stopped someone killing themselves. It was when I was on patrol in a shopping centre. There was shouting and screaming coming from behind one of the shops and I walked around and there's some guy literally trying to saw his arm off. I think he was going for the veins in his arm. He said to me that one of the other people in my uniform was a bit weird with him last time, so I said look "what can I do to make you feel comfortable? What makes you feel anxious around me?". He said that the handcuffs on show makes him feel really anxious. So I took my handcuffs off and chucked him to the side, so he felt safe and he didn't feel intimidated. I managed to talk him into passing over the saw, and then I just sat down, having a chat with him, calming him down, until police arrived. He actually approached me, a week after, thanking me for stopping him doing what he was doing. He said he wouldn't be here today if I wasn't there".

"I used to go from company to company – they don't really make you feel wanted. On the whole, I feel much more loyal to the client than to the organisation that had hired me. You know they are relying on you, and mentally, I'd worry about the customers, even on my days off. I am now with a new company, where they've made me a team leader. For the first time, I'm on a full-time permanent contract, which is unusual for the industry. They've said I can go and do a level 3 security operations course. My dilemma is that I need to earn more money in order to sustain myself, and for instance, to start a family later in life. But to progress my career and earn more is to do the management type roles, there are no stages in between. This would mean giving up the much more physical, first-on-the-scene side of things, which is what I love. But there is no money in it".

Initially, I was not attuned to the private security worker as 'helper'. Early on, when frontline interviewee participants mentioned helping as part of their central narrative, I did not 'hear' it; it did not fit the lexicon that I expected. I cannot recall the exact moment I became aware of 'helping' as central to people's stories of themselves. I think it was during the pandemic when the notion became particularly 'visible', in articles, tweets, Instagram photos and stories, and so on. I remember going back to interview recordings, finding the notion of helping had been there all along, and wondering how I could have missed it in my initial analyses. Once I was attuned to it, I heard and read it everywhere. The particular strand of private security as the helping profession is illustrative of where the more formally recognised label of security work as 'just' customer services (for instance, as per SIA materials and trainers talk) is, not quite resisted but being given more weight by a much more profound notion of helping people in need. The 'customer' is not just the client organisation. It is also ordinary members of the public visiting client venues – university students, clubbers, museum visitors - or walking around in boundaried, public spaces, for instance town centres. It is Dan's knife guy, Molly's vulnerable girls, Daisy and Carrie's troubled youngsters with anxiety issues, Lisa and Kath's drunken fighters, Bert's and Dana's lost students, both geographically

and mentally. To many FSOs in this research, 'customer services' seems a somewhat shallow label for the complex work they feel they do in sometimes aggressive, sensitive, and emotional situations. Participants describe their commitment as mostly to those perceived in need, rather than to the client organisation. The many accounts of 'helping' included offering a listening ear to customers or members of the public – for instance, people who feel lonely, depressed or anxious. FSOs feel they can help people not harming themselves, not become victims of crime, even to help them not *commit* crimes. They can offer help with getting medical assistance when people have had too much to drink or have taken too many drugs; they can help ensure they get home okay. They can help pointing people in the right direction and prevent them from getting lost.

In the dimensions of Findings chapter 2, helping others is a prevalent under-current, a master narrative that incorporates tropes of belonging, serving customers, standing out, and being an everyday hero. It ties in both the uneventful, i.e. the absence of threat, the offering of a listening ear Carrie and Daisy talk about, as well as the possibility for the encounter of violence like in Dan's story. It offers the opportunity for everyday 'heroic' acts such as making sure people do not lose their way or have their bike stolen. FSOs as helpers offers not just an opportunity to serve customers, but also the possibility of meeting adversary with courage. It is a call of character.

Image 5.16 - Slide from a presentation at the Work, Employment and Society conference, August 2021.

5.4.3 Private security as a feminist project

> *"…lots of people will say that it has to become more diverse. They'll say that a lot. They'll walk around the room and they'll say how un-diverse we are. They recognise that there is not many women, there are not many ethnic minorities, there is not actually much diversity in age. A certain level in security is all pale, male, and stale. It is all white men in their 50s."*
>
> (Andrea, editor City Security Magazine)

How the second narrative strategy came about is, in part explained by the shift in focus of my research. At the start of my project, given the changes in the sector more broadly but also the dogged, gender imbalance of security roles, I considered making my research about feminisation of security, and to interview women only. In search for feminine or feminised roles in the changing security landscapes, I wanted to explore what had changed but also what had remained the same. When I broadened my scope, in part because finding female frontline security officers proved challenging, I had already interviewed a number of female participants in the 'security consultant' participant group. Vignette 10 illustrates how this participant group view their place and role in changed security landscapes and how their own career histories helped effect these changes.

5.4.3.1 Vignette 10 – Interviewing Pat, security consultant, on site

As soon as I approach the iconic high-rise building in the heart of the City of London, the security guard immediately starts speaking to me, ensuring I have a legitimate reason to be there. When I have mentioned whom I've come to see, I can come through the doors. In the lobby, there are five receptionists and three security guards, as well as an airport-style security bag-checking facility, to be able to get up the escalators. Pat, my interviewee, tells me that as strategist account holder her remit, broadly speaking, is securitising the building. We do the interview in a first-floor lounge area, where there is an incessant stream of people. Pat greets them as they walk by, often pausing our two-hour long interview to chat with people, notably the security staff she manages, enquiring about their weekend, health and family members. People clearly like her. Pat tells detailed and lively anecdotes of being a woman with the police force, her previous career. In addition, she talks about the many concerns and challenges that come with securitising high-rise City buildings, and the kinds of responsibilities she deals with. She also provides interesting explanations of how security is organised and communicated as necessary to her clients, her organisation, and the public at large, and sometimes, or so it feels, to herself.

Pat summarises her career with the police as "survival of the fittest for 34 years". Starting as a receptionist with the police straight out of school, she soon decided that what the men were doing she could do, too. She tells colourful stories about what it was like being a woman in the police force in the 70s. For instance, there is the story of wanting to be in a so-called area car, which required the completion of a 5-week course, and her boss not letting her because as an attractive woman, the married, male colleagues could not be trusted to behave themselves. Or, the "useless", tiny truncheons female, skirt-wearing police officers were given so that these could fit in their handbags. Or, the miners' strikes, when all the male police officers wanted to go and 'do the strikes' in the pit villages up north, and the women were left in charge of policing the cities. Sexism, marginalisation, put downs, obstacles put in her way at every step – these were the order of the day. But Pat kept

going - her ambition was to become a superintendent one day. In those days, the only way to become one was to have a degree, so she enrolled at the Open University for a degree in psychology. Studying radically changed her, she feels; it made her open her eyes to other perspectives.

With one more year of her degree to go, Pat became a superintendent anyway. She was promoted together with a woman, with whom she had been in life-long competition. This was because she reasoned at the time that the powers-that-be would never promote two women to superintendent. She recounts how, in the toilets of the building where both women were doing a course, she befriended her life-long foe. They decided how ridiculous it was they should be pitted against each other. During the last few years of her police career, she was put in charge of the firearms section, not to handle the weapons or provide the training – the men already occupied those types of roles – but to manage the staff, streamline the processes. She talks of this role as even more valued and higher-ranking than being a superintendent. In the early 2000s she was tasked by her then boss to set up the women's network, because police forces across the country had to be seen to be taking the 'Gender-Agenda' seriously. Pat says she was so socialised into the police force way of thinking about gender that she couldn't see the point of doing it. However, she did set it up and was shocked to learn of the many traumatised women in the police who were clearly in need of support. She is still involved with the network and it now has about 400 members, both civilians and officers.

Unlike ordinary police ranks, superintendents do not have to leave the force after 30 years of service, but after 34 years Pat was only given boring jobs to do, which she took as a sign they wanted her to go. She got the job in the private security sector because of her contacts in the City, built up while still in the police. She considers her job with the private security organisation as more stressful than working for the police –she is always on call whereas at the police you could switch off once your shift had finished. She feels she brings her experiences and knowledge of London to her current role, which involves the responsibility for a number of customer accounts: high-rise buildings in the City of London, some of which are Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure sites. Pat manages managers who manage the sites, and although she has a more strategic role, she seems also to be responsible for operational management and the recruitment of security officers. She talks in the third person plural to give a review of all the security activities that have been implemented since she first started here. She uses 'market-oriented' talk of professionalization, customer services, and health and safety, for instance making sure that the 'visitor journey' of arriving at the building to arriving where they need to be is a pleasant and safe one. When I tell her of my 'visitor experience' and all the security measures I encountered, she proudly says she introduced these.

Her ultimate role is to keep the clients happy, although there are different types of clients, for instance the clients that occupy the building, and the clients who own the building. She sees her main task as people management, which in private security comes with the added challenge of people "not being very committed" to their jobs – people come and go and do the job because they can't do anything else, Pat thinks. Security is the first thing that is economised on when times are tough and there is no immediately perceived threat. Pat is often told to reduce the cost – this means fewer people at ever-lower salaries. Profit margins are tiny, both for security providers as for individuals on the ground – if they can make £0.10 per hour more somewhere else they'll go there. Private security guards are pretty much at the bottom of the pay scale; although they earn slightly more than the cleaners they earn less than the receptionists that I passed on my way in, Pat tells me (and the receptionists are provided by another organisation): "no one wants to pay for security".

What Pat rates about her new role is that there is far more diversity here – she has every nationality under the sun working for her. However, women still don't tend to see it as a career. The women Pat

is able to recruit come via the catering and cleaning contracts her organisation also provides. She says that if she had to advise her daughter whether to go into policing, i.e. public security, or private security, it would be the police every time. In the private sector, there is no career structure, very little training and development, and jobs tend to be poorly paid. Pat reckons for every 100 men they have about 20 women, mostly recruited from the restaurant inside the building. Advertisements for security jobs usually don't generate female respondents, even if they make them entirely female-only requirements. This is a problem, they need female officers for securitising women-only areas or for body searches on women. Her organisation can make profits work because they are part of a bigger conglomerate whose core business is catering. Organisations overall, are reluctant to pay for security because it is very expensive to pay for 'manned' guarding. Awarded contracts are usually for three years and competition is intense.

Pat offers a whole range of reasons on why security is necessary and the value of what she provides: terrorism, nearby public transport hubs, people on a night out carrying knives into the restaurant, guiding the public, stopping urban explorers from abseiling the building. However, it is mostly about everyday problem solving. She thinks of her current role as never boring: from one day to the next she doesn't know what she will do. She thinks her credibility – her attractiveness to the industry - comes from having been a policewoman and knowing the city well. She tries to keep hold on to the contracts for her organisation by keeping the clients happy. She believes in technology to improve security practices but says you will always need people, although jokingly admits she has a vested interest in claiming that! She talks of retiring at some point but says she would be really, really bored.

5.4.3.2 Jumping the public sector ship

Pat is not the only woman among my participant cohort who was able to craft a new role in private security on the back of a career in the state sector. Before joining the private sector, Alison, Mary-Jane, and Keira had long-running deployments as civil servants in government departments such as the Foreign Office, Cabinet, and the then Department for Trade and Industry. Attending Oxbridge universities, they started work at a time when women in relatively high level civil servant roles were somewhat of a rarity. Mary-Jane joined in 1976, only three years after the requirement for women civil servants of having to leave upon marrying was dropped (see for instance, civilservant.org.uk). Alison always had an interest in security issues and became part of the Territorial Army where she took the Platoon Commanders course, one of the first women to do so. Keira thinks of her own transition to the private sector as occurring in stages. She describes how, in her view, the sector is changing and a different kind of person is entering the security world now. She thinks of her own career as reflecting the many changes that occurred. Initially not interested in "waving the feminist flag in the Foreign Office", Keira pretty soon discovered there was a glass ceiling, and after her year out to do a public administration course at a top American University, funded by Keira herself, she persuaded her old place of work she'd be signed up for a pilot scheme for a women leadership programme, which involved being mentored but also mentoring the next generation. Keira finished this at the time of severe cuts to departmental budgets. Her first move away from the public sector was joining CybSecOrg, a think tank on cyber security security issues. CybSecOrg started as 'salon

conversations' in the 1990s, where civil servants and other stakeholders were considering the possible downsides to the internet, and the implications of these for national security. CybSecOrg was initially affiliated with a university but soon after became an independent organisation, with commercial sponsors. When Keira was approached via a Government connection, she noted that the demographic of the organisation was mainly white, middle-aged men. She also noticed that many of the business organisation stakeholders were represented by former government officials, possibly because, she thinks, government is still perceived as having the best people with the technical know-how, largely because of GHSQ. However, CybSecOrg actively promotes diverse interests across business, government, law enforcement and academia and the demographic is slowly changing. As part of the Foreign Office mentoring programme – possibly contravening the programme's original retention intentions - she became keen to show other female civil servants that there was "life outside of government". There are more women now. Keira attributes this to a change into what is perceived as necessary skills in the cyber security world. It is no longer just the 'technologists' – which still tend to be men – but people with skills in translating technical language into languages that business managers can understand. A particular skill women have, thinks Keira, is that they tend to be more open and are therefore considered more approachable by business people. She describes her recruitment for a PSC as completing the transition to the private sector, and as a long time in the making. The PSC were involved in advising government in cyber security services and for Keira to be hired by them on a consultancy basis to help them advise government where she was already on the payroll felt as taking the taxpayer for a ride, so she resigned her government post. She contrasts her sense of importance during her time in government with that in the private sector as more favourably in the public sector. However, her 'saving the world complex', as she describes her life's mission, finds an outlet in CybSecOrg:

> *" … business is important, no question, and exciting and dynamic but it is by no means as fulfilling work as what I had done previously [in government]. Some of that had to do with the culture of the organisation I was working in, some of that had something to do with the nature of the assignments that I was given, some of which was fabulous, you know "can you describe the nature of decision-making for whatever industry in China". Chunky question, really interesting. But I think I stayed there as long as I did because it coincided with my involvement with CybSecOrg. There you have an organisation with a clear mission. And it involved something that I could own." (Keira, Security Consultant)*

Alison wanted to join the army but decided against it because at the time, the jobs she was interested in were not open to women. She studied for a law degree and when a solicitor, started in a private practice. However, after a stint abroad, she became a legal advisor in the Foreign Office with an expertise in money laundering and international financial crime. The role took her to far-away places, where her remit was to get the security apparatus of particular countries on a "more

democratically accountable footing". She set up her own law business having been a government lawyer for 15 years, but which was still involved in a number of 'hybrid' clubs. Not the only such organisation around, the trade organisation TradeOrg she is now a director of, has as purpose to provide a single point of contact for government when it seeks the view of the private sector, and the private sector can feed back to government. An important task TradeOrg fulfils is working with both the private sector and government, at the time of the design of so-called trade frameworks which determine which organisations will be invited to tender for big pieces of (government-outsourced) work. In relation to women issuers in security type roles, she feels that being a woman can bring certain advantages:

> *[…] As a lawyer working in that security sector, it's quite operationally focused, so it is working with security operatives who are trying to achieve operational outcomes […]. I mean, although I am on TradeOrg and I feel that is useful, helping government and the private sector do its business better… it can be quite disarming when faced with a woman doing this sort of security-related role, often, because your interlocutors tend to be men, if you can get over the patronising bit, which often comes first, you can actually strike up a type of relationship two men don't get. (Alison, Security Consultant)*

A similar career trajectory is offered by Mary-Jane. She cites a range of reasons as to why in the end she left the civil service – husband retiring, children finishing university, not being adverse to making a bit more money as a 'final fling', and a generic 'wanting to move on'. She got her big private sector job through a recommendation by someone in her network – Mary-Jane attaches great importance to networks as this is how most people, she says, at her level get their next job. She saw her role in government as an intermediate between the 'techie tribe' and the 'diplomat tribe', trying to get one to speak to the other. Her views of her role as an interlocutor were extended to the development of a holistic strategy for the private sector and how *good* security should be accomplished. Threats in the public or private sector are similar and can come in through cyber, through buildings, through 'bad apples' working in the organisation. A central concern of businesses, thinks Mary-Jane, and what they need to get right, is *to be seen* to be acting responsibly. Stolen computers do not necessarily pose a risk because they will be password protected but you have to be able to say to internal or external stakeholders that it happened today, but that data had been backed up, and so the negative effects are minimal. If you say 'my computer was stolen three weeks ago', even though data was not accessed or lost, this is much more damaging. You have to be seen to be on top of it. Security and customer services go hand in hand, for instance providing visitors to your building with different-coloured lanyards so that you can guide them to the place they need to be; at the same time they stand out and you can keep an eye out. Security extends to questions of ethical business practices. For instance, with regard to data securing, sloppiness can become an ethical problem; Mary Jane works with ethics officers at advising organisations, who in turn advise business clients to

think about those kinds of issues. She thinks working in security is about *making judgements*, rather than about technology ("you have your tech staff for that") and approaching security in a holistic way.

However, although Pat, Alison, Keira, and Mary-Jane use their networks to access security roles in the private sector, they feel it is precisely their acquired social networks - social capital in Bourdieu's (e.g. 1986) terms - that makes them attractive to the security industry. Here, businesses look for access to legitimising institutions (e.g. law enforcement; government) via individuals with such built-up capital. However, it is more than that: being the only woman in the room is perceived as a distinct advantage. Mattering less in the army, in fact being somewhat of a negative, in the private sector it opens doors. Standing out, being able to dress differently, and "bringing colour" are welcomed by potential clients. Emma thinks this is because female attire reflects a less stern look and makes security seem compassionate. Given the diversity requirements at the organisation level, being seen to be dealing with women is good for business.

5.4.3.3 Female frontline security officers

The social and symbolic capital built up by female security consultants and managers in the state sector is less available to female frontline security officers, and with that, perhaps, private security as a feminist project features less. Nonetheless, although an estimated 90% of frontline security officers are male, on the ground security staff in my data set, both men and women, are acutely aware that what used to be seen as an important asset in frontline roles is no longer valued, i.e. the 'physicality of the male body' bouncer roles (Tomkins 2005, p. 156), or aesthetic labour delivered by the 'beefy bouncer' body type. In fact, male bodies are sometimes construed as disadvantageous. As Daisy comments: "…you don't really want a big 40-year-old, bald bloke who looks like he's on steroids carrying a little 18-year-old girl out. You need someone there that doesn't look too predatorial or anything like that". The women frontline security offices in my dataset therefore see that being a woman is 'sell-able', further strengthened by specific regulations that encourages women participation in frontline security roles, for instance the stipulation that only women can body search female customers. It is also often commented on by FSOs that female visitors welcome the presence of female security guards. Sometimes women participants view developments in this area, i.e. their participation in the jobs that are traditionally seen as male, as advancing equality agendas, although this was not a deliberate strategy when seeking employment in this industry. At the same time, female *and* male FSOs emphasise useful attributes such as care, listening, and helping, attributes culturally more easily associated with women. Therefore, a more resonant narrative strategy for developing culturally appropriate selves in the frontline, given that frontline

security officers are mainly men, seems to be the previous narrative strand, that of paid-up members of the helping professions.

5.4.4 Private security as global safe keeping: a security imaginary

"My paymaster, ultimately, is my son. And my unborn child. The world in which I want them to grow up is one in which these uncertainties don't exist. I think that is achievable. And I also want them to exist in a world in which there is security, I want them to exist in a world where people aren't dropping bombs on other people, and things like that"

(Gary, Security Consultant)

5.4.4.1 Vignette 11 – Dana, FSO on transitioning from public to private, and from her country of origin to the UK

At the time of the interview, Dana has just been recruited as a security supervisor, delivering security services on a UK University campus. She is over the moon with her new role and things have gone very well so far - "I love it – it is perfect". In her own country in Eastern Europe, Dana was a police officer for 14 years. She joined the police because her godmother was a police officer, and because of her belief in justice and the rule of law. Her mission in life is to help people. During many years as a police officer, Dana was engaged with crime prevention, which meant going into the community – schools, elderly care homes – to advise people how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. She is drawn towards the vulnerable and the helpless of this world, she says, and feels she has made a change to many people's lives; being a police officer is a calling – you need to want to be one yourself, and not because of other people's hopes for you. During the last few years of her police career, she was dealing with poachers in the mountainous region where she grew up. This was dangerous work: poachers operate at night to kill wild animals illegally - deer, wild boar, bears, foxes, protected birds, and so on - to be stuffed and sold on as trophies; they don't take too kindly to being stopped in their work. A stuffed bear head would trade for about £8,000. Meat on a bear, apparently – Dana has not eaten bear meat herself - is very tasty and bear paws, particularly, are a bit of a delicacy. Her job required her to go into the mountains at night to catch the poachers. It all became too much, and she did not feel she had the physical stamina. She started to adapt her job to make it more suitable to what she was good at and could do. This was to develop her intelligence skills, drawing on her networks to work out who the poachers were, and assist the operation in that way.

Dana came to the UK in 2019. Her husband already had a job there, and with a young son, she wanted the family to stay together. Brexit and new regulations sped up the process: soon, there would be a cut-off point when moving would be less easy. She is very happy to have come, and for her son who now attends a local primary school, it has been great. On arrival, she wondered whether she should change career, doing work other than policing or security work. She had a number of zero-hour, short-term contract jobs in unrelated fields. For instance, for a while, she worked in retail in a large department store. Here, her bosses noticed her eye for detail and observational skills. When a security role came up, Dana was asked to apply. This job, in turn, led to a security job at a hospital, from where she applied for her current role, a permanent, salaried employment, and just what she wanted. She had little expectation to get it, because she did not have all the licences (SIA door supervision), or a driving licence for a non-automatic car. The interview went well and lasted a long time. However, she thinks she ultimately got the job because

of her police career. And because she is a woman; being female, given the number of female students on campus, might come in handy. Alongside her full-time job, she is doing an online course in Business and Management, which she is funding herself.

Coming to the UK meant a substantial salary increase. In her country, she was paid £650 per month. Here it is about three-and-a-half times that. Like colleagues on her team, she works a 12-hour shift pattern over 11 days: four day shifts, three night shifts, four days off. Dana likes the team, and so far, they have been polite and don't swear too much! She is not sure yet of the challenges that await. But when they come, she will draw on her experiences of being a police officer. She feels she is calm, patient in every situation, especially in situations of domestic abuse, or fire. Violence doesn't bother her, and she has experienced all sorts: blood, deaths, horrible car accidents. For two years, she slept with a gun in her house. How do her experiences as a police officer relate to her new job? She does not expect there to be violence, but other than that, she thinks the jobs are not that dissimilar and draw on her key skills ("the way I am wired"). She thinks of herself as old-school' organised. She has notebooks and writes down daily tasks; she has good organisation skills. In a security job, it is important to be on time, punctuality matters, she feels.

Dana has been told her new job involves being the eyes and ears for the boss. During night shifts she needs to be out and about, with a colleague manning the control room. Supervising the team means checking the uniforms, the radios, and teaching the team how to do the patrols. She was told by her boss that student life during the pandemic was pretty bad; there were many incidents of anxious students and illegal parties. But on the whole, there are no big issues on a university campus. Worse case scenarios would be a fire, drug dealing, or theft. Does she expect to contribute to security in this job in the way she was doing back home? She thinks so, although can confirm in 6 months' time! She expects her niche expertise, such as her intelligence skills to be used to good effect. "Are you selling bear meat?", is not a productive question to ask, Dana jokes.

She'd like to be a security manager one day, once she has finished her courses. Security is what she is best at and what she knows. What she gets from security jobs is respect. When she was hired for this particular role, people congratulated her; she got many likes on a photo of her in her new uniform, which was posted on Facebook and also on the client organisation's Twitter feed: "I like my uniform. Not everybody understands that here. But back home they do".

5.4.4.2 Symbolic capital and symbolic borrowing

As alluded to in the Chapter introduction, this particular strand is perhaps less visible or tangible than the helping narrative. 'Making people feel safe' is a slogan often peddled by notably organisational stakeholders and security managers; however, a number of frontline participants use it too. I defend its inclusions as a culturally appropriate self because, unlike the other two strands, it speaks to the question of how it has come to be that a police officer from Eastern Europe, whose skills include chasing bear poachers, is seen as a natural fit in a private security role on a UK university campus. It is unsurprising that the notion of 'safety' features in participant accounts. However, the notion is conspicuous in its opaqueness, as well as playing a seemingly less dominant role than the helping narrative when that is perhaps expected. There are a number of visible traces of discourses in macro actors' accounts that could be grouped under this narrative of global safe keepers, and that help build it. One such trace is that a career in the military or police is prestigious

and seems positively valued by the industry. Among the participant cohort in this study, for which few claims of representativeness are being made, just two of the 28 have army backgrounds (Emma and Manish), and another two (Pat and Dana) had had careers in the police force. Participants with these past careers seem aware what kind of capital they have to offer. For instance, Pat thinks:

> *"… the fact that I've been in the police for 34 years brings a huge amount of credibility to me… So if I, if they say to me 'Pat, we're thinking of introducing.. body warm cameras' and I go 'That's a complete waste of time', they actually listen to me …those who haven't got a military or police background, they find it a bit more difficult to convince clients "(Pat, Security Consultant)*

Like the former civil servants, the four participants with professional lives built in the military or police privilege their worker identities related to these public sector institutions over their private security sector careers. Nevertheless, the prestige attached to them gives them symbolic capital desired by the sector, in turn building what Thumala, Goold, and Loader (2011) have termed 'symbolic borrowing': in its endeavour to be recognised as a profession, seen as competent, and acquire respect, the security sector tries to associate itself with other professions, see also the Literature chapter. Even though an army or police background is not a prerequisite for working in private security, many in the sector have this (Gill, Howell and McGreer 2020). As argued in Chapter 2, some of what drove the growth of the private security sector was the decrease in deployment of state sector armed forces, with a transfer of some of the security tasks and people to the private sector. Individuals with state-sector security careers are hugely valued in the private sector because of the status ascribed to such careers by the general public. Therefore, as vignette 11 illustrates, signalling these backgrounds to (potential) employer remains marketable. Having worked in the public sector in and of itself carries some cachet, of which Emma's account is a good illustration. Describing her transition from the public sector to the private sector as a "personal choice", she feels what made her attractive to the private sector, paradoxically perhaps for someone with a long career in the military, were her 'soft skills' acquired in the public sector. The things Emma felt that get ingrained into you like work ethic and values - teamwork, drive and determination, and a 'can-do' attitude - is highly valued by the private sector. Like the security consultants in the feminist project narrative, reconciling sense of purpose and perspectives of security acquired in the state sector with the security logics in the private sector is challenging. She recalls how her remit changed from national security, servicing citizens and country, to assets and risk mitigation, serving clients and customers. Where security in the public sector is seen as the primary function ("it was everything", says Emma), in the private sector it is an 'add-on'. She stories her transition rationale as "being passionate", although finds it difficult to articulate what it is she is passionate about, as per this short interview extract:

"[Emma:]I think having confidence in what you know, is really key, especially for people transitioning from public to private, I think. It is so subjective, risk mitigation is so, so subjective. You can talk anybody into anything if you believe it. *It is something I am really passionate about, and I think it really helps sometimes, because when you are in front of a client and you can say 'look, I believe in what I am saying', then they begin to believe you as well. Yeah, so I think it is passion and confidence.*

[BdO:] What is it that you are really passionate about, would you say?

[Emma:] Eh…understanding security…and helping…I don't know, gosh, that is a question! Don't know [pause]. Just problem-solving things. Everything can be fixed, there is an answer to everything".

5.4.4.3 A collective 'we' and the security imaginary

A second element that builds the safe keeping narrative is that of the vagueness of an imagined enemy. Many participants' talk, and indeed much of the programmatic texts are infused with speech about contemporary life as unsafe and risky, and increasingly so. As Steve puts it:

"Twenty years ago, the world was a different place in general. And I think the risks weren't as great then. We had no terrorism, I mean there was the Northern Ireland conflict over here. I think when we read the news recently, well with the London knife attacks, that could happen to any of our students. Nothing that we can do about it, *but that risk is huge nowadays. The dangers are more prolific. Twenty years ago, you could probably leave your house unlocked. There was a chance you might be burgled but it wouldn't be as great as it would be today". (Steve, Security Manager, emphasis added)*

Poachers and drunken students, mentioned in Dana's vignette (no. 11), seem two very different security threats. Unsurprisingly, threats and securitising against threats are understood differently across locations, roles, and job-specific remits. However, security and insecurity are fleeting notions and what constitutes either is not an objective reality but the fixing of meanings to events (e.g. Pretorius 2008, Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998). Furthermore, identity is not necessarily constructed through 'radical Otherness' (Hansen 2006, p.37), see also the Discussion. A narrative with longevity potential requires a collective imagination and goes beyond what is current. Imagining what a securitised world might look like - being on the 'right' side against a borderless and often faceless enemy - is perhaps a less readily to hand narrative for crafting a professional self than the more mundane 'helping professions'. However, it allows a shared 'we' that travels, at least in similar cultures. The industry taps into, needs to tap into, what is current, but does so in part as a continuous reminder of the shared 'we' in discourses of security and threat, in what Pretorius (2008) might refer to as a security imaginary. A social imaginary (based on the work of political philosopher Charles Taylor 2004, in Pretorius 2008) is how ordinary people imagine their environment where a common understanding shapes and legitimises practices that have no clear location. Likewise, 'those primary significations that constitute the security world have no precise place of existence where

one might look for them' (Pretorius 2008, p. 106). An example is City Security magazine (Spring 2022), the latest issue for which at the time of writing (Spring 2022) is about risk management. The front cover is in the colours of the Ukrainian flag. The flag itself also features, with a small inscription: 'our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine'. City Security magazine, or any private security organisation, would normally not readily be seen to side with a political cause or domestic, political party, but Ukraine is perhaps far away, and 'other' enough for there to be a 'we' in the 'our'. More importantly, siding with this country under siege from Russia is tapping into the dominant mood in the UK and therefore not too controversial. In participant accounts, there were not always clear distinctions between 'good' and 'bad', or even an identification of an enemy 'other'; however, the securitising activity in and of itself was seen as virtuous (being on the right side) or meaningful. An example of this is the two CCTV operators (Claire and Sophie) and the assets that needed protecting from those trying to damage or steal them, regardless of legitimacy of the assets or the virtue of the owners in the first place.

In answer to questions about what needed protecting, against who or what, and what providing security meant, participants talked of the *enemy* in fluid and flexible, and somewhat vague terms, as here in Kath's words:

> *"I mean there are nasty people in the world and they are trying to…you know doing what they are doing and security people are there in the front line making sure the event they are at is safe and secure" -(Kath, FSO)*

FSOs working in nightclubs or on the university campus felt they were protecting customers mainly against themselves. 'Keeping people safe' is how most participants would label their work, i.e. without a clear enemy. Some gave additional justifications, for instance that hedonistic life styles and pleasure seekers should not draw away resources from public law enforcers ("the police have better things to do" – Kath) with the taxpayer footing the bill. Among security consultants, there was a recognition that it was commodities that needed protecting against the competition ("it's the data, stupid" – Mary-Jane). But even among these participants, there is an ideology of safe keeping. Keira, the cyber security consultant with a self-ascribed 'saving-the-world' complex (see previous strand), talks about threat as the blue veins of a Stilton cheese: they cannot be separated from the white parts yet are all pervasive. There is therefore a sense in which participants talk about a collective *we the good guys*, against evil ("we all know who the bad guys are" – Keira). In this respect, it does not matter too much where one works: "the fundamental principles [of criminal intent, BdO] are the same" (Mary-Jane) and participants felt they were engaged in a perpetual cycle of responding to ever more complex insecurities in ever more complex securitising ways. In Keira's words:

> *"…as the good guys are getting better at putting the defences in, or are plugging the holes, or have better locks for the doors or windows, whatever images you want to use, the bad guys have to get more ingenious at overcoming them. And it will never stop" (Keira, Security Consultant)*

A former civil servant and policy adviser with the Ministry of Defence, Gary made the transition to private security because he got disillusioned with the Afghanistan mission. To him, what the army is and how it operates, is in essence having to keep flexing its muscle in order to retain its raison d'être. The Afghanistan and Iraq wars came just at the 'right' time as the Northern Ireland 'project' had finished and something else was needed. To Gary, Afghanistan missions in the Helmond province would never have a good outcome. There were too few resources for the policing of such a large area (Helmond is three times the size of Northern Ireland), there were too many agendas that could not possibly all be followed, and the career advancement of army generals were ultimately what drove combat decisions. He lost his belief in security as meaning one thing or that it could even be achieved, or that there was the one enemy. The notion of *enemy* Gary now sees as fluid and flexible which changes all the time - and therefore cannot be defeated. Gary's account has particular salience in recent major and disruptive UK events, such as Brexit, the pandemic and also the developments in Ukraine.

There is clearly a tension between on the one hand, (hyper)masculine identities developed and valued in state law enforcement careers, and on the other, the client friendly, customer services demanded in modern, civil private security roles; skill sets required for each, could not be more different. However, hooking on to a collective identity as a 'discursive enactment' (Ybema 2010, p. 483), a 'we' in the fight against a transient enemy accommodated by a 'global safe keeping' narrative allows the threading of elements that are fuzzy and temporal, as well as a shared language that travels across borders, national or virtual, but also across security spaces. And that is good for business.

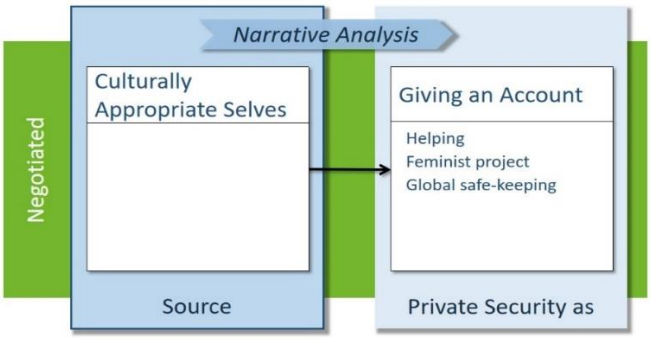


Diagram 5.17 - Part-diagram on narrative analyses of culturally appropriate selves at the negotiated macro/micro level presented as three alternative accounts

6 DISCUSSION – IDENTITIES AND PROFESSIONALITY IN CONTEMPORARY SECURITY LANDSCAPES

"And the wonderful thing about evolution is that it goes forward and you learn from it. But don't bring all the negative stuff with you, make it better for people, not make them feel worse about things, get that feel-good factor going. It's like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the 30s, it's all great all this reality stuff, but you need a middle bit, you need a dreamer in the room."

(In a private conversation with a Security Consultant on the reputation of the private security sector)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the three Findings chapters and explores their significance in relation to the literatures on professionalization, identity and identity work. First, based on a 'new professionalism' lens (Evetts 2011), which considers the ideological and discursive dimensions of the professionalism concept, I summarise dominant narratives in contemporary security landscapes and assess their potential for shaping security identities and professional selves. The section thereby outlines opportunities a regulated security sector has to offer but also a number of particular and significant challenges. Second, based on these opportunities and challenges, I consider ways in which the discourses and institutionalised conditions and mechanisms in the private security sector precaritise working lives and hinder the professionalization project, with a particular effect of invisibility. I propose that this kind of precaritisation offers fertile ground for the development of alternative narrations of professional selves. Third, to make sense of these alternative narratives, I turn to the work of moral philosopher Judith Butler, touched on in Chapter 3. In particular, I consider her ideas espoused in *Giving an account of oneself* (2005) as driver of identity work. I propose that her social theory of recognition is useful for a discussion on narratives and identity in the study of organisations, advancing an understanding of what constitutes the development of culturally appropriate, professional selves in precarious worlds of work. I end the chapter with arguments for an expanded notion of identity work, in relation to professionality in the private security sector.

6.2 Dominant narratives and professionalization as identity work: private security work as customer services

6.2.1 New professionalism and private security

Informed by Foucauldian concepts of legitimacy and control of the autonomous subject, new professionalism (Evetts 2011) is construed as a discourse combining both occupational value and

ideological interpretations, see the literature chapter. Analyses of professionalization through the new professionalism lens observe that increasingly, the state is taking over inclusion and exclusion mechanisms. More often therefore, professionalization is organised from above, turning professionalism into governance "at a distance" (Evetts 2013 p. 782). This kind of professionalism, it is argued (Kenny, Whittle, and Willmott 2011; Kirton and Guillaume 2019) leads to a diminished, or erosion of professional expertise required to fulfil roles, as well as the corrosion of (professional) character (Sennett 1998 in Benjamin 2015), for instance because of fragmentation or isolation, or under-development of career trajectories. In further building on the new professionalism concept that sees professionalization processes as inseparable from histories, cultures and ideologies, I observe that professionalization processes in the private security domain, construed as a kind of identity work, offer some opportunities for development of professional identity. However, the industry is also presented with a number of challenges appertaining to professionalism organised and regulated at a distance and from above, with limited opportunities for the development of certifiable expertise. These challenges, I suggest, have particular effects on the second element in Suddaby and Viale's (2011) four dimensions of the professionalization process: to use social capital and existing skills to occupy the new space, creating new professional identities. I now first outline the possibilities for professional identity followed by a brief description of four particular challenges.

The 'hybridisation' (Booth 2019) of security provision in the UK is the result of legislation and regulation, emboldening the sector in its quest for legitimacy. Keen to carve out its own space, the industry has clearly embarked on a professionalization trajectory (see the first dimension in Suddaby and Viale's 2011 professionalization process). Narratively, it does that in a number of ways: articulating a continuous need that other security providers cannot meet, thereby careful not to tread on state law enforcers' toes; differentiating itself from the military or police; distinguishing between shady pasts and the unregulated other; and foregrounding customer services skills and everyday security practices. With all its might, the sector is willing itself to have changed. Frontline security work is imagined as carried out by trained professionals who feel at home in their professional domains with good, secure incomes, and who are able to develop according to a number of laid out career paths. By dint of its existence, the Security Industry Authority (SIA) operating under the 2001 Private Security Act is considered to have a profession-constitutive function. Via regulation to address the aim of getting rid of criminal elements and increasing public safety (Mawby and Gill 2017), the SIA since its inception turned 'a-bit-of-money-on-the-side' type of role executed by either crooked characters in the night-time economy or an on-site 'one-man-and-his-dog' job into a profession, with at least *some* social standing. The SIA dictates that to become a security professional requires a short training course, a customer services approach, and a relatively

'clean' past working life. Excluded are those untrained and with disreputable pasts. The SIA's proposed code of conduct gives strong directives of how *not* to be and who, therefore, does not fit. Via these inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, its voluntary contractor scheme, as well as its disciplinary mechanisms to control the profession of frontline security, for instance via the open invitation to the public to report misdemeanours, the SIA organises professionalism 'from above' (Evetts 2013). In inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, the more tangible elements of professionalization processes new professional security identities became possible and have the potential to become institutionalised (Suddaby and Viale 2011).

The private security sector attracts workers in their droves. Frontline security careers are not necessarily intentional (e.g. Gill, Howell and McGreer 2020), but once embarked on can offer a professional home to many, notably to those with little by way of formal education. There are numerous courses provided by training companies, and professional organisations such as the Security Institute offer certification for those providing and acquiring further training. There is a particular trade organisation, IPSA, which aims to be the voice of the frontline; since September 2022 there is also a union (Security Journal, 2022). As noted elsewhere, private security workers work in triad employment relationships, i.e. they are employed by a private security provider who, in turn, sells security services to a third party, the customer. The security officer as 'customer service agent' goes some way in providing new professional identity and is one that is heavily promulgated in training manuals, courses, and other macro level resources. Attributes that are valued to execute such a role, such as friendliness and good communication skills, are present in identity talk by participants, and foregrounded and rewarded in trade organisations' award ceremonies. Such a foregrounding allows the industry to present itself as the natural home to thousands of workers who do everyday jobs for usually large private security providers in thousands of everyday, civil security activities. An identity of 'customer services' agent in the dataset of this study often goes uncontested; in a current economic and political climate of marketization of key public services, a customer service label fits, even for something as seemingly 'non-commoditisable' as security. The marketability and ordinariness of security, therefore, has found in customer services a new home. However, the customer services framing as well as state regulation presents particular challenges for the development of professional identity. Although related, I now outline these challenges below under four separate headers: 1) the challenge of a customer label, 2) the double-edged sword of regulation, 3) the challenge of signalling good security, and 4) the challenge of the fuzzy (enemy) other.

6.2.1 The challenge of a customer services label

In the empirical part of this study, the activity of 'serving customers' seems insufficient to account for security identity. Participants in frontline roles are evidently engaged with the notion of 'customers', but only to a limited extent. In accounts of what their job means to them, 'fellow human beings' as significant other seem to be more meaningful than the notion of 'customer'. Therefore, a customer services occupational value as foregrounded in macro level narratives does not come without its challenges. First, it is hardly a distinguishing category in economies dominated by service industries. 85% of the workforce is employed in a service industry (up from 76.9% in 1998) (ONS, 2019). An estimated 28% of the labour force has as its core, routine labour activity the serving of customers (Korczynski, 2009 in Korczynski, 2013). A positioning towards customers has been recognised in the academic literature as providing an important element in the development of self, with customer services seen as a 'social act and a human relationship' engaging empowered, self-actualising frontline staff with all the nuances that come with that (e.g. Bolton and Houlihan 2005). Modern conceptualisations of customer services go beyond that of docile service workers who deliver labour to a sovereign consumer, for instance drawing on the emotional labour concept in the work of Hochschild (1983/2012) or the Disney 'smile factory' in Van Maanen's (1991) classic study. Nonetheless, in encounters characterised by a 'de-personalised, target driven service' in unequal power relationships that 'disrupts the moral order' (Bolton and Houlihan 2005, p. 698) – interactions are largely fleeting for which an assessment of a 'job well done' is often delivered in algorithms of satisfaction ratings - opportunities for identity development seem limited. Furthermore, in analysing security as consumption – i.e. subjected to fads and fashions, meanings, aesthetics – Goold et al. (2010) point out that security consumers are not like other consumers, with likely knock-on effects on the consumer-customer services agent relationship. Security services or products are not high street commodities; most security products and services are sold business to business (for instance, to the University campus by the private provider) with the end user (for instance, students and staff) 'consuming security' indirectly. The authors suggest few consumers find joy in their purchases of security products and services in the way that they might in buying an item of clothing or a holiday; purchasing security may not satisfy an intrinsic desire considered fundamental to the act of consuming. In a personal conversation I had with a security consultant, they commented that security is a "grudge purchase"; nightclub owners, event managers or building owners buy security products and services because insurers demand they do so. At the same time, as pointed out above, participants in this study are ambivalent about their relationship to the client organisation, and express commitment to other entities – for instance, the public at large.

6.2.2 The double-edged sword of regulation

Overall, regulation via the Private Security Act and the arrival of the SIA is considered a positive – attested by various extant programmatic text narratives and participant talk alike. The professional identity-constitutive function of the SIA and its regulatory remit has been outlined above. Regulation met the aim of excluding unfit people and in that sense is a mechanism of professionalization (e.g. Evetts 2011/2013; Dahle 2012). As discussed elsewhere, to some extent, professional identity draws on *not* being other, i.e. not being those outside of the regulatory domain. However, private security stakeholders, i.e. those on the inside of the domain, are ambivalent about another aim - as stated on the SIA website until recently- that of keeping the public safe (see also Findings chapter 1). Industry stakeholders concur, not being other is insufficient to raise standards of both workers in security domains and organisations that sell their services, as evidenced by an insider view reported on in a relatively recent study (Mawby and Gill 2017). The study argued that at least some companies see acting in the public good, i.e. going beyond those who pay, as part of their remit, *and* as good for business. However, the private security sector as 'moral agents' (Mawby and Gill 2017, p. 271) - keen to act in the interest of the public rather than market - needs to be further addressed in order for the sector to become a credible partner (as considered as such by state security, but also by the public at large) in nodal security delivery.

A particular challenge for the sector generally, but workers in particular is that regulation (via legislation) does not necessarily entail becoming part of regular organisational life, with potential knock-on effects for professional identity. In the case of the private security sector, regulation has meant that increasingly, organisations outsource their security provision to the private sector. This is because the Private Security act had a sanctioning effect, i.e. giving organisations legitimacy to do so. In the example of university campuses, The Guardian (2019) reported that for 42 Universities in the UK, spending on outsourced workers on zero-hours contracts increased by almost 70% between 2010 and 2017. At Oxford Brookes University, explicitly mentioned in the article, spending over that period on contract cleaners, security and maintenance more than doubled from £4million to £9million (ibid.). Working conditions such as pension schemes, sick pay, maternity pay and so on are usually vastly inferior in outsourcing companies. For instance, a recent advertisement by the private security company Mitie, to whom Oxford Brookes campus security is outsourced (see also image 6.1), advertised for a new security supervisor[9]. The hourly rate is £12.50, and although holiday

[9] Downloaded on 29/08/22 from: https://careers.mitie.com/jobs/vacancy/security-supervisor-15892-oxford-brookes-university---oxford/15910/description/

entitlement of 5 weeks per year seems generous, the job is advertised for 56 hours per week, 8 hours above the EU directive of the maximum of an 48-hour working week. However, the University can dismiss its responsibility for these workers as the security activity is outsourced. Regulation can become a cloak to hide all manner of things, with knock-on effects for professional identity.

Image 6.1 The Mitie-Oxford Brookes partnership, with security van parked on the University forecourt where no other cars are allowed to park (photo taken February 2023)

6.2.3 The challenge of signalling good security

In the case of frontline private security, there is a basic entry level knowledge requirement. To achieve SIA recognition, a 5-day course has to be taken. In the data set of the study, some participants took on further courses in the security field, mostly self-funded. There is, however, little incentive for further education when the increase in hourly rates for frontline staff are minimal, career opportunities are limited, and rates of pay have not changed since 2006, see Chapter 2. That does not mean to say that being a 'good' security guard does not require skills or aptitude, it does, as many accounts testify. However, becoming good at frontline security roles is achieved via experience and on the job training, further informed by ever-changing visions of both security and professionalism, by the industry itself and outside of it. The challenge for frontline security staff is that good security cannot easily be signalled to a receptive audience and although there are clubs one can belong to that vet profession-specific expertise, for instance the Security Institute or IPSA, these are not necessarily recognised by security clients in ways that facilitate or hinder professional standing or progression. Furthermore, good security skills – for instance, being observant and a good listener, good at crowd control management, or understanding people and customer needs – seem

largely embodied. Finally, security consumers have limited understanding of security practices to be able to differentiate between good or bad security skills, see also Handley and den Outer (2020) on the challenges of signalling one's knowledge to a non-expert audience. Good security, therefore, at the individual level at least, is not 'bankable' because it is embodied, uncertified expertise.

6.2.4 The challenge of the fuzzy (enemy) other

Traditional arguments on security practice propose that the construction of the nation state is reliant on the construction of 'radical otherness' (Hansen 2006, p.37) to denote the distinction between a national community on the one hand and 'international anarchy' (ibid.) on the other. Given its remit is internal, civil security, frontline security work is hampered by a lack of such a distinct, radical other against which a securitising agent can be construed. In addition, civil security, the remit of the PSI, is traditionally perceived as the realm of state law enforcers. It is argued (Timmons 2010) that desired improved pay and status is especially difficult for groups that are unsuccessful in carving out a distinctive jurisdiction. Nonetheless, until a relatively recent revamp of website pages, the SIA's radical other seemed to have been terrorists or criminals, and its moral purpose to protect the public. However, with the passing of time and the 2017 terrorist attacks in the UK happening longer ago, references to terrorism, and even crime and protection, have all but disappeared from new formal SIA webpages hosted by gov.uk; what is left are statements about regulation. Indeed, the enemy other seems predominantly to be an unregulated workforce. Modern theoretical approaches (Hansen 2006; Paris School, e.g. Ratelle 2013 in Salter and Multu 2013) propose 'degrees of otherness' (Hansen 2006, p. 37) in 'ordinary' (in)security practices. Nonetheless, in the absence of big security events, constructing political identity via otherness becomes more challenging for the SIA, and with that for frontline security staff. If the 'other' is diluted or fuzzy because located on a spectrum - of threat versus security risk, crime versus minor inconvenience, and so on - perhaps the self becomes diluted too. To those selling security or in charge of keeping big accounts, it seems a challenge constantly to 'come up with innovation', to justify the constant presence of a security service, especially in the absence of tangible security threats. Frontline security staff are tasked continuously with performing their money's worth. The Brookes Security Instagram account, see image 6.2, is a good illustration. A number of times per week, an image appears of yet another service security services seemingly provide.

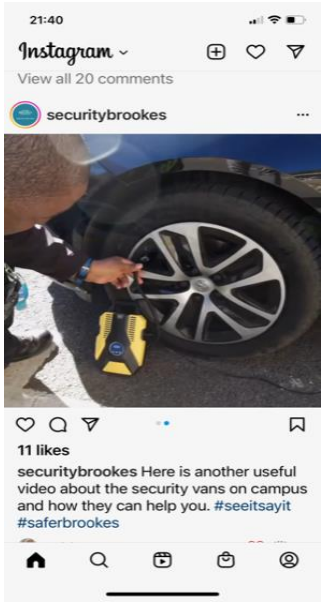


Image 6.2 – Securitybrookes Instagram post (September 2022) on the services an outsourced security provision offers to their client.

Regulation and the customer service label clearly create new opportunities for professional identity. However, the four challenges for security work and security workers in the nodal organisation and governance of security activities and practices described above are created by, in part, the regulation agenda of the state; the industry and bland labelling; clients unwilling to pay for security services appropriately; and finally, by the public at large who prefers security to remain the remit of state agents (see also Chapters 1 and 2) and who as uneducated consumers of security, have limited understanding of how security provision is organised and what good security looks like. Below, I construe these challenges in terms of precaritising mechanisms, followed by a section on a particular effect: invisibility. I then go on to discuss how this effect, in hindering the professionalization project, necessitate the articulation of alternative accounts of self.

6.3 Precarity, materiality, and profession

The charge levelled at discursive approaches is that these eschew materiality, that a sense of material reality is lost (e.g. Hardy and Thomas 2015). However, a Foucault-inspired 'material turn' has brought a renewed attention for bodies, objects, spaces, and practices to the study of identities, see for instance a new material-identity theory (Harding 2020). In Clarke, Friese, and Washburn's (2018) ontology of material constructionism, discursive approaches and materiality come together: analyses explicitly acknowledge material elements for their subject-constitutive properties. This approach therefore makes possible an exploration of the particularities of materiality in the private security sector and their effect on professional identity development. Materiality in the social

sciences more broadly, and sociology of work in particular, has had particular attention via the notion of precarity. 'Precarity' in academic work is an umbrella term referring to 'a range of often undifferentiated 'non-standard' forms of employment to which contractual insecurity is central' (Moore and Newsome 2018, p. 476), and where employees usually carry the risks of work and their employment (Kalleberg and Vallas 2018). It is argued (Alberti et al. 2018; Masquelier 2019; Millar 2017) that precariousness characterises work everywhere, that precarious work is therefore the new norm and the precarity concept risks losing its usefulness to analyse work relationships and employment conditions. Millar (2017) usefully distinguishes between three different categories of the precarity concept. These distinctions are precarity as labour condition (based on Bourdieu), a class (as in Guy Standing's 2011 precariat), and an ontological experience and intrinsic to what makes us human (Butler 2004, on precarious life in post 9/11 USA). New analyses draw to some extent on a combination of interpretations and include specific labour conditions based on wider political and economic structures; however, at the same time, they include attention for how these material conditions affect subjectivity and lived experience (Millar 2017). In drawing on Butler (2015), Masquelier (2019) proposes that precarity should not be thought of in essentialist terms via association with particular groups, professions, ethnicities and so on, but as processes that distribute precarity unequally. Analyses should unpick the mechanisms and conditions in place that *precaritise*, allowing to see the uneven effects, but also the route to agency, resistance, and new possibilities. Millar (2017) reminds us that Butler distinguishes between precariousness and precarity. By the former, she means an unavoidable vulnerability that is a condition of our sociality; by the latter she refers to specific ways that socio-economic and political institutions distribute the conditions of life unequally. It is Butler's (2015) contention that 'vast populations live in part a damaged life as part of a daily experience of neoliberalism' (p. 202). In seeing precarity as different modes of 'unlivability', Butler includes as a particular mode…

> …those who mark the condition of being part of a dispensable or expandable workforce for whom the prospect of a stable livelihood seems increasingly remote, and who live in a daily way within a collapsed temporal horizon, suffering a sense of a damaged future in the stomach and in the bones… (Butler 2015, p. 201).

Based on analyses presented in the previous chapters, this mode of precarity describes the frontline in private security very well. However, precarity in the dataset of this thesis is evidently differently experienced and unevenly distributed: those in relatively high-end civil service careers switching to employment in the private sector were in far from precarious work environments and secured lucrative contracts. They were offered opportunities in pursuit of professional selves, both materially and symbolically. Therefore, precaritisation in/by the private security sector, is multi-layered, and consist of both material and symbolic dimensions with particular, material effects.

Alberti et al. (2018) distinguish between explicit and implicit forms of precaritisation, where explicit forms refer to particular contractual forms. Based on the analyses in this thesis, it is clear that the private security industry precaritises in particular, explicit ways: via its prevalent insecure, low pay, zero-hours contract culture; its under-representation of women on the one hand, and over-representation of the immigrant population on the other; its lack of career, development, and reward structures; its static hourly rate, i.e. not increased significantly since 2006 (see the New Security chapter). Private security companies and race-to-the bottom practices on the one hand, and security consuming client organisations on the other, have contributed to the conditions for a dispensable workforce and the 'substitutability of labour' (Moore and Newsome, 2018, 487). However, the ambivalent attitude of the SIA as deputising state – its foregrounding of regulation and control, its backgrounding of professionalization and development for fear of being seen as handing over the security function to the private sector - could be construed as an implicit mechanism of precaritisation. In its regulation efforts - whilst still claiming (for instance, via the proposed code of conduct) to be the moral arbiter of who can execute security functions - it sanctioned the large-scale outsourcing of security functions by organisations to the private sector. However, because of a range of factors, professionalism - esoteric knowledge, expertise distinctiveness developed in specific security realms - if developed at all, is developed on the job. Training costs, including the SIA badge as sector entry threshold, as well as any other courses such as fire prevention, crowd control, or first aid training, are largely borne by individual workers. Low cost security provision is low cost because employees at the bottom ranks are 'paying' (see also Moore and Newsome 2018, who make this point in the case of parcel delivers who 'pay' for free delivery).

There is something particularly salient about precarity in the pursuit of security, where both those doing the securitising and those on the receiving end can be in precarious situations, i.e. precarious selves in precarious working lives to make others feel less precarious. As highlighted in the second Findings chapter, effects at the micro level included temporality and 'stuckness'; lack of recognition in 'dirty' work; mundaneness; invisibility; unrecognised skilled labour; and (fear of) violence. Sometimes these material conditions and effects come together in a perfect storm of the ultimate precarity, i.e. the risk of death: between 9 March- 28 December 2020, 'elementary occupations' were most at risk of dying of Covid-19 of which male security guards were the second highest group (ONS bulletin, January 2021). Public Health England listed 'security guard' as the highest relative increase of death between 2014 and 2020 (Public Health England 2020). The ONS tells us that age is accounted for, but not ethnicity, location, or pre-existing health condition. It is now known that ethnic minorities were at higher risk of Covid death, as were men, as were people in the lower income groups (see Public Health England, 2020). The point is that security work in and of itself is

not inherently precarious, as echoed by the chief statistician's cautionary note embedded in the ONS bulletin: 'There are a complex combination of factors that influence the risk of death…Our findings do not prove that the rates of death involving COVID-19 are caused by differences in occupational exposure'(p.3). However, in addition to the risk factors mentioned by Public Health England, the mechanisms as outlined above may offer further explanations for precarity of frontline security roles. Implicit precaritisation - paradoxically as the result of regulation by the SIA as deputised state and professionalization efforts by the security industry itself - happens when people are 'rendered subjectively precarious …in a climate of 'manufactured uncertainty'' (Alberti et al. 2018, p. 451). Acquiring keyworker status during the pandemic was a tiny plaster on a gaping wound, and a temporary one at that.

6.4 (In)visibility: private security, ubiquity and the hidden workforce

"A lot of what the security sector does is invisible. You know bouncers on doors, and security guards in shopping centres, the people walking around in uniform, they are sort of invisible. They are there to stop something happening but they are not like nurses who are wonderful and who will make you better." (Alison, Security Consultant)

Precaritising mechanisms in the private security sector have a particular effect that warrants further exploration. By voice of the British Security Industry Association (BSIA), its main trade organisation, the private security industry refers to its own workforce as 'hidden'. As Star and Strauss (1999) remind us, no work is inherently either visible or invisible; seeing work as one or the other is in part defined in power relationships, and changing contexts can both reflect and effect a negotiation between the two. As Hatton (2017, p337) puts it, an important question needs to be: 'Out of whose sight renders work invisible, and by whom is it ignored?' (In)visibility in the private security sector is complex. With 440,000 or so active licence-holders (SIA 2022), the ubiquity of frontline security staff is undeniable, certainly in comparison to the 160,000 police officers. There are few nightclubs, libraries, shopping precincts, university campuses, high-rise office buildings and so on that operate without. In discussing the complexity of the *invisible work* concept, Hatton (2017) defines it as ' labour that is economically devalued through three intersecting sociological mechanisms – here identified as cultural, legal and spatial mechanisms of invisibility – which operate in different ways and to different degrees' (p. 337). Hatton points out that mechanisms overlap and are mutually constitutive, generating labour that is for instance simultaneously socio-legally valued/visible but socio-culturally is not. For instance, to increase its legitimacy, the industry for many years has sought

to make private security staff *more* visible via high-viz jackets, uniforms and badges. Moreover, in having these outward symbols of visibility emulate those of state security, referred to by Thumala, Goold, and Loader (2011) as symbolic borrowing, the aim was to blur the boundaries between public and private security (see White 2022).

Simultaneously, discourses of increased transparency and accountability in public governance have also filtered through to security work. In the private sector, making security practices and operations as part of professionalization processes more accountable – such as staff recruitment, training, and certification - has also led to higher visibility of on the ground security staff, for instance, the requirement of wearing one's badge visibly on one's uniform, symbol of a training and vetting process. However, although symbolic borrowing and accountability may have made the workforce more visible, efforts here seem to have limited effects with the public, who is adamant in its 'state-centric leanings' (White 2022, p.12) with regard to who should be responsible for the delivery of security. The ongoing battle with normative legitimacy (see also the New Security chapter) seems to have pushed the industry towards campaigns with as explicit aim to win over the public "to love security" (private conversation with spokesperson). In the 2020 campaign 'The hidden workforce', the subtitle of 'resetting the perceptions of the security officer' is hardly subtle. To the BSIA, invisibility means *undervalued.*

Another social-cultural way in which private security frontline workers are made invisible is that much of the security work FSOs are involved in is short term, for instance at festivals and other events. Their ad hoc deployment means that there is a little opportunity for workplace relationships. In addition, increasingly, security is an outsourced organisational function: large organisations hand over the securitisation of their premises and events to private security companies. Security workers are therefore not part of employee networks that make up organisational life and which would make them more noticed, for instance, working with other teams, attending work events like Christmas parties or importantly, becoming members of trade unions. Socio-spatially, visibility of security activity is a complex story too. Night-time economy activity, such as patrolling and driving around in marked cars to guide drunken students back home adds to visibility, but perhaps to students only. Placing CCTV control rooms at the end of dead-end corridors, only accessible via air-locked doors with blacked-out windows as stipulated by formal guidelines published on government web sites, may give security work some cachet and mark it out as important. Simultaneously however, as an inversion of socio-spatial control of those under surveillance (e.g. Carlile 2018), it isolates the *surveilling* workforce; they are invisible to other colleagues on the University campus.

The mundaneness, the lack of eventfulness pose further opportunities and challenges to visibility. Individual participants talk about their physical presence – being visible – as the thing that keeps people and places safe, or at least, that which makes them *feel* safe. Not everyone has experienced such opportunities for heroic actions as 'George' in the helping narrative; the challenge for frontline security staff and the sector more widely, therefore, is that eventfulness is unevenly distributed, i.e. it is more difficult to be 'seen' guarding a library than performing crowd control in a nightclub. In this respect, de Landa (2006)'s point is of interest:

> From the point of view of the identity claims one can make in social encounters, eventfulness changes the distribution of opportunities and risks. In particular, only eventful situations allow participants the expressive possibility of displaying character (courage, integrity, sportsmanship) (de Landa 2006, p. 55)

The elements in a security assemblage that de Landa's theories could lead to is, would only in particular configurations produce possibility for identity development. In its emphasis of frontline security as a largely, everyday customer services-type role at best, where mundaneness and civic responsibility is celebrated in awards ceremonies and certificates, but *not* in pay and career progression, the sector offers limited opportunities to staff to shine. What the pandemic further highlighted, perhaps, is the need for the sector, and for the workers it employs, to make security work visible so that it continues to demonstrate its worth for fast-changing (or lack of) security demands. A marketability strategy via social media is developed in response - see for instance the Oxford Brookes Security Instagram account, a seemingly continuous stream to visualise the added value an on campus but outsourced security service provides.

Based on arguments presented above, it could be argued that private security frontline staff have simultaneously become more visible *and* invisible. Despite their omnipresence, frontline workers remain largely invisible in organisational networks, resulting in undervalued economic labour, further enshrined and exacerbated by race-to-bottom practices often identified by the industry itself as problematic (e.g. Amulet, 2019). Paradoxically, sector scorn remains highly 'visible', further contributing to its stigmatization, see also Kreiner and Mihelcic (2020) who link degrees of visibility to stigmatization of individuals and occupations.

6.5 Old masculinity, new feminized careers? Giving an account of professional selves in private security

Against the challenging conditions, precaritising mechanisms, and effects of (in)visibility described above, what *are* the possibilities vis-à-vis the development of professional identity in the current, rather bumpy security landscape? This study identified three alternative narratives of culturally

appropriate selves in the private security sector, i.e. selves that more or less successfully navigate a precarious terrain: private security as *helping profession*, as *feminist project* and as *global safe keeping*. Compared to each other, they are rather distinct. However, there are a number of elements that are common to all three. To an outsider (like me), they seem a) unexpected and counter-intuitive (notably the first two) b) diametrically opposed to (negative) stereotypes expressed in public perceptions shared in for instance collected in surveys and newspapers, as well as academic literatures, and c) overall, not especially promulgated by formal texts at the macro level, although not discouraged either.

To help make sense of the three narratives, I turn to Judith Butler's *Giving an account of oneself* (2005). In this particular title, Butler ponders the question of what it means to lead an ethical life under vexed social and linguistic conditions. In and outside of academia, Butler is mainly known for her theories on performativity and gender (e.g. 1990; 2004); however, her writings in organisation theory have had some but still limited deployment. A recent volume *Judith Butler and Organization Theory* by Melissa Tyler (2020) aims to address this. Tyler argues that Butler's writing is testament to a lifelong commitment to 'securing intelligibility and legitimacy for those denied recognition on the basis of hegemonic social, political and legal norms' (p. 198). This commitment, argues Tyler, constitutes an open invitation 'to organizational scholars, practitioners and activists to further 'flesh out' what her work means for how we experience, think about and engage with organizational life' (p. 199). Building on psychoanalytic thought, Butler (2005) contends that people give an account of who they are, not necessarily for fear of punishment or a desire to be rewarded but to elicit recognition, our most basic desire. The act of narration is in acknowledgment that individuals have agency and for the effect (good or bad) our actions have on others, we need to give account in order to become an ethical and viable subject, i.e. a human being with a liveable life. In distinguishing telling stories about ourselves and giving an account, the latter has a performative function that is both a reflection of a struggle of coming into being through a narrative endeavour, as well as in acknowledgement of a response to being called to, or in her terms 'hailed to', a particular direction. In Butler's words:

> Giving an account…takes a narrative form, which not only depends on the ability to relay a set of sequential events with plausible transitions but also draws upon narrative voice and authority, being directed toward an audience with the aim of persuasion (2005 p. 12)

Giving an account, therefore, intrinsically includes both the discursive and material conditions of our emergence (see also Tyler 2020, p. 117). Recognition and being recognised, equally, is a relational process. Butler writes:

> The norms by which I recognise another, or indeed myself are not mine alone. They function to the extent that they are social, exceeding every dyadic exchange that they condition (2005, p. 24).

Furthermore, the language that is deployed in giving account is social in character: 'the very terms by which we give an account, by which we make ourselves intelligible to ourselves and to others, are not of our own making' (p. 21). Narratives in this sense are a tool to 'convey a liveable life' (Tyler 2020, p. 110) when others demand we do so or when there is a threat to our identities, for instance in unequal (organisational) relations. A liveable life is one where individuals are recognised because their performances conform to normative expectations. Normativity, in this way should be thought of as that 'which binds us to who we are' (Tyler 2020, p. 86) and which both enables and constraints liveable lives. Butler proposes that a breakdown of recognition, 'a site of rupture within the horizon of normativity' (p. 24), necessitates the development of new norms and offering a critical opening. The enabling and constraining processes in Butler's theories (e.g. 2004) are referred to as 'undoing', in its basic meaning a change of what has gone before. Undoing can refer to both 'an unravelling of the subject as well as to the subject's capacity to challenge and resist this unravelling' (Tyler 2020, p. 86), for instance via the offer of a subversive, alternative narration of identity. Tyler (2020) proposes Butler's social theory of recognition can be transported to organisation theory to offer insights into how subjectivities in organisational settings come into being and ways in which these are or become under threat. This is because, first, it is also organisational settings that give rise to exchanges of holding people to account as to who they are and what the relation to the other ought to be. Second, in organisational settings through relations and processes in the demand to perform an organisational identity, do the ability to provide a coherent narrative and the capacity to give a convincing ethical account become conflated. This conflation, so proposes Tyler (2020) is where coherence comes at a cost and could be thought of as an *organisational* 'undoing', giving rise to challenges or resistance in some way. The precaritising conditions described above could be construed as undoing in organisational settings, although 'organisation setting' here refers to wider contexts that affect life in work.

Private security as helping, in particular, is an intriguing outcome. In this research, as outlined in the third Findings chapter, career (hi)stories were infused with wanting to help people, expressed in many different flavours and scenarios, to which initially, I as the researcher was not attuned. There is something particularly striking about a self-categorisation of being a member of the helping professionals. First of all, 'helping' is distinctly different to 'securing'. Second, it seems diametrically opposed to security work construed as 'hypermasculine', 'dirty', and 'stigmatised' in much of the sociology and international relations literature. Third, it does not fit headlines of violent or sexist

security guards in prisons, Covid hotels, or detention centres. Finally, no formal materials, such as training manuals or code of conducts, mention the notion of helping, and it constitutes a radical challenge to the diktat of 'do not be a criminal'. An application of Butler's theories on giving an account and recognition to the *private security as helping* narrative allows the construction of an argument as follows. It is clear that there are vexed conditions – both discursively and materially - for frontline security officers. As per the precarity section, there is an unappreciative and mistrusting public; the formally promulgated customer services label is inadequate to facilitate the development of frontline officers as viable and ethical subjects *in security*; a 'hyper-masculine', 'stigmatised' and 'dirty' work label is infelicitous and jars with everyday, customer services-type jobs; there is an absence of security directives from above other than an offensive draft code of conduct that asks FSOs *not* to be criminals; material conditions of zero-hours and low pay are unfavourable. These conditions, together, have the effect of invisibility - in terms of the private security industry itself, the frontline are the hidden workforce - and could be construed as a breakdown of recognition, or at least, of insufficient recognition. A customer services label insufficiently accounts for what individuals feel they do *in the security domain*; it demands organisational coherence, which comes at a cost. This breakdown of recognition needs the initiation of new norms by which one can become recognised in order to become someone (an ethical subject) and lead a liveable life. The helping narrative offers address, a route into the undoing of precarious individuals. 'Helping' was there before the pandemic but it was less conspicuous. During the pandemic, however, when much of frontline security work disappeared as public life ground to a halt and the industry had to resort to other legitimation strategies, the helping narrative seemed increasingly visible in communication by organisational and sector-level stakeholders. Conversely, during the pandemic, possibly by drawing on traces of discourses already circulating among the workforce, the sector increasingly showcased security staff in all sorts of helping roles, messages distributed and communicated by social media. See for instance the section on the BSIA and the quote in the Linked-In post, or tweets on security staff distributing food parcels during the third lockdown. Therefore, during the pandemic 'helping' looked to become a new norm by which FSOs *could* become recognised. In that sense, 'helping' is not an activity among a range of activities carried out by FSOs, rather, helping as a dynamic of inter-subjectivity creates the subject, i.e. 'an act of recognition becomes an act of constitution' (Tyler 2020, p. 116). FSOs are therefore helpers in a constitutive sense, a response to a breakdown of recognition by inadequate (customer services), infelicitous (hyper-masculine, dirty), and negative ('not-criminal') identities of a previous horizon of normativity. Molly's account - "I get a kick out of helping people" - is a particular good illustration: in helping, she is not serving her paymasters (clients or employing organisation), whom she does not necessarily respect and who often do not

recognise her, but her ethical self, in service to her fellow human beings in need. In sum, helping discourses seem a useful narrative for the individual, but possibly for the industry too. It moves the focus away from physical or violent security to foreground civic security duties and services to the client or public in everyday lives. Furthermore, they offer alternative identities in crisis situations that do not interfere with the formal security sphere of state security actors. To low-skilled individuals with few formal qualifications, however, the helping narrative within the security industry has a very attractive proposition: the possibility to be recognised and be someone.

Equally, private security as a feminist project could be construed as a useful account in the quest to be recognised. Clearly, it was not produced to subvert a customer service label as in the helping narrative - most (but not all) of the participants who draw on/produced this narrative have successful roles in the private sector based on (strategic) roles and careers developed in the public sector. Unlike those drawing on the helping narrative, these participants do have social capital (as per the Suddaby and Viale's 2011 second dimension). Equally, their working lives are not necessarily governed by the SIA. However, the fact that the SIA exists, born out of the private security act 2001, their existent working lives are made possible. Nonetheless, in the development of this narrative, some of the vexed conditions apply here too. As argued elsewhere, the private sector as delivering security is profoundly mistrusted by the public and the security realm reluctantly shared by state law enforcers and by government bodies. Given how unfavourably private security is regarded by various actors including the state and public at large but also by some participants themselves, especially those whose careers have been developed in the state sector, a feminist project could be construed as facilitating the legitimisation of a transition to the private sector. None of the participants in high-end security roles valued their work in the private sector as much as their public sector roles – it carries less cachet. Their accounts therefore illustrate very well White's (2010) point of (stakeholders within) the government's ambivalent attitude toward the private sector. However, a feminist angle of opening up high-end security roles for women makes such a move ethically palatable, for instance to an audience of former colleagues in the civil service. Simultaneously, recognition of security as a feminist project is offered by the security sector itself. It is not just offered by organisations such as IPSA, who in all the colours of the rainbow portray the security sector as caring, diverse, and inclusive. It is also offered by employing organisations and their clients who wants to be seen to acknowledge gender and ameliorate gender disparities, further encouraged by the 2010 equality act. At the start of my PhD research, I attended a Thames Valley Business Forum on security (17 April 2018), which was set up and mostly attended by small businesses looking to expand their networks and opportunities for selling security products and services. However, one of the speakers was James Gray, Tory MP for North Wiltshire. In the break, I spoke

briefly with him and explained what my project was going to look at. He said, “women in private security? I can’t imagine there are many. Should there be?”. The many materials I’ve scanned since - the courses I attended, the people I have spoken with - made his perspective, detectable in the question at the end, an anomaly because in these materials, yes, there should.

Finally, the global safe keeping as culturally appropriate self, simultaneously the least subversive narrative and perhaps because of that, the narrative with the biggest possibility in terms of identity formation because it can latch on to an imaginary that is specific to *security* in ways that the other two cannot. “I/my organisation make(s) people feel safe” is an undertone in the accounts individuals give of themselves, in a wide range of texts and security roles, and constitutes a particular performance of a security identity that chimes with a range of audiences. In this way, it is easy to detect because as a platitude, it is bandied about unlike the other two. ‘Safe keeping’ does not necessarily rely on an identified threat and can refer to making ‘the public’ feel safe by being present and wearing high viz jackets, to precautionary measures such as monitoring entrance to buildings and vetting visitors, to acts that are relatively and seemingly insignificant, for instance, walking through empty buildings or patrolling a car park with a tyre pump. In Butler’s terms, the global safe keeping is building a response to being hailed (e.g. in Butler 2005); it offers ways in which particular representations of security can travel, in which individuals recognise themselves as being part of a community, even at the global level. Global safe-keepers serve interests that are seemingly universal, i.e. they do not rely on physical proximity, a shared life, or even a common language, allowing an ethical obligation that accommodates dislocation. In addition, the global safe keeping narrative taps into the notion that people – citizens, businesses, other societal stakeholders – organise their rituals and practices in recognition of the right to safety, the importance of *feeling safe.* It allows for travel across linguistic, organisational and even national borders. Butler (2015) contends that an account of oneself is always given to another with whom we are in a co-existential relationship, but that in the modern (social) media era, co-existential relationships can be construed as extending both linguistic and national borders, by virtue of visual or linguistic translations. The global safe keeping narrative gives an account of an ethical self that is recognised, mediated in a digital age that is simultaneously ‘here’ and ‘there’. The multiple understandings of making people feel safe cannot easily, if at all, be translated in, or transported to particular practises, actions, remits, roles, or audiences and obligations towards them. Each social world has its own configuration and own legitimacy or security logic. However, as an account of what one does, ‘keeping people safe’ has the potential for recognition.

6.6 Professionality: professional identity development as quest for recognition in vexed conditions

'If I am to deliberate on how best to live, then I have to presume that the life I seek to pursue can be affirmed as a life, that I can affirm it, even if it is not affirmed more generally, or even under those conditions when it is not always easy to discern whether there is a social or economic affirmation of my life' (Butler 2015, p. 199*)*

The methods employed in this thesis – largely informed by philosophical underpinnings adopted in situational analysis (Clarke 2005)– accommodate partial, incomplete, sometimes opaque accounts that rather than identify single identities, explore the 'in-between', where only partial connections with others create new formations. There is an a priori assumption that story-telling in texts and interview settings is performed towards particular audiences. Furthermore, story-telling does not happen in a vacuum; there is an assumption that linguistic and material conditions are always already present in an encounter between researcher and the researched, where shared background understandings inform what is being said, see also Chapter 4. Methodological approaches that establish a space where alternative readings can become visible - in Clarke, Friese, and Washburn's terms those that 'pull narratives apart analytically' (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2018, p. 366) - allowed for alternative narratives to show up. See also in this context, Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2018, p. 389) notion of 'mystery' where the researcher tries to reach empirical materials that can produce alternative 'stories'. In terms of Butler's theories on recognition, coherence and undoing, Riach et al. (2016) refer to such a methodological approach as *anti-narrative*; this type of research 'seeks to unravel seemingly coherent narratives… in order to reveal the labour that goes into producing and maintaining them' (2016, p. 2078). Building on Butler's concept of undoing, the authors see organisations as entities that 'undo' workers by demanding the performance and maintenance of subject coherence in such a way that eschews complexity. In addressing the question whether it is possible to live a 'good' life in a 'bad' one, such as doing a good job in precaritising conditions, Butler (2015, p. 193 a.o.) proposes it is difficult to recognise yourself if no one else does. This is because, to have an account about you, what it is that you do and who you are is to convey a liveable life. If the value of who you are is not reflected back by others, you must try and change the norms of recognition via revising your account of yourself. Therefore, what makes a good account is situated and relational. The challenge for organisational scholars, so argues Tyler (2020, p.112 a.o.) is the identification and differentiation between different forms to assess their viability; not everything is important to recognition in the same way and this is depending on the audience. I argue that my Clarke-informed, anti-narrative methodological approaches allowed for

the three alternative accounts to show up, with a particular, significant difference. Given the challenges outlined earlier in the Discussion chapter, audiences that can provide recognition, or from whom recognition is sought, are not necessarily situated in the organisation. For instance, the helping narrative, mostly turned to by private security workers in the frontline, does not necessarily, or not only address organisational audiences (e.g. the employing or client organisation). FSOs are demanded to offer an alternative account to navigate the inadequate (customer services), infelicitous (hyper-masculine), and negative/empty ('not-criminal') identities demanded by, respectively, the industy, wider public, and the state.

The question arises as to what extent storytellers present accounts of which they are reflexively aware. To some of the participants in this study, accounts of selves of private security as helping, feminist project, or global safe-keeping rolled of the tongue; in most interviews, however, alternative narratives were less easily detectable. Butler holds that in accounting for ourselves, we do not present ourselves as necessarily coherent; indeed our own intelligibility of ourselves is limited:

> My account of myself is partial, haunted by that for which I can devise no definitive story. I cannot explain exactly why I have emerged in this way, and my efforts at narrative construction are always undergoing revision. There is that in me and of me for which I can give no account. But does this mean that I am not, in the moral sense, accountable for who I am and for what I do? (2005, p. 40)

Instead, the purpose of partial accounts – 'the limits of any self-understanding' (p. 82) - is that via a mutual awareness of this inability, we affirm our 'basic relationality' (Tyler 2020, p. 113). Tyler proposes that Butler's way of understanding relationality is a radical departure from one premised on identification with someone 'like me' but a reflexive recognition of the other doing their best to be coherent but never quite arriving at it.

6.5.1 Professionality

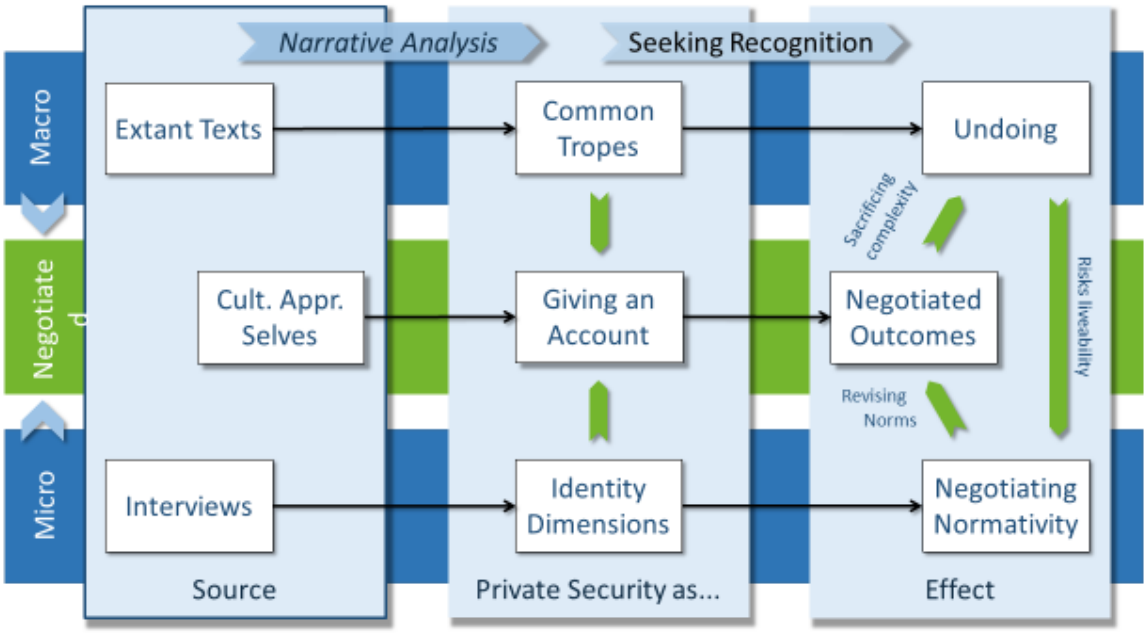


Diagram 6.3 - Professionality in the PSI: seeking recognition under vexing conditions

What do analyses using a Clarke and Butler framing mean for conceptualisations of the development of professional selves? In combining the part-diagrams at the end of each Findings chapter into one image, diagram 6.3 presents the flows in professionalization processes that link the macro (row 1) and micro (row 3) in the development of professional selves (row 2). Each row represents one Findings chapter. The three accounts as part of the middle row read against the grain to various degrees; in Butler's terms (2004) they have revised norms in negotiated outcomes. They revised – challenged, resisted, pushed, negated - the boundaries of an old(er) normativity and existing private security identities as relying on (too) narrow, or (too) coherent ideas of masculinity, and anti-heroic, customer-service-oriented security work and directions for what not to be, which risks undoing. The three accounts as negotiated outcomes make individuals intelligible to particular audiences allowing them to be recognised and live liveable lives. For instance, if the public mistrusts you because it considers security the remit of the state, a feminist project narrative mitigates the negative effects of becoming undone. If the state wants to regulate you to ensure you are not a criminal, or if the private security industry prefers you to be 'just' a customer services agent who blends in and is anti-heroic, you risk becoming undone. A helping or global safe-keeping narrative can give you the discursive tools to chisel a liveable life.

However, the demand of/for narrative coherence by authorities –institutions, organisations, managers –comes at a cost. What is there to speculate with regard to the alternative narratives' potential for longevity and live-ability? The global safe keeping narrative has probably most potential

in convincing the public at large of the value of private security services: it taps into wider discourses of the need for safety and reproduces rather than strongly subverts dominant narrative modes of security. The feminist project is subversive in that it can account for selves that had to become viable in a man's world, although in this particular study feminist selves provided legitimation for making a transition from respected state security to the less respected private security sector. Although it is still predominantly a man's world, especially at the frontline, as Eichler (2016) points out gender is seen as good for business; it can make security look more everyday, diverse, less 'dirty' and 'hypermasculine', altogether more legitimate. Paradoxically therefore, with the likely increase of women uptake of security roles, the 'feminist project' may lose its ability to build liveable lives. The helping narrative, as perhaps the most subversive account, may tap into the 'human touch', softer side of security – less masculine, more customer-oriented, communication skills foregrounding, diversity-aware - seemingly increasingly marketable especially acquiring further ground swell during the pandemic. Taken together, the three narratives may offer resilient responses to threats to identity, at least for the time being. The three alternative accounts suggest that 'hypermasculine', 'dirty' and 'stigmatised', or customer services and anti-heroic narratives are not the only professional identities in town.

Professional identity imagined in this way is no longer inextricably linked to occupational values and esoteric knowledge; rather *professionality* becomes a quest for recognition where the development of professional selves is about negotiating ever-shifting elements in the precarious landscapes appertaining to occupation - of policy and regulation, security discourses, and other cultural and social resources. Professionality, imagined in this way, is a professional identity construction process in precarious worlds of work, in but also outside organisational or sector domains, to fill a void, a way to be against the odds, to *a*-void becoming undone.

Threading the main themes of this thesis, the Discussion chapter ends where the Introduction chapter began: George Bass, the University campus security guard and author of the Financial Times article quoted at the start of the Introduction chapter of this thesis, seems to have an additional role as jobbing journalist. A 'licensed bouncer' as per his bio, he has been remarkably successful in getting articles published on the topic of his much-loved private security job, in titles such as the New Scientist and the New York Times, as well as the FT. He relatively recently wrote another article for the FT magazine on the cost of living and making ends meet for people in lower income groups (16 July 2022). Bass explains that in his job of "keeping property and people safe on a university campus", he earns £10.71 per hour. Since leaving school, he tried to live his working life by two guiding principles: he does not want to tell lies all day and does not want to get work calls beyond the car park. Starting his career in security has given him a third: "once you put your uniform on, it is

your job to help people". However, he has now started to keep tabs on where the money goes and is very concerned about the rise in cost of living; he worries whether his security job can sustain him and pay the bills in the not too distant future. He agrees that he should have bettered himself and found a better paying job, but then, he asks rhetorically, who would do his job? Don't they deserve a roof over their heads? And would they enjoy their security jobs as much as he does? By way of concluding comment, he writes, "as much as I love it, there are times when this job feels a little dangerous. Not for the first time, I wonder about buying a stab-proof plate for my protective security vest. I google the cost of one. It's £73. I decide I'll just be unfailingly polite instead." The article illustrates a number of major themes in this study: doing a job he loves but few people value, using good communication skills in increasingly precaritising conditions, conditions for which he is asked to carry the risks and insecurities. Not all that much seems to have changed since the anecdote from a previous article that illustrated the Introduction chapter opening pages, and his hopes of no longer being people's punch bags seem not to have materialised. Nevertheless, his calling in life is to help people. He can account for who he is.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between macro- level performances of industries and professions on the one hand and micro identities processes of participants on the other was identified as 'largely a mystery' (Brown 2018, p. 11), particularly in domains that are contested, under-defined or in transformation (e.g. Brown 2015). In response to this, I aimed to make a contribution to demystifying the macro-micro relationship for a particular, contested domain, the private security industry. Adopting the notion of identity as analytical bridge between self and sociality (Ybema 2020), I set out to explore the relationship between broader discourses of security and professionalization processes in the development of professional selves at different levels of analysis.

Research on security and professional identity appears to have been mainly developed in international relations (IR) and the sociology of work literatures based on concepts of 'hypermasculinity' (Stachowitsch 2014), 'stigmatisation' (e.g. Johnston and Hodge 2014) and 'dirty work' (e.g. Hansen Löfstrand, Loftus, and Loader 2016), although often in acknowledgement of the possibilities for agentic action. Most research, notably in IR, put forward particular understandings and articulations of masculinities developed in conflict zones (e.g. Higate 2012). This focus leaves a gap for research located in civil, private security domains that explores what has changed following the introduction of the Private Security Act 2001 and the foundation of the Security Industry Authority in modern, UK-based security landscapes. The review of the identity literatures, notably of identity work (Brown 2015, Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010), identified a need for a better understanding of how individuals story identity goals as part of the micro/macro role process, as well as the exact nature of the drivers of identity work in negotiating selves and sociality. With professionalization construed as identity work at the macro level, I understood professionalization processes in neoliberal economies as increasingly taking place *outside* the profession, diminishing the possibilities of development of professional expertise and requiring a professionalism which draws on a range of cultural and social resources (e.g. Evetts 2013).

The research was broadly located in an interpretivist paradigm, informed by situational analysis (Clarke 2005), and adopted five methodological principles: 1) a lens of the everyday 2) an ontology of multiplicity and materiality that combines human and non-human elements, 3) a multi-perspectival epistemology taken into account multiple perspectives of private security identity, 4) a democratising approach to empirical data collection and extant discursive materials making visible under-represented identities, and finally, 5) a text analysis focus on identity and narrative. The empirical objectives were a) to curate materials at the macro level to identify visions for

professionalization and professional identity in private security work and b) to collect qualitative data at the micro level via semi-structured interviews with individuals working in the sector. The research was guided by one main research question:

In the modern UK private security industry, a contested domain, how are macro and micro processes of identity formation configured to create conditions for professional selves?

Three sub-questions were formulated as

1. At the macro level, how does the private security sector present itself narratively to internal and external audiences? [addressed in Findings chapter 1]

2. At the micro level, how do private security workers talk about themselves in relation to 'others' (e.g. other private or state security workers, other organisations), times (e.g. pre-SIA vs post SIA), and locations (e.g. types of organisation and role)? [addressed in Findings chapter 2]

3. At the negotiated macro/micro level, which professional selves seem culturally appropriate in modern private security landscapes? [addressed in Findings chapter 3]

The findings were presented in three distinct chapters. Each chapter addressed one sub-question to meet aims of presenting narratives at different levels of analysis. Findings chapter 1 is summarised as five common tropes of private security as: (1) ordinary, everyday, and anti-heroic (2) customer services-oriented offering a human touch (3) for everyone; culturally diverse (4) lacking in distinct character/what *not* to be and (5) underdog: unloved and unseen by a range of audiences. The findings in this chapter were based on analyses of extant narrative discourse materials, i.e. materials that are already in the situation of enquiry curated but not produced by the researcher. The focus was on programmatic texts with a particular vision for professionalization and professional identity produced by five key programmatic sources at the macro level: the SIA, BSIA, Security Institute, IPSA and two trade magazines. Texts were supplemented by images and observations. Narratives documented a shift in vision of frontline security as a, by and large, masculine, unregulated, physical role toward security roles imagined as regulated, intrinsically social, mostly anti-heroic and mundane, culturally and gender diverse, servicing the needs of customers and, emboldened by the pandemic, with a human touch. However, the industry continues to think of itself as stigmatised in the security space - unloved, un-appreciated, undervalued by the public at large, and seemingly only just about accepted by the state. The quest for legitimacy as a bonafide security provider is therefore ongoing, and the notion of security professionalism, that which distinguishes the profession from other security providers, is difficult to define. The directives for professional selves were framed as what *not* to be (SIA) or as 'blending in' in customer services type roles at best (BSIA).

Findings chapter 2 presented narrative dimensions at the micro level largely informed by identity talk in interactional data collected via 28 semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals employed in the sector in a range of roles and with variety in backgrounds. However, the majority of participants were women and most participants were working in/had experience of the frontline, with a view to explore everyday security roles and issues of continuity and change. Five identity dimensions were used to organise the data: (1) belonging versus "not forever"; (2) serving customers versus 'dirty' work; (3) uneventful everyday versus (imagined) violence; (4) being invisible versus standing out; and (5) professional selves versus cowboy others. In combining analyses from Findings chapters 1 and 2, the third chapter presented sedimented narratives as culturally appropriate selves, i.e. those that navigate, more or less successfully, the private security work landscape. Three narratives were identified, in order of prevalence: (1) private security as the new helping profession; (2) private security as a feminist project; and (3) private security as global safe keeping. These accounts are presented as professionality, a process as quest for professional recognition with particular audiences, where individuals give an account of themselves in vexing conditions.

The five adopted methodological principles generated particular insights. Adoption of them made me consider and see more clearly how everyday security roles are related to wider policies, discourses, and events, creating the possibilities for, but also the limitations of professional identity with particular, precaritising effects. Furthermore, it gave me insights into the complexities of what the industry means to workers and facilitated alternative accounts of professional selves to show up. Finally, it made me want to explore better explanations for drivers of identity work that accounted for the limitation of available professional resources at the macro level and the identification at the micro level of cultural resources outside the domain of work and the workplace.

'Professionality' is the theorising element of the thesis, i.e. an argument, based on looking at something and an immersion in the topic that reduces complexity in ways that appeal to a particular academic family (Hansen and Madsen 2019). Although I argue that my main contribution is to understandings of professional identity in the organisation studies field, a project on the private security industry could not have been imagined without consulting the literatures that have hitherto informed research on (private) security and professionalization. Furthermore, over the years of the development of my researcher self, I dwelled in anthropology, pedagogy, sociology of work and international relations, engaging with different literatures and ways of theorising. My academic family is therefore somewhat dispersed. However, I take heart that organisation studies, a relatively new field informed by a number of research traditions and thinkers that span a range of disciplines, thinks of itself as 'a series of conversations' (Clegg et al. 2006, p.1).

7.2 Contributions to knowledge

Professionality differs from *seeking to be a professional*. In referring to a set of processes, professionality is an altogether more profound notion. With the organisation of the findings as described above, I aimed to show how professionalization processes in extant, discursive materials at the macro level and professional identity processes at the micro level are interconnected, and co-constitutive of the development of professional selves with material effects. In concurring with the need for the study of identities to be conducted at 'multiple levels of analysis', to see 'how identities framed at different levels interconnect and inform each other' (Brown 2020b, p. 897), the concept of 'professionality' theorises these relationships in contested domains in precaritising worlds of work. I argue that co-constitutive elements and interconnections can also relate to discursive, resource *deficiencies* or even sites of silence (Clarke 2005) that risk recognition. When there are limited discursive resources to draw on – for instance, because these are bland, counterproductive, or even negative and empty – alternative accounts offer possibilities for professional identity. These alternative accounts are very much self-created, and in ways that chime with particular audiences in particular times.

In the case of the helping narrative in the private security industry, giving an account is a response to a breakdown of recognition by inadequate (customer services), infelicitous (hyper-masculine), and empty ('not-criminal') identities of a previous horizon of normativity. Alternative accounts developed by individuals in this research do not necessarily address industry audiences - as part-creators of precaritising conditions they may offer only limited recognition in the first place - but to ethical selves, in recognition of others' vulnerability, and to live liveable lives. Alternative accounts mitigate risks of non-recognition, secure recognition with particular audiences in precaritising worlds of work, and make it possible to be someone against the odds. Therefore, alternative accounts have a self-constitutive function; with Butler (2005), I suggest that this dynamic of giving an account that chimes with audiences creates the self. In other words, to have a story about who you are is to exist.

Such an alternative conceptualisation of what constitutes professionalism makes a contribution to ways in which in a new professionalism (Evetts 2013) - in the absence of a shared professional ethic developed 'from within' and formal differentiators to signal professional security work - practitioners turn to discourses found in broader societal shifts. In the case of the private security industry, a contested space, dominant discourses of customer services and regulation have an uneasy relationship with, or are even antithetical to professional selves. In processes of professionality, drawing on a diverse set of cultural resources, workers craft alternative professional selves in order to be recognised and live liveable lives.

Expanding the identity work concept

Identity work has been mainly developed in the field of organisation studies. As one of its core concepts, it considers how organisations or organisational practices shape identity, and the leverage individuals have to influence their milieux in which they live their lives (e.g. Watson 2008). Motivations for identity work are broadly provided as a desire for positive meaning and social validation to avoid anomie and alienation (see Brown 2020a). Drawing on Butler (2005), this thesis proposes that these motivations could be further construed as seeking recognition, via giving an (alternative) account of who we are, to address particular audiences. The need to address particular audiences seems pertinent in domains where workers' lives are precaritised in particular ways. Individuals need to create alternative accounts for themselves when resources are limited or not recognised as suitable for identity purposes. This thesis therefore posits that to deepen an understanding of identity formation processes we must understand what these precaritising conditions entail – leading to a breakdown of recognition – *in order to make sense of what comes after*, i.e. these are particular narrations of professional selves that negotiate the breakdown of norms and the development of new ones. Butler refers to these processes as 'undoing' (e.g. 2004) – hitherto mostly used in relation to gender. Risking becoming undone is what gives rise to subversive (in the sense of troubling norms), alternative narration of identity. My research located in the private security sector – a deeply contested and precaritising domain with identity struggles of its own – has given particularly insights into what these undoing processes look like. It considered their particular identity effects - discursive and material - that construe alternative narrations of professional selves.

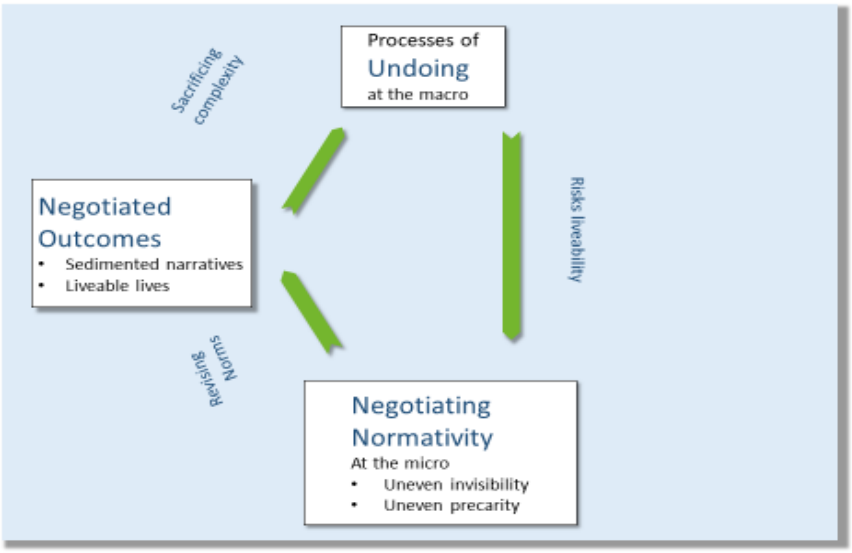


Diagram 7.1 Professionality as cycles of negotiating normativity in precaritising worlds of work

Professionality processes therefore offer further explanations of the purpose of identity work via the notion of 'giving an account' - cycles of undoing, negotiating normativity, and negotiated outcomes - as drivers of identity work. Individuals in precarious worlds of work, such as frontline security workers, are no one without a story about who they are - sometimes quite literally when at increased risk of death in crisis situations, see the Discussion chapter. The macro undoing element of the cycle hails individuals, who have become particularly 'undone', towards stronger (to various degrees) narratives. Based on the above, giving an account provides a more satisfying explanation as driver for identity work, advancing understanding of motivations that go beyond socialization and validation by communities.

One imagines that the negotiation cycles as described above are particularly prevalent and oft-recurring in precaritising worlds of work, where agile identities, identities that in their response to fast-changing working environments and demands in the 'new spirit of capitalism' (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007 in Coupland and Spedale 2020), risk a loss of self 'more disempowering than traditional alienation' (p. 844.). Giving an account protects individuals to some extent from agility demands. In addition, given modern workplaces as increasingly precaritising, identification with organisations may become less important or less possible, requiring a consideration of external foci in the development of professional selves (see also Ashforth, Moser, and Bubenzer 2020). Nevertheless, this thesis supports the notion (e.g. Kondo 1990) that inequalities are not merely oppressive - for instance in professional worlds where precarity is unevenly distributed - but in professionality processes they can give rise to professional selves via accounts that facilitate liveable lives (Butler 2015).

Security identities grounded in discourses of masculinities, stigmatisation and dirty work are expanded by the offer of a more nuanced space where individuals employed in the modern, UK-based civil private security industry can derive meaning and self-validation out of their working lives, even if worlds of work are precarious. Because discursive resources at the macro level are not actively taken up, or taken up only to a limited extent in accounts at the micro level – their salience is diminished and they become less hegemonic. An effect can therefore be that discourses at the macro level become less powerful – have their power undone – which shows the upward trajectory of undoing processes, i.e. from the micro to the macro, in the development of professional identity.

By giving an account, individuals diminish the power of macro discourses. The private security industry seemed an obvious contender to study those processes in issues of identity in relation to professionalism and professionalization at different levels of analysis. With its rapid growth, insecure workings conditions, and contested nature - with professionalization increasingly organised 'from

above' - it is exemplary of an industry in neoliberal economies, in which understandings of what it means to be a professional is changing.

7.2 Suggestions for future research

First, it would be interesting to research the extent to which the three accounts identified in this thesis gain further traction, notably the helping narrative, both at the individual level and in broader discourses at the macro level. Such research could contribute to further demystifying the macro-micro relationships in (professional) identity formation processes, and deepen the understanding of the ground swell that is required for collective identity development at the macro level. This study is too small scale to extend observations to *social* subversion, Butler's ideas espoused in later writings (2015) that address subversion as power of assembly in collective action, for instance social protest. However, Butler (in Tyler 2020, p. 42) suggests that 'subversive performances always run the risk of becoming deadening clichés through their repetition and, most importantly, through their repetition within commodity culture where 'subversion' carries market value'. For instance, if the 'helping' account is increasingly appropriated by macro level actors in how they present themselves – there are signs - its ability to subvert a dominant discourse of 'customer services agent' may be limited. Further research could explore these issues.

Second, expanded conceptualisations of identity work based on processes of professionality may be useful in other contested work domains - organisation or industry - where there are sites of silence or challenging discourses hampering professional identity development. Tyler (2020) comments that the work of Judith Butler has made some inroads in Organization Theory. Indeed Brown (2020b, p.897) mentions her as 'heavily referenced' in his concluding comments of the edited *Handbook of Identities in Organizations*. However, on closer inspection, Butler's theories are mainly used in relation to gender (e.g. Fotaki 2020) and sexuality (e.g. Rumens 2020); also, to a lesser extent with regard to the precarity concept. Only Cutcher (2020), in a discussion on conversations with self and others on matters of *researcher* identity, references *Giving an account of oneself*. There therefore seems scope for further deployment of this particular work and how her social theory of recognition could further inform the identity work concept.

Third, for the empirical part of this thesis, the study included a disproportionately large number of women (20 out of 28 participants were female). This number is particularly disproportioned given that 90% of the workforce is male. The study used female participants to explore issues of continuity and change in the UK private security industry. However, gender was not a key focus, nor was it used overtly to problematize issues of professionalization, and the pandemic hampered the recruitment

of female participants to some extent, see also the limitations in the Methodology chapter. A future organisation studies research agenda on private security and macro/micro relationships in identity formation could include a gender lens-designed study. Such a study could focus on career histories and theories of social and symbolic capital, to consider ways in which the transitioning of individuals from civil service roles to private sector organisations informed the development of the industry and shaped the contours of the private security landscape in the nodal delivery of security activity. The semi-structured interviews with female former civil servant participants point to a treasure trove of particularly colourful stories and, if nothing else, of illustrative narratives that in part account for the emergence of the private security industry, and in part that made it more palatable, at least in the eyes of the state, to deliver security functions.

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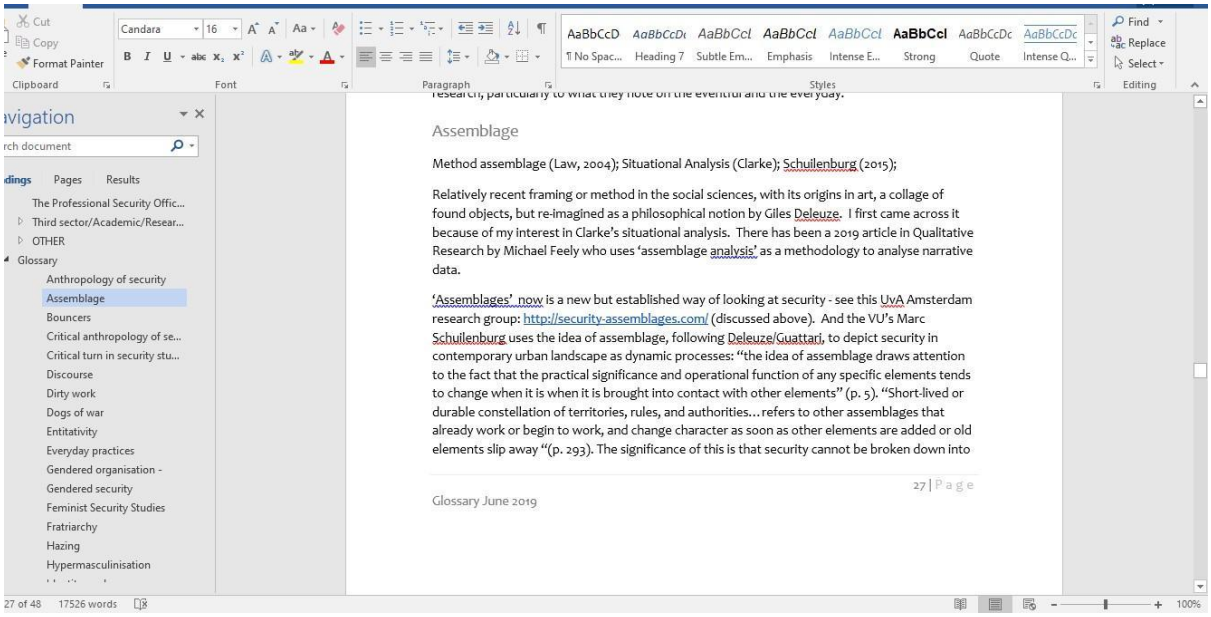
9 APPENDICES

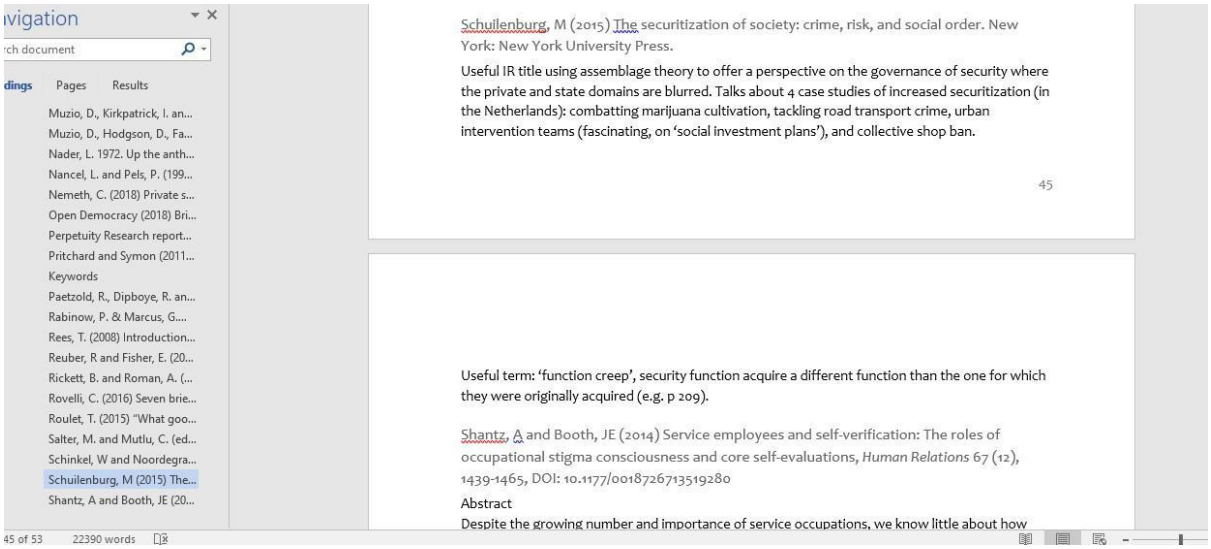
Appendix I - Sample pages of literature documentation and analysis

I a. Glossary pages

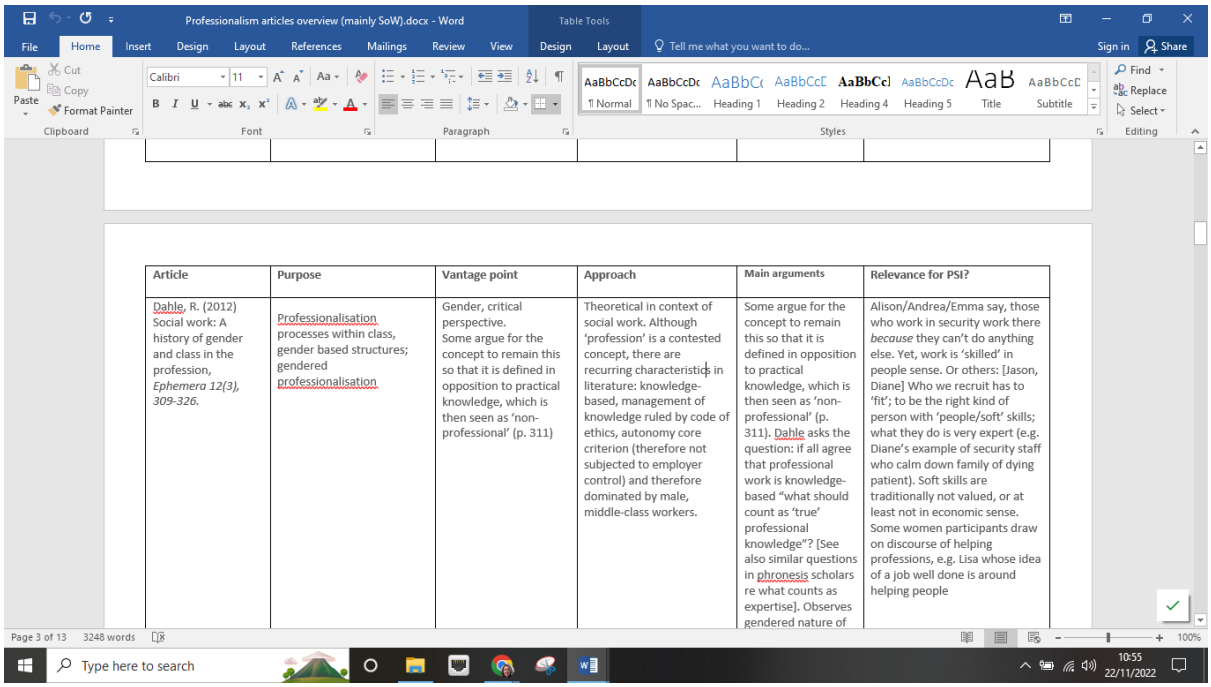


A screenshot of the Glossary document depicting a selection of concepts in the left navigation pane and an example description of 'assemblage'

I b. Sample pages - Article database



1c Sample pages – topic table



Article	Purpose	Vantage point	Approach	Main arguments	Relevance for PSI?
Dahle, R. (2012) Social work: A history of gender and class in the profession, *Ephemera 12(3), 309-326.*	Professionalisation processes within class, gender based structures; gendered professionalisation	Gender, critical perspective. Some argue for the concept to remain this so that it is defined in opposition to practical knowledge, which is then seen as 'non-professional' (p. 311)	Theoretical in context of social work. Although 'profession' is a contested concept, there are recurring characteristics in literature: knowledge-based, management of knowledge ruled by code of ethics, autonomy core criterion (therefore not subjected to employer control) and therefore dominated by male, middle-class workers.	Some argue for the concept to remain this so that it is defined in opposition to practical knowledge, which is then seen as 'non-professional' (p. 311). Dahle asks the question: if all agree that professional work is knowledge-based "what should count as 'true' professional knowledge"? [See also similar questions in phronesis scholars re what counts as expertise]. Observes gendered nature of	Alison/Andrea/Emma say, those who work in security work there *because* they can't do anything else. Yet, work is 'skilled' in people sense. Or others: [Jason, Diane] Who we recruit has to 'fit'; to be the right kind of person with 'people/soft' skills; what they do is very expert (e.g. Diane's example of security staff who calm down family of dying patient). Soft skills are traditionally not valued, or at least not in economic sense. Some women participants draw on discourse of helping professions, e.g. Lisa whose idea of a job well done is around helping people

Appendix II - Ethics approval letters

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Professor Juliette Koning
Director of Studies
Department of Business and Management
Oxford Brookes Business School
Headington Campus

31 July 2018

Dear Professor Koning

UREC Registration No: 181214
Female employees in private security organisations – phase 1

Thank you for your email of 19 July 2018 outlining your response to the points raised in my previous letter about the PhD study of your research student Birgit den Outer and attaching the revised documents. I am pleased to inform you that, on this basis, I have given Chair's Approval for the study to begin.

The UREC approval period for the data collection phase of the study is two years from the date of this letter, so 31 July 2020. If you need the approval to be extended please do contact me nearer the time of expiry.

Should the recruitment, methodology or data storage change from your original plans, or should any study participants experience adverse physical, psychological, social, legal or economic effects from the research, please inform me with full details as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Quinton
Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee

cc Karen Handley, Supervisory Team
Birgit den Outer, Research Student
Jill Organ, Research Degrees Team
Louise Wood, UREC Administrator

Professor Juliette Koning
Director of Studies
Department of Business and Management
Oxford Brookes Business School
Oxford Brookes University
Headington Campus

27 March 2019

Dear Professor Koning

UREC Registration No: 191284
Female employees in private security organisations – phase 2

Thank you for your emails of 20 and 27 March 2019 outlining your response to the points raised in my previous letter about the PhD study of your research student Birgit den Outer and attaching the revised documents. I am pleased to inform you that, on this basis, I have given Chair's Approval for the study to begin.

The UREC approval period for the data collection phase of the study is two years from the date of this letter, so 27 March 2021. If you need the approval to be extended please do contact me nearer the time of expiry.

Should the recruitment, methodology or data storage change from your original plans, or should any study participants experience adverse physical, psychological, social, legal or economic effects from the research, please inform me with full details as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Quinton
Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee

cc Karen Handley, Supervisory Team
Birgit den Outer, Research Student
Jill Organ, Research Degrees Team
Louise Wood, UREC Administrator

Appendix III Data collection materials

III a. Participant Information Sheet

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET – INTERVIEWS - STAGE 2

Working in private security organisations

An invitation to participate in confidential interview on your line of work

I invite you to take part in stage 2 of my PhD project. Before deciding whether or not to take part, I'd like to explain why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please ask me if you have any questions.

Purpose and outline of the study -

I am interested in private security organisations as a place of work, issues of professionalization, and perspectives of security more broadly. I completed a first stage of data collection, which comprised interviews with practitioners in a range of fields; the current stage involves interviews with frontline private security officers, notably women.

Who is invited to participate?

I am inviting employees who work/worked in private security organisations in frontline roles, e.g. as door supervisors, close protection officers, CCTV operators, and so on. Stage 2 of my project is envisaged to take place between March 2019 – May 2021.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep along with a privacy notice that explains how your data will be collected and used, and you'll be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason, and any unprocessed data will be removed from the study.

What does participation involve?

Participation involves an interview with me, Birgit den Outer, on topics such as your day to day activities in your security role, your perspective of the work that you do and security in general, and how you feel you fit in this type of work. The interview is likely to last up to an hour, and will take place at a location and time of your choice.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part offers the opportunity to enrich research on private security organisations as places of work.

I hope that my project will generate insights into private security as a career and the private security sector as a place of work more broadly. These insights may be useful to organisations wishing to improve practices in organisations, for instance in the area of clearer career paths in private security.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no envisaged risks in taking part. However, although not anticipated, it may be that I become privy to sensitive information to do with your role in the organization, the organisation itself or clients that are affiliated with you or your organisation. I have outlined below how I aim to deal with these risks.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Information about you, your organisation, or clients (such as interview notes and audio files - if recorded with permission), will be kept strictly confidential subject to legal limitations. Data will be stored in Google Drive, for which the University has a security agreement. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy on Academic Integrity, including being kept securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the project.

In any reporting on the interview, I will use a pseudonym for you, your organization, or your clients and de-identify any details that could possibly identify you, your organisation, or your clients.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you would like to take part, please email Birgit den Outer (b.den-outer@brookes.ac.uk) so that I can get in touch with you to arrange a convenient time for the interview.

What will I do with the findings?

The findings from the interviews will inform my PhD research. If you would like a copy of the transcript for your own records, please let me know by ticking the box on the consent form. If you have any comments, please could you send them to me within 3 months of receiving the transcript.

Who is organizing and funding the research?

I am conducting this research as part of my PhD studies in organisation and management. I am a part-time PhD student at the Business School at Oxford Brookes University, where I am also a lecturer. My supervisors are Prof Juliette Koning (j.koning@brookes.ac.uk) and Dr Karen Handley (khandley@brookes.ac.uk)

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University (reference: **191284**).

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to have further information about my project, or would like to take part, please email me using the email address below. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet.

Birgit den Outer b.den-outer@brookes.ac.uk 07887 893014
Oxford Brookes Business School, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP

III b.Consent form

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM - INTERVIEW

Research project: Working in private security organisations – STAGE 2

Researcher: Birgit den Outer (b.den-outer@brookes.ac.uk), Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, Oxford OX3 0BP)

Supervisor: Prof Juliette Koning (j.koning@brookes.ac.uk, Oxford Brookes Unievrsity, Headington Campus, Oxford OX3 0BP)

	Please initial box
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.	☐
I agree to take part in the above study	☐
I agree to take part in the interview	☐
I understand that the confidentiality of the information I provide can only be protected within the limitations of the law	☐

	Please tick relevant box	
	Yes	**No**
I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	☐	☐
I agree to the use of pseudonym quotes in publications	☐	☐

…….. …… …….

Name of Participant Date Signature

If you would like a transcript of the interview and/or a copy of the stage 2 report, please circle which applies and provide your email address here: ……

…… …… …….

Name of Researcher Date Signature

III c. Interview guide

Interview guide [SCOPING Stage – Women in Private Security]

Bring with me to interview:

This interview script!
Recorder [x2!]
Consent form
PIS
Timing device
Pen

Introduction and overview (at the interview)

Thank you for taking part in this project. I'd like to take a few moments to outline what it's about.

The project is my PhD research. *I am a PhD student in organization and management at the Oxford Brookes Business School, conducting research on private security organizations. I am interested in private security organisations as a place of work for female employees, and in issues of professionalization and diversity in the private security industry more broadly.* My PhD is in part funded by my university where I work as a researcher and lecturer. I don't receive any external funding.

As part of the first stage of the project, I would like to conduct interviews with private security experts to learn about the pressing issues in the industry. Your knowledge will be of great value to my PhD project. In addition, what you have shared with me will help me select issues to be investigated further in the second stage of the project.

I hope you have read the participant information sheet with further information about my project and possible interview.

For this particular stage I am aiming to speak to about 10 people who are like you in some kind of training, advisory or advocacy role. Whatever I publish from this project, I'll ensure that no individuals or organizations can be identified - for example I'll use pseudonyms.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? [CONSENT FORM]

Demographics

Age; Gender; Nationality? Highest educational qualification? [at the end?]

Personal: role, trajectory, meaning

- Could you tell me about your job/what your role entails and what you are responsible for? So for instance, what did you do yesterday?
- What is the attraction?
- Could you say a little bit about how you got to be where you are today?
- What do you like about this sector in which you work?
- What do your friends/family think about where you work; is it dangerous?

- Please could you describe to me what it is that you do in some detail.
- What do you feel you are 'securing'?
- How rewarding is your line of work?
- When is your job at its best?
- When at its worst?
- What kinds of activities do you enjoy doing the best?
- Do you feel the public at large/society values what you do?
- What does doing this job give you?
- How does what you do differ from employees doing similar work but who work for public sector organisations, e.g. in the police force?
- What has happened to you? Can you describe a situation where you were scared? Felt elated?
- How is your job different to what other people do? In offices? In state security roles such as the police?
- Who should pay for the security that you bring?

NOTES: FOR STAGE 1 and 2

- To have participants talk at the experiential level as to what work they do and what it means to them
- Questions above depend a little on the role and experience of the interviewee

Organization/professionalisation/self other

- On the website of your organisation/professional body/magazine, it says it does xyz. Could you tell me a bit more about its main purpose and activities?
- What is your organization best known for?
- How does your organisation view the development of the private security industry? In the UK? Globally? How does it hope to tap into these developments?
- Do you think your organisation has a good reputation?
- How does your organisation view the development of the private security industry? In the UK? Globally? How does it hope to tap into these developments?
- How is your organization different to others? What makes it stand out?
- To what extent and in what way is your organisation involved in professionalization of the private security industry?
- What does professionalization mean to you?
- To what extent does your organization acknowledge diversity and inclusion?
- What kinds of roles do you think women (could/should) occupy in private security organisations?
- Is there anything particular that women bring?
- Do you think there are roles in private security better done by women? Better done by men?
- Are the promotion trajectories the same for men and women?

NOTES: MAINLY STAGE 1

Part of the purpose of this section is:

- At the organisational level, get to the 'self-other talk': "defining a person by defining others" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, 629).
- To have participants describe/identify particular discourses
- To have participants talk about the fluidity between societal and individual identities

Wider perspectives (changing world, PS at industry level)

- The PSI has grown tremendously. What in your view are the key drivers to that development?
- What does your organisation aim to achieve in that development?
- You have been working in this industry for x number of years – could you tell me a little re how it has changed?
- Why in your view is the private security industry doing so well?
- What does the idea of security or securing mean to you?
- What are the big threats to security?
- How do we best protect ourselves?
- What specific role can your organisation play in this protection?
- What specific role does the private security sector have?

NOTES: Mainly stage 1, strategic level thinking

Fit/belonging/culture/working practices/gender

- Did you have to adapt when you started working here (in how you work, how you dress, how you act)
- Did you have to change how you behave when you came here
- What kind of jokes are made on the work floor
- Do you feel equal to your male peers
- What kind of socialisation takes place at work, are you having lunch together, social events
- Have you changed since working here
- Have you changed your view of the sector since working here, what was your original view
- Do you feel you belong?
- Do you take notice of what the media says about private security organisations – what do you make of these?

NOTES MAINLY STAGE 2.

Part of the purpose of this section is:

- At the individual level, get to the 'self-other talk': "defining a person by defining others" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, 629).
- To have participants describe their identity struggles, including organisational identification

- To have participants identify gender issues
- To have participants talk about ways of being

Closing

Is there anything else you'd like to add about working in the private security sector?	*[develop and adapt on the basis of the conversation so far]*
["Thank you ..etc."]	

Appendix IV Data Analysis

IV a. Research diary entry headers and a few example pages

PhD workshops October/November 2019

Had a few insights during these workshops. I think my PhD really is about the relationship between Professionalization and identity in the context of the private security industry. So, perhaps no need to 'problematise' the industry per se (although can still be critical…?).

Perhaps I can use assemblage theory for Chapter 2. Context as assemblage…? To map how there is an artificial creation of a raison d'être; neo-liberal impulse for security practices; an assemblage opens up space for particular professional identities

There are different levels of explanation and different ways of knowing, depending on the discipline/traditions.
Why is it the way it is? Always a good question to ask, leading to good explanations.
Theorising is not really discussed in textbooks; it is difficult to say "this is how you *should* do it
Based on Rosa's presentation: present the chapters in the thesis as chapters in a book.
Second stage of PhD: men too
Methodology chapter: combination of methodologies, incl discourse, thematic (recurring themes, patterns, anomalies), stories

Supervisory meeting 14 October 2019

This was the meeting based on submission of my context chapter of 35 pages. Upshot: split chapter into three parts: 1 Context 2 Discourses of security 3 Careers and identity. See KH's notes. JK agreed with this (and gave extensive feedback in the chapter itself). All three could be 'findings' chapters

1 Context - Developments at sector level, drivers of PSI, professional bodies, making argument for how Professionalization is shaping the industry as we as the identities available

2 Discourses - KH says not all my elements are discourse element in Laclau/Mouffe way, more discursive repertoires, e.g. customer-oriented/ anti-heroic. Diversity aware more part of context? Don't think so actually, my data does talk about that

3 Career/identities - developing arguments about people's identities - making the case for a feminized security - Expert interviews/or informants?

IV b. Example analysis – Interview text

Notforprof-Z interview with Keira on 24/10/18

Focus points:

Text highlights: anything of note in yellow

Organisation purpose/description: in purple

Self/other talk (mainly in terms of Notforprof organisation, own knowledge, career): in teal

Drivers of growth of private security/changes in sector: in green

Professionalization of security, incl changing landscape for women

Perspectives of importance of security and own role

Perspectives of the future of security (incl nature of threat): in green

[Long, non-recorded preamble of scope of project, interview particulars, and researcher perspective] Keira: Oh okay… where do I start… erm… I think I'll start with the community culture if I may… So, when people choose careers of things they want to go into they will be self-selecting, so the sort of person that might go into Defence, will be a different sort of person that might go into DfID or the Aid department, even though they both have a strong sense of public service? And I think we're going through a transition stage in the sector at the moment, where, when I sort of began, yes you could do degrees in international relations and so on, but it is only really since September the 11th that a lot of these security and defence type Master degrees have really taken off. And you're seeing a different sort of entrant coming in now, than perhaps you would have seen 20 years ago. And some of that also reflects the changes in the central government cuts and changes in the security budgets that have been going on for a long, long time, a lot of that of course stems back to the fall of the Berlin wall with everybody thinking we don't need to security people so much anymore and they have to go somewhere. And this is really I think where you can trace back the real sort of blossoming or growth of the sector. And I didn't realise how busy and vibrant it was	ORGANISATION PURPOSE K talks in very deliberate, slow manner, trying to get the listener's buy-in, further emphasised by using southern-hemisphere-going up in sentences (have often marked this throughout the text by adding question marks). Drivers of private security according to K

until I was involved in it. You already had organisations like Control and Control Risks that have been around for some time, but now you began to see a privatisation of human intelligence gathering, [name org] was the first of those and that generated a number of spin-offs…	
… and that was the first sort of focussing on human intelligence for business purposes. And a number of organisations span off from that of which [PrivSec Co] was one. And alongside that you had the beginnings of the growth of the cyber security industry. Which started inside the telecommunications sector and the not for profit that I am involved with, NOTFORPROF Z, began as a small conversation in the Foreign Office in the late 1990s when people looked at the internet and said "that's a wonderful thing, there must be a downside" and began kind of considering what the security implications might be. And that began as a series of small salon dinners, led by a lady called [name], who at that time was in the Foreign Office and who went on the become one of the Conservative Party national security advisors, and she grew NOTFORPROF Z over time and led it for about five or six years and then handed it over. Initially it was affiliated to Kings College London before it became a free-standing entity with commercial sponsors. And again, and one of the sponsors was the a community selling security IT but over time that has grown because people understand that cyber security affects everything so now , it's Finance sector, online retail, because of the way cyber security and the security landscape has changed, and I was first involved with NOTFORPROF Z because, as you saw from my CV my last job in Cabinet Office was working on government IT programme, and I already moved to [PrivSec Co] and was introduced to a chap who had worked for the MoD at the time that I was in Cabinet Office working on Kosovo, and he said "oh, you've been working on IT things, would you like to join NOTFORPROF Z" and I looked around the room and, NOTFORPROF Z prides itself on bringing together business, government, and academia so that they could share thought leadership on cyber security in a safe space and in the late 1990s that was still a new idea, but by the time I started going along to the dinners, I looked around the room and first of all there was certain demographic, it was all middle-aged white men, and it was mostly men, even though we are talking people from government, business, and academia, an awful lot of the people who represented business, came from government, or a [not sure] services background. And I think that it's beginning to change, but generally speaking it is still perceived that government has the best people with the technology know-how, largely because of GHSQ. So it is a lot of people from those sorts of organisations that went into private sector roles. So while on the on the one hand you got a blurring of boundaries between the private and the public sector, people leaving the public sector to go into the private sector, there are a lot of security issues. Governments are the ones of having the role of defending the state and they are the ones with the best information, so you have a dialogue going in the other direction. And especially now with the national cyber Security Centre which is coordinating the private	Coming about of Notforprof Z Has commercial sponsors How she was recruited (networks in government)

sector as much as with government in terms of UK cyber resilience. And when I first started going to the dinners, we were lucky, we were normally around 80 people, and we were lucky if there was one woman at a table. And..erm…I don't think it was deliberate…I think it was just, it was partly that it was a new sector and there weren't that many women who were senior. Generally speaking, women haven't traditionally chosen to go into the security and defence sector, but again that is changing, and cyber is very much the resilience side of that story, *so that has a different appeal,* erm, it is possible to do a cyber-security job with flexible working and home working in a way you couldn't do if you were in law enforcement, so I think that is helping to bring about a bit of a change. And now I'd say we have normally 2 or 3 women per table of about 10 people per table.	An awful lot of people who represented business came from government Changing landscape for women
Whereas in cyber security as a whole, we're about 17% female and falling we tend to be a bit underrepresented because of the engagement at the dinners [not sure I get this]. I must admit, I haven't found it… the community is very small, and it is only just starting to emerge as a profession, and people are just beginning to understand the importance of data protection. Which is nice in some ways because everybody knows each other, but is quite frightening in other ways when you consider the scale of the problem. So, there is quite a lot of effort going into improve cyber skills for industry and for government use. An awful lot of women who go into the area are not necessarily from the technical side. There are lot of fabulous technicians but you get quite a lot going on human behaviour, cultural change side of things… BdO: Yes, because the technical side of things tends to be the men really, still doesn't? Keira: I think that is largely because boys tend to do computer science, boys tend to follow through computer science at university. Girls coming from a technical side, often come from a completely different angle. So for example, there is a fabulous academic called Kate Devlin, at UCL, I think, or is she at King's, anyway, Kate came in, she originally trained as an archaeologist, and they using lot of technology for archaeological surveys, and from that she moved into robotics, and a bit on cyber security, more on the robotics side. In fact, her most recent project has been on sex robots would you believe. But that seems to be a trend, a lot of the women who in to the cyber security sector have come from other disciplines. And not even the STEM backgrounds. They might have come in from a STEM background but not necessarily from a computing background.	[not sure this is what she said, it doesn't make sense re what is to come], I should have asked for clarification here. "Scale of the problem" - unexplored Cyber security as small community. Perspective of future security threat Changing landscape for women Unusual paths for women to enter profession STEM/not STEM
Or, you get women like me, who are familiar with the security sector, and want to help the technologists translate their capability into a way that a civilian business person or manager can understand. Because, it is changing now but traditionally the technology boys, and it tends to be	

boys, haven't always had the best communication skills, or haven't understood how to put their capability into the business context and get listened to. And in fact [Private Security Org] that I am doing work with at the moment, almost self-consciously recruit predominantly women, because the chief exec is of the view that not only are women better at putting these things over, but as a consultancy, if you're going into to talk to somebody about IT or whatever, people tend to be more open talking to women…? BdO: That's not clear from that website by the way… in fact there are no names on that website at all… Keira: That is because of the nature of the work they do. You'll find that a lot in the sector, that they don't… even if they have won awards and all the rest of it and do that in quite an open place, by publicising what they do there is a fear they become a sitting target…? BdO: Yes, even on that NOTFORPROF – Z website, there are no photos of, there are photos of the chair and of the men, but not of the women, not of you. Is that on purpose? Keira: Yes it is, that is personal trust issue. Partly because at that time I was transitioning I didn't know whether I was going to go back to government, and partly because old habit die hard and that is the kind of culture I've grown up with. BdO: Okay. People working in that area would never put photos up? Keira: For some people actually most people do put up their photographs and actually by not putting up you photo you make it all the more obvious. Again, we're going through bit of a culture change. If you have to bear in mind that quite a lot British government activity we weren't allowed to talk about until the freedom of information act and that was only until, what, 15 years ago…? And so for some people, if they have grown up in the older culture, then it's quite a transition to come blinking to the sunlight, but for other people they have grown up with social media or have children on social media and it seems stupid not to be visible. And again, I think there is a change as well as we see a lot more floating between government and private sector organisations, which means that you see quite a lot of people come into the private security sector who don't have a government background. They might have a fabulous master's in international relations or defense and security, and they have chosen that at an early stage but through the private sector means.	Women seen as easier to talk to Government security officials don't publish personal data, even when going into private sector SELF TALK I know the answer to that really… Changes because of Freedom of Information Act Changes in sector
BdO: Because there is more and more of these kinds of courses on offer, I mean, they are now available as an academic subject, which wasn't always the case before, is that what you are saying? Keira: Well, to be fair, I never explored as an option when I was choosing my degrees, so I wouldn't really…, well, it never crossed my mind to do	

it. And if you look at what is on offer at King's College London which is one of the leading places, they have always had a small programme but it has never been at the scale it has grown into in recent years. BdO: Yeah, because your background is English Language and Literature, Keira: Yeah but don't forget, some of that also reflects the way in which the British Civil Service recruits. Because traditionally, it has always attracted people from a liberal arts background, who go on to become professional generalists, and once you're inside you develop your specialism, and I happen to go through, well I chose to go through international relations at the Foreign Office, which has always had a lot of historians, classicists and all the rest of it… chose to go into the Foreign Office, and then having done th Balcans, I fell into security and defense, and defense has evolved now from being tanks and rockets to being laptops. ***So my story in a way reflects the broader change of the landscape***. And you would still get people coming into it from liberal arts background but they are as keen to get the scientists as you need the technical capability as well. But my degree was completely typical of recruitment in the times when I was applying. And in fact I think still is now. In fact, when I think of the group of people that I joined the Foreign Office with, there was only one person that had a science degree, out of 22. But that was years ago. So that might have changed. And similarly women going in will have changed and that is partly because career paths have changed. So with the Foreign Office, which you could say is 'security-ish' – well the purpose of the Foreign Office is to stop wars, really, isn't it – well it used to be expected at the Foreign Office that if you got married you had to leave. And that used to be the case up until the 1960s and 70s. When I joined it was still expected that a woman would follow her husband around the world and give up her career. It was much more difficult to find a man who would give up his career and follow his diplomat wife around the world.	SELF/OTHER TALK Links own story to wider shifts Changing landscape of security SELF/OTHER TALK re changing security landscape for women

IV c. Nvivo coding framework

Nodes	Description
Changes at sector level	Anything participants shares re how the (public and private) sector has changed, including changing landscape for women, austerity cuts.

Nodes	Description
Austerity cuts	Anything participants say about pressures on the public sector or opportunities for the private sector as the result of austerity cuts
Drivers of private security growth	Anything participants mention that they feel explains the increase in private security provision.
Gold Dust	Any quotes of particular salience
NSWTM	Not sure what this means but sounds important or interesting
Own role	How participants describe what they do
Agency	Anything agentic or anti-agentic vis-a-vis career decisions, e.g. "I wanted", "I didn't want", "They wanted me to..."
Career to date	How participants describe how they got to be where they are.
Human capital	What participants feel they have (particular skills, expertise, experience, talents, etc.)
Type of organisation	Any description of the organisation in which the participant currently works
Views of work	Any comments participants make re how they feel about the work that they do
Professionalization	Any processes, practices, activities that hint at the Professionalization of security; incl having a profession vs being professional
Security Organization Logics	How the way the organization or security world is structured privileges certain (work or organisational) identities over others
Working practices and material conditions	Anything about the practices of security organisations in relation to their employees
Security perspectives	Anything respondents say re what security is or looks like and how it should be organized.

Nodes	Description
Commoditisation of security	Any comments on security as commodity
Security nothings	Term used by Huysmans (2011) to denote the small practices and processes that shape securitisation, replacing/displacing decisional gravitation or political salient speech acts. Also referred to as 'little security nothings' - "programming algorithms, routine collections of data and looking at CCTV footage" (p. 372)
Self vs Other Talk	Discursive devices participants employ to say who they are by describing what they are or what they are not.In my data set mainly to do with current roles in security (as opposed to in careers)
Identity work or talk	As per Kenny et al.: "The more or less conscious effort and activities that are undertaken to build, maintain, protect or defend our sense of 'who I am'" - In this data set the efforts participants describe to identify (or not) with the organization they are working in or for. Talk: anything that describes who they are
Private vs State Security	Any statements participants make about how one compares to the other.
This security and not that	Any comments interviewees make about the security they provide and how this distinguised from other kinds of security
Threats perspectives	Anything respondent says about what threats are, look like or ought to be thought of as such.
Named enemy	Anything very specifically named as a security threat
Women and security	Anything participants share re women, women's roles, what women bring, women attributes, women and future security roles
Femininities	Anything participants mentions re security and femininity or feminization of security roles
Masculinities	Anything participant says about masculinity and security, or masculinasation of security roles

IV d. example interview summary

Keira – former cabinet office civil servant now Director Private Security Provider, Vice chairperson Not for profit

I interviewed Keira, a woman of about my age, via Skype. Beforehand, Keira had emailed to me her (very impressive) CV and a description of the not for profit organisation, [CybSecOrg], she is the vice chairman of. I interview her via Skype, which meant I wasn't always able to gauge how she meant things. After I explain to her my project, she starts the interview with a description of the sector's culture, as she sees it, and how it is changing. She initially sets out with an advocacy agenda, probably because she thinks that this what I would be most interested in talking about, given that her cyber security 'think-tank' actively promotes diversity interests across business, government, law enforcement and academia. She describes how, in her view, the sector is in transition; a different kind of person is entering the security world. She attributes this change to processes that have been going on for a while, starting with the fall of the Berlin wall ('where else did those security people have to go?') but that these were ramped up after 9/11. The blossoming of courses in security are symptomatic, through which we see an emphasis on intelligence gathering for business purposes. The security world now draws on a wider pool of people, for instance people who have done specialist Master's degrees, rather than those who have climbed the ranks in the civil service. There are still the women pioneers – the women who have been in security for quite a while and joined government departments at a time when this was relatively unusual for women.

Keira describes how [CybSecOrg] started as a (salon!) table conversation in the Foreign Office in the 1990s, where civil servants started to wonder whether there might be any downsides to the internet, and the implications of these for national security. [CybSecOrg] was initially affiliated with a university but soon after became an independent organisation, with commercial sponsors (!). When she was approached later on (Government connection), she realised that the demographic of this organisation was mainly white, middle-aged men, with often very few women present. She also realised that an awful lot of business organisations are represented by former government officials. She thinks this is because government is still perceived as having the best people with the technical know-how, largely because of GHSQ. This flow from the public to the private sector has security implications in itself [not expanded on]. However, the demographic is slowly changing, and there are more women now. Keira attributes this to a change into what is perceived as necessary skills in the

cyber security world. It is no longer just the 'technologists' – which still tend to be men – but people with skills in translating tech language into languages that business managers can understand. Another 'skill' women have, says Keira, is that they tend to be more 'open' and therefore considered more approachable by business people. She gives the example of the company she is a currently a director of, where the CEO tends to only hire women as new recruits.

Keira locates the starting point of a career in security in a traditional/typical civil servant recruitment and selection process of the Foreign Office: Oxford graduate in liberal arts subjects (Keira did English language and literature), to via fast track civil service career become a professional generalist before choosing a specialism. She says her career was timed with a shift in Defence going 'from tanks and rockets to laptops'. She became a Polad (policy adviser) and was posted to Bosnia for nine month, which she describes as "an opportunity I wish for my best friend and an experience I wouldn't wish for my worst enemy". This perspective changed her ideas with regard to diplomacy and conflict, the difference between them, and how one can obstruct the other. However, her perspectives of security changed in more fundamental ways, she feels, during the 9/11 and the 7/7 London bombings. During the latter, where Whitehall was in lockdown, and Keira could not access her phone or watch the news until the middle part of the afternoon, she fundamentally understood what needs to be in place for a society to just carry on regardless and keep its citizens safe. She contrasts her sense of importance during her time in government with that in the private sector, which she classes as exciting and important, but not nearly as fulfilling. Her 'saving the world complex' as she describes her life's mission found a renewed outlet in [CybSecOrg], which needed to become more relevant and innovate. She describes her recruitment for [PrivateSectorcompany], her complete transition to the private sector, as a long time in the making. [PrivateSectorcompany] were involved in advising government in cyber security services and for Keira to be hired by them on a consultancy basis to help them advise government where she was already on the payroll felt as taking the taxpayer for a ride so she declined. But she wanted to transition to the private sector, which she did when they offered her a Directorship. Around the same time, she became a member of, and then later the vice-chair for [notforprofitZ].

Her interest in women's issues was a slow burner. As one of very few women at the start of her career, Keira was keen for her work 'to speak for itself', and she wasn't interested in waving the feminist flag in the Foreign Office. But she pretty soon discovered there was a glass ceiling, and after her year out to do a public administration course at Harvard, funded by Keira herself, she defiantly told the FO to invest in her for a change. She entered a leadership programme, designed to develop women leaders, and she took part in a pilot scheme, which involved being mentored but also mentoring the next generation. She finished this at the time of brutal cuts to departmental budgets

and so was keen to show women that there was life outside of government. This is a particular striking note in her story: feminism and the coming about of private security! However, a possible 'women's network' at her new organisation was a step to far – Keira felt it was best to change things slowly in a more organic way. Keira's idea is not feminism per se – i.e. increasing the number of women in the security domain as this would be a fairer reflection of society – but it is bringing particular skills women tend to have, to the security domain. In addition to being more approachable, see above, Keira also feels that women share ideas in different ways. Women are better at a magpie approach to security solutions, picking and mixing elements to come to a more enriched solution.

Keira's perspective of future security threats are more holistic than for instance, terrorism alone. She fears the disintegration of the social fabric of society because of over use of technology (e.g. mothers being on the mobile phones rather than interacting with their children). Gangs and tribes operate in a different way to what they used to, making it easier for people to become isolated and extreme. Cyber security is like the 'blue veins of a Stilton cheese' – it is not one particular thing but all pervasive. She does not have an answer to my question of what the private sector brings ("I'd have to go away and think about that") and can see it isn't particular clear who the enemy is, and whether the private and public sector share the same views here. She does, however, have a lot of ideas as to how to professionalise (private) security, to organise it where both come together, and how to increase and diversify the number of people coming into a security career.