The last policeman
On the globalisation of local policing

David Sausdal

Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology at Stockholm University to be publicly defended on Friday 25 May 2018 at 13.00 in lecture hall 7, building D, Universitetsvägen 10 D.

Abstract
Global threats, such as cross-border crime and terrorism are on the rise! At least, this is a popular notion amongst politicians, policy makers and the police, who are therefore advocating a need for policing to become as peripatetic and pervasive as these criminal developments. This has led to a rise in transnational or international police collaborations, notably through institutions such as Interpol, Europol, Frontex, UNPOL and many bilateral partnerships. In criminology, this ‘globalisation of policing’ has been richly documented and discussed. However, studies have mostly taken an interest in these new institutions, paying less attention to how local police work has been affected by increasingly having become part of a more global world order. Given this lack of knowledge, this thesis discusses what Bowling has also termed ‘the globalisation of local policing’. It does so on the basis of 900 hours of participant observation at two Danish police task forces engaged in policing cross-border crimes. More specifically, it examines the everyday practices and perceptions of the task forces’ detectives. In doing so, the thesis demonstrates that the globalisation of local policing has led to a considerable amount of concern among Danish detectives. It was this concern that led the detectives to sarcastically, but to some extent also seriously, proclaim that they might be the last real policemen.

Keywords: Policing, globalisation, cross-border crime, concern, nostalgia, everyday life, ethnography.

Stockholm 2018
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:diva-153382

ISBN 978-91-7797-262-4
ISBN 978-91-7797-263-1
ISSN 1404-1820

Department of Criminology

Stockholm University, 106 91 Stockholm
THE LAST POLICEMAN
David Sausdal
The last policeman
On the globalisation of local policing

David Sausdal
To my mormor,

who might not have fully understood all this

but who would have loved it anyway
Globala hot, som gränsöverskridande brottslighet och terrorism, ökar! Det är åtminstone ett populärt påstående bland politiker, beslutsfattare och polisen som förespråkat att polisarbetet ska hålla jämna steg med kriminalitetens utveckling. Detta har gett upphov till internationella polissamarbeten, i form av institutioner som Interpol, Europol, Frontex, UNPOL, Schengen och en mängd bilaterala partnerskap. Inom kriminologin finns en rik dokumentation och diskussion kring denna ”globalisering av polisarbetet”. Forskningen har emellertid i huvudsak varit intresserad av de nya transnationella institutionerna, och mindre uppmärksamhet har ägnats åt att förstå hur det lokala polisarbetet påverkats av att det alltmer blivit en del av en global världsort. Mot denna bakgrund diskuteras i denna avhandling vad Bowling har kallat ”globaliseringen av lokalt polisarbetet”. Detta görs genom 900 timmars deltagande observation av två danska polisenheter inriktade på gränsöverskridande brottslighet. Mer specifikt undersöks vardagliga praktiker och uppfattningar bland brottsutredare. I avhandlingen visas hur globaliseringen av det lokala polisarbetet har lett till betydande problem för danska poliser. Oro kring dessa problem ledde poliserna till att sarkastiskt, men med visst allvar uttala att de kanske var de sista riktiga poliserna.

Nyckelord: Polisarbete, gränsöverskridande brottslighet, globalisering, oro, nostalgi, vardagsliv, etnografi.
Acknowledgements

Often, when we think back, it can be difficult to determine whether our memories are real or whether they are just figments of our imagination. What we did and where we were sometimes seems so unreal to us that we almost question whether it really happened. I at least often get this feeling. And in handing in this PhD thesis, and attaining a degree of whose existence my young self, and most of the people I grew up with, family and friends, were completely unaware, the feeling is only intensified.

It is with this feeling that I want to thank all of you who have helped me along the way. First of all, I have to thank my mum, Ghita, who has always been there and who is here today. I also have to thank my stepdad, Torsten, whom I disagreed with as a boy but to whom I have grown closer as an adult. A big ‘thank you’ to my dad, Tom, now sadly deceased. For all his faults, he remains a source of warmth when I think of the big smile hidden behind his big black beard. And, when it comes to family, more than anything I would have loved for my grandma, mormor Gerda, to be here. Without a doubt, she would have smiled more than anyone. To her, I was the kind of perfect human being I can only inspire to be. The biggest ‘thank you’ to you all and, of course, to all my dear siblings.

Family is not everything. That’s definitely true when it comes to writing a PhD thesis. In other words, I could never have done this without the help of my supervisors Magnus Hörnqvist and Henrik Vigh. In your different ways you have inspired me and pushed me towards where I needed to be. I must also thank all my wonderful colleagues at Stockholm University’s Department of Criminology. You are too many to mention, but you know who you are. Nevertheless, Tove Pettersson and Janne Flyghed deserve a special mention as you provided me with indispensable critiques and comments as the thesis neared its conclusion. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Princeton University’s Department of Anthropology, the University of Copenhagen’s Department of Anthropology and Faculty of Law and to the University of Oslo’s Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law. Thank you for stimulating my mind, for your friendships and, in general, for allowing me to visit and become a part of your encouraging workday. Many names should be mentioned, but in particular I must thank Keith Hayward, Katja Franko and John Borneman. Your input and help has been vital. And Leanne Weber, of course, thank you for sharpening both my mind and my pen. And last but most certainly not least, I am very grateful to Ian Loader for agreeing to be the opponent at the defence of my PhD thesis, and also to Helene Gundhus, Micael Björk and, again, Tove Pettersson for making up the PhD committee.
Admittedly, the last year or so has not been the very best in my life. Professionally, it has been arduous but amazing. Personally, however, it has been a bit rough. Ask any of my friends, and they will confirm this. As they always have and as I'm sure they always will, they have been there to listen to my (all too many) complaints and to lift my head and my spirit. Thank you. You have all been indispensable, just as you always will be. And, of course, I also have to thank my dearest partner, Nynne. Words can't express what a big help you've been to me. I look forward to repaying your care and support.

Finally, and I should have done this to begin with, as none of this would have happened without you, the biggest thank you goes to the Danish Police, and to Charlotte Bergén Skov in particular. Even more so, my appreciation goes to the detectives working at the task forces whom I was so generously allowed to follow. I am most grateful to you, not least for the way in which all of you took the time to show me your world, work and, not least, worries – worries that eventually became the focus of this thesis. I can only hope that you will be able to recognise yourselves behind the at times obscure haze that academic language too often ends up producing.

And to all of you whom I have failed to mention; I'm sorry. Rest assured that I'm truly grateful, even if forgetful.

Kind regards/Kærlige hilsener,
David
Table of contents

Acknowledgements.................................................................................................. 1
Abbreviations........................................................................................................... 4
Preface: Globalisation; fretful and floating thoughts.............................................. 5
Introduction: The last policeman............................................................................ 10
Chapter one: The collaborator; notes on methods and ethics .............................. 32
Chapter two: Policing globalisation in Denmark.................................................. 68
Chapter three: Police surveillance revisited .......................................................... 96
Chapter four: Police xenophobia revisited ......................................................... 126
Chapter five: Policing terrorism revisited............................................................. 148
Chapter six: Police nostalgia revisited ................................................................. 171
Chapter seven: The banalities of policing; everyday criminology revisited ........ 207
Conclusion: The lost policeman........................................................................... 229
References.......................................................................................................... 243
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>The Documentation Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFCS</td>
<td>The Eastern Foreigner Control Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurojust</td>
<td>The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europol</td>
<td>European Police Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCS</td>
<td>The Foreigner Control Sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontex</td>
<td>European Border and Coast Guard Agency, from French: Frontières extérieures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpol</td>
<td>International Criminal Police Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCI</td>
<td>The National Centre for Investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFB</td>
<td>Task Force Burglary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFP</td>
<td>Task Force Pickpocketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFCS</td>
<td>The Western Foreigner Control Section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface:
Globalisation; fretful and floating thoughts

All this desire to have oh so open borders, to just let people roam around freely; all these ideas that we of course need to accommodate every international directive and be together like one big happy family; like, honestly, they all seem a bit absurd and naïve to me. Sometimes I even get quite irritated. It’s like it’s become an unquestioned good and inevitable thing that we absolutely have to be a part of a global world. I mean, I know all this talk about globalisation and what it means, but when did it become something that we automatically have to accept?

These are the reflections of a Danish police detective – reflections that are also common among his colleagues, and reflections that point towards the central interests of this PhD thesis. Indeed, as will be evident when reading its several chapters and many pages, this PhD thesis is concerned with how globalisation was something that was not automatically and happily accepted by a group of Danish police detectives. In describing how, and in making an attempt to explain why this was, many ethnographic examples will be provided and analysed. However, prior to reading about and assessing the detectives’ (apprehensive) reactions to policing developments that they thought were caused by Denmark’s inclusion in a more global world order, it is important to provide the reader with an initial overarching and contextualising comment. This relates to the issue of the term ‘globalisation’ and what it means within the conceptual confines of this thesis.

Ever since the mid-to-late 1980s, globalisation has been both a widely discussed phenomenon and a contested concept in the social sciences (see Bauman, 1998; Beck, 2009; Giddens, 2011; Harvey, 1999; Held and McGrew, 2007; McLuhan and Powers, 1989; Robertson, 1995; Sassen, 1996). It has been used to describe the increasing interconnectedness of societies through capital, cultural, political, material, technological and transportational means. It has been used to point to the narrowing of previously obstructive temporal and spatial distances and it has simultaneously been applied to point to how this narrowing is taking place in the form of a selective rather than an inclusive process. Globalisation, it is argued, offers global awareness to most of the world’s people, yet it only offers actual borderlessness and mobility to some. As a result, the concept of globalisation has also been used to point to the stratification processes by which societies, corporations and people of already significant wealth and power are given an advantage, if not them-

---

1 All extensive empirical citations, notes, descriptions etc. included in this thesis come in this format; indented and written in italics.
selves taking advantage, and consequently, to the human hardship that has become intensified as a result. Moreover, on a more philosophical note, globalisation has been used to describe the changing nature, if not the dissolution, of previous ontologies and epistemologies, pointing to the growing fluidity but also anxiety of postmodern life and thinking. And recently, academics have even started to talk about ‘the end of globalisation’ (Rugman, 2012), pointing to various examples of local political protest and developments against what some believe to be the unwanted effects of globalisation. In the eyes of the protesters, the local is portrayed and perceived as being both at risk and superior in relation to the offerings of a more global world order. As such, notions of globalisation are many and varied – and I have here only mentioned some of the ways in which globalisation has been portrayed in the social scientific literature.

While the interlocutors or research subjects described in this thesis, i.e. a number of Danish police detectives, would surely lean towards the latter understanding of globalisation, seeing it as a problem and something that functions as a hindrance in relation to local issues, this thesis remains largely uninterested in participating in a debate about what globalisation really is. Certainly, as is further discussed in the thesis’ introduction, my research into the Danish police was initially driven by a contemporary criminological interest in globalisation (Aas, 2010; Pakes, 2012) and, more specifically, in what has been termed ‘the globalisation of policing’ (Bowling, 2009; Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012; Bradford et al., 2016). Since criminology has largely been shaped by the legal and conceptual Westphalian limits imposed by the nation state’s views on crime and punishment, criminological scholars are now turning their attention towards how global processes have increasingly been challenging the theoretical premises and deductions of criminology. This more “global attention” also concerns the subject matter of policing. For example, in noting how the world has witnessed a growth in transnational and international police collaborations and an expansion of the surveillance and information technologies used to track criminality and other alleged societal risks across national borders, scholars have forced themselves to rethink policing in more global terms, beyond the confines of the nation state. Police work, crudely put, can no longer be understood as primarily concerning the local beat. Instead, as Bowling has noted, even the stereotyped local police officer cannot escape the fact and feeling that his job has become more globally attuned (2009). It was this ‘globalisation of local policing’ (ibid.) that inspired this PhD thesis, since it pushed me to study how local Danish police officers were reacting and relating to their workday becoming more global. For example, how did increasingly encountering suspects of foreign nationality, and increasingly having to coordinate and collaborate with foreign colleagues, affect police practice and perceptions?

In asking such questions, I have obviously made use of the academic subject matter of globalisation as a point of departure and an inspiration in my research. That said, in
directing my research interest at a number of local Danish police detectives, I have simultaneously abandoned any ambition to provide and produce any definite knowledge about what globalisation actually is either as an empirical phenomenon or a sociological concept. Instead, I have followed Burawoy’s ideas regarding how globalisation may be studied by means of ethnography. In observing the everyday life of the people ‘left on the ground’, Burawoy argues, the ethnographer

shows globalization to be a very uneven process and, most importantly, an artefact manufactured and received in the local. Globalisation is produced and consumed not in thin air, not in some virtual reality but in real organisations, institutions, communities etc. (Burawoy, 2001: 148)

In other words, an ethnographic interest in globalisation is a matter of mapping and understanding the local, ‘emic perspective’, with this consisting in the attempt to discover ‘patterns with respect to what goes on inside people’s heads’, or more to the point, ‘the method of finding where something makes a difference for one’s informants’ (Harris, 1976: 330, 311). Or as Fassin has reasoned specifically in relation to how ‘the police have become a major controversial figure in the contemporary world while law and order policies have tended to disseminate globally’, ‘ethnography […] makes it possible to account for the police’s view on their practices while embedding them in a larger picture’ (2017c: 2, 6).

Following this ethnographic train of thought, the aim of the thesis is basically to shed light on the practices and perceptions of a number of Danish detectives – detectives who often framed and phrased their experiences in terms of ‘globalisation’ or other, for them, directly related terms such as ‘global’, ‘cross-border’, ‘international’, ‘foreign’, ‘outside’ or ‘not Danish’. Thus, whether the detectives were correct in pointing to globalisation as the cause of certain developments is irrelevant in the framework of this thesis. My interest lies solely with the police perspective, where it evidently played a significant role. Furthermore, as the introductory reflections voiced by the Danish detective also demonstrate, the way the detectives used and understood globalisation should be understood as that which in semiotics is called a ‘floating signifier’ (see Mehlman, 1972). Not unlike well-known but frequently contested concepts such as ‘culture’, ‘ethnicity’ or ‘race’ (Hall and Jhally, 1996), globalisation is regularly used as a signifier, without there being any singular agreed upon referent (Epstein, 2003). In everyday talk and life, globalisation can and often does mean a lot of different things. Among the detectives, for instance, globalisation was used to talk about everything from border practices and politics, foreign suspects, cross-border crime, terrorism, technological developments, Europol and other transnational or
international police institutions and bilateral partnerships, but it was also used when referring to wider issues such as debates about refugees and migration. In this way, globalisation signified a wide and at times even contradictory range of phenomena and issues. Having said this, while the actual meaning of globalisation was blurry, the detectives were nonetheless united in the notion that globalisation was something that was not particularly positive. Their talk about globalisation was thus unified more by sentiment than by strict semiotics. In short, to the Danish detectives, rather than being a coherent concept, globalisation was often basically a conceptual outlet for their many job-related frustrations.

Therefore, as we now move on to the actual substance of the thesis, I ask you, the reader, to remember this when reading about the various ways in which the detectives discussed globalisation and not to become too invested in academic debates about what globalisation really is and what it is not. Nor would it be worthwhile for you to spend too much time fact-checking the detectives’ notions. This is because, returning for a moment to the detective’s opening statement, it would certainly be correct to say that he did not actually know everything about ‘all this talk about globalisation and what it means’, and nor did his colleagues. The only thing the detectives knew was that globalisation was one means, amongst others, of talking about some, to them, problematic occupational developments.

This thesis is their story – yet a story that is not told verbatim or uncritically as some form of unattached or apologetic anecdote, but rather a story that is mediated and has thus been analysed by me to provide a supplementary and at times nuancing narrative in relation to the existing literature on the growing globalisation of policing. Indeed, the detectives’ narratives about the effects of globalisation often became a story about what globalisation appears not to be about. As will become evident, the Danish detectives often used the concept of globalisation as a convenient backdrop, as a ‘suitable enemy’ as Christie and Bruun would probably have put it (1985), by means of which they would – consciously or unconsciously – reflect on what really concerned them, this being the pushes and pulls, the disgruntles and gratifications of their local, everyday police work.
The location of the two Danish police rescue forces whose workday I was allowed to follow. The two police badges in the top left corner point to their location in downtown Copenhagen and north of the city, respectively.
Introduction:
The last policeman

It's late afternoon Friday in Vesterbro, Copenhagen. The summer sun is out, shining brightly. A group of five police detectives sit on the balcony at the downtown police station, Station City, enjoying an after-hours beer and a chat. The detectives are all part of the Danish police investigation task force named Task Force Pickpocketing. As the name indicates, it is the task force and its detectives' job to investigate and apprehend professional pickpockets in the Copenhagen Police district, pickpockets who are almost exclusively from countries outside Denmark such as Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Morocco and Chile. Drinking their beers and talking about the rise in pickpocketing that Denmark has experienced over the last decade or so, one of the detectives concludes: 'That's globalization for you, right? With open borders and people moving around so easily and undetected it's hard to keep track. Seriously, sometimes it feels like we're trying to empty the Baltic Sea using a teaspoon. That's our job. We are the teaspoon police.' One of his colleagues smiles and joins in: 'Yeah, well put, that's exactly our job. And we do it. Of course, we do. [Pausing for a moment]. But it seems like these days there is not much left of what police work used to be. It's obvious that the world around us is changing and that policing must change with it. That's the name of the game, right? However, with all these changes and all the things we now have to do and, not least, what we cannot do, I sometimes doubt whether this is something worth doing.' 'Hear, hear!' one of the younger colleagues responds, almost shouting, 'It sometimes feel like we are the last real policemen! A rare and dying breed. Cheers to that!' The group laughs, and they raise their beer cans in mutual salutation.

On the one hand, they seem to be laughing at how unquestionably silly it is to claim that they are the last real policemen – especially in a day and age in which governments, Denmark’s included, are increasingly turning to policing as the solution for a wide range of societal issues. On the other hand, I detect a sense of shared apathy amongst them. It does actually seem like the detectives somehow truly feel that the job is not what is used to be or, perhaps more accurately, that the job isn’t what they think it should be.”

In essence, this thesis is about trying to develop a better understanding of the police concerns that were expressed on that sunny day on a balcony in downtown Copenhagen. Stated differently, the thesis probes further into the causes of the considerable level of vocational concern that I so frequently observed when I spent more than 900 hours observing the police work of Task Force Pickpocketing (TFP) and Task Force Burglary (TFB) in 2015. Why, this thesis asks, were the detectives from these two Danish investigation units, which specialised in the policing of cross-border crime, worried about certain occupational developments – worries that led them to sarcastically but at the same time with some seriousness exclaim that they might be ‘the last real policemen’?

---

As has been noted in the preface, all of the more extensive empirical citations, field notes, descriptions etc. that are included in the thesis will be presented in this format; indented and written in italics.
Globalisation and policing
The opening vignette presented in the introduction also points to the broader theoretical inspiration for the thesis, namely the issue of globalisation and policing. Indeed, when speaking about how they thought their job was becoming less gratifying, the detectives often pointed to what they sometimes bluntly described as ‘the problems of globalisation’. In seeing globalisation as the culprit, however, they did not restrict their focus to the increase in cross-border crime that was resulting from the world having become more interconnected and itinerant. They also spoke critically of global developments in policing itself that were affecting their daily work. These for example included the worldwide move towards improving police cooperation across international and institutional borders, and also the move towards making policing more intelligence-led via the use of information technologies and strategic analyses. Although the detectives did see the need for vocational changes to better counter the effects of globalisation, they remained apprehensive – an apprehension that not uncommonly gave way to expressions such as those seen in the opening vignette, or below:

Call me bitter or old-fashioned but I don’t really appreciate it. I don’t appreciate how easy it has become for any foreigner with criminal intentions to come to Denmark and steal whatever. We have little control over that as things are. As I see it, globalisation and all this talk about freedom of movement is screwing Danish citizens over... And then there’s the question of the ways in which we’re told to deal with it. Here, there’s a lot of talk of the need to analyse, be strategic, build up collaborations with external partners and you name it. Attending meetings here and there and generating academic analyses might do some good, I guess. But it’s worthless if we don’t get out there and do some proper police work. That’s my two cents, if you ask me.

This opinion was voiced by a Danish detective in his mid-thirties, demonstrating that what he himself admitted was an old-fashioned viewpoint cannot simply be explained away or viewed as a simple generational issue.

While the theme of globalisation has been an integral part of, for instance, sociology, anthropology, economics and political science since the 1980s, it has only more recently become a focus of criminological interest (see Aas, 2013a; Chan, 2000; Findlay, 2000; Pakes, 2012). Until the turn of the century, criminology had – and still has, many would say – a statecentric or ethnocentric bias. In other words, in examining crime or criminal justice, criminologists have had a tendency to follow the ontological and epistemological definitions of the nation state, even when they are critical towards such definitions. However, with crime and criminal justice increasingly having become more global, cutting across the nation state, criminologists have had to force themselves to rethink the ‘how?’, ‘who?’, ‘what?’, ‘why?’ and ‘where?’ of criminology. Or as Aas has more elegantly
put it, bearing in mind Wimmer and Glick Schiller’s critique of ‘methodological nationalism’ (2002):

The globalizing social condition creates novel methodological and theoretical imperatives, which have been, among others, articulated through the critique of the so-called methodological nationalism. Transnational interconnectedness and interdependence challenge established national frameworks of thought and demand an outward looking perspective, as well as contributing to a generally more international academic habitus ... [T]he growing awareness of global connectedness represents an impetus to develop methodological, theoretical and conceptual approaches which transcend the established ethnocentric frameworks and are built on a more expansive and inclusive geographical imagination. (Aas, 2012a: 8)

In criminology, such a ‘more expansive and inclusive geographical imagination’ (ibid.), or, more simply put, a more global perspective, has prompted a range of insightful studies. For example, it has given birth to studies of cross-border or transnational crimes (Bruinsma, 2015; Findlay, 2000; Friedrichs, 2007; Kruize, 2016; Passas, 1999; Ruggiero, 2013; Siegel, 2014; Van Daele and Vander Beken, 2010; Van Duynne, 2001; Vigh, 2017; Von Lampe, 2012), studies of migration and how certain kinds of migration are increasingly criminalised (Aas, 2013b; Aas and Bosworth, 2013; Andersson, 2014; Bosworth, 2014; De Genova, 2010; De Giorgi, 2010; Feldman, 2011; Stumpf, 2006; Melossi, 2013; Pickering et al., 2015; Ugelvik and Ugelvik, 2013; Weber, 2013; Willen, 2007), and also studies of borders or rather bordering, which demonstrate how both physical borders and sociocultural boundaries are increasingly policed and produced, thereby enforcing differences between the haves and have-nots of society (Aas, 2013b; Aas and Gundhus, 2015; Aas and Bosworth, 2013; Aas, 2014; Andreas, 2012; Barker, 2015; Fassin, 2011; Heyman, 1994; Loftus, 2015; Mutsaers, 2014; Pickering, 2004; Pickering and McCalloch, 2012; Weber, 2013). And I have only mentioned some of the criminological studies carried out as a result of an interest in the effects of globalisation – criminological studies that in various and often overlapping ways address our traditional subject matter, matters of crime, harm, power and justice as given shape in local conditions and global developments (Pakes, 2012: 5).

The globalisation of policing

Returning to the specific research interest of this thesis, another growing criminological focus is the question of what globalisation has meant for policing and broader means of criminal justice (see Aas and Gundhus, 2015; Anderson, 1989; Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bowling and Shepptycki, 2012; Bigo and Guild, 2005a; Bradford et al., 2016; Deflem,
2002; Findlay, 2011; Franko and Gundhus, 2015; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Lemieux, 2013; Lohne, 2017; Marmo and Chazal, 2016; Nelken, 2011; Newburn and Sparks, 2004; Ross, 2004; Sheptycki, 2000; Weber and Bowling, 2014). One shared conclusion in this area is that policing and criminal justice have become increasingly international. Although the novelty of this internationalisation is at times exaggerated, it is beyond question that we have recently seen a significant qualitative and quantitative growth in transnational or international policing institutions. That is, more power or more significance have been afforded to existing institutions and new institutions have been established. Telling examples of this include Interpol, Europol, Frontex, UNPOL and Schengen. Add to this the increase in bilateral policing partnerships and it is evident that policing has become more international if not global, stretching across and sometimes beyond the nation state.

When asked, the customary explanation for this expansion given by politicians, policy makers or the police, in the latter case eluding to what the Danish detectives said above, is that it is necessary as a result of ‘the dark sides of globalization’ (Heine and Thakur, 2011b). While globalisation may have produced desirable effects, for some at least, in the form of capital, political and sociocultural opportunities made possible by a greater interconnectedness between countries, it has also provided criminal opportunities. This was famously described in Castells’ seminal study on *The Rise of the Network Society* (2011 [1996]). As Castells maintained, taking advantage of the increasing technological and transportational means provided by globalisation, criminals are now able to move more easily across borders, expanding their markets whilst at the same time increasing their chances of evading the apparatus of criminal justice, which are more constricted by the nation state. Indeed, as has been argued in the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) report on *The Globalization of Crime* (2010), which was praised by amongst the INTERPOL Secretary General for its ‘ground-breaking assessment’,

Organized crime has diversified, gone global and reached macro-economic proportions: illicit goods are sourced from one continent, trafficked across another, and marketed in a third. Mafias are today truly a transnational problem: a threat to security, especially in poor and conflict-ridden countries. Crime is fueling corruption, infiltrating business and politics, and hindering development. And it is undermining governance by empowering those who operate outside the law. (UNODC, 2010: ii)

Indeed, as is commonly argued by policy makers and the policing institutions (Europol, 2013b; 2017; Rigspolitiet, 2012; UNODC, 2009; UNODC, 2010), it is this discrepancy between criminal opportunities and policing and penal opportunities in an age of globalisation that has necessitated an expansion of policing and criminal justice. Or as stated in
simple but startling terms by the United Nations: ‘Since crime has gone global, purely national responses are inadequate’ (UNODC, 2010:ii).

While there is certainly some truth to this, research on the issue remains sceptical. As Bowling and Sheptycki have argued, for example: ‘[T]he simple functionalist notion that global policing has arisen because of a need to chase after global bad guys does not provide a very satisfactory account of the observable transformations’ (2012: 132). Instead, research on the globalisation of policing has pointed to a number of supplementary explanations. While I am conscious of the almost unavoidable risk of overly simplifying the theoretical richness of these explanations, what they tend to argue is that the globalisation of policing is due either to deliberate political or ‘moral entrepreneurship’, here using Becker’s (1995) famous concept, or, alternatively but relatedly, to an expansion in the way in which criminality and thus crime control is understood and dealt with in our contemporary, globalised societies. The first line of thought points to the way in which an internationalisation of police cooperation has been heavily encouraged by political actors such as the US or the EU. Acting as moral entrepreneurs, and attending to their own ideological, political and/or economic interests, both the US and the EU have either directly or indirectly promoted the need for countries to work more closely together in areas of criminal justice and homeland security (Anderson et al., 1996; Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Nadelmann, 2010). In addition, Bowling and Sheptycki have pointed to the considerable role that police forces around the world have played in forming international policing relations. As a result of the way in which the police are (increasingly) being asked by politicians to provide estimations of both contemporary and future criminal and societal risks, the widely shared cultural outlooks of police organisations have become more influential. Stated more simply, the police, who are known for having somewhat conservative and suspicious worldviews, are influencing international politics by pointing to and perhaps exaggerating the risks of the aforementioned dark sides of globalisation (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012) (see also Flyghed, 2002). This line of thought also includes discussions of ‘policy transfer’ (Newburn, 2002) and of how more global forms of policing have emerged out of the cross-national branding and borrowing of policing policies such as, for example, the renowned New York model of “zero tolerance” policing.

While other criminological researchers would surely agree that policing has become more global as a result of various forms of moral and political entrepreneurship (or fearmongering as others would call it), they also see a more dominant underlying reason.

---

[1] There are, of course, other possible explanations, such as explanations pointing to how more global forms of both crime and policing are not new at all but rather have a large number of historical roots and causes. On the basis of this view, it would thus be more accurate to talk about the globalisation of policing representing an intensification of an existing phenomenon, rather than viewing it as a present-day innovation (see Andreas & Nadelmann 2006).
One seminal article that describes an underlying reason of this kind is Bayley and Shearing’s ‘The Future of Policing’ (1996). Here, the authors argue that one of the primary ‘driving forces’ behind the current restructuring of policing, including a globalisation of policing, is a widespread ‘fear of crime [and] the inability of government to satisfy society’s longing for security’ (1996:585). This is very much related to Beck’s famous notion that modern-day societies are ‘risk societies’, which are comprehensively and thus apprehensively invested in locating and managing not only strictly criminal activity but also broader forms of societal risk before these evolve and actually become harmful (2006) – a notion Beck later expanded into the global domain in talking about a ‘world risk society’ (ibid.).

In other words, in different but overlapping ways, researchers are pointing to the presence of ‘a culture of fear’ (Furedi, 2006) of not only crime but of other societal risks, which has become so prevalent in contemporary societies that it has led to the expansion of the means by which societies seek to control it. This has led scholars to argue that we have witnessed a ‘pluralization of policing’ (Bayley and Shearing 1996:858), with the task of policing no longer being solely the monopoly of the public police, but having increasingly come to involve a complex policing network that includes both public and private actors, and that cuts across both international and institutional borders. Although scholars disagree about whether this development in policing systems may be said to amount to a radical evolution in policing, or whether it should “merely” be seen as an escalation of already existing approaches (Jones and Newburn, 2002), there is general agreement that contemporary means of policing have changed significantly. It is this underlying change from a narrower focus on criminality to a broader focus on risks and (in)security, often driven by fearmongering and Post-Keynesian neoliberal politics, that has led scholars to argue that contemporary research into policing should abandon its restrictive focus on the public police of nation states and that it should instead focus on the wider and often global constellations of ‘the policing web’ (Brodeur, 2010), ‘plural policing’ networks, (Jones and Newburn, 2006; Loader, 2000), or ‘the policing of risk-society’ (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). Some have gone even further and argued that the research should abandon policing as a research subject altogether and instead focus on the ‘governance of security’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003) or ‘regulation’ (Braithwaite, 2000b; Hörnqvist, 2015).

In short, although varying in scope and substance, what these studies highlight is that the increasing globalisation of policing is not just a simplistic function of a globalisation of crime, as many politicians and practitioners otherwise insist. It also involves a wider and more complex story about ‘transnational moral entrepreneurship’ (Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006: 7), international and institutional policy making and an increasing governmental as well as commercial move towards the sating of a prevalent social need for security in a global world in which a variety of risks are persistently believed to be penetrating the inevitably permeable borders of the nation state.
Globalisation of local policing

The above-mentioned research has undeniably provided a range of thought-provoking insights when it comes to the causes and consequences of an increasing globalisation of policing. For this reason, although this thesis has a different focus, it has been a central source of inspiration for me in carrying out my study and in writing this thesis.

Having said this, one could argue that studies of the globalisation of policing have tended ‘to overstate the degree of novelty attributable to the changes taking place and [to] posit an ‘over-globalized’ view of the world’ (Jones and Newburn 2002: 132) (see also Williams, 2016). Or as Bowling has argued (2009), there has been a tendency to mostly focus on quantitative measures, the level of policy making and the make-up of international policing institutions or networks. However, while the world has unquestionably witnessed a rise in both public and private policing institutions and partnerships that are oriented towards and operating at a more global level, the globalisation of policing has also had a considerable effect on police work at the local level. Or, stated in perhaps overly simplistic layman’s terms, the globalisation of policing is not just a matter of an increasing “Interpol-isation” or an increase in the number of liaison officers and intelligence agents roaming around the world in the style of James Bond. The globalisation of policing has also reshuffled what it means to be a “normal” police officer policing one’s beat. However, as Bowling amongst others has argued, little qualitative research has been conducted to examine ‘how far and how fast [l]ocal policing [is], in fact, changing in response to increased global interconnectedness’ (2009:157). ‘The globalisation of local policing’, he elaborates, is of criminological importance, because

the most significant impact of global interconnectedness may be happening much closer to home. It seems likely that neighbourhood policing is undergoing ‘interactive globalisation’ in which indigenous practitioners become globally aware. In a global age, borough commanders must police their local communities while remaining conscious of the impact of global forces on that locality. (Bowling, 2009: 14, emphasis added)

This is why Bowling and Sheptycki in their treatise on Global Policing (2012) remind fellow scholars to not forget to study what they also term ‘glocal policing’, a term used to refer to a situation in which ‘local police agencies and units [are] transnationally linked’ (ibid: 25)

Importantly, focusing on the globalisation of local policing is not just a matter of empirically satiating a sparsely studied field. It also bears theoretical promise. As Aas has argued, studies of the local level, preferably by means of extended ethnographic examinations, provide ‘an antidote to the abstract nature of many theoretical claims about globalization and its impact’ (Aas, 2013a: 175). A similar contention has recently been made by
Loftus in her study of international border policing. In this study she calls for ‘policing scholars […] to engage in sustained ethnographic fieldwork to track how security frameworks are realised at the local level’ (2015: 115). These are direct echoes of how and why Burawoy has envisioned an ethnography of globalisation, as mentioned in the preface (2001). In other words, ethnographic studies of the local level provide an opportunity to not only produce empirical knowledge about how global policies and discourses are perceived and carried out in practice but, simultaneously, to relate these to dominant theoretical models regarding the globalisation of policing. In a nutshell, this is what this thesis is all about, providing ethnographically gathered empirical examples of glocal policing practices and perceptions which – as will become evident whilst reading the thesis – provide support for, add to, but also sometimes challenge, and thus encourage us to modify, prevailing theories.

Local police perspectives and concerns

As has been noted, researchers have called for the local level of police work to be studied ethnographically. It was with this call in mind that I set out to examine how the Danish Police were adjusting to a more global world order.

I will soon (in the next chapter) discuss more thoroughly the methodological and ethical issues that my study entailed. For example, how did I obtain permission to observe the task forces’ daily police work? And what are the potentials and problems associated with using participant observation as one’s main method? Such questions are of course pivotal to any understanding of the aims and results of my research. Here it is sufficient to note that I did end up gaining access – an access that allowed me to explore how a group of Danish detectives reacted to their work becoming more globally attuned.

For an extensive amount of time, I was allowed to follow every aspect of the detectives’ work – when they were working at their desks, attending meetings, interrogating suspects or going on stake-outs. I was even invited to spend some after-hours time with the detectives. And it was on one such occasion that I ended up on the police station’s balcony, as described earlier, overhearing the detectives complaining about the state of things. This was by no means the first time that I had heard them express their concerns and frustrations. However, there was something about the deliberately overdramatic way in which the younger detective exclaimed that they might be ‘the last real policemen’ that stuck with me. It made me think about whether the detectives’ concerns were merely an example of the stereotypical police wistfulness frequently depicted in police research. Or, alternatively, whether their concerns about the globalisation of policing were actually manifestations of a more profound story.

I decided to pursue the latter line of thought, placing the officers’ concerns at the centre of the focus for this thesis – an emic and inductive choice (Harris, 1976) which was
made even more appealing by the simple fact that one of the most apparent outcomes of the increasing globalisation of the Danish detectives’ work was that it was causing a considerable amount of concern, dissatisfaction, frustration, apprehensiveness, negativity etc. Admittedly, however, I could have chosen to focus on other and equally important aspects of their work, for instance by pursuing ‘the crimmigration thesis’ (Stumpf, 2006) and elaborating on the task forces’ increasing focus on undocumented migrants, their collaboration with other migration police units and migration services and their opportunistic use of migration law. I could also have chosen to focus more clearly on a criminological study of ‘mobility’ and ‘borders’ (Aas and Bosworth, 2013; Aas, 2013b; Barker, 2015; Bosworth et al., 2016; Fassin, 2011; Pickering and McCulloch, 2012; Pickering et al., 2015; Weber, 2013), demonstrating how the detectives were working together with national and international policing actors, increasingly policing both the external physical borders and the internal sociocultural boundaries of Danish society, thus tightening the net around unwanted or criminal(ised) migrants, and in doing so demonstrating how borders are not only policed but produced in Danish society. Another route would have been to highlight the potentially discriminatory effects of the detectives’ work in our global day and age and the problematic racialisation of this work (Delsoi and Shiner, 2015; Miller, 2010; Sollund, 2006; Weber and Bowling, 2013). As a final example, I could have more clearly accentuated the ways in which the task forces were part of a both internationally and/or institutionally widening policing network (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012; Bowling, 2009; Brodeur, 2010; Shearing and Wood, 2003; Jones and Newburn, 2006; Sheptycki, 2002; Sheptycki, 2000; Sheptycki, 2005; Lemieux, 2013; Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bradford et al., 2016). And there are unquestionably even more ways in which I could have framed and pursued my study of the Danish task forces and their detectives.

Nonetheless, besides the obvious fact that various concerns were a dominant part of the detectives’ workday, and accordingly demanded and were deserving of academic attention, the reason I ended up focusing on these sentiments was also that I saw a possibility of telling a largely untold story. In recent years, as the above-mentioned studies indicate, a number of insightful studies have dealt with the consequences of contemporary (global) policing. These studies have been helpful in demonstrating and discussing the results of an expansion of policing means and methods. They have broadened our criminological understandings, showing how notions about crime and punishment are currently being reconceptualised in a more global day and age, and also showing that this often has tragic consequences for, for instance, non-citizens and other marginalised groups in society (see Fassin, 2013a; Mutsaers, 2014; Weber, 2013). However, while these studies primarily focus on the effects that contemporary policing has on the policed, they rarely take up the question of how the officers themselves are affected. Although a few insightful studies have examined how police officers experience increasingly becoming a part of a
more global world (see Franko and Gundhus, 2015; Fyfe et al., 2017; Gundhus, 2012; Gundhus and Franko, 2016; Larsson, 2006; Ross, 2004; Yakhlef et al., 2015) the criminological knowledge in this area remains limited. It was this lack of knowledge that prompted me to pursue and further examine the Danish detectives’ concerns.

In general, although some might debate this point, I believe it can be argued that thorough studies of police officers’ own perceptions and perspectives are few and far between. When studying police perceptions, such as what factors police officers are concerned by, the predominant approach has been to discuss the issue in terms of ‘police culture’ (Chan, 1996; Cockcroft, 2012; Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Herbert, 1998; Holdaway, 1994; Lofus, 2009; Reiner, 1993; Reuss-Ianni, 1993; Waddington, 1999b; Westmarland, 2008). These studies, with little variation, tend towards the same conclusion, namely that police perceptions are heavily affected by shared cultural values that can be found in police organisations across the globe. Thus, as Lofus summarises, rather extensively, in a relatively recent study of police culture:

> It is now cliché to refer to what Reiner describes as the ‘core characteristics’ of police culture. Police, it is said, have an exaggerated sense of mission towards their role and crave work that is crime oriented and promises excitement. They celebrate masculine exploits, show willingness to use force and engage in informal working practices. Officers are continually suspicious, lead socially isolated lives and display defensive solidarity with colleagues. They are mainly conservative in politics and morality, and their culture is marked by cynicism and pessimism. The police world view includes a simplistic, decontextualised understanding of criminality and officers are intolerant towards those who challenge the status quo. According to this orthodox conception, these cultural mores are communicated and reinforced through on-the-job socialisation and arise as officers adapt to the demands of the police vocation. (Lofus, 2010: 1-2)

In short, police culture, and thus police perceptions, are by large a story of conservatism, inwardness, suspicion, crudeness, cynicism, pessimism, masculinity, action and, one might add, often xenophobia.

As the different chapters of this thesis will show, the Danish detectives’ perceptions ran along these lines. However, one central argument of the thesis is that through paying attention to their various concerns, a larger and more complex understanding emerged. This was a story that goes beyond the, I believe, crude functionalism that by and large has characterised studies of police culture – a functionalism that is fundamentally based on Skolnick’s contention that police culture is a simple response to ‘the fact that [when] a man is engaged in enforcing a set of rules [this] implies that he also becomes implicated in affirming them’ (2011: 59) (see also Lofus 2010: 9). While it is undeniably
true that much can be explained through this dictum, it simultaneously entails a very simplified view of the police vocation. As this thesis aims to demonstrate, the Danish detectives’ concerns were not merely a simple expression of their being part of a profession mandated with policing and upholding the law. Nor was it simply a matter of their being part of a police culture in which one is socialised into, for example, action-loving, masculine, conservative and perhaps even xenophobic attitudes. The detectives’ concerns also spoke of wider vocational issues, which they experienced as being threatened by various global developments – issues that they felt were central to good and gratifying police work. The fact that the Danish detectives’ cultural attributes differed somewhat from what Loftus, Goold and Mac Giollabhui have also termed ‘the clichéd cultural expressions of uniformed police’ (2015: 629) may to some extent be explained by the specificities of detective work vis-à-vis the work of uniformed police. While the practice and efficacy of patrol work rest upon a spectacular display of the police’s power through visible symbols such as the uniform and the badge, and confrontation (Manning, 2010), detective work by and large functions through indistinctness and consideration (Loftus et al. 2015). This practical difference leaves it mark on the respective cultural outlooks of those involved in these two different forms of police work, possibly making up an, although not substantially, different and separate ‘detective police (sub)culture’ (Bacon, 2017; Ericson, 1981; Hald, 2011; Hobbs, 1988; Sheptycki, 2007b; Young, 1991). Noting this, the thesis also makes a contribution to the relatively smaller number of studies of the practices and perceptions of police work that are not focused on uniformed, patrol work, in this case those associated with the work of detectives (ibid.). This is in line with Punch’s appeal for ‘ethnographers to scrutinize detective work and specialized units’ (cited in Marks, 2005: 866) – an appeal not only voiced because of a wish to fill a an empirical gap but also because of the growing number of such units and the often impervious powers bestowed upon them.

In explaining how the Danish detectives’ concerns and wider cultural outlooks differ from what is normally said about police culture, I also aim to broaden criminological conceptions of what makes up ‘real police work’ (Manning, 1978). Bearing in mind the above-mentioned description of ‘the clichéd police cultural expressions of uniformed police’ (Loftus et al. 2015: 629), what police officers prefer in terms of real police work has often been described in much the same way: Police officers prefer hands-on, action-based crime-fighting rather than the tedium of paperwork or what Banton famously described as ‘peacemaking’ (1964). There is undoubtedly much truth in this. The Danish detectives also had a preference for crime-fighting rather than sitting at their desks. However, when it came to their vocational likes and dislikes, the story was more multi-faceted. As the different chapters, and the thesis in general will illustrate, the detectives’ perceptions were largely not, as e.g. Loftus et al. have otherwise argued in their recent study on the culture
of covert detective work, 'dispassionate', 'unreflective', 'objectifying' or in other ways disregarding of the people they policed (2015: 636, 644). The increasing use of technological and other covert means of surveilling and investigating suspects did not directly and appreciatively foster such vocational disinterest amid the Danish detectives – and when it did, for instance in relation to certain foreign suspects, this was something that the detectives felt to be frustrating. Actually, this is a key finding of the thesis, namely that the concerns expressed by the detectives were related to a shared feeling that various of the practical and technological developments that were a result of the globalisation of policing were making their job more dispassionate, unreflective and distanced.

A study of Policing rather than Danish Policing

That the Danish detectives, apparently different from detectives in other countries, didn't necessarily appreciate their work becoming more dispassionate could lead one to want to discuss whether this might be due to their specific “Danishness”. Yet it is important to note that, while taking its vantage point in the local actions and attitudes of a group of Danish detectives, the thesis does not delve deeply into the specificities of Danish issues. Though touching upon Danish political and policing discourse, as well as referencing Danish and other relevant Scandinavian police studies, it is not the thesis’ agenda to develop an archetypal anthropological argument about whether what I observed was specific to the Danish Police or, more broadly, was due to sociocultural sentiments specific to Danish culture or produced by the Danish social democratic welfare system. Although such “Danish specificities” no doubt had an effect on the Danish detectives’ outlook, the interest of the thesis lies elsewhere. As is described and discussed throughout, the argument is that, while stemming from an ethnographic study of the Danish Police, the findings have a resonance that goes beyond any domestic discourse. This can be argued quite simply on the basis of the view that if the globalisation of policing is a movement that ties the local into a more global order then the globalised local, be it Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, French, Dutch, Australian, English or American, will in consequence have an analytical purchase. Furthermore, throughout the thesis I continuously make an effort to compare my findings to those from similar studies of the police in other countries, which also explains why I have mentioned the nationalities listed above. By using comparisons in this way, I seek to generalise beyond the specific circumstances of my particular Danish study – or, as in Loader et al.’s framework for global policing studies (2016), I make a conscious effort in avoiding the tendency to parochialism otherwise often found in police research. In short, while it would undoubtedly have been interesting to probe further into what was particularly Danish about the detectives’ behaviour, this thesis has (unfortunately, some might think) primarily been focused on what can be said about policing rather than about Danish policing.
Ethnography, theory and thematic revisits

As has already been noted several times, this thesis is inspired by the body of theory entitled or in other ways associated with ‘the globalisation of policing’. More particularly, as previously explained, it is concerned with the so-called ‘globalisation of local policing’, building on theory and empirical examples from this line of research, also including relevant or in other way related research conducted into policing more generally. Having said this, the thesis itself does not build on, and nor does it contain, a comprehensive theoretical framework. Thus, if readers are looking for an overarching and fully explanatory theory, they will remain unsatisfied when the last page is turned. This could certainly be grounds for concern and critique. I nevertheless hope that, for the moment, judgment can be suspended and that the thesis’ different chapters and the stories they tell – although at times eclectic – will eventually be enough to stimulate and satisfy the reader’s criminological curiosity.

Rather than being based on a specific theoretical programme, the fieldwork I carried out and the thesis I have written were inspired by the ethnographic tradition recently exemplified by the work of Fassin and a range of anthropologists who have studied police work by means of participant observation (Fassin, 2013a; 2017c; Garriott, 2013; Karpiak, 2016a). In the anthropological, ethnographic tradition, theoretical pursuits are temporarily halted to allow for the world and the people who are observed to come to life in their inevitable complexity before conceptualising and categorising (ibid.). While much of our criminological knowledge (as I will later elaborate, when I discuss the methods used in my study of the Danish police more systematically) about police forces, police officers, their work and its consequences is largely the result of the excellent ethnographic studies carried out about half a century ago, both these studies and more recent, similar research also include a number of in-built shortcomings. These are, Fassin argues (2017c: 2), due to the way in which they were often carried out through the lens of a predetermined theoretical schematic. Many ethnographers have gone out into the field looking for, for instance, the ‘symbolic interactions’ of the police or applying a ‘conflict theory’ approach, scrutinising the ways in which the police were involved in reproducing societal stratification (Reiner and Newburn, 2007; Björk, 2018). Later, around the turn of the century, police ethnography became increasingly attuned to the problems of the police, trying, testing and developing ‘crime control’ theories (ibid.). While these studies have provided immense help in our understanding of the police, Fassin (2017b:2-3) argues, the tendency towards theoretical deduction has also limited our understanding of what policing might be. Instead, an alternative and needed approach, adopted in connection with the contemporary rebirth of police ethnography, is to carry out an
ethnography [relying] on observation and induction […] First, observation confronts discursive propositions with actual facts, thus allowing for the unveiling of discrepancies between what is said and done, what is presumed to be and what really is; second, induction restrains preconceived ideas [i.e. theories] or preformed judgments, since it does not suppose hypotheses to test or questions to answer … (Fassin, 2017c: 5)

Furthermore, the aim of ethnography is not only to allow for, presumptuous as it sounds, 'actual facts' and 'what really is' to question discourses and preconceived ideas. Whereas the (police) ethnographer should remain curious and open to police practices and perceptions, the purpose is not just a matter of ethnographic unveiling. Rather, the ultimate aim is to make possible an account of ‘the police’s views on [their] practices while embedding them in a larger picture’ (Fassin 2017b: 6), embedding them and explaining them in relation to both existing scientific knowledge and the larger societal context of which they are a part.

This is what I have aimed to do. I have made an ethnographic effort to suspend theory (or Theory with a capital T) in the hope of not limiting my reading of my interlocutors' practices and perceptions but instead letting them inspire and provoke my thinking. Certainly, my study was not completely unsystematic. It was, as I have noted, framed by an overarching interest in the globalisation of police work and what this meant to the Danish detectives. It was with this interest at heart that I ended up paying special attention to how the detectives, with an anxious eye on global developments, felt like the last policemen, including the various ways in which they experienced professional loss. In noticing the recurrence and dominance of this sentiment, I decided to inductively explore why this was the case. Essentially, this inductive exploration is what has shaped the content and structure of this thesis, since I use the detectives’ various concerns as an analytical prism. By this I mean that by attending to the concerns that the detectives have in relation to different aspects of their work, I then use these concerns as a prism, or one could also say an empirical point of departure, by means of which popular theoretical themes in the globalisation of policing research are examined or ‘revisited’, as I put it. The themes that I revisit in this way are ‘police xenophobia’, ‘police surveillance’, ‘policing terrorism’ and ‘police nostalgia’ – themes that are not only confined to questions of globalisation but which both now and in the past have received considerable criminological attention. Although the themes might seem random and heterogeneous, they were, as each chapter will reveal, not chosen haphazardly. They emerged as being relevant because the detectives’ practices and perceptions spoke directly to and of them.

Thus, returning to the question of theory or of the theoretical approach adopted by this thesis, it cannot be viewed in terms of a coherent theoretical approach. Instead, it
is an ethnographic exploration of different theoretical themes of relevance to 'the globalisation of (local) policing'. In place of one theory, the thesis, via these 'revisits', offers rich and critical discussions of a range of different and often dominant theoretical concepts and understandings, discussions that are based on concrete ethnographic examples of local police officers’ thoughts and actions. It can thus be said to amount to a mosaic or smorgasbord of theorisations rather than Theory per se. Moreover, as the various chapters will reveal, the revisits of central theoretical debates, be it police surveillance or xenophobia, will sometimes confirm what is already known and will sometimes add to the debate, while at other times they may contribute empirical examples that provide grounds for criticising dominant theories and thus stir up new ideas. As such, one key theoretical contribution of this thesis is that it provides a large number of ethnographic examples of 'glocal policing' practices in a research field that is at times restricted by its dominant focus on the level of policy.

*Everyday policing and criminology*

At the risk of immediately contradicting myself, the thesis ultimately does include a larger theoretical if not methodological motivation. However, since this admittedly only dawned on me whilst I was writing up the thesis, it would both be factually and chronologically wrong of me to present it here in the introduction as the thesis' guiding theoretical framework. Rather, following my purported ethnographic aim of allowing my observations to inductively guide my theorisation, it became an *a posteriori* realisation. It simply struck me when I was re-reading and analysing my fieldnotes, and thus reliving how the Danish detectives acted and argued. The fact that it came to me after the fact, as a finding rather than a theory, is why I have chosen to include it as the final chapter of the thesis. I have thus included it at the end of the thesis, as a form of theoretical summation – or perhaps more as a potential theoretical perspective that I believe may be warranted by my empirical findings and analyses. Another reason for my only describing it very briefly at this point is that I do not want it to muffle what this thesis is first and foremost about, it being an ethnography whose primary interest lies in empirical description and discussion more than theory-building.

As I spent time with the Danish detectives, it struck me how often otherwise outspoken important cross-border policing practices where put aside or reacted against as a result of what appeared to be, by comparison, mundane matters. Foreign suspects were regarded as tiresome, if not wicked, not solely because of cultural or political prejudice, as much research has argued, but because they caused the daily work itself to become tiresome. Important surveillance and control practices were put aside because of technological shortcomings, because the detectives did not like this line of work, because a colleague had to be helped or because their children had to be picked up from day-care. And the
professed militarisation of policing described in the literature as being due to perceived
global threats was met with limited enthusiasm by the detectives, since it was thought to
get in the way of normal routines rather than being a new rousing aspect of the job. And
so on. In many ways, the globalisation of local policing was seen by the detectives as nec-
essary, yet also in some ways as being antithetical to everyday police work, with the latter,
and its gratifications, often trumping the panicky requirements of the former.

Experiencing the way such everyday matters were given greater weight than more
exceptional circumstances perplexed me. It was perplexing because I had learned, both
from political and criminological discourse, to be attuned to the idea that policing and
wider means of governance were today all about the exceptional, particularly with regard
to the policing of professed global risks such as cross-border crime. Indeed, as Flyghed
has put it in an Agambian approximation, when it comes to policing of cross-border crime,
these days we are witnessing a ‘normalising of the exceptional’, a normalising of excep-
tional (if not insincere) interpretations of the phenomenon and of the means to combat it,
which together amount to a ‘case of political violence’ (2002). However, I was witnessing
a group of Danish detectives who were professionally and profoundly invested in policing
cross-border crime, and who were still mostly concerned with normal police work and
unremarkable matters. It is true that one could say that their aim was to normalise the
exceptional, but not in Flyghed’s sense. They were not unswervingly attempting to make
the exceptional the new normal of policing, but were instead making conscious and un-
conscious efforts to back away from the exceptional and to reinstate what they believed
to be normal and gratifying police work.

The fact that normality and everydayness were of such importance to the Danish
detectives once again directed my attention to Fassin’s recent work on policing. As he
terms it, his police study is ultimately an exploration of ‘the ordinariness of law enforce-
ment’ (Fassin, 2017b: 14), which, much like my study, seems rather peculiar, since he was
also studying a specialised policing unit, in his case established to tackle urban disorder
and riots in the Parisian banlieues. However, as Fassin explains on the basis of his ethno-
graphic engagement and the many hours spent with the Parisian officers, what slowly
emerged as one of the most dominant aspects of their police work was its utter ordinari-
ness and, as he elaborates, tediousness. While framed as being exceptional, dangerous, and
critical, the police work of these Parisian officers was mostly the exact opposite. This leads
to Fassin conclude that although the ordinariness of police work ‘has not been ignored by
criminologists’, ‘little emphasis has been put on its meaning and implications’ (Fassin,
2017a: 271).

I will not go into further details at this point, other than to note, like Fassin and a
selected few police researchers and criminologists before him, that the ordinariness of
police work carries profound meaning and implications for policing, even when policing
the allegedly alarming 'dark sides of globalisation' such as cross-border crime. As the reader will no doubt notice, this thesis is filled with ordinary and everyday examples of this kind. And, more importantly, it is filled with discussions of central concepts and notions from police research that do not fit neatly with these everyday examples of police work. In short, this is why the final chapter of the thesis contemplates whether my thesis might provide a basis for a call for an 'everyday criminology'. Because if everyday, ordinary, banal, mundane, humdrum matters, although unremarkable, leave such a mark, shouldn’t researchers be better at paying attention to these commonplace aspects of our criminological subjects, be it police officers, criminals or whoever?

The structure of the thesis

Remembering the above, the thesis is structured as follows:

In Chapter One, I elaborate on how I ended up studying the Danish police and more particularly the two task forces. This entails discussing and reflecting upon the methods used and, specifically, on accounts of how I obtained permission and later spent considerable time observing the task forces’ daily work. As the chapter unfolds, central methodological and ethical issues associated with studying the police by means of participant observation are explained employing the concept of ‘the collaborator.’ Etymologically, a collaborator both denotes a person with whom you enter into productive collaboration and a person who is aiding the enemy. Indeed, during my time with the task force detectives, I continuously had to negotiate this nervous continuum between friend and foe, which inevitably affected the means and ends of my research. As I argue, however, besides being illustrative of methodological and ethical issues, the “collaborator concerns” that the detectives expressed were also empirically indicative of the thesis’ analytical focus. In the same way as they treated me with apprehension, trying to judge whether I was with them or against them, they treated many of the phenomena and people with whom they came into contact as a result of the globalisation of their work in much the same way. For example, in the case of potential yet unknown policing partners from another country, the detectives also contemplated whether these persons were truly associates or maybe rather adversaries. In fact, my having been met in much the same way as an unfamiliar foreign policing partner is not particularly strange. To the detectives I was just that – yet another “strange” example of the developments that their workday was going through in the name of globalisation.

Following Chapter One’s explanation of the thesis’ methodological background, Chapter Two describes the thesis’ broader empirical background. In other words, Chapter Two includes descriptions of the wider policing discourses on cross-border crime alongside introductory descriptions of the two respective task forces, which cover their organisational structures, the people working there and the work itself. Essentially, this empirical
background is provided in order to give the reader a referential framework that will hopefully make later chapters, and the ethnographic depictions and discussions presented in these, more comprehensible.

Having set the general scene (theoretically in the introduction, methodologically in Chapter One and empirically in Chapter Two), Chapter Three presents the thesis’ first revisiting of a well-known police research theme. By means of comprehensive ethnographic accounts, the chapter revisits the question of ‘police surveillance’. In contemporary police research and the wider criminological literature, it has become close to theoretical orthodoxy to criticise the worldwide increase in police surveillance and other control measures. Through growing cooperation between various policing partners and the use of information technologies, we are told, a wide-reaching ‘policing panopticon’ is emerging – the police, either by means of an expanding physical or digital presence are becoming increasingly able to oversee, control and catch “us” if they need to. This chapter aims to present a contribution to this debate. However, in contrast to the predominant means of analysis, which has focused on the level of policy, the chapter turns its analytical lens downwards towards the everyday, practical level. In other words, it describes and discusses the daily work of the Danish police detectives – detectives who in their policing of cross-border crime are supposed to be central actors in the development of the policing panopticon. By focusing on the detectives’ workaday practices and perceptions – and indeed the many apprehensions they have – the chapter reveals how the detectives are not only often manifesting reluctance, but how they are even resisting the developments of the policing panopticon. It is true that the detectives acknowledge the need for further surveillance and control as a result of the growing mobility and complexity of crime in this global day and age. Paradoxically, however, when it comes to carrying out the various practices required to make the policing panopticon proficient, they frequently refrain from doing so. The chapter therefore concludes that seen from the perspective of local Danish detectives, the policing panopticon is not-so-panoptic after all.

Chapter Four takes up a criminological theme that is closely related to that discussed in Chapter Three with regard to the way in which the police are reacting to increasingly being included in a global world order. While Chapter Three concerns itself with how this global involvement is being promoted by an ostensible increase in police collaboration and other technologies of police surveillance and control, Chapter Four takes up a consequence of this that has often been noted in police research, namely the question of how globalisation is giving rise to an increase in police xenophobia and discrimination. In police research, dominant explanations for the xenophobic attitudes harboured by law enforcers are most often dressed in cultural or political rationalisations. Whilst also noting how the Danish police detectives expressed a noticeable negativity towards the foreign suspects they frequently encountered, this chapter makes an effort to offer an additional
explanation of xenophobia. It seeks to demonstrate that police resentments are triggered not only by cultural prejudice or politics but also by the ways in which foreigners complicate quite ordinary yet, from a police perspective, valued work practices.

Having discussed two themes that are pertinent in relation to the globalisation of policing, Chapter Five takes on another contemporary police research topic related to the issue of globalisation. This chapter discusses the theme of terrorism, or more specifically, it contributes to the criminological debate about the widespread contemporary fear of terrorism and governmental reactions to it. In research, the fear of terror and the policing thereof have typically been described as follows: On a symbolic level, researchers argue that the fear of terror is being exploited or even exaggerated by, for example, politicians, the media or the police, in order to promote their own interests. Subsequently, on a substantive level, research has pointed to the way in which legislation has been significantly extended and how increasing resources have been given to the police in the reputed ‘war on terror’. This extension of the law and the increase in policing resources, sometimes designated as ‘war-policing’ or ‘police militarisation’, have been criticised by criminologists, who have pointed to the way in which the police use discretionary legal powers and other resources to also police conventional criminal law matters, which has also generated a risk for discrimination and human rights violations. In short, criminologists tend to argue that the fear of terror and the subsequent policing of terror has been problematically beneficial to the police and other means of governance. While the chapter agrees with the main tenets of the research described, it adds another story to the debate. Whilst the Danish detectives’ official job description was not counterterrorism, the issue of terrorism had a considerable effect on their daily work. As a result of the fear of terror, the entire Danish police had been put on high alert. This meant that the detectives on many occasions had to put their daily tasks on hold in order, for example, to investigate even the smallest suggestion of terrorist activities, to go to the shooting range to improve their shooting abilities or to stand guard for many hours outside targets designated to be at risk of terrorist attacks. In this way, the chapter tells a story that differs from the mainstream narrative. Although the detectives shared the fear of terror, and the idea that something had to be done, they were generally annoyed at the way in which the increasing need to police terror prevented them from doing their job. Furthermore, as the chapter ultimately argues, although the primary focus is directed at the policing of terrorism, a similar analysis can be made in relation to other additional tasks that the police are required to work with in order to combat alleged global risks, such as cross-border criminality or undocumented migration. For local police officers, it is argued, the widespread political fear-mongering in relation to globalisation often has a limited professional purchase.

Although Chapters Three to Five all deal with themes connected to the larger debate about globalisation and/or policing, the chapters deal with quite diverse empirical
and theoretical matters. Chapter Six, however, makes an effort to point out a common-denominator among the chapters that is directly germane to this thesis’ title and research interest, namely that the detectives expressed a considerable amount of concern and frustration with current developments. In revisiting the theme of ‘police nostalgia’, which has been widely reported in the field of police research, the chapter seeks to shed light on what the young detective meant when he sarcastically but nonetheless somewhat seriously proclaimed that he and his colleagues might be the last real policeman. In doing this, the chapter furthers a critique of the tendency in police research to too swiftly bracket expressions of police nostalgia as being a simple illustration of a conservative and clichéd police culture. While there might be some truth to this, i.e. that police nostalgia and negativity are a reflection of the cultural stereotypes often described in police research under the heading of police culture, the chapter nevertheless argues, pointing to the large number of ethnographic examples provided throughout the thesis, that police nostalgia might also be read as an echo of a more profound sense of professional loss. In other words, police nostalgia, or ‘the last policeman’, also tells a story of how the Danish detectives felt that they were in some sense losing what made their job meaningful and gratifying, for instance the ability to apply personal discretion, to remain grounded in personal experience and to enter into meaningful relations with both colleagues and criminal suspects. Stated differently, the detectives’ experience of being part a more global order might mean, as Smith has argued, that the detectives became ‘empowered as watchers’ (2009). When looking at the wider vocational reality of which they increasingly were becoming a part, however, it is obvious that they also felt ‘disempowered as workers’ (ibid.).

While Chapters Two to Six are predominantly formed around ethnographic observations, Chapter Seven turns to the more theoretical if not speculative. Stated differently, Chapter Seven makes an effort to point to the grander theoretical and methodological contribution of my study. It asks the following question: What does it mean for criminological theorisation that knowledge about serious (global) issues such as police xenophobia, surveillance and terrorism can also be obtained by attending to the everyday vocational complaints of a number of Danish detectives? The chapter provides a tentative answer by arguing that if such apparent banalities of policing carry theoretical weight, then this might encourage a move towards an ‘everyday criminology’. As has been described above, this is in line with Fassin’s argument that police research might benefit from paying better attention to the boring, banal and otherwise ordinary aspects of policing (2013b; 2015; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c). Truly, this thesis is filled with examples of how the everyday often trumped the exceptional, i.e. the ordinary outweighing the otherwise more obvious and ostentatious parts of the globalisation of local policing.
'Back in the morning' – not the last policemen.

Having finished up our afterhours beer, the detectives and I leave the police station. Walking out of the station's front gate, I ask one of the detectives whether he 'really felt like the last policeman?' ‘Haha,’ he chuckles, ‘Nah… It was more a figure of speech, you know. But, sure, at times things get really upsetting … Then again, there are still many good things about this job. We’ll see, right? All I know is that I’ll be back here in the morning. See you then!’

We did indeed see each other the following morning as well as on many subsequent mornings. I mention this not only to point to how this thesis and its stories are based on many hours of observation. I mention it first and foremost to point to the way in which the notion of ‘the last policeman’ shouldn’t be taken too literally. The detectives, and their colleagues who harboured similar sentiments, did of course show up the next day. As such, they, along with coming generations of police officers, will ensure that they are not the last policemen. In fact, in Denmark as elsewhere, political and economic resources are increasingly being invested to increase both the quantity and quality of policing. Policing, one may very well argue, is not only not dwindling, it is expanding.

As such, the title of this thesis does not amount to a claim that policing is a dying profession, and it does not signal a belief shared by some policing researchers that the current globalisation and pluralising of policing mean the end of the police’s monopoly and as such ‘the end of public policing’ (McLaughlin and Levi, 1995). Nor is it referring to a desire for policing, in its current control-oriented form, to die out as some avid abolitionists would like (Vitale, 2017). Neither should the title and thus the thesis be read as an example of sentimental ‘police fetishism’ (Reiner 2010:3), signalling an inability to envision a society without a state sanctioned police force. Instead, the title and the contents of this thesis are simply focused on describing how certain changes in the police vocation have, in some ways, a negative effect on the local level of policing, on “normal” policemen (men and women). This negative effect might of course wane as time passes and new police generations emerge. Even though this might be true, however, I believe there is still some value in paying attention to the reasons that the Danish detectives were so apprehensive. As this thesis shows, although they could be overly wistful and romanticising about the way things used to be, the detectives’ concerns nevertheless resonate with those of many criminologists when it comes to contemporary developments in policing and wider governance. Here, criminological concerns and critiques are often voiced in relation to the cumulative and perhaps runaway aspects of contemporary policing, whereby policing practices and perceptions are becoming more omnipresent as a result of social and digital networks, and yet also detached from and thus insensible to the complex actualities of everyday life. The trials and tragedies of human beings and human lives, the argument
goes, are increasingly being written out of the governmental equation. As this thesis shows, however, this “writing-off” of the human factor is also happening in relation to the local police officer. The policing network is expanding. At the same time, however, it seems that it is also leaving its local practitioners and their vocational needs behind somewhat, making them if not ‘the last’ then at least ‘somewhat lost’ policemen. As an academic, one might be unconcerned by such an “abandonment”, perhaps thinking that police officers’ are best left behind. For myself, however, I believe this to be a rather arrogant and ill-informed stance – because the police officers are not really leaving. They are not last but lasting. They are coming back. They will be there, and perhaps in even greater numbers, but now with the risk of them feeling more detached and thus indifferent to their work and those it involves – callous rather than considerate. That is definitely a grim future for policing.

On this gloomy note, I move on to the first chapter of this thesis. However, the next chapter does not delve directly into why the Danish detectives sometimes felt a vocational detachment. Instead, it will describe how I as a researcher became attached or rather obtained the access that allowed me to observe and examine the detectives’ practices and perceptions. As will quickly become clear, the issue of “attachment vs. detachment” nonetheless lay at the heart of both my research method and the detectives’ work-related concerns. The policing of cross-border crime, and my researching of this work, was largely centred around an uneasiness about whether this kind of labour was actually helpful or, instead, potentially hostile to the policing profession.
Chapter one:
The collaborator; notes on methods and ethics

I am sitting in the back corner of the TFP office, temporarily using Detective Mikkelsen’s desk as he is off duty today. It is one of those days where the caseload is too great and pressing for the TFP detectives to be able to leave the office and stake out the streets of Copenhagen. This means that Detectives Clausen, Madsen, Larsen and Christensen are all fully engaged in looking at their respective computer screens. They sit there, typing away, working on cases, and the room is completely silent except for the sound of fingers hitting keyboards and the radio playing yet another contemporary pop song. Suddenly a patrolman from one of the downstairs units enters the office. ‘Hello, you handsome devils!’ he says, leaning against the frame of the door. The detectives all look up and turn towards him as they cheerfully echo his salutation. ‘What’s up?’ Detective Christensen asks him. The patrolman opens his mouth and is just about to answer when he suddenly sees me sitting in the corner — a person he doesn’t know and, I guess, a person who doesn’t look like the conventional cop. Although I’m not far from the average police officer demographic, since I am a thirty-year-old male and an ethnic Dane with suitably short hair by police standards, I still stand out. During my fieldwork, I have experienced this several times, with both officers and suspects pointing me out as someone who ‘doesn’t really look like a policeman’ — and now this downstairs patrolman is doing the same. As I’m told, this is basically due to how I carry and clothe myself.

‘Who are you?’ the patrolman therefore asks me distrustfully, but looking to Detective Christensen for an answer. ‘He’s with us,’ Detective Christensen replies. ‘No worries, he’s alright. He’s an academic sent here via the National Police.’ ‘Alright,’ the patrolman says, somewhat reassured yet still apprehensive. To be sure, as my experiences with both the Danish Police and other police research have taught me, neither ‘academics’ nor the ‘the National Police’ are terms that are calculated to make most frontline police officers feel entirely comfortable. In seeing that he is still hesitating, Detective Larsen reassures him once again. ‘Seriously, just say what you came here to say. David’s good enough. He’s just here to learn how we deal with these cross-border criminals. Right? Aren’t you good enough, David?’ he asks me smiling. ‘I certainly hope so,’ I say, smiling back. ‘I’m just here to learn how you guys do things around here,’ I explain, echoing Detective Larsen’s words. ‘Okay okay,’ the patrolman finally concedes. ‘You know how it is,’ he then says to me, ‘we have to be sure that you’re not someone who isn’t allowed to hear what I have to say.’ He then carries on talking about how he and his partner, during their watch, had encountered what he believed to be a potential group of Romanian thieves, including having observed where they were living, and how he thinks this might be of interest to the TFP detectives.

Whereas the remaining chapters of this thesis are concerned with empirical descriptions and analyses of these, this chapter concerns itself with how I ended up obtaining my empirical material and thus the possibility to analyse it. In other words, this chapter discusses the methods used in my research on the Danish police or, more precisely, on TFB and
TP: How did I gain access and obtain insights into this specific police environment? What did I see? How did they see me? In sum, what methodological and ethical issues did my research on a number of Danish detectives and their vocational concerns entail?

In reflecting upon such questions, I hope to be able to provide the reader with what is key to qualitative, ethnographic research, namely ‘transparency’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Given the personal and thus inevitably partial nature of research that is carried out with the mind and body of a human being as its primary methodological tool, an ethnographic study based on participant observation cannot promise the replicability, reliability or validity of hard science. Stated more simply, given that nobody is completely like me and given that the social world, in this case of policing, is not a fixed and predictable entity, there is no way of promising that what I have found out could be straightforwardly replicated by any other researcher and thus verified as a scientific fact. Thus, as qualitative methodology prescribes (ibid.), the only thing to do is to lay out the procedures I followed and the problems I encountered for my peers to ponder and evaluate. That said, given the extent and multifarious nature of the study I carried out, it would be more or less impossible to touch upon all aspects of it. The descriptions and discussions below are therefore admittedly selective since I, along with leading police researchers who have highlighted similar issues (see Björk, 2018; Fassin, 2017; Holmberg, 2011; Mac Giollabhui et al., 2016; Punch, 1978; Reiner and Newburn, 2006; Van Maanen, 1978; Westmarland, 2001), believe these best represent the essential problems and potentials associated with the conduct of an ethnographic study of the police using participant observation.

Here, we return to the introductory example given on the previous page. A key question when observing the police, and one that will constitute the focus of this chapter on methods, is that of in what way, as Detective Christensen put it, the researcher is ‘with’ the police. As Reiner and Newburn, for example, have discussed in their insightful methodological textbook piece on ‘Police research’, one might be invited to observe the police, but this is not the same as subsequently having ‘secured the trust and genuine cooperation of the people in the research site itself, after formal access has been given’ (2007: 355). One might thus be with the police without actually being truly with them. Furthermore, one might sometimes be allowed to formally follow the police whilst not only being distrusted but actually being seen as someone who is pitted against them. Indeed, as much research has shown, academics are exactly the kind of people who police officers often respond to with a high degree of apprehension if not antagonism. This is why I have decided to entitle this chapter, ‘the collaborator’, bearing in mind the term’s dual and ambiguous meaning. As the anthropologist Weiss has also noted and discussed, the term collaborator designates a person who is potentially with or against you (2016). The collaborator might be someone you enter into creative collaboration with or s/he might be in
cahoots with the enemy – trustworthy or a turncoat. As this chapter and its different examples will demonstrate, albeit in different ways, this “for-or-against-conundrum” was part and parcel of the way I was received, positioned and perceived during my fieldwork with the Danish police. Thus, as a concept, ‘the collaborator’ speaks to central methodological and ethical questions regarding the use of the participant observation method to study the police, questions such as ‘access’, ‘rapport’, and my ‘role and position’ as a researcher (see Bernard, 2002: 136ff) – questions which will be discussed in the following pages. Also, in order to keep in line with the thesis’ ethnographic disposition and literary style, I have largely sought to frame the discussion via the use of concrete empirical examples taken from my fieldwork, rather than merely referring to methodological meta-descriptions – showing rather than telling.

Returning to that day at the TFP office, Detective Christensen and Larsen eventually convinced their downstairs colleague that I was ‘good enough’. This demonstrates that I at least in some ways succeeded in being invited into the detectives’ workday reality, that I to some extent was seen as being with them and not against them. However, it also raises the question of ‘good enough’ in relation to what and for whom? Because, certainly, the standards for what constitutes ‘good enough’ for the detectives are not necessarily equivalent to those for what is ‘good enough’ in terms of academic and scientific standards. This question illustrates the unceasing balancing act that formed the basis of my study – a balancing act which included many instances of uneasiness and concern on the part of both the police and myself. Actually, as will soon become clear, this methods chapter mulls over something that is also central to many of the examples provided and arguments made in the other chapters of the thesis. The fact that the detectives frequently voiced an uncertainty in relation to whether I was a collaborator, in a negative sense from their standpoint, can simply be seen as yet another illustration of how they remained sceptical of phenomena and people of whom they lack close, everyday experience. In many ways, I was seen and treated in the same way as the detectives saw and treated other people whom they were increasingly supposed to work with as a result of global developments in policing. This is not a huge surprise since this is precisely what I was. I was, at least initially, yet another stranger whom they were ordered to collaborate with because of the increasing significance of issues of cross-border crime and other global matters. Indeed, this was exactly how I was introduced during my first fieldwork day at both TFB and TFP:

Hello everybody. This is David Sausdal, he’s a researcher sent here via the National Police to look at the issues of cross-border crime and how we handle it.

Thinking about both the problems and potentials of observing the actual realities of police work, I will now provide an account of my attempts to do so. In order to make this account
as comprehensible as possible, I have made an effort to present a chronological description of the steps I took. First, I provide a brief summary of the methods used. Following this overview, I go on to describe how I (eventually) gained access to the field by obtaining formal permission to study the Danish Police, and in particular TFB and TFP. This will be followed by a discussion of my attempts to establish rapport and secure the trust of the Danish detectives. Building on from this, I discuss my role and position in the field and what these may have meant in relation to the empirical material I obtained, and, subsequently, I also include a few words about the production of fieldnotes. At the end of the chapter I reflect on some additional ethical issues, including the issue of police deviance, before finally returning more directly to the concept and conundrum of ‘the collaborator’, arguing how I have sought to solve this conundrum by conducting and writing an ethnography that is neither ‘for’ nor ‘against’, but ‘about’ the police (Björk, 2018; Innes, 2010).

The methods used

Before going into the specificities and not least difficulties of conducting an ethnographic study of the (Danish) police using participant observation, a brief recapitulation of the methods used and what they included is useful.

As already mentioned, this thesis is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork that was carried out in 2015, and that also included some earlier and follow-up field visits. For more than 900 hours I followed the daily work of the two aforementioned police task forces, TFB and TFP. In more specific terms, this means that I was allowed to observe all facets of the task forces' detectives' work: I sat in during their daily briefings and other work meetings. I sat together with them in their offices, watching them work their cases. This included watching them writing up reports, checking and updating relevant databases, confering with each other and with other colleagues, setting up and listening to wiretaps, and checking other means of surveillance. I also observed their continuous emailing or telephoning of colleagues, other policing partners, witnesses, suspects or other work-relevant individuals. In addition, I observed them interrogating several suspects and also witnesses. I followed them when they left the office to go on stakeouts, to install surveillance equipment, to conduct searches, to make arrests, to appear in court or to pick up arrestees and drive them to the court house or to meet their respective lawyers. I had coffees and lunch with the detectives as well as the occasional breakfast, dinner or night-time snack if they worked early or late, which was not uncommon, working 'when the criminals work', as they put it. And as has already been demonstrated in the introduction, I sometimes spent time with them after hours, having a drink or a chat about work, politics, sports, music, movies, that new show on HBO or sometimes life in more general terms. It was through this circadian immersion into the task forces' workday that I gradually acquired an understanding of that which lay at the heart of my research interest; namely the way in
which being part of a more global reality was shaping local police officers’ practices and perceptions – and not least, as has ultimately become the central concern of this thesis, how it made them feel less than optimistic.

In this way, by observing and participating in day-to-day police work, I followed in the methodological footsteps of many renowned police researchers who have similarly made use of ‘participant observation’ in their endeavours to research ‘the practices and culture of policing’ (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 354) or, stated simply, to study ‘the reality of police work’ (Van Maanen, 1973b: 5). As a method to study the police, participant observation was first applied by Westley in the 1950s only to pick up pace in the 1960s and 1970s, providing the basis for a number of foundational Anglo-American police studies, which remain among the most widely cited in the field (Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1967; Cain, 2015: [1973]; Manning and Van Maanen, 1978; Manning, 1977; Punch, 1979a; Reiss, 1973; Skolnick, 2011: [1966]; Westley, 1970). In much the same way, participant observation has similarly constituted the preferred method in the most well-known studies of the Danish Police (Hald, 2011; Hartmann, 2014; Holmberg, 2003) and also other Scandinavian studies of the police (Björk, 2006; 2009; Carlström, 1999; Finstad, 2000; Granér, 2004; Gundhus, 2006; Görtz, 2015; Pettersson, 2012; Sollund, 2007b; Valland, 2015). Moreover, while a drastic decline in the use of participant observation in police research and in criminology more broadly had been detected by the turn of the century (Maguire, 2000), with this period even being described as a ‘dark age’ of ethnography (Adler and Adler, 1998), ethnographic studies have more recently witnessed a renaissance. The fact that an increasing number of scholars are turning from studying the police via quantitative means or interviews, to once again use participant observation, may be due both to the admitted limitations of, for example, surveys and interviews and also to the unique benefits of observation. However, it might also be due to the way in which policing has taken centre stage in contemporary governance, prompting a scholarly need to scrutinise its motives and effects (see Fassin, 2017c).

In addition to the many hours of participant observation, I conducted approximately thirty interviews with both management-level police officers and frontline officers of relevance to my study. These interviews were sometimes prearranged and conducted as ‘semi-structured interviews’ (Brinkmann, 2014). This entailed asking the respective interviewees a few more overarching questions related to my PhD project’s research interest, i.e. the globalisation of local policing and more particularly the policing of cross-border crime, including how they perceived this issue, how they were dealing with it at the moment and also what they believed to be the best future course of action. Having framed the interviews in this way, the officers were given the opportunity to talk freely about what they thought and did, with me only guiding them back to the subject at hand if they strayed
too far from it. More often, however, the interviews simply happened when an opportunity arose. This could be during lunchtime, when at the office or during an uneventful stakeout for example. In this way, it would even be fair to say that the approximation of having conducted thirty interviews might actually be an underestimation. As is widely known, participant observation often allows for conversation with one’s interlocutors during the inevitable downtimes that occur on any given day, during which the researcher is thus given the opportunity to ask questions and probe further into relevant issues (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). And as has been noted in police research, police work and perhaps detective work in particular is ripe with such uneventful periods (Fassin, 2017a).

Lastly, besides the empirical material gathered via observations and interviews, I have also, prior to, during and after the fieldwork, examined relevant documents and statistics. This work included looking through both publicly available and classified Danish Police documents as well as documents published by the Danish Government on cross-border crime and policing. Furthermore, I oriented myself in relevant international reports and statistics on the matter published by, for example, adjacent European nation-states, Europol and the UN. By examining these various national and international documents, I have made an effort to understand the wider police and political discourse surrounding the issue – an understanding which proved very useful, since it provided me with policy-based knowledge on the detectives’ work, which I was able to use when talking to the detectives. Furthermore, it also provided a more general means of analytically grasping the context in which the detectives’ work was set.

**Participant observation and penetrating the smokescreen of policing**

In short, ‘participant observation’ includes ‘the prolonged participation of the researcher in the daily life of a group’ (Punch, 1978: 253). In his article on how and why he studied the Amsterdam Police, the well-known police researcher Punch further elaborates that we do this in an attempt to better understand ‘the norms, values and behaviour of that group’ (ibid.). The view is that such norms, values and behaviour cannot be fully fathomed by other methodological means given that, as Reiner and Newburn maintain,

> [a]ll other methods rely on some sort of account offered by the police themselves (whether in interview or official documents and statistics), the veracity of which is often precisely the question being studied (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 354).

In other words, there is a potential divergence between authorised accounts and everyday reality, which the participant observer seeks to overcome. Furthermore, as the founding father of participant observation Malinowski has reminded the would-be ethnographer, certain facts of everyday life might not only differ from official reports, they might even
be ‘imponderable’ (2014: 19). Malinowski hereby contends that the social and cultural life of humans entails ‘certain subtle peculiarities, which make an impression as long as they are novel, [but which] cease to be noticed as soon as they become familiar’ (Malinowski, 2014: 21). Stated more simply, there is a limit to language in both writing and speech. Only certain aspects of life can be put into words – other aspects are either seen as too mundane to even be noticed (a matter to which this thesis will later return), or are sensory and semantic rather than purely phonological, and thus require corporal experience. Becker and Geer, in arguing more directly that criminologists should consider using participant observation, made a very similar argument as early as the 1950s (1957: 29) (see also Ferrell, 1998; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). In this way, the means and ends of participant observation in studying the police do not differ from those of other ethnographic studies that apply this method.

However, observing the police does include both unique problems and unique potentials. In Goffmanian terms, the police, much like other similar institutions, have a specific ‘front stage’ appearance and a somewhat different ‘back stage’ reality (Goffman, 1978; 1989). In other words there are the official police perceptions and practices, which they present to the public, and then there are the things they do and say when they believe themselves to be alone. This is a distinction, as much police research has consistently shown, that the police guard more meticulously than other social groups. Or as Punch has noted in somewhat starker terms:

The police are held to be the most secluded part of the criminal justice system. Like other agencies of social control - military academies, elite socializing institutions, prisons, etc. - and like many client-serving bureaucracies, the police erect barriers against prying outsiders and endeavour to present a favourable image of themselves to the extent of mystifying and even falsifying accounts for public consumption (Punch, 1978: 151).

The fact that the police in some ways function and carry themselves with such duplicity has recently led Constantinou to reiterate both the difficulties and the importance of ‘de-mystifying’ police work using participant observation (2016). To be sure, using participant observation to demystify the realities of police work has been the main motivation of police ethnography since its birth in the 1950s and 1960s, with the goal being to shed light on and hold to account the otherwise “low visibility” of everyday police-work (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 354). Or as Van Maanen has stated, in more metaphorical terms:

If we are to gain insight into the police environment, researchers must penetrate the official smokescreen and observe directly the social action in social situations which … represents the reality of police work (Van Maanen, 1973b: 5).
Hence, in wanting to study the true backstage realities of how the detectives related and reacted to the way in which their work was becoming more affected by global issues, I too had to penetrate this smokescreen. From the very first steps I took in order to gain access to the field, to my final steps as I was leaving, I constantly, although in varying ways, had to consider how as well as if the police would really let me in, or whether I was merely being given the officially sanctioned account. In other words, methodologically, a key challenge when ethnographically studying the police is to convince one’s police interlocutors that they can truly reveal the actualities of their work to you. In short, the ethnographer needs to ‘establish rapport’ (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011: 47). This is indeed a central task in all ethnographic studies based on participant observation, but given that the police more than other groups are characterised by such a drastic distinction between what they reveal to outsiders vis-à-vis insiders, establishing rapport is undoubtedly a more difficult task in police research. As Nader famously put it, it is unavoidably more difficult to ‘study up’, by which she was referring precisely to the difficulties associated with gaining access to and establishing rapport with powerful institutions such as the police who have a lot to lose and little to gain by letting a researcher into their workaday lives (1972).

Gaining access
Reiterating the smokescreen issue, gaining access in a participant observation study of the police entails two distinguishable phases: First, the researcher has to begin by obtaining formal permission in order to gain any access to the field. Secondly and subsequently, the researcher has to gain the trust of the observed officers (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 355). Here I will focus on the first phase of gaining access, namely how I succeeded in obtaining the formal permission of the Danish Police to follow the daily work of TFB and TFP. I will then discuss how, or perhaps rather whether, I ended up establishing rapport and gaining the trust of the Danish detectives.

In my attempt to obtain formal permission, I sent an email to the Danish National Police in September 2013 asking whether it would be possible for me to conduct an observational study of the Danish police’s work related to cross-border crime. The email included a description of who I was along with my research focus and aims, which were formulated in the following way (in an English translation):

*Throughout the last decade, Denmark, alongside other Western European countries, has experienced a significant rise in cross-border crime. This increase is often explained as being caused by the unfortunate criminal opportunities provided by globalisation. Noting this, I believe it is of relevance to develop a better understanding of how this form of more ’global criminality’ is affecting police work in Denmark. More specifically, it is of interest to understand how local-level police officers are reacting to and dealing with this change in crime and, accordingly, how it is affecting their daily police work – officers who have no doubt...*
been more used to crime being a more directly Danish matter. Therefore, if given permission, I would like to study this local level of policing by observing their work for an extended amount of time. In doing this, the aim is to obtain insights that are not only of academic interest, but which would also be of interest to the Danish Police in their desire to understand how frontline police officers view, solve and are maybe also struggling in relation to investigations of cross-border crime. Well-grounded and detailed knowledge of this kind would appear to be integral to the future development of police work on this matter.

I did not have to wait too long before the Danish National Police wrote back. Their response was positive whilst not promising anything. I was invited to a meeting later that autumn at which I was to present my research proposal. If the meeting went well, I was given to understand, they would help to facilitate my study.

Before meeting with the National Police, I spent a considerable amount of time reading up on the subject. In fact, I had already made sure to study available materials ever since the time at which I had decided that I wanted to research the globalisation of policing, and specifically how it affected the Danish Police. I collected and studied both national and international statistics on cross-border crimes. I looked at national and international reports, policies and research on the matter – and I continued to do this throughout my study. Although the ethnographer’s primary interest, mine included, is the lived life of the people we observe, it is of vital importance to study the available formalised knowledge (Noaks and Wincup, 2004). Acquainting oneself with this knowledge in this way is not only useful for the ethnographer to update him-/herself on the wider context in which his/her research is set; when thinking about gaining access, it also allows the ethnographer to better know what questions are of relevance and, not least, how to ask them. As Malinowski put it in his almost a century old manual for the aspiring ethnographer:

‘[T]he Ethnographer has to be inspired by the knowledge of the most modern results of scientific study … Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with “preconceived ideas” … [T]he more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and in seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work.’ (Malinowski, 2014 [1922]: 8)

Having followed the recommendations of both Malinowski and other ethnographers, i.e. having obtained a prior knowledge of current developments in policing, I attended my first official meeting with the Danish National Police in late autumn 2013. I walked through the revolving iron gate and thick green fencing that surrounds the National Police compound west of Copenhagen. I was welcomed, offered a cup of coffee, and I was then seated at a small round table in one of the management’s offices. I presented my study proposal in much the same way as I had formulated it in the email. Questions were asked,
including critical ones, but much to my surprise, the National Police expressed an immediate interest in helping my study along. This surprised me because the Danish police had otherwise increasingly shown a preference for conducting research projects themselves rather than allowing an ‘outside outsider’ to conduct research on the police; the term an ‘outside outsider’ denoting an independent academic researcher who has no prior affiliations with or relations to the police (Brown, 1996). As Holmberg has also noted (2014), the Danish police, following a similar trend to that found in many other countries, have recently increased their in-house academic capacities, largely due to the world-wide inclination towards developing more ‘analytically-based’, ‘pro-active’, ‘problem-solving’ or ‘intelligence-led’ policing (Ratcliffe, 2016). While it may be viewed as positive that the police have taken it upon themselves to base their work on thorough analyses, this nevertheless entails a risk, Holmberg argues, of making the world of policing less accessible to independent researchers, and therefore a risk of police research becoming biased and less critical (2014). In other words, this development entails a risk that such analyses will exclusively come to take the form of research ‘for’ the police, rather than research ‘about’ or ‘against’ the police (Innes, 2010). Reiner and Newburn have discussed this development in a similar way, noting that there has been a tendency towards more and more police research becoming focused strictly on ‘crime-control agendas’ rather than on the ‘controversies’ or even ‘conflicts’ in which the police are involved (2007: 349).

Nevertheless, at the end of the meeting I shook hands with the four National Police representatives I had met, and they promised that they would help me gain access to relevant police units. In particular, they suggested that I should observe the work of the two special investigational task forces, which also then became the focus of my study, namely Task Force Burglary (TFB) and Task Force Pickpocketing (TFP). According to the National Police, these two task forces would be of specific interest, as they put it at the end of the meeting,

to a study on how the Danish police are dealing with the challenges of globalisation. To the best of our knowledge, burglaries and pickpocketing are two crime areas dominated by cross-border criminals. In this way, by observing the police work of the two task forces who respectively police these two crime areas you will be given a good first-hand insight into how it is done, also including the problems they encounter.

In this way I rather speedily obtained formal permission from the Danish National Police. The fact that this happened so effortlessly can of course be explained in many ways, with luck perhaps being one of these. Nevertheless, two factors appear to have played a particularly important role. First, I had chosen a theme of interest which the Danish police themselves were also very interested and heavily invested in (together with policing actors worldwide). This was obvious from the news reporting, for example, in which the police
themselves often and openly spoke about the problems of Denmark being a part of a
global reality, which included increases in cross-border criminality. As such, a shared field
of interest existed between the Danish police and myself. Indeed, the fact that the Danish
police (like their colleagues worldwide) expressed such concerns was one of the central
reasons that I had wanted to study this development in policing. Secondly, as I had also
described in my initial email, I had made a conscious effort to frame my study so that it
would appear beneficial not only to me but also to the Danish police. Here, I made a clear
attempt to highlight how my study would be of use to the Danish police, since it would
allow them to know more about whether the policies developed to counter cross-border
crime were actually being taken on board and implemented by frontline officers. By fol-
lowing the daily work of TFB and TFP over a longer period of time, I argued, my study
would be able to describe possible discrepancies between procedures and the actualities
of everyday police practice, including both the problems encountered and also the poten-
tials for possibly improving the work of the police in this area.

My having formulated my research in this collaborative manner was due to rec-
ommendations that were made to me by colleagues and other acquaintances working with
or for the police. As the Danish criminologist and police ethnographer Lars Holmberg
had said to me prior to my contacting the National Police, for example, ‘You need to make
sure to explain what’s in it for them as well.’ This recommendation was an echo of how
other (Danish) police ethnographers have succeeded in obtaining formal permission and
thus access to study the police (see Holmberg, 2014; 2015). It is similarly an echo of
Nader’s famous guidelines regarding ‘studying up’ (1972). As Nader argues, the ethnog-
rapher seeking to observe the daily work of powerful institutions or organisations will
benefit from being able to show how his/her study might be of interest to all the parties
involved. In contrast to other areas of social life, powerful institutions and organisations
such as the police often need to be persuaded that the study is of at least some mutual
benefit (ibid). The fact that a researcher, such as myself, who ‘studies up’ is frequently
forced to frame a project in this way no doubt entails possible methodological and ethical
issues, such as the question of (im)partiality. I will discuss such issues in more detail later.
For the moment, suffice it to say that I agree with Nader, amongst others, when she
stresses that we as academics stand to lose even more if we refuse to ‘study up’ and instead
insist on sticking to certain dogmatic scientific and ethical standards.

To finalise the formal permission for my observing the work of TFP and TFB I
had to go through a security clearance process and a written contract, involving a non-
disclosure agreement, had to be agreed upon. The fact that my background had to be
checked and that a non-disclosure agreement was part of the contract point to the distinc-
tiveness of the field, i.e. that this is a field of assumed importance in which inside
knowledge is guarded not only socially but administratively – a field for the few and initiated. The essence of the contract and the non-disclosure agreement was that I had to promise to anonymise (which I have) the people involved in my study (both the police officers and suspects) and that I wasn’t to reveal (which I haven’t) any of the ‘trade-secrets’ (investigational practices, surveillance technologies etc.) deemed essential to the apprehension of cross-border criminals. Although making such promises may appear troubling in terms of academic standards, they didn’t, to the best of my belief, produce any substantial ethical complications. When I conducted my study, and when I showed them my thesis, the only comments made by the National Police concerned questions of the anonymisation of individual interlocutors/study subjects as well as one comment that related to how I, in an initial draft, had revealed too many details of the detective work that they believed to be central to catching cross-border criminals. The work was of a technological nature but, importantly, was conducted within the limits of procedural law. Furthermore, the National Police never asked me to remove descriptions that portrayed officers in a negative light, for example when I describe their at times xenophobic attitudes.

With these predetermined restrictions formally circumscribing my study, I was given the liberty to conduct the study in accordance with academic interests and standards – or at least in accordance with the methodological measures described in the chapter. However, as a result of bureaucratic factors relating to both the contract and my security clearance, my actual observation of the two task forces was postponed, and commenced more than a year after my initial contacts with the Danish National Police. The fact that gaining access to institutions such as the police is not only formally difficult but also a time consuming process is yet another obstructive factor associated with ‘studying up’ (Nader, 1972).

Having obtained permission and signed the contract, two introductory meetings were set up with the management of TFB and TFP respectively. During these meetings I presented my research proposal, highlighting how I wished ‘to understand the work-related challenges that policing cross-border crime entailed’. The managements of TFB and TFP both agreed that there were a number of different and increasing challenges related to policing foreign nationals travelling to Denmark, committing their crimes and then leaving the country and that these challenges ‘should be,’ as they said, ‘looked at and taken seriously’. However, going back to the discussion about the need for a mutual interest, they also wanted to know what they would get out of allowing me to follow them and their work:

‘Okay. We will help you and your study along. Of course,’ they told me. ‘But,’ they elaborated, ‘it would also be nice to know what you think you’ll be able to find out. Like, what do you think you can help us with? What’s in it for us?’
I explained, similarly to the way in which I had explained to the National Police, that I believed that in documenting the actualities of their everyday practices – including both problems and possible solutions – I would be able to convey this to the police management, who could then use this to develop Danish police work in this area. I sensed that the management at both TFB and TFP were relatively satisfied with this answer, and the representative from the National Police and I eventually left the meetings. On our way out, before walking off in different directions, the National Police representative nevertheless gave me the following reminder:

‘Listen, it’s perfectly fine that you have some personal, academic interests. They or at least I understand that. Yet, to the police officers, it doesn’t really matter what you,’ emphasizing the word “you”, ‘want and what you,’ again emphasizing “you”, ‘find of interest. What is of interest to them – as you heard – is much more what it also gives them. Think about it. You need to be better at presenting this study as something that is mutually beneficial, something that is about “us” rather than just “you”.’ I nodded and replied: ‘I understand. I will remember that and try to reformulate it in the future.’

When I started my fieldwork at TFB a couple of months later in February 2015, and for the remainder of my fieldwork, I continuously recalled the National Police representative’s words, trying to think of and explain my presence and purpose amid the detectives as something of a partnership or, indeed, a collaboration. Certainly, both she and others were correct in pointing out how my various police interlocutors would probe into how my spending time with them would also be of benefit to them. I would be asked this question throughout my fieldwork. Sometimes, the detectives would even contact me directly and tell me, as Detective Madsen did on one of the first days I spent at TFP, that he was

‘pretty sure you won’t be of much help. Actually, I’m more afraid of the damage you might do. But if you want to be of help then please just tell the big guys the following: that we need more men, more resources, that they should close the borders and, most importantly, increase the length of sentences because the foreigners view sitting in a Danish prison for a few weeks as nothing more than a joke. I tell you, that’s the only way forward.’ Detective Madsen told me this, pointing to an email that a Swedish colleague had just sent him, describing how two pickpockets had gotten a much longer, he believed, sentence in Sweden than they would have gotten in Denmark. He then swung back around and returned to his desk, announcing, ‘that is the only thing I can tell you and it’s the only thing I have to say.’

In this way, and on many other occasions, I was bluntly reminded that formal permission to follow the work of TFB and TFP was not the same as having gained the detectives’ trust and their willingness to properly cooperate. I might have been formally given permission to be there by the management, but informally I was sometimes persona non-grata,
particularly in the beginning. Furthermore, it served as yet another reminder of how this trust in part rested on the detectives, if not seeing the purpose of my stay, then at least not being too afraid of the damage I might do.

Establishing rapport

'The Minister of justice is coming to visit us later today,' the TFB management announce during the TFB morning meeting. Personally, I feel excited but in observing both the management's and the other detectives' rather limited interest, my enthusiasm quickly declines. 'She,' the management continues, 'is here to see how we do things, as rumour has it that we're pretty good at catching those foreign burglars. In other words, we'll be giving her “the tour”'; the management emphasise “the tour” in a way that makes it obvious that it means a swift, official account. 'Jensen, we will swing by your desk. So, can you please show her one of our good cases on your computer?' Detective Jensen nods in the affirmative.

Later that day, the Minister of Justice, the Social Democrat Mette Frederiksen⁴, comes by Detective Jensen and his team's office, where I am sitting next to Detective Jensen. We all shake hands with the Minister, Detective Jensen shows her one of the good TFB cases, and about fifteen minutes later she leaves again. After the minister and her delegation have left, Detective Jensen turns towards me, Detective Andersen and Detective Pedersen and says: 'There you have it. I'm sure she was satisfied. But... this is seriously the same old case I show to all people coming here. It's really just a show. I can't be bothered updating it or doing anything else. Like, who cares? She got some info she can use in her line of work and we get to get on with our work.'

While the lack of interest in relation to the visit by the Danish Minister of Justice should be read as an expression of the detectives' political beliefs, i.e. of their not being Social Democrats but on average being further towards the political right, the example is also telling with regard to the challenges faced by visitors. To me, it served as a methodological reminder of how outsiders might be allowed an insight into the workings of the police, yet also of how this insight was often superficial rather than substantial. As the management put it, visitors were given the proverbial ‘tour’, denoting a glazed account rather than an actual look into the everyday world of policing. Or as Detective Jensen, in a no doubt unintended Goffmanian reference, phrased it, it was 'a show'.

The Minister of Justice was by no means the first person who was 'entertained' in this way during my observations of TFB and TFP. During my time at TFP, a visiting reporter was given the same treatment, and even a visitor from the National Police was met with the same outspoken frontstage façade. The fact that these different people were all treated in this way visibly symbolised how access to the realities of policing could not be obtained merely by being allowed to pass through the front gate of the station. Since I

⁴ In 2018, Frederiksen is currently leader of the party.
was myself an outsider, an academic who also came via the National Police, this naturally forced me to reflect on whether I too was merely being given a titivating tour.

In contrast to other areas of academic interest, there are some advantages to studying a hierarchical institution like the police. In having been given formal permission by the police management, the researcher is (almost) automatically allowed to enter and follow the work of certain police officers. The officers might not appreciate the researcher’s presence in their workday, as the comment by Detective Madsen reminded me, but they nevertheless have to follow the management’s orders. However, even though official permission has been granted, it is of great interest to the researcher to obtain a further form of access, namely the trust of officers. Such rapport is part and parcel of all ethnographic studies, yet, as was discussed earlier, it is particularly pertinent when observing the police. Here we can return to Van Maanen’s smokescreen metaphor. Even though the first layer of smoke is penetrated by having obtained formal permission, the practices and perceptions of police officers are shrouded by yet another layer of opacity. This layer concerns the well-established fact that police culture entails a particularly strong scepticism towards outsiders, particularly academics like myself who are seen as promoting a liberal and anti-police agenda. Furthermore, bearing in mind that I gained access through the National Police, I also had to overcome the apprehensions that most frontline officers harbour in relation to the police management. In short, one might be allowed to outwardly observe the daily work of the police but if one wants to really study the police officers’ actual practices and perceptions, one needs to convince them that they can act and speak freely when one is in the vicinity. Further, establishing rapport is perhaps of even greater importance when studying, as I was, police work in relation to foreign nationals. As other studies have similarly noted (see Fassin, 2013b), given the highly sensitive subject matter of this work, including debates about possible police prejudice and discrimination, I would be at risk of receiving the polished and politically correct standpoint of the police officers. Thus, in seeking to know what they really did and thought in relation to cross-border criminals, I needed to assure them both of my trustworthiness and that my following them wouldn’t do them harm.

As has been documented by other ethnographic studies, both of a criminological and non-criminological kind, establishing such rapport is first of all a question of time. People might talk to you and allow you to follow their workaday lives, but the chances are that they won’t initially talk about the more profound, personal or troublesome aspects of life. As in many other areas of life, it often takes time to develop a willingness to talk about and reveal such intense aspects of one’s life. However, when it comes to studying the police, merely spending enough time with them is often not sufficient. The police, as Reiner and Newburn have argued, often seek more apparent evidence of one’s, if not allegiance, then at least of the fact that one is not an adversary.
This evidence often comes in the form of the researcher being put to the test or through what may be seen as ‘initiation rituals’ (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 358). As the anthropologist and police ethnographer Karpiak has similarly noted (2016a: 105-106), what such testing and initiation might entail can be understood by remembering the famed anthropologist Geertz’s example of the moment when he realised that he was not only amongst his Balinese interlocutors but actually an accepted part of their community (Geertz, 2000). The example Geertz gives is that of a day when the police raided one of the illegal cock-fights popular in Bali that he was observing. Instead of standing his ground and showing the police his scientific credentials, Geertz fled the scene just like everyone else. After the police had eventually vanished and people had reassembled, one of his interlocutors turned to Geertz and saluted him for finally having become ‘one of them’. Geertz had acted as the natives did and thus proven himself to be an insider.

Although I believe it to be an all too crude dramatization of the point at which one’s interlocutors truly trust and confide in one as a researcher, Geertz does succeed in exemplifying the way in which given moments are pivotal in telling you whether you are seen as a reliable insider or whether you are still seen and suspected as an outsider. In a Danish context, Holmberg experienced the exact same thing when he was following the patrol work of the Western Copenhagen Police District about twenty years ago. In this case, a Danish police officer told Holmberg that they had found and seized some illegal weapons hidden in a flat. In asking the officer how they managed to locate the weapons, the officer evasively yet revealingly answered:

> It was a tip. We knew something about drugs being sold, so that was a bit lucky. That’s at least how the story goes, and we’re not going to tell you how it really happened. It can’t leave this room … It cannot be put on paper. (Holmberg, 1999: 24-25)

In this way, Holmberg was made aware of police misconduct whilst being told not to pursue the matter, which thereby tested his commitment.

During my time with TFB and TFP, my commitment was similarly put to the test. On a more minor scale this involved everything from the detectives asking questions about my background, and who (if anyone) I knew at the police, to them asking about my political beliefs. It also involved them openly talking about matters that they knew were controversial, such as the so-called European refugee crisis, when most of them were for a harsher approach i.e. allowing fewer refugees to enter Denmark. In doing so, they were looking to see what my position on the matter was. To take one example, they would ask me: ‘But, David, what do you think? You’re probably one of those left-wing, soft academics who think that we should just be good too all people and open our borders, right?’ To this I always answered that, compared to them, ‘you are probably right but it really doesn’t
matter since I’m not here to promote any political agenda but to carry out research.’ As it was, I often experienced that being honest about my political beliefs rather than hiding them was well-received since, I suspect, the detectives thereby experienced that I wasn’t trying to deceive them. More often than not, they merely laughed at what they believed to be ‘naïve views’ and told me that my spending time with them ‘would no doubt help you understand how the world really is.’ Furthermore, I would not uncommonly hear the detectives end a tirade about what they thought about things with them saying something along the lines of:

Yeah, if I didn’t care about my job, this is exactly what I would go tell the management or some newspaper. So, if you want to get me in trouble, you just go ahead and print that. I’m honestly so tired of things around here. You’ve been with us for quite a while now, right? Isn’t it a complete joke? We keep picking up these foreigners and they just keep coming back. It is of no consequence to them. And the management and all the politicians do almost nothing about it. They just force us to carry out all these scheduled ‘activities’ so that they can point to the numbers and say that things are being done. But let me tell you: we’re being screwed by all these foreigners. They are laughing at us. We’re basically helpless clowns.

There were also more significant examples of their testing my loyalty. For instance, sometimes the detectives would check how far I would go in order to help them if it were needed. This could involve me being asked to look after suspects, to run for help or to assist them in other ways. The following is a particularly telling example of this:

My time at TFP is almost over. I’ve been with them for months now and as such we have come to know each other better, as people do who see each other every day. Finishing at TFP also means that my fieldwork is coming to its conclusion. We chat about this fact, as Detective Christensen, Detective Larsen and I exit the police station on our way to Valby Station, southwest of the city. According to Detective Christensen, a group of well-known Romanian pickpockets might be in Copenhagen – an idea he has come by in noticing an MO in the crime reports which he thinks to be on a par with how this particular group usually carries out its crimes. ‘They are usually quite fond of stealing around Valby Station,’ he tells me as we head towards Copenhagen Central Station to take a train, ‘that’s why we’re going there now.’ ‘Also’, he continues, ‘given that it’s only Larsen and I, then you might actually be put to some use today.’ He grins and suddenly hands me some zip ties. ‘Here! Hold on to these. We might need you to use those long, lean legs of yours to chase them down. In case of emergency, you can use these as provisional hand-cuffs.’ As we board the train, Detective Larsen joins the conversation. ‘Haha,’ he laughs, ‘Yeah, David, now you’ve been with us for so long that you should know what’s all about. Maybe it’ll be good for your project to experience what police work is really about.’ Hesitantly, I put the zip ties in my pocket. There is an awkward moment of silence, until Detective Christensen finally says, ‘Nah. Don’t worry. We’re just kidding. You’d best leave the police work to the professionals.’ They nevertheless tell me to hold on to the zip ties in case they should need them at some point. With these buried in my pocket and me being a bit thrown off kilter by the whole thing, we spend the next few hours looking for pickpockets in and around...
Valby Station. However, the detectives never spot any potential suspects and we return to the station. On our way back, I can’t help feeling relieved that we didn’t encounter any suspects. Because ‘would they in fact expect me to act...?’ I think to myself. ‘And what would I do?’ My thoughts then go back to a fairly similar example that had occurred during my time at TFB, where I spent several hours in a North Zealand forest staking out a suspected fence who was living at a nearby farm. Here I was also told, in what appeared to be to be a mix between joke and sincerity, to ‘be ready to chase after him if he makes a run for it.’

Although I always insisted on not being a police officer, and thus not taking part in their work, and although the detectives always ended up saying that they were joking, it was obvious that they were using situations of this kind to test my position. ‘We just want to know where you’re at,’ they would say. Since I accompanied them when on stake-outs, I did run alongside them, I did carry some of their equipment if asked to, and as I will describe later in the thesis, I did for example run to the assistance of one of the TFP detectives who had been blinded by his own pepper spray whilst arresting a Polish suspect; this was not in order to help him arrest the suspect but merely to help to carry both his and the suspect’s bag. In short, throughout my fieldwork I made a conscious attempt to prove that I could be trusted, but at the same time I also made efforts to stress that I was there in the capacity of a researcher and not a police-aid.

These examples of the ways in which Danish detectives tested my allegiance are not exhaustive of the many times that I was put to the test or questioned – the introductory example being yet another. They mainly serve to show how an ethnographic study of the police, my own included, is a matter of constant access-negotiation (Reiner and Newburn, 2007) – a negotiation largely based on the question of whether I as researcher was with or against them. To the best of my knowledge, the Danish detectives never decided not to allow me to accompany them and they didn’t seem to hold back on what they thought about things. I cannot of course be in any way certain that they did not furtively keep me at a safe distance from certain places, practices or perspectives. I do however find some comfort in noting, for example, that they openly spoke about their frustrations and dislikes of foreign nationals, to which this thesis bears testament. Xenophobic talk of this kind would normally be classified as something not suitable for an outsider’s ears. Furthermore, I find comfort in Reiner and Newburn’s argument that

researchers may reassure themselves a little that they have achieved some degree of trust as observers or interviewers if they see or hear things that would cause the subjects embarrassment if they appeared on the front page of the next morning’s Guardian… (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 355)
Although the detective who was mentioned earlier obviously wasn’t referring to the Guardian but to a Danish newspaper, his words – alongside the numerous times I heard other detectives apprehensively “joking” about their fears of ‘ending up on the front page’ – nevertheless serve as an example of how I at least in some way managed to achieve a degree of trust.

That said, I would not in any way claim that I found the perfect Archimedean point in terms of how I was with and observed the police. It is highly likely that such a point does not in fact exist, and my study is undoubtedly shrouded with ethical and methodological issues. The only thing one can aim to do, as Björk (2018) has recently contended, is to be clear about the reasons as to why you are following the police and observing their work, and in doing so also seek their consent. I always presented myself as a researcher whenever asked or when encountering new people, be it police officers, suspects or witnesses. And I continuously sought out my interlocutors’ approval of me being there.

**Research role and position**

Ultimately, I gained accesses and established at least some sort of trust, thus being able to carry out my fieldwork. Still, this cannot and should not be equated with my study being exhaustive, seamless and bias-free. Just like any other (police) ethnographer, the things I was allowed to see, hear and thus note down were by and large due to the way the detectives perceived me beyond the rudimentary binary of being a potential friend or foe. In other words, the empirical material I ended up gathering has been shaped by the role and position I ended up obtaining at TFP and TFB.

However, in contrast to the ‘positivist approach’ adopted by earlier, often male, police researchers (Ericson, 1981; Reiss, 1973; Skolnick, 2011; Sudnow, 1967), who assumed that a passive researcher role would eventually and naturally lead to rapport and full insight, I do not believe myself to have found, to cite Rabinow, ‘a privileged position, absolute perspective, [nor a] valid way to eliminate consciousness from our activities or those of others’ (1977: 151) (see also Hunt, 1984: 284ff). Although individuals’ roles and positions are admittedly not stable, including those of the researcher, but are rather malleable and even manipulative social designations, it is nonetheless possible to describe some general traits in terms of how the detectives related to me. Some have already been noted, such as the way I was perceived as a non-police outsider – as an academic and a person with ties to the National Police management. Having said this, other aspects of my person(ality) were also formative. Once again, an example from my fieldwork is illustrative – an example that goes back to the initial notes on my age, gender, ethnicity and hairdo, and on how these were on a par with the core police demographic, although my interlocutors were nonetheless still easily able to see that I wasn’t a police officer:
I'm sitting in the TFB office with Detectives Pedersen, Andersen and Jensen. Although February is coming to an end and the first month of spring is just around the corner, it's still nippy and not least wet and windy outside – the typical Danish winter sensation. Light has only just broken through the morning darkness and it's only my second day at TFB, which also means that it's only my second fieldwork day altogether. I still feel an uneasiness about the whole situation. However, I remember from my prior ethnographic involvements and from the methodological textbooks that it's perfectly normal to experience what is sometimes described as 'culture shock' (Westmarland, 2001) – feeling the weight and worry that comes from being a stranger in a novel and incomprehensible social setting. I've already introduced myself to the entire TFB during the morning briefing. As such, I've revealed that I'm a criminological researcher with ties to the National Police, and am here to look at how TFB deals with cross-border crime. During the briefing and directly afterwards some detectives were immediately talking to me or about me with apparent apprehension, mulling over the fact that I was, as one said, 'one of these academics'. Meanwhile, the detectives were able to estimate my age (30 years of age) and note that I'm a white Danish male.

Knowing this, Detective Andersen starts probing a bit more into who this stranger is, now sitting in her office: 'So, David, can you tell us a bit more about who you are? Like, where are you from? What are you about? Of course, we've already checked the records, so we know all your dirty secrets,' she says humorously, letting me know that she's joking (checking records would be illegal), whilst of course hinting at the police's Orwellian capacities. I answer: 'Well, I was born and brought up on Funen; then I moved to Copenhagen to study. Now I have been living there for quite some time in my flat in Nørrebro, but I've also lived in London and at the moment I live in Sweden, studying for my PhD.' 'Alright,' Detective Andersen acknowledges, with Detective Pedersen and Jensen listening in. 'So, you are somewhat of a hillbilly like many of us. That's something we understand. But it also sounds like you are a real globe-trotter. And who would want to live on Nørrebro?' she says, again in a not-so-serious but more jesting tone. As I know from prior research encounters, the Danish Police tend to dislike Nørrebro since it is the Copenhagen borough with the highest density of what the police vernacular terms 'assholes' (Holmberg, 1999: 68ff; 'Van Maanen, 1978a), that is, people who tend to be critical of the police, such as academics, left-wing youths and ethnic minorities with believed gang-relations. 'Okay,' she carries on her interrogation, 'And what do you do for fun?' 'What do I do for fun?' I think out loud. 'Hmmm… Of course, as you might be able to guess, I read a lot. But besides that, I guess I'm just a pretty ordinary guy. I like beer, football, women and hanging out with friends. You know, I'm single at the moment so I'm doing what all single guys do, right?' The detectives all say 'sure' and seem satisfied with the answer. Of course, I've made a conscious effort in not presenting myself as too much of an academic stereotype, but I have also spoken the truth about my preferences. 'That's good,' Detective Jensen interjects. 'We'll just have to see if we can forgive your university ways, but it's good to know that you're not that strange after all.'

In a very similar way, I was told later during my fieldwork that it was 'good to talk to someone who is quite normal and not like some of those other academics we work with', largely referring to female academics working for the National Police.

Whether the detectives really felt that I was 'quite normal' or 'wasn't that strange after all' is not for me to judge. They might now be saying the same thing to the next
person. Nevertheless, the way they generally reacted to my background and my presenta-
tion of self is, I believe, telling of the way that they saw me and, possibly, also of what they
told me and allowed me to see. As an illustrative counterexample, it is worth thinking
about what they would(n’t) have shared if I had not been a young, white, heterosexual,
‘hillbilly-ish’ male with an inclination for cold beer and a football match. Here, we can
think about Hunt’s important study on ‘The Development of Rapport through the Ne-
gotiation of Gender in Field Work’ (1984). As she writes in relation to her participant obser-
vations of the police:

> When the researcher enters the field setting, he/she inevitably brings with him/her certain
> features which the subjects interpret in culturally prescribed ways. In the case of the police,
> the researcher was perceived as a "feminine," "inside" person who was allied with man-
> agement against the rank and file. The process of rapport therefore involved the transfor-
> mation of the researcher’s identity from untrustworthy "feminine spy" to a trustworthy
category of person who belonged in … a masculine domain (Hunt, 1984: 283).

As Hunt describes, she too experienced her police interlocutors suspecting her of con-
ducting espionage rather than impartial research. Furthermore, she highlights how this
police perception was gendered to a large degree (see also Loftus, 2009; Mac Giollabhuí
et al., 2016; Pettersson, 2012; Westmarland, 2001). She, as a woman, had to transform her
role to be better suited to the often-described masculine domain of policing, not unlike
the way in which the female officer also has to prove herself to become “one of the guys”
(Lander, 2016). Being a ‘guy’ already, I certainly had a much narrower gendered space to
overcome. Having said this, it would be wrong to simply conclude that being a young male
makes rapport easier and thus the material collected better. The point is merely that dif-
ferent aspects of the police reality are offered depending on how the officers see you. This
of course also depends on other biological characterististics and cultural constructs such as
age, ethnicity and sexuality (Finstad, 2000).

> As Hunt describes, she too experienced her police interlocutors suspecting her of con-
ducting espionage rather than impartial research. Furthermore, she highlights how this
police perception was gendered to a large degree (see also Loftus, 2009; Mac Giollabhuí
et al., 2016; Pettersson, 2012; Westmarland, 2001). She, as a woman, had to transform her
role to be better suited to the often-described masculine domain of policing, not unlike
the way in which the female officer also has to prove herself to become “one of the guys”
(Lander, 2016). Being a ‘guy’ already, I certainly had a much narrower gendered space to
overcome. Having said this, it would be wrong to simply conclude that being a young male
makes rapport easier and thus the material collected better. The point is merely that dif-
ferent aspects of the police reality are offered depending on how the officers see you. This
of course also depends on other biological characterististics and cultural constructs such as
age, ethnicity and sexuality (Finstad, 2000).

In short, the fact that the researcher’s role and position in the field depends on a
variety of demographic variables – alongside everyday interactional qualities – points to
the inevitable partiality of the empirical material obtained. To this I admit, and in this
chapter I have made a conscious effort to outline mine. There is no “right” research po-

dition. Indeed, as Westmarland has concluded, the police ethnographer ‘may move along
a continuum of insider/outsiderness, slipping backwards and forwards along it throughout
the life of the study’ (2001: 527). However, again bearing in mind Hunt’s difficulties in
obtaining the trust of her police interlocutors, it certainly wasn’t unhelpful that I didn’t
stray too far from the police officer stereotype.
The production and problems of fieldnotes

Another thing that obviously positioned me as a researcher and not as a police officer was the fact that I continuously jotted down what I heard and saw in the notebooks that I had with me. In observing my note-taking, both officers and suspects, as well as other members of the police staff and the public would frequently ask what I was writing and not least why. I answered that I was a researcher studying the policing of cross-border crime and that I took notes to make sure that I remembered things correctly and that I would therefore not misrepresent them. However, as has been noted by other police ethnographers (Reiner and Newburn, 2007), taking notes is not something that every policing situation allows for. Often police work includes either intense or intimate situations in which it is not appropriate or sometimes even possible for the researcher to openly stand there with pen and paper in hand. In the case of my own study, for example, I was told to not take notes when staking out the streets of Copenhagen with TFP. ‘This will make you and therefore us stand out. Like, you need to fit in, to be an unnoticeable part of the urban environment,’ the detectives would tell me. Instead they told me to write down notes on my phone as this behaviour ‘nearly fits how everyone is walking around with their phones, texting and being on Facebook.’ When on stakeouts, then, I would write down short scribbles or summaries on my phone, only to develop these when I had returned to the office or, as has become something of an ethnographic cliché, when in the lavatory. On other occasions, however, the police work carried out by TFP and TFB made it easy for me to take notes “on-the-go”, for example when the detectives were working in front of their computers, at meetings, in court or when, if I was allowed to be present, interrogating suspects.

In this regard, I made efforts to write down as much as possible, whenever possible. As has been illustrated, however, noting in full both verbatim speech and my visual impressions was simply not possible. This means that I when I returned home after a day in the field, I would spend time writing up and developing my notes into more coherent field descriptions whilst I still had the day’s experiences fresh in my mind. Furthermore, following the recommendations of Spradley (2016), given that it is basically impossible for the ethnographer to write down everything that is said and done in full, I made an effort to take special notice of culturally specific argot and acts, noting what was said and done and in what context. As Spradley argues, this is particularly important since it keeps the ethnography semantically precise and provides excellent aides-memoire (ibid.) (see also Becker and Geer, 1957). By using this technique and by spending time editing and elaborating on my fieldnotes after a day of fieldwork, I laid the groundwork for the many and at times long empirical vignettes, descriptions and citations included in this thesis.
Having said this, I cannot promise that my memory or my notes haven’t at times been inadequate, meaning that I in some instances might have misunderstood or misremembered certain details. In other words, some few words or actions by individual police officers might have come about in a slightly different way. Unfortunately, this is an unavoidable fallacy of participant observation, in which a person and a pen and not a tape recorder studies the reality of lived life. I can however promise that all empirical descriptions included in this thesis are as close to the facts of the detectives’ work life as possible and, more importantly, that they as a bare minimum are socially and culturally representative of what was said, thought and done. The detectives might sometimes have said ‘good’ instead of ‘nice’, ‘irritated’ instead of ‘annoyed’ or ‘criminal’ instead of ‘law-breaker’, but with the semantic essence remaining the same. As was also described in this chapter’s introduction, this is the only type of representative scientific veracity that a qualitative study can promise; ethnographic preciseness attained through an extensive daily engagement rather than pure empirical positivism.

Further ethical issues
Before commencing my study, I sent my research proposal to the Swedish Ethical Review Board for ethical vetting. In formulating my proposal, I fashioned it along the lines of the British Society of Criminology’s ‘code of ethics’ (2006), which specifically highlights the importance of not harming one’s research participants in any way and of obtaining informed consent. The ethical review board had no objections, so I was allowed to continue. However, as is also written in the British Society of Criminology’s ‘code of ethics’, although termed as a research code, ‘the purpose … is to offer some guidance to researchers’ rather than a ‘prescription for the resolution of choices and dilemmas surrounding professional conduct in specific circumstances.’ (BSC 2006:1) This formulation underlines the fact that when it comes to especially qualitative criminological research, the researcher should always reflect upon issues of ethics yet also remember that, due to the changeable and unforeseeable nature of our study subjects, no absolute right way automatically exists (see also Johnstone, 2005; Wolfgang, 1981). Perhaps particularly in relation to participant observation, the researcher simply cannot foresee every social encounter and situation. Some ethical considerations therefore need to be resolved as they arise, although of course showing the greatest possible regard for the aforementioned ethical standards.

Consent
I remained conscious of these ethical standards throughout my fieldwork. However, ethical issues did arise, particularly in relation to my efforts to secure informed consent. While I had initially secured the consent of the National Police, as specified in a written contract, I continuously had to personally ask for the consent of my study participants. As
Holmberg has also noted (2011), this was not a major issue when it came to the police detectives, who had been officially informed of my presence and purpose and with whom I was in constant dialogue. Securing third-party consent is a more delicate matter however. In noting this, Holmberg refers in particular to the difficulties in obtaining the consent of criminal suspects (2011) (see also Wolfgang, 1981). While the researcher has many opportunities to ask his/her police interlocutors, it is more difficult to engage in conversation and obtain consent from suspects as well as witnesses or from members of the public for that matter. In my case, when I encountered a Romanian, Polish or Moroccan criminal suspect, the situation often did not allow for me to interrupt and ask about whether it was okay for me to be there in my capacity as a researcher. The detectives would be engaged in questioning the suspects and the suspects would be engaged in trying to answer. In addition, I was observing the work of detectives, who were not wearing uniforms or other obvious police insignia, which made it less easy for suspects to note my presence, since I did not necessarily instantly stand out in my own civilian clothing. In this way, doing an ethnography of ununiformed investigational police units clearly differs and involves different methodological and ethical issues form the more common ethnographic studies of the uniformed police (Mac Giollabhuí et al., 2016). Furthermore, there was a significant language barrier, which also made it difficult to seek consent, even if my presence was eventually made clear.

However, when the opportunity arose, for instance when suspects were officially interrogated, I always made sure to have the interpreter ask the suspect whether my presence was acceptable. In these cases, none of the suspects expressed an objection to my being there. I can only guess why this was. It might have been because of the power discrepancy due to my position as a Danish researcher, and perhaps someone who in their eyes appeared to be siding with the police. It might also have been, as I experienced in one instance, that the suspects preferred having me there as a line of defence against possible police misconduct. Or, a third reason could be, and this would be my best guess, that the suspects simply didn’t care, since they perceived other matters to be more pressing.

Whatever the truth might be in this regard, I can do no more than admit to these various difficulties in acquiring informed consent. Having said this, I do think that in this case the end justified the means. In my desire to study police practices in relation to cross-border crime, not being present when the police encountered suspected cross-border criminals would defy the purpose of my study and significantly reduce the quality of my empirical material. To take one example, if I had chosen to abstain from being present during interrogations, I wouldn’t have been able to obtain one of the insights discussed in Chapter Four, i.e. that the many interactional irritations that occurred during interrogations were a factor that contributed to the detectives’ apparent xenophobia. Furthermore, if I hadn’t been present in such situations, I wouldn’t have been able to hear the suspects’
side of the story. As I will describe in more detail later, it was in these encounters that the suspects actually had the opportunity to counter the police narrative without being silenced by distance, commands or language barriers, since they had an interpreter present. More generally, remembering that a stated aim for the police ethnographer is precisely to penetrate the smokescreen of police work and shed light on areas that are not otherwise visible to the public, it would be counterproductive to choose not to follow and observe all aspects of policing, thereby concealing oneself and thus also the phenomena and people encountered by the police.

Anonymisation
Consent itself is not sufficient to allow the researcher to write freely about what s/he sees and hears. This is because, as was also specified in the contract between myself and the Danish police, it is pivotal to ensure that one’s interlocutors remain unidentifiable unless something else has been agreed. This is of importance not only in police research but in all ethnographic research. However, it becomes even more essential in police research as a result of the consequential nature of police work, and also the fact that there are some aspects of the realities of police that cannot be disclosed by law. Thus, as was noted earlier, I have made sure to anonymise all police officers, prosecutors, suspects and other interlocutors who have become part of this thesis. They have been given new names and sometimes I have even slightly changed verbal, personal, temporal or situational aspects if I judged them to be too specific and where it would have been too easy to figure out who I was referring to. Although one might voice concerns when it comes to aspects such as scientific reliability, validity and, not least, replicability, this is a practice that is common to police researchers – and which helps protect the identity of one’s interlocutors whilst not changing aspects that are of relevance to the story one is trying to tell (Björk, 2018)

At the same time, policing sometimes involves troublesome practices that make the researcher question the ethical obligations described above. The fact that this is the case is part and parcel of why ethnographers initially wanted to study the police – to investigate not only the conduct but also the possible misconduct of police officers. This tension leads us to the next ethical issue, which has as yet not been discussed sufficiently.

Researching police deviance
First, a disclaimer: I didn’t witness any police conduct that I would without hesitation be able to describe as being evidence of police deviance or misconduct. However, I did experience many ambiguous situations. For example, police work almost inevitably involves the use of force. Sometimes, therefore, I would reflect on whether or not the Danish detectives’ use of force was excessive, for instance when they were apprehending suspects, tussling with them on the ground or, although rarely, using their batons or pepper spray.
to overcome them. As Westmarland has similarly pondered, experiencing such intense yet unclear situations of violent police conduct are common to the police ethnographer (2001). The fact that such situations appear unclear to the academic, Westmarland argues, is amongst other things because we as academics are not normally used to either being part of or witnessing violent behaviour. To us, violence is exceptional. To the police, it is not only not exceptional but often an everyday occurrence. Violence is a vocational demand and skill. Furthermore, it is not always easy to judge whether or not police violence is appropriate. This is due to the way in which the concept of ‘appropriate force’ is situational rather than unequivocally defined (ibid.). Although strictures exist, it is inevitably the situation itself, and thus the police officer’s discretion, that often determines what amount of force is needed.

This is also something the police themselves often think about. During my stay at both TFB and TFP, I often heard the detectives discussing whether their use of force had been inappropriate, although they regularly concluded that

\[
\text{it’s hard to say, I don’t think it was. The thing is... like, you have to act and take control over the situation. There are guidelines, but in reality, you’re just thrown into the situation – a situation that you have to be the victor in.}
\]

The use of appropriate force is merely one example of the many police situations and practices which, both to the researcher and the police themselves, might include questions of misconduct or deviance. Although legislation such as human rights laws, criminal law, procedural law and internal police guidelines provide a professional framework, policing the unlawful and in other ways difficult sides of life will at some point unavoidably include the use of harsh, disreputable or at times perhaps even illegitimate practices (Punch, 1986; 1989; Westmarland, 2001). Thus in seeking to observe and describe this world, the police ethnographer will almost certainly be faced with practices that might be called into question. Were the police right in doing so? Should I tell, or should I keep quiet? And what would the consequences be? As many police ethnographers have noted, such ethical yet often ambiguous questions arise in abundance when studying the police (ibid).

In my observations of TFB and TFP, I too observed police practices that provoked such questions. Against this background of what might be termed ‘deviant ambiguity’, I will provide two different examples of this from my field study. One concerns a practice that constitutes a by the police self-admitted ‘grey zone’ but that is nonetheless deemed legal – a technological surveillance practice that the detectives used secretly, and the other an issue that is well known in police research, namely that of police prejudice towards foreigners.
Deviant surveillance?

Since the essence of covert police surveillance is to work in the shadows, adopting a clandestine and deceitful approach, this work will almost inevitably take place on the fringes of what is ethically and legally acceptable (Carlström, 1999; Feldman, 2016; Lofts and Goold, 2012; Mac Giollabhuí et al., 2016; Marx, 1988). Thus in studying the work of TFB and TFP detectives, who frequently used covert means, both of a practical and technological nature, to surveil and eventually apprehend suspects, I encountered a number of practices that led me both to question their appropriateness and, subsequently, also raised the question of whether or not I should disclose that such practices were being used. Sadly, the answer to such questions is in no way straightforward (Punch, 1989). The example presented below is particularly telling, an example concerning a specific technological surveillance practice commonly used by TFB.

‘You can’t write about this, David. You mustn’t tell anyone! This is why you signed the non-disclosure,’ the management of TFB warned me. ‘I understand,’ I say. ‘We mean it,’ the management underline, ‘it’s not because we don’t trust you or want to sound harsh, it’s because it’s one of the best and, admittedly, few good weapons that we have against cross-border criminals in particular. As you know, they move around and travel all the time – like one day they are here and the next they are gone – and by doing this, we make sure that we can follow their movements before they simply leave the next day. If we didn’t do this, we would have a much harder time tracking them and collecting evidence to prove their criminal offences. For instance, we never mention it in court. We just describe it as ‘technical observations’. That said, the suspects must certainly wonder how on earth we managed to know all this. You can tell that they look completely dumbfounded,’ the management of TFB explain with what seems to be a smile on their faces. ‘Like, it’s not that you can’t write about it because it’s illegal. Legally, our lawyers have okayed it, although it is sometimes described as a grey zone matter. So, it’s not a matter of corrupt methods. Not at all. It’s simply just a matter of [the fact that] if it is picked up by journalists or others, then the burglars will know, and we will have lost our edge.’

This warning was given to me on one of my first days at TFB, when I was in the very early stages of my fieldwork – but it was a warning that was repeated to me throughout my fieldwork, during which the management and the detectives would let me know that certain aspects of their work had to be kept secret from the public so that criminals couldn’t take advantage. ‘You can’t even tell your sweetheart or best friend. Remember that! We know, it’s difficult. But that’s the premise of your being allowed to study this area of policing.’ These words reminded me of what Mac Giollabhuí et al. have accurately concluded in relation to their studies of covert policing in the United Kingdom, namely that such studies inevitably make the ethnographer, so to speak, an accessory to the act (Mac Giollabhuí et al., 2016). In contrast to studies of the patrolling police, in which distinctions
between the researcher and the officers can more easily be drawn, observing investigational work based on covert surveillance technologies and stake outs requires that the researcher also becomes covert.

Fast forwarding to the very end of my study, I attended a meeting, together with one of my PhD supervisors, with representatives from the Danish National Police who had just read the first comprehensive draft version of my PhD thesis.

Besides going through some reasonable comments on how to better ensure that my interlocutors remain anonymous, the National Police representatives turn to a specific few pages in my thesis where, it is judged, I have described certain investigational and surveillance practices in too much detail. ‘The National Centre of Investigations want you to remove it. That’s the message they gave us after having read your thesis draft – a message we are now relaying,’ a representative tells me. ‘You are only allowed to call it ‘technical observations’ but you cannot reveal the exact details and how it is done step-by-step since this will diminish the detectives’ chances of catching the suspects. There is simply too much insight and information in this draft. Or, stated more directly, if this becomes public knowledge there’s a risk that the criminals will use it to evade apprehension.’

At first, I questioned whether I needed to remove the description in question, since I felt that it was already publicly known, having for example already been mentioned and discussed in newspapers and by commentators. In posing this counterargument, I was nonetheless again met with the request ‘to blur out these practices’ since ‘it might be true that it is not an all-out secret but there’s no need to make it even more known.’

I chose to follow the Danish police’s request, leaving out specific descriptions of this surveillance technology, and also other police technologies and practices. This choice was not a straightforward one, as is also demonstrated by my protest to the National Police. First, I believed that I as a scholar should be allowed to describe any police practice used which was evidently, if not well known, then at least publicly identifiable by searching media archives for example. My reading of the signed contract and non-disclosure agreement was that it only gave the police the right to censor descriptions of integral and, importantly, unidentified practices. Besides, as an ethnographer seeking to describe the police workday, I thought it would be a shame, if not a shortcoming, if I did not describe this workday in as much detail as possible. Secondly, when it came to the surveillance technology in question, I knew that it was (and still is) a police practice which, although admittedly legal, was heavily criticised by human rights lawyers, among others, for its surreptitiousness and Orwellian capacities. As a result of this, I thought it important to describe the practice – which I also thought because I believed it to be a good example of the technological steps that are being taken in this global day and age in trying to track and counter the growing mobility of crime. Thirdly and relatedly, in not describing the practice I felt that
I was in some way contributing to covering up the ongoing increase in surveillance technologies used by police forces and other governmental actors (cf. Mac Giollabhuí et al., 2016); technologies aimed at tracking and controlling the public whilst simultaneously being kept from the public’s awareness by means of policy and covert practices (as is further discussed in Chapter Three). In the end, as the Danish police requested me to, I did blur my descriptions of these surveillance practices, calling them ‘technical observations’, based on the well-known policing argument that such clandestinity is necessary to counter the clandestinity of contemporary criminal developments.

My decision not to go up against the Danish Police and insist on my academic rights and the public correctness of disclosing the described practices could certainly be criticised. However, in weighing up the pro and cons, I nevertheless believed that there would be more value in following the police’s recommendations. I had signed a non-disclosure agreement which did allow them to censor my descriptions of essential police practices. Whether they were right or I was right in stressing the importance of (not) keeping this particular technological surveillance practice a secret was in the end a matter of opinion. And this being the case, I felt it to be more important to follow the expertise of the police, live up to the contract and thus ensure that our collaboration remained productive. Moreover, as the police also correctly pointed out, given that the focus of my thesis is not specifically on the technicalities of certain police practices but rather on the concerns of the police, leaving it out would not negatively affect the thesis’ narrative. In short, mirroring what Reiner also decided in a somewhat similar situation (2000), I decided that it would be more damaging to both my academic present and future to insist on describing the surveillance practice. That said, I am unable to say whether or not this choice was the ethically and academically correct one – all I can do is acknowledge this uncertainty.

Deviant prejudice?
Another often-discussed example of ‘deviant ambiguity’ involves the question of police prejudice, racism and discrimination. The following situation touches upon this issue:

Almost the entire fifth floor is sat around the rectangular table squeezed into the hallway just outside the TFP office, the kitchen and the office in which the robbery detectives have their home. It’s lunchtime. Some have collected food from the canteen on the eighth floor and others are enjoying homemade lunches of the conventional Danish open rye sandwiches or yesterday’s leftovers. Some are chatting. Others are reading the newspaper. Having just read about how a notorious “crime boss” with Danish residency but no citizenship has yet again avoided deportation, one of the detectives bursts out in anger: ‘What the fuck! This Gipsy should be thrown far far away – straight into hell. Human rights my arse. Why should we pay attention to his rights when he and all his compatriots do nothing but piss on ours? It’s repulsive. We are too soft on these fucking foreigners. Look at the stats, guys. We all know how things really are.’ His
colleagues around the table agree either openly or through their silence. ‘Couldn’t have put it better myself,’ one of them says, sitting right in front of me, now looking at me. ‘It’s the truth, David. These corrupt foreigners are screwing us over.’

A further example of derogatory talk about foreign nationals was that it was not uncommon to hear the detectives use other prejudiced labels such as ‘Polacks’ or ‘fucking Arabs’.

Such derogatory and prejudiced expressions are not at all satisfactory of course from either a public perspective or a police perspective. Since the officers were themselves aware of this, the detectives at times policed each other when a colleague said something along these lines. On one occasion, for example, TFB Detective Pedersen directly told two colleagues to ‘Shut up. Come on. Why do you need to talk that way? That’s idiotic.’ His colleagues replied,

‘Loosen up, man! Yeah, we know it’s not the correct way but it’s just fun and games. Stupid police talk, right. No need to be so sober all the time. You know how I sometimes call the colleague from downstairs ‘China boy’ and he calls me an ‘ugly potato’. None of us take it seriously and we carry out our work as professionals.’

Thus the Danish detectives, much like many of their colleagues worldwide, had a police argot that was, rather deliberately, not politically correct and at times downright prejudiced and racialized. As the example demonstrates, this was also debated internally. It should be added, however, as the example also shows, that Detective Pedersen and his described ‘soberness’ represented a minority perspective. In the confines of the car, office or, as Waddington has noted, the canteen (1999b), the police would not uncommonly speak about foreign nationals, but also Danish people, in unbefitting ways. As Waddington has argued, however, although this is problematic if not unacceptable, two important comments should be added. One is that it is imperative to look at whether there is a discrepancy between talk and practice. The other is that one should also note that inappropriate talk, whilst widespread in police forces, is not confined to this profession. As Hughes has famously noted, however unfortunate this might be, it is common to many ‘dirty work’- professions (1962). The point here is that as professionals, the police inevitably come into contact with difficult, deprived and even depraved aspects of social life which inevitably affect police discourse. Thus while one should remain critical of the police talking in derogatory ways, for example about suspects in the confines of the canteen, one should also understand this as a way of letting off steam or as a way of ‘fighting cynicism’ (Björk, 2008). It is, one could argue, asking a great deal of people who work with the grimier aspects society to in no way have dirty mouths.
During my fieldwork, I never experienced the Danish detectives being outwardly discriminatory against the foreign nationals they encountered. I “only” experienced this unbecoming talk – talk that only occurred when the detectives were amongst themselves. As is also mentioned for example in the chapter on police xenophobia, as well as at many other places in this thesis, I am not trying to excuse the detectives. Indeed, as Sollund has noted in a closely related Norwegian police setting (2007a), for example, and as Fassin has more recently argued (2013a), it would be naïve to think that the way the police talk has no effect on their actions. In a more specific Danish context, research has also noted that the Danish police profile and thus potentially over-police ethnic minorities (Holmberg, 2000). Evidently, and as is also openly admitted by the detectives, as shown in Chapter Two, the Danish detectives did use concepts of ethnicity alongside many other identifying characteristics to spot and profile potential thieves. This, they argued, supported by their own experience and statistics, was due to the large number of criminal suspects who had e.g. Romanian, Polish, Chilean or Moroccan citizenship. Admittedly, this leaves us with the complicated question of whether the over-representation shown by the statistics is due to a bias in the focus of police attention or whether it is the other way round (Holmberg, 1999). Unfortunately, I have no way of convincingly answering this question, since little research exists on the policing of cross-border crime in Denmark.\footnote{Kruize’s (2016) recent report on cross-border criminality in Denmark is a study which actually does suggest that the police might be right in assuming that cross-border criminality is an increasing issue. In Norway, Mohn and Ellingsen have carried out a much-related study of ‘Unregistered residents and registered crime’ (2016). This study also points to a likely overrepresentation, although a small amount of the total crimes registered with a known offender are committed by refugees and irregular migrants.} Indeed, the Danish police themselves admitted to this problem. This was described in the following way during a meeting in July 2015 at the National Police.

I know we have had police inspectors concluding that approximately 50 % of burglaries in private homes are committed by foreign nationals, but there is honestly no way of coming to that conclusion. When we only catch around 10 % of the burglars then there are the remaining 90 % to account for. Statistically, it’s erroneous to use the mere 10 % as representative for the many criminals we don’t know. It could be that the remaining 90 % are all Danes. I don’t think so, truth be told, but it’s wrong of us to draw any conclusions at the moment.

In much the same way, I cannot draw any conclusions but only point to the importance of this question, and its associated difficulties.

Blowing the whistle?
In thinking about the issue of police deviance, and in particular the two examples I have presented of covert surveillance and derogatory talk, I will end this section on a perhaps
unsatisfactory but nonetheless frank note. Maybe I did experience aspects of the Danish detectives’ perceptions and practices that might have qualified as deviant. Yet, as Punch (1989) and Westmarland (2001) have similarly discussed, one must emphasise this element of doubt – a doubt shared by and actually integral to the discretionary nature of police work. As Westmarland has therefore concluded in her article on the difficulties of knowing if and when to blow the whistle and reveal police deviance:

Not to be confronted with their [i.e. the police’s] difficulties concerning personal ethics, dilemmas, perhaps emotional and physical danger, would be to ignore the very substance of the social environment of policing (Westmarland, 2001: 532).

This is directly related to a more overall and acute point made by Wolcott, in which he stresses that when it comes to real life, and thus ethnographic studies, ethical ‘lines are often blurred’ (1999: 106). It is, in short, this ethical blurriness that makes it difficult to pass any final moral judgement. Given this, I believe it is an unfortunate but inevitable part of an ethnographic study of the police that we as ethnographers have to ‘read a thin line between going along with police behaviour— colluding through inaction when unnecessary force is used—and ‘blowing the whistle’ (Westmarland 2001:527).

That said, in treading this line between collusion and whistle-blowing, and having now laid it out for the reader, I decided that, following both ethical guidelines and my contractual and verbal agreements with the Danish police, there were no grounds for me to blow the whistle. Or, echoing Westmarland’s words, I would also maintain that ‘the protection of informants from harm, physical or emotional, is crucial, whether or not we agree with their justifications for behaving in certain ways’ (ibid:532). Having said this, the many ethical deliberations that have been described above clearly demonstrate that it was not only the detectives who at times wondered whether I was with them or against them. I also often asked myself whether I was a collaborator – and if so, how and for whom?

The collaborator?

A person who works jointly on an activity or project; an associate.

A person who cooperates traitorously with an enemy; a defector.

*Oxford Living Dictionaries*

Although it would constitute a crude categorisation, one way to classify the different purposes of police research since its birth would be to speak of this research as being either ‘on’, ‘against’ or ‘for/with’ the police (Innes, 2010) (see also Björk, 2018: 456). Another,
similar way of conceptualising these three different approaches is to speak of ‘consensus’, ‘controversy/conflict’ or ‘crime-control’ perspectives (Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 349). In their chronological review of these perspectives, Reiner and Newburn argue that the sine qua non and prototypical example of the earliest police research, Banton’s *The Policeman in the Community* (1964), applied a harmonious, consensus view of the police. Banton actually argued that an ethnography of the police was worthwhile since it served as an instructive benchmark for other societal institutions, the police being, as he put it, an ‘institution that is working well’ (ibid: vii). From the 1970s and up until the 1990s, police research on average took a more critical stance. Furthered both by broader developments in criminology (symbolic interactionism, labelling theory, conflict theory, critical and radical criminology etc.), and alongside all too frequent examples of police misconduct and brutality, police researchers started focusing on such misconduct and, more generally, on the police as a societal institution that furthered class-based interests. In other words, researchers by large examined the problematic and potentially stratifying aspects of police practice and culture. However, from the 1990s and, especially since the turn of the 21st century, police research has taken a collaborative turn. This is both due to both academic developments and the developments in police forces themselves that were mentioned earlier. As a result of a move towards intelligence-led policing and other “academifications” of the police vocation, the police, the Danish police included, are now increasingly employing academics to carry out research that is of practical relevance to the police. Simultaneously, as can be seen in the call to conduct ‘crime science’ rather than criminology (Clarke, 2004), many criminologists, not least as a result of funding opportunities, feel forced to formulate their research so that it has a potential crime-prevention output (Holmberg, 2014). In short, criminology broadly, and police research in particular, has taken a turn towards ‘crime control’, increasingly becoming research with and for the police.

As was noted earlier, both from the outset and today, I see myself as conducting police research in the ‘about the police’-tradition. As I hope the thesis will attest to, I have made an effort to repetitively position myself as a researcher who is interested in everyday police perspectives and practices. I have first and foremost been interested in how the Danish detectives saw and did things and not in academic adjudicating. This, I believe, is also the primary purpose of doing an ethnography, making an effort to, as Fassin argues, critically describe and understand police practice and culture rather than (solely) denouncing them (2017c).

This ‘about the police-approach’ has also been the most common approach when researchers have chosen to use participant observation as their main method. This might be due to difficulties in obtaining access, i.e. if one proposes an antagonistic approach, the chances are that the police won’t let you in. It might also be due to the way in which continuous exposure to what the police officer is exposed to makes simplified critique
difficult (Fassin, 2017c; Reiner and Newburn, 2007: 362; Reiss, 1968). Indeed, when one experiences what a difficult job policing is and observes how police officers themselves admit to being troubled and experiencing doubts when it comes to their choice of actions, it becomes hard for the researcher to make unswerving declarations about what is right and what is wrong. The best the police ethnographer (in the ‘about’ tradition) can do is therefore to try to describe, critically but not crudely, the complexity of the vocation. This is also what I have tried to do, although this is a difficult endeavour since one risks being either accused by the police of being unnuanced or even ignorant or accused by one’s academic peers of having ‘gone native’ – that is of being gullible and uncritical.

Indeed, returning to the above definition of a ‘collaborator’, when studying the police, it sometimes feels like one is swaying between being seen as an associate or an apostate. Positional solidity is rarely achieved. When your peers see you as one of their associates, your police interlocutors might see you as an apostate and vice versa. One can only acknowledge the presence of this dilemma. As Punch has similarly maintained, using the comparable concept of ‘infiltrator’ rather than collaborator,

infiltration constitutes the key technique of participant observation. Although the word infiltration has a negative tone related to espionage and deception it emphasizes that entry and departure, confidence and trust, and attachment and desertion in the field may sponsor social and moral dilemmas that spell out a virtually continuous process of negotiation of the research role (Punch, 1989: 178-179).

A participant observer “infiltrates”, for better and for worse.

A final note should be that, even though studying the police using participant observation inevitably entails this type of collaborative or, in Punch’s perspective, infiltrational conundrum, this should not only be viewed as a methodological and ethical issue. It also speaks of the field itself. It is a vivid empirical demonstration of one of the well-known dominant traits of police practice and perception, namely the existence of a stark binary police worldview, which divides people and practices into right or wrong, inside or outside. More than other social groups, police officers look at and engage with the world through this suspicious and wary lens. This binary worldview has been at the core of this chapter and, significantly, it is an essential explanation for the police concerns described throughout this thesis. Indeed, one could say that the Danish detectives’ many concerns by large stemmed from them questioning the collaborative qualities produced by the increasing globalisation of their work. For example, were the Romanian police really interested in collaborating on a case or were they merely focusing on their own business? And was the information generated by Europol and sent to the Danish detectives’ email inboxes really to be trusted and used or was it insubstantial or perhaps promoting an agenda? And was this young PhD student really there to learn about their work on cross-border
policing or was he rather there to expose them? As demonstrated throughout this thesis, such an ambiguous scepticism lay at the heart of the detectives’ worries.

Final remarks: Good enough?

A good way to end this chapter would be to return to the day at the TFP office that was mentioned at the chapter’s beginning.

After having briefed the TFP detectives about the whereabouts of the Romanian suspects, the patrolman eventually leaves the office, probably returning to his first-floor unit using the staircase behind the kitchen. Detective Madsen spins round in his chair. ‘So, David, did you notice how he was a bit cautious about you being here? I guess it’s a good thing that we’re here to reassure him, right? But hey, you know that’s how we are, as policemen; that’s part of the job, being suspicious. Don’t be offended by it. We just need to make sure. And of course, this guy who hasn’t met you before becomes a bit suspicious when he walks in and sees this guy sitting without any visible police insignia, looking like some random outsider. We know you and we know that you’re okay, but he doesn’t,’ Detective Madsen contends. ‘Sure, I understand,’ I say, ‘It’s not the first time. Just the other day, another patrolman I didn’t know grabbed me and held me back, and even though I told him that I was with you guys and mentioned names, he didn’t want to let go of my shoulder until you, Detective Christensen, came and told him that I was alright.’ ‘True enough,’ Detective Christensen confirms, ‘I had to go down there and tell him that David was good enough before he would let him go.’

In summary, an ethnographic study of the police based on participant observation is by no means an unproblematic endeavour. It is ripe with methodological and ethical complications, complications that are probably only intensified when a study is focused on police work of the kind involved in both overt and covert investigations of foreign suspects. I admit to these complications, and in this chapter I have made an effort to put them on display, enabling both myself and my readers to better reflect on what this has meant in relation to the empirical material collected and the analyses conducted. Thus, as Van Maanen has similarly noted, and with which I can only concur, as a method, participant observation is undoubtedly somewhat ‘un-systematic, biased and to some, unscientific.’ ‘Yet’, he continues,

‘as a partial defense, I know of no other method to explore and begin to describe the “backstage” orientation of actors to their work than to join with them and share both the objective and subjective “becoming” experience.’ (Van Maanen, 1973b: 77)

Following Van Maanen, I will end on a more constructive note. When one wants to describe how given police officers actually act, think and feel in relation to a given issue, as
I set out to do, there is simply no better way than spending a considerable amount of time with them and their work. Many examples will be provided throughout the thesis to prove this point. For instance, I would otherwise not have been able to discover the existence of a discrepancy between official policies about the need to use more information technology, more international police collaboration or the need for additional policing of terrorism and the actual realities of the detectives’ everyday practices and perceptions. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine any other method that would have allowed me to properly explore the many (negative) sentiments that the police manifested. By spending much time with the Danish detectives, as I hope this thesis will succeed in demonstrating, obtained the opportunity to both explain, situate and nuance their frustrations in relation to the depths and broader context of their profession.

Returning to detectives’ valuation, i.e. that my presence was ‘good enough’, I hope that my discussions of the various methodological and ethical factors that my study was built upon and influenced by, will convince my academic peers to come to the same conclusion. To be sure, the use of any qualitative method simply cannot produce rigorous scientific perfection. It can only ever hope to be ‘good enough’, and thereby and more importantly, it can aspire to provide an informative foundation for an ongoing academic debate – in this case a debate on the matter of local policing in a global day and age.

It is to this academic debate that we now turn. The next five chapters will describe and discuss different aspects of the Danish detectives’ work and, particularly, their worries. At first, this move from the methodological to the empirical will include a broad description of both the discursive and daily activities in which the detectives participated – a description of societal concerns in relation to cross-border crime and the policing policies developed to counter these, and also accounts of some the different Danish police departments that were given responsibility for carrying out these policies and of how they in general did this.
Chapter two:
Policing globalisation in Denmark

(Cross-border crime has) become an extensive problem … [which] cannot be tolerated … [W]e have to strike against this type of criminality … as the criminal activities … affect the entire community. Their actions have consequences for all kinds of citizens in our society, feeling unsafe in their own homes and in the streets [and] they have consequences for the small businesses that are being undermined by large-scale thefts. (The Danish National Police [Rigspolitiet] 2012:1-3)

This is how the Chief Commissioner of the Danish Police spoke of the problem of cross-border crime during the European Police Chiefs’ Convention at Europol in late May 2012. It represents a telling example of how the Danish Police at the time of my study saw and still see this issue, including their larger concerns about the challenges of globalisation. To the police, globalisation is understood as having caused increasing criminal opportunities. In a more interconnected world, criminals are increasingly believed to be using various transportational and technological means to both expand their markets and influence across borders and to evade law enforcement. The fact that the Danish police see it in this way is confirmed by a reading of their Strategic Analysis (2015) in which many of the future challenges of police work are linked to how Denmark has become part of a global world order. Cross-border crimes, cybercrime, terror, migration and even climate change are continuously mentioned as being at the root of future policing issues. This view on the problems of globalisation was reiterated to me many times during my study. Notably, the following was said to me by one of the leading figures at the National Police during one of my initial meetings with the Danish Police:

Today, we live in a more global reality. It’s a global reality that has given us many good things but, from a police perspective, it also comes with some quite big problems – and problems that will surely only continue to grow in the future. Today, it is a lot easier for ill-minded people from one part of the world to seek out lucrative criminal markets, for instance in Denmark. We for instance have these Chilean burglars who come here from I don’t know how far away. You get what I mean, right? The criminals can jump on planes, drive cars, or travel swiftly in and out in other ways with little risk of detection. And then they can go and hide in their country of origin without us really having the chance to find them or, if we do find them, to prosecute them. Add to this the problems of computers, where one person can sit nicely and quietly in the confines of his house somewhere in Romania or wherever and commit crimes in Denmark. Like the other day we saw that credit cards skimmed in Denmark were being used in South America somewhere. People just log on to the Dark Web, buy the info and take out the money. Easy peasy. These kinds of crimes demand a whole new approach to police work, different from the traditional cop on the street corner or traditional detective work. Here we must work more closely together across national borders. We have
to engage with experts outside the police, we have to build up solid intelligence and share it and develop knowledge and technologies that are as up-to-date as the criminals. Stated somewhat simply, we must become global like the criminals; we must find ways of becoming as mobile and multi-faceted as the criminals we’re after.

The Danish Police’s analysis is not exceptional. As was touched upon in the thesis’ introduction, it merely mirrors the perceptions of the police forces in many other countries, as can be seen from the criminal threat assessments compiled by Europol (2013a; 2017).

Politically, there is a similar consensus. Both internationally and in Denmark, politicians habitually, and often anxiously, discuss the ‘dark sides of globalisation’ (Heine and Thakur, 2011b), referring to both the believed rise and changes in criminal activities and to other societal risks that are produced by globalisation (IIGGP, 2013; UNODC, 2009; 2010). Looking towards what they believe will be a grim global future, commentators have even predicted that the worldwide illicit trade generated by cross-border crime ‘may reach anywhere from 1 to 3 trillion dollars in value (…) [approximating] seven times the rate of growth of legal trade’ (Heine and Thakur, 2011a: 50). Cross-border crime is not only a big problem, it is big business!

In the Danish context specifically, perhaps looking fearfully at such staggering estimates and their societal consequences, Danish politicians have been outspoken about the problem. The political debate and the Danish media have frequently been filled with apprehensive statements from across the entire political continuum. ‘Danes,’ the far-right Danish People’s Party have said, ‘need to feel safer in their everyday lives. Unfortunately, we can see how particularly cross-border criminal foreigners are increasingly coming to Denmark.’ This concern has been echoed by colleagues from the right-wing, the political centre and the left. ‘Cross-border crime is becoming a larger and larger part of the picture … [W]e cannot silence the fact that it is particularly criminals from Eastern Europe who are a significant part of the statistics,’ the Conservatives have announced. The Social Democrats have acknowledged that they ‘see it as a big problem … We know that people are coming here thinking that Denmark is a rich country and that there is a possibility of getting some easy money,’ and the Socialist People’s Party have correspondingly concluded that ‘We need to get more [cross-border criminals] convicted so that they feel that it won’t go unpunished.’

A question of class?

Evidently, there is a powerful and often alarmed political and police focus on the issue of cross-border crime. However, certain kinds of cross-border crime have attracted more governmental attention than others. These are the types of crimes that the Danish politicians more frequently speak of, namely various kinds of property crime such as burglary
and pickpocketing – the kinds of cross-border crime that constitute the focus of this thesis. These crimes are seen ‘as a big problem’ and as a major reason for citizens not feeling safe in their everyday lives.

One might ask oneself why this is the case. Why did the Danish politicians and subsequently the police direct so much attention at foreign burglars and pickpockets travelling to Denmark, instead of focusing more on other global crimes such as cross-border financial crime? One obvious answer to this question would be based on the reasoning of critical criminology with regard to the function of the police, namely that the kinds of criminal behaviour that receive the most police attention are those which more obviously affect the ruling class(es) (Reiner, 2010: 4-5). In other words, the parts of society characterised by low levels of power and status, and that are therefore more prone to revolt against society, are more at risk of becoming the focus of police inquiry and investigation. They become ‘police property’ as Lee famously put it (1981). Following this line of thought, it is undeniable that cross-border offences such as burglaries and pickpocketing have attracted a substantial amount of political and police attention and control whereas, for example, equally international lawbreaking of a more white-collar kind has seemingly been allowed to slip more easily under the governmental radar, at least in the context of public statements.6 In other words, it would probably not be wrong to argue that burglaries and pickpocketing committed by foreign nationals are more politically potent, since they so perceptibly affect the “good”, middle-class Danish citizens who constitute the ruling class in the renowned Danish welfare state. Indeed, as the Chief Commissioner openly admitted in the quote presented at the beginning of this chapter, the Danish police are called upon when Danish homeowners’ privacy and property are trespassed upon and taken or when business owners’ businesses are being undermined – homeowners and business owners being emblematic of the Danish middle-class. The same can be said about pickpockets, who steal from the wallets of hardworking urbanites or much-appreciated tourists. As a result, although they may appear petty by comparison with other forms of cross-border criminality, these crimes and the intense interest in policing and punishing them can be said, in Durkheim’s famous quote, to speak to the ‘heart and centre of the common consciousness’ (2014: 69) – that is, a consciousness that is common among the governing forces in society.

The fact that this was the case was appreciated, although perhaps accidentally, by one of the Danish detectives who explained to me that he of course knew

---

6 Although, recently, Danish politicians have been increasingly outspoken against for example international shell corporations.
that it is sometimes only a mobile phone or whatever [that they steal]. Who cares, right? But still, it’s
more than that… They come here in numbers to our country and harass decent citizens. They break into
people’s homes or put their hands into people’s purses. It’s not the absolute biggest crime, I know. But I
promise you, it’s upsetting. In some way, it is like they’re not just stealing stuff, you know…? It’s more
like they’re undermining ordinary people’s daily lives. People don’t want to leave their homes if they think
they’ll get burglarised and tourists don’t want to come here if they constantly experience having their pockets
picked. Like, what has the world come to if you cannot expect yourself and your stuff to be safe in your
own pocket or in your own home?

In this way, which is similar to other contemporary fears of and focuses on crime, the
Danish police and politicians often invoke the well-being and safety of the populace, of
‘ordinary folk’, as the reason for enhancing policing efforts – and this is especially true
when it comes to migrants, refugees and other non-citizens who not only in Denmark but
worldwide are increasingly policed, thereby emphasising and enhancing the line between
the rights and rightfulness of “decent” citizens” vis-à-vis “indecent” immigrants (Bowling
and Sheptycki, 2015b; Gundhus and Franko, 2016; Weber, 2013)

Nevertheless, the interest of this thesis is not directed at whether the Danish police
or politicians are right or wrong in considering (some of) the challenges of globalisation
in this way. The same can be said in relation to the aforementioned quantitative aspects of
this discussion. Thus the intention in the following pages is not to critique the qualitative
or quantitative veracities of the alleged dark sides of globalisation. Instead, the thesis is
specifically and solely interested in the police perspectives and practices that have been
furthered by this particular view on cross-border crime and globalisation. In other words,
as was mentioned earlier, the interest is to ethnographically understand ‘globalization [as]
an artefact manufactured and received in the local’ (Burawoy, 2001: 148). It is therefore
simply noted that the above-mentioned political and police discourse exists, since it con-
stitutes the wider context in which the Danish detectives worked. As has been described,
this was a contextual discourse in which it wouldn’t be wrong to conclude that cross-
border criminals such as Romanian, Polish or Chilean burglars and pickpockets had be-
come contemporary ‘folk devils’ (Cohen, 2002) in Denmark, since they were a ‘group of
persons [that had] emerge[d] to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests’
(ibid: 9). Again, what such societal values and interests consist in and, more importantly,
whom such societal values and interests benefit, are certainly significant questions but un-
fortunately not questions to which answers are sought in this thesis.

Cross-border crime demands cross-border policing
It is in the light of this view of cross-border criminals as a folk devilish societal threat that
the Danish Police recently declared that criminal foreigners ‘better be looking over their
shoulders,’ given how the police would now be making an extra effort to apprehend them.
In making this extra effort, the Danish police note two work areas in which they need to improve, mirroring the words of the leading figure from the Danish National Police cited above, who concluded that the Danish Police ‘must find ways of becoming as mobile and multi-faceted as the criminals we’re after.’ One work area that needs improving involves the amount and quality of the Danish Police’s international collaborations. The second involves an increase and development of the Danish Police’s use of information technologies, including building up, sharing and analysing data – building up their anti-cybercrime and wider computer proficiencies as well as acquiring new surveillance technologies (Det_Danske_Politi, 2015). In other words, by working more closely together with other countries’ police forces and by increasingly obtaining, analysing and disseminating information/intelligence on the actions and movements of people, the Danish Police hope to be better able to identify and apprehend foreign criminal suspects.

In this way, increasing practical and digital cross-border police cooperation is viewed as providing the answer to the challenges of cross-border crime, and also other societal risks produced by globalisation. This also includes a move to not only increase cooperation across international borders but also to increase cooperation across institutional borders. Here, the Danish Police are increasingly seeking to strengthen their partnerships with external organisations and institutions, for instance seeking to work more closely together with other governmental institutions such as the National Tax Agency, Customs, Migration Services, Social Services, and the educational sector as well as academic experts, businesses, and civic society (Det_Danske_Politi, 2015). The fact that policing collaborations are increasingly seeking to cut across both international and institutional borders mirrors what has been noted by the research since the turn of the century, namely that contemporary policing is increasingly becoming a widespread policing network rather than merely being a task that is restricted to the public police (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Jones and Newburn, 2006; Loader, 2000). This is also what has led many leading scholars to argue, in what is often characterised as ‘the transformation thesis’ in police research (Jones and Newburn, 2002), that it would be more sensible to make ‘policing’ rather than ‘the police’, i.e. the verb rather than the noun, the action rather than the institution, the object of scientific scrutiny (Reiner and Newburn, 2007). I will return to this point later.

The field

In later chapters I will provide further examples of how the Danish police, and specifically the task force detectives, concretely responded to these various developments in policing, thus attuning their work to a more global perspective. However, the aim of this chapter is first and foremost to present both the wider and the more particular empirical reality in which the detectives worked. As has already been mentioned, this includes describing the
status of various policing policies and discourses on cross-border crime and globalisation more generally. Moreover, this presentation must also include a description of concrete workplaces and workdays in order to give the reader a better sense of the exact field that constitutes the empirical foundation of the thesis, in particular the two police task forces whose work I spent many hours observing throughout 2015. Specifically, the descriptions will include short accounts of the task forces’ location, mandate, organisation and demography. Further, I will provide some ethnographic examples of the actual police work carried out by the task forces. I do this in order to give the reader a sense of how this work was conducted and what it included. It should however be mentioned that no two days were exactly the same. The police profession, perhaps more than other professions, is capricious, since unexpected events can completely reshuffle the officers’ workday. The work can suddenly, as the detectives would put it, ’be hit by everyday realities’ (something I will later discuss and the importance of which I will elaborate further). The ethnographic examples provided below are therefore illustrative rather than exhaustive. There are however certain common denominators. And this might be particularly true when it comes to detective work, which is admittedly not as subject to the effects of the unexpected as, for example, the work of a patrolling officer. Bearing this in mind, I will now provide a summary description first of Task Force Burglary and then of Task Force Pickpocketing.

**Task Force Burglary (TFB)**

Task Force Burglary was established and commenced its work in 2012 as a special investigation unit specifically tasked with combatting a dramatic increase in supposed organised burglaries in Denmark. It was strategically placed in the affluent suburbs north of Copenhagen as part of the police station, Station South, which is one of the North Zealand Police District’s four major police stations. The North Copenhagen suburbs with their mansions and villas were (and still are) among the places that are most often targeted by burglars, which meant that it made sense to place a burglary police task force in the vicinity. What makes TFB special, alongside other task forces that have been granted special powers and responsibilities, is that they, unlike other regular police units organised under specific police districts, are allowed to work and operate across Danish police districts. TFB was, as the unit’s officers themselves said, ’border-crossing’ in its work. This right and ability not to be restricted by organisational and territorial boundaries was given them in acknowledgment of the fact that the crime they were policing was itself ‘border-crossing’, ‘mobile’ or ‘travelling’ as they would interchangeably refer to it, cutting across the normal divides of the Danish police organisation, since the criminal suspects involved came not only from other parts of Denmark but frequently from other countries.
The organisation
At the time of my observations, TFB consisted of just under twenty police detectives. The
typical way of organising the detectives’ work was to divide the detectives into separate
investigation teams, with each team working its own cases. Besides the detectives, three
designated prosecutors were stationed at TFB and worked exclusively with TFB cases.
This everyday involvement of prosecutors is not common in the Danish policing context
given that the Danish police themselves, and not the prosecutor’s office, are mandated to
run and lead the investigations – a discretionary power which the Danish police prides
itself in and which is a rarity when looking at the division of labour between the police
and prosecutors in many other countries. Besides the detectives and the prosecutors, TFB
was also the base for a crime analyst and a liaison officer from Romania, as well as for the
occasional interpreters who helped with the cases involving foreign nationals. All these
people were headed by three senior officers, who comprised the TFB management.

In terms of demography, the detectives at TFB were predominantly male with, at
the time, only four female detectives. In terms of age, the detectives were between thirty-
five and sixty years old, which means that they all had considerable experience as detect-
tives. A certain amount of investigational experience and aptitude were indeed expected,
since the investigations conducted at TFB were bigger and more complex than the average
investigations conducted at individual police districts. Indeed, as an officer from the TFB
management told me when I first met him, ‘At TFB we’re investigating organised crime –
large and complex cases and not some petty, random burglaries.’ All the detectives at TFB
were, without exception, ethnic Danes. The TFB management also consisted only of male
officers, two of whom were around sixty while one was a younger colleague in his mid-
thirties. These were also ethnic Danes. The prosecutors’ team consisted of two females
and one male prosecutor, all in their late thirties/early forties and all of them ethnic Danes.
The interpreters who assisted on different cases involving foreign suspects all had an im-
migrant background, having either been born outside Denmark or having parents who
were born outside Denmark. This gave them the necessary language proficiencies in, for
example, Romanian or Arabic. As regards their socioeconomic background, to the best of
my knowledge, the detectives more or less all came from a middle-class or lower-middle-
class background and they had often grown up in the suburbs or in the Danish coun-
tryside. In this way, while TFB demanded that detectives had a certain aptitude, and thus had
considerable status in the police organisation, the unit and its detectives were nonetheless
representative of the average demography of the Danish Police and, for that matter, the
police worldwide: They were predominantly male, of a middle-class or lower middle-class
background, often from the suburbs or rural areas and ethnic natives of the country in
which they worked.
The work
What did the police work of the TFB include? This is a difficult question to answer, since this work involved many things and since every day was slightly different. There were however, some general tenets for this work. It is with these in mind, that I have selected the following empirical example, which is taken from one of the days I spent at TFB.

'They both got just under three years!' one of the prosecutors happily and proudly announces during the TFB morning briefing. The prosecutor is speaking of the prison sentences that had been given to two Moroccan men the day before. The two Moroccans, both in their early twenties, had many months earlier been arrested by TFB detectives and charged with having committed a series of burglaries and one instance of robbery. Before and after their arrests, the TFB detectives had been working hard gathering evidence to secure a 'good conviction', as they called it. And a sentence of just about three years imprisonment, including the possibility of getting the Moroccan men deported, was seen as just that, a good conviction. Just after the morning briefing's happy announcement, I walk back to the desk that TFB has assigned me during my stay. The desk is in the smallish office of one of the TFB investigation units led by Detective Jensen and consisting of himself, Detective Andersen, Detective Pedersen and another detective who is currently absent on paternity leave.

Yesterday, Detective Andersen, together with Detective Jakobsen and Detective Iversen, had been in court watching the Moroccan men receiving their sentences. The detectives had invited me to come, just as they had invited me to attend earlier hearings in the case. Sitting at the back of the courtroom, with the detectives sitting close to the defendants to make sure they didn't talk to each other or, for that matter, try to escape, I heard the judge's ruling. In sentencing them to almost three years in prison, he had underlined that the prosecution had made a convincing case, providing sufficient evidence for the court to be able to judge the Moroccan men's crimes as constituting organized crime. It was demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the two defendants had been in Denmark with the intent to commit crime, and, more specifically, the evidence provided had successfully established that during their stay in Denmark they had committed more than twenty burglaries in private residences. Receiving the verdict, which was translated for them by an Arabic interpreter, the two men didn't look particularly surprised. Some family members and friends who were following the trial did look rather devastated however. Yet, before exiting the court room, one of the Moroccan men started to openly vent his frustration. Maybe it was slowly sinking in that he was going to prison for a long time or, as Detective Iversen guessed, as we drove back to TFB, 'Maybe he realised that he's going to be sent back to where comes from. Most of these foreigners don't think it's such a big thing to be imprisoned in Denmark but they absolutely hate being deported. They'll do anything to avoid that, especially the asylum seekers.'

Before hearing the judge's final ruling, I had attended earlier hearings in which the defendants had given their statements and I had heard Detective Jakobsen provide a detailed account of how they could prove that the suspects had been in the areas where the burglaries were committed by, amongst other things, showing how their mobile phones had connected to nearby mobile phone masts. 'Looking at this,' he had explained in court, 'we have been able to determine that their movements match perfectly with the burglaries being committed. Their mobile phones, as you can tell by looking at exhibit 34 shown on page 65, connected to the nearest mobile phone mast or, if the mast was full, they connected to the second nearest.'
In this way, we can see that the defendants moved along this path towards North Zealand where the crimes were committed. Then all of a sudden, the signal died out as they, we assume, turned off their phones. And then, after committing the crimes, they turned on their phones again. This we can see as the mobile phone masts show that they moved back towards Copenhagen. The detectives had earlier shown me this mobile phone movement evidence, which indeed looked convincing, considering when and where the crimes had been committed.

Now, back at the TFB office, Detective Andersen notes that 'this was a good case.' ‘It was good,’ she explains to me, ‘because the Moroccans got put away with more than a slap on the wrist; a softness we unfortunately otherwise see every now and then.’ Detectives Pedersen and Jensen agree. ‘Yes, that was a good case. So, let’s put more of these people in jail,’ Detective Jensen says. ‘And we can start by putting away the ones we’re investigating now.’ For the last couple of months, the detectives in this investigation unit have been investigating a group of Danish ethnic minorities suspected of having committed several burglaries west of Copenhagen. The investigation started when Detective Pedersen had spotted the suspects in a car, where something had aroused his suspicion. He had followed them, as he himself admitted, due to a mix of luck and experience, and he had eventually observed them trying to break into a business but fleeing as the alarm went off. Instead of arresting them there and then, he had followed them to where they lived and later, with this evidence in hand, he had convinced the other detectives to run a case on them.

At TFB not arresting criminals straight away, but instead building up the case, was normal procedure, based on their mandate to investigate organised crime. As they told me, this decision was further encouraged by the fact that a description of a series of burglaries matching the appearance and MO of the suspects had been sent out to the entire Danish Police just a few days earlier. In deciding to run the case, the detectives had eventually obtained a judge’s permission to set up wiretaps on the two suspects living in the flat that Detective Pedersen had located. The detectives had been listening in on the suspects’ phones for some weeks now, but without getting a suitable amount of proof of criminality activity.

Looking at each other, and hoping to secure more evidence, the detectives stop ruminating about prior ‘good cases’. Instead, they turn on their computers and log on to the surveillance programme that records suspects’ phone conversations and other digital communications such as text messages and internet activities. ‘If you start with what has come in since we left the job yesterday, I’ll start with what they have said and done from midnight and onwards,’ Detective Andersen tells Pedersen. ‘Sure,’ Pedersen confirms. However, it is obvious that the detectives are not overly thrilled with this case, compared for example to the one with the two Moroccan men or, even more so, compared to a prior case, which they had given the code name ‘Goldfinger’. ‘Goldfinger’ was one of the big TFB cases that had made the news. During this case, TFB had managed to get a wiretap running on a Serbian citizen and his accomplice, a Romanian citizen, who were buying gold and silver from contracted Romanian burglars. Through many hours of investigation, listening in on wiretaps, doing stake outs and even following the suspects across international borders, the detectives had finally arrested the Serbian citizen, his Romanian accomplice and the many contracted Romanian burglars.

Possibly thinking about some of these bigger cases and how small and slow their current case is, Detective Jensen turns to me and says, ‘Look, the idea is that we should only run big cases. This could be a big case but lately they haven’t really said anything on the wire. It’s like they have gotten other phones that they use for their criminal activities. Or, it’s like they are at home all day, all the time. That can’t be
right. They must be doing something without us knowing,' Detective Jensen thinks out loud and then stares into thin air for about ten seconds. 'Listen guys, we need to do something. We need to find the car they are using. That's the key,' Detective Pedersen and Andersen agree. 'I'll get the stake out team to see if they can locate the car,' Detective Jensen eventually declares.

A few days later, I am back at my desk where, as on most days, Detectives Jensen, Andersen and Pedersen are also present, sitting in front of their computers busily deciphering the various types of information and intelligence that are coming in. 'We found the car,' Detective Jensen tells me in an excited voice. 'Now we can catch them red handed!' 'Anyway,' Jensen continues, 'I've arranged for you to talk to this other detective who's running a case on some suspected Chilean burglars. He definitely has some things to say of relevance to your research on cross-border criminals.' 'Come on,' says Detective Jensen, and drags me with him down a small staircase, leading to a bigger downstairs office. 'This is David,' Detective Jensen tells Detective Ulriksen. 'David is looking at how we deal with cross-border crime. Please tell him a bit about the Chilean case. Okay,' Detective Ulriksen answers, watching Detective Jensen leave. After having told Detective Ulriksen a bit more about my research project, he shows me a whiteboard with pictures of the suspects. 'These are the guys we're talking about,' showing me pictures of a group of Chilean men aged around thirty, perhaps a bit older. 'The story is that we started to investigate them because the post office in downtown Copenhagen contacted us. The Chileans had tried to mail back several big parcels with stolen goods. The only reason the post office noticed it was because one of the parcels broke and the goods fell out. We then told the post office to let us know the next time those Chileans came to post something. That's how it started. Now, we've investigated this case for a while and we have also run another case on another group of Chilean nationals. Like, it does seem super weird that they bother coming all the way to Denmark from South America. Right? But we've found out that there's a Cuban man here who facilitates the whole thing. So, these guys fly in on tourist visas, often through Paris. They stay here for the three months they are allowed to. And then they leave, fat and rich. It's fucked up, right? It's so easy. They fly in from across the world, via Paris or some other European city or as not to arouse our suspicion, and then they are suddenly here in Denmark, with us, the Danish police, having little chance of knowing that they are here. Luckily, we got these guys, but think about it, it was more chance than good police work that the parcel broke and the post office contacted us.'

Continuing our conversation, Detective Ulriksen and I walk up to the kitchen where we get a cup of coffee. 'Actually,' he says, 'we're going out later today or first thing tomorrow, scouting out this place where we think some suspects might be staying. You wanna come?'

I accepted Detective Ulriksen's invitation and later that day we drove out into the Copenhagen suburbs to stake out some possible suspects. In general, I accepted all the invitations I was given. This meant – as I described at the beginning of this account of the police work conducted at TFB – that I followed the detectives to court, when they picked up arrestees from prisons to go to court or for meetings with their attorneys, when the detectives conducted searches of suspects' flats, when they went on stake-outs, when they collected evidence from crime scenes, when they made arrests and also when they went out to talk with potential witnesses. Having said this, it is nonetheless difficult to provide a simple and coherent account of the normal work procedures at TFB. It is difficult because
the detectives were very much at the mercy of what happened in the cases they were running. It is furthermore difficult because of the fact that most TFB investigations were substantial and time-consuming. This meant that even though I was there for around 450 hours, spanning over a number of months, I did not get the chance to see them open a case, investigate it, and then make an arrest and secure a conviction in the same specific case. Following a single case from beginning to end would unfortunately have required a much longer stay. That said, the examples described above do demonstrate the regular facets of TFB and the work of its detectives. As the examples show, the detectives investigated organised burglaries and in doing so they encountered both Danish citizens and foreign nationals. The Danish citizens (or at least people with permanent residence in the country) who were suspected of committing burglaries were often believed to be people with relations to criminal gangs in Denmark, either the MC gangs such as the Hells Angels or so-called ‘immigrant gangs’ which consist of resident ethnic minorities. The foreign nationals were also thought to be organised or professional criminals, travelling to Denmark from countries such as Romania, Poland, Lithuania, Chile or, alternatively, being asylum seekers with criminal intentions from North African countries such as Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria. As was also demonstrated above, a significant amount of the TFB detectives’ work consisted of their working from their offices. From their office, they would monitor the wiretaps and other means of surveillance (or ‘technical observations’ as they termed them) that they had set up to observe the activities of their suspects in the hope of gathering evidence of their criminal behaviour. Having obtained these insights into the different aspects of their work, I eventually asked Detective Jensen if he believed there was any difference between working a case with Danish suspects and a case with cross-border criminals.

’Hmmm… I guess. Like, you’ve seen some of them. There are simple things like how we don’t understand what the foreigners say so we need interpreters. Like, the fact that they are foreigners instead of Danish produces a lot of noise and extra work like that. It produces extra paper work, people we have to call, things we have to consider. That’s pretty annoying, to be honest. And, yeah, then there’s the difference that these cross-border criminals are only here for a short while. They are here “to work”, if you know what I mean. They come and leave the next day. This means that we have to be quicker. We can’t just wait for a patrolman to randomly bump into them or something like that and we can’t drag out the investigation. We need to find ways to be quicker, to keep better track of where they are here and where they are. So, in this way, the cross-border criminals have an edge that Danish criminals don’t have. Fortunately, the cross-border criminals are often more stupid than the Danes. They don’t take the same precautions. That’s often how we get them. That said, I’m sure we only get very very few of them … So, yeah, we probably should change things up if we are going to catch more of them.’
Task Force Pickpocketing (TFP)

The TFP mandate, organisation and workday was characterised by both similarities and differences in relation to TFB. One big similarity was that a considerable amount of time was spent investigating and apprehending foreign cross-border criminal suspects – foreigners who were not however suspected of burglary but, as the task force’s name communicates, pickpocketing. Although pickpocketing sounds like petty crime in the style of Oliver Twist, the pickpocketing crime category in this case involves a wide range of criminal acts, some of which are more serious and complex. While the term does also denote the well-known stealing of a mobile phone or a wallet from a table, jacket or bag, TFP mostly worked with the kind of organised pickpocketing also known as ‘shoulder surfing’. ‘Shoulder surfing’ is the police vernacular for when a criminal first observes a person’s credit card pin, for example by looking over the person’s shoulder when the credit card is used for a purchase, and then subsequently steals the credit card and uses it to take out a large sum of cash. In addition, TFB also focused on cases of credit card skimming where, for example, a slim-looking device is mounted on top of a cash machine in order to scan and copy the credit card data.

The organisation

Task Force Pickpocketing was not the official name given to the detectives working there. It was an unofficial name given to signal the special nature of their work. At times, the detectives were also spoken of as belonging to ‘the pickpocket group’ or ‘team zapzarap’, with ‘zapzarap’ allegedly meaning ‘stealing’ or ‘being transgressive’ amongst Eastern European criminals. In this way, TFP was not a real task force in the same sense as TFB which was, as mentioned above, given its own specific mandate, facilities, management, prosecutors and also HR employees. Instead, TFP was a small group of specialised and experienced detectives who were organised under the Copenhagen Police’s Theft and Robbery Section. When I first visited them in early 2013, during a pilot project (Saasdal, 2014), they were housed at the Copenhagen Police’s offices at Copenhagen Central Station. Later, when I carried out my thesis fieldwork in 2015, they had a small corner office on the fifth floor at Copenhagen Police’s Station City, which is located on Halmtorvet in downtown Copenhagen, not far from the central station and just next to the meat-packing district and Jægersborg. This is a part of Copenhagen (in)famous for accommodating an urban mix of petty street criminals, prostitutes, pimps, drug dealers, drug users, tramps, tourists and, signalling its ongoing gentrification, many young and hip Copenhageners. Hence, in the same way as was the case with TFB, the location of TFP in this area, close to the centre of the city, was chosen because much of the pickpocketing was happening in its direct vicinity.
As a special investigation unit, the TFP detectives were normally kept free of other commitments, being allowed to focus solely on pickpocketing. The reason for this was that Denmark, like adjacent countries, had been experiencing large numbers of pickpocketing offences, particularly in and around Copenhagen. Thus in the same way as TFB, TFP had been established on the back of increasing crime numbers, negative press and political pressure. That said, even though TFP was given permission to focus on pickpocketing, daily realities meant that they instead at times had to help nearby colleagues, for instance in making arresting or writing reports. And sometimes they were ordered to assist in other important parts of the district’s responsibilities. As the TFP detectives thus put it, ‘Our job is to catch pickpockets. And that we do. But honestly, we can only organise and plan so much.’

TFP consisted of five to six detectives during my stay, although, when running bigger cases or larger operations, they would be aided by colleagues from either their own unit or for instance from the Eastern Foreigner Control Section (EFCS). The five to six detectives were all male at the time that I was following them. The detectives were between thirty and forty years old, although one of them was significantly older and had thirty years of experience working with pickpocket policing in Copenhagen. The detectives were all ethnic Danes. Like the detectives at TFB, they were all from a middle-class or lower-middle-class background. Furthermore, the detectives were supervised by two senior officers, one older and one younger, both of whom were also ethnic Danes.

The work
Similar to the workdays at TFB, it is difficult to simply recapitulate all the things that the detectives at TFP did. That said, the following example taken from a midsummer day that the TFP detectives spent staking out the streets of Copenhagen contains the fundamentals:

It’s still early in the morning. The TFP detectives and I have just come down from the morning briefing on the eighth floor and the detectives are now logging on to their computers. I bring them each a cup of coffee to make myself useful. Sitting in front of their respective computer screens in their rather small corner office on the police station’s fifth floor, they – whilst chatting about matters not particularly work-related – start to go through yesterday’s crime report. In doing this, they are especially looking for more serious crimes of pickpocketing, or ‘trick thefts’ as they are also called. This for instance involves signs of ‘shoulder surfing’, ‘fake cops’ or ‘breakfast thieves’. ‘Shoulder surfing’ is the police argot used for when pickpockets observe your credit card pin, steal the credit card and then take out large sums of money. ‘Fake cops’ basically is what it says. It is when pickpockets present themselves as police officers to, most often, tourists and then use their “authority” to search and steal the tourists’ belongings. ‘Fake cops’ is also referred to by the criminals themselves as ‘The Maradona’, using the Argentinian footballing genius’ name to denote that it is seen as one of the best tricks of the trade. Finally, ‘breakfast thieves’ is the police term used for
pickpockets who linger around hotels during breakfast time and steal hotel guests’ belongings when they are busy eating or getting food from the breakfast buffet.

There’s been quite some activity around Østerport Station. Do you see that, guys? There are several reported offences from yesterday and the days before. It could be Antonescu and his Romanian friends who are visiting our country again. It kinda looks like their MO. What do you think? Detective Christensen asks the other TFP detectives whilst still looking at his screen. ‘That’s possible,’ Detective Larsen says from across the office. ‘Do we have some CCTV footage?’ ‘Nah. But I’ll look into it,’ says Detective Madsen. ‘Like, if you guys want to go out and catch them, you should do it now while the morning rush is still happening. Then I’ll stay behind and send you the CCTV footage if I find something of interest,’ Detective Madsen concludes. ‘I’m game,’ say both Clausen and Mikkelsen who’ve been following the conversation. ‘But how do these guys look again?’ Detective Clausen asks Detective Christensen. Detective Christensen finds some old footage of them from when they were last arrested. All of the detectives study them so that they can better remember their faces if they see them on the street. ‘David,’ Detective Larsen calls me over, ‘have a look. And have a good look. Trust me, remembering faces is much harder than you think. People think it’s easy but if the suspects don’t have an extremely weird look, it’s very hard. I’ve actually been told that one should look at pictures upside down. The idea is that it will make you see details you can actually remember instead of just seeing a face,’ he says, smiling at me. ‘I dunno,’ he thinks out loud, ‘but take a good look. It takes practice before you become as good as Christensen for instance.’ ‘Christensen is a natural born talent when it comes to remembering people,’ Detective Larsen informs me as he gets ready to leave the station and, as the detectives say, ‘hit the street’. Getting ready, the detectives fetch their radios and headsets. They need the radios to be able to stake out potential subjects whilst communicating to their colleagues where they are, what they see and what they are doing. They also get their handcuffs. And just before being ready to leave, they get their service weapons and put on their bullet proof vests. Carrying their weapons and wearing a vest has recently become mandatory due to the risk of terror in Denmark. The police, the TFP detectives included, need to be ready to both defend themselves and the public if something happens. Bringing their weapons and wearing a vest is something they do reluctantly however. First of all, it’s summertime and rather hot outside. This means that they’ll get very warm, walking around with all their gear for many hours. Furthermore, it annoys them, as they find that a weapon and a vest makes them look more like cops. If screams cop,’ Detective Clausen explains, ‘when we’re walking around outside like the Michelin man with way too many clothes on. People are wearing shorts and t-shirts and we have to wear thick hoodies to hide our gear.’ ‘It’s not the best cover, I tell you.’ Detective Clausen, Mikkelsen, Larsen and Clausen and I are now ready to leave the station, whilst Detective Madsen, as he said he would, stays behind. However, just before we leave, Detective Larsen grabs a brown sports bag and throws it over his shoulder. ‘It’s a good camouflage,’ he tells me. ‘It makes us look, like all the other people out there who are just on their way to work, the gym or somewhere else. It’s all about blending in.’ In making a similar effort as Detective Christensen to blend in, the other detectives are all wearing their own private clothes, wearing shirts, jumpers or hoodies together with cargo trousers, jeans or shorts. They also tend to wear backpacks, sun glasses and a couple of them put on a baseball cap. Seeing them, they don’t look like your typical policeman, although they often admit that ‘just as we’re good at spotting pickpockets who look like normal folk, businessmen or something like
that, the pickpockets are excellent at spotting us. And, yeah, again, it doesn’t help that we’re wearing too many clothes in the summertime and that we’re wearing earpieces.’

Having now left the station, we walk together as a group towards Copenhagen Central Station to take a train to Østerport Station, which is only three stops away. Walking through the central station, however, the detectives spread out, taking different routes. Given that the central station is one of the places where most pickpocketing occurs, especially shoulder surfing, the detectives, as Detective Mikkelsen says just before we enter, ‘may just as well take a look now that we’re here’. They have a look, zig-zagging around the station for about fifteen minutes. However, as no people catch their attention, they decide to leave and head for Østerport Station instead, to look for Antonescu and his gang ‘or whoever’s stealing around here at the moment,’ as Detective Christensen tells me, baring subtly waved me over as all the detectives are getting on the escalator down to the platform.

We are on the train towards Østerport Station. Again, the detectives have spread out, making sure not to attract too much attention. One of them is sitting down, another is standing some doors down from where I’m standing together with Detectives Christensen and Mikkelsen. The train is crammed with people who are on their way to work, school or wherever this morning might lead them. ‘So guys,’ as I can hear Detective Christensen reporting with a dampened voice over the radio, ‘we should be ready to run as soon as we get to Østerport Station. These guys know me, and they’ll no doubt make a run for it if they spot us. Last time, we had to chase them, running over the tracks.’ He looks at me, letting me know that I too should be ready.

We exit the train and all detectives quickly scan the platform for any potential suspects. Seeing nothing of interest, however, they spread out. Detectives Clausen and Larsen stay behind on the platform, hanging out on one of the benches. Detective Christensen has already left the platform and entered the station building. I walk together with Detective Mikkelsen, and perhaps a minute later than Detective Christensen, we also enter the station building. Mikkelsen turns left and signals that I should walk straight ahead so that we don’t attract any unnecessary attention. I see Mikkelsen enter the station’s 7-eleven and I myself buy a cup of coffee from the station’s small coffee shop. I do this bearing in mind the first rule of staking out pickpockets, which the detectives have reminded me of several times, namely that one ‘should act normal. It’s all about just looking like yet another commuter. So, if you linger around a place for too long without buying a ticket or a coffee or something, you start to attract attention. That’s also how we spot the pickpockets. At first glance they look like normal people, but if you follow them for a bit you’ll see how they don’t behave as you normally would in the specific situation. Instead of buying tickets, coffee or, if you’re out shopping, looking at windows and buying stuff, the pickpockets linger. They look at people instead of at the clothes in the store or the screens in the train stations. They don’t buy stuff. That’s our main way of knowing whether or not someone might be a pickpocket. We look at their behaviour – a behaviour which appears to fit in but which, if you look closer, is different from normal behaviour.’

‘Behaviour’ was indeed what all of the detectives mentioned as the central thing they looked for when staking out potential pickpockets. Besides behaviour, the detectives told me that they also looked for the following things: ‘Sure, ethnicity or nationality matters. But not in the way that many would like to think. We don’t just stop every person who looks like a Romanian or a Pole or whatever. Do you remember the other day when we got help from the Foreigner Control Section? These guys have no idea about how professional pickpockets look, so they simply insisted on stopping every poor and stereotypical Gypsy. Do
you remember? They called us over and wasted our time, because they had spotted a group of hungry gypsies who were eating some burgers that other people had left behind at Burger King. Like, I'm not saying that these people won't steal if given the chance, but they are not professionals. No, we look for pickpockets who basically dress just like you and me. Like, you've seen these guys. They could be businessmen on their way to work. At first glance they look perfectly normal. But, when you've done this for a while, you start to see the small distinctions that matter. So, yeah, we look for people who look Romanian or Polish but not in the way that people like to think. Instead, we for instance look at the kinds of clothes they wear. The shoes, for instance, are a big tell. They always wear shoes that are almost what people would wear in Denmark but not quite. They often wear glasses, often without any proper lenses, and, yeah, hats are also a big tell. They use them as disguises, for instance when they take out money using stolen credit cards. Another tell is that they tend to wear these very specific shoulder bags where they store their gear and loot. So, yes, we look for ethnicity but that's a very small part of it. We mainly look for a behaviour that doesn't fit in. They often work together in groups for instance, so if you spot one potential suspect then you can always find his mates in the vicinity. Like, it looks like they are walking alone, but if you look closely, you'll find his mates walking only a few steps away from him. We start to see the small distinctions that matter. And then the last thing which draws our attention is the place they are at. Like, we probably won't be as observant if we're walking around a place not known for pickpocketing. But as soon as you’re at, say, a train station and some of the signs mentioned start showing up, you become suspicious. And, then of course, we look for pickpockets we already know. That goes without saying.

Thus, according to the TFP detectives, what made them suspicious, what constituted the root of their profiling, was ethnicity/nationality, behaviour, appearance and place. Added to this, they also had ideas about the general age of the professional pickpockets. The pickpockets could both be male and female, but they were thought to be between at least twenty and at the very most sixty years of age, but most of the time between thirty and fifty years old.

Having bought a coffee, I exit Østerport Station to find Detective Christensen sitting on a bench around the corner. I sit down next to him. 'Any luck?' I ask. 'Nope, they're definitely not here,' he answers, enjoying the rays of sun that have broken through the clouds, 'but they might come in a second or two. That's the thing. You just never know. The only thing we can do is try to place ourselves in the places we know that they usually go to and then cross our fingers.' This was true. During my time at TFP I experienced being on stake-outs during which no suspects were encountered just as often as I experienced the detectives making an arrest.

However, having just concluded that they were out of luck, Detective Christensen jumps up. 'Let's go!' he tells me hastily, as he rushes inside the station and down the stairs towards the platform, with me trailing and with Detective Mikkelsen just in front of us. We jump onto a northbound train just as its doors close. Standing there in the train, Detective Mikkelsen tells me that Detective Clausen has just spotted a group of four potential Polish pickpockets. 'One of them is up there,' he tells me, whispering. 'He's perhaps around fifty and is wearing a blue jacket. And his mates are somewhere further down.' As we approach the next station, Nordhavn Station, I am told to get ready. 'They might try to escape. Clausen is afraid that they have blown his cover.' And sure enough, as soon as the train doors opened, I see one middle-aged man sprint towards the exit. Detective Christensen runs after him, Detective Mikkelsen grabs
first one and then another man, showing them his badge, and pushes them to the side. Detective Clausen and Larsen have stayed on the train, searching for the fourth suspect.

'Hit's the Danish Police. Show me some ID, please,' Detective Mikkelsen tells the two men who are indeed dressed in "normal" clothes, both of them wearing jeans, a blazer, glasses, and carrying a shoulder bag. The men, in very bad English, express their disbelief at the situation but eventually produce two Polish ID cards. Suddenly, Detective Mikkelsen has Detective Christensen calling over the radio.

'Daniel,' Detective Mikkelsen tells me, 'run down to Christensen. He's down the road and he needs help.'

I leave Detective Mikkelsen and the two apprehended Polish suspects and I catch up with Detective Christensen who comes walking towards me with another suspect in handcuffs. 'It's alright,' he tells me. 'It's okay man. He made a run for it and I actually only caught him because a citizen grabbed him for me. Yet when I tried to handcuff him he resisted and tried to escape. So, I eventually had to hit him with the pepper spray, but I also got it in my own eyes, so now we're both blinded. That's why I called for help!'

Detective Christensen says to me, both laughing and squinting. I walk with them back to the front of the train station where we link up with both Detective Mikkelsen and Clausen. Clausen who has arrested the fourth suspect and brought him back with him. All handcuffed, the four Polish men are lined up against the station wall and they are told to not communicate with each other: 'Don't speak! We don't understand your language and we can't have you coordinating stories or something like that.' Meanwhile, the detectives look through the Polish men's belongings, where they find a rather large sum of cash and what they believe to be normal pickpocketing accoutrements such as fake glasses, hats, some other clothes to change their looks and burner phones. 'They're definitely pickpockets, these,' Detective Clausen concludes. 'Look at these things. And who starts running from the police just like that. It's a sure thing, this one,' he says. The other detectives agree.

Detective Christensen contacts Detective Madsen who is still at the TFP office. He sends Detective Madsen the pictures of the suspects that he has just taken and he gets Detective Madsen to check their names. After taking a brief look through different relevant databases, Detective Madsen reports that the Danish police do not seem to have anything on the Polish men but, as Detective Christensen lets us know 'a couple of them are known in Norway'. In knowing this, in having found a large sum of cash on the suspects, and, in general because of the four Polish men's suspicious behaviour and the fact that they matched the police profile for a professional pickpocket, the detectives decide to call for a police van to take them back to the station for questioning. 'Let's see if we can't find something on them. I'd bet you that if we retrieve some of the CCTV footage from some of the reported crimes during this week, these guys will show up. We know they are criminals. Now we just need the final proof.' Fifteen minutes later the police van comes. We all jump in the back and some twenty minutes later we drive through the police station's gate.

Back at the station, the detectives bring the arrestees in through the station's basement entrance. Here the Polish men will be processed. This means that they, one by one, will be asked who they are, asked to account for their belongings and eventually shown into one of the basement's holding cells where they'll have to wait until the detectives decide what to do. The detectives have a maximum of twenty-four hours to charge them and put them in front of a judge. Before going up to their office, the detectives have a quick chat with the colleagues who are in charge of processing. 'So, another bunch of Poles, huh?' says one of the processing officers as he goes through one of the arrestee's belongings. 'Yeah,' Mikkelsen replies. 'You
know how it is. It’s like a flood these days. We’ve opened our doors and they have accepted the invitation,’ he says jokingly, but also with an obvious hint of irritation. ‘True,’ the officer agrees, ‘It’s like nobody really cares – at least until it’s their things they steal.’ Outside, Detective Larsen has also come back to the station. He had taken the train a number of stops further, looking for some people he had found suspicious, but without any luck. Now, he’s offering one of the Polish men a cigarette and whilst doing so he asks me to back off. ‘Just don’t stand too close. I want to see if I can get him to talk and tell me a bit about how all of this is organized back in Poland, and I can’t establish any trust if you’re standing right next to us,’ he says in a friendly yet firm tone. The rest of the detectives have all gone upstairs where, as they often put it, ‘now, the race is starting’. By this they mean, that given that they didn’t catch the arrestees red-handed and given that they apparently didn’t have any open cases on the arrested individuals, they now have to rush to find evidence of criminal activity within the legal time limit. If they don’t find any proper evidence that will enable them to charge the Polish men and bring them before a judge within twenty-four hours, they will have to let the men go.

Knowing this, they, almost frantically, start going through some of the folders of reported crimes that they are storing behind their desks. ‘Let’s first see if we can tie them to one of these crimes,’ Detective Clausen tells the others. ‘Sure, you do that,’ Detective Christensen replies, ‘I’ll try to get hold of some of the CCTV footage that we haven’t gotten already and see if we can’t find them there.’ Meanwhile, Detective Madsen has found out that two of them have an entry ban, which had evaded him during his first check as he hadn’t got the names right. An entry ban means that as a result of prior criminality in Denmark, they aren’t allowed to enter Denmark, and in entering Denmark they have committed an offence which automatically gives them prison time. ‘Hell yes!’ the other detectives yell, celebrating. However, having searched for evidence that they can use to charge the two remaining Polish arrestees for over three hours straight now, the detectives still haven’t found any. A senior officer from the management eventually enters the room. ‘Guys, if you can’t find anything substantial then you have to let them go. I’m sorry.’ This frustrates the detectives, particularly knowing that one of the men they are releasing was the one who had a large amount of cash on him. ‘Fuck this,’ Detective Clausen says, ‘It’s such an insult that we have to let these arseholes go when we know perfectly well what they are.’ The representative from the management agrees. ‘But,’ he says to smooth things over, ‘you’ll get them next time. Now you know who they are. Just remember to enter their info into the system and we’ll get them the next time, or our international colleagues somewhere else will, right? That’s how we get them these days.’ Detectives Larsen, Christensen and Madsen all nod and Detective Clausen takes the elevator down a few minutes later and releases two of the four arrestees. In doing so, he nevertheless makes sure to tell both of them – in very firm words – that the Danish police are on to them. The fact that the TFP detectives had to release two of their suspects dampened their otherwise happy mood. ‘And we were having such a nice day. It sucks. But hey, we still get the two others so that’s something,’ Detective Larsen concludes. ‘Now we just need to question them and charge them’.

An hour or so later, Detective Clausen starts questioning one of the Polish men. A Polish interpreter has been called in. Having had a smoke on the outside balcony, the three of them sit down around Clausen’s desk. He first asks the Polish man, via the interpreter, some basic questions such as what his name is, where he is from, what he does back home and why he is in Denmark. The Polish man answers rather reluctantly. Through the interpreter and through his own broken English, he expresses
a complete lack of understanding for why he has been arrested. After a short while, the Polish man's behaviour becomes too much for Clausen, who tells him 'Stop it. There's no need to discuss whether you are a pickpocket or not. You were already apprehended a while back for such crimes and you're not allowed to be in Denmark because of that. So, stop the theatrics and just admit to it.' Detective Clausen then goes on to read out the charges that the Danish police are pressing against him and, finishing up the questioning, Detective Clausen reads the Polish man's statement in relation to these charges back to him. The Polish man nods and eventually signs the statement. Having escorted the Polish man back to his holding cell, I bump into Detective Clausen who tells me that 'yeah, that Polish fella wanted to put on a show but once he was reminded of what we've got on him, and that there was no way out of it, he had to confess.' Not much later, Detective Larsen questions the final suspect, who eventually also confesses.

After a long and, the TFP detectives seem to think, somewhat successful day, although they had been forced to let two suspects go, the detectives and I get ready to leave the station. Before we leave, I find Detective Christensen looking at some of the footage of suspects that hangs on the back wall of the TFP office. He's looking at Antonescu, the Romanian pickpocket whom Detective Christensen first thought might be the one shoulder surfing around Østerport Station. 'So, it wasn't him...?' I say. 'Nah... you never really know,' Detective Christensen replies. 'You never know. It could easily still be him and his gang. Like, we couldn't find any crimes to tie to the two Polish men today so there's gotta be others out there. There are always others. They're everywhere. Just look at the numbers. Like, we go home now because we're tired and have families, but if we wanted we could go out into the Copenhagen nightlife and catch some of the North Africans who steal during the night-time. The only question is having the time and resources to do so.' 'I see,' I say. 'But how do you get to the root of it? I mean, I saw Detective Larsen trying to get information from one the Polish men earlier today because he wanted to know more about how they are organised, you know, getting information that can lead further down the chain than just taking pickpockets off the streets at random. I remember you told me that you thought that was important too...? I say enquiringly. 'It is important,' Detective Christensen replies. 'It's the way to go. We should be better at working together with other countries. We should be better at using these computer- and surveillance systems. We should get more sources in Poland and Romania, for instance. We should in general go at it in a more organised and strategic fashion and not just keep having these printouts [pointing to the picture of Antonescu] and folders. But, then again, what's the use if we don't get out on the streets and catch them. That's essentially what policing is about. Trust me, this idea that most cases can be solved through collaboration and computers is an over-simplification. Anyway. Let's get out of here. Tomorrow is another day.'

I have chosen this extensive example of the work carried out at TFP as it demonstrates many of the different practices and perceptions normal to the TFP detectives. It demonstrates how their work consisted of investigating and apprehending foreign pickpockets from, primarily, countries such as Romania and Poland but also from countries such as Chile, Morocco and Bulgaria. It demonstrates how this work was carried out, describing how it involved checking CCTV footage, covert stakeouts or in other ways undercover police work, the checking and updating of both national and international databases, the occasional arrests and also the interrogation of suspects. It also shows what and who the
detectives looked for. Often, as the example also shows, policing cross-border criminals such as pickpockets was not a straightforward matter in which the investigational approach could be perfectly planned. Instead, the detectives went about their work by means of a combination of experience, skill, intel and, as they themselves admitted, luck. Furthermore, the example also illustrates the considerable amount of frustration the detectives felt in relation to the many foreign pickpockets who were, all too easily, the detectives believed, crossing the border into Denmark. They believed that one means of improving their chances of apprehending these cross-border criminals, as Detective Christensen told me just before we left for the day, would be to increase their international cooperation and to use the available computer systems to obtain and disperse intelligence to other policing partners. On this particular day, however, as on many others, the detectives merely noted that this was a solution, without turning talk into action. Instead, they simply went home, only to carry on in much the same way the following day.

Other places
While most of my ethnographic observations were made at TFB and TFP, I also had some shorter ethnographic stints at other relevant units and sections in the Danish Police. Encouraged by my research interest and by the Danish National Police, I was given the opportunity to visit both the Western and Eastern branches of what the Danish Police have named the Foreigner Control Sections. I also visited the Documentation Centre at Copenhagen Airport as well as the National Police’s Centre of Investigation, and I spent a just under a week visiting the Danish Police’s representation in Europol. While these visits didn’t allow for any extensive observation, they did provide a very useful perspective on how the Danish Police approach the issue of cross-border crime and the wider challenges of globalisation in different ways, ranging from their local to their national and inter/transnational policing engagements. It thereby also gave me an opportunity to meet some of the colleagues that the detectives at TFB and TFP most often collaborated with (or, as I will later discuss, the colleagues they were supposed to collaborate with).

The Foreigner Control Sections (FCS)
The Foreigner Control Sections consist of two independent police units that deal with criminal matters involving foreign nationals. One of the units, the Western Foreigner Control Section (WFCS), was located in the southwestern part of Denmark, near the German border in the border town of Padborg. The other, the Eastern Foreigner Control Section (EFCS), was located east of Copenhagen close to Scandinavia’s biggest international airport, Copenhagen Airport, and the Øresund bridge connecting Denmark to Sweden. Although both units were, as their names suggest, mandated to police crimes committed by foreigners, their work differed both from that of each other and that of TFB and TFP.
At WFCS they focused on the crimes taking place around and across the Danish-German border. Specifically, I was told, they kept their eyes out for car and bicycle thieves and for burglars who drove up over the border and then drove back across with their plunder, amongst other things using stolen or fake licence plates to evade detection. The WFCS was also in charge of writing a weekly report on the issue of cross-border crime that was circulated to all police districts – a report I came across every now and then when spending time at TFB and TFP, although this report was not read particularly comprehensively by the detectives at TFB and TFP, which the management of the WFCS also complained about. In focusing on cross-border crimes, the WFCS had close relations with the German police, German customs and other relevant agencies and actors. This was apparent in the way that German liaison officers worked side by side with the WFCS detectives. Furthermore, several of the detectives were bilingual, speaking both Danish and German, which was necessary in the daily work of sharing information and coordinating police work across the border.

While the WFCS focused its work on the described property thefts, the EFCS focused on matters such as human trafficking, illegal migration, street begging and illegal work carried out by foreign nationals – crimes that the detectives working there themselves spoke of as often not being perceived by other police colleagues as ‘real crimes’. Or as Detective Finsen from the EFCS crudely put it: ‘We work more with migration law and offences that normal police officers generally can’t be bothered with.’ In their daily work, this included staking out the streets of primarily Copenhagen, for instance looking for street beggars (begging is illegal in Denmark), evidence of human trafficking in Copenhagen’s prostitution scene (prostitution is not illegal in Denmark, but pimping is) or illegal migrants working, for example, in corner stores or the service sector.

Although the mandate and daily work of the FCSs differed from that of TFP and TFB, my short visits allowed me to see how other Danish police units dealt with the ‘issues of globalisation’ and crimes committed by foreign nationals. In this way, I was given an opportunity to weigh up whether what I observed at TFP and TFB were exceptional or common occurrences. My clear impression was that the practices and perceptions of the TFB and TFP detectives, bracketing the obvious occupational differences, were much on a par with those of the detectives working at both the EFCS and the WFCS – and importantly, that they were also similar when it came to the subject matter of this thesis. Even though my visits were short, they were sufficient for me to experience that the detectives at both the EFCS and WFCS were also openly frustrated about some of the contemporary developments. The fact that this was the case was made crystal clear to me by Detective Hansen from the EFCS who, in commenting on his work and the problems associated with this work, said the following:
You know what I really would like to do if I didn’t care about my career? I would speak some truth on Facebook or in some paper about the problems of cross-border crime and about the ways in which it is dealt with by the police and the politicians. It’s a bottomless pit out there and nothing is really being done about it. The people who come here, or at least a lot of them, only come here to take advantage of our society. We talk about it, but nothing really happens. It’s all fake politics – the management is just playing a game of politics instead of listening to and learning from us. I really want to write something like that and get it out there, but I know that I can’t if I want a future in this company. So… like, I don’t really know what you’re doing here, but I hope that you’ll tell that story. That’s the only thing I have to say.

The Documentation Centre (DC)

During my stay at TFP, I also had the opportunity to visit the Documentation Centre (DC) at Copenhagen Airport. The reason for this was that TFP was running a joint operation with the EFCS in which they spent three days cooperating on a stake out of the streets of Copenhagen, looking for professional foreign pickpockets. During these days, they arrested a suspect, whom TFP had been seeking for several weeks but without any luck. Photos of the suspect taking out money using stolen credit cards and other CCTV footage of him had been hanging on the TFP whiteboard to remind the detectives to look for him when going on stakeouts. The detectives were reminded to look for him in cafés and coffee shops in particular, since these places were thought to be the suspect’s chosen pickpocketing venues. This was also why they had given the middle-aged and, as the detectives estimated, North African male suspect the nickname ‘The Baresso Man’, Baresso being a chain of coffee shops in Denmark. And sure enough, during the operation, a detective from the EFCS spotted ‘The Baresso Man’ on the joint operation’s first day, the suspect being seen hanging out inside the Starbucks at Copenhagen Central Station. He was arrested and brought back to the station and was later interrogated and presented with the police’s charges against him.

However, the reason that I was given the chance to visit the DC was that prior to and during this interrogation, the detectives encountered a problem. They had conflicting information regarding the suspect’s identity. One passport said that he was from Iraq, another that he was Moroccan and he himself insisted that he was from Germany. He also had IDs that gave him both different first names and surnames. Thus, for the detectives to be sure who the suspect really was and where he was from, I accompanied Detective Finsen from the EFCS to the DC – which at the time included two experienced officers who had specialised in making preliminary judgements on whether passports and other identification papers where authentic or fake. Their office, located behind the Copenhagen Airport terminals, consisted of three desks, three windows, shelves filled with folders and a backroom with filing cabinets full of old cases. We came in and Detective Finsen presented us, also repeating the reason why we were there, as he had also told them when he...
had phoned ahead. He handed them the suspect's Iraqi passport and one of the DC officers took one look at it. 'It's definitely fake'. He then wrote up a report in which he explained why he thought it to be a fake. This information would then be used against the suspect, who would also be charged with counterfeiting documents, i.e. misrepresentation.

Sadly, I can't recount what exactly made the DC officer decide that the document was counterfeit. However, I remember him talking about the different ways in which identifications papers can be forged, while at the same time giving me one of the many thick folders from the shelf to browse through:

It can be fake in the following ways: You have the completely falsified document made from or at least almost from scratch. These are really common. We for instance see a lot of fake ones from ex-Yugoslavian countries where the standards of the real ones aren't that high. We've also been used to seeing a lot of fake Indian ones back in the day when it was basically just a piece of paper. Then you have the authentic document which has been altered to suit the new user. And finally, you have a completely authentic document which is simply used by another person. For instance, we see a lot of sub-Saharan Africans who just show another African person's passport. Look at this for example [pointing to a picture of a passport and then to a picture of a person underneath]. If you look at it quickly, and that's what people do here, this person looks exactly like the one on the passport. But if you take your time and really look for specific features it becomes apparent that they are actually not that similar at all. The problem is that we white Europeans really can't tell the difference between Africans. They all look the same to us. I know it sounds crude but that's how it is. The same is the case with Asians. And the people who want to get into this country and hide their identity, they know very well that we're colour blind.

Having been given this small lecture, and once a signed report had been given to Detective Finsen, we drove back to TFP. On the way out, one of the DC officers said his farewells, reminding us that

identity fraud is always going to be a big thing in this day and age as people want to force their way into countries like ours where life is much better than where they come from — and they're getting better and better at it. Trust me. Like, look at all these folders, it's hard to keep track.

The National Centre of Investigation (NCI)

During my study, I was also invited to visit the Danish Police’s National Centre of Investigation (NCI) located inside the National Police’s gated compound on the western outskirts of Copenhagen. The aim of my visit was to give me the chance to talk to the group of NCI detectives who specialised in cross-border crime at the national level. At the time, the group was made up of four detectives whose job was to follow the overall developments in cross-border crime in Denmark. This included property crimes such as burgla-
ries, pickpocketing, trick thefts, skimming, bicycle thefts, car thefts, construction equipment thefts and metal theft, to mention a few, where the culprits were foreign nationals travelling to Denmark with the intention to commit crime. Such culprits were also and often interchangeably called itinerant criminals, mobile criminals or, more generally, mobile organised crime groups (MOCGs). The NCI group’s daily work consisted of the detectives keeping themselves and thereby the Danish police updated on relevant global and local developments. This included paying attention to crime reports and other statistics generated by the Danish Police districts. Similarly, their jobs involved examining the reports, statistics, analyses and intelligence coming from transnational or international partners, such as Europol or Interpol, and also included attending conferences and meetings abroad. For example, during the couple of days I spent at the NCI, one of the detectives had just come back from a conference in Southeast Asia and the head of the group had just been in Panama. Furthermore, the detectives were in on-going contact with the Danish Europol representation, also known as the Danish Desk (which I will further describe in the following section). In this way, keeping themselves updated on the wider developments in various forms of cross-border crime, and dispersing this knowledge to both the local level and to partners worldwide, the NCI constituted the national contact point between the local and international levels in relation to cross-border crime.

During the days I spent at the NCI, I was given a valuable insight into how the Danish Police at the national level worked with the issue of cross-border crime, with this largely being based on acquiring, analysing and dispersing intelligence gathered via information technologies. Cross-border crime, as the head of the group put it, was an issue that had grown ‘significantly throughout the last decade or so’. This was echoed by NCI Detective Gustavsen who told me, as we sat in his office on one of the corridors belonging to the NCI:

*The problem of cross-border crime* has only been growing and it will only grow more. Look at all these emails I get! Remember how the whiteboard looked in the other office (referring to a whiteboard where the NCI detectives’ work areas were highlighted)? Like, how do they expect that we can keep ourselves fully and professionally updated when we have to attend to so many areas and so much information. It’s just not doable. It’s overwhelming. I’ve told the management several times. You can’t do any real analysis if you don’t take the time and apply the resources to really go through things. But the management’s answer has been to cut this unit down because resources were needed elsewhere I guess – like for terror and stuff or because of other priorities. I don’t know... sometimes it feels like we’re going at it more or less randomly.

**Europol and the Danish Desk**

During the late summer of 2015, I boarded a plane flying from Copenhagen to Schiphol Airport outside Amsterdam. From there, I took the train to The Hague where I was to spend just under a week visiting the Danish representation at Europol or ‘The Danish
Desk’ as it is more popularly known. Europol is housed in a large, newly built complex close to other transnational or international criminal justice institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Association of Defence Counsel (ADC-ICT), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the European Union’s Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust) – demonstrating how The Hague has become a real hub when it comes to the globalisation of policing and wider means of criminal justice.

Inside the large and heavily secured complex, surrounded by a moat, The Danish Desk was located in a glass-walled office next to, amongst others, the Swedish Desk. The Danish Desk consisted of four senior police officers who were stationed there, one of whom was the leader of the team. In a similar way to my visit to the NCI, the purpose of my visit was to obtain insights into how the Danish Police carried out their policing of cross-border crime at, in this case, the international, European level. To obtain such insights, I was allowed to spend some time with and interview the Danish Desk’s police officers. During my visit, I was shown what their daily work consisted in. I was told that it mainly consisted of three things: First, they were the contact point between the Danish National Police and Europol’s member countries. This meant, for example, that if TFB or TFP detectives needed information or help from other member countries, the detectives had to contact the National Police who would contact the Danish Desk, and the Desk would then establish the requested contact, if this was possible. Secondly, their job consisted of receiving and observing international intelligence and weighing the importance of this intelligence for the Danish Police – something done via the Europol Information system (EIS) and The Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA). And thirdly, the work to a large extent involved attending meetings and conferences to represent Danish interests. Hence, as officer Karstensen summed it up:

*We are here to connect the Danish police to the wider European world and vice versa. This means that it’s not only about keeping ourselves informed, keeping the databases up to date and sending the Danish police intelligence – including ‘early warnings’, as we call them, about cross-border criminals travelling to Denmark – it is also very much about networking. When you come down here you have to learn to become an international animal and build up relations … What one should understand is that there is a definite need to coordinate police work in Europe, or around the world for that matter. I know that people, and especially me in the police, always say that things are more extreme these days than they used to be, and that it’s only now that crime has become more border-crossing or global. That’s not exactly true. It is however true that the degree to which it is happening and the complexity of it has changed dramatically – especially with regard to the use of computers and other technologies. Because of this, we need to work together, and we need to coordinate our knowledge and improve our knowledge about what’s happening crime-wise. We need to gather knowledge and we need to analyze it to make sure that police work is based on facts rather than fiction. That’s our job, as I see it. To be in the know and to help, in our case for instance, the police and politicians in Denmark to be the same.*
In this way, my stay at Europol confirmed what I had also been told at both the local and national levels, namely that the future of police work, particularly when it came to cross-border crimes and other similar global threats, was based on developing police cooperation and information technologies. Given that this lies at the core of the Europol mandate, this was not surprising. What was a bit surprising, however, was that the more or less all of the officers I spoke to at Europol complained about the efficiency of international police cooperation and intelligence sharing. As officer Karstensen admitted, having just underlined the need for these things:

That’s at least how it should be, but the reality is very different. We produce these Europol threat assessments and other intelligence reports for instance, and we in Denmark are actually really good at coming back with the information that Europol asks for. Other countries, however, mentioning no names, don’t prioritise this at all. They come back with whatever. Some countries even refuse or disagree because of differences in criminal law or political motivations. So, honestly, although this is not a popular thing to say, the work we do and the things we write are in some ways a little bit random. It’s important. It’s serious work. But it’s also a bit fragmented.

A Danish global policing network: ‘We have to accept that things are changing.’

In this chapter, I have made an effort to describe the various policing phenomena, places and persons that make up the empirical background to this thesis. I began by describing the contextual discourse – a discourse consisting of a concerted and concerned political and police focus on cross-border crime and wider issues of globalisation in Denmark. This description also included illustrations of the policies developed to counter cross-border crime, policies primarily focused on making the reach of Danish policing as extensive as that of cross-border criminal activities by means of international cooperation and the use of information technologies. I then presented concrete descriptions of different Danish police units involved in the policing of cross-border crime, predominantly focusing on the two task forces TFB and TFP.

These descriptions were primarily provided in order to give the reader an overview of the different forms of police work that are carried out. Collectively, however, the descriptions also served as a way of exemplifying what Bowling and Sheptycki have conceptualised as the contemporary structure of ‘global policing’ (2012: 8ff). Also referring to it as ‘a social-spatial typology of transnational policing’, Bowling and Sheptycki describe how global policing networks start from local policing, or ‘the glocal’, extending towards ‘the national’ and ‘the regional’, and then finally connecting with ‘the global’ level – stretching from more provincial policing to policing on a global scale, by which means ‘local policing agencies and units [become] transnationally linked’ (ibid:25) (see also Bowling, 2010: 9).
Similarly, what I have described above can be said to amount to an illustration of a Danish global policing network – a network consisting of local actors such as TFB, TFP, the DC and the FCSs, national actors such as the NCI and a regional yet globally connected actor such as Europol – a global policing network that has, amongst other things, been put in place to combat cross-border crime.

In outlining this Danish global policing network, it has been my intention to offer the reader a better understanding of the empirical foundation that this thesis rests on. At the same time, the intention has also been to demonstrate that the thesis’ empirical material should be of a sufficiently solid character to allow me to discuss the questions posed in the introduction, i.e. to examine the globalisation of local policing in a Danish context.

How, I asked, were the Danish police reacting as their profession was becoming more, to use Bowling and Sheptycki’s words, ‘transnationally linked’? And, more specifically, why was this development generating such evident concern among the detectives who had been called upon to work on the frontier of this development – concerns, as described in this chapter, that were not only restricted to TFB and TFP but also appeared elsewhere in the Danish global policing network?

During one the last weeks of my field study, I had an illustrative conversation with the TFP management with regard to this matter. I was invited into the management’s office and told to close the door behind me and take a seat.

David, this is how it is … Like, I guess you’ve noticed how the guys [meaning the TFP detectives] are not always so thrilled about some of these new policing methods that we have to apply if we really want to catch and prevent these cross-border criminals who come here. They are reluctant when it comes to using the new data programs and they think it’s not necessarily worthwhile to build up data, analyse it and share it. But it is. And I hope that they’ll understand that soon enough. It’s my job to make sure they do … You know, nowadays, we have to get used to police work becoming more and more geared towards the world outside Denmark. Be it by us policing foreign nationals across borders, working together with foreign colleagues, using various technologies or using more strategic analyses, the conclusion is that we just have to accept that things are changing.

I can’t say whether the TFP management really believed that they would eventually be successful in persuading their detectives of this. They didn’t succeed during my stay, and to the best of my knowledge, they still haven’t. The question, then, is whether their failure was due to a lack of leadership or, as this thesis leans towards, the fact that these changes were to some extent antithetical to the detectives’ ideas about how police work should be conducted...?
This question serves as a perfect starting point for the subsequent chapters, and we will now turn to the first of the thesis' revisiting of well-known research themes are of relevance to the globalisation of policing. The first revisit focuses on the research theme of police surveillance – a theme or issue which has recently been the focus of an increasing amount of academic interest as scholars have debated what is believed to be a dramatic and often problematic expansion in the use of both overt and covert surveillance practices and technologies. I revisit this debate by relating its main theoretical tenets to the observations I made whilst following the (surveillance) work of the Danish police, thereby comparing theory to practice. This revisit, together with the following chapters, also illustrates that the everyday practices of the Danish detectives were in many ways on a par with dominant understandings, but importantly, that the detectives’ practices also differed in a number of significant ways – a practical difference that was often rooted in rather workaday considerations and concerns.
Chapter three: Police surveillance revisited

I know. Trust me! I know we need to work more closely together with the National Police, Europol etc. and, hell, even the local post office if we’re to improve our chances of tracking these mobile, cross-border criminals. And, yes, I know that we need to be better at using computers and sharing the info we gather. I know. It’s definitely the way to go in the battle against the problems of globalisation. Old ways of police work just won’t cut it. Traditional border controls don’t do much honestly. It’s easy for people to cross anyhow. We know that. We need new surveillance technologies. Something that allows us to better track and know who and where suspects are. That’s what we need. But … yeah … I must admit that when it comes to us actually developing and doing all this new and needed surveillance work, it quickly becomes a different story.

This quote from TFP Detective Christensen goes to the heart of this chapter’s interest. In it the detective speaks of well-known worldwide developments in police surveillance and, as will be elaborated on in this chapter, the various ways in which Danish detectives feel they are not properly participating in these developments.

As has often been noted in the field of criminology, albeit in different ways, contemporary police surveillance is becoming more omnipresent, resembling a pervasive policing panopticon as it is ‘driven by the desire to bring systems together, to combine practices and technologies and integrate them into a larger whole’ (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 610) (see also Bauman and Lyon, 2013; Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012; Brodeur, 2010; Mathiesen, 2013; Molland et al., 2018; Poster, 1996). More specifically, scholars point to how surveillance and other governmental possibilities for monitoring the population have been proliferating in the age of globalisation via an increase in policing collaborations both across international borders and institutional boundaries and also by means of the expanding implementation of information technologies.

Policing policies in Denmark have also had the objective of developing more wide-ranging means of surveillance, with the Chief of the Copenhagen Police informing citizens to ‘expect more surveillance in the future’, for example (Reinmann, 2010). While this shows that there have undoubtedly been calls for an increase in surveillance at the level of policy, this chapter goes on to explore how things looks at the practical level. In following the workday of TFB and TFP, I was given a rare insight into the day-by-day development of this evolving policing panopticon. What I observed was something of a paradox, to which this chapter bears testament. The detectives, both spurred on by the management

7 This chapter is a revised version of an article entitled ‘The not-so-panopticon of policing’ which I am currently revising and resubmitting to Policing & Society.
and also of their own accord, often and openly spoke of the need to build up more ‘global’,
‘cross-border’ or ‘mobile’ means of surveillance, terms which they employed interchange-
ably. Just as policy prescribes, and as criminologists tend to criticise, more collaborations
and an increased electronic registering and sharing of intelligence were seen as pivotal to
the effective policing of cross-border crimes. Nevertheless, although the detectives
acknowledged this, as can be seen from the words of Detective Christensen above, they
frequently refrained from doing the work required. In noting this apparent irrationality,
the simple question that this chapter explores is ‘how and why that is?’ What made the
Danish detectives echo the police management’s emphasis on making surveillance in par-
ticular and policing in general more itinerant, intrusive and almost inescapable, only to
then circumvent doing so in practice?

In answering this question, the chapter begins by outlining the views of existing
research on contemporary means of surveillance. Although this will unavoidably amount
to a somewhat crude generalisation as a result of the volume and complexity of the subject
matter, it should nevertheless be sufficient to demonstrate how much research there is
that describes both a quantitative and qualitative increase in surveillance. Following this,
the chapter touches upon some of the few, yet insightful, studies that have explored the
everyday practices of surveillance, be it in the form of international police collaborations
or information technologies. As these studies demonstrate in various ways, there are con-
siderable problems when it comes to turning surveillance policy into practice. Building on
this, the chapter then provides rich empirical evidence of how and why the Danish detec-
tives’ surveillance work included similar practical problems – problems of a cultural, tech-
nological and private nature. Thus, with knowledge of such problems in mind, the chapter
concludes that the contemporary expansion in surveillance is evidently happening at full
force at the policy level, but that seen from an everyday police perspective, contemporary
surveillance in fact appears less Orwellian or, so to speak, ‘not-so-panoptic’. Actually,
among the Danish detectives, many of the contemporary surveillance policies developed
to counter the problems of a globalising world were not only not followed; they were in
fact often seen as keeping them from doing their jobs – a vocational hindrance rather than
a vocational advantage. This is the ‘different story’ eluded to above by Detective Christen-
sen.

The policing (super)panopticon

Social control has become more specialized and technical and, in many ways, more pene-
trating and intrusive … The state’s power to seek out violations, even without specific
grounds for suspicion, has been enhanced. With this comes a cult and a culture of surveillance that goes beyond government to the private sector and the interaction of individuals … There is the danger of an almost imperceptible surveillance creep (Marx, 1988: 2).

Thus wrote Marx, in his influential book on undercover police surveillance published in the late 1980s, in relation to the upcoming ‘cult’ or ‘culture of surveillance’ – arguments somewhat similar to those of his contemporary Cohen in his work on developments of social control (1985). Throughout the thirty years since these works were published, Marx and Cohen’s words have continuously been echoed in both police research and wider criminological studies (Andersson, 2014; Bigo, 2006; Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012; Brodeur, 2010; Ericson, 2007; Feldman, 2011; Findlay, 2011; Fox, 2001; Jones and Newburn, 2006; Goldsmith and Sheptycki, 2007; Haggerty and Ericson, 2000; Haggerty, 2006; Loader, 2000; Mathiesen, 2013; Molland et al., 2018; Poster, 1996; Shearing and Wood, 2003). Although these studies differ in both scope and substance, they remain united in arguing that present-day (police) surveillance and control has increased by means of a growing collaboration between policing actors combined with a greater use of technologies to track, store and share data on the movements of people. In his Work on The Culture of Control (2002b), for example, Garland provides a grand diagnosis of these developments, concluding that ‘a rough justice of exclusion and full-force surveillance […] has become more and more routine […] increasingly viewed as a necessary condition’ (ibid:160, emphasis in original). The existence of ‘full-force surveillance’, Garland thus argues, is not just a fact; it is also largely understood as a societal necessity – something both unavoidable and indispensable; and something that is largely, as explored in this thesis, spurred on by societal fears related to an otherwise ungovernable globalised and peripatetic world.

Classic custodian concepts

Discussions of the increasing ability or motivation to surveil citizens, often evoke images of the world described in Orwell’s dystopian novel 1984 and Foucault’s ‘panopticon’ (1977). In 1984, Orwell provides a scary depiction of a society in which a privileged elite exercises an omnipresent control over its subjects – a control that is not limited to the level of practice, but which also extends to the question of whether people think in the wrong way. In Oceania, as Orwell named the country in which his novel took place, not only actions but also ‘thoughtcrime’ are patrolled by the fittingly named ‘Thought Police’. As a result, residents of Oceania feel an unremitting pressure to be and behave according to doctrines dictated by the government and manifested via the famed yet feared notion that ‘big brother is watching you’!

The idea that surveillance and control are directed not only at bodily actions but also at the thinking that guides these actions – at both practice and perception – was also
central to Foucault’s well-known discussion of modern-day discipline and punishment. In Modernity, as Foucault famously asserted, ‘the soul is the prison of the body’ – his use of this term thereby denoting how in Modernity, punishment of the soul replaces the greater focus on punishing the body that was seen in earlier periods (1977: 29-30). Put differently, where the body had previously been the main recipient of at times extreme physical retribution, the primary focus of the modern penalising state was now instead directed at ‘the passions, instincts, anomalies, infirmities, maladjustments, effects of environment or heredity’ (ibid.). In this shift, the goal became that of rehabilitating the delinquent by means of a recurring institutionalised disciplining of the delinquent’s thinking and behaviour, rather than that of blunt retribution. As a prime example of how such institutionalised disciplining is devised, Foucault pointed to Bentham’s panopticon penitentiary. In Bentham’s architectural design, the internees were to be constantly surveilled from a single vantage point, without the internees themselves being able to see those who surveil them. In this way, as with the notion of the constantly watching big brother, the internees would experience an unrelenting awareness of how they were always at risk of being scrutinised, which would lead them to behave accordingly.

To be sure, there are important distinctions between Orwell’s ‘big brother’ and Foucault’s ‘panopticon’. Orwell for instance presumed that state surveillance would only be directed at the middle and upper classes, leaving the unimportant underclass to its own devices. In Foucault’s analysis of pervasive societal surveillance, it is rather the reverse that is true. Here, demonstrating the work’s Marxist inspirations, it is precisely the lower classes and other marginalised people, who are not living up to the ruling classes’ societal standards, that are subject to the highest levels of scrutiny and discipline. Nevertheless, bracketing this difference, both custodian concepts go to the heart of the developments in present-day surveillance and control and are therefore often used by contemporary criminologists in their analyses thereof. We live in societies, the story goes, in which police and wider governmental means of both overtly and covertly following, and thereby regulating, our behaviour have increased significantly be it through various street-level bureaucrats, the police included, evaluating our behaviour and rights or through digitalised recordings and assessments of our whereabouts, undertakings, who we are and who we are with.

**Survillant society and its superpanopticon**

Orwell and Foucault wrote their expositions of Modernity in 1949 and 1975 respectively. They could therefore hardly have foreseen the extreme developments in computerised means of surveillance that we are currently experiencing. Or, as Haggerty and Ericson put it, neither Foucault nor Orwell could have ‘envisioned the remarkable marriage of computers and optics which we see today’ (2000:606). Previously, surveillance, control and regulation were somewhat restricted in their omnipresence by the simple fact that the gaze
of big brother or the panopticon could not penetrate every part of people’s lives. Today this hindrance has largely broken down as a result of the way in which countless aspects of both our private and professional lives are now computerised or digitalised in other ways. When passports are scanned, biometrics recorded or when we log-on to and enter ‘the grid’ by using our mobile phones, computers, payment cards etc. we are connected and thus also more-or-less knowingly at risk of being surveilled. This is what has led scholars to declare that contemporary means of surveillance actually surpass Orwell’s and Foucault’s premonitions. We live, as Lyon has stated, in a ‘surveillance society’ governed by an ‘electronic panopticon’ (Lyon, 1994; Gordon, 1987) or a ‘superpanopticon’ (Poster, 1996) – the ‘superpanopticon’ being the dreaded consequence that the aforementioned scholars speak of when describing how present-day means of policing and surveillance are spreading via the increasing integration of ‘a number of discrete technologies or social practices’ (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000: 610). Here, various policing actors, the Danish detectives included, cooperate, combine and compile their respective resources across international and institutional borders, potentially tracking our every movement. As Haggerty and Ericson thus quite terrifyingly conclude in their seminal article on contemporary surveillance, the means of surveillance are now not only geared towards disciplinary supervision but are often utterly ‘devoted to the disappearance of disappearance’ (2010:620), limiting the places and spaces where people can truly withdraw and be alone.

**From policy to practice**

The described development towards a (super)policing panopticon is indeed intimidating – that is if you are sceptical towards such an increase in police surveillance and its consequences. The decision to use the concept of ‘the panopticon’ in this chapter, rather than other similar surveillance concepts, was taken with this widely shared anxiety from the field of criminology in mind. Ever since Bentham used the panopticon as an architectural model for his prisons, and especially since Foucault’s application of the concept in his critique of a disciplinary society and modern-day governmentality, the panopticon has become a key criminological concept that is continuously used in discussions about punishment, policing, surveillance and wider means of governance. However, the ambition of this chapter is not to enter into a complex yet important discussion about the exact makeup of a present-day panopticon, for instance debating how contemporary surveillance and control might in some ways resemble less a panopticon and more a ‘ban-opticon’ (Bigo, 2008), being less focused on disciplinary rehabilitation and more crudely on surveilling people in order to catch, contain and eventually banish them (see also Aas, 2014). In

---

8 Such as ‘surveillant assemblage’ (Haggerty & Ericson 2000), ‘surveillance society’ (Bauman & Lyon, 2013; Mathiesen, 2013), ‘culture of control’ (Garland, 2000) or ‘control societies’ (DeLuzac 1995), to mention some.
other words, the decision to use the panopticon over other concepts is simply due to the fact that this is one of the most commonly used surveillance concept – a concept which translated and stripped off its dense Foucauldian history means ‘all-seeing’, and also the fact that the aforementioned studies, although they might disagree on the specificities of contemporary policing and surveillance, all agree that it has become just this, increasingly all-seeing.

Holes in the web

In 2010, Brodeur published *The Policing Web* in which he also critically discusses this ocular expansion. Instead of only using the concept of the panopticon, Brodeur also uses the concept of ‘the web’ to diagnose the developments and distinctions found in contemporary policing and surveillance. One of Brodeur’s principal arguments is that a more comprehensive theorisation is needed than the one afforded by much police research. A major reason for this is that theories of what constitutes policing are often restricted by the fact that most police research has focused on patrolmen (cf. Feldman, 2016; Loftus et al., 2015). Instead, Brodeur argues, a theory of policing should also consider the various other acts and actors involved in police work, such as criminal investigations, intelligence gathering and also both the legally sanctioned and extra-legal policing carried out by private actors. When these various areas of police work are combined, a ‘policing web’ is produced – a web of police surveillance and control that consists of different social and technological practices and that has been continuously expanding over recent years. However, Brodeur contends, describing a policing web as being comprised of various policing actors is not the same as saying that the web is “tightly woven”, to stay with the metaphor. Instead, he argues, the policing web consists of ‘loosely connected pieces that may not behave in a consistent way’ (2010: 35). He thus argues that there indeed is an expansion in policing and surveillance practices but that this expansion also involves different and perhaps at times even contradictory logics and activities. The fact that the contemporary policing web, or the police panopticon, is becoming more ubiquitous, but not in any easily discernible way, is what leads Brodeur to call for further empirical scrutiny of the various policing practices that are pushing the panopticon forward – a call which has been echoed, but rarely responded to, by like-minded scholars (see also Smith, 2009). Put differently, there is an empirical need to study the everyday practices of the different people who are steering the expansion of the policing panopticon, at least if we want to develop a more precise and perhaps more profound understanding of this, to be sure, problematic phenomenon.

Panoptic problems and pathologies

In a recent study of Frontex (2015), Franko and Gundhus can be said to explore the everyday practices of the policing panopticon. In particular, they explore the effects of an
increasing international police cooperation by interviewing Norwegian police officers engaged at Frontex (see also Gundhus and Franko, 2016). While Frontex is an apparent instantiation of how policing is expanding across the borders of the nation state (both in practice and digitally via the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur)), Franko and Gundhus were simultaneously made aware of the everyday complications of such cooperation. When the Norwegian officers were interviewed, they did speak of the need for such increasing international collaboration. However, they also continuously pointed to a range of factors that complicated this cooperation. These included everything from language issues to perceived cultural differences. As Franko and Gundhus put it, 'neither cultural nor linguistic proximity can be assumed among the officers themselves nor with the public' (2015: 1). In other words, although the Frontex' employees professionally as well as symbolically were all police, significant vocational differences and hindrances existed when it came to the question of how to carry out the work. These perhaps unsurprising yet noteworthy findings are mirrored in a similar study by Larsson (2006) on the challenges of international police cooperation.

Besides the problems of an experienced cultural and linguistic gap, Franko and Gundhus point to one particularly major issue that cross-border police cooperation entails. As they remind us, research has consistently shown that police cultures across the world are characterised by in-group trust and out-group distrust (2015) (see also Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012). In other words, it is part and parcel of police culture to approach people with a certain amount of suspicion if the people in question are not already well-known. Thus, as Lemieux has also concluded, the 'cultural heterogeneity inherent in international cooperation introduces the potential to aggravate the ever-present lack of trust in police subcultures' (2013: 4). Hence, while the spread of the policing panopticon is founded amongst other things on a well-functioning cooperation between international policing partners, it is troubled by various cultural problems – with one of these paradoxically being located at the heart of police culture itself, namely that police officers tend to treat people, unknown international colleagues included, with suspicion (see also Ross, 2004; Yakhlef et al., 2015).

While Franko and Gundhus primarily focused their study specifically on the spread of police cooperation, other studies have focused on how traditional police work is being affected by the growing implementation of information and other investigational surveillance technologies (Chan et al., 2001; Fyfe et al., 2017; Gundhus, 2006; 2012; Loftus et al., 2015; Manning, 2008; Sheptycki, 2004; Smith, 2009). Research has here pointed to how there indeed is an evident push towards the implementation of technologies in order to better combat developments in crime and other global risks. However, as with the aforementioned findings, the research has also found that there are considerable problems
when it comes to everyday practices. For example, police officers often find that the epistemeology of information technologies differs problematically from their usual epistemology, which is based on personal involvement. As Gundhus explains (see also Manning 2008), labelling the policing epistemology based on computers ‘knowledge-based policing’:

knowledge-based policing in practice promotes a concept of knowledge that indirectly threatens the police officers’ traditional experience-based knowledge and professional discretion … Knowledge-based policing emphasizes a logic based on evaluation of codified, standardized information-systems, rather than an experience-based, action-oriented, and collegial logic. (Gundhus 2012: 178)

In this way, police scepticism towards knowledge based on information technology is an echo of the same scepticism found amongst police officers in relation to collaborating with more-or-less unknown colleagues: Police officers, it is said, tend to trust and prefer that which emanates from their own personal involvement.

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that it is not only normative or cultural preferences of this kind that cause problems in relation to the use of technology. As Sheptycki argues, there are inherent ‘pathologies in police intelligence systems’ (2004). In general, these pathologies are due to the hierarchical nature of police organisations and the tendency for knowledge to be generated, and thus also biased, in relation to the interest at hand. In other words, while the success of information technologies is dependent on their horizontal extension – in the case of global policing, approximating a worldwide reach – police organisations tend to funnel information vertically along their hierarchical structures, generating what Sheptycki calls ‘information silos’ (ibid:320). Knowledge becomes essentialised rather than extensive. Furthermore, police officers tend to have a selective approach to knowledge generation. If you investigate murders, for example, you will find certain information to be of interest. If you investigate property crime, other information might be of greater interest.

In sum, what is revealed by the limited but edifying number of existing studies that focus on what may be called the practical level of contemporary police surveillance systems, looking at both digital and practical means of police collaboration, is that there are a range of everyday problems. By demonstrating this, these studies direct our attention at the importance of going beyond, or perhaps rather beneath, the policy level of this alleged policing panopticon and of further exploring how it is practiced at the workaday level. Here, a different reality based on various vocational and subjective partialities interacts and interferes. As we will now see, this was also the case among a group of Danish detectives.
The not-so-panopticon of policing

In 2010, the Chief of the Copenhagen Police proclaimed that Danish citizens were to ‘expect more surveillance in the future’ (Reinmann, 2010). His statement has subsequently been echoed by many Danish politicians and police representatives. The Danish Prime Minister, Lars Lokke Rasmussen recently said that even though ‘we don’t want to live in a surveillance society’, there should be a discussion of how ‘we can extent the space of surveillance’ in order to ‘keep a keen eye on some of the forces in our society that constitute a risk’ (Gjertesen and Kaae, 2015). While this might be expected to sound frightening to the public, a recent poll has shown that sixty per cent of Danish citizens would actually like to have more surveillance in and of Danish society (Svan, 2017).

The need for increased surveillance is not framed as being necessary as a result of some expressed Orwellian need to monitor citizens. Instead, it is framed as being necessary because it is seen as being just that, necessary. An increase in the means of surveillance is deemed compulsory since it constitutes the only way to counter current developments in crime and thus to secure the welfare and well-being of law-abiding citizens. It was therefore with great satisfaction that Police Commissioner Svend Larsen in February 2017 was able to warn criminals and alleviate worried citizens by declaring that the police had acquired a new ‘super weapon’ (2017). This super weapon, which was also termed both a ‘revolution’ and ‘a quantum leap towards a modernised police’, was a new pre-crime computer system named ‘Polintel’ with the ability to store, cross-reference, share and use big data and thereby both solve crime by analysing existing data and prevent future crime by predicting where offences will occur.

Furthermore, the fact that the Danish Police see the future of policing in the use of information technology and cross-border police cooperation would be clear to anyone who has been following the recent political debate in relation to Denmark’s membership of Europol. After a majority of Danish citizens voted ‘no’ in the 2015 referendum on whether to discard Denmark’s EU opt-outs on security and defence, citizenship, police and justice, Denmark was excluded from Europol in the spring of 2017 when Europol became a transnational or rather supranational institution. However, at the very last minute, the Danish government managed to make an agreement with Europol, securing Denmark’s access to, amongst other things, Europol’s databases, although the databases were now only to be accessed and mediated by a few selected employees based at Europol and in Denmark. Denmark’s securing of this agreement with Europol was a source of great relief amongst both Danish politicians and the Danish police. The Danish National Police expressed their immediate satisfaction, although at the same time also expressing their concerns at the fact that Denmark was now not a full Europol-member, since this would inevitably mean a loss of international insight and of the influence required in this global day and age (Statsministeriet, 2016). The same mix of relief and uneasiness was
expressed by the Danish Prime Minister who was pleased to have secured the continuing support of Europol while also voicing concerns about Denmark now being ‘an outside country’ (ibid). Hence, what the Prime Minister and the police’s appraisals point to is the widely shared governmental notion that the Danish police cannot function properly in a global world without taking an active part in international police collaborations.

Moreover, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it was not only the politicians and police management who thought in this way. The view that police collaboration of a both practical and digital kind constitutes a necessary part of future police work was repeatedly echoed among the rank and file officers whom I met during my own study. For example, when I asked Detective Madsen how he viewed the future of police work during one of my first days at TFP, he told me the following:

In this new global world, we need more global means of policing. When crime and criminals move more, then we also need to be able to do that. That’s why we need to have systems that can keep track of such movements. If we don’t develop new methods, we’ll be left behind.

Having heard both the Danish police management and Danish frontline officers routinely expressing this desire for a, to paraphrase the police commissioner, ‘future of surveillance’, I was therefore rather baffled when the detectives’ daily activities did not fulfil this future but at times even seemed to go against it. Indeed, throughout my field study I frequently observed that detectives would speak of the importance of developing panoptic policing capabilities only to subsequently act in ways that contradicted their own words.

As I experienced it, the reasons for this break between the panoptic ideal and practical everyday considerations were many and ranged from being more openly explicit to being unconscious and rather banal. Bearing this in mind, on the subsequent pages I aim to provide a number of ethnographic examples of some of the main reasons as to why the policing panopticon in practice became not-so-panoptic. Some examples have been left out, but I believe that the following will be sufficiently convincing to persuade the reader of their importance. Specifically, inspired by aforementioned research on the practical level of the policing panopticon, I have divided the ethnographic examples into three emically explanatory categories. These are ‘cultural problems’, ‘technological problems’ and ‘private problems’ – problems that all stemmed from workday considerations rather than doctrinaire demands or desires.

Cultural problems
What I refer to as the ‘cultural problems’ of the policing panopticon are largely related to the issues mentioned earlier when discussing the problematic cultural aspects of interna-
tional police cooperation. These problems relate to how both international police cooperation and information technologies run the risk of igniting the inherent distrust of police officers towards people and phenomena that they lack substantial personal experience of, be it foreign colleagues or “foreign” data on a computer screen.

The fact that proximity and personal experience were preferred over the perceived detachment of information technologies and international cooperation was made clear to me when I visited the Danish representation at Europol in The Hague, also known as ‘the Danish Desk’, in the summer of 2015. The Danish Desk consisted of a group Danish police officers representing Denmark, who acted as the link between the Danish Police and the other Europol members. Following the agreement of the Danish National Police, I had been offered the chance to spend a week in The Hague to develop a better understanding of how the issues of cross-border crime, and globalisation more broadly, were dealt with at the European level. It was during my very first exchange of words with one of the Danish Europol officers, Officer Poulsen, that I was told that one of the biggest challenges to functional international police cooperation was what he called ‘the cousin police’.

The cousin police

Let me tell you, the problem when it comes to securing a well-functioning international police cooperation is that policing itself is based on suspicion if not downright distrust. You only trust that which you have experienced first-hand yourself or the people you’ve met. We call this ‘the cousin police’. You know, you don’t really trust the stranger on the phone even though he might also be police. Instead, you trust your own ‘family’ — the guys you’ve worked with and who have proven themselves to you. The existence of a cousin police is a big, big hindrance to the development of international police cooperation.

As this rather terse comment shows, Officer Poulsen used the metaphor of ‘the cousin police’ to denote police officers’ preferences for that which they have had close, personal experience of. In further explaining both the reasons for this and the associated problems, he gave the following example:

Although this luckily rarely happens, we infuriated the Germans the other day. They were furious because Danish police had crossed the border, staking out a car suspected of being in the drug trafficking game. You know, rules prescribe that they must contact us first, and then we contact the German Police who’ll then, if they feel like it, help us in our investigations. If they just cross over, they’re infringing on German sovereignty. However, I know how police officers think. They thought that it would be easier to just go ahead and then seek permission afterwards. Maybe they called some local contact they knew, but it must be cleared internationally. And they know this. But I understand them, although they shouldn’t have crossed the border because it destroys future possibilities of a fruitful cooperation. I get it because they
Honestly don't have the time to wait for us to talk to the Germans. If they don't act and wait instead, they might lose the suspects and destroy the case. That's the problem of the international system. It's too slow and rigid. So, the risk is that local police officers continue to do what they feel is best; calling a friend instead of contacting us. It has to change. If they don't change, we'll continue to have angry German colleagues who'll make our work very difficult. You get what I'm saying, right? The cousin police is counterproductive.

The problems described by the Danish Europol officer in relation to what he termed 'the cousin police', and the major hindrance these placed in the way of police cooperation, resonated well with the observations I had made during my time at TFB and TFP. It was apparent that both the TFP and TFB detectives often reacted with hesitancy towards both information technologies and collaborations with policing partners who were not experienced as being part of their immediate workday. Below I present telling examples of, first, the detectives’ hesitancy towards computer-based intelligence and then, secondly, of their unwillingness to work with more or less unfamiliar colleagues.

The cousin police: Information technologies

You just don’t really and readily trust some numbers you see on the screen. Nor do you simply buy everything that’s written that you haven’t yourself had a chance to double-check. You always treat such information with caution.

Reading a report from the National Police, this was one of the conclusions drawn by TFB Detective Andersen. 'The same goes for all the other things we’re sent,' she said, pointing to a poster-sized diagram hanging just to the left of her entitled 'the investigation triangle'. She was venting her frustration to me, as she had spent most of the day going through the report. The TFB management had ordered her to do it, but according to her, she was 'not really getting anything out of it besides a headache.' As she told me, the report outlined current developments in serious organised crime and, once again pointing to the diagram on the wall, the diagram was meant to be a reminder of how the detectives were supposed to handle their investigations. 'It’s not that we don’t understand the value of these things, but we often experience a disconnect between the practical reality and these general illustrations,' she continued. The other detectives in the office agreed. In general, they weren’t easily swayed by the increasing amount of digital intelligence they were receiving. The following examples provide further evidence that this was the case:

For a long time, the detectives at TFB had been complaining about the lack of 'good intelligence' as they put it. When this task force started, colleagues were sending us good things all the time. Now, it’s like our novelty has worn off or something. Maybe they want the good cases for themselves. I don’t know. I just
know that it'd be nice with a call or something,' Detective Jensen was explaining this to me, with his colleagues sitting next to us, all of them agreeing that 'something had to happen'.

Some days passed and the detectives kept working a case that they didn't find 'terribly stimulating'. Then suddenly, Detective Jensen received an email from Europol. The email, as I was shown, contained intelligence about a suspected Romanian burglar on his way to Denmark. It contained a name, photo and a scanty description of the burglar's MO. 'This could be what we've been waiting for,' Detective Jensen said, whilst explaining to the others what he had received. 'Sure,' Detective Pedersen responded. However, neither Pedersen nor Jensen appeared to do much more than agree that it 'could be' what they had been waiting for. None of them, it seemed, were about to probe further into the matter.

Later, after lunch, I asked Detective Jensen what they planned to do. 'You seemed pretty thrilled about the Europol intel you got earlier...?' I said, in an inquisitive tone. 'Hmm... yeah... there's some decent intel here... there is... but then again... here's the thing; where should we start? What to do about it? I often feel like this when we receive intel from Europol,' Detective Jensen concluded whilst looking at a picture of a suspect. 'When you haven't yourself got any real experience of these people, like who they are and how they work, but only this scarce, generalised info, it becomes hard to really work with. It is interesting, but it is also too vague. It's like a bone without any flesh on it.'

Detective Jensen’s hesitation ended up leading him and his colleagues to conclude that their resources were better used elsewhere. And in my experience, even though the detectives were yearning for good intelligence, they often had a hard time getting themselves to react to intelligence received from external policing partners such as Europol or the National Police since they experienced this intelligence as being too far removed from their own daily experience. We also call this the snowball-method – or the snowball-problem,' I was later told by Detective Pedersen:

'There is definitely a tendency in police work to simply work from case to case, using one case as the starting point for the next. So, if a potentially good but unknown case comes along, detectives will be a bit apprehensive about taking it up. Maybe that's stupid but it's the truth.

The view that officers felt apprehensive about engaging with unfamiliar intelligence and analyses was echoed by TFB crime analyst Pallesen. As he explained to me, whilst going through some of the statistics and analyses he had produced earlier:

'They have given me this job to make their work more efficient and focused. So I have for instance developed analyses showing how we have to work if we want to live up to the numbers that the management and politicians want from us. But even though I've consistently reminded the detectives about my analyses, they continue to just work the cases that are right in front of them instead of raising their heads and looking at the pointers I give them. This is not just about their disregard for policing by numbers, a disregard I share, it is also about their normal ways of working.'
There is no doubt that the detectives, as they themselves admitted, had a preference for working with the things that were part of their immediate work sphere. They were more drawn to and led by their personal experiences and, as such, they were hesitant about information technologies that were used to produce statistics, analyses and other means of intelligence, since they perceived these as being distanced from their workaday reality.

The cousin police: Police cooperation
The detectives did not only have what they would also sometimes call ‘a healthy scepticism’ towards intelligence that they themselves had not been involved in producing. Their scepticism also included potential colleagues whom they hadn’t had the chance to work with before. One way of showing this is to recount what the detectives answered when I asked them if they knew ‘the names of relevant colleagues who worked with cross-border crime issues at the national level and at Europol, and, if so, how many they knew?’

During my fieldwork, I had met these colleagues and – bearing in mind what Europol Officer Poulsen had told me – the two things that I had consistently been told were that further cooperation was necessary but also that the involved parties had limited contacts with each other. The local level, such as TFB and TFP, tended to work largely independently of the national and European levels and vice versa. Thus, in asking the detectives about whom they knew, I expected them to be unable to provide many names. And sure enough, one detective was able to give me the names of two colleagues, another detective one name, but most were unable to recall a single name when it came to their national and international colleagues. The detectives uniformly explained this (away) by saying that ‘Yeah, we should be better at working together. Yet, we honestly never hear from them. And when we ask them for help, it often turns out to be unproductive.’ While there might be some truth to this, what was curious about this statement was that the officers at both the National Police and Europol said the exact same thing when I asked them why they didn’t work more closely with one another.

Thus while a lack of coordination and productiveness might explain some of the noted hesitancy towards collaboration, it cannot explain it in full. Here, we once again return to the police’s vocational preference towards what and whom they already know. I saw one evocative example of this when I was at TFB. TFB was running a large-scale investigation into a suspected Romanian criminal group. Due to the cross-border nature of the investigation, which in this case took the form of it involving several people living in Romania, TFB had established contact with Europol and Eurojust via the Danish National Police, to seek help from Romanian authorities. During my stay at TFB I frequently heard the TFB management and its detectives talk about the importance of securing assistance from the Romanian authorities. Meanwhile, I also overheard a constant scepticism towards the possibilities of such a collaboration. The general feeling at TFB was that ‘it
would be awesome for the case but we’re afraid that our efforts will be futile. To be honest, I’m quite doubtful when it comes to the Romanian authorities,’ as one officer from the TFB management put it. On another occasion, he underlined his scepticism by reminding his colleagues that:

*We shouldn’t get our hopes up. It’s not the most well-run country down there. Corruption and stuff, right? And then there’s the question of why they should want to help us… I mean, is it really in the Romanian authorities’ best interest to help us catch Romanians? It’s not the best branding for their country, is it?*

Indeed, statements like ‘they probably don’t want to help’ were common. A Romanian liaison officer posted at TFB specifically to help them with crimes being committed by Romanian citizens confirmed that this was the TFB view. When I spoke to him about the scepticism found at TFB, he told me the following:

*TFB want help from the Romanian authorities, they do, but they meet them with the idea that Romanians don’t want to help. It’s like asking for help, without wanting it … It makes cooperation hard, no? And it’s weird that they keep on thinking like that, because they appreciate my help. They tell me all the time. And, surprise(!), I’m Romanian.*

The management and detectives at TFB did indeed appreciate the liaison officer’s help, as they had also told me, and as I had also heard them telling him. Nevertheless, they remained unconvinced.

*One day at TFB, a video-call with the Romanian authorities took place in which the details of the collaboration were to be agreed upon. I entered the conference room alongside the TFB management, one of the TFB prosecutors and two representatives from the National Police’s Centre of Investigations (NCI). Entering the room, one of the National Police representatives, Detective Svendsen, repeated the collective scepticism: ‘You know, they’ll probably try to wriggle their way out if it.’ The others agreed. Five minutes after Svendsen had expressed her doubts, the Romanian prosecutor, who was running the case in Romania, appeared on the screen. The call took about forty-five minutes and both parties agreed to the terms without any apparent obstacles. All the TFB representatives looked at each other and one of them eventually said, ‘Well, that was surprisingly easy. Maybe we should’ve done this much earlier.’ Later that day I bumped into the Romanian liaison officer again and I told him about the call. ‘Haha,’ he said, ‘Yeah, sometimes you should trust the fact that other people want to help,’ before walking away with a smile on his face.*

Bearing the liaison officer’s words in mind, the TFB wariness may be viewed as the perfect example of the general distrust they had in policing partners whom they didn’t know. Yet, it is also an example of how this distrust declined somewhat when an opportunity arose to talk and relate to the partner in question. Indeed, the detectives themselves often said
that an increased personal experience of otherwise remote partners reduced their level of uneasiness. As TFP detective Madsen explained it to me, describing why he did not reach out more often to Europol or the National Police despite the fact that he recognised the importance of building up these relationships:

I don’t really know these guys. Maybe if I’d worked with them before I’d contact them more. But when you don’t know them it feels a bit weird. You don’t know what to expect. It feels a bit like you’re losing control of the situation… So, instead, we often just reach out to people we already know. And if we don’t know anyone, it kind of ends there to be honest…

Explanations that followed a train of thought of this kind were commonplace. While cooperation with national and international partners was formally framed as being advantageous, everyday attitudes were dressed in this language of hesitancy. The detectives did of course contact colleagues at both the national and international level. And they did occasionally use some of the intelligence they received. However, as has been shown above, there was a clear tendency towards the detectives working with the people and the intelligence that they already had more immediate experience of. As Detective Madsen put it:

I simply trust the ways and the people I have come to know over the years better than some person sitting a long way away at some desk in The Hague. I’ve never met him. I’ve never been there. Do you know what I mean? And from my perspective, relations and trust are essential in our line of work. We’re not just selling refrigerators here!

One of these ‘persons’ in The Hague was the above-mentioned Europol Officer Poulsen, who was well-aware of this police preference towards what is familiar and known, as evidenced by his description of ‘the cousin police’.\(^9\)

This brings us to the next, and related, ‘cultural problem’. This problem, once again using the emic concept that the detectives themselves applied, is that of ‘the police nose’. Stated briefly, this concept denotes the way in which the detectives’ predilection for knowledge that has been personally embodied rather than technologically disseminated is not merely a preference but also linked to how police assess their professional worth.

---

\(^9\) Another example of how the Danish detectives preferred to take care of their own business (or family), and thus how they did not productively participate in international police cooperation and cross-border means of surveillance, was presented to me when the detectives sometimes told criminal suspects to ‘take the train to Sweden’ or to ‘go commit your crimes elsewhere. We don’t care. We only care if you come here. Then we’ll get you.’ As such, although policing cross-border crime, their policing interests often didn’t cross the Danish border.
The police nose

I'm sitting in the foyer of one of Copenhagen’s larger hotels with Detective Larsen. We are looking for 'breakfast thieves' who steal hotel guests' bags whilst the guests are enjoying the breakfast buffet. The TFP detectives have told me that it is difficult to know exactly where these breakfast thieves will be, thieves who are, I'm told, most often from Chile. 'How do you know where to look for them? Like, why did you choose this hotel and not another one? I ask Detective Larsen. Detective Larsen doesn't take much time thinking about my question as he instantly points to his nose. 'This. That's how. You know because of the experience you get from having done this for a long time. You know it's somewhat random where they'll be. They might be here or somewhere else. But when you've done this for a very long time you get a sense of where they might be.' 'But,' I ask in a slightly critical tone, 'Wouldn't you be able to know better if you did some sort of analysis of the data you have?' 'Nah…,' he replies, 'These criminals don't follow a specific route. Like, the only thing we know is that they travel from Chile to Denmark somewhere during summertime so that they can be sure that there are a lot of wealthy tourists around. And then we know that if they were here yesterday, then they're probably not coming here today. That'd be too obvious. 'But,' he says, pausing for a second, 'then again, because it's so obvious maybe it's actually the smart thing to do, right? So, the only thing we can do is to follow this.' [pointing to his nose again].

Pointing to their noses, or in other ways referring to having a well-developed, embodied sense of where criminals might be, was a normal way for both the TFB and TFP detectives to explain how they worked. It was also a habitual way of explaining the limitations of the information technologies and analyses that were otherwise available to them when going on surveillance stake-outs. They would frequently receive analyses from Europol, the National Police or from their own district, in which crime patterns were described. The detectives would even themselves speak of how they wanted and at times even longed for 'good analyses that can optimise our investigations.' However, when they received such analyses, the normal thing for them to do was to very briefly skim them, if they looked at them at all, and then ignore them.

'Shouldn't we get the department of analytics to look at these Polish pickpockets?' the TFB management asked the detectives. 'Sure! If they can put something together about who the Poles work with, their modus operandi etc., that'd be amazing,' Detective Larsen answered. 'Good. I'll get Kaspersen from Analytics to look at it.' 'Great,' Detective Larsen replies, 'We know that they'll keep on coming here, so if we get something that'll sharpen our investigation that'll be brilliant. We need to go about this more systematically, guys. We're talking about this so many times.'

About two weeks later, Detective Larsen receives the requested analysis. He prints out a copy to read and share with the other detectives. He comes back from the printer quickly flipping through the pages. He looks at it once more and then he puts it to the side. None of the other detectives ask for it. Surprised by his lack of enthusiasm, remembering how keen they had all been on getting such a report, I ask him what he thought of it. 'Hmm… first of all, we get it a bit late. Secondly, it just outlines how
some our suspects might be connected, but it’s really not that different from what we already know. So…
I just can’t really see how this helps us. The other detectives barely look up from behind their computer screens. A bit later however, Detective Mikkelsen walks over and gives it a quick look, ‘Hmm… yeah…
nothing useful there. It’s always like that. They talk about how great this “use of strategic analysis” will be for police work and so on, but when it comes down to it, it’s all pretty useless.’ The other detectives concur in the form of a shared silence. The report is then placed on top of another stack of papers on the window shelf where, as I often experienced, it will collect dust with other documents that are apparently deemed unfit for actual police work.

Were the detectives right in their reading of this report, and many other analyses they received, as being practically useless? It seems reasonably fair to note that a report that is not received until two weeks after criminal activities have been detected – criminal activities in the form of cross-border crime, which involve suspects swiftly leaving the country – is unusable and that the reports thereby often fell short in terms of what the detectives needed. However, the detectives’ reluctance to use the analyses they received went beyond such explanations. This was also known to one of the primary producers of such analyses, a detective working at the National Police’s Centre of Investigations, Detective Gustavsen, whom I interviewed. He and the team of which he was part were working to collect intelligence on cross-border crime at a national and international level. In relation to this, they had written a small and, according to Gustavsen, accessible pamphlet on what Danish police officers should do when they encountered suspected cross-border criminals. The pamphlet included what information to acquire in order to ensure that the police had accurate and useful data on the matter. Among other things, this included descriptions of how to read a Romanian ID card, for example, to ensure that police officers didn’t write down the suspect’s last name as his/her first name or vice versa:

‘Making that mistake is common. Very common. Danes can’t tell the difference between Romanian first names and last names. And if they make a mistake, we won’t be able to recognize the person in our systems the next time we meet him. We see this all the time. The data won’t be comparable and the foreign criminals escape ... Seriously, this pamphlet could be understood by your grandma. It’s so simple. And I’ve been on a grand tour around the country promoting it in all police districts, telling officers how important it is that our data are generated correctly. Because, this is the thing, if we just write and upload whatever we feel like it becomes useless. But… yeah … I’ve advertised this pamphlet’s importance, but I know I’ve done it in vain. Words and reading are not for them. They’re stuck in their ways.’

In hearing this explanation from the National Police, the detectives’ reluctance to use intelligence, even in cases where they had requested it themselves, suddenly made more sense. Their reluctance wasn’t purely based on whether or not the reports were actually useful. It also had something to do with how the reports clashed with ‘their usual ways’,
to paraphrase the National Police detective – ways that they were stuck in for some reason, or rather, as I would argue, that they consciously chose to stick to.

As Punch, amongst others, has noted, when describing what the police recognise as ‘a nice piece of work’, the police often invoke bodily concepts such as ‘a ‘feeling’ or a ‘nose’ for the unusual or suspicious’ (1979a: 46). In Denmark, the former Head of the National Murder Investigations in Denmark, Hans Jørgen Bonnichsen, confirms this in his book on police investigation and interrogation methods, where he describes how murder detectives refer to having ‘a nose for such things’ (2012). However, as Gundhus has demonstrated in her study of how Norwegian police officers have reacted to the increasing use of information technologies, these technologies at times clash with normal police perceptions of what constitutes a ‘nice piece of work’ or ‘real police work’ (2012). Police officers, she explains, are used to work using ‘traditional experience-based knowledge and professional discretion’, whereas ‘a logic based on evaluation of codified, standardized information-systems’ is not only different from their normal vocational practice but threatens to undermine the individual police officer’s feeling of professional worth (2012:178). This is closely related to Smith’s argument that information technologies might ‘empower the watcher’ whilst simultaneously ‘disempowering the worker,’ possibly making the police perspective bigger yet simplifying favoured police practice (2009).

In short, panoptic means of seeing more, such as intelligence reports, are not necessarily on a par with workaday notions about what constitutes good and gratifying police work. Stated differently, when the officers feel that they have less discretion as a result of the mechanical nature of information technologies, and that their police nose is being made somewhat obsolete, they become sceptical. Pointing to their noses or refusing to read a pamphlet should therefore not only be read as a simple conservative preference on the part of some old-school police officers who revel in and romanticise the past. Nor should it only be understood as a simple scepticism towards computerised data. It should also be understood as a manifestation of a general apprehensiveness towards the way in which new developments in policing might negatively affect what detectives understand as being at the heart of their profession, i.e. individual intelligence and sensibility rather than electronic intelligence and strictures.

**Technological problems**

The cultural problems described above, with their embedded vocational partialities, produced considerable everyday hindrances to the effectiveness and methodical nature of cross-border police surveillance.

Another everyday hindrance was of a more technological kind. In general, the detectives exhibited a dual appreciation of the various information technologies with which their workday was increasingly being filled. They were outspokenly excited about the use
and promise of new surveillance technologies or new data programmes, for example, whilst at the same time frequently saying that they had a hard time both operating them and truly understanding what they were 'actually good for'. In this section of the chapter, I will focus on the reasons for the latter whilst acknowledging that these technologies were certainly also used and appreciated by the detectives. Specifically, I will focus on how the detectives experienced that they were being almost overwhelmed by the constant introduction of new technologies that they then subsequently viewed themselves as being somewhat incapable of using.

**Technological overload**

- KR - The national crime registry
- POLSAS – The police’s case management system
- PED - The police’s investigation database
- FR – The national population registry
- CRM – The national motor vehicle database
- POLMAPLITE – A search engine which combines POLSAS with geographical maps and graphs
- The informant registry
- TARGET360 – a surveillance system
- The firearms registry

‘Those are the most relevant ones. But there are many others. And new ones are being developed all the time,’ TFB Detective Jensen told me when I asked him to list the computer systems they were (supposed to) use on a more-or-less regular basis. ‘But,’ Detective Jensen revealed, ‘most days we only use a couple of them.’ As he took the time to go through all the different systems, I was given an immediate understanding of the challenges posed by such a large number of systems. To a novice it felt overwhelming. Of course, using the systems was part of the detectives’ job, meaning that one would expect them to have a better understanding of them. Even though they were not themselves novices, however, it was obvious that the sheer range of systems rather overwhelmed them. This was what sometimes made them ‘rely on the old systems that we do know,’ as they themselves said, one of these systems being KR, the national crime registry, which was developed for the 1980s’ MS-DOS operating system. The quantity and constant introduction of new systems was no doubt also why the detectives were not easily persuaded, when the management encouraged them to use a new intelligence computer program named POLKON. Here, a computer screen pop-up window designed in the form of a slot machine sought to playfully encourage the detectives to use this new-fangled intelligence and investigation system if they, as the pop-up window said it, ‘wanted to catch an internationally wanted criminal’. However, although I was studying the work of detectives
whose job was precisely to catch international criminals, I rarely if ever experienced them using this system, as is also revealed by the absence of the system from Detective Jensen’s list. This also means that one should remain sceptical of the Danish Police Commissioner’s previously mentioned prediction that yet another computer program, Pointel, is going to become a form of ‘super weapon’. It certainly seems unlikely that it will become ‘super’ if its primary users, Danish police detectives, don’t really use it.

Another quite banal yet telling example of how the use of a multitude of computer systems can obstruct the likelihood of police officers properly engaging with them was the fact that the detectives were required to have different usernames and passwords for each and every system. ‘We need this because of data security, but it then makes the whole thing a lot less accessible,’ Detective Pedersen explained:

> Look, we have notes in different places where we write down what the newest password is because that’s the only way to remember. Haha. Like, how am I to remember all these various passwords, especially when I’m forced to change them every other month? Right? That’s why I have to write them down and keep them in nearby places. It’s kinda stupid, I know. But I can’t really spend time storing them in all sorts of remote places. That’ll be hindering my workflow. So, yeah… So much for data security!

Indeed, the hindrance produced by an overload of computer systems – in relation to getting officers to use systems that are otherwise described as constituting the indispensable future of more global policing – is one of the aforementioned ‘pathologies’ noted by Sheptycki. He singles out this pathology when describing how the ‘multiple recording of data on multiple systems and at multiple levels is a contributing factor’ underlying why intelligence systems do not necessarily function (2004: 316). Elaborating further, Sheptycki notes that the

> tendency to systemic overload in the intelligence system is exacerbated by its voracious appetite for data. Intelligence-led policing predicated on widespread system surveillance has a tendency to demand ‘more data’ rather than ‘better data’ (ibid.).

Quite simply, this almost ravenous appetite for data quantity rather quality is propelled by, Sheptycki explains, a perceived need for the police ‘to do something’ in order to counteract otherwise runaway crime trends (ibid.). Unfortunately, as was often the case among the Danish detectives, the shared notion that something needed to be done, and done ‘now’, gave way to developments which at times left the detectives dumbfounded, and with the counterproductive feeling that can be the result of having too many options. This very much resembles the latent ineptitude of modern day surveillance described by Zizek. Using Denmark as a telling example, Zizek has argued that for a total surveillance of all Danish citizens to really work,
90 per cent of Danish people would have to be constantly employed to analyse what 10 per cent are doing … I think that all these state controls can only end in major confusion. I simply don’t believe in the efficiency of this “total control” (Žižek, 2015).

I am not able in this context to judge whether the Danish detectives and a Slovenian philosopher are correct in their stated disbelief. I can only conclude that both parties – at least sometimes – feel that these many information technologies and the amount of data they produce are both overly consuming and confusing.

**Technological idiocy**

The feeling among the detectives that they were sometimes overwhelmed by the overabundance of information technologies can be said to provide a foundation if not a ready-made excuse for the recurrence of the following statement amongst the detectives: ‘All that computer stuff is just not for me. I’m not that tech-savvy.’ In general, the detectives shared a sense of lacking the necessary skills to operate computer systems, especially when it came to those that are most important for the increase in, and effectiveness of, contemporary surveillance.

For example, the detectives knew that using PED (the police’s investigation database), and thus building up and sharing intelligence and evidence, was important for keeping track of cross-border crime. At TFB, the management more than once ended the morning briefing by stressing that:

> It is extremely important that you use PED when registering your investigation progress. It’s the only way we can get a bigger picture, the only way for us to get a consistent overview. If you don’t do it or do it as you please, it’s useless. That’s why we have the guys from the National Police here to help us. They are experts. They can tell you how to do it if you don’t already know. Like, don’t ask me. I don’t know. But they know. Ask them. That’s what they are here for.

Although encouraged, if not ordered, by their bosses, few of the detectives really used PED, or at least used it properly. This was either because they didn’t prioritise it or simply because they didn’t know how to. For instance, on leaving one of these morning briefings, with the echo of the management’s words still ringing in his ears, Detective Axelsen stepped out of the meeting room and, having gone far enough for the management not to hear him, he whispered to Detective Thorsen:

> Shit, I’ve been doing it completely differently from how they want it. Honestly, I’m kind of lost when it comes to this thing … Hmmm…. I guess it’s a trial and error kind of thing. We just have to do our best but it’s not easy when you haven’t really tried it before.
Detective Thorsen seemed to agree. He too obviously wasn’t sure how to work this new computer-based investigation technology.

The lack of a general aptitude amongst the detectives was particularly evident in the way that officers at both TFB and TFP identified a single person as being ‘our PED expert’, thus also admitting to their own inability. At TFB, when I asked about the use of PED, I was told to contact Detective Sørensen, who was jokingly but respectfully referred to by her colleagues as ‘the queen of PED in the Danish police.’

In talking with her and observing her work, I was shown how she had built up folders and categories in PED which she used to go through reported crimes, and if a known suspect could be identified, she would make sure to make a data entry. In this way, she explained,

we make sure that we don’t only get cross-border criminals for the crimes they just committed. By electronically cataloguing cases we can make a case against a cross-border criminal that includes 150 charges instead of just one or two. In doing this, we make sure that we get them with a harsher sentence. If we keep on having print-outs and folders on the shelves we won’t get to the bottom of it. Doing what I do is the future of cross-border investigations.

The National Police agreed with her, since earlier that month they had interviewed her about her practice, with them, I was told, wanting to benchmark it and spread it to other police districts and units. And her colleagues also agreed, as they often experienced frustration at having to sift through the many folders that they kept on the shelves behind their desks, searching for crimes that they were certain a given suspect had committed but that they couldn’t easily find. ‘I’m sure I’ve seen this guy before,’ they would say, ‘but where was it? I might have something on him in this folder…’

In this way, given that all detectives agreed that a greater and more systematised use of computer systems was the future of surveilling and subsequently policing cross-border crime and other global issues, it was quite paradoxical to see that the detectives were not more invested in using these systems.

One simple explanation for the detectives’ lack of tech savviness has to do with the minimal amount of training they received. The introduction of different computer systems and other electronics obviously demanded that the detectives acquired at least a basic understanding of them. Of this, the management were well-aware. The detectives were therefore sent on various training courses on which they were introduced to new computer systems. ‘How-to manuals’ – such as that written by NCI Detective Gustavsen,

---

10 That the police (only) have a few and often variably skilled ‘significant actors’ to drive the technological development is comparable to what Manning (2008) found out in his comprehensive field study of three American police departments and their use of information technologies at the turn of the 21st century
as described above – were also produced and distributed. Even though the detectives had attended courses and read manuals, however, although they may perhaps only have skimmed through the manuals, they felt ill-equipped to fully engage with these often quite complex computer systems. As Detective Clausen explained to me the day before he was to attend one of these courses:

Tomorrow, I’m attending a course on this new Israeli surveillance programme the police have just bought. I’m actually looking forward to it. It sounds interesting and it definitely sounds like something we can use to really investigate the criminal networks of these pickpockets beyond the streets and outside of Denmark’s borders. However, seriously, I also know that a two-day course is close to being useless if we don’t end up using it in our everyday work. And I bet you, that is how it’s gonna be.

His colleagues also frequently experienced the lack of usefulness of the different courses they attended in a similar way: ‘We get this simple introduction and then the expectation is that we’ll go ahead and use it – but the reality is that we don’t.’

Furthermore, I repeatedly observed cases where the detectives were supposed to attend a course only to have their attendance postponed indefinitely because they were needed elsewhere.

‘That’s just how it is,’ the TFB management told me, ‘If something happens and people are needed, for instance, as we see today, in the policing of terrorism, then training or other extracurricular things just have to wait. That’s the reality of police work. We have to start with the base of things before we move towards the more complex parts.

Another reason for what they also sometimes humorously but also rather proudly called their ‘technological idiocy’ has less to do with being overwhelmed or untrained and more to do with the vocational partialities of police culture described earlier. It was obvious that the detectives often used a proclaimed lack of interest in information technologies to signal what they, by contrast, believed to constitute real police work. Here, we return to the notion of ‘the police nose’ and the penchant for police discretion, which was echoed in a comment made by Detective Larsen, for example, when the management, as always, had reminded him of the importance of using the computer systems: ‘Sorry boss. I’m a very old man. It’s not really something I know how to do. I’m much more about doing real police work, getting out there and shipping criminals to prison.’ Detective Larsen was only in his late thirties and in other ways he was more than capable of using modern day technology, having the newest iPhone, for example, and at times also flaunting his recently purchased tablet. As a result, and as he himself also admitted, his comment should be read more as an expression of preference rather than of a real lack of tech savviness.
Thus, following Manning conclusions from his study of The Technology of Policing: Crime Mapping, Information Technology, and The Rationality of Crime Control (2008), although the detectives were told to increasingly use various technologies in their investigations problems remained, including the absence of problem-solving role definition, training or an infrastructure for crime analysis … [One might therefore conclude that] technology has played an important role in the transformative movement in … police departments, but technology is insufficient to alter the basic routines and practices of any police department (Manning, 2008:125, 164)

Private problems

A third and final reason for the panoptic problems dealt with in this chapter has to do with something that research on law enforcers rarely concerns itself with, namely more ‘ordinary matters’ such as issues involving the police officers’ private or personal sphere (see Fassin, 2013b; 2015; 2017a).

In police research, the relationship between the private and the professional, including the way in which it affects the people involved, has only received a limited amount of research attention. When this issue is examined, it is most often viewed from the vantage point of how the strains of the police occupation might (negatively) affect the police officers’ personal life, including the risk of stress, depression, substance abuse and marital issues (Brown et al., 1996). However, what I am more interested in here is how non-work matters affect police work, an area which has received even less criminological interest.

Bearing this in mind, my observations were filled with the detectives speaking about mundane private matters that, to be honest, seemed rather banal when I first heard them but which, on reflection, heavily influenced their work and, in the case of this chapter, influenced their engagement with the development of coherent surveillance systems and practices. In the same way as at any other kind of workplace, the detectives would speak on a daily basis of birthdays, school meetings, their kids, a dinner with the family or friends, dates, problems with the spouse, supermarket trips that had to be made, drinks with old friends, concerts, sporting events or the importance of going for a run or to the gym etc. Their workday, like anyone’s workday, was filled with stories and references to personal or private matters of this kind – matters that I was first tempted to regard as humdrum, and therefore irrelevant, but which the following situations helped me to appreciate the importance of:
Picking up kids

The detectives have just brought in a group of suspected Polish pickpockets and placed them in custody. While two of the suspects have prior convictions in Denmark, and therefore aren’t allowed entry into the country, which means they can be prosecuted for a violation of their entry-ban, the detectives don’t have sufficient grounds to charge and detain the remaining two. Knowing this, the management comes into the office to tell the detectives to ‘cut them loose’. The detectives know that this is their only option, but it nevertheless frustrates them. ‘It’s annoying when you know that they’re up to no good. Like, why would they be “randomly” hanging out with known pickpockets and why does Europol have intelligence suggesting that they’re part of an organised group of pickpockets if they’re not just that, pickpockets? We know it’s the way the law works. Still, it’s frustrating because it might be a while before we get the chance to pick them up again.’ A little later, Detective Clausen and I walk down to the holding cells. Here, Detective Clausen gets the officer in charge to give him the keys to the cells where the Polish men are awaiting their fate. He unlocks one of the doors, tells the Polish man to come out and then releases him onto the streets of Copenhagen. Following the same procedure, he also releases the last Polish man, on whom the detectives couldn’t find any substantial evidence proving his culpability. Walking him out to the back alley of the police station, Detective Clausen grabs him rather harshly and looks him straight in the eye: ‘I know what you are,’ pointing his finger at him. ‘I don’t understand,’ the man says, ‘What am I?’ ‘You know what you are,’ Detective Clausen says angrily, clutching the man’s shoulder in a very firm grip. ‘And if you come back. If you do something wrong, we’ll get you! It’s just a matter of time. So, the best advice I can offer is to leave the country and never come back. Because if you come here, then you won’t be as lucky as you are now. I get your name and photo. I know who you are.’ ‘I don’t understand,’ the Polish man repeats dumbfounded. ‘Leave! Now!’ the detective yells at him.

The Polish man leaves, and we walk back upstairs to the TFP office. Here, the other detectives are equally annoyed with the fact that they had to let two of them go. But as Detective Clausen had told the Polish man, and as Detective Larsen now repeated, ‘We know them now. We got pictures, names, DOB etc. If any reported crimes come in during the day, we know that it might be them. And if they come back or if they go anywhere else chances are that they’ll get arrested by colleagues elsewhere.’ The other detectives agree. At almost the same time, the management comes back into the office. ‘You know, these two assholes you just released, remember to register and upload the info you got on them. Then we get them the next time.’ Detective Larsen concurs, and he lets the management know that he is just about to do it. ‘I’ll do it straight away, boss!’

Five minutes later, however, he gets up, puts on his jacket and walks out the door. ‘Did you update the system?’ his boss asks, as he walks past his office. ‘Nah, didn’t have the time, gaffer. Gotta pick up the kids. No worries though, I’ll do it tomorrow.’ A week later, the paper with the information on the Polish men is still lying on his desk. Another week passes and the paper is now either gone or, at least, hidden beneath other papers that have been stacked on top of it – one of the papers being the aforementioned report drafted by the Department of Analytics.

Fairly mundane examples of this kind occurred frequently during my stay at both TFP and TFB. At TFB, for instance, Detective Jensen was a divorced single dad and during the
weeks when he had the kids, he couldn’t stay late at the office irrespective of how urgent a given situation might be.

That’s just how it is. Are you gonna look after my girls? No, right. So, I have to leave even though I’d like to stay and work the cases we have. It’s not ideal but then when I don’t have the kids I can stay all night if needed.

His colleagues respected his situation. They themselves had young children and were also often forced to leave work to pick them up, cook dinner, attend meetings at school or for some form of activity at the local sports club etc. At other times, they had to take care of buying the groceries, and so on.

**Going on dates**

Another perhaps quirkier yet easily understandable example of how personal matters affected the officers’ work was when another TFB detective had to leave because he was going on a date. ‘Hell, I haven’t been with a woman since forever, so I need this,’ he said smiling, excusing the fact that he was not going to react to an otherwise, as he himself put it, ‘very interesting tip’ on some suspected Romanian burglars. ‘Yeah, I know that we should react quickly when it comes to these cross-border criminals, but I can’t completely cancel my private life, can I? You know I usually give this job everything, but today I’ll have to prioritise myself for once.’

Admittedly, the detectives’ private and other personal matters might be viewed as a comparatively insignificant matter. When talking about important issues such as panoptic surveillance, who cares about certain Danish detectives’ romantic lives, or lack thereof, or the fact that they have to leave work to pick up their kids from kindergarten before it closes? Criminologists often don’t care, or they at least don’t think of these things. But, even though they appear rather humdrum when measured against the drives and dangers of an expanding policing panopticon, they are something that the detectives have to care about. In the context of their everyday lives, picking up the kids is not simply more important, it is necessary. The surveillance panopticon is not. So, although the detectives readily admitted that such preferences might appear ill-advised, they nevertheless commonly chose – out of necessity or desire – to prioritise their private lives, even though they knew this was not optimal in relation to the chances of tracking and apprehending suspected cross-border criminals. ‘We just got our second child,’ as TFB Detective Christensen explained it, describing why he couldn’t work during the weekend, even though intelligence indicated that pickpockets were becoming increasingly active on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, ‘so I have to be at home with the family. That’s how it is.’
The fact that private and personal matters had such a bearing on the detectives’ work serves as a useful reminder – it reminds us that even the most doctrinal discourse, in this case that of the policing panopticon, inevitably competes with people’s everyday existence, an everyday existence in which the pedestrian often trumps the principled. It is yet another cue to focus on the importance of everyday life, as de Certau famously insisted we should when reminding panoptic and otherwise ocularcentric social scientists of the following:

Escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible. Within this ensemble… are the practices that are foreign to the "geometrical" or "geographical" space of visual, panoptic, or theoretical constructions. (De Certeau, 1984: 93)

The panopticon might be able to see everything that stands out, but it misses many of the small things that undeniably hold life together. This conclusion also rings true when speaking of contemporary police and surveillance work – even when they are focused on the otherwise disconcerting dark sides of globalisation.

Concluding remarks: Colleagues before computers

It is true that there are policies and discourses that are promoting an increase in police surveillance. It is true that steps are being taken towards an increasing integration of information technologies and a growing amount of police cooperation across both international and institutional borders. It is also true that the police themselves, in this case a number of Danish detectives, speak of the necessity of such developments and that they even dream about the ways they will help them catch otherwise hard-to-apprehend cross-border criminals. Even though this is true, however, and while it is therefore understandable that the convention is to point to and at times warn against a proliferating policing panopticon of this kind, it is not necessarily true that the practical everyday life of policing follows this narrative. At least amongst a group of Danish detectives working with cross-border crime, who were thus everyday actors in the maintenance of the policing panopticon, the reality was very different. As this chapter has demonstrated, there was reluctance and even resistance to participating. Amongst the detectives, cultural, technological and private workaday issues often outweighed the otherwise outspoken importance of developing contemporary surveillance practices of both a practical and digital kind. Indeed, stated somewhat inelegantly, but hopefully tellingly, the detectives daily work revealed how the supposed policing panopticon was 'not-so-panoptic' after all.
Furthermore, while it is true that what can be described as a policing panopticon is developed these days, increasing police and governmental capacities to surveil and control the population, what this chapter has demonstrated is that the logic also somehow applies to the individual police officers involved in this panopticon. Albeit for different reasons, the police officers also feel the presence and pressures of the panopticon, and they too look for ways in which to escape—finding ways in which to avoid losing their sense of professional worth in the crude mechanics of the policing panopticon. Herein, we find central clues as to why the detectives were so concerned and frustrated in relation to the global developments of their profession. Stated differently, it wouldn’t be entirely wrong to say that, at least for the Danish detectives, the not-so-panopticon of policing often equaled the quite-so-pleasures of being a police officer. That this was the case is further substantiated by the following example of yet another surveillance practice being sidestepped—an example with which this chapter ends:

‘It’s the police! Stop! Stand still! Who are you? What are you doing here? Let’s see some ID, please.’

These are words often voiced by the TFP detectives when stopping suspected pickpockets on the streets of Copenhagen. The suspected pickpockets, often with little objection, then hand the detectives their documents, usually in the form of a Romanian, Bulgarian, Polish or North African ID-card or passport. Whilst examining the IDs with their scrutinizing police gaze, the detectives call their colleagues downtown to check whether their suspicions check out. If the suspects are indeed wanted in relation to a crime, or if they are not allowed entry into the country due to prior convictions, the detectives arrest them and take them back to the station. If the detectives’ scrutinizing of foreign suspects turns out to be fruitless, the individuals are allowed to leave, although not without first having been comprehensively quizzed about ‘what they are really doing here?’ because ‘we know that you’re not just a tourist, right?’

When the stop-and-search of given foreign suspects is over, irrespective of whether or not it has concluded with an arrest, the detectives leave with various sorts of information about these non-citizen suspects; information such as their names, their date-of-birth, their particular ID number; information about who they were together with, where exactly the detectives met them, as well as information about their appearances, sometimes obtained by the detectives taking (if arrested but not only if arrested) pictures with their mobile phones and (if arrested and indicted) pictures and fingerprints, and also information on certain bodily characteristics such as scars or tattoos. The detectives refer to this information gathering as ‘registration’, denoting that the suspects in question are being noted and incorporated into the catalogue of people whom the police keep a special eye out for. Indeed, as is prescribed by work procedures, and as both TFP and TFB detectives are continuously reminded by the management, the information they retrieve is supposed to be typed into and thereby uploaded to different computer registers or databases in order to be stored and shared with other police districts as well as with other countries who might be on the look-out for these suspected cross-border criminals, or who might encounter them in subsequent investigations. Indeed, the detectives clearly know that this is what they are supposed to do because, as they say, ‘this is how we make sure that we can track the movements of these traveling cross-border criminal foreigners—
criminals who are constantly on the move across various national borders. Today, we can't just do as we did in the old days and keep a file on the desk. It needs to be shared. It needs to get out there.'

TFP Detective Christensen eventually sits down in front of his computer. His notebook and phone are full of various types of information about the different foreign suspects that he and Detective Lassen had stopped and questioned during their day on the streets of Copenhagen. Having a sip of coffee, he is now ready to make the compulsory data entries. However, just as he is preparing to do so, a colleague swings by. 'Hey, we need help arresting a robber. You in?' 'Right now, I was just…,' Detective Christensen says, but he doesn't even complete the sentence before the colleague replies: 'Yes, right now!' Detective Christensen gets up and prepares to leave the office, leaving the flickering computer screen behind. 'Let's go,' he says to me, signalling that I should get up from my chair in the corner of the office. 'This is what real police work is all about. You help your colleagues when needed. It'll always be more important than some computer work.' We grab our jackets and less than thirty minutes later we storm into the flat in which the suspected robber lives. On our way back, with the suspect placed on the back seat squeezed in between two detectives, Detective Christensen tells me, 'See. This was more fun than updating the database, not? I'm not saying it's more important, but this is how we do things. You help when asked. Us helping each other is what makes this whole thing work and feel worthwhile. If I had said no, I would've chosen the computer over my colleagues and that wouldn't have been well-appreciated. Isn't that right, fellas?' The other detectives smile and agree. 'Yeah. It'll be one shitty day if things started to be any different.'

Although much of what has been written on the subject of present-day policing and surveillance practices points to things having become dramatically different, this difference was yet to become properly embedded in the daily practice and perceptions of the Danish detectives. Having noted this, the thesis now turns its attention to another problematic aspect of contemporary policing in an increasingly globalised world, namely that this development has apparently brought with it instances of police xenophobia. As research has consistently demonstrated, the police are not renowned for being particularly welcoming in their encounters with foreign nationals. In this respect, the Danish detectives were not very different.
Chapter four:
Police xenophobia revisited

One late April afternoon at Station South, a few miles north of Copenhagen, Police Detective Jensen comes into the office waving a yellow post-it note in front of me and his colleagues. ‘So guys, I was just talking to Gabriel [a Romanian liaison officer] who’s been listening through some of the hours of tape we have on an old case. Apparently, the primary suspect was on the phone with some other Romanian guy who asked if he could help get ‘a discrete means of transportation’. You know, he was asking for some wheels to use for break-ins. Gabriel gave me the number so maybe we should set up a wiretap?’

I’m sitting in the corner of the office, watching Detective Jensen, who is initially somewhat pleased about the possibility of running ‘a good case’ as they tend to call it. However, his eagerness dwindles rather dramatically when he is met by what appear to be a couple of colleagues who don’t immediately share his interest. Detective Pedersen doesn’t even look up from behind his computer, as he continues with his work in an almost demonstrative fashion. A moment later, however, Detective Andersen reacts, sitting at her desk across from Detective Pedersen. Without initially saying anything, she looks sceptically at the post-it that Detective Jensen is still waving in his hands in anticipation of a reply. ‘What do you think?’ he asks her. Detective Andersen, gives it a quick thought, and then replies simply and rather sharply: ‘Hell no! Forget it. I don’t care about those damn foreigners. I don’t want anything to do with them. They are no fun. Like, seriously, don’t we have another case that we can do instead? I’m sick and tired of these damn Romanians, Moroccans or whatever. They make me so angry!’ Detective Jensen agrees, ‘Hmm… yeah, I know what you mean. But no, I don’t have anything better at the moment… so, what do you think?’ ‘I say no,’ Detective Andersen answers, ‘unless we really really have to; I prefer to stick with the cases we already have.’ ‘And you?’ Detective Jensen asks Detective Pedersen, who then, for the first time, looks up only to say that he agrees with Detective Andersen. ‘Alright. Another time then,’ Detective Jensen concludes, tossing the post-it into the nearby bin whilst actually not looking overly disappointed with the group having decided not to pursue an investigation into a suspected Romanian burglary ring operating in Denmark. He sits down and turns to me in order to, I think, explain what just happened. ‘Yeah, to be honest, although the cases against these Romanians can be very good and although they are important, so that we can stop them from coming up here, I’m also kind of fed up with these people.’

The notion that the police tend to become aggravated by foreigners is well-documented in criminological research (recent examples of this include Chan, 2011; Delsol and Shiner, 2015; Fassin, 2013a, 2017c; Mutsaers, 2014; Weber and Bowling, 2014). In both police research and criminology more broadly, this aggravation, or what might even be termed police xenophobia, is most often explained by applying either a cultural or a political...
analytical framework. Stated differently, police xenophobia is habitually understood as being an expression of cultural prejudice embedded in the individual police officer, the police organisation and/or in the society of which the police are a part, or, alternatively, as being an example of a problematic political discourse in which foreigners are singled out as being a precarious social group in special need of policing.

Using either one of these two analytical frameworks would constitute a reasonable way of analysing the ethnographic observations of the Danish Police – or the TFB and TFP more particularly – that form the basis of this chapter as well as the thesis at large. Indeed, in Danish police research (Holmberg, 2000; 2003) as well in wider Scandinavian police research (Flyghed, 2002; Frantzen, 2004; Granér, 2004; Görts, 2015; Høigård, 2011; Peterson and Åkerström, 2013; 2014; Pettersson, 2013; Schclarek Mulinari, 2017; Sollund, 2006; Uhnoo, 2015) it has been suggested that the police harbour cultural prejudices towards foreigners and also that the police politically promote the fear of foreigners. However, if this chapter were to limit its analysis to these frameworks, it would not provide an exhaustive explanation of the negativity towards foreigners expressed by a specific group of Danish police detectives. Here we may return to the chapter’s opening vignette and to TFB Detective Andersen’s unenthusiastic reaction at the prospect of having to investigate a possible Romanian burglary ring – a lack of enthusiasm manifestly shared by her TFB colleagues. Her words and the embedded attitude constitute examples of the, perhaps at first glance, rather outlandish proposition that this chapter seeks to promote: that the Danish detectives’ xenophobia also had something to do with police perceptions that policing foreigners was less gratifying and even at times seriously frustrating. Stated differently, it is proposed that one reason that the police harboured negative sentiments towards foreigners, in addition to cultural prejudice or politics, is that foreigners complicated otherwise valued work practices. To the Danish detectives, foreigners were ‘no fun’ – or at least, they were on average not as much fun as other suspects.

The chapter also includes a more general point. The Danish detectives’ experience that this line of work was frustrating and less gratifying can also be used to understand the general concern found among the detectives when it comes to Denmark’s and the Danish police’s inclusion in a more global world order. Like the individual foreign suspects, the wider crime phenomena thought to be produced by globalisation were also frequently understood as being, in the detectives’ patois, ‘no fun’. The fact that this was the case will

as the analytical framework for this chapter is simply that it provides the broadest way of addressing negative sentiments towards foreigners, which is the core topic of interest, without having to directly engage in the, albeit important, debate about if/when such negative sentiments amount to actual police racism and discriminatory practices.

13 It is important to stress that I do not suggest that all foreigners are ‘no fun’ and, vice versa, that all non-foreigners are therefore satisfying to work with. What is suggested, however, is that the general perception amongst the detectives is that Danish suspects are on average more satisfactory to police compared to certain non-resident foreigners (for reasons which are explained later in this chapter).
become clear not only in reading this chapter. Instead it is rather the case that a lack of vocational joy constitutes an explanatory baseline in almost every empirical example provided throughout the thesis – a lack of vocational joy which, for example, also provides an explanation as to why the detectives weren’t willingly participating in the cross-border policing and surveillance practices as discussed in the previous chapter.

Prevalent explanations of police xenophobia

‘Can someone please go and pick up Ioana and drive her back here for questioning? Her lawyer is coming later today so we need to make sure she’s here,’ the TFB management reminded the detectives at the end of this Wednesday’s morning briefing. Nobody reacts. Waiting in vain for someone to volunteer, he turns to Detective Axelsen, ordering Detective Axelsen and his partner Detective Carlsen to do it. ‘Sure,’ Detective Axelsen says, obviously not thrilled to have been chosen for this task. Later that day, I’m sitting in the back of the police car whilst Detectives Axelsen and Carlsen drive towards the prison where Ioana is being held in custody. ‘These damn gypsies! I’m sure she’s gonna give us nothing but trouble,’ Detective Carlsen says as we approach the prison. Meanwhile, the radio broadcasts a news story on how shoplifting has become an increasing problem in Denmark. Listening to the radio and sighing rather heavily, Detective Carlsen turns around and looks at me: ‘You see, David… I guess we don’t share the same political views but if you knew what we knew… Like, I promise you that a major reason for this problem is that we have this asylum centre up here where the foreigners who live there are allowed to come and go as they please. No control whatsoever! I promise you that if we spent just a couple of minutes waiting outside the asylum centre, and if we searched or followed people coming and going, then we would be able to arrest several of them. Without doubt! To them, the Danish law and system is one big joke. That’s why they are here. They don’t give a shit. They have a completely different way of seeing things. To them all of this is just one big criminal opportunity.’ Without saying so, it is obvious that Detective Axelsen agrees.

Some minutes later, I am sitting next to Ioana, a Romanian woman in her forties perhaps fifties, who has spent every second complaining forcefully about being arrested and imprisoned – including vast volumes of crying and shrieking – ever since the detectives picked her up. ‘Why?’ she says in broken English. ‘I haven’t done anything!’ A minute later she tells us that she wants another lawyer than the one she has at the moment and that, if she doesn’t get a new one and preferable the same one as her husband, who is also a suspect in the same case, she will refuse to be questioned today. She is within her rights to do so, but the detectives hope that she will change her mind and that her complaining is ‘just a stupid performance’, as they tell me in Danish, making sure that she doesn’t understand. Detective Axelsen, looking at me in the rear-view mirror, then says, again in Danish, ‘You get what we mean, right? It’s always like this. It makes things so dramatic and difficult. It’s goddamn infuriating this damn gypsy thing. She’s guilty and she knows it, but she is still crying and behaving like some insane child. Seriously… What a fucking joke!’

Situations like this were common during my time with the task forces; situations and conversations filled with irritation and with what cannot be described as anything other than
negatively stereotyped if not bigoted attitudes towards, in this case, a Romanian citizen.

Bearing such negativity in mind, the simply question posed in this chapter is: How should we interpret this apparent xenophobia?

**Cultural rationalisations**

The most common way of explaining police xenophobia is by arguing that it is caused by cultural prejudice. Explaining this analytical framework, Bowling *et al.* (2004) have provided a simple summary, which, bearing in mind the previously mentioned contemporary research on police xenophobia both inside and outside Denmark, remains relevant (see also Keith, 1993). Bowling and his colleagues track the cultural foundations of police xenophobia from the smallest component of the police organisation (the individual) to the larger context of which the police organisation is a part (society). In doing so, they outline the following three explanations as to why ‘racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and the abuse of power are problems in police forces in many parts of the world’ (Bowling *et al.* 2004:4). At the individual level, the ‘bad apple theory’ is used to explain police xenophobia as a phenomenon caused by ‘the result of the actions of a small number of rogue police officers who actively discriminate against ethnic minorities’ (Bowling *et al.* 2004:10). At the organizational level, ‘occupational culture theory’ views xenophobic attitudes as the product of a specific police culture ‘in which concentrated forms of racism and xenophobia are prevalent’ (ibid:12). Thirdly, shifting the focus to the larger culture of which the police are a part, ‘reflection of society theory’ argues that ‘racial prejudice and discrimination in the criminal justice system simply reflect widely held beliefs and behaviours among the general population’ (ibid:11). This third theory also includes wider arguments about institutional or structural racism in society (ibid).

Furthermore, bearing in mind this threefold theoretical approach, Mutsaers has recently noted that cultural rationalisations of this kind often tend to include discussions of ‘police discretion’ (2014). The reason that police discretion receives such specific attention is that the police’s extensive but also necessary discretion to choose what actions and people to pursue entails the risk of turning cultural prejudices into actual practices of discrimination (ibid). In a Danish context, for example, Holmberg has demonstrated that the line between discretion and discrimination is rather fluid when Danish frontline officers act out their ideas about ‘typological guilt’ (1999:187), a term used to denote how certain foreigners are ontologically viewed as being more crime prone than other social groups without there necessarily being sufficient grounds for suspicion (Holmberg, 2000) (see also Choongh, 1998). This is also why Mastrofiski, among others, has made the question of ‘controlling street-level police discretion’ (2004) central to his work as a means of curtailing possible cultural prejudice.
Political rationalizations

While the aforementioned explanation of xenophobia has its basis in (un)conscious cultural sentiment, be it in society at large or in the individual officer, the second criminological explanation of xenophobia is less normative and more instrumental. In this framework, negative attitudes towards foreigners are viewed as not only reflecting cultural partialities but are also understood as being a case of politics.

An exemplary study in this regard is Hall et al.’s Policing the Crisis (2013: [1978]). In this study, Hall and his Birmingham School colleagues examined the notable ‘moral panic’ about ‘mugging’ and, as mugging was racialized in public discourse, the subsequent increasing policing of ethnic minorities in 1970s England. Instead of merely understanding this as an example of a xenophobic (police) culture, Hall et al. argued that the escalating fear of mugging had to be read through a larger political and economic lens. Stated differently, they proposed that the increasing disapproval and subsequently policing of ethnic minorities was caused by a ‘crisis of legitimacy’ (ibid.). 1970s England was a time of political and economic turmoil and in this time of crisis the state needed a ‘scapegoat’ by means of which the focus could be redirected and a societal consensus and consciousness restored. The manifest fear of proverbial foreigners, the argument went, should therefore be understood as an instance of a more or less calculated politics of being and belonging, whereby a given society, by casting certain marginalised people as dangerous and even unworthy, was able to view itself and its citizens as virtuous and worthy. A similar means of analysis – with various nuances of course – has also been used in more contemporary criminological studies, particularly in the recent work on ‘crimmigration’ (Stumpf, 2006) and ‘the criminology of mobility’ (Pickering et al., 2015) (see also Aas, 2007; 2013; 2014; Bosworth et al., 2016; De Genova, 2010; Gundhus and Franko, 2016; Melossi, 2015; Weber, 2013). Thus, in short, xenophobia in these political analyses functions less as a cultural and more as a socio-political differentiator, serving to enforce the margins between the haves and have-nots, the insiders and the outsiders.

Echoing the ‘scapegoat framework’, other criminologists have focused on how foreigners are habitually used as ‘suitable enemies’ in political fearmongering (Christie and Bruun, 1985) (see also Tham, 1995). What is referred to here is the way in which ethnic minorities and migrants are frequently linked to crime and, more recently, particularly to terrorism, and in promoting and even exaggerating this link, ‘moral entrepreneurs’ (Becker, 1995), such as the media, politicians, policy makers or policing actors, are understood to be capitalising in various ways on the induced xenophobia (Andersson, 2014; Andreas and Nadelmann, 2006; Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012; Flyghed, 2002). In short, the foreigner becomes a centre of negative attention not (simply) because of ingrained beliefs that s/he is a lesser person but because xenophobia is politically advantageous.
Although I am sympathetic towards the means of analysis described above, in this chapter I also look beyond conventional cultural or political rationalisations to explain the xenophobia I witnessed when observing the work of the two Danish police task forces. In doing so, I have drawn inspiration from ethnographic ‘situational approaches’ to police research that were pioneered in the 1970s (see Manning, 1977; 2001; Manning and Van Maanen, 1978; Punch, 1979a). In short, situational explanations, or ‘interactionist’ as they were also called, focus on how police perceptions and partialities are not only produced by larger structures, but also (per)formed in and by police officers’ everyday encounters with e.g. colleagues, suspects or the general public. In applying such a situational approach to the following ethnographic examples, it will become evident that situationally generated frustrations contribute a great deal to the negativity experienced by Danish detectives in relation to foreign suspects – situations that were frustrating not only because of the foreign suspects’ behaviour but simultaneously because the officers’ work situation itself became less pleasurable than it otherwise used to be.

The (dis)pleasures of police work

There remain sound reasons for thinking that approaching [crime, punishment and social control] from ‘an emotional point of view’ might enrich criminological research and reflection; helping us construct explanations of criminal behaviour and social censures that are neither unduly simplistic nor over-rationalized. (De Haan and Loader, 2002: 244)

Detective Iversen: Of course, we’re emotionally invested! We care about our work. Don’t you care about yours?

I have juxtaposed these two statements as they, by and large, speak to the same issue – the one articulated in academic argot, the other in the words of a policeman. Stated differently, in an effort to understand the xenophobia expressed by a group of Danish detectives, this chapter (and to some extent the entire thesis) adopts this type of ‘emotional point of view’, as promoted by De Haan and Loader and simply but sharply given voice by TFP Detective Iversen. The chapter does so by examining some of the pleasures and displeasures of the detectives’ police work and by demonstrating how these had a significant bearing on the detectives’ attitudes. As will be argued, examining the detectives’ (dis)pleasures provides an understanding of police xenophobia which is indeed ‘neither unduly simplistic nor over-rationalized’.

Unfortunately, there are few comprehensive criminological studies that focus on the wider gratifications of police work. Those that do exist are often framed as studies of ‘police culture’ and of how, stated simply, a key aspect of police culture is that frontline police officers particularly enjoy catching criminals or other action-oriented aspects of
their work (Manning, 1978; Loftus, 2010; Fassin, 2013a: 59ff; Newburn and Stanko, 1994; Cain, 2015). Furthermore, action-based crime-fighting is not only understood as a particularly appreciated part of the police vocation, it is even promoted by police officers worldwide as being emblematic of 'real police work' (Manning, 1978). Even though it has been widely documented by scholars, as well as readily admitted by police officers, that the reality of police work involves much more than catching criminals (e.g. paper work and, as Banton famously put it, 'peacekeeping' (1964)), crime-fighting remains not only a symbol but an actual valuation of what police work is all about. This was also confirmed by the Danish detectives, who would zealously celebrate being able to 'get out there and catch some cross-border criminals instead of just sitting on our arses, staring at our computer screens'. As such, a correlation between emotional appreciation and vocational worth was forged – a correlation which, as McWilliams has argued, is not only typical of the police but of most professional vocations in which the everyday gratifications of one’s job are what makes the work both enjoyable and, importantly, meaningful (1999). This is indeed a standard conclusion in both the psychology and sociology of work with regard to job satisfaction, and the phenomenon is perhaps particularly pronounced in today’s post-industrial work settings (Casey, 1995; De Botton, 2010; Kahn, 1990).

To be sure, the Danish detectives, alongside colleagues worldwide, appreciate action-oriented crime-fighting as one of the primary pleasures and meaning-makers of police work. In a sense that is important to the argument of this chapter, however, this was by no means the sole source of professional satisfaction. The detectives also found vocational joy and meaning in other, to some extent more mundane work practices (see also Loftus, 2010: 6). They would indeed tend to describe a 'good bust', for example, as representative of appreciated police work. However, by paying close attention to their daily work, it became clear that less outwardly exhilarating parts of their job were also perceived as gratifying – gratifying when things went well and maddening when they were made difficult.

A similar observation has recently been made by Fassin on the basis of his ethnographic study of policing in Parisian banlieues and his observations of the considerable amount of time his police interlocutors spent not catching criminals (2013a; 2015; 2017c). Pondering the vocational significance of the time spent in this apparently non-eventful police work, Fassin argues that such mundane aspects of police work ‘may not have benefited from all the attention [they] deserve … as a banal fact of life’ even though, he asserts, they might actually be ‘key to the understanding of policing’ (2015). Stated differently, it might be said that too much focus in the study of ‘police work’ has been on the alluring ‘police part’ rather than on the more humdrum ‘work part’ of the equation. As Van Maanen has argued (1978b), this could be due to the way in which scholars are tempted to follow suit when police officers so often and openly speak of crime-fighting and other more spectacular aspects of their work as both the most fun and the most real
part of their vocation. However, following Fassin’s arguments, this chapter (and this thesis in general) aims to demonstrate the importance of (also) paying careful attention to the more mundane work (dis)pleasures of policing. (This will be further discussed in chapter seven).

Paying attention to both more apparent as well as mundane work pleasures, we now return to the discussion of police xenophobia. Three examples of work pleasures of this kind will be presented below, namely the normal pleasures of seeing one’s work coming to fruition when criminals are convicted, the fun of interrogating suspects and lastly, the gratifications of listening to wiretaps – with all three examples also demonstrating that the problems posed by foreign suspects in these work situations gave rise to xenophobic attitudes.

The (dis)pleasures of convictions

*It’s a win! This is why we put the time in. I know it might appear distasteful to an outsider, seeing us celebrating throwing people in prison for several years. Yet you have to understand that it is one of the few tangible ways in which we can measure if we’ve done a good job. That’s also why I feel rather satisfied when I get to see how the harsh realities of life suddenly dawn on the criminal when he realises that he is going away for a long time. Like, let’s be honest, why shouldn’t I be happy about putting away a serial burglar. Right?*

These were the words of one of the TFB prosecutors just after a judge had sentenced two Moroccan burglars to almost three years of prison respectively. The prosecutor’s views on this matter were shared by the TFB detectives who also enjoyed ‘a win’, which in police vernacular fundamentally means getting suspects sentenced as harshly as possible. The vocational pleasure that police officers experience as a result of ‘putting bad people in jail’ (sometimes even letting the end justify illegitimate means) has been widely and repeatedly demonstrated in police research (see Skolnick, 1982: 43). And as I often experienced, the Danish detectives found it similarly gratifying, since it was seen as emblematic of their work as crime-fighters. As a result the detectives would openly celebrate what they also called ‘good convictions’ when they were announced during morning briefings, or later in the kitchen when a prosecutor or a detective came home with good news of this kind. Conversely, the detectives became infuriated and at times even utterly disheartened if a judge had ruled against them, for instance only sentencing criminals to a short term in prison or, even worse, acquitting them. Such ‘bad news’ would sometimes taint the entire day at both task forces, becoming the centre of discussions and causing passionate out-breaks such as:
It's all worthless. No matter what we do, the law is so lenient that it doesn't really matter. It's a joke. They are laughing at us. Seriously, they are laughing right in our faces,

which was how TFP Detective Madsen responded when, in this case, he felt that a group of foreign pickpockets had gotten off all too easily.

Obviously, a lot of vocational worth was focused on a case being successful, which essentially meant that the case produced what the detectives viewed as a satisfyingly harsh conviction. Yet, in speaking of the (dis)pleasures of convictions I am not focusing on such quantitative aspects, although such aspects evidently remain central to police officers’ assessments of their work. “Three years are better than one year”, as their logic dictates. Instead, my observations of their dissatisfaction led me to consider some of the more qualitative aspects of convictions which the detectives also saw as a symbolic marker of meaningful versus meaningless police work. What I am gazing at here are the aspects found towards the end of the above quote from the TFB prosecutor, where he speaks of the gratification he felt when the newly convicted person ‘finally realised what was happening’, and, importantly, obviously felt distraught as a result. Because, as I frequently experienced, while detectives might secure a quantitatively good and harsh sentence, this didn’t always mean that the sentenced person outwardly exhibited that he or she also felt it to be harsh and upsetting. This disconnect between the felt quantity and quality of convictions was the focus of much debate and frustration among the detectives, a frustration that was much more common when it came to the foreign nationals they sent to prison.

Two telling examples come to mind, the first being one I experienced first-hand, involving a Romanian held in custody awaiting trial, and the second being an example I was told about where the detectives had overheard a Polish suspect talking about the, to him, minute threat of getting caught and imprisoned in Denmark.

Detectives Ibsen and Thorsen and I are in Vestre Prison, waiting by the front desk. Vestre Prison is Copenhagen’s largest prison, not far from the city centre. We’re there to pick up the Romanian citizen, Christi who is a suspect in a big TFB case. Christi has just been arrested a few days ago and is supposed to have his fingerprints and photo taken today at the nearby police station, Station City. The detectives talk to the woman working at the prison’s front desk, letting her know why they are there. A few minutes later, Christi comes out, escorted through a massive iron door by a prison guard. Christi is smiling and he greets us. ‘You look tremendously happy,’ Detective Ibsen remarks, ‘Why is that? There’s no reason to be happy about what’ve you done and your situation!’ Christi continues to smile and then says in bad but fairly comprehensible English ‘Yeah, it’s hard not to be happy. Instead of living under a motorway bridge, and having to search for food all day, I now get a bed to sleep in, and,’ he laughs, ‘here I also get three different porn channels on the telly! So, what’s not to like??’ The detectives laugh, seeing the amusement if not the absurdity in how a Danish prison is providing a Romanian suspect with such offerings as free pornography. Yet as they later tell me, ‘It’s also madly provocative to see him smile like that and talk.
about porn. It's like he couldn't care less. And seriously, that's how it is. You heard him. Here they get food, shelter, a PlayStation, free dental service and other healthcare things beyond their wildest dreams and so on. Like, look at him,' Detective Thorsen points to Christi who is now getting his fingerprints taken by Detective Ibsen, 'he's yakking away like some happy kid although we are in a cold and ugly police station basement. I mean, that seems a bit off, right?'

Whether Christi really was so unconcerned is another question. When I chatted with him, the two of us sitting in the backseat of the police car on our way back to the prison, his cheerful manner had changed into something sadder, with him trying to explain to me how he wouldn’t be able to talk to and see his family if he was convicted and thus had to spend a considerable amount of time in a Danish prison. Nevertheless, his initial cheery ways had been enough to upset the TFB detectives – an irritation I often encountered when both TFP and TFB detectives discussed how foreign suspects, even when convicted, seemed rather nonchalant.

The second example is very similar as it also concerns a foreign suspect and his seemingly lack of fear in relation to policing and punishment in Denmark.

During a lunch break, a group of TFB detectives are discussing why so many foreign burglars travel to Denmark. 'There's a lot to steal here,' Detective Pedersen suggests, 'and it's pretty easy to travel to Denmark from Eastern Europe.' The others agree. 'And we Danes don’t protect our houses properly,' another detective concludes. Again, people agree. 'And then we have the question about how soft the punishment is here in Denmark compared to what they are used to,' Detective Jensen says. For instance, on an older case in which TFB was investigating a ring of Polish burglars, we at TFB,' Detective Jensen carries on, 'had set up a wiretap on one of the primary suspects. The investigation had gone on for months before eventually, when we had the required amount of evidence, we arrested him and his crew. However, as we were listening in on the wire, we were also able to overhear that the suspect was well aware that he was on the verge of getting caught. Since he was thinking this, he told his wife something like this: 'But, hey love, don't worry. It's not that bad. Not that bad at all. There's no actual punishment up here. Prisons are like kindergartens. There's nothing to worry about.'

In having told about how the Polish suspect saw Danish prisons as kindergartens and how 'ridiculous' but also 'true from a Polish perspective' this was, Detective Jensen suddenly looks at me. 'David, you wouldn't believe how normal it is to hear foreign suspects not only telling their wives about the leniency of Danish criminal law and punishment but also using this as an argument when trying to recruit fellow countrymen/criminals.' 'They will,' he elaborates, 'openly talk about how good the conditions are in Denmark. Seriously, since we know this, this needs to change. I tell you, it's so frustrating to see that they don't think of it as punishment at all – of what we do as punishment. It's obviously a problem in terms of deterrence if they don't in any way feel frightened about the prospect of going to prison in Denmark. Yet it is also simply frustrating for us as it becomes a provocative and patronizing remark on the worth of our hard work when we see them, say a Polish, Romanian or whatever citizen, smiling about the prospect of going to prison.'
Again, whether the detectives were right in assessing that the foreign nationals did not fear and perhaps even somewhat enjoyed going to prison in Denmark (and that this was the reason why they committed crimes in Denmark), is not the point of interest here. As was mentioned earlier, remembering how Cristi was evidently upset about the prospect of not seeing his family, I believe the real situation to be more nuanced than the detectives described it.

That said, it is not only Danish detectives who openly speak of how Danish prisons and criminal law in general are too lenient. Politicians from both ends of the political left-right spectrum speak of this being a problem, not only because it doesn’t deter but rather because it, they believe, somewhat paradoxically attracts criminals, who see Danish prisons as attractive holiday resorts or, as the story often goes, ‘five star hotels’. For example, in 2012 a convicted criminal created quite a scandal when he came out and described Danish prisons in precisely these terms. And for my own part, I also experienced, both through the wire and in real life, foreign suspects speaking about Danish prisons in this way.

Nevertheless, the reason why I have chosen to discuss what I have called ‘the (dis)pleasures of convictions’ in the current context is not to discuss whether or not foreign convicts view convictions as pleasurable. Instead, the focus here is simply on how the detectives often felt that foreigners found Danish law and prisons rather agreeable and that this experience robbed the detectives of the feeling that their work was truly worthwhile. Indeed, it is important to note that the detectives’ experiences of their job as being less meaningful as a result of the way in which certain criminals fail to exhibit any fear of imprisonment should not be considered when discussing criminal law. However, given the goal of this chapter, which is that of understanding police officers’ negativity towards foreigners, the detectives’ experiences need to be considered. Although one might disagree with the detectives, and although one might describe such sentiments as bordering on cynicism or even sadism, it is nonetheless essential to understand that the police’s vocational worth is strongly tied to this issue. It is essential as a means of understanding the detectives’ frustrations in relation to foreign nationals and also their concerns in relation to wider debates about the problems of globalisation and policing. As the above-mentioned quotes serve to exemplify, the detectives often experienced that not only the means, but particularly the ends associated with their work weren’t producing the same, to them, satisfying effect.

The (dis)pleasures of interrogations
Interrogations, understood in terms of both casual conversations and formal questioning, are one of the few work situations in which police officers and suspects are face to face
for a sustained amount of time and therefore one of the few social scenes in which they, at least in some ways, can get to know one another a little more profoundly. They were also one of the work practices that many of the Danish detectives enjoyed. As I observed several of these interrogations, it became clear to me that the detectives took particular pleasure in what they would call ‘a good interrogation’. It was also obvious, however, that they tended to find interrogations less pleasurable when they involved a foreign cross-border criminal suspect, with these situations instead often fostering negativity.

In the following quote, TFP Detective Larsen explained to me what he believed to be the normal pleasures of interrogating. He told me this after I had just witnessed him interrogating a Polish suspect, and in this case – in contrast to the normal pattern – he seemed rather pleased after the interrogation:

I actually think it’s quite fun. It’s like a game. Like, how I go about it is that I often like to establish a connection so that it feels like we’re also just two people talking about life. Like, as you just saw me do before talking to this guy, I’ll go outside on the balcony, have a smoke and chat about normal things, talking about family, football, getting them to understand that I’m basically a normal guy. It’s about being able to relate. That to me is a good interrogation. When an interrogation turns into a simple ‘yes and no thing’ it not only becomes tiresome, it rarely produces anything of worth. Like, of course, if the suspect just says ‘I did it’, that’s also good, but when it’s hard to get anything out of the suspect and they won’t talk, it’s just an annoying waste of time.

Detective Larsen’s description of a good interrogation was echoed by TFB Detective Axelsen.

Whilst driving to a house on the Western fringes of Copenhagen to scope out a house in which suspected Romanian thieves were thought to be living, Detective Axelsen tells me about how he enjoys the more talkative aspects of the job and how he finds it ‘very meaningful to be able to engage in good conversations with people’. In describing this further he tells me that the basic essence of talking to sources is to ‘really take an interest in what they tell you. Like if he’s having problems with his wife, kids, friends etc., I need to know that. Similarly, I need to offer him a part of me. Like, if I’m an hour late, I need to tell him it was because of my kid who was sick and not tell him some bullshit about the traffic or something. I need to be honest so that he confides in me. It should feel like we’re having a genuine relationship. It’s much the same for normal interrogations. You have to be able to create a situation in which it feels like you’re having a nice and sincere chat. That’s when it becomes fruitful.

Thus according to these two detectives – and many of their colleagues – a good and fruitful interrogation was based on establishing a ‘genuine relationship’. This preference mirrors the research conducted into how interrogations are supposed to be carried out. Here ‘establishing rapport’ and the ability to create a ‘positive atmosphere’ have been identified as
key ingredients (Hartwig et al., 2005). Although the research on this subject is predominantly preoccupied with how a good interrogation will lead the suspect to want to confide in the interrogator, in just the way described by Detective Axelsen, the same ingredients, which are also of importance to the argument being made here, comprise the detectives’ definition of what constitutes not only a useful but also an enjoyable interrogation – an understandable correspondence between product and process.

Bearing the features of a good interrogation in mind, we now turn to the displeasures of interrogating foreign cross-border criminal suspects and the possible xenophobia these may produce. In doing this, and in order to demonstrate the difference, I present another example of Detective Larsen interrogating a Polish suspect; however, in this case the interrogation produced frustration rather than satisfaction:

Together with the suspect, a Polish citizen in his late-thirties, Detective Larsen and I take the elevator up from the downstairs holding cells to the TFP office on the fifth floor. Not long before picking up the Polish man from his holding cell, Detective Larsen had let me know that he would try to see if he could get him to not only plead guilty, since the case against him wasn’t the strongest, but, as Detective Larsen elaborated, ‘also get him to tell a bit about his accomplices and the criminal environment in Poland.’ ‘David,’ he continued, ‘you’ll see, I’ll try to chat him up a bit. So, please keep in the background so that he doesn’t feel too overwhelmed.’ Standing in the elevator, Detective Larsen first tries to make small-talk in English. However, the attempt to create ease in the situation fails as the suspect barely understands the detective. Instead, as I can easily overhear standing alongside them in the quite narrow elevator, some incoherent German words are exchanged, a language both parties speak poorly. After some moments of awkward silence and staring at the elevator wall, we finally get to the office and Detective Larsen places the Polish suspect on a chair next to his desk and calls in the interpreter. Just before the interpreter comes in, Detective Larsen turns to me again and says in a rather unsatisfied tone, ‘Yeah, that didn’t go so well. It’s hard to chat when you don’t speak the same language, no?’ With this slight disappointment in the back of his mind, the interrogation starts.14

- Detective Larsen: Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- Suspect: Why?
- Detective Larsen: I just like to know who I’m talking to.
- Suspect: I’m just a tourist. Just here to explore.
- Detective Larsen: Sure you are… I like, where are you from in Poland? Do you have a family? A job?
- Suspect: [Doesn’t really care about answering but after a while he says] I’m from Kielce. I have a wife and a boy. And I work in construction.

---

14 The following conversation represents a sample taken from the actual interrogation that has been reconstructed by the author.
Detective Larsen: OK. It’s not the first time we’ve met someone from Kielce. How is it down there?

Suspect: What do you want me to say? It’s Poland. We’re poor.

Detective Larsen: But you have a job. You just told me. So, you don’t need to steal?

Suspect: Exactly. I’m a tourist. I’m here to explore and see friends.

Detective Larsen: Don’t give me that silly tourist bullshit.

Suspect: I don’t know what you’re talking about.

Detective Larsen: So even if I show you this picture of you standing right next to one of the victims, you’ll still say you’re a tourist.

Suspect: It’s not me (looking out the window).

Detective Larsen: Look at me when I talk to you! It’s not you? Are you kidding me? Everyone can see it’s you … You’re going to have to talk. It’ll make things a lot easier. Now, I’m going to go through all the different charges and you’re going to tell me whether you admit to them or not.

Suspect: I don’t understand … How can I admit to something when I don’t know why I’m here? I’m just a tourist. I don’t understand anything.

Detective Larsen: You are here because you’re a thief. And don’t give me that provocative ‘I know nothing, I’m a victim’ attitude. You’re really starting to irritate me.

Having escorted the suspect back to his cell, Detective Larsen turns to me again and says: ‘God damn Polacks! God damn idiots! They only know how to steal and lie. Like, it was impossible to have a proper conversation with him. How hard can it be? He can even choose to say that he doesn’t want to talk but instead he’s badly behaved and all over the place. It’s like he was downright dumb. And he probably is with all the vodka they drink. We see this all the time. All the time.’

The above conversation exemplifies, in condensed form, the ways in which talking to foreign suspects often ended up being perceived as a bad rather than a good interrogation, resulting in irritation and prejudiced utterances. Of course, becoming angry could happen with a Danish suspect as well, but the general perception, which was both confirmed by my observations and often openly admitted by the detectives themselves, was that it happened more often with foreigners. ‘They are just harder to have a normal, earnest conversation with,’ the detectives would conclude. As the above example indicates, the difficulties in establishing rapport and creating a positive atmosphere in interrogations with foreigners are largely due to three recurrent emic problems: gaps or barriers in language, knowledge, and social factors – gaps which the detectives themselves spoke of or otherwise expressed their frustrations in relation to.

Language barriers are self-evident. The Danish detectives do not, for instance, speak Polish and the foreign suspects do not speak Danish and only rarely decent English. In this way, given that the possibility of establishing rapport is heavily reliant on conversational techniques such as small-talk (Abbe and Brandon, 2014), the simple fact that the
parties involved cannot communicate very easily produces problems for the interrogation. In general, as research has shown (Muir, 1979), the ability to converse both in order to obtain information and also to calm down difficult situations is one of the frontline officer's central tricks of the trade. However, this trick frequently failed with foreign suspects, as is evident in the way that Detective Larsen was unable to engage the Polish suspect in chit-chat.

Furthermore, language barriers are amplified by gaps in knowledge about the background of foreign suspects. When questioning a domestic citizen, police will often be able to acquire additional information about the suspect prior to the interrogation. For example, the Danish detectives check different national registers, developing an idea of individuals' criminal histories, where they are from, who they know, their family relations etc. And this is supplemented by what the detectives described as 'the shared knowledge that comes from having been brought up in the same country by more or less the same institutions'. As the detectives see it, this prior knowledge is believed to give them a conceptual and conversational resource which they can put to use, providing things to talk about as well as providing the means to interpret what the suspect says. However, when it comes to foreigners, the detectives rarely have the same prior knowledge, which they consider a considerable hindrance in their efforts to make conversation and keep it going. The example presented above demonstrates this problem, with Detective Larsen seeking to gather some knowledge about who the Polish suspect was, but largely failing because the suspect was not particularly able or interested in saying very much about himself. The lack of knowledge made the interrogation 'difficult' or 'bumpy', as the detectives sometimes put it, terms used to denote that it is difficult to create a situation in which the conversation flows – a flow which the detectives viewed as an integral part of a useful and enjoyable interrogation. To borrow from and explain this phenomenon in terms of Goffman's (1957) definition of the core rule of a 'good conversation', the detectives' difficulties in relation to both being able to talk (language gap) and having things to talk about (knowledge gap) stifle the 'spontaneity' of the conversation. It becomes, as a TFP-detective eloquently put it, 'less like a conversation and more like a questionnaire'.

Finally, the detectives' interrogations and other communications with foreign suspects include a potential social gap – a social gap which also affects and is affected by the language and knowledge gaps. This, in brief, concerns what the detectives would describe as 'the foreigners not knowing how to behave'. This is evident in the example above, where Detective Larsen was annoyed by the way in which, as he perceived it, the Polish suspect did not follow the normal behavioural rules of an interrogation. This perceived social 'misbehaviour' was a recurring phenomenon during my field study, in which I continuously observed the detectives becoming irritated with foreigners, commenting on how they misbehaved when they, for example, were being interrogated, when they were detained, and
also when in court. As TFB Detective Ibsen commented, having spent a day in court where a group of Romanian citizens were on trial:

\[ \text{Did you see how she was getting her “Gypsy” on? She was throwing her hands up in the air, rolling her eyes, and screaming all sorts of gibberish. She was so hysterical. They all are. This happens every time we catch them for the many crimes they commit. Honestly, that behaviour really pisses me off. It’s infuriating.} \]

Whether Detective Ibsen and his colleagues were right in assessing that the foreign suspects were misbehaving more than Danish suspects is not relevant to the argument made in this chapter. What is relevant is simply that the foreign suspects were misbehaving according to the police’s articulated behavioural standards.

Following on from this, it is well-established in situational police research that interactional failure gives rise to resentment. One of the most well-known examples of this is found in Van Maanen’s (1978a) situational analysis of the genesis of various police typologies. In this analysis, Van Maanen explores the underlying reasons for police negativity towards groups of individuals, such as ethnic minorities, whom the police speak of as ‘assholes’. The asshole, he argues, is viewed as annoying because of his ‘failure to meet police expectations arising from the interaction situation itself’ (1978a: 224), the negative sentiment therefore being based more upon ‘situational contingencies [...] than upon certain individuals’ (1978a: fn. 4). Or as Goffman (1961: 18) would have put it, negativity surfaces because the conversations between the foreigner and the detectives lack a ‘we rationale’ whereby both parties acknowledge how the conversation should be conducted. The absence of this ‘we rationale’ became evident in how the detectives would more often praise Danish suspects for ‘behaving well’ or ‘knowing the game’. Here, a social gap was not thought to exist. Sadly, however, in the eyes of the police, many foreigners do not know or fail to respect the game, making it difficult to play and making the foreigner a frowned-upon opponent.

Furthermore, in the interrogation example provided above the conversation was being held via an interpreter, a process that many detectives found to be an additional hindrance when it came to the possibility of having a good and gratifying interrogation. The following is a telling example taken from an interrogation with a Romanian suspected of pickpocketing:

\[ \text{Detective Christensen: So, I’ll ask you again, do you know these two people? It seems like you’re working together. Look, you’re right there next to them on this photo we have of you guys.} \]

\[ \text{Interpreter: [Speaking Romanian to the suspect]} \]
Suspect: [Answering in Romanian]

Interpreter: [Continuing to talk to the suspect in Romanian]

Suspect: [Speaking Romanian]

Interpreter: He says no.

Detective Christensen: What do you mean? What were you talking about? He just said no? I need to know what he said exactly. Don’t interpret, just translate! Understand?!

Following Detective Christensen questioning of the Romanian suspect, I asked him how he thought it had gone.

Hmmm... I guess we got what we needed, although it’s annoying as hell not speaking the same language. You’re never quite sure that you understand each other. There’s always that annoying uncertainty. And that interpreter... like, she’s sweet and all, but I’m sure she misinterpreted several things. And it makes me sceptical when I don’t understand what they’re talking about. I have no control over that. It’s fucking annoying. But it’s often like that when using interpreters. It makes it difficult to have a proper conversation.

Like, I want him to talk with me man-to-man instead of talking with her.

Thus, as this example demonstrates, having to use an interpreter made it even more difficult for detectives to have a good and fruitful interrogation. The inevitable use of an interpreter added yet another layer of possible misunderstanding. And, given that the detectives defined a pleasurable interrogation in terms of the ability to have this ‘genuine relationship’, to relate ‘man-to-man’, the detectives who interrogated foreigners often felt that they became somewhat lost in translation, and that the desired symmetry of a good interrogation was disturbed. Good conversations turned bad – and so did the attitude of the detectives. As one TFB detective wittily put it, ‘It’s like going on a date with a chaperon. Nobody likes that.’

The (dis)pleasures of wiretaps
The use of wiretaps is another aspect of police work that many officers find exciting, as it offers them a covert peephole into the thoughts and activities of their suspects. However, in the specific case of the Danish detectives, since the suspects were not committing crimes most of the time, a large percentage of the information that the detectives obtained from this method involved calls and messages about mundane matters. This could be conversations with family members or friends about everyday things such as the weather, the news, what to buy from the supermarket and so on. In this way, the work involved
listening in on apparently irrelevant conversations about non-criminal matters, and, yet, this became worth it when something of investigational interest eventually occurred.

This oscillation between the apparently non-eventful and eventual thrills is well documented in police research (see Fassin, 2017a). However, in contrast to the focus of most previous research, it is not only when something relevant happens that police officers experience pleasure. Much of the tedium of listening in on suspects’ conversations that the Danish detectives experienced was made less trivial by the voyeuristic pleasures of this type of work; by the way in which detectives enjoyed obtaining insights into the lives of their suspects – or, stated differently, by the detectives’ feelings of satisfaction in closing the knowledge gap described above. As my observations showed me, listening in on the many non-criminal and mundane conversation that the suspects were having served as a way for the detectives to develop an interest in their suspects that extended beyond their criminality. Here is an example:

It is late afternoon Tuesday at TFB. Detective Pedersen and I are the only ones left at the office as the operations they are running are not giving them much in terms of evidence. ‘They are not using their phones that much. Maybe they have acquired new phones. Or maybe they are just resting a bit,’ Pedersen explains, looking at me from across the desk, ‘and when they do talk, they mostly talk about girls – or with them.’

Fifteen minutes later he waves me over. ‘Come here, David. Listen to this young guy talking to his dad’:

Dad: Hey. What’s this I’ve been hearing? You in trouble again?


Dad: You sure? It doesn’t matter who said it [...] You know you can tell me anything. I just don’t want you to waste your life. You need to tell me if you’re in trouble.

Suspect: Dad, don’t worry. I haven’t always made the best choices, but right now everything’s good.

After listening to the suspect’s conversation with his dad, Detective Pedersen remarks: ‘This is typical. Like, even though he’s an idiot, it’s hard not to get some sympathy for the kid when you hear him talking to his dad. Even though he’s lying, it’s obvious that he doesn’t want to disappoint his dad. We all know what that’s like. These boys are trying to be tough guys whilst trying to appear as good boys in relation to their families. We see this all the time [...] Actually, even though it might not be directly relevant for me to listen through recordings of this guy talking to his dad or whoever, I like doing it. It might reveal something that we can use, yet it’s also nice as it gives me a better understanding of who he is.’
Indeed, throughout my fieldwork I noticed how detectives enjoyed acquainting themselves with their suspects. They did this by checking available police and other national databases or registers, by browsing social media, by continuously discussing their suspects with their colleagues and, if given permission by a judge, by using wiretaps. They even spent considerable time producing and decorating print-outs of the criminal groups they were investigating and, as these print-outs showed, they often spoke of the suspects using the suspects’ first names in a way that signalled a certain familiarity. One could say that for the detectives, this gave their work meaning, not only listening to the criminals being criminals but also to them being ‘normal people’ (see also Björk, 2008). Indeed, this was an integral way for the detectives to experience not only being police officers but, mirroring Loftus et al.’s findings, actually ‘becoming observers of the larger human condition ... [by which they] become engrossed in, and occasionally sympathetic to, the lives of those they are investigating’ (2016: 636). However, the language and knowledge gaps associated with investigating foreign cross-border criminal suspects who do not speak Danish meant that the detectives did not have the same opportunities to familiarise themselves with these suspects. The detectives simply did not have the same data available to them, and they did not have the same opportunities to know the suspects through the wire. I asked Detective Pedersen how this affected his work:

‘Hmm... I must admit that I often develop a much more cynical view. When I listen in on Danes I get to hear them talk about a lot of different things. Like, they talk to their mom, their dad, their friends and so on. Just like normal people, they talk about everyday stuff. But when it’s a foreigner we need an interpreter who’ll most often only translate the case-related criminal matter. In this way, I never get the bigger picture but only the criminal one (...) This might be why I like catching Danes. I get the bigger picture. Like, when I go and arrest Johnny it’s like I already know him. I’ll be like ‘Hey Johnny, how’s it going with your mom?’ If his name’s Petrescu or something, I’ll probably be less understanding.’ Related to this, one of the other TFB detectives admitted that: ‘When I go out and arrest a Danish burglar, it might be someone I know from a prior case. Like, I know what he’s about (...) And even if I don’t know him I know of him (...) I mean, we’ve all grown up with someone named Kasper who had a difficult childhood (...) But when it’s these foreigners it’s different. We know almost nothing about them.’

So, since this speaks of the chapter’s focus on the (dis)pleasures of policing, why is knowing a suspect satisfying?

In police research, the most frequently noted pleasure of having extensive knowledge of suspected criminals is explained by reference to how it is simply a useful investigational aid (Dean et al., 2006; Skogan and Antunes, 1979). However, this is not the only pleasure that the detectives in my study mentioned. Instead, they spoke of what might be translated as the pleasure of sense-making. In other words, the detectives liked to understand the broader intent and purposes of the criminals whom they apprehend. If they
were not given this opportunity, they were likely to become more contemptuous. Indeed, as Van Maanen (1978a: 228) has argued, the police’s difficulties in not properly understanding suspects are a well-known trigger of negative sentiments, since, as Van Maanen elaborates, the suspects’ ‘actions are seen as [so] senseless [...] that recognizable and acceptable human motives are difficult for the police to discover.’ In other words, while listening in on a suspected Dane also became a form of what might be termed ‘sociological work’ for the detectives, listening in on a foreigner often remained merely instrumental, investigative police work. And, as the examples demonstrate, this mere instrumentality entailed the risk that the detectives would literally think less of the suspect (see also Björk, 2005). The detectives became thoughtless rather than thoughtful.

In addition to such matters, a wider knowledge of the people whom they investigate (again, irrespective of whether this knowledge is accurate) spills over into the pleasures of vocational storytelling. If you step into a room in which officers are gathered, you will inevitably hear them telling stories (Fielding, 1994; van Hulst, 2013; Waddington, 1999b). Here, knowledge about suspects acts as a key ingredient as the police use their extensive knowledge of who the suspects are, where they come from, what they have done, why they did it and so on to tell good stories and thereby entertain one another. Here, one might add, entertainment should not only be understood in its most common sense. Instead, it should also be understood in the older etymological sense, meaning that which ‘holds things together’. In short, wider knowledge about criminals constitutes a pleasurable as well as an everyday basis for collegial conversations, which are used to lighten up the boring downtime that constitutes the majority of police work. When the police do not have a substantial knowledge about certain criminals, they quite simply lack literary substance for their vocational storytelling. As a result, the stories become uninteresting, uninterested and maybe even crude.

Finally, knowing one’s suspects is not only important for investigational sense-making and as a means of storytelling, it is also a key ingredient in police prestige. As research has shown, in police culture there is a great deal of cachet associated with ‘intelligence hoarding’, that is, having a wider knowledge of the criminals and suspects, since this is seen as being career-promoting and, not least, as it provides collegial respect (Sheptycki, 2004). Amid the Danish detectives, it was obvious that this aspect also played a significant role in why foreigners were less liked. As NCI Detective Gustavsen explained:

---

15 This is easily appreciated in the Danish language, where the word for entertainment is ‘underholdning’, ‘under’ meaning under or beneath and ‘holdning’ holding or bearing. This is also why the word ‘underholdning’ is used in Danish not only to talk about entertainment but also about the things needed to support a family, household or a living in more general terms.
There’s definitely still a police hierarchy in terms of what makes up the most prestigious work. Drugs and gangs are still the types of crimes that’ll give you a name. There are still almost mythical stories being told in the Danish police about this and that person who knew everything about and everyone in, for instance, the Hells Angels. Like, you can walk down the hall and talk to some of the guys down there whose job it is to handle sources and informants. They know everything. But, talking about the problem of cross-border criminals, then I know for certain that they’ll have very little to say. They know no-one. Cross-border crime is still not “sexy” police work.

Why ‘no fun’?

Returning now to the essential question examined by this chapter, namely why foreign suspects, as Detective Andersen said in the chapter’s introductory quote, ‘are no fun’, we should now be in a better position to provide an answer. In a strictly practical investigational sense, the police may have enough knowledge to apprehend the foreign suspect. Yet, given the meagre knowledge they have of such foreigners in a wider sociological sense, the police lack the ability to comprehend their actions, engage in fruitful encounters with them, tell good stories about them or to use them as a token of prestige. This also explains why xenophobia might surface. Indeed, as much of the literature on xenophobia argues (see Banton, 1994; 1996), prejudice is often based on the xenophobe only having a crude and thus caricatured knowledge about a group of people. That Danish detective work doesn’t automatically include such tendencies to crude characterisations but rather the opposite can be appreciated in remembering that one of the grand-old men of Danish police investigations, Bent Isager-Nielsen, entitled his book on murder investigations: ‘You hunt a beast but catch a human being’ (2009). Unfortunately, as a result of the vocational difficulties described in this chapter, when policing cross-border criminals there is a risk that “the beast” never gets humanised.

Thus, at a more general level, what can be seen from the examples presented above of valued police work turning sour is that seemingly insignificant matters, such as the everyday gratifications of police work, are not insignificant when it comes to understanding police resentment towards foreigners. The examples presented in this chapter also show that analytically attending to police work preferences requires more than, for instance, a narrow Benthamite focus on the study of hedonistic happiness. The pleasures that police officers find in certain work experiences or tasks – be it experiencing that convicts are distraught at the prospects of prison, having good interrogations or listening to and understanding what’s coming in through the wire – are not a simple matter of satisfying a need for fun and games, for cynical crime-fighting and confrontation, which are all too often portrayed as the core emotional draws of police culture. It is not ‘just boys doing business’ (cf. Newburn and Stanko, 1994). The pleasures the Danish detectives took in their job were integrated into the very principles of their work and their sense of vocational
worth. Again, whether the detectives were wrong in feeling as they did, given that it produced xenophobia for example, while being important, is a different question altogether. What this chapter has aimed to demonstrate is simply that the policing of criminal phenomena under the banner of globalisation in a number of unfortunate ways troubled the police’s ideas of good and gratifying police work, which in turn produced both resentment and irritation.

From a police perspective, irritation is certainly a dominant sentiment when it comes to the dark sides of globalisation. As has been described many times in this thesis, the police look apprehensively at how globalisation has created both new and expanding criminal phenomena. Criminals and other societal malefactors are believed to be increasingly crossing the border, be it in person or through cyberspace, pushing the police to adjust and stay alert to this development. With this alertness in mind, I will now turn to yet another and perhaps the most emblematic aspect of current day global fears, namely the issue of terrorism, and how this is dealt with by the Danish Police. Although the primary focus of this thesis is on the policing of cross-border crime, issues of cross-border crime, both in theory and everyday practice, often became intertwined with issues of terrorism. Actually, as the next chapter highlights, what the fear and threat of terror did to the Danish Police, and the task force detectives in particular, constitutes a telling example of what the detectives themselves would describe as ‘the problematic globalisation of local policing’.
Chapter five: Policing terrorism revisited

No-one's around when I step into the TFP office just before 6am on this summer morning. Sleepily, I hang my jacket on the coat rack behind the door whilst wondering where the detectives are. Yesterday, before going home, we had agreed to come in extra early to go hunt for breakfast thieves as they put it. In other words, the detectives wanted to go and scope out different downtown hotels, looking for potential thieves who steal hotel guests' belongings whilst the guests are otherwise occupied with eating their breakfasts. However, looking around the office and elsewhere on the fifth floor, everything is deserted. I'm the only one there. Then suddenly I can see the shadow of Detective Larsen exiting the elevator with Detective Mikkelsen just behind him. 'David, we're downstairs,' he shouts to me from down the hall. 'Come on!' I do as he orders, and all three of us walk down the stairs to the fourth floor, which is where the Vice unit, among others, is located alongside some of the police station's management.

We walk into one of the station superintendents' offices. Detectives Clausen, Christensen and Madsen are already there alongside a couple of other detectives from other units who also came in early this morning. The superintendent starts explaining to us what's going on (and thereby why the TFP detectives are not preparing to go out and catch the aforementioned 'breakfast thieves'). 'We need you to stay here at the station so that you can be prepared to help if needed,' he starts, before going on to explain more precisely why this is. 'As you have no doubt already heard, this morning a Danish Railway Company employee was found tied up sitting inside a train carriage that was being cleaned and prepared for service. His hands and body were tied together with duct tape and as the employee explained it to our police colleagues who arrived when it was reported, he had been attacked by two unidentifiable assailants whilst he was cleaning the train. Furthermore, he said that he heard them talking about a bomb and that they wanted to blow something up. So, gentlemen, as a result of this possible terror threat, the central station has been shut down and all train traffic has been halted for now. It's a pretty major decision as this disturbs the morning rush hour, but it's our only option. We have to take the threat seriously. So, right now we have people searching and sweeping the whole area looking for anything suspicious, people or explosives. Therefore, until we know more, I need you to stay here and for you guys to be prepared to help if needed with the investigation and, God forbid, if the whole thing blows up.'

The detectives quickly affirm that they will stay at their desks, prepared to help, but they still enquire further into the incident: 'So, what do we think about it all?' Detective Larsen asked. 'Does the threat seem to be legit?' 'Hmm...,' the superintendent answers. 'As you know, we must react to all terror threats as if they are real,' he continues, only pausing for a moment. 'Like, right now, the man who was tied up is being brought in here so that we can ask him some further questions. Detective Jonasen will be talking to him to try to figure out what this whole thing is all about. However, some of the circumstances surrounding this whole thing don't really add up. To be honest, it's a bit fishy. For instance, so far, no trace or evidence of there being two unidentified men/possible terrorists roaming around the train tracks have been found. Furthermore, the story the guy tells appears pretty inconsistent to be honest. And, according to none of the investigators, it almost looks like he has tied himself up... But, that said, we will of course investigate this seriously and talk to him and make sure we get the story right. In this day and
age, that’s the only right thing to do. Even the slightest hint of terrorism has to be taken seriously. You
know how it is, guys.’

The TFP detectives and I leave the office and walk back upstairs. Whilst walking, Detective
Mikkelsen says, ‘No doubt it’s a hoax. It’s the work of a desperate man, taking advantage of the whole
terror frenzy to make people feel sorry for him. Right? Wanna bet?’ The other detectives don’t want to bet
but merely agree. ‘Anyhow, no matter what it is, it’s going to keep us from catching any breakfast thieves
today. It’ll be yet another day at the office, sitting and waiting,’ Detective Larsen declares somewhat
discouraged. Having heard those discouraging words, we get a cup of coffee and the detectives sit down at
their respective desks, waiting to see how this possible terror threat plays out. In this way, with the threat
of terror looming, their workday, in the words of Detective Larsen, is ‘suspended until further notice.’

Just before I started my fieldwork in late February 2015, Denmark was hit by an Islamist
terror attack dubbed ‘The 2015 Copenhagen Shootings’. Here, a young Danish citizen
with Palestinian parents named Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein first attempted to shoot
one of the Muhammad cartoonists, the Swede Lars Vilks, at a conference celebrating free
speech entitled ‘Art, Blasphemy and Freedom of Expression’ in Østerbro, Copenhagen.
The cartoonist was neither hit nor hurt. Instead, a civilian was killed in the young man’s
attempt to murder the cartoonist. Furthermore, three police officers were wounded. This
tragedy happened even though both the Danish and Swedish police were present at the
conference as a result of the threat that existed following the powerful condemnation of
the now infamous satirical illustrations of the prophet by many Muslim societies, organi-
sations, and other religious representatives. Following his attempt to murder the cartoon-
ist, Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein was not caught but managed to escape. Later that day,
while still on the loose, he attempted to break into The Copenhagen Synagogue. He failed
in this attempt but killed a civilian security guard and wounded two police officers who
were also standing guard. El-Hussein’s attack was instantly described as terrorism by the
police, politicians and the media, leading to large scale anti-terror demonstrations and pub-
lic speeches by politicians over the subsequent days, which amongst other things employed
the fashionable French phrase ‘Je suis Copenhague’, referencing the Charlie Hebdo terror
attack after which the Western world and the world-wide-web had resounded with expres-
sions of ‘Je suis Charlie’. Following the Copenhagen attack and, more widely, following
previous terror attacks and threats in other European cities, the threat level was heightened
in Denmark and the Danish police were ordered to increase their counterterrorism efforts.

Given that this terror incident happened only a few days before I started my field
study, the question and fear of terror was ever-present among the Danish Police. It was
something the police detectives and their colleagues frequently thought about and, not
least, talked about. For instance, when they discussed why cross-border criminals were
coming to Denmark, committing various property crimes, and, then subsequently dis-
cussed what the foreign criminals did with proceeds of these crimes, some detectives
would voice terrorism concerns, saying – partially or completely seriously – that ‘they might be funneling the money to ISIS’. The same thoughts haunted the TFP detectives’ perceptions when they stopped and searched various foreign pickpocket suspects from North Africa in and around Copenhagen. For example, as the detectives, jokingly yet apprehensively, said one day subsequent to having let two Algerian suspects go in the absence of evidence, ‘Did we just let some terrorists go?!’ A similar anxiety was expressed when the detectives were commenting on the long line of mostly Syrian asylum seekers queueing in front of the police station to apply for asylum as a result of the European refugee crisis:

Hmmm… we know of course that a lot of these people are here because they had to flee their countries… But we also know that some of them are just using it as an excuse, as a cover, to come up here and cause all kinds of trouble. I’m sure not all of them have a clear conscience [in Danish, the idiom is ‘not having unsullied floor in the bag’].

In short, the Danish detectives’ various perceptions and practices were charged with the threat of terror – an omnipresent concern that easily became entwined, as other criminological scholars have noted (see Pickering, 2004), with wider perceptions of and biases in relation to migration/refugees and criminality. In seeing migrants/refugees coming to Denmark, and encountering some who lived outside Danish criminal law, the detectives were seeing what Weber and Bowling have also termed ‘the spectre of terror’ (2014: 27ff) – a spectre which was only enhanced by the way in which the political and media discourse both inside and outside Denmark painted the same unsettling picture.

However, this chapter is not about the potentially discriminatory aspects associated with the spectre of terror. Nor is it about the various and problematic ways in which the police and other governmental institutions are becoming increasingly empowered via the expansion of legislation and increasing resources due to the spectre of terror, as has been described at some length in the literature (Altheide, 2006; Aralau and Van Munster, 2009; Flyghed et al., 2011; Hörnqvist, 2004; McCulloch and Pickering, 2009; Mythen and Walklate, 2005; Pickering, 2004; Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004). Instead, this chapter focuses on what the spectre of terror means to “normal” police officers such as the Danish detectives. For the police organisation, contemporary fears of terror have undeniably led to wider discretionary powers and more resources – perhaps even amounting to a ‘police militarization’ (Kraska, 2007) as some researchers have claimed (see also Andreas and Price, 2001; McCulloch, 2001; McCulloch, 2004; McCulloch and Pickering, 2009). Yet, as is shown by the introductory example of the duct taped man at Copenhagen Central Station, and the detectives being ordered to cancel their work plans in order to ‘be prepared’, for Danish frontline police officers, the fear of terror was often more of a vocational
menace than a means. In other words, as this chapter demonstrates, the needed policing of terrorism was commonly viewed as a problem rather than as an appreciated para-militarisation of policing.

Certainly, in discussing 'the policing of terrorism' (Deflem, 2004; 2010), this chapter is seemingly a bit off-topic. The intended aim of my study was to study the policing of globalisation through a local lens, and in particular to do this by examining the policing of cross-border crime. Due to the above-mentioned circumstances, however, the policing of terrorism became an unforeseen yet inescapable part of my study. Besides, the issue of terror, in the minds of politicians, the public, and, in this case, the police, is also an issue of globalisation. In this way, the Danish detectives' reactions to the required policing of terrorism are actually highly illustrative of their general attitudes towards the crimes and risks produced by globalisation – namely that these global issues were diverting time and resources from what police work should be about, namely Denmark and local Danish policing issues.

The spectre of terror and criminological research.

This is 'a time of terror'! (Borradori, 2013)

Before delving further into how terrorism was experienced by the Danish detectives, I will first turn to how policies and the policing of terrorism are habitually discussed in criminology. This will make it easier to appreciate both similarities and differences in terms of how the detectives policed and perceived terrorism vis-à-vis the general tenets of criminological theory.

As Mythen and Walklate have argued in their influential paper on 'Criminology and Terrorism' (2005), the general criminological approach is to 'critique the ways in which the terrorist threat is being discursively and materially shaped by law and order institutions' (ibid: 379). Stated differently, criminologists tend to look for the symbolic and/or the substantive effects that have been furthered by the contemporary fear of terrorism (see also Cottee and Hayward, 2011). Although this description might not be exhaustive of the many and assorted ways in which criminologists and other like-minded scholars have dealt with the issue, it should constitute an acceptable point of departure in relation to the aims of this chapter. Since my goal is not to engage with the complexity of this question in its entirety but, instead, "merely" to produce a supplementary understanding of how terrorism also effects policing, I hope that the reader will excuse any potential shortcomings.
Symbolic effects

One of the primary ways of analysing the fear of terror, as manifested by politicians, policy makers, the media or the police for example, is to argue that the way these groups represent this fear involves a certain amount of fearmongering. A prototypical example in this regard is Altheide’s ‘Terrorism and the Politics of Fear’ (2006). Here, Altheide argues that ever since 9/11 there have been continuous representations in the media and by politicians that link terrorism to existing fears of victimisation in ways that ‘often decontextualize rather complex events to offer simplistic explanations’ (2006: 417). This one-dimensional coupling, Altheide concludes, has made it easier for ‘moral entrepreneurs … to market to audiences anchored in fear’ (ibid: 434). Or as Pickering has put it, the fear of terror is ‘consciously mobilised for political point scoring’ (2004: 223) (see also Rothe and Muzzatti, 2004; Amoore and de Goede, 2008; Hörnqvist and Flyghed, 2012; Flyghed, 2002).

In this way, the fear of terror and the political discourses and decisions made as a result constitute a perfect example of what we in criminology also discuss as ‘symbolic politics’. In the words of Newburn and Jones, the term ‘symbolic politics’ relates to situations in which, for example, politics relating to criminal justice are conducted ‘at the symbolic rather than the substantive level’ – being directed towards ‘terminology or rhetoric rather than … technologies and techniques of crime control’ (2005: 72). In this approach, the focus is not directed at the actual realities of terrorism. Instead, as has been described, the focus is directed at how social meanings are constructed by various moral entrepreneurs, and subsequently of course also at what the causes and consequences of these constructions might be.

In more direct relation to policing, several authors have therefore argued that even though it is undeniable that a terror threat exists, the threat is simultaneously being exploited by policing actors (Pickering, 2004; Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012). As Flyghed has argued, discussing the policing of terrorism in particular:

‘The manufacture of dangerous situations constitutes one means of promoting efforts to normalise the use of extreme weapons and spectacular policing methods … This too constitutes an example of the normalisation of coercive measures.’ (Flyghed, 2002: 35)

Viewed from the perspective of this analytical framework, the police knowingly promote and even exaggerate the terror threat as a means of ‘normalising the exceptional’, allowing them to retain the provisional resources and rights allocated to them to combat an otherwise exceptional threat. Considering the Danish context, in which the police, alongside politicians, continuously represent the threat of (Islamist) terror as being omnipresent, Flyghed’s Swedish-based assertion rings true (cf. Rytter and Pedersen, 2014). This critique
of the police representation has been repeated by Bowling and Sheptycki, who remind police researchers that it is

important to acknowledge that appearances can be deceptive and [that] it is not always the case that the social actors [i.e. the police] claiming to be ‘good guys’ and pointing fingers at the ‘bad guys over there’ have anyone’s best interests in mind other than their own. Indeed, we would even go so far as to say that it is more important to unmask the taken for granted assumptions, because the rhetoric of ‘war on terror’ and ‘war on crime’ have well documented harmful effects … we simply have to reconsider the terms of discourse used to describe the problem.’ (Bowling & Sheptycki 2012:135).

Substantive effects
Although it seems fair to argue that the discourse surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism is at least at times more symbolic than substantial, while still remembering that “talk is action” (Garland, 2002b), the declared war on terror has led to a large number of concrete initiatives and practices. These initiatives and practices are many and so is the scholarship debating them. Having said this, and bracketing this multiplicity, there is one general tenet that cuts across the various debates, namely that the

fear-inducing tales of criminality and ‘terror’ are often the basis for establishing expansions in real-world panopticon surveillance, thus endorsing calls for more street cameras, more prisons, more data checks and greater police powers. (Coleman and McCahill, 2010: 28)

Or as Lyon has repeatedly pointed out, ‘the war on terror’ has been the primary catalyst in ‘the growth of globally networked surveillance’ (2007: 30). In other words, the war on terror is understood as one if not the main facilitator in, as was discussed in Chapter Three, the marked panoptic expansion driven by widening legislation, increasing tactical resources and growing policing cooperation around the world, Denmark included.

In this area, criminological analyses focus on the many problematic side-effects of this kind of expansion. These analyses have questioned both the effectiveness of the expansion as well as its necessity. A recurring critique is that voiced by Mathiesen (2004; 2008; 2013), for example. In his work, Mathiesen has criticised the way in which the expansion of various transnational European surveillance systems – which together amount to a ‘surveillance monster’ (2013: 177), that he warns us against – is not effectual in relation to its proclaimed targets, i.e. to surveil and prevent transnational organised crime and terrorism. Instead, Mathiesen points to the fact that much of the expanding means of surveillance are actually used to track political opposition, to solve more mundane criminal justice cases or are simply used in relation to standard public order issues. Here, the alleged
policing of terrorism thus becomes a policing of both much broader and more mundane criminal justice and public order issues. As Kroener and Neyland have similarly concluded:

[T]o imagine surveillance cameras being used to intervene in terror attacks … requires a selective focus. [Instead] surveillance camera systems are used to monitor traffic, maintain order in schools, and watch the flow of penetrations in transports hubs far more frequently than they are used for security or anti-terror operations. Yet, such systems are often funded through anti-terror budgets, made available to anti-terror operations and gain the kind of publicity required to justify their budgets in moments of terror. (Kroener and Neyland, 2012: 143)

Hence the evidence suggests that, although phrased as counterterrorism means, the people who are often most affected by the increasing policing of terrorism are actually not potential terrorists but “normal” law-abiding citizens with no relation to terrorism or crime – people who are now continuously both overtly and covertly monitored. This (mis)use has led to stark criticism of the legitimacy of many counterterrorism initiatives, particularly in relation to how the expansion of surveillance involves both breaches of personal privacy and general violations of human and civil rights (Amoore and de Goede, 2008; Flyghed, 2002).

Furthermore, as many scholars have subsequently noted, the expansion of both overt and covert means of police surveillance and control frequently include discriminatory practices. Given that widespread ethnic stereotypes exist with regard to who potential terrorists are, certain foreign nationals and ethnic minorities run the risk of being excessively policed. As Morgan and Poynting argue, fear and terror and the practices produced in their name are directly tied to a rising Islamophobia in the West (2016) – a prejudiced connection advanced through an increasing focus on ‘radicalisation [that] has further become tied to policy preferences which have [negatively] affected the Muslim community.’ (Hörnqvist and Flyghed, 2012: 319)

Problems of accountability
While it is clear that there has been an increase in surveillance and other means of policing, irrespective of whether one believes this to be necessary, there is also a conspicuous lack of public knowledge about the inner workings of this increase in policing. Thus while governments increase their panopticon perspective in the name of terrorism and other threats, scrutinising the lives of the public, they are increasingly cutting off the public’s possibility of obtaining insight into how they are being scrutinised. As Ericson and Haggerty have described this problematic paradox,
The ongoing war on terror accentuates how the state is […] concerned with carving out a sphere of privacy, even as it tries to render the actions of others more transparent … Hence, legal claims to privacy are being invoked as a means to render actions of powerful interests more opaque. … (Ericson and Haggerty, 2006: 10)

Or as Coleman and McCahill similarly describe it:

[T]here remain relatively secret spaces, closed off from synoptic scrutiny. This relates to the social visibility of panopticon processes themselves, as in the case of criminal justice practices that include police decision-making, state punishment political policing concerning ‘the war on terror’ and other aspects of surveillance found in, and enacted by, powerful corporations.’ (Coleman and McCahill, 2010: 28)

Consequently, whilst maximising its panopticon abilities in the name of terrorism, the state and its various governmental agencies has simultaneously been obscuring its own counterterrorism work. This double-standard is also present in the Danish context, where parliament in the wake of 9/11, again in 2006, and then following the 2015 terror attack in Copenhagen, passed anti-terror bills that have included the allocation of several hundred million Danish Kroner, of which the lion’s share have been given to the Danish Intelligence Service Agency whose work largely remains beyond public and even political scrutiny. As is the case in other countries when it comes to the policing of terrorism and other alleged dark sides of globalisation, this obfuscation is excused by the necessity of following suit. That is, the state and its agencies must, just like its opponents, work in the shadows in order to be effective. While there might be some truth in this, it nevertheless gives rise to significant problems of accountability. As e.g. Bowling and Sheptycki have disparagingly concluded in relation to a worldwide increase in covert policing measures, this development ‘is antithetical to transparent and democratically accountable policing’ (2012: 71) (see also Bowling and Sheptycki, 2015a; Loftus and Goold, 2012; Marx, 1988). In short, this constitutes an example of the well-known problem of who is going to watch the watchers as the watchers dramatically increase their means of inspection?

Militarisation of the local/low police
The above points to the fact that, as Brodeur has termed it (1983), areas of ‘high policing’ or ‘political policing’ have been significantly endowed with extra resources and rights in the name of terror. However, as, for example, Mathiesen’s study also shows (2013), there is evidence that normal criminal justice law enforcement, or ‘low policing’ (Brodeur 1983), has also been heavily affected by contemporary politics. In this regard, scholars studying different policing organisations around the world have demonstrated that regular local police work has undergone a significant change as a result of the terror threat (Hörmqvist,
The core argument here is that given that ‘most constitutional limits on policing are transsubstantive – they apply equally to suspected drug dealers and suspected terrorists’ (Stuntz, 2002: 2140). It therefore follows ‘that when courts approve police tactics designed to fight terrorists, they will also be sanctioning use of the same tactics against other sorts of criminals’ (ibid). Such a spill-over or trickle-down effect is no new thing. The transsubstantive nature of law, and thus its spread to areas for which it wasn’t really intended, has been documented by many other police researchers – with regard to both anti-terror legislation, anti-narcotics legalisation and also migration law, for example, with many scholars recently having noted an increasing overlap between migration law and criminal law both at the policy level and the level of actual policing (Stumpf, 2006; Aas, 2011; Garner, 2015). In Denmark, this spill-over effect has also been noted and criticised by several legal, criminological and human rights scholars (Christensen et al., 2015; Hansen, 2011; Kjaer et al., 2004; Mandoe Glesner, 2010).

In following this transsubstantive analysis of the (uncontrollable) spread of counterterrorism policing measures, scholars have argued that the many policies and practices introduced in the name of terror should therefore ultimately be seen as a ‘conflation of crime and national security concerns’ (Pickering, 2004: 212) (see also Andreas and Price, 2001; Hörnqvist, 2004), i.e. as a conflation of high and low policing. The most emblematic example of this is found in the fact that the various forms of governmental work intended to prevent terrorism are repeatedly framed as warfare rather than as a manifestation of criminal justice. Such a framing, it is argued, has

significant consequences for the expansion of national security issues into traditionally internal policing domains, and the utilisation of external military apparatus for non-war functions involving international policing tasks. (Pickering, 2004: 212)

In its most dramatic form, this perspective includes the police ‘militarisation’ or ‘paramilitarisation’ thesis (Kraska, 2007; McCulloch and Pickering, 2009), i.e. that the police is increasingly becoming a ‘blue army’ (McCulloch, 2001; 2004). Here, scholars point to how the continuous labelling of various criminal justice issues as ‘wars’ (war on drugs/crime/terror), and the legislation and tactics that it has given rise to, have made both the police and policing methods more extensive and aggressive.

In sum, much has recently been written on the fear of terrorism and the counterterrorist measures applied to combat this fear. Irrespective of whether it is approached symbolically or substantively, what the above nevertheless demonstrates is that there is a common denominator with regard to criminological analyses of the policing of terrorism.
This denominator amounts to an evaluation of terrorism and the policing thereof as something problematic – it is problematic either because it is used in the form of exaggerated and self-serving politics or because it has somewhat uncontrollably extended, if not even militarised, the means and ends associated with both high and low policing. Crudely stated, one could say that the standard criminological analysis is that (the fear of) terrorism is a problem for pretty much everyone except certain governmental actors, the police included, who by and large benefit from it.

The spectre of terror and the Danish detectives

The domestic war on terrorism is … affecting local police departments’ ability to deal with more typical sorts of crime. A lot of police manpower has been diverted to various forms of homeland security, such as guarding at-risk public spaces and responding to reports of possible attacks. That drains resources from more ordinary policing, which may in turn lead to an increase in crime general. (Stuntz, 2002: 2139)

For police, the "War on Terror" is no war at all. (Deflem, 2004: 87)

In having touched upon the general tenets of criminological research, let us now turn to how the issue of terror was most often experienced by the Danish detectives. During my study I did indeed witness how the spectre of terror had become a pertinent part of Danish police work, producing (intentionally or unintentionally) various material, practical and also perceptual outcomes. However, the question of terror also, if not more often, became a part of daily police reality not as an example of e.g. an orchestrated and excessive ‘police militarisation’ (Kraska, 2007) or ‘war-policing’ (Hönke and Müller, 2016), as some of the literature would have it, but rather as something that the Danish detectives perceived as an occupational burden. This relates directly to the two quotes from Stuntz and Deflem presented above, which represent a marginal position in the criminology of (counter)terrorism as a result of their focus on everyday experiences of local or ‘low’ police. As Deflem has argued in his study of The Policing of Terrorism (2010), there is something peculiar about police work against terrorism relative to other efforts in the wider constellation of counterterrorism. All too often, sweeping statements can be heard about counterterrorism that are based on interpretations of very specific aspects of certain responses to terrorism, without clarifying which institutions and agents play a part in these practices and how they might differ from other efforts. (Deflem 2010:5)

Deflem here raises a critique of the above-mentioned studies, claiming that criminologists have tended to conflate their analyses of exceptional counterterrorist activities with the
wider realities of everyday police work – wrongly taking discourse, policies, legislation and other external and extreme measures as exemplary of how the policing of terrorism is practiced and perceived throughout the police organisation. He argues that qualitative studies instead suggest that many police organisations actually resist the external politici- sation of this issue, and the war rhetoric, and ‘continue counterterrorism activities that rest on an efficiency-driven treatment and depoliticized understanding of terrorism’ (Deflem 2004:75). Or otherwise stated, in relation to everyday police work, ‘the “War on Terror” is no war at all’ (Deflem 2004:87). Following this, Deflem therefore first argued in 2004, and then reiterated six years later, and which I can merely echo once again on the basis of my reading of the criminological present, ‘the policing of terrorism presents an as-yet rel- atively unexplored and often not properly understood topic of research’ (2010: 1). One might even say that, as Deflem has provocatively stated, there is ‘a populist bandwagon of self-proclaimed terrorism experts [who tend to] rely on emotion rather than intellect’ (2004:89). Although this statement is in itself a little populist and slightly unsophisticated, there was and, on the basis of my own study of the Danish police, still is some truth to it.

In line with this, in the everyday experience of the Danish detectives, the war on terror was certainly most commonly not a war at all. Quite the contrary. The habitually noted spectre of terror, and thus ironically also the slight fearmongering engaged in by criminologists themselves, did not in fact play out in line with the script outlined in much of the published scholarship. In other words, the spectre of terror did haunt the detectives but often in the form of a fear-inducing myth with no concrete manifestation – like a shadow with no actual body. The introductory example of how, as one of the TFP detective also put it, ‘a deranged individual had used the current fear of terror to his own ad- vantage’ constitutes a perfect illustration of this.

To elaborate further, I will continue by providing descriptions of three ways in which terror (negatively) affected ordinary police work. The first is similar to the incident from Copenhagen Central Station that was described earlier. This is an example of another possible terror incident that ultimately turned out to be a false alarm. The second concerns the consequences that terrorism has in relation to the, in the absence of a better word, extracurricular practices that it forces the detectives to participate in. Thirdly, I provide examples of the perceived negative effects that terrorism has on the detectives’ working conditions and, not least, private lives.

Terrorising incidents

Whilst I was following TFB, another possible terror episode occurred, just like the one at Copenhagen Central Station. It instantly hit the front pages of the Danish news media, as shootings were being reported in Denmark’s biggest shopping mall, Fields, located to the east of Copenhagen. Amongst other things, the headlines, screaming 'BREAKING
NEWS’ in colours and capital letters, read ‘Three people wounded by gunshots and knife stabbings in a shopping mall’. Eye-witnesses were reporting how they

were sitting eating lunch when we heard three bangs. They were very loud, and they reverberated, so we assumed that they came from the parking garage. The first we thought of was that it was gunshots, but that thought seemed unreal.

Another eye witness reported that he had

been both horrified and shocked when I suddenly saw two people running past, one of them wearing a black mask and holding something resembling a weapon in his hand.

Consequently, in the moments following the shootings, rumours spread about a possible terror attack. It is not difficult to understand why this may have happened. Seeing masked people and weapons, and hearing gunshots, and given that the suspected assailants were from ethnic minorities and of supposedly Middle-Eastern descent, the scenario easily spilled into the general fear of Islamist terror that exists in Denmark in the same way as in all other Western countries – a fear that was no doubt heightened by recollections of how terrorists had previously attacked shopping malls around the world.

When this happened I was in court witnessing a TFB prosecution of a group of Romanian defendants. As such, my only initial experience of the incident was via the above-mentioned media reporting, which I read on my smartphone, receiving popup notifications. In these reports, the media were still trying to establish exactly what was happening without being able to provide any certainty. However, only a few moments after the incident, I got a group text from Detective Jensen, sent to me together with the other TFB detectives from his investigation team. In it he asked whether we ‘had seen what had just happened in Fields?’ (the shopping mall) and explained ‘that it is Hussein’s group getting back at Abi’s group’. When I came in to the office later that day, Detective Jensen elaborated on this:

You see, I was just randomly following the news when they suddenly broke this story. And at the same time, I heard through the wire that Abi and his gang was hanging out in the shopping mall. And just after that, they started calling each other on their phones, screaming. Then I knew that it was our guys who were doing this and not some crazy terrorists. Yet, knowing how this could easily blow up in our faces – like the [police] radio was on fire – and suddenly be seen as some major terror thing, I got Andersen to find out who was the lead investigator on the Field’s case and then to call him and tell him that we knew who these people were – and of course to tell him that it was not terrorism, before he went ahead and suggested anything like that to colleagues or, worse, to the news. You know, it was lucky that I was here listening to the wire. If I hadn’t been, this whole thing could’ve escalated beyond our control. You know how it goes, right? As soon as someone even whispers
terrorism it all goes completely nuts … So, it’s good. Yet, the only fucked thing now is that instead of having a good and solid case on some burglars, our case will become secondary. You know, attempted murder in a public place trumps burglary. Of course, burglaries are just not as spectacular and important when it comes to either the legality or the publicity aspect.

Detective Jensen’s take on the situation neatly summed up what was the central issue for the TFB detectives. For over two months they had been running a wiretap and working every day trying to build a case against a group of young ethnic minority men living west of Copenhagen who were suspected of having committed several burglaries over the past six months or so. TFB not only had a wiretap running, they had conducted searches and they had also put a lot of other resources or, as they called it, ‘technical observations’ into collecting evidence and securing an arrest. As a result, I was told, a ‘good case’ had been built which, they estimated, was very close to being strong enough to get the suspects convicted of organised crime. A few days before the shootings in the shopping mall, the detectives had even discussed whether they should ‘just go ahead and bring these guys in?’

However, as was demonstrated by the above example, the case had suddenly evolved in a rather unexpected way, with the crime extending to attempted murder instead of being “merely” a case involving a number of burglaries. This process had already started some weeks before the shootings at the shopping mall. As it happened, the two groups shooting at each other had initially been, if not a single group, then at least close acquaintances who, it was suspected, had even committed crimes together. Yet, something had happened which had divided them and pitted them against each other. The story that I was told was that it had all started because of a girl and a subsequent conflict at an internet café (or was it a corner shop?) where there had been a dispute and a window had been broken. Indeed, as the TFB detectives explained to me,

> it always starts with a girl. Always. Or at least often. And then it just escalates when these young, hormone-filled guys feel like they have to show that no-one should mess with them. You know how it is.

> It’s all about honour and respect for these youngsters. That’s the only way they know how to think.

The disrespect felt by the young men had then escalated into a stabbing in downtown Copenhagen and a drive-by shooting west of Copenhagen in which two people had been severely injured.

Bearing this conflict in mind, the reason for the shootings in the shopping mall was that one of the victims’ brothers had randomly spotted the rival group at the shopping mall and had alerted the opposing group about them being there. Stated differently, the whole thing had escalated from common romantic problems into two groups of people
shooting at each other in the midst of a large number of customers in a shopping mall, and, consequently, had led to fears of terrorism. Or as Detective Pedersen put it,

and we thought we were just having us a nice burglary case here with some young guys wanting quick money and thinking they were above the law – but then it ends up on the front page of the news instead with a lot of drama. That wasn’t really what we had planned for.

As is reflected in these words, what this demonstrates is that the police often experience that underneath these spectacles of terror, there is something mundane and not at all terror-related that is happening. In this case, it was broken hearts and offended honour and in the other case from the Copenhagen Central Station it was a matter of a possibly mentally unstable and distressed individual. Additionally, and even more important to the point I am trying to make in this chapter, it also demonstrates how the Danish detectives were well-aware of how this was often the case. This does not of course mean that the detectives didn’t think that they should take incidents of possible terrorism seriously. It merely demonstrates that the omnipresent fear of terror in Denmark had a negative effect on their everyday work and, hence, why they were ‘tired of this terror thing’, as they put it. This was simply because, as the detectives often experienced, fears of terror not only trumped their normal police work they also hindered it.

Terrorising practices
It was not only these few but consequential might-be-terror incidents that influenced the detectives’ daily work. On a more daily basis, the fear and threat of terror and the demands placed on the Danish police to counter it, meant that almost the entire Danish police force was affected, with police officers being asked to perform certain terror-related practices regularly. The following are two examples:

Coming into Copenhagen from the north you pass by a small Jewish butcher’s located at the side of the road facing a large, open square. Here, since around February 2015, you will be able to see an armed police officer standing in front of the butcher’s. Depending on the available operative resources, the officers on duty might have to stand outside for several hours in the often quite dreary Danish weather, waiting for their workday to end. Furthermore, if you journey around Copenhagen you will be met with many similar sights. You will find police officers guarding the parliament building, the synagogue, various embassies and also other targets judged to be at risk of terrorism. At some point, when the risk of terror was estimated to be at its highest level, you could even find heavily armed police officers patrolling train stations.
Here we go again. I can’t believe that I have to do this,’ Detective Clausen tells me, as I watch him put on his uniform preparing to go on terror guard duty of the kind described above — a uniform he rather dislikes wearing, since he is a detective used to wearing his own civilian clothing, and is used to the professional distinctions that come with such differences in attire. ‘I tell you, it is boring as hell, standing outside that tiny Jewish butcher’s or wherever the management puts you for so many hours at a time. And it gets terribly cold also. Even though this is summertime, it often gets cold when you just stand there. And just think about how it’ll be during the winter! No matter how many clothes you wear, when you just stand there without really moving, your body doesn’t get any heat. In the end, you’re fucking freezing … And yeah, I guess it gets a bit better when you are on your break and you get to eat some sandwiches and drink some lukewarm coffee, but that doesn’t really weigh up the fact that it’s a shit job.’

The fact that Detective Clausen had to spend his entire workday guarding a suspected terror target instead of being able to carry on with his actual work, apprehending professional pickpockets, was something that greatly annoyed him. Unfortunately, seen from the detectives’ point of view, their being included in such intensified protection work and in other ways of policing terrorism was becoming more and more common as a result of the assessed increase in the terror threat in Denmark. As Detective Christensen very similarly noted a few days after my conversation with Detective Clausen, ‘Standing out there like simple sentries is really not what I expected I would be doing after becoming a police investigator and having spent more than ten years on the force. I get that the job might be important, or, of course it is important, but I think it should be someone other than me, to be honest. On the one hand, I’m overqualified for the job. On the other hand, I’m underqualified as I haven’t received any proper training in this kind of security work for many many years’.

At TFB, the detectives echoed their TFP colleagues’ frustrations, although they were thrilled that they were one of the country’s few police units that had not been asked to participate in the policing of terrorism. ‘We’re lucky,’ TFB Detective Jensen told me, ‘Politically there is still too much focus on burglaries for us to be removed from our daily work. But, trust me, it’s just a matter of time before we also get sucked into this frenzy, which will make it almost impossible for us to carry out our work to a satisfying degree.’

To the best of my knowledge, TFB and its detectives managed to stay clear, avoiding having to stand on guard duty in the name of terrorism. They were however the exception to the rule, with police officers from all around Denmark being told to report for duty in Copenhagen in particular. I will later return to what a two or maybe three-hundred-kilometre commute from the Western parts of Denmark meant for the officers who were ordered to make it. For now, the examples mentioned above are sufficient to demonstrate the general perception shared by all the police officers I came across, namely that standing

---

16 This was at least how it was during and after my field study. Yet, just recently, the Danish military have taken over some of the guard duties from the police, which nevertheless only enhances the warlike sensation.
on guard to protect places and people against terrorism might be important but was nevertheless a very boring and bothersome task.

When it came to other practices implemented in the name of terror, however, neither the TFP nor the TFB detectives remain unaffected. The following is an example of something they all had to do:

'Bang, bang, bang!' The noise is deafening, and it returns just a short second later when the police officers reach for their handguns instead of the machine guns they have just used. 'Bang, bang, bang!' it goes again, echoing loudly on the outskirts of Copenhagen – an echo that is multiplied by other shots being fired nearby. Having hit the target, the officers holster their weapons and secure them. 'Good,' the drill master says, 'Let's do it again, only this time I want you to do it faster without taking the time to aim.' The officers acknowledge the order and carry on, putting back on their noise-reducing headsets, and so do I. 'Bang, bang, bang!' With these final shots fired, the beads and hearts of the men painted on a thick white piece of cardboard are now completely riddled with bullet holes. After about an hour's worth of shooting practice in which the officers have trained their skills in using both light and heavy arms, the session is over, and we return to the small meeting room some hundred metres away. Here, the detectives spend the next thirty minutes cleaning their weapons, and after a quick change of clothes, TFP Detectives Larsen, Clausen and I drive back to the police station. Including the hour prior to actual shooting practice, during which all the officers were informed about the weapons, bullets and were not least given safety instructions and told what to do if a stray bullet hit them, the detectives had now spent more than half their workday improving their firearm skills.

Driving back to the station, Detectives Larsen and Clausen start to make negative comments to each other and to me about this time expenditure. And as we punch in the code and unlock the station's front gate, Detective Clausen says, 'Yes… and there we have it. The day is almost over – and the only thing we managed to do was to shoot some holes in a piece of cardboard.' 'Indeed,' Detective Larsen says, 'This is why I've been trying to avoid going to the shooting range for quite a while now. It takes up the whole day.' 'And,' now looking at me, 'even though it can be kinda fun and while it's definitely important these days that we're not complete idiots when it comes to using our weapons, it still feels like a waste of time.' Detective Clausen agrees by looking at us with a like-minded and, it seems, fatigued expression. Finally, back at the office, we pass Detective Mikkelsen who is himself on his way to the shooting range. 'Gotta get it over with,' he says grinning as he walks towards the elevator.

With Detective Mikkelsen gone, the office is void of people besides Detective Larsen, Detective Clausen and I. Seeing that their colleagues have all gone and looking at the time displayed on their mobile phones, they eventually look at each other. 'So… what do you feel like doing?' Detective Clausen asks. 'Hmm… not much to be honest. It feels stupid to hit the street and look for pickpockets at this point and I haven't really got a case I can just work on for a couple of hours,' Detective Larsen replies. 'Same here,' says Detective Clausen, 'Should we call it a day then? Maybe get a coffee and a smoke and then leave?' 'Sure,' agrees Detective Larsen, taking out his packet of cigarettes, which Detective Larsen sometimes also helps him smoke. We all walk out on the balcony and, before going home for the day, Detective Larsen remarks rather ironically, 'So, at least now we're ready to shoot the terrorists when they come.' But,' he continues, 'it was also yet another good day for the cross-border criminals out there. I wanted to follow up
On this particular day, the TFP detectives couldn’t postpone the shooting practice, which
every officer in the Danish police force was required to do because of the heightened
terror threat level. As they said themselves, they would otherwise have made an effort
not to go until they really couldn’t avoid doing so. Detective Larsen later explained to me
that he had tried to plan to go to the shooting range so that it wouldn’t ruin a whole day’s
work, but that the shooting practice he had scheduled early had been cancelled, so his
planning had been in vain. At TFB they were similarly annoyed about having to go and
spend the day at the shooting range, although they tended to acknowledge the need and
usefulness of doing so. However, Detective Jensen had told me straight that ‘personally, I
don’t really care’, since he never wore his gun or intended to use it. Other detectives said
the same. ‘I’m a detective. That’s not what I do, you know,’ Detective Jensen stated. Nev-
nevertheless, Detective Jensen and all his TFB colleagues also eventually had to spend a day
at the shooting range away from their normal work.

Being ordered to go to the shooting range constitutes an example of the practical
consequences that the fear of terror had on the detectives’ everyday work. Furthermore,
the detectives had been ordered to always carry their service weapon (a Heckler & Koch,
USP Compact, 9 mm. handgun) and the detectives, together with all their colleagues in
the Danish Police, were also ordered to always wear bullet proof vests when leaving the
station and to wear their badges visibly on their bodies when at the station – the weapon
and vest to protect and prepare them, the badge to make sure that no outsider intent on
causing harm could easily infiltrate them. Such various intensifications and manifestations
of the use of police insignia and equipment are apparently in line with Manning’s conten-
tions that policing involves a performative or spectacular quality – a spectacular quality
that often becomes increasingly dramatised in moments of societal crisis in which the le-
gitimacy and effectiveness of the police are threatened (2010) (see also Loftus and Goold,
2012). Of course, the fear of terror constituted such a crisis, prompting the police to bol-
ster themselves both symbolically and substantively. As such, it could also easily be read
as an example of the aforementioned police militarisation (Kraska 2007).

However, as the above examples illustrate, the detectives did not entirely appreci-
ate these spectacular and militarising aspects. Mostly they were seen a necessary evil. Add
to this a number of other less-than-appreciated practices that the fear of terror forced the
detectives to participate in and it becomes obvious that the increasing policing of terrorism

17 Police officers in the Danish police force in general have to keep their firearms skills up to date. Yet, after the terror
attack in February 2015, the police management put a greater emphasis on this, forcing officers to go the shooting
range.
was not welcomed as a useful addendum to their work. The detectives, who preferred and were normally allowed to dress in their own civilian clothes, now had to not only carry their weapons but also to carry vests and visible badges, as well as other emblems demonstrating that they were indeed police officers. This obvious parading of them as police ran counter to how they liked seeing themselves professionally. For example, it muddled the difference between the patrolling officers and the detectives. This was a problem since the detectives, hereby denoting a specific police detective subculture, thought of themselves as being different from and, perhaps, in some ways better than their patrolling colleagues (see also Lofus et al., 2015; Westmarland, 2008).

Furthermore, besides being sent to the shooting range and having to buff up emblematic police symbols and practices in other ways, the detectives also had to attend mandatory training courses. One day at TFB, for example, all the detectives were told that they had to come down to the lecture hall for ‘an introduction to radicalisation’. Having sat through almost three hours in which the detectives were told, as an add-on to their everyday work, ‘to look for signs of radicalisation’, including how to spot these signs and not least how to report them, I walked up the stairs towards the kitchen, talking to Detective Ibsen. ‘So,’ I said, having noticed a general, sceptical chatter prior to the presentation and the officers unexcited faces during the lecture, ‘what do you think?’

“What do I think?” Detective Ibsen answered quite strongly, “I think that I would like to get on with my cases! Sure, I’ll try to look for signs of radicalisation but, honestly, I don’t think this short introduction has improved my ability to do so in any substantial way – and it’s not like I don’t have enough on my plate anyhow, right?”

Terrorising working conditions and private life

The policing of terrorism, in the form of possible incidents and time consuming and tedious practices, had increasingly become a part of the detectives’ daily policing fabric. While these incidents and practices were generally perceived as vocationally annoying, and something they therefore sometimes made efforts to avoid, what remained the most troublesome aspect was what they meant for the officers’ working conditions and private lives.

Intensified by the aforementioned Copenhagen Shootings in February 2015, along with the refugee crisis and the issues of undocumented migration, the Danish Police have been forced to acquire and employ a growing number of police personnel – personnel who are used to guard and patrol the previously mentioned terrorism targets, for example, and for postings at the Danish border. This need for more officers caused the Danish Government to reshape the police education system, reducing it from a three-and-a-half-year university bachelor’s degree to only two years’ worth of course work. This was heavily criticised not only by commentators but also by police officers whom I met. The
decision to shorten the education was criticised since it was seen as a move in the wrong direction. Contemplating both the increasing complexity of policing (for example the call for intelligence-led policing and the difficulties associated with global issues such as cross-border crime, cybercrime and financial crime) and also the cultural problems of an old-fashioned police corps, a good and substantial education was and is viewed as being essential. Furthermore, the bachelor’s degree was a recent (and costly!) political invention, and had only been launched in 2013, on the basis of arguments that such an education was required precisely because the Danish police needed to evolve and adjust themselves to a new and more complex reality. In this way, the decision to scale back the police education/training was seen as an ill-advised and desperate move – and by the detectives it was seen as symbolic of how little politicians thought of the police profession. As one of them put it:

You see? They don't take us and what we do seriously. They think it's easy … Although the education wasn’t a bachelor's when I went to the academy, I would have liked it to be one. I mean, don’t get me wrong, I hated all the reading and the academic stuff, but looking at it from where I am now, it would have provided a way for me to more easily leave the police and try out other areas. You know, having a bachelor's gives you access to different master's programs and so on. I could have gotten a new life! But as it is, I’m rather stuck. And so will the new cadets be when they only get two years of regular academy training.

The detectives understood that the downsizing of the police education due to a desperate need for police officers was probably necessary because of the demands of terrorism and other global issues such an increasing influx of refugees. However, it was also seen as a hindrance to their exit strategies and personal career paths.

An aspect that was even more disliked was that the drastically heightened need for and thus use of police personnel had forced the officers already on the force to work overtime, resulting in Danish police officers in 2017 together working a total of more than 969,000(!) hours of overtime. This represents around a 50 per cent increase since 2014, when the number of overtime hours was 633,000 (Dansk_Politi, 2017). This rather extreme overtaxing of police officers has made both the police service itself and also most Danish politicians admit that the Danish police are currently heavily understaffed. Furthermore, the extra workload placed on the Danish police has given rise to a powerful and public criticism of management and politicians on the part of frontline officers, who are otherwise known for keeping their criticisms in-house. Both during and after my fieldwork, police officers from all around the country have written Facebook status updates that have gone viral. Officers have written op-eds in national newspapers. And the police officers’ own union has openly referred to the situation as ‘a bomb under the Danish
Police’, stressing that this ‘might cost officers both their health and their family life’ (Bæksgaard et al., 2015).

The detectives at both TFP and TFB agreed that these new developments were corroding both their jobs and themselves. They openly spoke about being overworked and stressed: ‘Seriously, how do they expect us to do a good job when they just throw us around like that and take advantage of us?’ was a sentence that I heard more than just once or twice. This was also what an old employee at TFP told me as he was visiting his former TFP colleagues. He had moved to the countryside with his family, precisely in order to get away from the stressful life of Copenhagen and the Copenhagen police. However, he pointed not only to the troublesome working conditions that had been produced by the fear of terror but also to how it was having a very negative effect on his private life and his family. As he put it:

It’s extremely frustrating not being able to take proper care of our everyday work and, for instance, not living up to the promises we have given to a victim of crime or the public because we are told to not work the cases we have but instead to go and stand somewhere in the freezing cold like political poster boys. We are overworked, our families are falling apart, and the rate of officers calling in sick is increasing dramatically … Of course, we all gladly help when there’s a need for it. That’s the life of a police officer. That’s our duty. That is who we are. But one starts to feel fooled when we’re asked to do all these extra things without really getting any extra resources to do it. Yeah, I know that many millions have been allocated to counter-terrorism activities but they all seem to go to the Danish Intelligence Service Agency and not to normal police work, not to us. And we do almost all the work! Or at least a lot of it. Yet, we’re just expected to throw away what we have in our hands because of some political agenda or whatever, while colleagues at the Intelligence Service Agency get to act like proper secret agents or whatever. It makes me so extremely angry. Like seriously, the other day I had promised my wife that I would pick up the kids and take care of them as she was going away on a job seminar. But then they (the police) called me in and ordered me to stand guard somewhere and my wife had to cancel her thing. Do you think that kind of thing is good for things at home? No! Right?! They sometimes suddenly call me early in the morning and tell me to report for duty in Copenhagen, some two-hundred kilometres away, even if it might be my day off, making it impossible for me and my family to plan our everyday life. Like, who is gonna pick up the kids? It not only frustrates me, it also frustrates my wife. She’s carrying a lot weight these days.

As this plainly shows, the detective and his family felt weighed down by the pressures placed on the Danish frontline officers in response to terrorism – and so did many of his colleagues and their families.
Final remarks: From policing terrorism to terrorising policing

Bearing these, as I choose to call them, terrorising ‘incidents’, ‘practices’ and ‘working conditions and private problems’ in mind, let us return to the Copenhagen terrorist shootings of February 2015. This tragic incident apparently differs in many ways from the other examples presented in this chapter, since it actually ended up with people being shot and dying in the name of terrorism. Here, the victims were, as Christie might have put it, the ‘ideal victims’ (1986) when it comes to radical Islamic terrorism, since they were random civilians, the Jewish community and the police. Furthermore, prior to the incident the assailant had shown signs of having been radicalised and he was therefore carrying out these deeds in the name of Allah. As such, the stage was set for everyone to regard the incident as an act of terror.

Given this official labelling, together with the perpetrator’s intention and the outcome, this incident differs substantially from the other examples presented in this chapter. However, if we look beyond these symbolic and substantive aspects and instead focus on how the incident was understood by the Danish police officers, it doesn’t differ very much. When it comes to the average yet unofficial opinion of police officers, this otherwise official act of terrorism was not really an act of terrorism. This was at the least the impression I was given when talking to both the TFP and TFB detectives and others of their colleagues. Although they admitted that the assailant who had carried out the shootings, and who was later shot and killed by the Danish police, had indeed carried out these horrendous acts thinking of himself as a righteous terrorist, as a martyr who had sworn fidelity to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a Facebook post made just before the shootings, the officers still tended to see him as ‘a stupid young man with serious issues.’ As I heard several police officers say:

Most of all, he was a loser with some connections to gang criminality – a loser who was trying to explain away all his senselessness and shortcomings by reinventing and redeeming himself through religion.

Indeed, this denial, or at least watering down, of the view of the perpetrator as a terrorist, and thus of the incident as constituting terrorism, is on a par with how police organisations not only in Denmark but throughout the world point to the fact that the greatest threat from terror stems not simply from religious fanatics but from marginalised members of ethnic minorities, often with connections to organised crime, who only recently became religious (Europol, 2015; Makarenko, 2004). Thus, in other words, the Danish detectives accepted that the acts themselves could/should be seen as terrorism, but felt that the person who carried out these acts should rather be viewed as a stereotypical misguided youth criminal. What this again demonstrates is that the fears and spectre of terror that have been so forcefully presented, if not promoted, by politicians, the media and at times the
police organisation itself, were not univocally echoed by frontline officers – even in cases when incidents were officially labelled as terrorism and when one might expect the police to readily and openly buy into such a threat-based framework. Recalling Deflem’s earlier words, in the eyes of Danish frontline officers terrorists were not necessarily that war-like but instead rather common criminals and, hence, the war on terrorism was not always a real war.

Thus, in sum, the simple point that this chapter has sought to make is that frontline officers, in this case primarily a group of Danish detectives, did not eagerly accept terrorism, in the way much of the literature insinuates, as something that was of value to their work. The spectre of terror was indeed perceived as a real threat and as something that required policing. However, when it came to its everyday consequences for their work, the spectre of terror, to stay with the metaphor, haunted the detectives’ work more than it helped. Policing terrorism has undoubtedly become a both symbolic and substantive part of policing, but terrorism is also, so to speak, terrorising police work.

This is obviously a very similar point to the one I made in Chapter Three, where I discussed how the detectives did not entirely appreciate the increase in surveillance practices and technologies. Just as it is hard to see policing, at least on a policy level, suddenly coming to be less about new and expanding means of surveilling the population, it is also hard to see policing coming to be any less about terrorism any time soon. The Danish detectives thought and felt the same. And this was responsible for some of their apathy, explaining why they sometimes felt like the last policemen. The detectives simply had a hard time envisioning a day when the fear and threat of terrorism, together with other fashionable political fears, would decrease significantly enough for them not to have a significant effect on everyday police work. ‘For that to happen,’ Detective Christensen said when we discussed the topic after the unbalanced man at Copenhagen Central Station had caused the Copenhagen police to put (almost) all their available resources into investigating his claims of a possible terror attack, ‘we’ll have to build a real fortress with moats and stuff around Denmark.’ ‘And,’ he paused, ‘that’s not gonna happen, is it?’

No excitement, no meaning, no glory
To close this chapter with a final, more theoretical remark, an additional way of understanding how and why the Danish detectives didn’t appreciate policing terrorism can be found if we ponder Cottee and Hayward’s theoretical approach to a more existential and emotive study of terrorism. In this study, they stress how such an approach entails looking for: (1) the desire for excitement, (2) the desire for ultimate meaning, and (3) the desire for glory that terrorism might offer and satisfy (2011). Although their discussion is
framed in relation to the terrorist and not the policing of terrorism, I would argue that their threefold approach also has purchase in relation to the study of the latter. Indeed, in summing up what this chapter has engaged itself with, including the examples presented above, it would not be far from the truth to conclude that, to the Danish detectives, policing terrorism was precisely unexciting, lacking in any ultimate meaning and that it did not bring them any apparent glory. As some of the primary antagonists of terrorism, they did not experience the same emotional draw – an emotional draw which much of the literature on counterterrorism otherwise often hints at by arguing that the police have become war-like, militarised or Orwellian and that this fits the stereotypical attractions of 'police culture' with its focus on crime-fighting and other action-based events. Or to reuse McCulloch’s figurative phrasing, then I would say that the Danish detectives had indeed become part of a ‘blue army’ (2001), yet with an emphasis on the sensation evoked by the former rather than the latter part of the concept. Although the fear of terrorism certainly put weapons in their hands and gave them tactical vests and legislative liberties, for the Danish detectives, the policing of terrorism was primarily dull and inconvenient. To some extent, and in a way that makes this chapter’s focus on the policing of terrorism relevant to the principal interest of this thesis, the same can be said for many other issues that the officers were increasingly ordered to police as a result of prevalent and political global fears – migration and cross-border crime included. Here the discourses, policies, legislation and, to be sure, certain police practices, are without doubt exceptional, but they are often primarily bothersome in relation to everyday police work.

The fact that their everyday police work was viewed as being disturbed in various ways by globalisation takes us directly on to the focus of the next chapter. Here, we will return more specifically to how these vocational hindrances made the Danish detectives not only negative but sometimes also quite nostalgic. In this way, the thesis also returns to the question of why it was that they spoke of themselves as the last policemen, or, at least, the last real policemen.

---

18 Though one may note that the empirical material Cottee and Hayward use actually stems not from studies of terrorists but from armed forces and other militarised groups and their existential and emotive thoughts about the means and ends of combat and conflict.
Chapter six:  
Police nostalgia revisited

I jump into the front passenger seat with TFB Detective Mogensen sitting next to me, his hands already on the steering wheel. Just a second ago I helped him load the trunk of the car with food, beverages and other things needed for the retreat that TFB is going on for the next couple of days. The retreat is being held in one of the International Police Association’s (IPA) resorts — resorts which can be found all over the world. ‘To use an IPA resort,’ Detective Mogensen tells me, ‘you need to be, first, a police officer and, secondly, a member.’ ‘You see,’ he continues, ‘we need a couple of days to pause for a second,’ explaining why the entire TFB staff is going on this retreat. ‘We need it to talk about things that have happened, because, honestly, things have been kind of rough. And we need it to talk about and discuss what the future will bring. And, yes, we also need to drink some beers and have a bit of well-deserved fun.’

More officially, the theme of the retreat is centred around a big case TFB is running on a supposed Romanian ring of cross-border criminals and the challenges involved in this case — challenges that are new not only to TFB but to the entire Danish police, touching upon questions such as how police work should be carried out in this global and, not least, more digital day and age. To address this issue, TFB have invited an investigative journalist who has worked at some of the biggest Danish national newspapers and at one of the leading Danish broadcasting networks. ‘He’s an expert in how to use the Internet as an investigational tool,’ Detective Mogensen tells me, as we drive onto the highway, heading northwest towards the resort which is located in a beautiful spot by a lake on the fringes of a forest some forty minutes from the TFB headquarters. Driving up there and bearing in mind this investigative journalist who is going to give a talk, I ask the detective what he thinks about this development whereby police work is increasingly being carried out in front of the computer, amongst other things. I ask him this question, also knowing that he is retiring at the end of next month — a retirement which he has widely announced to his colleagues as something he is looking forward to so that, as he at one point had said, ‘me and the missus can spend some quality time together just relaxing. Also, I’m just getting way too old for this circus.’

‘So, what do I think about the internet, computers and all that?’ He replies slightly cautiously to my question, ‘Hmmm…’ Now, I don’t want to sound as old as I am, and like someone who can’t see the value of any future developments, but, truth be told, I don’t like it. One thing is that I don’t know how to do all these new things as I have no real interest in modern technology, even though I do understand the importance of it. Another and to me more important thing is that I don’t like what all this computer stuff is doing to police work and to the world more generally. Like, before people would go out and meet each other in person when buying stuff at the butcher’s or at the market or wherever. As individuals in society you would have to go out and meet each other and look each other in the eye. Now you can just sit there in front of the computer and with a click or two you can buy stuff or “talk” to people. There’s no human factor there, no relationship. You get what I mean, right? This also concerns police work. We used to have the opportunity to go out there and look people in the eye and listen to them. That gave them the opportunity to explain themselves and us the ability to check whether they were lying. Now, as a citizen you can just
file a report online and you can therefore report all sorts of stuff stolen or whatever without us really being able to check whether it’s true or not. Like, you get what I mean, right? For example, we had this famous Danish crime writer who reported that she had gold and diamond jewellery stolen as well as expensive Danish design furniture amounting to I don’t know how much money. However, when we pulled some CCTV footage of the car used by the suspected burglars and when we later talked to them, the pictures and burglars seemingly told a different story. Right? It seemed suspicious, but it was impossible to judge. What I mean is that the computer, this technological distance, relieves people from thinking or, worse, it is something people can hide behind it and play dumb. For instance, nobody would think that it’s not criminal to buy a television set from some shady guy in a dark alleyway somewhere, but people can easily close their eyes and buy stuff online that might actually seem way too cheap but where they can hide behind the uncertainty that the computer transaction offers. They’ll just say, “If I don’t really know, it’s not really criminal.” You know what I mean, yeah? To me it seems like there is a greater distance between people these days and that people don’t care about each other as much as they used to simply because they don’t have to. And it’s the same with my line of work. It seems to have become more distanced and automated. It seems like they want us to become simple cogs in some big and cold machine. So, yeah, I’m glad I’m retiring. These new developments are not for me. I’m a product of the old ways of policing. Hell, I was a mechanic, a craftsman before becoming a police officer. And so were most of the other officers – people who knew how to use their hands and head at the same time and who knew how to relate to and talk to people simply because they themselves were regular Joes. You get what I’m getting at, right? Today, it’s all very academic. It’s all about knowing a lot of fancy formulas, but do people know how to be and behave out there in the everyday world? Listen, I respect progress and all that, and I see the use of it, at least in some ways, but in other ways I tend to think that we’re losing some of the very essence of what this job is about, you know, losing these real interactions between the police and the people.” After this long explanation, Detective Mogensen then pauses for a moment with his hands firmly holding the steering wheel. “Yeah,” he says exhaling, “the only thing I know for certain is that I prefer the old days.” “And being in my sixties and on my way out, I’m luckily allowed such a backward-looking stance,” he concludes light-heartedly.

A short while afterwards we drive into the resort’s parking lot. A few hours later we listen to the journalist talking about how to use Facebook, the DMV, tax records, other online records and different open sources to locate and investigate people. Later, the TFB management will give a presentation about the Danish Police’s new strategy against, as it is called, ‘Particularly complex crimes’ that is being developed by the National Police — a strategy in which such digital policing methods, other information technologies and cross-border cooperation are – to Detective Mogensen’s dismay one would guess — highlighted as an essential means in policing cross-border crimes and other serious societal risks in this global day and age. Indeed, as I observed the management’s presentation on the future of Danish policing, what struck me most of all was how many of the detectives were otherwise engaged and seemingly uninterested, some even facing in the opposite direction sipping their coffees and staring into space.

So far, this thesis has been filled with examples of how Danish detectives were concerned and frustrated, or how they even openly complained about (global) developments in policing, also at times including wider complaints about the world they had to police. The above provides yet another example of such a negative stance. On this occasion, TFB
Detective Mogensen talked frankly about what he believed to be the almost anomic state of contemporary social life – a view that was not particular to him but that was echoed both by his colleagues and in official police documents – speaking of a problematic decline in the moral rectitude of public attitudes and an increasing unwillingness amongst people to police themselves (see Europol 2013: 15). In talking about this, Detective Mogensen and the police more broadly can be said to be referring to ‘the decline of more indirect (and arguably more effective) sources of social control’ in many Western societies, of which much of the research literature speaks, noting the way in which globalisation, as Giddens famously argued, has caused a ‘disembedding’ of social relations (see Jones and Newburn 2002:140). Or as Bauman and Donskis more bluntly put it, we live in a time of excessive ‘moral blindness’ (2013). However, for Detective Mogensen, this blindness and disembeddedness was not just a larger social issue but also one that was more particular to police work. As the above vignette demonstrates, he was simultaneously happy about retiring as well as sceptical about the way in which police work was becoming, as he put it, more ‘distanced’ and ‘automated’ and thus less about ‘real interactions’. In expressing these views, he referred specifically to the effect that he thought computers were having on both the social world and policing as a troublesome example. In the eyes of Detective Mogensen, the old days were preferable to the perhaps necessary, but to him also problematic, contemporary and future developments.

Importantly, as Detective Mogensen himself admitted, his nostalgia could easily be explained (away) as insignificant, as simply the tired grumbling of an old man who was all too set in his ways and, not least, on his way out. However, as has frequently been shown throughout this thesis, grumbles and other expressions of dissatisfaction were in no ways solely the preserve of the older detectives. Although there were of course some age-related differences, many of the dissatisfactions discussed in this thesis were widely shared, both across the entire generational continuum and, it should be added, among both male and female officers. Indeed, a yearning to return to the way things used to be, and an apprehension about the current situation, were a big part of the socio-emotional fabric that made up the TFB and TFP workday.

Another telling example of this was provided when I was staking out the annual Copenhagen street festival Distortion with the younger TFP Detectives Mikkelsen and Frederiksen.

As an electronic music festival at which more than 100,000 people are crammed together in the streets of Denmark's capital city, Distortion is the perfect occasion for both youthful nihilism and pickpocketing. Having just left the provisional command centre, where Detectives Mikkelsen and Frederiksen had grabbed a quick coffee, we are now walking towards the epicentre of the festival. Both detectives are certain that there are many pickpockets around. 'This is like a sweet shop for these guys,' Detective Frederiksen
tells me, 'I bet you that many Romanians, Poles and you name it have come to Denmark for this occasion. And, as you’ve seen the last few days, ever since the festival started it’s basically just a matter of us getting out there and picking them up like ripe apples.' 'Alright,' he admits, 'it can be very difficult to spot them in this massive, dense crowd of people.'

Yesterday and the day before, the TFP detectives had indeed arrested and charged first a group of Romanian and then a group Polish pickpocketing suspects. They had spotted the Romanians on Vesterbro next to one of Distortion’s many stages, where a deejay was blasting out loud techno music and people were dancing and drinking. Given that people were facing the deejay, focused on the music and certainly tipsy if not already completely plastered, this was the perfect opportunity for pickpockets to move in. A group of three Romanian citizens had thought the same and the detectives had spotted one of them with his hand sunk deep into a young woman’s purse. They caught him red-handed and his two accomplices were apprehended after a short chase.

Remembering the successes of the days before, Detective Mikkelsen and Frederiksen are confident that today will be equally fruitful. ‘However,’ Detective Mikkelsen says to Detective Frederiksen, ‘they are completely ignorant, the bosses at the command centre, don’t you think? Like, did you hear them lecturing us on how to do this work; lecturing us on how to catch these pickpockets and then what to do afterwards in terms of how we should write it up and register it? Just because they have been taught at some random management course that building and sharing intelligence is the holy grail of policing these days, that doesn’t mean they know shit about actual police work, does it?’ Detective Frederiksen agrees, ‘I hate it when they think of themselves as some sort of prophets of change. It’s so belittling and out of touch.’ ‘Right?! They are assholes!’

Now almost laughing, Detective Mikkelsen thinks about how they have spent every minute complaining ever since they left command centre. ‘Shit,’ he concludes, ‘we almost whine more than even the angriest and most hysterical kid would!’ ‘That we do, that we do,’ Detective Frederiksen says in agreement, ‘But there is also much to whine about these days, don’t you think?’

In line with the two TFP detectives’ apparent pessimism, statements such ‘I just want to do real and good police work’, ‘I’m sick and tired of not being allowed to just do my job’ or even ‘if this continues, I’ll find another job’ were common amongst both the TFB and TFP detectives. Furthermore, they remain common when I today speak to the detectives about how things are going. Some detectives are actively looking for another job inside the police organisation. Some are even looking outside the profession, where their assessment is, as they themselves say, ‘that the job itself might possibly be less relevant in relation to what I do now, but it might nevertheless be more meaningful and manageable seen in relation to the bigger picture.’ \(^{19}\) A few of the detectives have even found such new jobs, with Mikkelsen and Frederiksen being examples of this.

\(^{19}\) In police research, it is often argued that the line between public and private policing has become more permeable. This, for example, lies at the heart of Bayley and Shearing’s article on ‘The Future of Policing’ (1996), in which they argue that the provision of security has replaced a more narrow focus on criminality as the main object of policing sys-
Bearing all this in mind, the question that this chapter explores is that of why the detectives were so conspicuously negative and nostalgic. Why were present day developments so bad and what was so good about the proverbial good old days? Clearly this question is in line with the overall research question of this thesis as posed in the introduction: Why was it, returning to that sunny day on the downtown Copenhagen police stations’ balcony, that the detectives so forcefully aired their frustrations and agreed that they might be the last real policemen? (Remembering, as has just been described, that the use of police men or policeman is neither a generational nor a gendered matter but rather an emic concept referring to all police officers).

In trying to provide a meaningful answer to this overall question, this chapter focuses on revisiting a well-known police research theme, that of ‘police nostalgia’ (Bittner, 1984; Reuss-Ianni, 1993; Skolnick and Bayley, 1988; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). First, the chapter presents a description of how scholars have generally examined this issue. Building on this, the chapter then outlines an additional reading of police nostalgia. In doing this, I simultaneously provide a summary of the findings and arguments presented in earlier chapters, in which I have provided many examples of how the detectives were unenthusiastic about dominant policing developments that were in general thought to have been caused by globalisation. Recalling earlier chapters, for example, the detectives were to a greater or lesser extent unenthusiastic about the increase in foreign suspects and about the increase in police cooperation and information technologies, and they were unenthusiastic about the way in which their everyday work was being affected by perceived global problems and threats such as terrorism, migration and a range of other cross-border matters. Again, the key question of course is why this was the case. Why were the Danish detectives so negative and nostalgic?

terms, meaning that not only the public police themselves but a plurality of different security providers (public and private) are engaged in policing these days. Simultaneously, this line of thinking includes the notion that this change in the object or ontology of policing is what has made it easier for policing actors, like the Danish detectives, to go from a job in the police to a job at an insurance company. However, in the view of the Danish detectives, a job at an insurance company was still ontologically different from (and less interesting than) a job in the Danish Police force. The reason they nonetheless sought out such employment was rather due to more general work-related considerations that are well-known to us all, with the detectives wanting to have better working conditions, job security and not least a better balance between their professional and private lives. This suggests that one reason why the divide between public and private policing has become more permeable these days is not necessarily (only) that the object and ontology of policing has changed profoundly, but is simply due to rather more standard economic considerations (Stenström 2017, Stenström & Sausdal, forthcoming).
Police nostalgia: Common explanations

TFP Detectives Clausen and Lassen have just brought in three Polish men suspected of pickpocketing. They spotted them at Nørreport Station, and just before the suspects could flee, trying to jump on a train, the detectives had grabbed them. Detective Lassen even had to tackle and push over one of the Polish men as he was trying to escape, sprinting down the platform.

Now the Polish men are being processed one at a time on the bottom floor of Station City. This means, as always, that their possessions are being searched and accounted for; questions are being asked about who they are, pictures are being taken and, in the end, the Polish men will be escorted into separate holding cells where they will have to wait until the detectives are ready to possibly interrogate them and charge them. Standing there watching this process, as I did numerous times whilst following TFP, I hear one of the younger police officers in charge of processing incoming arrestees complaining rather loudly. His objections are about a female arrestee who has been shouting various obscenities from the inside of a holding cell ever since we came in – obscenities and similar exclamations which, it should be mentioned, are not at all uncommon in this specific vocational environment. ‘Shut up you!’ he shouts back. ‘We’ve heard you. Several times. And if you do, we’ll know soon enough.’ He then turns towards his colleague and says, ‘Sigh! She’s a god damn fool. Hell, people like her are driving me mad. Why do we have to endure this absurdity all day? Why can’t people just behave like they did in the good old days… Just a bit… Just a bit normal and respect what we say…? Is that too much to ask?!’ His colleague acknowledges his frustrations as he is also annoyed by the woman’s constant shouting and complaining. However, noticeably, the older colleague is also a bit tired of his younger colleague’s grumpiness. ‘I hear you,’ he says, ‘But still, there is no need to be so overly pessimistic and negative. You know? You’re young but you’re complaining almost as much as she is.’ He has a smile on his face as he says this. ‘Haha,’ the younger colleague replies, ‘That’s true. Very true. But hey, I’m only following what they teach us at the police academy and what this job teaches you: to be a backward looking and bitter old man!’ ‘True,’ the older colleague answers with a grin on his face, ‘Very true.’

A certain amount of police negativity and nostalgia, especially amongst the rank and file, has been widely documented across the world and also frequently discussed by police researchers (Bittner, 1984; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Loftus, 2008; Reiner, 1995a; Reuss-Ianni, 1993; Skolnick and Bayley, 1988). Indeed, police nostalgia has been recognised as a normal part of the police vocation across space and time, or at least ever since scholars took to studying the police. Why is that?

Inspired by Loader and Mulcahy’s insightful work on Policing and the Condition of England: Memory, Politics and Culture (2003), two distinguishable yet overlapping ways of understanding police nostalgia can be identified. These focus on certain (multi)cultural...
changes’ and/or ‘managerial changes’ that officers on average tend to dislike (ibid: 305).
Furthermore, a more overall reading of these two aspects of police nostalgia can also be applied, a reading which demonstrates that scholars, irrespective of their focus, have ultimately tended to conclude that police officers’ nostalgia is mostly not based on a factual or precise description of a longed-for past but rather on a romanticised pretence – a sentimental pretence which is both caused by and integral to the way in which ‘police culture’ produces an *esprit de corps* but which, it is argued, may be dangerous as a result of its potential to (re)produce a past and prejudiced social order. Indeed, thinking about the example described above of the younger police officer’s complaints, it is clear that expressions of negativity towards the present and of a longing for the past, as the police officers themselves acknowledged, are part of police culture or maybe rather police culturalisation.

(Multi)cultural changes
When it comes to explaining police nostalgia as being caused by certain cultural changes, Reiner’s study of the British Police is exemplary (Reiner, 1995a; 2010: 39ff). In his studies, Reiner focuses on the decline in public approval ratings that the British police have experienced ever since the post-war era’s so-called ‘golden age of policing’, during which the British police, and ‘the bobby’ in particular, were held in high public regard as symbols of a perfectly ordered society. Indeed, climaxing in the late 1950s, the British police were not only admired by politicians and the public, but even police ethnographers pointed to the police as an organisation worth studying because it was exemplary of how a public organisation and institution should work vis-à-vis the society to which it belonged (Banton, 1964). As Loader and Mulcahy have summarised, at this point in time bobbies were ‘not only merely looked (up) to as avatars of order, authority and discipline, and community, but venerated as totems of national pride’ (2003:3) – a veneration which the British police officers of course prided themselves on and found gratifying. However, from the 1960s onwards, the formerly almost sacrosanct status of the police waned. As Reiner has put it, the police went from being ‘sacred’ to not only losing public approval but becoming almost publicly ‘profane’ (Reiner, 1995a) – a process that included a ‘haemorrhage of public confidence’ (Reiner 2010:78).

Describing the reasons for this ‘haemorrhage’, Reiner focuses, amongst other things, on certain significant changes in the cultural landscape surrounding the police that occurred from the 1960s onwards. Most visibly, these cultural changes have manifested themselves in the form of accusations directed at the police in relation to a variety of problematic events, if not unmitigated scandals – and not only in the UK. As a result of several examples of police brutality and racism (such as the Stephen Lawrence case in the UK) and examples of police corruption (exemplified by the Knapp Commission in the US) police forces worldwide have been under political and public pressure to change and
become better attuned to the cultural reality of which they are a part. Thus, as Fassin has stated in an up-to-date ethnography on (the problems of) policing in different parts of the world,

there has been a growing concern regarding law enforcement practices … The implication of the police in the death of young men of colour in Aulnay-sous-Bois in 2005, Tottenham in 2011, and Ferguson in 2014, among many others, and the impunity from which they have benefited, have caused a major urban unrest in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, respectively, revealing the moral gap between the law enforcement institution and the population that it is supposed to protect … [and] these incidents have not been limited to Western countries… (Fassin, 2017c: 1)

While such (recurrent) examples of police misconduct in themselves provide ample grounds for a change in police practice, they also, in Fassin’s words, reveal this cultural and moral gap between the police and the population. This points to the way in which societal sentiments and the composition of the population have changed rather significantly since the so-called golden age of policing. For example, women and ethnic and sexual minorities have been given a more prominent voice and place in political and public life, and one that reflects ways of life that are different from the conservative and masculine outlooks normally found in police forces.

As a result of these changes, police forces have been pressured to modify their ways, to culturally acclimatise, for example by developing a greater understanding of and even employing more females, homosexuals and ethnic minorities, in order to better match the demography of society. Moreover, in training to become a police officer, not only in Denmark but in many other countries, cadets have had to learn social and psychological theory in order to be better able to reflect on the causes and consequences of police work. Sensitivity training has also been included in the curriculum. All this, and more, has happened in the pursuit of aligning the police to the growing ‘multiculturalism’ of present-day society, a process which has in general been based on

the notion that police policy and practice must recognize the experiences and claims of the diversity of social groups that today compose […] society and respond in ways that are anti-discriminatory, sensitive to the situational definitions and emotional needs of victims […] and protective of human rights. (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 305)

Hence, thinking about the reasons why approval ratings have dropped, one explanation may be that the police have simply failed to culturally develop in line with society. Simultaneously, the reason given for why police officers express a longing for the past is exactly that police officers are longing for the heyday when politicians and the public approved
of and respected the police and their authority (no questions asked!), while at the same time longing for a society that is more structured around the cultural norms that police officers tend to value (which are not typically those that might be described as multicultural).

Looking at this issue in a Danish context, the Danish Police, alongside their Nordic colleagues, have also experienced a slight drop in public approval ratings (Justitsministeriet, 2016). (It should be mentioned, however, that Nordic police forces can still pride themselves on a remarkably high level of public approval compared to others, with the Danish Police ranking highest in relation to fifteen other European countries). In line with the examples mentioned above, the Danish police have also been affected by if not scandals then heavy public criticism. Recently, for example, the police have been at the centre of two internal investigations, one being the ‘Pearl case’, in which a Danish officer was recorded apparently using racist language but was acquitted by the police auditors, arguing that he said ‘perle’ [pearl in Danish] and not ‘perker’ [the Danish racial slur equivalent of Nigger or Paki]. The Danish police were also investigated when evidence suggested that they had deliberately shielded off demonstrators exhibiting Tibet’s flag and other Tibetan symbols during visits from the Chinese President in 2012, 2013 and again in 2014. In relation to this case, two middle-management police officer were found culpable as a result of having given the orders to inhibit the freedom of expression whilst, as of now, more senior management figures, and the politicians who were possibly ultimately responsible, were not incriminated. Other cases of possible police misconduct could also be mentioned. Furthermore, another reason why the Danish Police have been criticised in these cases was the way in which the police officers involved were suddenly unable to remember what had happened, that police email correspondence had been deleted, and that there were even examples of the police arguing that they suddenly could not find and identify involved officers even though there were pictures or sound recordings showing their involvement – all of which at least suggested that the Danish police were circumventing the truth, and protecting their own interests.

Bearing these issues in mind, and going back to the question of why approval ratings have dropped, the Danish police have also been similarly accused of having failed to adapt themselves to changes in society. The police, some critics say, are problematically outmoded in their ways – a cultural critique that the police officers whom I met were well-aware of, but which they on average perceived as both tiresome and misdirected and which they would usually fend off by saying: ‘If people knew what we knew and saw what we saw, they probably wouldn’t be as multi-culti and soft.’ As much police research has shown, this is a common way for the police to reject outside criticism or calls for change. By simply referring to what Görtz (2015: 213), in a study of the Swedish Police’s encoun-
ters with ethnic minorities, has labelled the police’s ‘secret knowledge’, police officers elevate their own experiences to empirical fact whilst simultaneously thinking that any external perspective (or critique) is based on politicised or naïve beliefs. The same was the case amongst the Danish detectives.

Managerial changes

As has been established by previous police research, instances of negative or nostalgic police outlooks are not only based on the police disliking certain types of cultural change. When studying the police, and perhaps increasingly so during the last two or three decades, it is not uncommon to hear frontline officers complain about not only cultural but also more practical changes that have been imposed on their work by politicians and the police management (Balvig et al., 2011; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Ratcliffe, 2016). Here I am referring to the well-researched question of how police forces, like other bodies in the field of governance, have been exposed to sweeping neoliberal managerial discourses such as New Public Management (Feeley and Simon, 1994; Johnston, 1996; McLaughlin and Levi, 1995). Over the last two decades, as a result of what has also been labelled ‘policing by numbers’ (Reiner, 1995b), police forces and police work have increasingly been structured so that the outcomes of their efforts can be better measured, evaluated and streamlined. This also includes a general notion that police work is a business and that, as such, it should prove itself to its customers and produce agreeable results. As Loader and Mulcahy have argued in relation to English policing, but in a way that could easily be applicable to the Danish context:

[View[s] exist that policing ought to be organized – in a manner akin to commercial enterprise – to deliver its stated purposes with the maximum economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; that it must be disciplined by national performance measures and targets … [and] the belief that ‘the public’ are to be treated – the analogy, once more, is with private business – as ‘customers’ of policing services, and that their demands need to be elicited and satisfied as such. (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 305)

In the context of the Danish Police this commercial view is easily discernible in the sense that terms such as ‘police customers’ and ‘police business’ are frequently used to describe whom the police engage with and how. Balvig, Holmberg and Andersen (2011) have elaborated on this in their study of the NPM-based Danish Police Reform, which was introduced against a backdrop of political consensus in 2006. As they demonstrate, however, the reform was not only counterproductive in relation to its declared goals of bringing the police closer to the citizens (or customers); it also produced a significant amount of police-officer frustration as a result of the fact that they experienced their work becoming more
dissociated from the public, and instead being based on quantifiable strictures rather than on qualitative conditions – on politicised integers rather than personal immersion (Balvig et al., 2011). An associated managerial development, also adopted by the Danish police (Fyfe et al., 2017; Hestehave, 2013; Ronn, 2012), is the move towards ‘intelligence-led policing’ that has been referred to on several occasions in this thesis (see also Ratcliffe, 2002; 2016). As a top-down development in police work based on academic and often quantitative analysis, this move has also been met with scepticism by frontline officers, who experience it as somewhat demeaning and as diminishing their personal discretion (Gundhus, 2012).

The way in which managerial changes such as NPM and intelligence-led policing are met with hesitation by frontline officers can also be seen in the warmth with which many frontline officers remember community-oriented policing – a form of police work widely viewed by police forces as emblematic of good and proper police work. This notion is probably best symbolised in the above-mentioned, almost mythical status of the English bobby (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 69ff; Reiner, 2010: 68ff). Policing his (the bobby is almost always seen as a man) beat largely unarmed, becoming known to and knowledgeable about the community, "bobbying" represents, not only outside the police but also within the police forces of many countries, the *sine non qua* of how policing and perhaps more broadly governance should be conducted. In a Danish context, this is also what Balvig and Holmberg concluded about a decade ago in a study of the Danish police’s (somewhat unsuccessful) attempt to develop and enhance community policing efforts (2004).

Having said this, it should be remembered that there is a difference between the symbolism and the actual reality of bobbying or community policing. While this line of police work is often spoken of as being based on relationship building and mutual respect, there is evidence that many community police officers gained this respect not only by means of mutuality but also via menacing. In other words, Loader and Mulcahy argue (2003: 69), when listening to police officers’ reminiscences, one should rather interpret them as a figurative and romanticising means by which officers are able to express their dissatisfaction with managerial or bureaucratic developments that seek to increasingly oversee them and dictate their practices. Here, ‘the bobby’ or the ‘beat officer’ stands out as being emblematic of a past in which politicians, the public and the management trusted and respected the police officer’s judgement, discretion and not least authority. Indeed, as Punch has similarly contended, it is thus worth remembering that ‘a benign bobby … still brings to the situation a uniform, a truncheon, and a battery of resources … which can be employed when appeasement fails and fists starts flying’ (1979b: 116). Beneath the veneer of community-oriented and relationship-building peacemaking policing lies a foundation of legitimate force (Reiner, 2010: 7). As such, a wistful view of community policing is not
merely an example of a nostalgic tale of the police’s thoughts about the benefits of the velvet glove. It is also very much a tale about the splendours and independence of the iron fist – a fist which is believed to have become increasingly insulted and insulated by aforementioned obstructive cultural and managerial politics and changes.

The form and function of police nostalgia: Perseverance, pretence and perilousness

Around the turn of the 21st century, there was a sense of optimism. It was believed that police forces were (finally) succumbing to the above-described political and public appeals for change. Indeed, organisational changes and reforms were taking place, both in Denmark and elsewhere. It was therefore hoped that police forces and police officers that were otherwise known for headstrong, bigoted and times brutal behaviour would now finally modify themselves. Steps were taken to professionalise the police occupation by systematising the work to take personal inclinations out of the equation, and thus also making the police more accountable. Moreover, attempts were made to alter an outmoded police culture, making it, for example, more appreciative of ethnic and sexual minorities and, more generally, of human rights.

Unfortunately, this hope has now faded somewhat, for example in the face of many recent examples of police misconduct (Fassin, 2017c). This disheartening conclusion has especially been echoed in two seminal police studies by Loftus (2009, 2010) and Chan (1997), who have explored and exemplified police officers’ perceptions and practices and their reluctance to change in the UK and Australia respectively. Following this discouraging discovery, questions have emerged as to why the police remain so unaffected by, if not utterly unwilling to, change. In this regard, scholars habitually point to the resilience embedded in ‘police culture’, with this term being used to denote the habituated norms and beliefs of frontline police officers and not, for instance, those of the police management or police specialists. According to Loftus, this resilience of police culture is due to a strong amalgamation of normative concepts such as forcefulness, excitement, masculinity, suspicion, pessimism, conservatism, cynicism, xenophobia and in-group solidarity (2010: 1-2).

Stated differently, despite the described cultural and managerial pressures that have been brought to bear on frontline police officers from both outside the force and from the police management themselves, these pressures have not been able to outweigh the long-standing density of the cultural norms and values that police officers are socialised into via the police academy and their older peers. Here we may think back to the example mentioned earlier, in which the younger Danish officer in part in jest, but also in a serious way, spoke about how such norms had been an integral part of his training to become a police officer. Thus, as e.g. Loftus concludes in her study of possible changes in British police culture, even though
there have been important developments within policing contexts, these have not been matched by decisive transformations in rank and file culture. In other words, the defining elements of police culture have extended into the contemporary policing terrain. (Loftus, 2010: 18)

In noting the perseverance of police culture, we can again return to the theme of police nostalgia, as research has shown that forms of police wistfulness are in themselves a driving force in keeping retrograde police culture alive and change at bay.

In police research, a well-known and symptomatic explanation of this has been offered by Reuss-Ianni in her work, *The Two Cultures of Policing* (1993/1983). Through interviews with and observations of the New York City Police (NYPD), Reuss-Ianni has demonstrated that there at the time was a strongly felt divide between the street-level officers and what they experienced as a completely different culture, namely the culture of the police management, hence the title of her book, *The Two Cultures of Policing*. Due to the aforementioned outside political pressures and cultural changes, which were intensified for example by the well-known Knapp Commission’s investigations into allegations of police corruptions and by accusations of police brutality, the street-level officers of the NYPD experienced that the management had not sided with them. Instead, modifications of the old ways of police work were now being implemented in order to change what the management and the wider public saw as a problematic police culture among the rank and file. In the light of these modifications, Reuss-Ianni argues, the NYPD frontline officers often used nostalgia both to keep alive ‘the good old days’ and as a means of producing a sense of unity and fight. Police nostalgia, in other words, became a driving force in their resistance to change. As she writes:

> The nostalgic sense of the good old days may or may not be an accurate interpretation of the past, but the street cops believe police work should be organised and carried out that way today. The value of this culture, operationalized in maxims guiding day-to-day behaviour and performance, form the reference for precinct level officers, and socialize officers to the job at the precinct … precinct level cops believe[ed] that a number of social and political forces have weakened the character and performance of police work and that the policing function is under strong attack as a result. (Reuss-Ianni, 1993: 3)

This citation from Reuss-Ianni neatly exemplifies one of the customary ways in which police researchers have approached the topic of police nostalgia. Disregarding what the police are nostalgic about, the customary methodology involves first rejecting the importance of whether the nostalgia in any way constitutes a truthful representation of the past. It ‘may or may not be an accurate interpretation’. This also entails a tendency to reject the question of whether nostalgia is a sentiment worth taking seriously as a manifestation
of a specific sensitivity that actually speaks of something of significance having been lost. Secondly, in having rejected nostalgia as anything but a symbolic romanticising of the past – a 'looking forward to the past' (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 311) – research then normally proceeds to look at what function nostalgia may nevertheless serve in the present. Here, as mentioned, it is primarily thought to serve as an important means of (re)producing a desired sense of unity among the police officers. As Bittner has argued, whilst reviewing Reuss-Ianni’s work, frontline officers tend to tell wistful stories about the ‘golden age of policing during which the department was one happy family, united in a common cause’ as a means of securing the in-group solidarity that is required (1984). Stated differently, by creating the narrative that frontline officers are under siege from multiculturalism, managerialism or some other outside force, officers come together. In short, even though their nostalgia might be a distorted mirror on the past, it nevertheless produces an esprit de corps in the present.

Furthermore, in police research, this shared sense of loss has not only been viewed as serving a unifying function for the police themselves. It has also been evaluated as being intended to serve, and as serving, a subjective function for the society they police. Here, studies have suggested that police nostalgia should also be understood as being productive in (re)producing certain societal practices and perceptions that the police value and which they think are under pressure, if not already gone. In other words, given the discretionary powers of the police, officers are in a prime position to channel their sense of loss into a policing of certain ways of being and behaving, thereby aiding the (re)production of, for instance, their own white, masculine, lower-middle-class values (Kleinig, 1996; Loftus, 2009; Hall et al., 2013; Waddington, 1999a; Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Or as both Ericson and Fassin have similarly argued, the police are not only aiming at policing law and order but are also engaged in enforcing and thus reproducing a certain ‘social order’ (Ericson, 1982; Fassin, 2013a).

Why haven’t public approval ratings dropped even more?
At this point it may be worth returning to the exploration of the drop in the public’s approval of the police. Because although it is true that public approval ratings have declined slightly, one might nonetheless wonder why the Danish police, for example, are still receiving such high approval ratings in the light of an increasingly bad press and internal investigations – particularly since other Danish state actors such as politicians and other street-level bureaucrats are currently experiencing a dramatic decline in public trust. It is however difficult to provide an answer to the question of why trust in the Danish police remains so high, since research on this matter remains scarce at best. Nevertheless, studies suggest that it might be due to the Danish welfare state model, with the state in general enjoying high approval ratings and, simply, the fact that Danes are in many respects well-
off and thus not in need of policing (Balvig et al., 2010; Kyvsgaard and Pedersen, 2012). As Balvig and Holmberg have shown, there is indeed a correlation between lower approval ratings and people having themselves been in contact with the police, either as criminals or victims (Balvig and Holmberg, 2004; Balvig et al., 2011). Another hypothesis relates to how the police, as a result of current politics and discourses that promote a paradoxical fear of crime (paradoxical, given that crime rates have never been lower), have been granted a central position in society as the guardians of peace and prosperity. Lastly, one should of course also mention the obvious explanation that the Danish police in general live up to their mandate and carry out their job in a satisfactory and professional way.

In many ways related to this, Loader and Mulcahy have discussed what they term ‘the desacralization thesis’ (2003:3), referring to the English police’s apparently drastic loss of public approval, as described by Reiner, and the police’s related sentiments of loss. However, although they agree that a decline can be detected, they ask questions similar to those raised above in relation to the Danish Police. They do this because, as they noted some fifteen years ago, while it is true at the national level that the British police have experienced a decline in public approval, evidence from the British Crime Survey carried out in 2000 revealed that almost 80% per cent still thought that their local police did at least a ‘fairly good’ job (Loader & Mulcahy 2003:34-5). Other surveys even made it plausible to suggest that approval ratings had remained relatively stable in post-war Britain (ibid: 35). In pointing to this stability, Loader and Mulcahy thus remain slightly critical of Reiner’s argument that the British police had experienced a ‘haemorrhage’ in levels of approval. As Loader and Mulcahy instead ponder, a more pertinent question might instead be why approval ratings had “only” dropped to such a relatively small extent ‘in the face of corruptions scandals, miscarriages of justice, paramilitarization, falling crime detection rates, the decline of visible patrols, the Stephen Lawrence affair, and so on’ (ibid:35).

Loader and Mulcahy’s work thoroughly explores this conundrum. This thesis, however, is not similarly invested in doing so, although it is a highly interesting question. Instead this thesis, and this chapter in particular, is more interested in understanding and explaining the Danish detectives’ apparent nostalgia. Here, Loader and Mulcahy offer a tentative explanation in pointing out that police nostalgia is not only a simple story of police officers yearning for a better cultural or professional past (even if this may be imaginary) but that the nostalgic tendencies of police officers also have the problematic conservative potential referred to above. While they agree that what they call ‘the dominant policing culture’ in England has been one of ‘scrutiny and complaint’ in relation to the English police (Loader & Mulcahy 2003:305), they argue that a ‘residual culture’ can also be identified (ibid:311ff). Here, they point to the way in which certain segments of the English population, and particularly the police, are characterised by an outspoken longing for the England of the 1950s, which is viewed as
a better, and lost, past […] a past reconstructed as safer, more stable, more socially cohesive and disciplined; a past where the authority of authority figures (teachers, doctors, vicars, policemen…) was quite properly taken as given, a past where local beat officers not only provided a visible, authoritative, pastoral presence in community life, but, in doing so, stood as an avatar of a proud, settled, uncomplicated, and white ‘England’. This worldview – which looks forward to a past that it mobilizes to assess and condemn the present – today forms a residual element of English policing culture. (Loader & Mulcahy 2003:312)

This is another answer to the question of why the police retain such relatively high approval ratings, despite being haunted by continuous cases of misconduct: The police, although at times erroneous, remain to many people a powerful symbolic avatar and at times even represent a possibility of reinstating a coveted past.

Evidently, Loader and Mulcahy are critical of these residual elements of police nostalgia, and, even more so, of the general tendency for not only the police but also politicians and the public to view and invoke the police as custodians and contemporary defenders of a more ordered social past – a critical stance that mirrors the aforementioned notion that the police use their longing for the golden age of policing to not only build in-group unity but also to enforce a social order that has otherwise been lost. In sum, Loader and Mulcahy, together with other police researchers, are critical of such nostalgia in the police as well as of nostalgia for the police, since it produces a risk of mobilising the police in the name of a romanticised golden age – a golden age, they argue, which includes ‘a defensive, xenophobic conception of imagined community that inscribes … a whole series of exclusions of those who are strangers to the social memories that constitute it’ (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 315). Certainly, looking to contemporary developments sometimes spoken of as including a ‘punitive turn’, such concerns about the residual yet increasingly reinvigorated longing for law-and-order and policing seem well-placed. Consequently, in this meta-reading of loss and police nostalgia, wistful police sentiments might not only be factually flawed in being based on a glorified pretence, but may also be politically problematic since they entail the risk of producing and affirming prejudices.

What prior studies of police nostalgia show then, albeit based on a rather crude summation, is that the general scholarly understanding is that police nostalgia is at best a partial remembrance but that it is nevertheless, either internally (for the police themselves) or externally (for a certain society) also functional and productive.
Police nostalgia revisited

There is ... simply no turning back the clock ... [T]his is exactly what [police officers] who actively bemoan the 'decline' of 'the Job' and 'the force' at least implicitly envisage or yearn for – often in tones suggesting some realization that the outlooks they cleave to are no longer culturally or politically dominant ... [This happens] not only in warm reconstructions of how 'bobbying' used to be done, but in often angry, emotive denunciations of such things as the declining status of beat officers; political correctness; women police; the eclipse of unfettered, unquestioned authority; civilians; [and] the end of the devotion denoted by a willingness to work long, unpaid hours ... It is an outlook symbolically condensed in the felt demise of the attribute that all police forces qua police forces demand – 'discipline'. (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003: 224-225)

Having, at the turn of the 21st century, interviewed English police officers about changes in the police profession and how they experienced them, this is the conclusion offered by Loader and Mulcahy. In line with the views of the English officers interviewed, the Danish detectives' yearning for yesteryear could (and should) also be read as a critical comment on developments inside and outside the police, on the world and on their work. Like their English colleagues, the Danish detectives also framed their outlooks as outlooks which were indeed no longer culturally and politically dominant, thereby pointing to the marginality yet also correctness of their counter-position. The Danish detectives also believed that a cultural or political correctness furthered by political, public and managerial doctrines was hampering the possibility of doing proper police work – 'forcing us,' as they would say, 'to walk around and think and feel all the time rather than act. And acting is ultimately what this job is about.' I would also hear the detectives complain about how they felt 'less respected these day', explaining that 'both criminals and the public used to respect what we do. Nowadays they always want to dispute everything.' The detectives also complained about colleagues' lack of 'old-school discipline' and willingness to work long hours while also simultaneously complaining about having to work long hours themselves. Both morally and monetarily the detectives felt that their value was not respected as it had been and should be – with the Danish Police Union for example campaigning in 2018 under the hashtag '#WEAREWORTHMORE', calling for better pay and more respect. Furthermore, it would certainly also be fair to diagnose the local Danish police concerns in relation to global developments that constitute the focus of this thesis as “merely” being part of more major developments, which would include the aforementioned managerial developments such as NPM and intelligence-led policing – developments that in different but related ways promote a more top-down, technocratic, technological, and analytical approach to policing that is different from that of the stereotyped bobby or beat cop or the often-televised chain-smoking detective with embodied local knowledge.
piles of paper on his/her desk – or that is different, for that matter, from the televised Sarah Lund-type Danish “Nordic noir” detective.

Given this, in explaining why the Danish detectives exhibited such nostalgia, a page can and should be taken from Loader and Mulcahy’s work alongside the other studies of police nostalgia that have been described above. Having said this, this thesis has not only been concerned with the nostalgia and negativity that is related to these specific cultural and managerial developments. Actually, in the more than fifteen years that have passed since Loader and Mulcahy carried out their analysis, it could easily be suggested that the police have both been at the mercy of critiques and changes whilst also experiencing a renaissance of political and public veneration. Indeed, as has already been mentioned, the police officers I encountered both found it in them to be sceptical towards policies that were pushing them to transform the conservatism of ‘police culture’ whilst also appreciating the fact that politicians increasingly saw societal solutions in policing. Stated differently, although officers (of all sexes and ages) would speak of decreasing levels of discipline and harshness among contemporary officers (themselves not included, of course) and would say that people were increasingly questioning police authority, they would also find joy in the increasingly harsh and disciplinary discourse visible both in Denmark and in the international community in relation to criminals, other transgressors and not least foreigners.

Given this, there is much to be said in support of the above-mentioned explanations as to why I too experienced so much wistfulness and disbelief amongst the Danish detectives. Certainly, in speaking about both external problems and managerial pressures, and in doing so referring to the much better heyday of police work, the Danish detectives came together, as was evident in the way that the ‘last-policeman’ comment was made on a sunlit balcony among a group of police detectives who were laughing with beers in hand. They were frustrated but they were united in their frustrations, being equally victimised. Indeed, the detectives did use nostalgia and negativity as a way of bonding – something that they themselves were often openly aware of, as prior examples have shown, with the young officer explaining his excessive complaining as being part and parcel of becoming a proper police officer and with TFP Detectives Mikkelsen and Frederiksen both somewhat proudly admitting to being disposed to whining. Also, it would not be at all far-fetched to conclude that the detectives had certain predisposed cultural ideas about what they thought Danish society should look like, ideas which they felt were under pressure and which mirrored their own demographic and political dispositions, for instance in the form of conservative, nationalist and at times xenophobic attitudes, which they might act upon consciously or unconsciously when carrying out their work. In this way, the Danish detectives and their nostalgia were very much on a par with the core characteristics of the
arguments presented in existing police research. Although no all-out haemorrhage of either public, political or managerial approval can be said to have occurred in Denmark, the officers did feel that they and their work were not as highly valued as in the past.

From a nativist to a practical stance

However, I believe that an additional reading of police nostalgia is also possible – a reading that has been at the core of this thesis and of which I have already provided many examples. The reading I am referring to is what the anthropologist Battaglia (1995) has termed a ‘practical’ understanding of nostalgia. As she defines it, practical nostalgia is a way of approaching nostalgia as

less fused to nativism and a lack of critical distance on self and the sources of cultural identity than is often presumed. Nostalgia may in fact be a vehicle of knowledge, rather than only a yearning for something lost. It may be practiced in diverse ways, where the issue

for users becomes, on the one hand, the attachment of appropriate feelings towards their own histories, products and capabilities, and on the other hand, their detachment from – and active resistance to – disempowering conditions… (Battaglia, 1995: 77)

In this way, Battaglia’s approach to the understanding of nostalgia entails a subtle critique of the more common ‘nativist stance’, as she terms it – the nativist stance being much on a par with the aforementioned criminological takes on police nostalgia, in which nostalgia is indeed often thought to be an example of a social group’s ‘lack of critical distance on self and the sources of cultural identity.’ Instead, Battaglia suggests, we might also approach nostalgia as something that, so to speak, “nostalgia users”, in this case police officers, are more consciously employing both as an echo of what from their perspective are ‘appropriate feelings towards their own histories, products and capabilities’ and as a reaction to ‘disempowering conditions’. Such a ‘practical’ approach to the study of police nostalgia is akin to Waddington’s celebrated ‘appreciation’ of ‘police (canteen) sub-culture’ (1999b). Instead of resorting ‘to condemn and dismiss [police] behaviour’, Waddington argues (ibid: 294), we need to appreciate, to take seriously and properly explore why the police invest so much time in matters that, to us, seem so senseless.

Thus, in following this train of thought, and instead of resorting to pronouncing, I think somewhat patronisingly, that police officers are simple and simply partial (wo)men of nostalgia, living in, by and for a specific nativist and perhaps naïve residual (policing) culture, we may instead go further into the police officers’ explanations of what they think they are missing and thus make a serious effort to understand the means and ends of their sentiments rather than simply bracketing them as biased fabrications. In other words, this chapter asks: What happens if we actually listen when the police say that there are losing
something of importance, and thus try to genuinely understand what this loss might entail not only for them but also the people they police?

Nostalgia amongst Danish detectives

In trying to understand the Danish detectives’ nostalgia, Detective Larsen’s frustrated words provide a useful baseline. In different ways, the detectives experienced that they were at ‘the mercy of outside trends, what’s politically popular or whatever blows in over the border’ – policing trends, politics and other winds of change that at least in some ways came in the way of what they perceived to be their actual job, including their vocational gratifications. The question to be asked, then, is what were these trends or other developments in policing that they didn’t fully welcome? And the obvious subsequent question is, how did these developments trouble their professional perceptions and practices?

Some answers to these questions have already been offered, with the multicultural and managerial changes described earlier being amongst them. However, bearing in mind the different chapters of this thesis and their descriptions and discussions, additional answers to these questions have, at least in some ways, also been provided. For the sake of clarity, I will now go through these answers – answers as to why the Danish detectives were frequently both nostalgic and negative.

One place to start would be to recount the causes of police frustration as described in Chapter Four. There I described how the Danish detectives exhibited what could be (and should be) understood as xenophobic tendencies when it came to the many foreign
suspects they encountered through their work. Often this xenophobia or other types of negativity towards the foreign suspects came in the form of an irritated behaviour that was exhibited in encounters with the foreigners, but most often before or after such encounters. It was apparent that the detectives did not, on average, appreciate foreign suspects as much as they appreciated the proverbial “Danish” suspect. The detectives would, for example, say something along the lines of:

…it used to be different, our relationship with criminals. There used to be a mutual respect and understanding. Like, for instance, Danish suspects in general tend to behave much better. It’s like they understand the game better, you know, they understand and respect the rules. It’s different with these foreigners. They don’t get it. They don’t give a shit … Sometimes these fucking foreigners’ behaviour makes me absolutely furious!

Again, as was stated earlier, what is of interest here is not whether it is true that foreign suspects ‘don’t give a shit’ and, conversely, that other suspects do. What is of interest is that the detectives experienced this to be the case and thus expressed an aggravated wistfulness towards a time when criminal suspects ‘gave a shit’, to stay with this colourful language.

As was further argued in Chapter Four, this appreciation of one group of suspects vis-à-vis another group could and should be interpreted along the lines of most police research. Existing police research explains such negativity as evidence of a xenophobia that is embedded in police culture or in politics, and which dictates that foreign suspects are problematic. Yet, as I have argued, an additional reading of police negativity towards foreign suspects can be found by listening to why and how the police officers complain about foreign suspects. What does it mean, for example, that the detectives frequently talked about foreign suspects being ‘no fun’ and thus frustrating? In taking the idea that foreigners are actually less fun seriously and, importantly, in looking at the ways in which they are less fun, the chapter sought to demonstrate that the Danish detectives experienced a loss of professional gratification when they were policing foreign suspects. Hence, the loss and the frustrations expressed were not merely a reflection of a wider cultural or political discourse. It was not, recalling Loader and Mulcahy’s reading, only a matter of a residual policing culture longing for an ordered past which they hoped to reproduce. The detectives’ loss, unfortunately in this instance given the offensive shape of xenophobia, also spoke of concrete vocational problems that were being experienced by the detectives – vocational problems that, furthermore, were not overly offensive, since they were essentially about a desire to understand and to be better able to relate to the people they police. Importantly, this was not simply a “bobby-ish remembrance” of the joys of community policing. Often, it was a more banal yearning for the vocational pleasures that the Danish
detectives otherwise experienced when policing people whom they were able to relate to beyond the crude binary of criminal and non-criminal – a longing for human encounters that were at least in some way more profound.

In Chapter Three, I turned my attention to an issue that has been much, and often heatedly, debated in both police research and criminology, namely that of contemporary police surveillance and control. Here, the theoretical mainstream points to a problematic world-wide increase in the means of policing and in wider governmental means of surveillance and controlling human lives by means of a growth in policing collaborations and information technologies. A pervasive ‘policing panopticon’, the story goes, is mushrooming in various ways. Whilst acknowledging that this is definitely the case, especially at a policy level, the chapter sought to explore what this policing panopticon looked like at the local level. Stated differently, the question examined was how effective and seamless police surveillance is when viewed from below; seen from the practical everyday of the police officers who are supposed to be actors in this expanding surveillance apparatus. As the chapter concluded, at least on the basis of this Danish example, it does not appear to be particularly panoptic after all. The reason for this, returning to the question of police nostalgia, was that even though the policing panopticon and the means that support it were deemed necessary by the Danish detectives, it simultaneously clashed with ingrained vocational partialities among the detectives. While they recognised that the future possibly belonged to an increase in police collaborations with external partners and an increasing use of various information technologies, they remained partial towards the old ways and towards what they believed to be the essential attractions and demands of their workday. They preferred picking up their kids over tending a computer database – and they preferred helping a colleague over tending a computer database. They detectives preferred information or intelligence in which they were personally invested over the generalised and distanced nature of the information available from various computer-based data sources, reports, analyses etc. These same factors also hindered them from really engaging in collaborations with colleagues outside of their immediate work sphere. Essentially mirroring the findings of previous research on this issue, the detectives preferred these proximate and personal ways of policing in the same way as they were not happy about the perceived distance between themselves and the foreign suspects. The distance manifested in and by information technologies and police collaborations might thus be described as being fruitful in extending their panoptic gaze, but when it came to their professional everyday life, it did not offer very much gratification. These panoptic developments in policing, as Smith has cleverly put it, might well ‘empower the watcher’ but at the same time ‘disempower the worker’ (2009). Stated differently, while it is true that digital surveillance technologies in particular are producing an abundance of traceable ‘data doubles’ (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000), the actual practice of policing these is not doubly gratifying. Instead it
detracts from the gratifications that officers otherwise experience when policing the real thing. Add to this the fact that the detectives felt overwhelmed by a constant influx of surveillance and investigational technologies, and how they felt undertrained in these, and it is understandable that the detectives exhibited a longing for a time (irrespective of whether it may have been real or unreal) when things were different. Thus, police nostalgia and scepticism towards, in this case, developments in the practical and digital means of surveillance systems and the wider means of police investigations were not simply a matter of their being reactionary simpletons with a yearning for a cruder reality. The detectives were not guileless labourers who preferred, as Loftus has otherwise argued, a ‘world view includ[ing] a simplistic, decontextualized understanding’ (2010:2). On the contrary, it would not be wrong to say that a big part of why they reacted negatively to the policing panopticon was precisely because it made their workday more simplistic and decontextualised, removing some of their professional depth, discretion, and independence.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I discussed the policing of terrorism. Intensified by the events of 9/11, the fear of terrorism, and subsequently policies and discussions of terrorism and what to do about it, have taken centre stage in politics and public life - and the issue has thus become a prevalent part of contemporary policing. In criminological research, the topic of terrorism has been approached in two often entwined ways, either symbolically and/or substantively, or as Cottee and Hayward have also put it, the focus has primarily been on the ideological or the instrumental (2011: 964). In other words, the focus has been on how the fear of terror has been advantageously used to form policies and to shape police work in a way that goes beyond what is perhaps necessary. Terror has been a ‘suitable enemy’ (1985) to use Christie and Bruun’s famous concept, with political and organisational agendas having successfully been furthered because of the way in which terrorism is such a fear-inducing phenomenon. When it comes the policing of terrorism more specifically, and the question of the concrete substantive effects of this work, the fear of terrorism has led to both an increase in legislation, which has also included an increase in police discretion, and to an increase in the resources made available to combat terrorism. This increase or extension of policing has also been spoken of as a ‘militarisation’ (Kraska, 2007) of the police, with the fear of terror having been beneficial in providing a basis for granting the police an extensive legal framework and economic and material resources to counter the threat. In short, when it comes to the fear of terrorism, and more particularly the policing of terrorism, the theoretical tenet has been to present it as something that the police largely profit from and thus something positive from a police perspective.

The Danish detectives, alongside their frontline colleagues, indubitably bought into the fear of terror and the necessity of combating it by any possible means. In this way, they were both symbolically and substantively on a par with the views that have emerged
from criminological analyses. However, in looking at their everyday practices and perceptions, another understanding of terrorism and police work emerged. Instead of being an all-out positive, in the sense that it provides frontline officers with greater discretion and machine guns, terrorism was often seen as a hindrance to their everyday efforts. Sure, they were posted with firearms in hand outside places thought to be at risk of terrorist attacks. But when asked, the detectives would much rather have been working their normal caseload than standing outside for many hours in the unpredictable Danish weather. Furthermore, the detectives experienced that the fear of terror often became exaggerated, since previously “normal” situations were now being seen and treated as possible instances of terrorism. Thus, as I wrote in this chapter, the spectre of terror not only haunted the general public in the form of both real-life consequences and perhaps excessive discourses and policies, it also haunted the detectives, who not uncommonly experienced being unable to focus on their actual jobs. Plans and cases were put aside in the name of terror. Politics were thought to be taking the place of practice. In this way, the detectives, contrary to criminological formulations, often spoke of terrorism as something bad, and not only because terrorism is a terrible thing but because it obstructed them professionally. Here, once again, a longing for a time without terror(ists) was not just a longing for a romanticised time when Denmark was not in danger. Nor was the detectives’ longing, extending the interpretation somewhat further, solely an expression of xenophobia as a result of Denmark having become more globally entwined and multicultural, which in the eyes of the detectives increased the risk for crime and terrorism. It was also a simple longing to be able to carry out the primary tasks that the detectives were employed to carry out. By contrast with what one might assume, the detectives for example openly talked about how annoyed they were at having to be armed, at having to wear bulletproof vests and having to walk around looking, as one of them put it, ‘almost like I did when I was in the army’ – his army days being something that he looked back on in positive terms, but which were not something he wished for in the present in any way.

Given the different examples provided throughout this thesis, I therefore believe that the Danish detectives’ complaints about current developments should be understood in a way that goes beyond conventional readings of police nostalgia – beyond what Battaglia called the ‘nativist’ or what Waddington might have called a “depreciative” approach to nostalgia. To be sure, seeing their complaints as contributing to their esprit de corps would not be a misinterpretation, but it would represent a simplified reading. Similarly, seeing their complaints as a romanticised residual reminiscence about better days in which their work and world were more ordered (and ordered in a way they viewed as fitting) would not be wrong either. However, both these readings would entail missing some, to the police, more profound professional losses – losses that are not only about policemen experiencing that they are increasingly being told to change their traditionalist
and at times racist and sexist ways, or about the profession becoming more academic and less action-oriented. In other words, what has been demonstrated in this thesis is that the Danish detectives were nostalgic and negative not only because of this, but also because of how they basically experienced that their daily work was in fact hindered by various global developments. As Detective Mogensen for example put it, there was a shared feeling amongst them that police work was becoming more 'distanced' or even detached from what were widely believed to be core attributes of good and gratifying police work.

The end of public policing
Before moving towards the end of this chapter, it is worth pausing to consider how the Danish detectives’ (melodramatic talk about being the last of their kind is apparently directly related to, yet also different from, one of the most well-known debates in contemporary policing research. This is the debate about whether we have been witnessing the final breaths of a state sanctioned public policing model and, more generally, a withering of the governmental reign of the Westphalian nation state.

In 1995 McLaughlin and Levi published an article entitled “The end of public policing?” In it they discussed how public policing was being troubled by new managerial trends such as NPM, as touched upon earlier in this chapter. Perhaps, McLaughlin and Levi wondered, an increase in policing by numbers and other ways of adopting ‘actuarial justice’ (Feeley and Simon, 1994) rather than the classic disciplinary approach to police work entail such radical changes to public policing as we know it, that it may in fact warrant us talking about its final demise.? A year later, Bayley and Shearing published their now seminal article ‘The Future of Policing’ (1996), in which they broadened this “fatal” discussion to include a wider range of transformational trends in modern-day policing, leading them to famously conclude and predict that:

Modern democratic countries … have reached a watershed in the evolution of their systems of crime control and law enforcement. Future generations will look back on our era as a time when one system of policing ended and another took its place (Bayley and Shearing 1996:585).

For Bayley and Shearing, the prophesied end of the old policing system was a prediction based on an analysis of two dominant developments. One of these relates to the above-mentioned managerial and organisational changes. These changes, Bayley and Shearing argued, have caused the public police to go
through an intense period of self-questioning, indeed, a true identity crisis. No longer confident that they are either effective or efficient in controlling crime, they are anxiously examining every aspect of their performance—objectives, strategies, organization, management, discipline, and accountability (Bayley and Shearing 1996:585, emphasis added).

Phrased differently, where the public police before felt reassured and unquestioned, they have increasingly been forced to measure and explain their worth—a self-questioning that has led to, Bayley and Shearing reasoned, a police identity crisis. The second development “fatal” to the public police is the ‘pluralization of policing’ (ibid) that was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, which includes a view that the public or nation state police can no longer be viewed as the sole and monopolistic provider of policing acts. Bayley and Shearing thus contended that the public police in many Western countries are under pressure not only from the changes discussed in this chapter, such as cultural and managerial issues; they are also being pressured by the fact that an increasing number of private and alternative governmental actors are now also providing policing and security services carried forward by neoliberal policies, fearmongering and the commodification of security. This also relates to the larger discussion presented in this thesis in relation to the globalisation of policing and how this globalisation has by and large been based on an extension of policing through the expansion of both practical and digital collaborative networks stretching across both institutional and international borders with the intention of providing societal security and reducing risk. With the end of public policing we are now ‘dealing with policing, not just police’, Bayley and Shearing concluded, noting that contemporary research into ‘agents of crime control’ should direct its focus beyond the narrowing confines of the police institution and look for larger networks of agencies and actors explicitly engaged in the creation of public safety (ibid: 586).

The prediction of the end of public policing and its monopoly has been echoed, but also criticised, by other police researchers. Most notably, it has been criticised by Jones and Newburn who in their discussion of what they term ‘the transformation thesis’ (2002) have argued that ‘new policing theorists’ like Bayley and Shearing tend ‘to exaggerate the degree of change, and underplay the extent of continuity, in seeking to explain the transformations taking place in contemporary policing systems’ (2002: 142). Instead, Jones and Newburn argue that the public police might have lost their symbolic monopoly when it comes to policing, but when it comes to the monopoly of legitimate force, this is still very much in the hands of the public police. Furthermore, speaking of a state sanctioned public police as the unavoidable status quo of policing would be to neglect the larger history of policing, since policing has throughout history in fact predominantly been carried out by a mix of public and private actors. Instead, Jones and Newburn therefore maintain, whilst acknowledging that changes in policing are occurring, including a globalisation of policing,
it would be more accurate to speak of these changes in terms of an increasing formalisation of a plural policing network, rather than in terms of an epochal transformation (ibid: 143).

Nonetheless, returning to the question of police nostalgia and negativity, and irrespective of the degree of the transformation, there is a consensus that the public police have undergone a number of drastic changes over recent decades. There seems also to be a general acknowledgment that this has caused the aforementioned ‘true identity crisis’ (Bayley and Shearing 1996: 858). As a result of cultural and managerial factors, and also this overall pluralisation of policing, the public police no longer feel as self-assured and singular in their role as if not the sole then at least the primary providers of crime control and public safety.

As has already been described, these developments were also affecting the Danish detectives as they at times wallowed in romanticised tales about how police work used to be different and about their authority having been more unchallenged in the proverbial ‘good old days’. In this way, one can say that this PhD thesis locates itself at the very centre of the transformation thesis, with empirical evidence showing that a more or less radical change is indeed occurring. Certainly, the detectives’ practices indicated that they were increasingly being pushed to become part of a more global or ‘nodal’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Shearing and Wood, 2003) network of policing. At the same time, the PhD thesis can also be said to have provided evidence to support the criticisms of the transformation thesis in showing how this transformation is not only not appreciated but even at times actively opposed by public police officers such as the Danish detectives.

Importantly, however, the purpose here has not been to weigh into this otherwise important debate. Instead, the aim has merely been to look at how these changes (big or small, new-fangled or already established) affected the local police at the everyday practical and perceptual level. Here, pondering the reasons for the detectives’ nostalgic sentiments that were mentioned earlier, it would be a mistake to read these as being directly tied to the sense of loss that this professed transformation has brought upon the public police – i.e. that the detectives have lost their professional monopoly and (thus) their meaning. While this development is certainly something that is causing Danish police officers to long for the days when their profession was more unique and unquestioned, the nostalgia described in this thesis clearly relates to a different and less narcissistic form of identity crisis. This was a crisis more related to the everyday function of their work than to the discussed changes in policing forms. In other words, nostalgia came about not only because other policing partners were to be collaborated with and might thus potentially encroach on what used to be the sovereign territory of the Danish detectives; the detectives were also sentimental because they believed this new kind of work substantially challenged what they otherwise believed to be proper police work. Importantly, this does not mean that nostalgia, following Bayley and Shearing, was caused by an intense ‘period of self-
questioning’ or a creeping belief that they weren’t sufficiently ‘effective or efficient in controlling crime’, leading in turn to an ‘anxious[s] examining [of] every aspect of their performance-objectives, strategies, organization, management, discipline, and accountability’ (1996:585). Certainly, the detectives didn’t appreciate these examinations, but it didn’t directly cause them to be anxious and uncertain about their professional worth. Instead, as demonstrated in this thesis’ different chapters, their feelings of being professionally diminished were more often related to how current changes in policing were encumbering their everyday work and what they otherwise found to be the gratifying and meaningful aspects of their profession. Their talk about the end of policing as they knew it, i.e. about their being the last policemen, was therefore not strictly a question of their being politically and publicly questioned nor was it about their not wanting to share their profession; it was rather about how this sharing was changing the everyday qualities of the profession itself.

**Police nostalgia, a problem of distance**

But why is it a problem that some everyday policing qualities are changing? If it doesn’t mean the end of policing but merely that some police officers complain about said changes, what then, so to speak, is the big deal?

As this chapter answers this final question on the basis of a much broader perspective, it would not be entirely off the mark to say that the Danish detectives were showing symptoms of an affliction that has been described by many sociologists over the last three decades as one of the core problems of globalisation. As Giddens has argued, for example, the paradox of globalisation is that while it apparently came with the promise of making life more certain and predictable for us, including the progress of science and technology, it often has quite the opposite effect … Rather than being more and more under our control, it seems out of our control – a runaway world. (Giddens, 2011: 1-2)

This is the ‘disembeddedness’ spoken of at the beginning of this chapter. Or, as Bauman has famously diagnosed the ills of globalisation, globalisation has created a ‘liquidity’ of meaning among people who are experiencing a harder time getting a grasp of the world they live in as a result of the constant influx of various social, material or conceptual inputs – it has created a more ‘liquid life’, he concludes (2000). While such liquidity or “runawaywayness” might be less alarming or even enjoyable to some people, for instance the cosmopolitan academic, it visibly alarmed the Danish detectives. To them, their increasing introduction into a more global realm of policing, with its cooperative and technological
expansion, was, perhaps paradoxically, not immediately experienced as a means of increasing control but rather as a loss of control. Since the detectives were rooted in ideas about vocational control and meaning-making being found in local, close and personal encounters and experiences, the globalisation of policing appeared antithetical to them.

This is certainly something of an enigma. On the one hand, the police are currently experiencing an apparently prolific era of policing, with significant resources and faith currently being given and ascribed to the police. A large part of the political and public spectrum is currently turning to policing not only to solve problems of criminality but also in relation to wider societal issues such as political opposition, religious radicalisation, migration, sexual harassment, larger social and welfare issues etc. In ‘governing through crime’ (Simon, 2007), the police have been elevated to a peak societal position. Ostensibly, this should be beneficial and thrilling for the police. And in many ways, it may in fact be so. On the other hand, however, what this thesis has shown is that even though this might very well be a new era of policing, it is nevertheless an era that a group of Danish detectives find far from gratifying. Discursively, legislatively and in terms of resources, the police might be experiencing increasing prestige but at the everyday, practical level, the job itself does not feel particularly prestigious.

Thus, first and foremost, this chapter has been about arguing that evidence of police nostalgia should not immediately be brushed aside as either being false or, if not false, then as solely being functional for the maintenance of police unity or of a certain (and problematic, most criminologists would say) social order. Nostalgia can also be about genuine, practical concerns. Having said this, whether police officers are right in being nostalgic is of course a completely different question. In other words, even though it might be true that they are experiencing a loss of some otherwise valued parts of their vocation, this is not the same as saying that we should sympathise with them. Indeed, there are many expressions of police frustration that it is difficult to sympathise with; and many of these have been mentioned in this thesis, such as their xenophobic tendencies and their general inclination towards extensive and firm means of policing. As Detective Mikkelsen explained to me, for example, expressing frustration about the fact that a new cadet had said to him that

‘I believe that all people had something good inside them.’ ‘To me,’ Detective Mikkelsen told me irritably, ‘this shows how the cadets haven’t understood anything at all. And they are never gonna be any good at this job if they continue thinking like that. Such misplaced soft humanism makes me furious. So, I told him that he should become a social worker instead. This is not a place for that kind of thinking. In this line of work, you must be hard and act with conviction. If you don’t, you’ll fail.’
Having said this, I would argue, taking the liberty of adopting a slightly normative stance, that there are some aspects of the detectives’ nostalgia which may seem familiar and even reasonable to most criminologists. Here I am thinking about the Danish detectives’ shared concerns about the increasing distance between themselves, their work and those that this work related to; how they, returning to the aforementioned afflictions of globalisation, experienced that their means of control and sense-making were becoming somewhat fluid and liquefied.

Problems of policing-at-a-distance
One way of understanding the problem of ‘distance’ that is familiar to criminologists is to return to Christie’s renowned article ‘Conflict as property’ (1977). In it, he writes about the way in which ‘conflicts are taken away, given away, melt away, or are made invisible,’ and asks, ‘Does it matter, does it really matter?’ (Christie, 1977: 7). In writing this and posing this question, Christie directs criminologists towards what is one of the most central ideas in his criminological oeuvre, namely that crime is nothing more than a social occurrence, albeit one that is at times frowned upon and radical. And given that it is a social occurrence, Christie argues, it should be treated as such. This is why he is critical of the increasing Weberian bureaucratization of criminal justice, or of ‘conflicts’ as he puts it, in a society where conflicts are being ‘taken away’ from the specific social setting in which they originate and handled solely by the state.

Forty years after Christie first aired his concerns, criminal conflicts are still, and perhaps even more so, being abstracted, analysed and managed by penal professionals, leaving the parties involved in the conflict distanced from it, with no ownership and, as Christie argued, with no real opportunity to settle and resolve these conflicts in and through the social settings of which they are inevitably a part. Thus, in Christie’s critique of how bureaucracies are “stealing” conflicts, we find the normative notion that the best way to deal with criminal acts and criminal justice is not through an abstract distancing but through increased proximity and increased social embeddedness among the parties involved. This belief leads Christie to conclude his article with the following, almost evangelistic sentence:

[The] task of training professionals ought to be looked into with renewed scepticism. Let us re-establish the credibility of encounters between critical human beings … That is how it ought to be. (Christie, 1977: 14)

Although Christie has received considerable criticism that his abolitionist beliefs are based on a – much in line with the concerns of this thesis – nostalgic and romanticised reading of African penal culture as studied by anthropologists, his idea about the importance of
close and real encounters between human beings, rather than the aloofness of overly managerial meetings, remains central to much criminology. Indeed, as Aas reminds us, ‘social distance has a long history of being seen as socially conducive to the infliction of pain’ (2012b: 253).

The idea that distance increases the risks of people acting more brutally and perhaps even immorally is not just a criminological concept. It is to be found in much celebrated social theory. It is similarly key to Bauman’s concept of ‘adiaphorization’ (Bauman, 1991; Bauman and Lyon, 2013), adiaphorization being when ‘systems and processes become split off from any consideration of morality’ (Bauman and Lyon, 2013: 8) – a moral splitting off that is considered precisely to be a problematic consequence of globalisation, as the particularity of individual existences is muffled by the expansion, overload and anonymisation of communications furthered by digital means, leading to ‘moral blindness’ (Bauman and Donskis, 2013). The problem of distance is also central to Collins’ phenomenological work on interpersonal violence (Collins, 2008; Collins, 2013). As Collins argues, acts of violence become much easier when human interaction is limited:

“It is much easier, emotionally, to fire artillery or drop bombs from a distance, to engage in arson or vandalism. Quite literally, the faceless enemy is easiest to hate … [t]he more humanly difficult kinds of violence are where the two sides consciously confront each other face-to-face … Here the attacker undergoes quite a lot of tension, because the confrontation with the opponent is palpable. (Collins, 2013: 136-137)

Violence is hard when close, easier when apart. This shared concern with distance found among leading criminologists and sociologists is also what has driven the criticism of what has been termed ‘governance-at-a-distance’ (Rose, 2006), ‘security-at-a-distance’ (Aas, 2012b) or ‘policing-at-a-distance (Bigo and Guild, 2005b) – concepts that are all used to describe a tendency witnessed throughout the last two decades towards governments increasingly dealing with perceived problems by means of various techniques that allow for little or no actual human interaction. This overall “distancing development” has led Aas to conclude that it

represents not only a conceptual and empirical challenge, but also a moral and ethical one. This is particularly due to the growing role of technology and technoscience in the facilitation and the articulation of the global assemblages. Critical voices see the technological productivity as denying or at least obscuring human relationality and, consequently, reducing the space for moral responsibility. (Aas, 2012b: 253)

In summary, criminologists and similarly interested scholars tend to find many worrying problems when it comes to developments in policing and wider governance whereby, for
example, the police officer and the policed are increasingly removed from one another via either social or technological proxies. Stated differently, it could be said that criminologists adhere to the fundamental humanistic creed that human encounters become richer and less rough if people actually meet and, therefore, are forced to engage with each other beyond simplified typologies.

Interestingly, returning to the Danish detectives, it would not be far from the truth to say that they, at least to some degree, adhered to the very same humanism – although, remembering Detective Mikkelsen’s annoyance with “the soft humanist cadet”, they would certainly have difficulty accepting this label. Nevertheless, much of their concern was tied to a sense of losing a personal relationship to and experience of their work. Thus, paraphrasing Christie, if we view policing not only in terms of ‘policing as property’ but instead see it as denoting an actual social encounter and not just as an aloof managerial matter, then the Danish detectives’ nostalgia and negativity may also be read as a manifestation of their feeling an increasing divide between themselves and the recipients of their actions. They were expressing a concern about how current developments were increasingly pushing policing towards becoming a manifestation of sheer and callous domination instead of being a substantial social interaction in which two parties meet in, while not even-handed, at least close and consistent engagement. To the detectives, there were too many vocational developments that were making such an engagement increasingly difficult, because they required them to reach beyond their local assignments and collaborate with external partners, to use various types of technology, to police terrorism, and so forth, rather than being able to attend to their actual jobs and thus interact with people and phenomena they did not feel distanced from.

In this way, the Danish detectives’ nostalgia was actually largely on a par with the nostalgia, apropos of Christie, that many police researchers and criminologists alike also adhere to when it comes to the means and ends of policing; a nostalgia towards the aforementioned velvet-glove qualities of ‘proximity policing’ or ‘community policing’ (Bowling et al., 2004; Holmberg, 2002) – a yearning towards policing being carried out closer to the epicentre of human existence, closer to everyday life and its complexities. Stated differently, the Danish detectives would certainly not disagree with Bittner in his famous diagnosis of how police ‘officers [m]aintain … their grasp of and [sense of] control’. The police’s grasp of and sense of control, as Bittner continues,

is precisely commensurate with the extent to which they “know the people”. By this they do not mean having a quasi-theoretical understanding of human nature but rather the common practice of individualized and reciprocal recognition (Bittner, 1967: 707).
As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, one of the frustrations and causes of negativity amongst the Danish detectives was indeed what they themselves might have called the ‘quasi-theoretical nature’ of some of the vocational developments they were experiencing – developments which perhaps left them with more professional tools but not always with the tools that they themselves desired.

Proximity and professional policing

As a final note, it is worth remembering that the preference for a practice that is personal and proximity-based can also be found in Muir’s renowned exploration of what constitutes not only proper or real police work, from a police perspective, but of what makes ‘a good’ or a ‘professional policeman’ (1979). In his work entitled *Street-level politicians*, Muir concludes that

a policeman becomes a good a policeman to the extent that he develops two virtues: Intellectually, he has to grasp the nature of human suffering. Morally, he has to resolve the contradiction of achieving just ends with coercive means. A patrolman who develops this tragic sense of moral equanimity tends to grow in the job, increasing in confidence, skill, sensitivity, and awareness (Muir, 1979: 3-4).

These two virtues are central, Muir argues, since they keep the officer from becoming either a brute and cynical ‘enforcer’ or, alternatively, an ‘avoider’ who remains conflicted and thus almost apathetic in relation the underbelly of social life (ibid:57).

Thinking about Muir’s argument about what makes a good policeman, what I am trying to get at here is the following: Whilst the problematic aspects of the Danish detectives’ nostalgia should be critically assessed, their nostalgia should also be valued for its positives. To me at least, the detectives’ nostalgia could also be read as a critique, conscious or unconscious, that manifested how they felt that the developments described above were making them worse policemen – or, pondering the title and focus of this thesis, perhaps not the last but nonetheless less-real policemen. There is indeed something to be said about how changes in policing were making it harder for them to grasp the wider nature of human suffering, and perhaps also to morally come to terms with what lies at the heart of their profession, namely the inevitable application of brute force. It would at least be correct to say that their sarcastic but serious remarks about their being the last real policemen represented an emblematic example of their feeling (in much the same way as many criminologists have suggested) that policing is drastically changing and that they did not entirely (in much the same way as many criminologists) approve of this change. A simple way to appreciate this is to consider Bigo and Guild’s criticism of many of the policing developments discussed in this thesis. ‘The result’ of such developments, they claim,
is a spiralling effect in that control procedures are then designed to operate independently of the individual's participation, to treat him as an object, to reduce him to nothing but a body and no longer a person capable of dialoguing with the various administrations and even outwitting them. [The control procedures are] then seen as the solution that will grant the state … the last word… (Bigo and Guild, 2005b: 255)

Although Bigo and Guild write this as a critique of policing-at-a-distance, focusing on the consequences it has for the policed, I would claim that the Danish detectives would also find it to resonate rather neatly with their own experiences. They too feel, although for them this does not of course involve a risk for the same potentially tragic consequences, that some of the policing procedures that are increasingly being implemented are cutting them off from participation. The procedures feel objectifying rather than enabling. And one might even conclude that they also make them less ‘capable of dialoguing with the various administrations and even outwitting them’. So, while it might be true that some of these “distancing developments” grant the state the last word by increasingly muting the policed, they may also be said, paradoxically, to be increasingly muting individual police officers. In contrast to Loftus et al. (2015), who in a recent article on British covert policing (not dissimilar to the police work that has been the focus of this thesis) have argued that the detectives they studied enjoyed the way in which surveillance technologies objectified the suspects and thus aided the detectives in becoming impartial to and removed from the complexities of human life, the Danish detectives did not find this detachment entirely enjoyable. Instead, they tended to long for and prefer work that brought them closer to their suspects – both as a means of controlling and catching them yet, I would claim, also as a means of understanding both the suspects and themselves in a way that went beyond the crude binary of criminal and cop (see also Björk, 2005; 2008).

Driving home from the TFB retreat mentioned at beginning of this chapter, I was given a ride by Detective Søvndsen, a representative from the National Police’s Centre of Investigation. During the journey, we talked about what had happened during the retreat, including everything from the dinner, the drinks and the entertainment to, not least, the theme of the retreat, namely that the Danish Police had to become better adapted to policing a more global world. Discussing this, she remarked:

> Actually, I was a bit surprised that they were all so disinterested and negative or to some extent unexcited. Didn’t you see how they were almost sighing when that new strategic plan for future policing challenges was being presented? They seemed to me to be a bit unnecessarily sceptical, like they almost just flat out refuse to consider any change or to even take any interest in these new things. To me, these new developments are not only necessary they are also exciting. I love my job, being at the forefront of things, establishing and
brokering new contacts and trying out new technologies. And so on. You know? It's fun when you are part of and pushing the frontier. I'm sure they would think the same if they had the same job as me. But, hey, you have it. They don't have the same job. They work here, and I work at the National Police. And as such, I can see how that their priorities might lie elsewhere.

The thoughts of Detective Svendsen, the National Police representative, seem to be a good way to end this chapter. They remind us that the developments dealt with in this thesis are indeed appreciated by some parts of the police, often those like her who are specialists or police officers who work at the national or international level in other ways. This type of appreciation has also been noted in other insightful studies (see Bigo, 2000; Gundhus, 2006). At the same time, Detective Svendsen’s thoughts serve as a reminder of the internal differences in police organisations. This also provides us with an opportunity to remember that this thesis has been concerned with the practices and perceptions of a group of local police detectives – local police detectives whose priorities, as Detective Svendsen acknowledged, lie elsewhere than those of herself or of other national and international police representatives who are directly employed to drive the globalisation of police work forwards. Although the TFB and TFP detectives were in some ways on the frontier of contemporary police work, as a result of their policing of cross-border crimes, these detectives were not employed to push the frontiers of police work. The detectives were local officers not liaison officers. Herein lies a significant difference – or at least a difference that was significant for them. If asked, the detectives, like most police officers, would first and foremost say that they are employed to investigate, apprehend and secure the convictions of criminals. As one of the TFB detectives explained this:

I keep my eyes on what’s going on around me, in front of me. I look at my desk, at the case I’m working, at what I have to do next, and so on. I’m here to arrest bad guys. And I leave all the fancy policymaking, progress-making and what have you to the people higher up. We might live in a more global reality, but my reality is still what’s going on out there.

As he said this, he was pointing out of the window. He was there to ‘arrest bad guys’. To be sure, a consideration of this use of the word ‘arrest’ might in itself provide an answer to why the movements of globalisation are not that easily appreciated by local police officers. Etymologically, ‘to arrest’ means ‘to stay’ or ‘to stop’. Thus, kinetically speaking, living in an increasingly itinerant world truly tests people who are not only employed to make the world stop but who also harbour a preference towards things remaining as they are.

Having noted this, and having discussed and explained the Danish detectives’ nostalgia, the thesis now moves on to contemplate more theoretical matters. Specifically, as was also
hinted at in the words of one of the TFB detectives presented above, the thesis makes an attempt to theorise the reality of policing – arguing that police reality, even though concerned with the darker and often more exceptional and evocative sides of globalisation, is of a more everyday character than is normally discussed in police research and criminology more widely.
Chapter seven:
The banalities of policing;
everyday criminology revisited

‘Fuck that. I don’t give a shit. Fuck those damn Gypsies or whoever they are. They keep on coming. On and on and on. Everyday it’s the same, like an endless stream. Seriously, if I wanted to I could spend every goddamn second going through picture after picture, CCTV footage after CCTV footage, you know, looking for whoever these criminals are who are stealing money from credit cards using some random cash machine. On and on. I don’t want to do that. It’s futile. I’ve had it. I’m fed up, man!’

I hear what I recognise as Detective Clausen’s voice shouting these words in an obviously aggrivated way so that most of the fifth floor of Station City can hear them. And as I enter TFP’s corner office fifteen seconds later, Detective Clausen is still noticeably upset, arguing with Detective Madsen, both of them sitting down but with their attitudes elevated. For what is possibly not more than about a minute or so, but which feels like a small eternity, they speak to or rather yell at each other in a not particularly friendly tone – and they simultaneously speak about the many foreign suspects that they are policing in an ever more critical way.

‘Stop whining and do your job, young man,’ Detective Madsen eventually says, continuing his somewhat patronising lecture by stating, ‘Yeah, I hate it as well but that’s just how it is. That’s the job, catching these disgusting arseholes. And I’ve been doing this since you were in nappies so don’t give me that attitude.’ Unsurprisingly, however, Detective Madsen only succeeds in making Detective Clausen even more irritated, and having sneered a few unpleasant words back, Detective Clausen walks out of the office. After a short while, I follow him and find him on the balcony, smoking a cigarette. ‘To hell with that old man,’ he says when he sees me, ‘And to hell with those fucking foreigners. Fuck them all. I’ll show them all very soon what I think of them.’

In the days following the clash between Detective Madsen and Detective Clausen, I would indeed observe a different and more antagonistic tendency in Detective Clausen’s work. His work had become a bit more ruthless with little if any room for debate with the foreign suspects he encountered. Such an ability and, at times even, desire to debate or engage in ‘small-talk’, as Detective Clausen would put it, was something that I had otherwise often observed in his work and that he often prided himself on. As he once told me:

_TO me, it is important to get them to settle down a bit and not see you as this angry cop. Small-talking with them, having a cigarette, will do that. That’s why I do it and it helps. They always talk afterwards. So, it’s stupid when colleagues insist on being these hard-bitters. That’s no good._
Now, going against his own logic, he had himself become more of a hard hitter. His work did not become a definitive example of police brutality or discrimination, but it was obvious that he, in his own words, could not ‘be bothered with any bullshit’ and was keeping things strictly ‘professional’, meaning that the relationship between himself as a police officer and the suspect was stripped down to its bare bureaucratic minimum. Examples of Detective Clausen’s irascible manner have been provided earlier, including for instance the time when Detective Clausen was standing in the police station courtyard, having to let a Polish suspect go, but sending the suspect on his way by yelling rather forcefully with his face close to that of the Polish man. There were also other examples of not only Detective Clausen but many other colleagues airing irritated sentiments. At TFP and TFB it was not too uncommon to witness both irritation towards suspects and also the occasional loud conflict between colleagues, an observation that has also been made by other police researchers (Fassin, 2013a; Martinussen et al., 2007). Thus, importantly, the above-mentioned example should not be read as me singling out or even exposing Detectives Clausen and Madsen’s behaviour as wrong and exceptional. I merely mention it here as one example of the numerous times that aggravated emotions came to the fore during my stay with both TFP and TFB.

This chapter uses the above-mentioned occurrence as a point of departure as it reflects on the fact that I overheard Detective Clausen and Madsen quarrelling and on how I more generally experienced the detectives from time to time becoming unsympathetic in the way they spoke to and about foreign suspects. How, for instance, should I as a researcher interpret hearing Detective Clausen yelling, ‘I don’t give a shit. Fuck those damn Gypsies’, or hearing Detective Madsen, in reply, calling them ‘disgusting arseholes’? How was I to understand this assertive apathy, as exemplified by Detective Clausen saying he was ‘fed up’ and that he was going to ‘show them all’?

As was noted earlier in the thesis, particularly in Chapter Four in my discussion of the debate on police xenophobia, the typical criminological approach would be to analyse such harsh expressions of disapproval as an example of problematic prejudices, and perhaps even as an example of a police culture that fosters and endorses a kind of masculine aggressiveness that encourages people to speak to and about others in a brutish way. And if not interpreted in this way, it would perhaps be analysed as representing an example of how the difficulties of police work lead police officers to “vent” or “let off steam” as a disagreeable but nevertheless necessary form of Freudian defence mechanism, helping the officers to avoid becoming completely consumed by the difficulties of the job (Björk, 2008; Hughes, 1962; Waddington, 1999b).

Again, I do not think that such readings are wrong. And these readings were in fact the first thing that came to mind that day when I overheard Detectives Clausen and Madsen’s unpleasantries. However, this chapter seeks to promote an additional theoretical
approach, based on a supplementary understanding that was offered to me a few days later by Detective Clausen himself as the workday was coming to an end. On this occasion, I simply asked him why he and Detective Madsen had been shouting at each other.

Yeah… I know… I shouldn’t have gotten into a fight with Madsen. I was just fed up with it all. I was fed up with how he always wants to tell me what to do just because I’m one of the new guys here. Seriously, I have more than proved myself. I arrest more people than he does. I put in the hours. And although I’m not that old, I’ve actually been on the force longer than most. I started early. So give me a break, please! I know how to do this work. I don’t need Madsen or anyone else to tell me what to do all the time. So in that sense, it wasn’t really about the work itself. I know what it entails. I know that there’s an ocean of foreigners coming here and there’s a lot of work to do. That’s just how it is. I honestly don’t care that much … And [pausing for a while] … Yeah [pausing a bit more] … another thing is that things are pretty bad at home with the missus. Like I feel completely exhausted when I get in to work and then work also exhausts me. It’s a vicious circle. I get no space or time to recuperate. Sometimes, it’s just too much. The stress of this job where we get thrown around all the time and then the stress of what’s going on in my private life sometimes gets to me. I start to get slightly short-tempered which is, I know, not the best thing to be in this job.

In this way, Detective Clausen offered not an all-out alternative story that excused him of his combative behaviour, but a supplementary story by which his behaviour could also be understood – a story that had less to do with cultural prejudice or the hardness of the masculine ethos but was more about a police officer, or maybe rather a person being a police officer, who was experiencing strain both at work and at home. Furthermore, although his outbreaks can and should be read as venting, as others’ analyses would argue, it was not a venting that was directly related to the strains of having a job that involved so-called ‘dirty work’ (Dick, 2005; Hughes, 1962). Instead, Detective Clausen was venting more as a result of an irritation at colleagues than because of irritations related to the suspects he met in his work and what they “did” to him. And perhaps even more so, he was expressing emotions that were due to private rather than professional matters – matters that were in no way unique to him but rather well-known to many of his colleagues. To be sure, police officers may be more at risk of or prone to being short-tempered, but in Detective Clausen’s case, his short temper was easily understandable to all of us who have to both work and are trying yet sometimes failing to strike a healthy balance between home and work.

Although I could have chosen other examples, it was this to most people common-sense cause that made me choose the above-mentioned example as the point of departure for this chapter. Furthermore, it was this kind of more everyday explanation for police behaviour that prompted me to write this chapter, together with the many other examples provided in earlier chapters, where explanations for the detectives’ practices and
perceptions were frequently related to more humdrum vocational or even private matters than those described in most criminological analyses. Bearing this in mind, and having thus revealed the essence of this chapter, I believe that together these examples provide empirical and analytical grounds for a call to make criminology more attuned to the more everyday aspects of our study subjects’ lives.

In wishing to promote this call, a call towards an ‘everyday criminology’, I will in the following pages describe what I mean by this more specifically, and thus what such an everyday criminology might look like. Thus, while the preceding chapters have been more distinctively ethnographically formed around, and have revisited, common themes from the field of (global) policing research, this chapter has a more overall theoretical and methodological focus. Importantly, as was also noted in the introduction, the chapter does not promise to provide a grand theory or methodology, but it does have an ambition to sum up and develop the specificities of the analytical approach I have used in my work.

In developing this, and in moving towards an everyday criminology, I will first describe two other contemporary criminologies of everyday life. The first of these is entitled the ‘criminology of everyday life’ by its proponents, and the other something I have myself chosen to label the ‘criminalisation of everyday life’. Building on, but at the same time differing from these two existing criminological approaches, I conclude this chapter by using further empirical examples, and references to like-minded criminological theories, to elaborate my own vision of an ‘everyday criminology’, focusing on its distinctive perspective on what ontologically constitutes ‘the everyday’ and on its potential purchase for police research and wider criminological theorisation.

**Criminology of everyday life**

[W]e must locate some of the new ways of thinking about crime [in] [the new criminologies of everyday life—rational choice theory, routine activity theory, crime as opportunity, situational crime prevention—that are coming to be so influential in the shaping of contemporary police thinking. [These] are usually credited to authors such as Ron Clarke, Marcus Felson, George Kelling and James Q. Wilson. But it might be more accurate to attribute authorship of these ways of thinking and acting to the countless unnamed managers and security staff, whose job it has been to come up with practical solutions to counter the problem of crime as it affects their particular enterprise. (Garland, 2002b: 161)

Thus writes Garland in his influential book *The Culture of Control*, published at the dawn of the new millennium, in which he writes quite elaborately about ‘the new criminologies of everyday life’ (2002a: 127ff). In Garland’s reading, these criminologies of everyday life have occasioned a radical shift in the way criminology approaches the subject of criminality. This shift, Garland argues, is based on ‘new ways of thinking about crime’, or what he
also terms a new-fangled ‘crime consciousness’, that are prevalent not only in (if not pro-
duced by) police thinking but also in the broader segments of society that are either polit-
ically, administratively or commercially engaged in securing the safety and well-being of
citizens (ibid: 160). In short, this new crime consciousness has led to crime no longer being
seen as an exceptional part of life. Rather, crime is “merely” an everyday phenomenon.
Crime is not something that happens in extraordinary circumstance, but simply something
that inevitably happens if certain circumstances encourage it. ‘Opportunity [and not soci-
ety] makes the thief’ is the dictum (Felson and Clarke, 1998). Instead of being a larger
matter of malfunctioning cultural, social or economic issues, crime and the fear of crime
are seen as being propelled by ‘broken windows’ and other mundane, but to the would-be
criminal opportune, communal defects (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

This move, Garland argues, from criminologically understanding crime as an ex-
traordinary aspect of life to instead approaching it as a troublesome yet ordinary fact of
life has been born out of a specific ‘dialect of fear and defensive aggression’ (ibid: 160) –
a fearful and defensive aggression that has over recent years been advanced by politicians,
the media and practitioners and adopted by the public, and which can be related to the
‘culture of fear’ referred to in the introduction that is so visible in contemporary society
(Furedi, 2006). In a circular and consolidating motion, a dominant discursive political fo-
cus on the threat of crime and other societal risks has prompted and is now feeding off
the popular perception that crime, and thus victimisation, is an ever-present part of eve-
day life. Or, as Garland puts it, it is the fact that crime has ‘become more and more
routine in our experience’ that has simultaneously occasioned and provided a justification

As Garland’s depiction neatly illustrates, although he is obviously critical of the
developments he describes, a criminology of everyday life entails a different perspective
on crime and thus also on the perceptions and purposes of criminology. In this perspective
– a perspective that is sometimes also labelled ‘crime science’ by some of its most promi-
nent proponents (Felson and Boba, 2010; Clarke, 2004) – crime should be dealt with as a
real, concrete, practical problem rather than being viewed as a larger social scientific or
philosophical question, as in much of the sociological, critical or cultural criminology – a
realist rather than a relativist approach. In the criminology of everyday life, the crimin-
ological raison d’être is thus for criminologists to willingly lower our usual academic ambitions
and instead approach crime as the societal problem if not evil that it is.

On the basis of this view on criminality, criminologists, or crime scientists, look at
the specific situations in which crimes occur instead of looking at background explana-
tions; and instead of locating some larger root cause, they simply offer concrete analyses
of why crime happens and thus how it can be prevented. It is with this view on crime and
criminology in mind, that Felson and Boba, in the celebrated book specifically entitled *Crime and everyday life* (2010), explain this new criminological agenda in the following words:

> We know more about crime than ever before and can put it together more consistently and clearly. We have new means for bridging the many gaps in our knowledge; the field is no longer in the doldrums. Moreover, we can increasingly relate the study of crime to the experience and principles of other scientific fields. But that can be accomplished only if students of crime will stick close to the earth and always consider how a criminal would respond to a given situation. (Felson and Boba, 2010: ix, emphasis added)

Hence, as Felson and Boba brashly declare, criminologists should stick our otherwise elevated heads closer to the ground and try to imagine how the would-be criminal would see the situation.

As Garland also notes, besides the already mentioned 'broken window theory' and 'opportunity makes the thief', this everyday approach to crime is perhaps best described in 'routine activity theory', for which Felson fittingly has also been partly responsible (Cohen and Felson, 1979). This theoretical approach distinguishes among everyday situations by looking for a specific empirical trinity: 'motivated offenders', 'suitable victims' and 'capable guardians' (ibid.). Here, everyday situations are seen as inescapably criminal if the right or rather wrong combination of this trinity is(n’t) represented. That is, if a motivated offender (which basically means all of us if we are placed in the wrong situation) encounters a suitable victim (say a rich, elderly woman or a villa with expensive design furniture) and nobody is around to fight off the attacker or if the villa lies off the road and has no alarm installed, the chances are that the motivated offender will offend. Thus, in focusing more explicitly on the specific situations in daily life in which criminal activity might have a greater chance of happening, the proponents of the criminology of everyday life hope to be able to provide solutions to prevent crime, again consciously disregarding wider discussions about whether, for instance, the motivated offender has become motivated because of his/her socioeconomic background or perhaps because s/he has been problematically labelled and thus pushed towards criminality by a prejudiced criminal justice system or a wider criminalising discourse.

I genuinely think it is a reasonable academic project to want to provide scientifically backed theories about when and where crime happens instead of solely attending to larger debates about the why. As long as the criminologists of everyday life, as they often do, restrict themselves to this agenda, I am not particularly critical. I am however critical about the worldview this entails or, perhaps more precisely, the worldview and practices that it risks producing. It is probably true that crime can be prevented by for instance doubling up on the number of capable guardians at given 'hot spots', but an everyday life
with, perhaps, no crime and a lot of guards does not sound particularly everyday-ish to me. It sounds more like a crime-free but also culture-free life. It sounds more like militarisation than emancipation. That said, I often find the criminology of everyday life refreshing in its insistence, as Felson argues, that we, the students and scholars of criminology, should be better at putting our heads closer to the ground and really look at what is going on from a bottom-up rather than a top-down perspective. Alongside Felson and other proponents of the criminology of everyday life, I too, as is exemplified both by this chapter and the thesis more generally, find some police research and criminology to be too detached from what really happens on the ground in everyday life.

**Criminalisation of everyday life**

Academically and politically, the gap between what is called ‘the criminology of everyday life’ and what I here term ‘the criminalisation of everyday life’ could not possibly be any wider. While the former concludes that crime is, unfortunately, a normal and unexceptional part of everyday life, and should therefore be studied as such, the latter looks critically at how more and more areas of mundane life are precisely being represented as including criminal risks, thus turning the otherwise mundane into a matter of misconduct. This is the new ‘crime consciousness’ that Garland was critical of. In short, the former perspective points to crime in everyday life and the latter to the criminalisation of everyday life.

Under various well-known headings such as ‘risk policing’ (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), ‘pre-crime’ (Zedner, 2007; Pickering and McCulloch, 2012), ‘governing through crime’ (Simon, 2007) or ‘securitization of society’ (Schuilenburg, 2017) various police researchers and criminologists have correctly pointed to the gradually expanding ways in which contemporary governments are involved in, if not obsessed with, uncovering human or social elements and existences that might evolve into criminal activity if not detected early. In other words, everyday ways of living which were previously seen as, perhaps, a little out of the ordinary or even ill-disciplined are now increasingly treated – by politicians, the police and other governmental actors – as something to be particularly apprehensive of. The maxim seems to be: ‘Wicked people exist. Nothing avails except to set them apart!’ (Garland 2002:160). Ordinary life, with all its contours and colours, is thereby made more black and white, which, the argument goes, produces a risk of criminalising otherwise normal behaviour.

The fact that those who, even minutely, stray from the norm are increasingly placed under governmental suspicion and control, scholars of the criminalisation of everyday life argue, involves the calamitous risk of marginalisation and discrimination and an even stronger reproduction of existing differences between the world’s haves and have-nots. Or as Mythen and Walklate conclude:
Such modes of social sorting and monitoring do not so much produce suspect individuals as risky populations whose movements, actions, and practices are perpetually subject to scrutiny. It would seem that evidence-based decision making has been compromised by fears of a dangerous future, leading to a pre-emptive delirium in which risky others are indelicately identified, branded, and discriminated against. (Mythen and Walklate, 2010: 36)

On a wider level, it is contemporary governments’ obsessive focus on everyday criminal risks that has provided a foundation for the burgeoning and over-arching criminological field interested in ‘regulation’ (Braithwaite, 2000a; 2000b; Hörnqvist, 2015). While the Foucauldian disciplinary panopticon was first and foremost implemented within and through the confines of designated institutional compounds (in the school, the factory, the prison etc.), a regulatory society is a society or culture of control, as Garland (2002b) and Deleuze (1995) have respectively put it, rather than a disciplinary society. In control societies, ever more aspects of our lives are sought to be surveilled and regulated if they are deemed problematic. In the words of Haggerty and Ericson, and as discussed in Chapter Three, a society of control aims at ‘the disappearance of disappearance’ (2000: 620), making an effort to increasingly penetrate even the most private and everyday spheres of our lives with its apprehensive gaze. To summarise, as Neyland for instance has concluded, the essential and critical focus of a criminalisation of everyday life is directed at the many ways in which contemporary policies and discourses are ‘shifting the ordinary into the threatening … shift[ing] things from the mundane into matters of concern’ (2008: 22)

It is obvious that the criminalisation of everyday life argument stands juxtaposed to that of the criminology of everyday life. In fact, the former squarely locates the problems in the epistemology and ontology of the latter. When the criminologist of everyday life insists that crime is “just” a normal occurrence, and that criminology should therefore be focused on detecting the specific things in and aspects of everyday life that might turn into criminal activities, they are seen by the criminologists of everyday criminalisation as actively promoting a regulatory worldview, not unlike the worldview of a police officer, as Garland also noted, in which the mundane is suddenly looked at with an intensified suspicion and scepticism. Thus even though both perspectives look towards ‘the everyday’, ‘the mundane’, ‘the ordinary’, ‘the banalities of life’ etc. in search of criminological theory, they come at with very different research interests in mind.
Towards an everyday criminology

Before going on to describe how I myself envision a form of everyday criminology that differs from the two approaches described above, it may be worth pondering three examples from my fieldwork. Though seemingly quite different in their subject matter, they overlap when it comes to their message, a message about the prominence of the ordinary over the more conspicuous and outstanding aspects of police work.

‘How did this case start? Why did you start suspecting these people?’ During my time with TFB and TFP I often asked these kinds of questions, wanting to know how the detectives had first gotten a sense that something unlawful was happening. In answering these questions, the detectives gave a variety of answers. They explained how cases were opened when intel came in from for example district colleagues, other districts, the National Police, Europol, Interpol or from Swedish, Norwegian, German or Romanian police contacts. A case could also be opened on the back of intel from informants or from external governmental, corporate or civic partners. At other times, the detectives themselves made sure to note what known suspects, or ‘old acquaintances’ as they put it, were up to. The detectives would for example frequently check available records and databases to see if known suspects were out of prison if the MO of crimes committed were thought to match these suspects. The detectives would of course also look for clues in crimes committed which could point towards potential suspects. Lastly, they would often use intel from a prior case, i.e. using the previously mentioned ‘snowball method, to seek out new cases.’ All these reasons make sense given the formal investigation guidelines, especially in relation to the policing of cross-border crime. Similar to what research has noted in talking about contemporary global policing and the policing networks this involves (Bowling and Sheptycki, 2012), the detectives obtained or sought intel both from within their own organisation and from outside, across international and institutional borders, and the detectives used information technologies to surveil and investigate possible suspects. During the many hours I spent with the task forces’ detectives, I had many first-hand experiences that confirmed that this was how they worked and how cases started.

However, I also heard about and experienced other reasons for the detectives starting to suspect people. These were reasons that the detectives themselves admitted were ‘more random’, ‘accidental’ or a ‘stroke of luck.’ One example was when Detective Pedersen was driving to work and unexpectedly spotted a car containing what he thought looked like ‘guys who were up to no good.’ He had followed them, and his suspicions were later proved to be correct. ‘I got lucky. It was a bit unplanned. But then again, it’s not only luck but also my professional expertise, my police perspective, that allowed me to get suspicious in the first place,’ he told me. The same professional expertise, as exemplified in the earlier discussion about the ‘police nose’, was also by and large what guided the TFP detectives’ policing of pickpockets, rather than any pre-acquired intel, thorough analysis or strictly planned investigations.

Another example of a more random reason for starting a case was when the downtown Copenhagen post office called the police because a parcel had accidentally been dropped and had broken open, allowing the post office to see what appeared to be stolen goods inside. ‘And there are many other examples of more chance-based matters where we have gotten on to a group of cross-border criminals not because of organized policing but because small things like that happen. Of course, again, the post office or others call us because we have a good relationship with them, so in that way it’s not pure happenstance. Still, it’s a
different story from what you often hear, right? Often, and especially with the cross-border criminals who come and go so quickly and who we have little prior knowledge of, it is rather random reasons that lead us to investigate them. As TFB Detectives Olesen and Henriksen, who were the lead investigators on a major case run by TFB, told me for example, ‘We seriously only thought this was a small burglary case but then all of a sudden it exploded, and we got transferred from our local unit to TFB and now half of TFB is working on this case. We had no idea, honestly.’

As is demonstrated by these alternative and more accidental reasons for the detectives starting to investigate suspects, their policing of cross-border criminals was not only a story of a structured global policing network that had been put in place. Often, it was quite the contrary, and the situation was instead one in which, as TFB Detective Mogensen put it, ‘more ordinary matters get us started.’ ‘Actually,’ as Mogensen explained further, 

one could even say that cases opened on Danish criminals are more systematised. When it is Danes, we have a network of sources and contacts, we have prior knowledge and experiences and we have our databases. If it is some Romanians, then there isn’t the same existing and working system in place.

In this way, Detective Mogensen pointed, in a way not dissimilar to the points made in Chapter Three, to the fact that the policing of cross-border criminals was not necessarily based on a highly organised surveillance and control system as has otherwise often been described in the research literature. Furthermore, and perhaps unexpectedly given the panoptic arguments embedded in the globalisation of policing literature, it was the traditional “Danish” police investigations conducted within the confines of the district or nation state that were more systematic. When the Danish detectives were policing more international matters, their suspicion was instead sparked, at least sometimes, if not by more random then at least less Orwellian factors or, as Detective Mogensen put it, by ‘more ordinary matters’.

Ordinary occurrences also lie at the heart of the next example, although here not in the form of something that aided the police in catching criminal suspects but rather in the form of something that hindered them:

Everything’s planned. They are ready to go. Today is the day they are going to arrest the suspects in the ‘Bigfoot Case’. For several months, the TFB detectives have been investigating a group of Romanian citizens suspected of having committed numerous burglaries in the more affluent parts of suburban Copenhagen. As with almost all cases, the case name chosen by the detectives reflects a sarcastic mix between a creative process and a particular trait of the suspects. In this case, an oversized footprint was found at the crime scene, quite naturally leading the detectives to entitle the case accordingly. Before leaving work yesterday, the detectives had agreed that this morning would be the perfect time to make the arrests. A plan had
been agreed upon and rules had been assigned. The detectives were excited and so, honestly, had I been as I had travelled on the southbound train back home to my flat the previous evening to write up my fieldnotes.

Looking at the fieldnotes today, I see how I had written in capital letters: TOMORROW, MAKING ARRESTS IN THE BIGFOOT CASE! While the detective work carried out at TFB might appear sensational and intense, I had quickly come to realise that most days were characterised by the exact opposite sensation. Not unlike the way in which it is neatly portrayed in the celebrated TV series, The Wire, most days at TFB were spent waiting, listening to wiretaps in which nothing of interest happened or being on stakeouts for several hours, where the most exciting thing that happened was when we ate our brought-along packed lunches and had a sip of hand-hot, bitter black coffee. However, today was the day when something was surely going to happen – which led to an elation that was welcomed both by the detectives and myself!

'Sorry guys,' says the TFB management at the end of the morning briefing. 'We need you to pick up some arrestees and drive them to court. No-one else is around and able to do this, so we have to ask you to do it,' the management explain, looking at two of the detectives who were otherwise supposed to help with making the ‘Bigfoot’ arrests. Fifteen minutes later, I am sitting at my desk across from Detective Andersen, who is one of the detectives running the case and therefore coordinating today’s arrests.

'Yeah,' she says, 'I’m sorry, but we cannot make the arrests today. There’s not enough of us. Trust me, there’s nothing I want more than to go ahead and pick up these criminals, but we’ve been hit by the tough luck which is one of the everyday realities of police work – something else has to be done and that means that what was planned can’t be done. It’ll just have to wait. It’s annoying but that’s how it is.'

Some days later, when there were no ‘everyday realities’ to get in the way, the TFB detectives did make the arrests. As such, the outcome ended up being the same, the only difference being a slight delay. Often this was the case; things had to wait, or plans had to changed or sometimes even dropped because some comparatively less critical but nonetheless indispensable matters had to be dealt with. Activities that are emblematic of policing and detective work, such as arrests or the gathering of evidence, were not uncommonly postponed or put aside because more mundane matters, that were nonetheless essential to the workings of the police vocation, had to be resolved. This might be picking up arrestees, returning seized evidence, court duty, guard duty, paperwork that needed to be completed, helping colleagues with their paperwork and other, at times private, matters – or it could be that the detectives had to attend a course to learn a new computer program or, in one more bizarre but telling instance, to spend the entire day setting up and testing their new work phones. All in all, these are dull but unavoidable everyday realities – realities that in some cases are even quite familiar to most people working in a contemporary organisation.

The third and final example speaks less of the everyday of police work, and more of the reason why someone might apply to become a police officer in the first place and, more generally, of what motivates police officers:
I know that we’re supposed to say that we do this, that we’re police officers, because of some big calling, a sense of duty or because of some major mission in life – that we do this to make the world a better place. Or that we wanted to do this because of the immense amount of prestige related to the uniform. And of course that’s part of it. It is. I remember when I first applied to get into the police academy and I went to the interview; then I said something along those lines; that I wanted to contribute to society, make things right. And I still do, for sure. Being a policeman and seeing that you’re doing good by catching criminals or helping victims and so on, seeing that you actually are making a difference, makes all of us happy and proud about what we do. That’s easy to understand, I suppose. Yet … I think I speak for most cops when I say that we also just applied for this job because it, yes, felt worthwhile and exciting, but also because we couldn’t really think of anything else that made sense or that we could do. Hell, I could easily have ended up on the backseat of the police car rather than driving it! So, if someone tells you that they are only doing this for queen and country with a tear in their eye and their hand on their heart, then you know they are lying. That’s the story we’ve been trained to tell. The truth is that this is by all means a very unique job, but it is also just a job. You know? I don’t get up in the morning with a sense of duty driving me from my bed to the office. I get up because I need to go work. And I like my work because I get the chance to make a difference, but also simply because I, at least sometimes, enjoy the daily work, my colleagues, the occasional bite of cake and all those other small things that make up a good workday.

In the detectives’ talk and in their other ways of exhibiting that they were dissatisfied with their work, and, by negation, what they enjoyed about it, what drove them, one might expect to hear the well-rehearsed tales about the joys of ‘crime-fighting’ that are common in the police literature, and conversely, the tediousness of for example paperwork or the more ‘social worker aspects’ (i.e. Banton’s peacemaking) that policing also entails. In complaining about how they didn’t have the time to go out and catch criminals because of the demands placed on them by the management, as in the second example provided above, the Danish detectives often confirmed this stereotypical story about what police officers regard as ‘real police work’ and therefore also enjoyable police work.

However, the third and last example is a perfect exemplification of a different story that I heard just as often. This was the story, or stories, that I have told throughout this thesis – a story about how it was not only the action-based and eventful parts of policing that gave them vocational satisfaction. The Danish detectives also found pleasure and vocational value in, as Detective Mikkelsen put it, ‘all those other small things that make up a good workday’. In other words, they were not only motivated by the grandiose tale about duty and ‘putting bad guys away’, but, I would say, they were often even more motivated by a hope that a given day on the job would simply be a good day – a good day not necessarily equalling ‘a big bust’ but simply including the everyday pleasures that make up a workday, such as for instance having gratifying relations with the people one works with,
a case that is moving along nicely or, perhaps, which actually happened quite often although it sounds like cliché, a bite of cake.21 A good day at the job sometimes even involved the exact opposite of the action-based narrative. Sometimes the detectives would come to work with heavy eyelids as a result of a bad night’s sleep, and after the morning briefing had ended, they would proclaim that they

wouldn't mind it if nothing really happened today … who knows, maybe I can even go home early and take half a day off.

To be sure, taking half or whole days off, often to relax or to be with the family, was a common thing for the detectives to do, thus showing an occasional preference for personal leisure over professional passions.

*Everyday realities*

Essentially, the perspective and purchase of ‘the everyday’ that this thesis has applied and promotes lies in the distinctions made above in the three examples of how more mundane matters, these ‘ordinary matters’ as Detective Mogensen put it or ‘everyday realities’ in Detective Andersen’s words, both caused and came in the way of the detectives’ work. In the same way as in this chapter’s initial story about Detective Madsen and Detective Clausen’s dispute, the resulting aggravation and the reasons for it, alongside the many examples of how the detectives were frustrated at what they experienced as everyday yet imperative vocational as well as private matters, this is a perspective on the everyday as just that; everyday, ordinary, banal, run-of-the mill etc. but nonetheless important and meaningful. While the ‘criminology of everyday life’ and ‘the criminalisation of everyday life’ both attend to the everyday by transforming it into the opposite, insisting that it should lose or that it has lost its banal innocence as a result of the new ‘crime consciousness’, this thesis instead focuses on an insistence that everyday life is important, in this case for a group of Danish detectives, precisely because it isn’t part of a crime/criminalising consciousness of this kind.

A good although rather makeshift way of understanding what I mean by this is to think of how conceptually different the act of policing cross-border criminals is from, say, picking up a child from kindergarten. In a conceptually driven criminology, which, as Ferrell amongst others has maintained (2004), represents the conventional criminological approach, these two acts are worlds apart. Thus, analytically, they have nothing to do with.

21 Of course, there are also other reasons why people apply to become police officers. As Loader and Mulcahy have noted, these involve matters such as family traditions and the fact that for a lower-middle class or working-class person the police represent one of the few career paths with a stable sense of job security and societal prestige (2003).
one another. They belong to two hermeneutically and heuristically different modes of being and thus cannot inform one another, and they therefore cannot be part of a coherent criminological explanation. In real life, however, in everyday police work, they have everything to do with one another basically because it is the same individual who carries out both activities: a police officer apprehends a Polish pickpocket and later he picks up his kid, the latter perhaps happening less than an hour after the former. Or, as has also been demonstrated in this thesis, the latter may sometimes even hinder the former.

Bearing this in mind, if one were to search for answers to the detectives’ vocational frustration using the conventional criminological approach, one would run the risk of only coming up with more sweeping accounts of, for example, the wider pushes and pulls of policing politics and culture. The established political, societal or for that matter organisational narrative would refer to the more ostentatious aspects of policing. “They are frustrated because their political worldview is being challenged.” “They are concerned because a greater use of computers and other information technologies means that their work is becoming less action-based and less authoritative.” Or “they are brutish and negative towards foreigners because ruggedness and xenophobia are an essential part of police culture.” And so on. Yet, to the Danish detectives, it was often, or at least also, smaller everyday events at work that made the job worthwhile and it was the complications associated with these that caused their concerns – events that might not even be directly related to policing, but which were basically just ordinary work events common to many workers. ‘What truthfully concerns me professionally,’ as TFB Detective Andersen put it, for example,

is to have a meaningful job. This means that the work itself should be significant and exciting but also that things around here should simply work. You can’t have one without the other, no?

In police research, there has been a tendency to be more concerned with the former part of Andersen’s equation, namely the more obviously significant, exciting if not quarrelsome parts of policing, rather than with the functionalities of everyday work. Or stated more simply, there has been a tendency to focus more on the police-part rather than the work-part when studying ‘police work’. In the words of Fassin, it can be argued that there has been too great a focus on the eventful aspects of policing and a serious lack of analytical focus on ‘the ordinariness of law enforcement’ (2017c). The preference for the eventful, such as the causes and consequences of crime-fighting or public confrontations, is of course understandable, but as I showed in this thesis, there is something to be gained if we extend our criminological attention from the obviously eventful to the more everyday aspects of police work. And in the specific context of this thesis, if we turn our attention towards the everyday aspects of police work it becomes obvious that the globalisation of
local policing involves a range of ordinary yet consequential causes and complications that are quite different from the prevalent tendencies referred to when speaking of a systematized, superintending and judging Leviathan.

Interactionism and the everyday

Admittedly, I am not in any way the first to promote the importance of paying better attention to the more everyday aspects of police work. Below, I will describe three inspirational strands of police and wider criminological research that all, although not necessarily directly, include an emphasis on the analytical importance of everyday life.

One strain of police research that harbours such an intention is the situational/symbolic interactionist approach developed in the 1970s, as already discussed in Chapter Four. This approach was based on the symbolic interactionism of the Second Chicago School and notable scholars such as Goffman and Becker, and was spearheaded by Anglo-American police researchers such as Manning (1977; 1978; 2001; 2008; 2010), Van Maanen (1973a; 1973b; 1978a; 1978b) and Punch (1979a; 1986). By means of ethnographic observations, these scholars sought to describe how the practices and perceptions of the police made up a specific ‘social drama’ – a drama that was continuously performed, negotiated and constructed in and by the everyday interactions of which the police were a part. As Punch rather effusively explains this interactionist approach, simultaneously explaining the purchase of ethnographic observation:

[The complex drama of police work demands an interactionist perspective and that observation is the most suitable technique to tap its multiple dimensions. As a public symbol of law and order, the uniformed policeman on the street is so intrinsically concerned with "face" that we can be blinded by the rhetoric and the performance. Sharing his predicament can take us off-stage, where he is no longer putting on his public act, to perceive him as an individual, a companion, a member of a group and where, off-guard, he looks at you through the fatigue of a long night-shift and explains his work, his life, his world and, inadvertently, helps you write your book. Such intimacies, in all their baffling uniqueness … represent the very essence of a humanistic and qualitative sociology and challenge the critical intellectual to understand and analyze the social dynamics surrounding the basic dramas of the human condition. (Punch 1978:258)]

Drawing on Punch’s writing, what he and the other interactionists sought to do was to not only describe and explain ‘the face’ that police officers put on in the line of duty, denoting a certain dramatised style of law and order, but also to uncover the less apparent backstage matters – to penetrate ‘the smokescreen’, as Van Maanen put it, and study what lies behind. As Punch explains further, the police ethnographer with an interactionist inclination aims not only to meet the policeman but also the man who is a police officer –
meeting the individual behind the uniform where ‘he looks at you through the fatigue of a long night-shift and explains his work, his life, his world and, inadvertently, helps you write your book’ (ibid.).

Having said this, focusing on the everyday and backstage situational outcomes of police work should not be confused with a disregard for more structural sociological explanations. As Manning argues, the interactionist approach does not advocate a disregard for macro-sociological explanations; it is simply committed to the notion that social life is both fragile and negotiated—is built up and affirmed almost daily in interactional encounters—while at the same time appreciating the pattern in life that comes from the inertia that social structures possess and are continuously granted (Manning 1977: 29).

In much the same way, in advocating a move towards an everyday criminology, I have sought to pay good attention to these backstage yet basic dramas of police work in trying to fathom the concerns described by the Danish detectives. Looking methodically at the police’s interactions, as I did for example in Chapter Four when describing the xenophobia that arose from these, was a way for me to understand not only what they produced in terms of consequences for the criminal suspects but also what they meant for and not least did to the officers. Here, in the daily interactions between police officers and suspects or, as in the introduction to the current chapter, in the interactions between officers themselves, it was possible to find explanations for what they thought and did—explanations that were frequently not only about larger cultural or political constructs but also about everyday matters such as a professional or at times even private relationships that were thought to have gone awry. Indeed, sometimes the detectives themselves would even straightforwardly correct me when I was probing into why they had reacted as they did in relation to a suspect, a colleague or a superior, saying

I know you want me to say it just happened because of some bigger, profound reason. But truth be told, it happened because I got annoyed with his behaviour. It’s as simple as that. Sometimes people don’t know how to behave and that pisses you off. Don’t you know that feeling?

‘Of course,’ I said, admitting that this feeling was known to me. That said, I didn’t relinquish the idea that the conflict also spoke of larger issues. However, I also acknowledged the detectives’ reminder that the social situation itself could also hold explanatory power, the task then being to look further into why a certain behaviour was aggravating to the detectives.
Another inspirational source for an everyday criminology can be located in cultural criminology (Ferrell, 2014; Hayward and Young, 2008; Presdee, 2004) – a criminological approach which itself includes the aforementioned interactionist approach in its academic lineage. In his polemical, but for cultural criminology agenda-setting article on ‘Boredom, crime and criminology’ (2004), Ferrell, one of cultural criminology’s foremost proponents, directly identifies ‘everyday existence as an essential arena’ for cultural criminology (ibid: 2). And together with Young and Hayward, two other key cultural criminologists, Ferrell later underlines the importance of this in affirming how ‘cultural criminologists often focus their analytic gaze on those little situations, circumstances and crimes that make up everyday life’ (Young et al., 2008).

The reason why everyday life is such an essential arena for cultural criminologists can be explained by considering what another prominent cultural criminologist, Presdee, borrowing from Bakthin, has discussed as ‘the second life of people’ (2003). By pointing to the analytical significance of this second life, Presdee directs our criminological attention at the unavoidable existential space given to people amid otherwise pressing structures and discourses. Seen from the outside, via statistics, documents or even in interviews, social structures and discourses appear paramount and unavoidable, but in the existential space of everyday life, they inevitably become less uniform. Here, they are constantly perceived, practiced, negotiated and perhaps even altered or circumvented in an encounter with the everyday demands and desires that people might have. Thus, as Hayward and Young explain it in a de Certeauian reference:

\[
\text{[T]he bureaucratic rationalistic world increasingly exerts its influence and impinges on every aspect of human existence. Ironically, it is this world that is imaginary, the idealized construct of planners, politicians and official spokespersons. It fails to grasp or engage with the existential fears, hopes, joys, resentments, and terrors of everyday existence. (Hayward and Young, 2004: 265)}
\]

Indeed, given that this thesis is filled with examples of such sentiments of everyday existence, although mostly of the gloomy sort, it is apparent that such daily attitudes have a bearing on the wider world of which our criminological interlocutors are a part, in my case a group of Danish detectives.

The cultural criminological interest in everyday life is thus, just as with the interactionist approach, not a renunciation of the larger social and cultural conditions that circumscribe everyday life. Instead, it can be described as a methodological intervention – an intervention that includes an effort to ‘rehumanize’ criminology (Ferrell, 2004: 296), an effort by which criminologists allow the individuals we study, be it delinquents or law-
enforcers, to come forth as more than sociological representations. Thus, as Katz, one of the key ancestors of cultural criminology, has decreed:

The first [criminological] commitment is to describe the phenomena to be explained in the forms as they are experienced by the people living them. (Katz 2002:258)

In having this as its guiding principle, cultural criminology is helpful as it, emically and inductively, places theorisation at the feet of the people whom we study rather than in predefined sociological variables – focusing on their experience and existence rather than insisting that what they say or do should be altogether intelligible on the basis of existing social concepts or categories.

**Anthropology of policing and the everyday**

The commitment to the everyday and the ordinary, which is part the ethnographic ethos, makes possible this paradoxical discovery of the obvious (Fassin 2017a: 297).

The final and foremost inspiration to an everyday criminology is found in the anthropological studies of policing whose numbers have been increasing over recent years (Garriott, 2013; Karpiak, 2016a; 2016b; Fassin, 2013a; 2017c; Maguire et al., 2014; Mutsaers, 2014) – studies conducted by anthropologists all trained in ethnographic observational methods and in explaining how the world looks from the commonplace, phenomenological perspective of the people living in it. As Karpiak has summarised the essence of an anthropological perspective on policing, the main drive is to simply: ‘recognize[e] [the police] as anthropological subjects in their own right’ (2016b: 420). This recognition includes extending to police officers the same curious, holistic and humanising gaze given to all subjects of anthropological enquiry. In studying a specific group of people, the Danish police or a remote Polynesian community, the anthropologist seeks to make sense of their practices and perceptions from a grounded, inside perspective, understanding the group’s worldviews, their daily doings and their relations to each other as well as to believed outsiders. This also includes initially suspending prior ideas about how these people can be understood, for instance by deductively dividing their way of life into *a priori* sociological categories such as ‘(police) culture’, ‘(police) politics’ or ‘the law’ as conventional criminology has a tendency to do (Karpiak 2016, Fassin 2017c). It is, as Karpiak has argued, through such an embedded and inductive approach, that ‘a viable means’ is offered by which it is possible
to emphasize the ‘human dimension’ of crime and justice – often lamented by critical and cultural criminologists – without resorting to a dissonant ‘grand theory’ in turning to ‘larger’ global socio-economic forces. (Karpiak, 2016a: 113)

Karpiak’s point is well made. Habitually, criminological approaches are inclined towards grand(er) theory or towards larger (global) socio-economic forces when explaining the who, what, why and how of policing. And this is especially true when it comes to the globalisation of policing. Here, the analytical gaze tends to drift towards international politics and global discourses rather than local effects and affects (see Bowling 2009). Although, as Gundhus and Franko argue, such an analytical inclination is understandable, it nevertheless fails to explore how ‘the daily life of local policing is also crucially affected by these global dynamics’ (2016: 508).

Discovering the ordinary

While larger discourses and politics are most certainly of relevance to the understanding of policing, the anthropology of policing includes, as seen above, an emphasis on local practices and perceptions. In itself, however, this “local interest” doesn’t set the anthropology of policing particularly apart from other studies of the police. What does differentiate an anthropology of policing is what Fassin has described as a rare interest in ‘the routine and its regularities’ (2017c:8). As he elaborates, rather than solely focusing on spectacular aspects, whether heroic or tragic […], [anthropological] ethnographers are attentive to the ordinary and the mundane, to the uncertain and ambiguous, to meaningful details and significant variations’ (ibid).

It is this anthropological attentiveness to the ordinary that this thesis shares and which this chapter promotes. Fassin goes on to explain more precisely what he means when advocating the way in which an anthropological ethnography has an acute eye for the ordinary and mundane aspects of police work. In following and observing a special ‘urban disorder’ unit policing the impoverished banlieues of Paris for an extended period of time, Fassin came to the surprising conclusion that one of his most spectacular discoveries was of a very ordinary sort. Remembering a conversation he had had with a journalist, Fassin explains his ordinary yet spectacular finding as follows:

“It made me see the banlieues and law enforcement in a completely different light”: this remark by a newspaper journalist, who usually covered urban issues and crime stories, was quite heartening. Probably it is for this reason that we practice ethnography—to make a difference in the way we comprehend the world. In this instance, the difference could be named quite simply: the ordinary. Whereas each time the banlieues would make the news it would be for violent incidents, criminal activities, rioting adolescents, or drug trafficking,
I depicted the everyday life of squads, the eventless nights of patrolling, the tedious routine of stops and frisks, the wearisome arrests of undocumented immigrants and marijuana smokers, the repetitive questioning of youths in the housing projects and of Roma people on country roads. In this “descent into the ordinary,” to use Veena Das’s phrase, the most “spectacular discovery” of my research was the inaction characterizing police work in these disadvantaged neighborhoods and the profound boredom exuded by the long hours of roaming through the city (Fassin 2013:631-632).

Thus, to Fassin, the biggest research result of his study lay not in depicting the more evidently quarrelsome aspects of police work but rather in his ‘descent into the ordinary’. In further clarifying what he means by this, Fassin expounds on what might be the reason why a more mundane reality tends to escape the attention of both specialised journalists and trained criminologists:

>[It] takes time to go beyond the first impression of excitement aroused by the officers’ narratives about supposedly exhilarating moments they had experienced and by the emotions of their driving fast through the empty streets to mimic improbable adventure … Consequently […] the monotony of the activity and the tedium of the officers [remains unexploited]. (Fassin 2013: 631-632)

In its core, this is the benefit of an extensive ethnographic engagement. Perhaps even more so when it comes to a branch of life that is so practically and semantically sated with tales and tropes of action, violent encounters, unpolished language, human tragedy and consequential choices like policing, overcoming a proclivity to solely focus on these matters is difficult. However, in being with the Parisian officers for an extended amount of time, Fassin slowly but surely started to notice that one of the most governing aspects of the Parisian police officers’ workday was the continuous boredom of it. And in not only noticing this, as prior police research had also done, but actually analytically exploring what this meant to policing, Fassin managed to demonstrate that the officers’ boredom was one of the fundamental causes of the instances of ruthless police behaviour that he would occasionally witness. Given the discrepancy between the stated exhilarating purpose of the officers’ police work, i.e. policing urban riots and disorder, and the uneventful actualities of their workday, the Parisian officers were inclined ‘to take advantage of any minor event, to transform it into an engrossing expedition and try to turn it into a possible offense’ (Fassin 2013:632). Like restricted potential energy, perhaps the most unnoticeable and ordinary aspect of life, boredom, consequently became a reason for police brutality.

In this way, Fassin managed to find analytical answers about police practice in the usualness of boredom rather than in the uncouthness of police culture. This being his most spectacular finding, Fassin concludes that such ordinary or in other ways mundane
aspects of police work ‘may not have benefitted from all the attention [they] deserve [...] as a banal fact of life’ even though, as he asserts, they might actually be ‘key to the understanding of policing’ (2015). Preceding criminological studies of the police might have noticed various everyday aspects of policing, such as ennui, but they have rarely taken any steps to proceed from empirical observation to analytical scrutiny. Taking such steps into the ordinariness of policing, Fassin concludes, promises to provide novel understandings of policing.

The banalities of policing – being hit by reality

In a nutshell, it is this “Fassanian view” of the everyday and of the importance of thoroughly examining it that this thesis has shown the importance of and which this chapter therefore champions. This is a view based on an anthropological and ethnographic approach to the study of policing in which more attention is paid to, paraphrasing Arendt, the banalities of policing – not in search of evil but of everyday life. Here, in contrast to ‘the criminology of everyday life’ or ‘the criminalisation of everyday life’, we find a view of everyday life as precisely that, everyday life – not something that is potentially criminal nor something that has been criminalised but something that is normal, ordinary, banal, humdrum and routine but which nevertheless has a substantial effect on phenomena of interest to criminological research, in this case the practices and perceptions of Danish detectives policing cross-border crime. In this view, the everyday merely denotes something inconspicuous yet inevitable that happens frequently, a baseline of life that the people whom we study think little about or of, and that they sometimes do not even notice since it has ceased to make an impression. Therefore, when reading police documents or interviewing the police, it probably won’t appear, and it definitely won’t appear important. When continuously observing police work, however, it will slowly but surely materialise, particularly if we as researchers choose to not only notice it but also to explore its meanings and effects. Indeed, as I hope my thesis has succeeded in showing, the Danish detectives’ frustrations and the reactions they produced frequently stemmed not from grand, conjectural reasoning about what to them constituted a proper society, nor from a sense of an organisationally embedded, or for that matter sublime morality. Instead, they were often rooted in everyday irritations and ideas about what a good and fulfilling workday should consist in.

Bearing this in mind, and going back to Detective Andersen’s explanation of why TFP unfortunately would not be able to go out to make the planned arrests, it would definitely be interesting to see what happened if the study of (global) policing and perhaps even criminology more broadly allowed itself to be increasingly ‘hit by everyday realities’… Phrased differently, an everyday criminology, particularly when it comes to studies of po-
licing, could also simply be said to entail finally affording the police the same phenomenological curiosity that Katz thirty years ago pleaded that we should extend to criminals. As he argued in the introduction to his *Seductions of Crime*:

> The study of crime has been preoccupied with a search for background forces [...] to the neglect of [...] that [which] make[s] its various forms sensible, even sensually compelling, ways of being. (Katz, 1988: 3)

An everyday criminology of the police seeks the same: to critically but with curiosity engage with the daily, sensory life-worlds of police officers in order to understand how they think, feel and evaluate their work – including both the practical and perceptual highs and lows of this work. In doing this, to stay with Katz’s terminology, we might truly unearth the seductions of criminal justice.
Conclusion:  
The lost policeman

An individual made morally ‘insensitive’ (that is, one who has been enabled and is willing to cast out of account the welfare of another) is, like it or not, simultaneously situated at the receiving end of the moral insensitivity of the objects of his or her own moral insensitivity (Bauman in Bauman and Donskis, 2013: 15).

‘Why was a group of Danish detectives so concerned about certain global developments in policing?’ This is the central question explored by this thesis. As has been explained, however, police concerns were not my initial research interest. In formulating my research proposal back in 2013, I first and foremost wanted to explore more generally how the Danish Police were dealing with an increase in cross-border crime and, as such, with increasingly becoming part of what has been referred to as ‘the globalisation of local policing’ (Bowling, 2009). However, it was here, in researching the local consequences of the Danish police having become more entwined into a global world order, that I realised that one obvious outcome was a significant amount of complaining and concern among a group of Danish detectives. And it was in continuously encountering these concerns, and in experiencing the weight they carried for the detectives, that I eventually decided to make them the centre of my analytical attention.

Nevertheless, although concerns were a significant part of the detectives’ workday, selecting them as the focal point of my PhD thesis was of course ultimately my own choice, not theirs or anybody else’s. Given this, it may be worth reminding the reader once again that the detectives’ practices and perceptions were certainly much more numerous and diverse than those portrayed here. Having said this, in choosing the detectives’ concerns as the empirical and theoretical focus of this thesis, it is my hope that I have been able to produce something of scholarly interest and maybe even of some originality, not only with regard to the globalisation of (local) policing but also in terms of research on policing in more general terms. I at least believe that the different chapters of the thesis both individually and in sum bear testament to the way in which the Danish detectives’ concerns were not just a matter of uninteresting nit-picking but were also a meaningful analytical matter to pursue. In different but nonetheless comparable ways, they made it possible to, as I have put it, “revisit” well-known research themes from the policing literature from the vantage point of local police practices and perceptions. Indeed, if asked to summarise the most central and fundamental finding of my study, I would argue that these different “revisits” have demonstrated the following: There are significant differences between the globalisation of policing policy and local police practice. In other words, as many studies have demonstrated,
contemporary policing has gone increasingly global as a result of various practical and digital cooperation, but, as has been illustrated in this thesis, it would be erroneous to think that such strategized cooperation have effortlessly produced the wanted actions and attitudes among the individual policing actors employed to carry out said strategies. As Bowling put it, ‘the most significant impact of global interconnectedness may be happening much closer to home’ meaning ‘that neighbourhood policing is undergoing ‘interactive globalisation’ in which indigenous practitioners become globally aware’ (2009: 14). Bowling has a point. However, as has been demonstrated in this thesis, the way in which the indigenous practitioners are becoming globally aware is not necessarily on a par with the main tenets of global policing programs and discourses.

That said, the fact that there is a discrepancy between (global) police policy and (local) police practice is certainly in no way a novel idea. As has been mentioned throughout this thesis, other recent studies have suggested the same thing. Furthermore, the notion that local practices differ in a globalised world, and that one should therefore study these, is an old and much repeated story in globalisation studies. As was noted in the preface to this thesis, this is the reason why Burawoy, amongst others, highlights the importance of ethnographically studying globalisation from the local perspective, since this is where globalisation is ultimately ‘manufactured and received’ (2001: 48). Yet, even though this is the case, studies of the globalisation of policing have often neglected the local perspective and opted for more structural accounts. Also, the studies that do exist of the local level have tended to study the local consequences for the populations at the receiving end of global policing policies. Describing these at times tragic consequences is of course of the utmost importance. However, this thesis has chosen a different course of action. Instead of focusing on the local consequences for the policed, it has made an effort to understand the local consequences that global developments have had on the police themselves – that is, to understand how Danish detectives were becoming globally aware and what this meant to them.

Before going on to reiterate in more detail the thoughts and findings of the different chapters, another important point to be made is the following: While the thesis promotes the importance of ethnographically studying local, everyday police practices, and encourages further studies of these in order to broaden our understanding of the globalisation of policing, it does not in any way refute the importance of broader policy-based studies. Although the Danish detectives’ practices and perceptions at times provided grounds for a nuancing or even modification of certain theoretical tenets, they should first and foremost be read as a needed supplement and not as a reproach of existing knowledge. This is also why I have chosen the more unchallenging term ‘revisiting’ instead of for example ‘revising’ in the titles of the different chapters. Stated differently, as I see it, examining and thus unearthing local, everyday practices is basically a means of driving the
discussion forward in the form of an indispensable dialectic between the programmatic and what it produces – in this case between global developments in policing and the police concerns these developments produce.

Now, returning to the central issue of the thesis, namely the Danish detectives’ concerns, this thesis’ conclusion unsurprisingly also includes an attempt to reiterate why they in an animated moment spoke of themselves as the last policemen and what this meant to them. Actually, this is why this concluding chapter was introduced with Bauman’s words on moral insensitivity, taken from his famous dialogue with Donskis on *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (2013). This is because, as Bauman notes, insensitivity is not just a one-directional moral act, it also acts back on the insensitive person. Insensitivity reverberates. It comes back to haunt you. And in thinking about why the Danish detectives were concerned about certain global policing developments, the haunting and harrowing qualities of insensitivity seemed to be at the heart of their concerns. In other words, on the surface, the detectives might be adhering to popular tales told about a cop’s coolness and cynicism, but beneath this clichéd exterior, they harboured a real concern about the way in which the globalisation of policing was making both their work simpler, shallower and at times more arbitrary. In this way, the detectives became if not the last, then at least somewhat lost policemen – feeling that they were somehow losing their formerly more substantial grip on reality.

The chapters revisited
Going through each chapter, the thesis has included the following arguments:

Having first introduced and framed the study in the introduction and then having provided some reflections on methods and ethics in Chapter One and a description of the study’s empirical background in Chapter Two, Chapter Three took up the question of contemporary police surveillance. Over the last three decades a growing number of studies have pointed to an expansion in police and wider governmental means of surveillance and control. This expansion has been ascribed to an increase in policing collaborations across both international and institutional borders – collaborations furthered not only by actual physical and practical partnerships but more often by a shared use of information technologies by means of which data about (suspected) people are continuously gathered, scrutinised and disseminated. As special investigation task forces engaged in policing cross-border crimes, both TFB and TFP were expected to be an active part of these developments in surveillance. Just like colleagues around the world, both Danish politicians and the Danish police management openly spoke about the need for the Danish police to increase their collaborations and their use of information technologies as these means were understood as being necessary to combat cross-border crime and other international risks.
caused by globalisation. The TFP and TFB detectives agreed. They also saw cooperation and information technologies as a solution to global problems.

However, as the chapter elaborates, when it came to their everyday practices, the detectives often abstained from participating in what can also be described as an expanding policing panopticon. As a result of cultural, technological and private considerations, the detectives’ daily practices were not-so-panoptic after all, as the chapter concludes. In this way, the chapter both included ethnographic descriptions of how a group of Danish detectives played (a limited) part in the alleged increase in police surveillance and also included a call to move beyond policy and to study the actual practices of contemporary surveillance. Furthermore, bearing in mind my focus on the detectives’ concerns, it was exactly the detectives’ outspoken annoyances and apprehensions that stimulated my curiosity. Prior to my study, I was well aware of studies that have noted a problematic increase in surveillance. However, in listening to and analytically following the detectives’ concerns, I was able to provide, if not an alternative account, then at least a more nuanced narrative. In paying attention to the detectives’ daily concerns and even counter-practices, it became obvious that even though the described developments might be providing officers additional panoptic capacities, in terms of the gratifications of everyday police work, these were seen as a hindrance rather than as being enabling.

‘I don’t care about those damn foreigners … they are no fun!’ It was with these words of expressed displeasure, that Chapter Four started. In this chapter, I considered the theme/problem of police xenophobia that has been widely documented around the world, including in Denmark. In policing cross-border crimes, the detectives unsurprisingly came across many foreign nationals. These encounters were often accompanied by some negativity on the detectives’ behalf, a negativity that at times took the form of prejudiced or derogatory attitudes. In this way, the Danish detectives exhibited some of the same signs of xenophobia in relation to foreign nationals as have been widely documented in police research. In said police research, the predominant means of analysis involves explaining such xenophobia as a matter of cultural prejudice that is embedded in the individual officer, the police organisation and/or the society of which the police are a part or to explain xenophobia as a political strategy whereby moral entrepreneurs such as the police point to the harms caused by foreigners as a means of furthering certain internal interests and ideas. However, bearing in mind the above-mentioned citation, that these ‘damn foreigners … are no fun’, the chapter set out to provide an additional explanation. As I experienced it, the detectives’ negativity in relation to foreign suspects was often a manifestation of everyday vocational frustrations. In summary, the detectives became frustrated and at times antagonistic as they experienced that the policing of foreign suspects did not provide the same professional gratifications – and this loss of gratification entailed a risk of the detectives not only becoming annoyed with their job but, also of their blaming
and thus becoming annoyed and even angry with the foreign cross-border criminal suspects. Xenophobia, therefore also became a matter of professional loss, alongside the common explanations of cultural and political prejudice.

While Chapter Four revisited the theme of police xenophobia, or the fear of the foreign(er), Chapter Five took a look at another, related contemporary fear, namely that of terrorism or, more particularly, at the policing of terrorism. In criminological research, the theoretical tenet has been to analyse the policing of terrorism as either a symbolic or substantive issue. In discussing the symbolic effects, the line of thought is to explore how the fear of terror is used as a political means, with politicians or the police for instance taking advantage of the existing fear and promoting their own interests whilst discursively creating a discriminatory ‘us’ and ‘them’ binary. Furthermore, in looking at the substantive effects, researchers have argued that the fear of terror has caused a drastic expansion in and harshening of the legislation, as well as an increase in the resources provided to counterterrorism institutions such as the police. Surveillance and other means of control have increased, marginalising certain groups of people, putting basic human rights at risk and also militarising the police.

In terms of the Danish police, and the Danish detectives more particularly, the fear and threat of terror have led to them improving their firearms skills, having to always carry their service weapon, having to wear a bullet proof vest, having to participate in classes on how to spot radicalisation and having to occasionally stand guard outside places deemed to be at risk of terror, armed with machine guns. In this way they have seemingly become more battle-ready. However, in contrast to the either explicit or latent criminological belief that the police benefit from terrorism, the Danish detectives more often spoke of it as something that annoyed them. It annoyed them because it prevented them from being able to do their jobs. Instead of continuing with their investigations, they had to react to even the slightest possibility of terror, or spend their workday standing guard somewhere or going to the shooting range. Furthermore, they weren’t thrilled about having to carry their weapons and a vest, since these were seen as a hindrance and as symbolically antithetical to the work of proper detective. And, even more troubling to the detectives and many of their colleagues, the threat of terror caused many private problems as they were ordered to show up to work a long way from home or to work overtime, which prevented them from being able to participate properly in their family lives. Thus, by observing the detectives’ complaints regarding the fear of terror, and what it meant in relation to their work, an alternative narrative appeared, a narrative in which the policing of terrorism – at least at this local, frontline level – was not appreciated as something that increased the power of the police but rather as something that disempowered the officers in their everyday work. Here, the politically dictated policing of terrorism was somewhat paradoxically also terrorising the police.
Police frustrations, concerns, complaints, apprehensions and other ways of exhibiting a negative stance towards the current state of things were a key element of Chapters Three to Five. Additionally, alongside their negativity, the detectives simultaneously projected a yearning for the proverbial 'good old days', a nostalgia. This police nostalgia became the focus of Chapter Six. In focusing on the reasons for the Danish detectives' nostalgia, the chapter set out to answer the thesis' principal research question, namely why the detectives were so concerned in relation to contemporary times. Why did they somehow think that they were the last policemen? To be sure, nostalgia is not something unique to this group of Danish detectives. Much police research has demonstrated that particularly frontline police officers have a wistfulness about them. As professionals, the police are known for being sceptical about the present and to have an almost romanticised view of the past. Research has habitually explained such police nostalgia as constituting if not a false then at least a biased image of the past. The argument goes that police nostalgia should be read as a means by which frontline officers come together, building up a needed in-group solidarity. Alternatively, research has viewed police nostalgia as constituting a residual and problematic political ideology which police officers might, if given the opportunity, act out in their work, by policing and discriminating against that and those they deem to be at fault for destroying the 'good old days'. As has been argued in this thesis, these two readings of police nostalgia also make good sense in relation to the Danish detectives. However, the chapter also aimed to demonstrate that by themselves these two readings were also limiting, if we truly want to understand the reasons why the detectives were so concerned. Instead, making use of Battaglia's concept of 'practical nostalgia', I explored what would happen if we were to take the Danish detectives' sense of loss seriously. In doing this, and in remembering the lessons learned in previous chapters, the chapter argued that the detectives' nostalgia and their wider negativity could also be understood as expressions of what was to them a significant professional loss. While the detectives did understand the need to develop various new policing practices as a result of Denmark having become part of a more globalised world, they at times felt that these developments were at odds with their ideas about real, good and gratifying police work. This was not however just about the demise of a clichéd 'police culture' and 'real police work' in the sense most often described in police research, where it has been viewed as a matter of action-based, authoritative crime-fighting. Instead, the detectives complained because they experienced having a harder time relating to the new suspects they were encountering, because they felt estranged in having to enter into collaborations with foreign colleagues or when having to use computer-generated intelligence of which they had little personal knowledge and because, in general, they felt that many of these global issues were simply keeping them from doing their job. This was why they – consciously exaggerating – thought of themselves as the last of their kind.
The fact that the detectives were nostalgic and believed certain developments to be troubling to their ideas about police work is not the same as saying that they were correct in thinking in this way. There are many examples of how police officers have been advocates of not accepting changes that have obviously been needed, bearing in mind issues of police brutality and discrimination to mention only two examples. However, as the chapter goes on to argue, there might be something in the Danish detectives’ nostalgia that many criminologists would sympathise with. Criminologists often share the notion that distance is problematic when it comes to policing and punishment. In other words, much has been written about the way in which there is a risk of dehumanising policing and punishment if it is made too distanced, mechanical, technological etc. This has been the case ever since Arendt’s argument that Eichmann “merely” exhibited the banalities of evil that were so easily yet brutally inscribed into a thoughtless bureaucratic system. Similar critiques have been raised in relation to an increase in policing-at-a-distance. Here, a growing distance between the police and the policed is thought to entail the danger of an increase in indifference, violence, and dominance via a muting of the policed. Simply stated, when a policing relation includes few or no actual human encounters it becomes more difficult for the policed to defend themselves, but easier for the police to be inconsiderate. Bearing such problems of distance in mind, Chapter Six thus ends by arguing that problems of distance were a central part of the detectives’ concerns. They, not unlike the policed, also found these new means of policing to be muting and disempowering. Distance, e.g. in the form of using information technologies, might be aiding them in locating suspects, but it did not help them in creating a broader and more intimate knowledge of the problem at hand. They often felt that their everyday discretion, the core aspect of their sense of professional worth, was being diminished as a result of distancing technologies and wider movements within the global world into which they were increasingly being propelled. Hence, even though they did not have the same outspoken humanistic ideals as criminologists with regard to the issue of why more distanced means of policing might be wrong, it is, as Chapter Six concludes, nevertheless worth noting that the detectives’ concerns were much on a par with criminological critiques.

Unlike the first six chapters, Chapter Seven aimed less at providing an analysis of certain empirical findings. Instead, it aimed to ask what the thesis’ larger theoretical if not methodological contribution consist in. Stated differently, in this chapter I made an effort to encourage an ‘everyday criminology’ – a criminology that pays better attention to, as Fassin has also put it in relation to police studies, ‘the ordinariness of law enforcement’ and how the apparently ordinary has a considerable effect on the people we study. Throughout the thesis, examples have been provided of how the Danish detectives’ reactions to changes in their workday were not always caused by a somewhat crude conservative outlook embedded in and strengthened by the inertia of the police organisation or
'police culture'. Many of their reactions and concerns were simply (also) a matter of them experiencing a loss or a conflict of a more workaday character. They disliked foreign suspects because they were less fun. They did not participate properly in surveillance developments as a result of vocational ideas about how proper police work should be carried out, because they preferred helping a colleague instead, because they had to pick up their kids or because they felt technologically incompetent. And they were not too pleased about the way in which globalisation had carried with it an increase in cross-border issues such as terrorism, not only because they were worried about what this meant for Danish society but, on an everyday basis, because they constituted a significance vocational hindrance. 

In short, by not bracketing the detectives’ often rather humdrum complaints as just that, humdrum, and thus uninteresting, but instead taking them seriously and pursuing their effects, the thesis provided several examples of how the seemingly ordinary often carried a lot of weight when it came to the detectives’ practices and perceptions. This is not the same as saying that the detectives were not heavily affected by the larger social and cultural structures of which they were a part. Of course they were. Focusing on the more everyday aspects was merely a means of providing an additional story – an additional everyday story that is too rarely told in police research and criminology more broadly. Importantly, as is argued in Chapter Seven, a call towards an everyday criminology should therefore not be confused with the in-fashion criminology of everyday life, which argues that criminality is a banal fact of lived life and which therefore seeks to describe the situations that are more criminogenic than others. Nor does an everyday criminology represent a mirroring of the many interesting studies that are looking at how everyday life is increasingly being criminalised via a regulatory risk-management paradigm. An everyday criminology finds the everyday interesting not because it is criminal(ised). Instead, it looks for how quite unremarkable and ordinary aspects of life may have a remarkable effect on the things that constitute the principal interests of criminologists, in this case questions of policing and globalisation.

Lost policemen: ‘Does it really matter?’

Alright, so maybe some Danish detectives don’t entirely appreciate these various global developments in policing, and maybe they in their everyday practices even contest them, but, in the context of the big picture, does this really matter? Isn’t it just an exception to the rule – a small drop in the ocean?

During my time as a PhD Research Fellow, this is a type of question that I have been repeatedly asked when presenting my thesis’ findings to colleagues. In this respect, both junior and senior scholars would generally express an appreciation for my ethnographic
examples and arguments (which is not to say that you must necessarily agree with them),
but could still feel that a ‘proper critique’, as one professor put it, was lacking.

In the same way as my many presentations of my work have ended with someone
posing a question of this kind, it seems fitting to conclude this thesis in a similar way.
When asked this question, I have naturally made an attempt to answer it, explaining that I
both see my descriptions of the Danish detectives’ everyday practices and perceptions as
having a purchase for criminological theorisation and, also that they involve a ‘proper
critique’. Although I believe this question warrants a much bigger discussion than these
concluding remarks will allow for, I will attempt to outline three reasons why I believe it
is proper – why it is not just some anecdotal exception to the rule – my simply naively
recounting the peculiar cantankerous ways of a number of Danish detectives – but how it
actually carries some critical weight.

First, ethnography matters. Reiterating the reasoning of the pioneers of police eth-
nography, being allowed to observe the daily actualities of police work is of importance as
it is the only means by which we can penetrate the smokescreen that is otherwise laid
down by police forces. Since we know that there is a difference between what the police
say in public and what they do and think in practice, it is imperative for police research to
explore and overcome this divide. If it does not, we risk misinterpreting or being misled.
Of course, this remains a risk even when one is allowed to conduct an ethnographic study.
However, as Van Maanen asserted, and with which I agree, there is ‘no other method to
explore and begin to describe the “backstage” orientation of actors to their work than to
join with them and share both the objective and subjective “becoming” experience’
(1973b: 77). In the case of my study, I was interested in knowing ‘the “backstage” orien-
tations’ of some Danish police actors involved in policing cross-border crime. Or, as I
have framed this thesis, I was interested in answering Bowling and others’ call for further
studies of ‘the globalisation of local policing’. This I did. And although the stories I have
ended up telling and portraying are not in any way exhaustive of the many other things
that the Danish detectives’ work involved, the thesis nevertheless represents a real and
indeed rare insight into police practices and perceptions in relation to cross-border crime –
insights into the ways in which the policing of globalisation affected their work. These
ethnographic stories of the globalisation of local policing, this empirical matter, is a con-
tribution in itself to a field of research that is on the rise but which remains scarcely stud-
ied.

Secondly and relatedly, the thesis, in a Popperian sense, provides if not empirical
falsification then at least a testing and nuancing of some of the prevalent criminological
theories regarding the globalisation of policing. Here, exceptions are the rule. While some
of the examples of the Danish detectives’ thoughts and actions have been in line with
prevalent understandings, they have also occasionally varied from these. As was stated
earlier, differences between (global) policing policies and (local) policing practices have emerged. For example, while it is true that the many fears seen in many contemporary societies in relation to alleged global risks such as terrorism, cross-border crimes and undocumented migration are causing a political push to increase policing collaborations both practically and digitally, and while this might even amount to a panopticon and a paramilitarisation of the police, this is not the same as local police officers finding it easy to appreciate and participate in the developments. As this thesis has aimed to demonstrate, such exceptional policing means are, at least sometimes, obstructed by everyday partialities at the local level. Importantly, this is not a one-off finding of my own. It is echoed and thus confirmed in the few but increasing number of qualitative studies on the matter. This, of course, should not persuade us to abandon analysis and critique of policies and discourses that expand policing beyond what is reasonable, but it should persuade us to not conflate policy with practice and to thus be a bit more hesitant and nuanced in our descriptions of the local realities of an expansion of this kind. If we are not, then police research and criminology can (just as we sometimes criticise politicians, the media, the police etc. of doing) be criticised for misrepresenting the truth, for unnecessary fear-mongering or, as it is a la mode to say, for “fake news”. Indeed, in this so-called post-factual world, social science should first and foremost make sure to keep its empirical facts straight (Fassin, 2017b; Matthews, 2009). In line with this, one might therefore say that the thesis amounts more to “a critique of criminological critiques of policing” rather than “a criminological critique of policing”. In other words it has primarily been interested in developing grounded knowledge rather than in passing judgment. Whether it has succeeded in doing the former is another but of course important question.

Speaking of critique, the thesis includes a third and final merit. The police as an institution and policing as practice should certainly be examined and criticised for their problematic consequences or even misconduct. To be sure, this thesis could and perhaps should be criticised for not having properly seized upon this opportunity. As other similar studies have shown, for example, the policing of cross-border criminals or non-citizens more broadly tends to include a problematic conflation of criminal law and migration law, which leads to the non-citizen facing a double and often opaque penal regime. Other studies have highlighted the increased tendency for racial profiling and discrimination in a globalised world, whereby policing is helping to enforce the lines between national insiders and migrant and ethnic outsiders. And some policing studies have shown that the discourses surrounding cross-border crime and alleged global risks are (consciously) exaggerated beyond their practical reality. All these studies, alongside others I have forgotten to mention, have served to develop our critical understanding of new global policing realities.

However, the thesis has been differently invested. It has certainly acknowledged those instances where the Danish police’s policing of cross-border crimes could be read
through the critical lenses mentioned. However, as was stated in the introduction, its empirical object was not the consequences of policing but rather the police officers’ view on their increasingly globalised workday. Since they were the empirical object of my study, I have sought to show and analyse how these views included a considerable amount of vocational concern. Here, one could argue that in describing the police officers’ concerns I have merely paid lip service to a profession and professionals known to be belligerent and backward-looking. Although I understand this concern, I disagree. As is the case in Chapter Six, which focuses on police nostalgia, I have aimed to show that it would be a flat and, I believe, prejudiced and even patronising reading to simply discard the detectives’ concerns as nothing but sentimental grumpiness. Their concerns and nostalgia were not just a means of producing esprit de corps through self-victimisation, nor were they merely a matter of a struggle to reinstate an erstwhile work and world reality based on the conservative stereotype of ‘police culture’. The detectives actually experienced that key and appreciated aspects of their daily work were being problematically challenged by, amongst other things, global developments.

Herein lies a significant critical contribution. Because in directly or indirectly explaining the vocational aspects that the detectives had lost and the problematic consequences of this, the detectives’ concern or, indeed, critique, became a strange echo of the prevalent criminological critique in this area. Just as police researchers and criminologists have more widely criticised the way in which policing these days is becoming more global, omnipresent, opaque, covert, technology-based, automated, detached, distanced, crude and cynical and in different ways more difficult to hold to account, the Danish detectives voiced similar critiques. They too felt that policing was increasingly moving away from being a human(e) enterprise based on personal involvement and experience – becoming ordinal instead of ordinary.

Thus one could say that this thesis might not be entirely critical of the police but rather perhaps critical with the police. This is not the same as siding with them. It is simply an acknowledgement of a common critical ground – a common ground which I believe can prove fruitful for change; or, dare I say it, for a critical collaboration. As Wuestewald and Steinheider have argued, for example, the chances of change increase when the researcher demonstrates his/her ability to understand the insider perspective (2009). Or as Boltanski has maintained more broadly in his ‘pragmatic sociology of critique’, disputes can more easily be resolved if the involved parties do not insist on interpreting matters based on two completely separate understandings of the world (Boltanski, 2011) (see also Björk, 2018: 472).
The loss of policing

Throughout the last couple of decades, scholars have been speaking of a major transformation of policing (see Jones and Newburn 2002). In other words, although disagreeing on how radical the change is, there is a consensus that the notion of policing as the exclusive undertaking of a state sanctioned public police needs to be abandoned. Witnessing a growth in the number of both public and private actors engaged in different and collaborative forms of crime-fighting, security provision and risk management, it is argued that policing and not the (public) police should be the focus of scholarly interest. Stated differently, the job for present-day policing scholars is to look beyond the police and instead study the plural and manifold forms and formations that are engaged in policing, protecting, surveilling and controlling the public. This expansion of policing across not only institutional but international borders has led some of the most prominent policing scholars to speak of how the public police are experiencing a ‘true identity crisis’ (Bayley and Shearing 1996: 858); some have even declared that this may be the end of the public police (McLaughlin and Levi, 1995).

As already discussed, the title of this thesis ostensibly lends itself to this discussion. Thinking about the detectives’ many complaints and the way in which they spoke of themselves being ‘a dying breed’, it seems reasonable to suggest that they were actively involved in this transformative or even terminal narrative. In some ways they were. The developments to which their job was being subjected were much in line with the transformational tale; over recent years their job had become more subjected to political and managerial pressures; increasingly guided by numbers; more based on intelligence gathering, sharing and analysis; increasingly based on different technologies; and also propelled towards increased collaboration with other public and private policing partners – a development that was intensified by the way in which they were tasked with policing more global issues such as cross-border crime in relation to which the latter developments in particular were seen as fundamental. Hence, in experiencing such developments the detectives were growing sceptical, sometimes contemplating whether all these vocational changes were not on a par with the ‘watershed in the evolution of [s]ystems of crime control and law enforcement’ (1996: 858) foretold by Bayley and Shearing.

However, even though the detectives’ apprehensive accounts might lead one to affirm what Bayley and Shearing amongst others have argued, this is not really what this PhD thesis has been about. In other words, whether the Danish Police in general and the two task forces in particular have undergone an actual watershed in their system of policing is not for me to say. Changes have definitely occurred. Yet, this thesis has restricted itself to not analysing the exactness of these changes and has instead pursued an understanding of the various concerns expressed in relation to these. Furthermore, in examining the detectives’ concerns, I have not been recounting Bayley and Shearing’s tale about the ‘true
identity crisis’ (ibid) that the aforementioned changes have produced for the public police. The crisis experienced by the Danish detectives, I believe, was not (only) about them experiencing a loss of respect, power, purpose and their position in society, as much of the policing transformation literature has otherwise argued. Instead of it being a matter of a loss of, so to speak, policing pedigree, the concerns were much more about a loss of professional profoundness. As a result of developments caused by their inclusion into a more global policing order, the detectives were experiencing that their vocation might have enlarged its supervisory capacities but had simultaneously lost its local and everyday complexities. Or, to put it in more abstract social scientific parlance, their job had, to their regret, become more like a panopticon yet less like an oligopticon. As Latour has expressed this difference, oligoptic perspectives denote a means of grounded inspection that ‘do exactly the opposite of panoptica: they see much too little to feed the megalomania of the inspector or the paranoia of the inspected, but what they see, they see well’ (2005: 181).

To be sure, the loss that the Danish detectives were talking about was indeed about them increasingly not seeing or perhaps rather grasping their immediate reality as well as previously.

Once again, one might be indifferent to the police complaining about having their sight and senses constrained. If allowed to take a final normative stance, however, I believe such indifference would be misguided. This is because there is a risk that the police will not only become more aloof and indifferent but also more aggressive. Indeed, as Sheptycki has noted, for example, the fact that the current developments in policing dictate a greater reliance on different practices and technologies that are removed from the actual encounter between the police and policed include the danger of producing

an enhanced belief in the efficacy of coercion [which] results in the tendency to lose contact with the complexity of reality and to grow ever more reliant on the exercise of force.

The psychological price paid is manifest in defensive cynicism and aggressive moralism.

(Sheptycki, 2007a: 34)

Consequently, the losses of policing or, more accurately, police officers that this thesis has been engaged with are not just a Benthamite matter of a decrease in professional gratification. They also represent a story about how certain developments in policing might lead to greater police carelessness, assertiveness and thus reliance on displays of power, as the objects of their power are becoming increasingly dehumanised. However, in contrast to what may be the popular notion, this is not a development that my group of Danish detectives, at least, found enjoyable. To them, as Bauman predicted, insensitivity was coming back to haunt them. They might have been given practices and technologies that would produce a quantifiable increase in their policing capacities but qualitatively, these simply
felt insubstantial. Thinking about the haunting hazards of current policing developments, I would therefore suggest we should not simply bracket such police concerns as biased idiosyncrasies. Indeed, as Björk has argued, the police officer’s lack of ability to establish coherent professional meaning presents itself as a substantial policing problem (2005). As he has demonstrated, frustration and subsequently aggression is the psycho-social outcome of police officers experiencing that what they do and whom they do it to are beyond apprehension. This is when the police develop ‘a desire to settle scores’ or to ‘deceive, humiliate or turn to violence’ (ibid: 309). In short, police meaninglessness is a stimulus for police misconduct. As a result of the current developments discussed in this thesis and the described meaninglessness experienced by the police, I am apprehensive that we might be facing a future of policing that is increasingly based on such violent score-settling. Looking at the world around us, there appear to be many signs of this. This is something we should contest and criticise. This is something that truly matters.
References


Aas KF. (2012a) ‘The Earth is one but the world is not’: Criminological theory and its geopolitical divisions. *Theoretical criminology* 16: 5-20.


Hughes EC. (1962) Good people and dirty work. Social problems 10: 3-11.


Policing 1: 501-513.

Haggerty KD, Ball K and Lyon D (eds) Routledge handbook of surveillance studies. London: 
Routledge, 141-148.

Kruize P. (2016) Omrejsende kriminelle i Danmark. Copenhagen: Faculty of Law, 
University of Copenhagen.

domstole mv En sammenligning med andre europæere, København: Justitsministeriets 
Forskningskontor.

Practices. In: Lander I, Ravn S and Jon N (eds) Masculinities in the Criminological Field: 
Control, Vulnerability and Risk-Taking. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 71.

Larsen S. (2017) Dansk politi advarer forbrydere: Vi er klar med et »supervåben«. Available at: 


Oxford University Press.

Lee JA. (1981) Some structural aspects of police deviance in relations with minority groups, Toronto: 
Butterworth.

Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

345.


culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press.


Reiss AJ. (1968) Stuff and nonsense about social surveys and observation. *Institutions and the Person* 351-367.


Svan M. (2017) 60 procent af danskerne vil have mere overvågning: Blå blok er splittet om spørgsmålet. *BT*.


Van Maanen J. (1973b) Working the street; a developmental view of police behavior. *Working paper (Sloan School of Management)*.


