

Beyond the Call of Duty
Long hours of work in the UK Police Service:
Causes, consequences and alternatives

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&

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Critical Management Studies

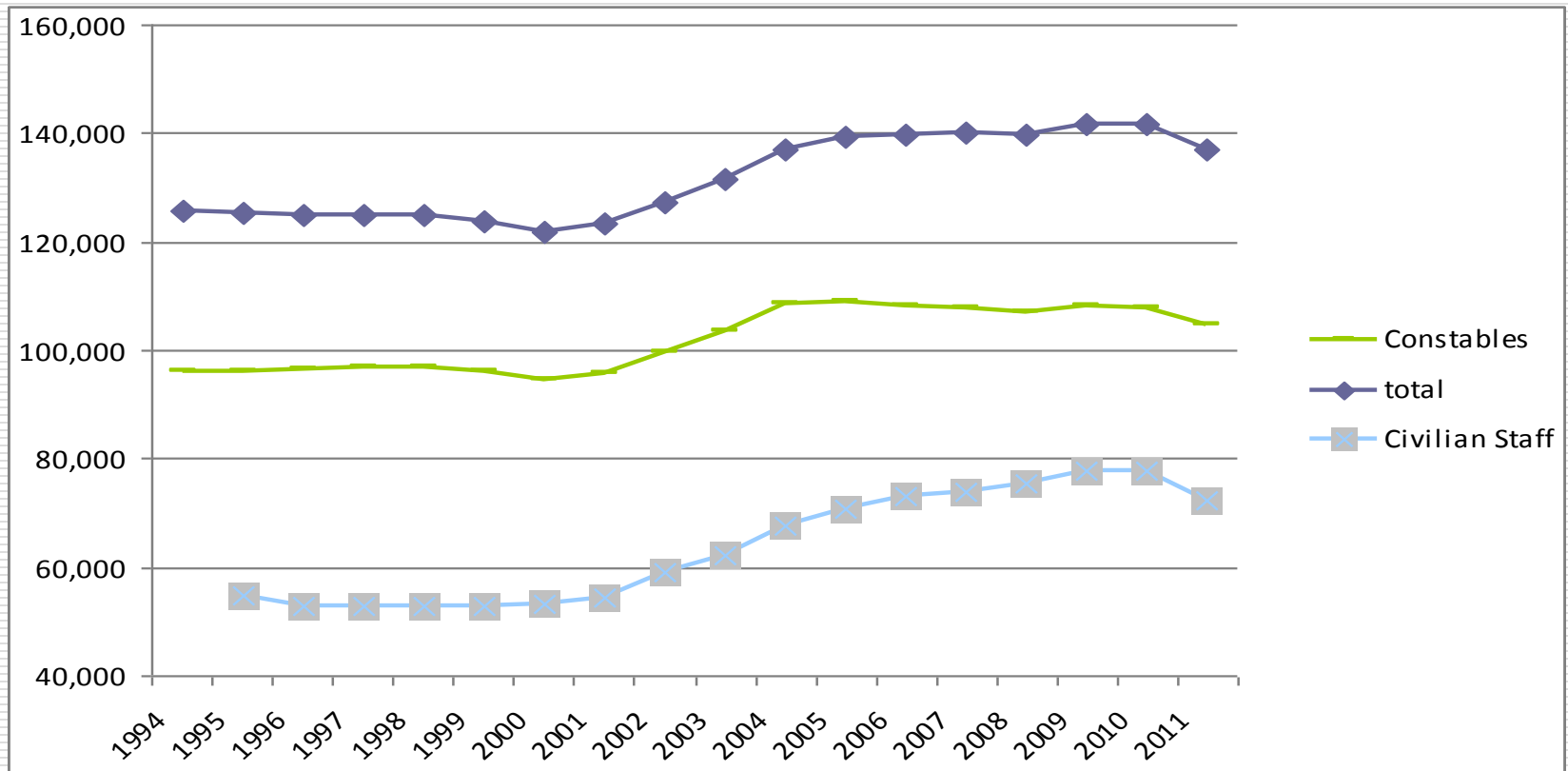
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Manchester University

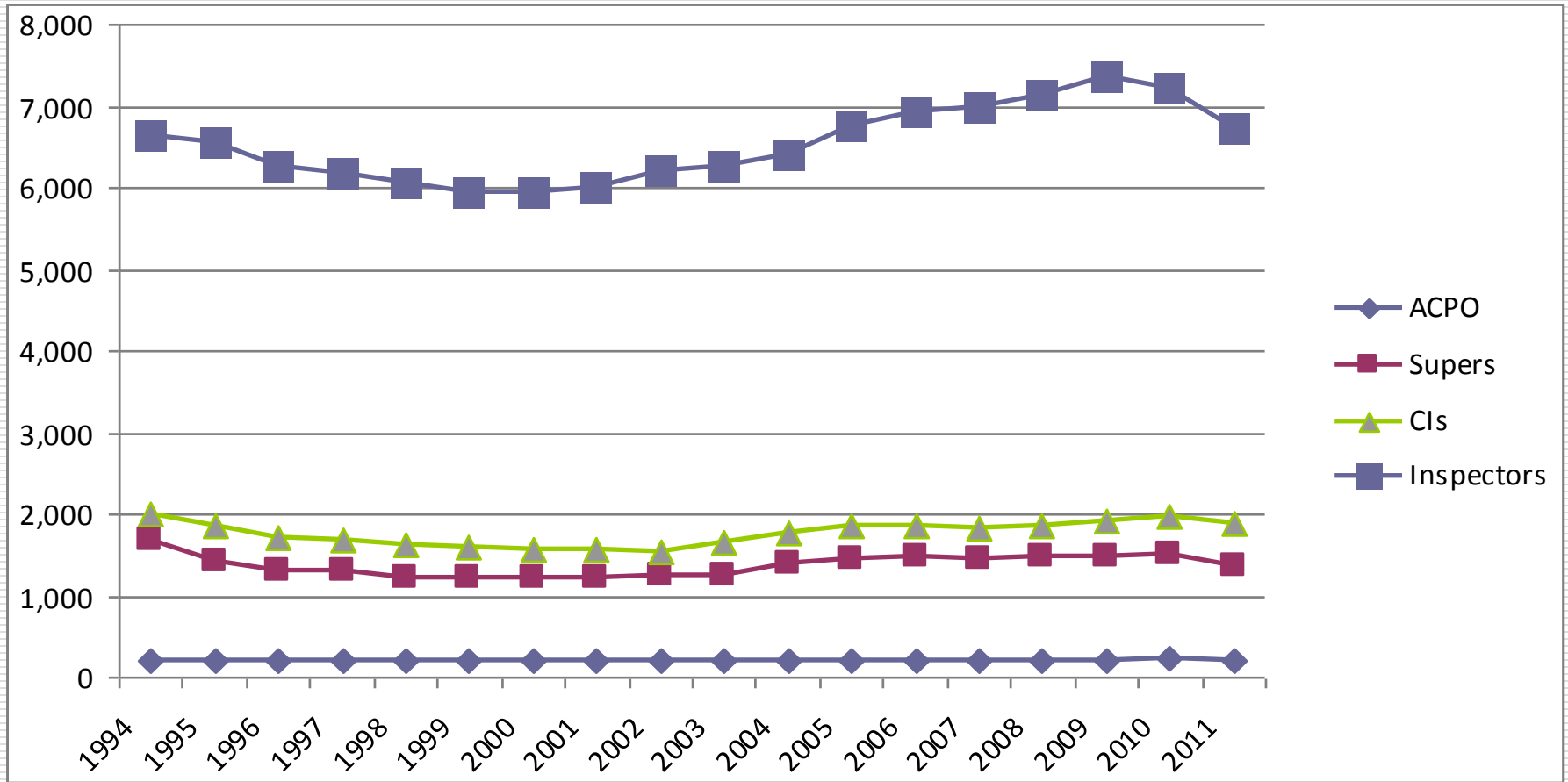
Background

- ‘Buy-out’ of overtime for Inspectors (1994)
- Expansion in police service (2001-2009) followed by CSR 2010
- Survey of Inspectors’ hours of work in England & Wales (Jan 2011)
- Survey of Inspectors’ hours of work in Scotland (Sept 2011)
- Focus groups Sept to Dec 2011
- ESRC-funded Knowledge Exchange Project Feb 2013-2014

Total Police Force Strength, Constables and Civilian Staff, 1994-2011 (England & Wales)

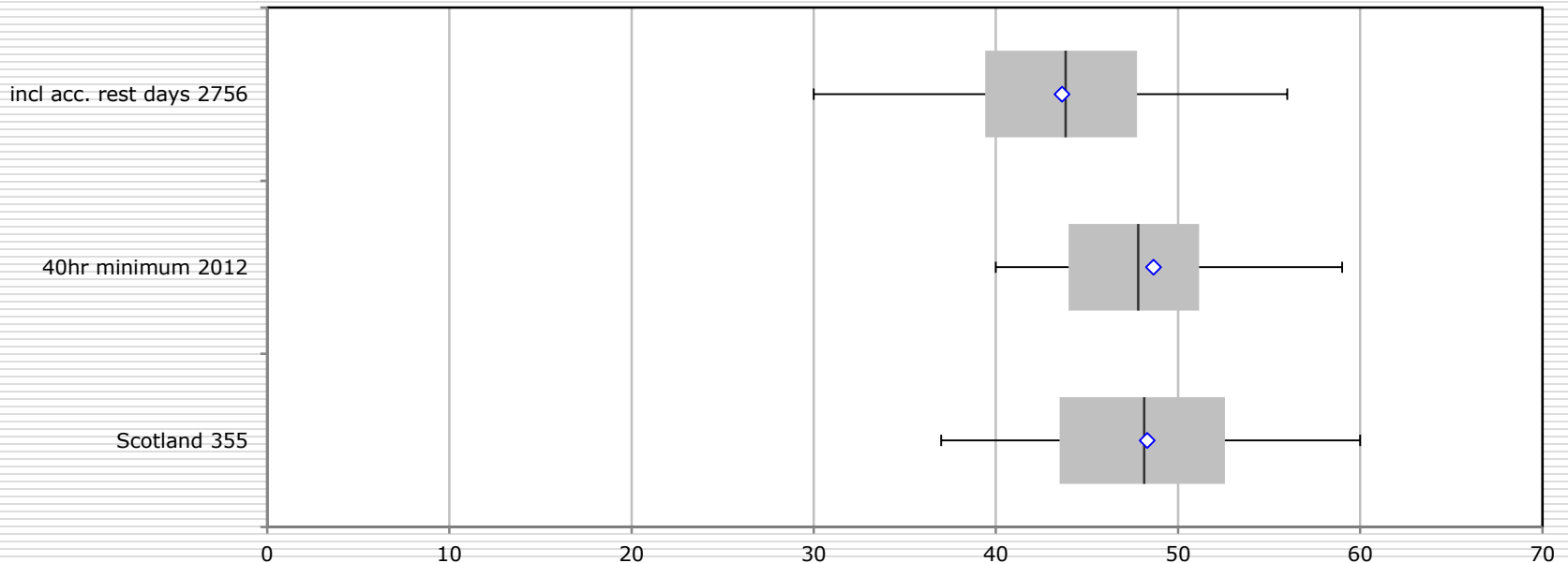


Chief Officer and Inspecting Ranks, 1994-2011 (England & Wales)

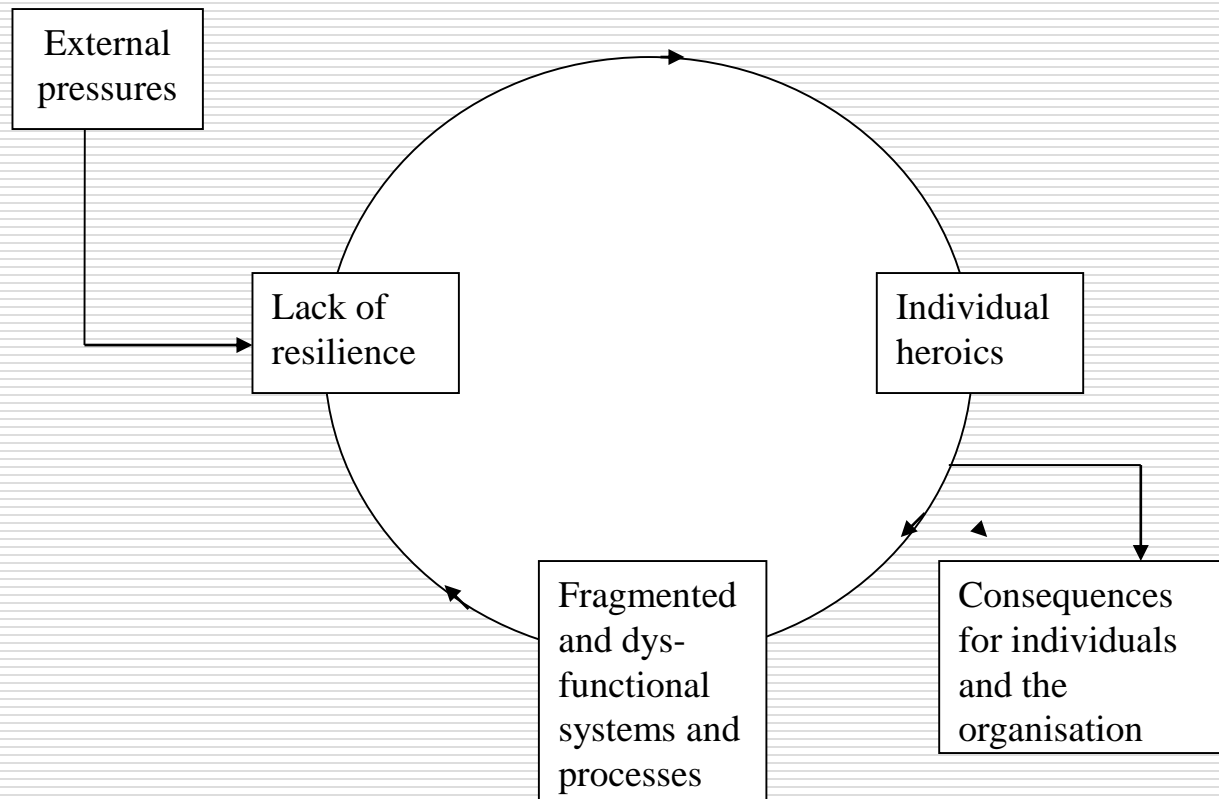


Working Time of Inspectors

Weekly Hours by Sex for Full-Time Inspectors whose Hours are not Affected by Leave, England and Wales: Week Beginning 24th January 2011



The Vicious Work-Time Cycle of the Inspecting Ranks



Source: adapted from Perlow (1999)

Personal Resilience

- *confidence* – having feelings of competence, effectiveness in coping with stressful situations and strong self esteem
- *social support* – good relationships with others
- *adaptability* – flexibility and responsiveness to changing situations beyond the immediate control of the individual, and
- *purposefulness* – having a clear sense of purpose, clear values, drive and direction

Effect of lack of organizational resilience

- Control and identity
- Expanding job territory
- Expanding job roles

Expanding Job Territory

My Force, particularly within my own sector, is reducing the amount of Inspectors considerably via natural wastage and not replacing them. Sectors are being joined together to create 'super sectors' with one Inspector in charge rather than the previous two for the separate sectors. In addition, responsibility for the response staff will come to the sector Inspector too. We have to do far, far more with far, far less now and the rank of Inspector will shoulder much of this (Region 7 Operational Inspector, female 21 years service)

There is a marked decline in the number of Inspecting ranks. I was promoted almost 5 years ago and at that time working in divisional headquarters were ten Inspectors working shifts, now there are three. I now cover two sub divisions and frequently am responsible for the whole division, a population of around 400,000. My workload has increased substantially particularly in relation to complaints about the police, which is a huge drain both on time and morale. Logistically it is difficult to be responsible for such a large area and I can find it difficult to know what is happening all over the areas I am responsible for (Scotland Operational Inspector, male 25 years service).

Expanding Job Roles

I am responsible for seven Safer Neighbourhood Teams. I'm the drugs lead, Youth Offending Team lead, Schools lead and Mental Health lead for the borough. It naturally leads to excessive hours worked, and sometimes it's difficult to stop myself working. What's really frustrating is that all plans and work can come completely to a standstill as I'm also expected to cover duty officer when there is a need, resulting in shift changes, cancellation of appointments that are to do with the portfolios listed. What the job doesn't record is how many additional hours those of us that have large portfolios work from home. If I didn't take work home, in addition to the hours I work, I wouldn't be able to keep all plates spinning. Sometimes I feel like I'm very much a big part of that (very) thin blue line! My job is like spinning plates, I need to choose which ones to keep spinning in any given week (or day) (Region 8 Community Inspector, male 15 years service).

I am very dedicated to my role, however feel that I get very little or no support from my senior management team. I have responsibility for the divisional Safeguarding team, a department dealing with the extremely vulnerable, however, do not spend enough time with them due to me covering divisional CID. The safeguarding DI's role should be a full time post, and not an 'add on' to the divisional DI role. I work full shifts, including sets of 12 hour night shifts, covering 3 divisions. I cannot give full support to my Safeguarding role due to this. In some other areas of the Force, the Safeguarding Inspectors role is their only role. I frequently have to cancel my midweek days off, in order to get to Safeguarding board meetings, as I am the divisional representative (Region 2 DI, male 17 years service).

Why do inspectors work long hours?

- 1. Cumulative effect of small (daily) decisions*
- 2. Focus on commitment and professionalism and not hours of work*
- 3. Professional pride*
- 4. Preserving a competent identity*
- 5. Command and control management*
- 6. Aspiration towards promotion*

The Adverse Effects of Working Excessive Hours

% of inspectors who reported adverse effects on ...	England & Wales	Scotland
Health or well-being	44.3	38.5
Sleep	-	52.1
Energy levels	-	54.1
Work relationships	12.2	11.1
Family relationships	53.0	56.8
Social life	44.0	50.6
Community activities	-	21.5
Personal hobbies/fitness	-	56.8

Fragmented and Dysfunctional Systems and Processes

- Police service complicit in failing to reduce demand in line with resource
- No proper recording of working hours
- Diverting responsibility for working time and wellbeing on to individual inspectors
- Fostering a macho culture that compels inspectors to work long hours

Fragmented and Dysfunctional Systems and Processes

“... as well as cutting command numbers we have also cut admin and executive support, so as well as far more work funnelling into fewer people there is less support to filter what does arrive, so without wanting to appear arrogant there is a proportion of what I do that does not need my pay grade to deal with it, and probably not the pay grade of hard pressed Inspectors, but there is simply nowhere for it to go; so it either adds to your admin burden or does not get done. The bottom line is that you do not show leadership by doing your e-mails, but you can only ignore the e-mail chaff for so long. I worked 60 hours last week including spending some time out on the street showing some visible leadership; I now have 229 unread e-mails, was I wrong to spend time with my people? I don't think so but nonetheless the e-mails keep piling up. Will I have to work harder in the future? Of course I will. Can I add more to the business? I think I can. Is extending my working day and doing it on my own the answer? Only in the short term” (Region 5 Operational Inspector, male 20 years service).

Reflection

- Role of social science to bear witness to and to understand the intensification of work and its effects
- Police experience is a window into the wider public sector
- Tradition and obligation of measuring hours
- Archetypal macho conservative culture
- Opportunity to uncover complex incentives and motivations that drive professional workers to work long unpaid hours

Aims and Objectives of the KE Project

“to raise awareness of the risks to health, well-being and organisational performance that arise directly from a long working hours’ culture in the Police Service, as well as to develop practical interventions that will help to monitor, manage and balance Inspectors’ hours of work”



Individual and Organisational Responsibilities

“individuals have a fundamental responsibility to look after their own health, but this demands an understanding of how individuals’ perceive the risks to their health”

“employers bear the primary responsibility for establishing the conditions and practices in the workplace which minimise the likelihood of people being made ill by their jobs” ... and in so doing to ... “move beyond the traditional health and safety agenda”

Dame Carol Black (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, London: TSO

