What are the implications of changing place for the Professional Performativity of

Prison Officers?

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Abstract

Throughcare Support Officers (TSOs) were a unique role in the Scottish criminal justice system when they operated between 2015 and 2019. This research challenges and extends existing prison scholarship by asking a number of novel questions: to what extent do prisons as places shape prison officer identities and what happens to prison officer identities when you largely remove the prison itself. TSOs were prison officers who worked with newly released individuals from custody, and their work was based largely in the community supporting reintegration. In this article, we utilize two strands of Judith Butler's theories of performativity and materiality, theories that have been used to analyze professional identities in other professions, although not in the criminal justice system until now. Analysis from data generated through 20 semi-structured interviews (a sample of 49% of all TSOs), illustrates that through a greater fluidity of TSO roles, TSOs are able to agentically adapt to a range of situations and hierarchies. The reflections of TSOs provide a unique insight into the place and perception of prisons within the criminal justice system in Scotland. More widely our analysis provides new insights into the ways in which custodial and the community settings shape particular professional identities.

Introduction

In 2017 there were around 304 000 prison personnel in the EU (Eurostat, 2018) and over 4,500 prison staff in Scotland (SPS, 2018), with the number of prison staff declining over recent years linked to decreases in the prison population. Within the context of declining prison staff numbers, prison officer roles are diversifying and are being re-imagined. Prison officer working identities are conventionally shaped by the prison context (Coyle, 1986; E. Crawley, 2004; Crawley & Crawley, 2008; E. M. Crawley, 2004; Liebling, 2000, 2011; Liebling et al., 2011; Scott, 2006; Sim, 2008; Tait, 2011), more specifically through material manifestations of the role such as the uniform (Ash, 2010), the physical prison environment and working with diverse and often vulnerable people in custody. Prison officers are synonymous with the prison environment, the concept of a 'total institution' suggesting that the staff can become institutionalized as well as those who live in custody (1961). In this study we examine the implications of removing the physical prison space and material markers within custody such as uniform, for a group of prison officers who do not wear uniform and largely do not work in prison in their role as a TSO.

Considering the implications of the changing place of work, facilitates an exploration of the importance of custody and community as contexts shaping professional identities and the performative ambiguities this creates. Ultimately, we contend that prison officer identities are performed, and are flexible and fluid. This complements research by Crawley on the performance of emotion by prison officers (2004), and wider debate relating to the fluidity or stability of contemporary work identities (Brown, 2015). Furthermore, we argue that performativity facilitates a number of opportunities for the participants in this study, who engage agentically in order to achieve certain outcomes. Finally, performativity provides a theoretical frame within which to consider evolution and change, in a range of identities.

The 2013 Scottish Prison Service (SPS) organizational review, 'Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives', focused on desistance as its theoretical underpinning (McNeill, 2016). It is within the SPS that desistance theories have had particular impact (McNeill, 2016), with desistance theory reflected in organizational vision and values and key policy documents (SPS, 2013, 2016). Within this context, the SPS introduced the Throughcare Support Officer (TSO) role to provide advocacy and support to those people serving short term (less than four year) sentences in the transition between custody and community. After an evaluation report focused on a single prison (Cochrane, 2014), SPS appointed 41 Throughcare Support Officers (TSOs) and 3 Throughcare Support Managers (TSMs) across 11 sites (with the exception of Open Estate and one prison for those serving long-term sentences). TSOs provide voluntary support for short term[1] non-statutory service users[2], and spend most of their working time in the community as opposed to custody. That the TSOs referred to the people they worked with as 'service users' as opposed to 'prisoners' or 'inmates', suggests a realignment of their role closer to services provided in the community as opposed to those within custody, themes explored in more detail below. Most TSOs interviewed estimated they were in the community for around 75% of their working time, often working closely with community-based partners such as NHS, housing and benefits providers. The 2014 evaluation report (Cochrane, 2014) recognized that TSOs have a role to play in supporting people in custody prior to and on release. A further evaluation in 2017, argued that for the Throughcare Support Service to develop, SPS should review the configuration of services, funding and resources in order to provide a sustainable and consistent service across Scotland (SPS, 2017). In 2019, throughcare support provided by the SPS was paused in response to operational pressures within the service, and TSOs were redeployed to front-line roles within prisons again.

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[1] In Scotland a short term sentence is under four years.
[2] TSOs referred to those they supported in the community as 'service users'. This term will be used throughout this research.

Performativity and Materiality

In this article, we utilize Butler's theory that identities are performed (performativity) (1990), to analyze changes to prison officer identities, we use Butler's theories as a novel application of them as they have not been used to analyze prison officer professional identities until now. Butler has been central to the development of the fields of gender and queer studies, principally though the development of the theory of performativity (1990) alongside subsequent theorizing exploring issues relating to bodies (1993) and speech (Butler, 1997). Butler's theory opens up a space to consider the ways in which people might perform in certain ways agentically, to achieve certain identities. Butler's theory rejects the notion that identities are 'natural' and that they are socially constructed and must be achieved. Whilst Butler's theory of performativity was used to explain the performance of gender, we contend that this framework is insightful for understanding the performativity of professional identities, building on research that has drawn upon the theory in a wide range of professional settings (Bogaerts, 2011; Hodgson, 2005; McKinlay, 2010; Powell & Gilbert, 2007). Similar to these studies, we do not use performativity to explicitly analyze performances of gender within our research, but use it to consider the ways in which professional identities are socially constructed and therefore fluid and open to change due to changing contexts within which they are performed.

According to Butler, performativity is quite different from performance, the latter suggesting an actor follows a script. For Butler, (1993: 12), '[performativity is] a reiteration of a norm or set of norms while performance is a "bounded act"'. The aspects of Butler's theory of performativity relating to the socially constructed *fluidity* of identity will be utilized in particular throughout this paper, in order to shape the analysis of the data.

According to Butler, identities are a process or verb. These gain the appearance of being natural, through repetition, thereby becoming *fluid*. For Butler, identity 'ought not to be conceived as a noun or a substantial thing or a static cultural marker, but rather as an incessant and repeated action of some sort' (1990: 112). It is through the everyday and regular citation and mimicry that the appearance of 'natural' identities emerge. As Butler argues: '[t]he subject is not determined by the rules through which it is generated because signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects (Butler, 1990, 145). The quote above also points to the fragility inherent in identities, what Butler identifies as the appearance of substance (Butler, 1990: 25). Butler indicates that dominant identities in a given social context, rely on the repetition of discourses that lends itself to mimicry. In essence, repetition is the process through which identities emerge, resonating and referring to wider identities and histories.

According to Butler, bodies are constructions which are also performatively established. Bodies that Matter (1993) explores and develops this proposition, analyzing the ways in which bodies cannot be considered without a consideration of discourse, therefore it is discourse that is formative in how bodies are both considered and created. These ideas have gone on to influence scholarship in a number of fields. For example, a number of studies within educational contexts have considered the significance of school uniforms for performativity within schools (Happel, 2013). However, Butler's later development of the theory of performativity (in particular, Butler, 1993), has not been applied within prisons or other professional contexts. The fluidity and materiality of performativity, are the two areas of Butler's conceptualization that form the analytical framework within which this project is framed.

Performativity, the contemporary workplace and prison officer work

Butler's theory of performativity has been hugely influential across a wide range of disciplines. The notion that professional identities are performed has been analyzed in a range of professional settings, including; teaching (Ruitenberg, 2007), journalism (Bogaerts, 2011), helping professions (Powell & Gilbert, 2007), project management (Hodgson, 2005). As (McKinlay, 2010, 232) argue, 'Butler's notion of performativity provides a way of understanding the ambiguities and paradoxes of contemporary identities at work.'

While performativity has been used in diverse workplace contexts, this has not been utilized within the criminal justice sector generally, or prisons specifically. This is surprising given that a number of studies that have considered performances of gender in prison (Crewe, 2006; Maycock & Hunt, 2018; Moran et al., 2009), exploring the ways that prisons shape specific performances of gendered identity. Despite this, there are a number of studies that have considered aspects of the prison officer role in a range of jurisdictions, (for example, Bennett et al., 2008; Crewe, 2009; Liebling, 2004; Liebling et al., 2011; Sparks et al., 1996; Tait, 2011). However, within the Scottish context there are no recent significant published studies exploring prison officer roles and identities (with the exception of Coyle (1986)), and how these are shaped by a distinct, devolved penal and cultural context (Brangan, 2019; Morrison, 2016; Sparks & Morrison, 2015). This is compounded by a concentration of research activity in the Scottish central belt and on female and young people in custody (Maycock et al., 2018), with prison staff in Scotland relatively neglected.

Prison officer work is often (mistakenly) assumed to relate to the practical tasks that form part of the job which relate chiefly to the maintenance of security and the management of risk, priorities considered 'the foundation' of prison officer work (Arnold, 2016). The work is marked by the routine of the prison regime (Sutton, 2013), and has been described as 'largely

mundane', and marked by 'unlocking prisoners, checking locks, bolts and bars, carrying out roll checks, dealing with prisoner requests or disciplinary offences, serving meals, supplying toilet rolls, changing the laundry, delivering the post, playing pool, watching television, reading the newspaper, talking with officers and prisoners, or drinking tea' (Scott, 2006, 15). However, these accounts of prison (emphasizing repetition or citation) overlook the very considerable skill required for the job, abilities and attributes which are often not even apparent to the officers themselves in their day-to-day work (Sparks et al., 1996). Prison officer work necessitates the balance of 'security values' with 'harmony values' (Liebling, 2004), and the ability to work through, and maintain the 'right', relationships with those under their care (Liebling, 2011).

As Sykes (2007) first noted, those who live and work within prisons form societies themselves, therefore, the *social* experience of working is a central element of prison officer work (Crawley, 2004). The camaraderie of colleagues is informed not by only the need to work closely in order to provide security, but it is also a function of working in an enclosed and often pressurized working environment. The camaraderie and humor associated with the work also support resilience and an ability to cope with the stresses from its emotional labor (Crawley, 2004a, Crawley & Crawley, 2008, Arnold, 2016).

Ultimately, prison officers embody the prison regime, therefore the contradictions within imprisonment as a social institution are reflected in their work. The repetitive nature of the regime is important in relation to the performance of prison officer identities, as Feldman (2003) has explored this in other contexts. Prison officers often view the provision of safety in the prison environment as a central part of their role, which is achieved through a continual monitoring and maintenance of static and dynamic security (Liebling et al, 2011; Arnold, 2016). However, prison officers are also required to promote desistance and to 'rehabilitate',

through pro-social modelling, building personal and social assets and the fostering of hope and a crime-free identity (SPS, 2016). The contradiction of these aspirations within an environment which can also fracture community relationships and re-enforce a criminal identity, is an ever-present tension within imprisonment and prison officer work (McNeil & Schinkel, 2016).

This research challenges and extends this existing scholarship by asking a number of unique and novel questions: to what extent do prisons as places shape prison officer identities? What happens to prison officer identities when you largely remove the prison itself and the symbolic material markers of working in prison? How do TSOs adapt to their role in the community, and what can TSOs working in the community tells us about the place and perception of prison in Scotland?

Ethics and Methods

A semi structured topic guide was developed with ethical approval granted by the SPS Research Access Ethics Committee. Informed consent was given by all participants, with assurances of anonymity given to all participants. Additionally, all research participants were given a draft of this article to comment on before submission, in order for them to be able to comment on how their narratives have been represented and analyzed. This resulted in some amendments to the version of the article submitted. All recordings and transcripts were stored securely, with all identifying information stored separately (in line with ESRC ethical guidance). In total, 20 interviews were undertaken (between 45 - 100 minutes long) between April and June 2018 with a representative sample of TSOs, in terms of age, gender and career stage. This represents a 49% sample of the 41-total group of TSOs. On average the TSOs were experienced prison officers as the participants had worked for the prison service for around 18 years. The 20 TSOs came from a range of career backgrounds within the SPS prior

to becoming a TSO, although the majority had worked in prisoner rehabilitation programs, which is quite a different role within prison compared to residential prison officer roles. TSOs were interviewed from six prisons across Scotland, in order to provide insights in how the job varies by prison population and locality.

Interviews were transcribed and subsequently checked and anonymized for analysis in Nvivo 11. Subsequently, inductive analysis of the data was undertaken, using themes emerging with a particular focus on the fluidity and materiality of professional identities. Themes were further shaped through a critical engagement with the existing prison officer literature, in particular where it touches on identity.

Findings

Results organized around two main areas of TSO professional identities: fluidity and materiality, to explore the ways that the TSOs were able to adapt to, and strategically use, the changes in the place and material markers of their work. Through these adaptations, it is possible to get a unique insight into the ways that prisons are viewed within the Scottish criminal justice system. The findings are shaped around multiple facets of the performance of the TSOs' professional identities that constitute an evolution from their previous identity as prison officers. Through considering how the TSO's identities are different from their previous professional identities and their colleagues who still work in prison, it is possible to consider the ways in which the prison environment, as well as the community, shape particular forms of professional identity. The analysis of this unique approach taken by the SPS to throughcare support provides new insights into the implications of working both in custody and the community for the professional identities of the TSOs and perceptions of prisons within the Scottish criminal justice system.

Fluidity - Throughcare support and the complexity of TSO identities

In all 20 interviews, TSOs were asked to reflect on their identities and the extent to which becoming a TSO had shifted the way they self-identified professionally. Responses to these questions both support and subvert the notion that TSOs see themselves as prison staff, illustrating that prison officer identities are malleable for some, and in some senses, more fixed for others. There was a significant diversity in the responses to questions, with contradictions emerging within and between interviews. This is important given the significant investments that prison officers make in their professional identities, investments defined by place and a sense of camaraderie (Crawley & Crawley, 2008; E. M. Crawley, 2004; Liebling, 2011). The response below is reflective of the general sentiment amongst the TSOs interviewed:

> "It definitely does blur the line of what a prison officer is. However, you do still think of yourself as a prison officer and when you're in here [in prison] that is your role." (TSO4)

This resonates with research that highlights the ways that prisons shape performances of gender (Maycock & Hunt, 2018; Moran et al., 2009). The significance of the prison as a space shaping these professional identities was a recurring theme in the interviews, with TSOs feeling conflicted about whether they were prison officers or not. The 'place' of prison emerged consistently as important in shaping the identities of these staff; working in the community therefore complicated their professional identities. Some TSOs wanted to be seen as a prison officer first and foremost, as this was most comfortable and familiar to them. In a way it was also seen by certain participants as being the most legitimate:

> *"If I met you in a pub, would you say you're a prison officer, or a TSO, which comes first? Or do you see yourself as both?*
>
> I would still say, a prison officer. A prison officer, aye." (TSO14+15).

However, for other TSOs there were caveats about their professional identity based on the place in which work occurred. This points towards the prison as a place shaping a specific professional identity, that the TSO role, largely in the community, had brought into question:

> It can be quite liberating, so quite a good word, I don't really feel like a prison officer when I'm out in the community." (TSO2)

In this instance we can see the evolution of prison officer professional identities through the changing place within which these professional identities are performed. This suggested an increased fluidity and diversity in how TSO identities are performed and described by the TSOs compared to their previous prison officer identities. In addition, this was supported by the different legal powers conferred to the different roles and settings; while the prison officer role was based on compliance and control, the TSO role worked on a voluntary basis and was based on the provision of support alone. This also had some impact on the ways their viewed themselves and the interactions they had with people in custody and later in the community:

> "When I'm working with a guy in prison, I'm a prison officer obviously, we all are, although we don't wear uniform, but we work with prisoners, we go down to halls, we see them down there, all the guys know us and know what we do and actually while they're in prison they are prisoners and we have to impose the prison rules and regulations. But then when it comes to the liberation date, all of a sudden, they're walking out the door, effectively they are a free man. If they turn around to me and say, get lost, I've got to get lost." (TSO13)

For most of the TSOs interviewed, the movement between working in custody and the community created opportunities to support those leaving custody, which had not been possible when working solely within the prison. Within this context, two of the TSOs

interviewed reflected that their professional identity had evolved so far that they no longer viewed themselves as prison officers:

> "I know some of us think differently but I don't feel like a prison officer anymore. I think the role has so drastically changed that the role that I done a few years ago [in prison], this is completely different, so I don't feel like a prison officer. I don't think I'm doing a prison officer's duties." (TSO4)

This suggests that the different duties and powers of working in the community versus in custody, had promoted these professional identity. Additionally, that TSOs' colleagues, who worked only in prisons, no longer viewed them as prison officers, also had an impact:

> "If you asked any prison officer on the landing [if I were a prison officer], they would say, definitely not. Because they want to retain their identity as a person in a position of authority." (TSO5)

These diverse personal reflections of TSO professional identities were in contrast to their identities when working only within the prison. While there are diverse ways of being a prison officer within prison (Tait, 2011), our research shows how TSO identities were fluid and diverse, in comparison with prison officer (working only in prison) identities which were relatively constrained and restricted. Some of the TSOs still identified as prison officers, while others did not. Working in the community therefore had an uneven effect within our sample. The ambiguity relating to their professional identity related to their place of work primarily in the community, the voluntary nature of the engagement with service users, and, relatedly, the lack of use of legitimate force and authority that comes with working in the custodial environment (Crewe, 2011; Liebling, 2011), not available to them in the community.

TSOs indicated that their service users had a range of views relating to their identity which differentiated from the prevailing views that people in custody have of prison staff (Crewe, 2011; Hacin & Meško, 2018). Some TSOs reflected that they were seen as a relative by their service users:

"Probably like that, kind of, big brother. I've got one boy that stays in Glasgow. He's probably had the worst life you've…if you were ever to read his backstory, eh… And he high fives me when I see him, when I meet him. And he'll be like that, alright, bro. And, like, fist bumps." (TSO3)

Gender emerges are particularly formative in the ways in which the TSOs viewed their role, with a number of the female TSOs felt quite maternal about their supportive role:

"[I'm seen as] sometimes a friend, and sometimes, sort of in a motherly…the ones that haven't had any parent at all, they sort of see you as a mother role. But then, interesting, the fact, we are mothers, and we're older. As some of them keep telling us, you're that old, you old bint, we got called today. So yeah, you can get the maternal. For some, we're their only friend. And that can be really sad." (TSO14+15).

Other TSOs reflected on the parental role they fulfilled for some service users':

"She got offered a permanent flat, and this was the first time ever, she was 26 at this stage. And I was the first person she phoned to say. I said, have you told your dad, and she went, no, I'm going to phone him after you. And it's like, she phoned me first, and it's like…which was really nice, but. And I think that was kind of the mother's role that she kind of thought, subconsciously thought." (TSO14+15).

This is illustrative of a clear difference in how the TSOs felt they were viewed as prison officers, reflecting most obviously their lack of coercive power and authority through a supportive role in the community. A number of TSOs reflected that while service users didn't view them as prison officers, they were nonetheless regarded part of the prison:

> "They don't view us as prison officers. They don't view us as social workers, they definitely don't, but they view us as...I think they view us as part of the prison and I think they view it as just again a natural extension, but, no, I don't think they view us as prison officers." (TSO4)

This illustrates the continued resonance of the prison for TSO identities, but perhaps in a more ambient or subtle way. For some service users, TSOs were more like a friend, often illustrating positive working relationships, something that can also be part of prison life too (Crewe & Ievins, 2019):

> "I had a boy say to me one time, aye, like, when this is all done, I'm just wanting you to know I really appreciate everything you've done for me. And I had, kind of, pointed out to him, 'I'm only pointing you in the right direction. It's you that's doing it.' He says, 'aye, aye, but…aye, you know what I mean. Like, this is the best I've ever done. Aye, when it's all done we'll go for a pint.' Obviously, er, no." (TSO3)

However, this can raise dilemmas relating to professional boundaries, which were configured differently in this role compared to roles exclusively within custody:

> "We've got to remember that I'm not their friend, it's a professional relationship we've got with this ex-prisoner. You've got to…you're policing yourself with your code, you're not their friend, you've got to remind yourself. I went to a boy's flat just

quite recently, 'oh, come in and have a drink with me'. 'Oh no, I'm working'. I think some of them forget that you're a prison officer." (TSO11)

Additionally, the closeness and trust that often was able to develop between TSOs and the people they support can potentially cause problems of dependency between the TSO and the people they are supporting:

"Well, dependency will happen anyway. I think there needs to be a balance, we need to strike a balance. I think it's important that you don't cling onto your service user, or hold onto him too long." (TSO5)

This suggests a potential dependency on the TSOs by the people they were supporting. Finally, some of the people that the TSOs were supporting didn't view them as a prison officer at all, but viewed them closer to the roles associated with the wider social services they were also engaging with in the community:

"I think a lot of the time the people that you're taking out they don't see you as a prison officer. And as much as we do tell them they tend to forget a lot of the time. I think they think we're social work or an agency or whatever." (TSO2)

This quote indicates that the TSOs are seen as part of the State in some sense, but not necessarily seen as prison officers. This section has illustrated that TSO identities are complicated and, in some ways, viewed differently from prison officer identities, by TSOs themselves, and those they work for and with.

These varied reflections on the role of the TSO highlight the significance of custody as a 'place' and the different powers available in each place in shaping prison officer identities. By extension, they also illustrate how working in the community complicates previous

identities. When the conditions of custody are absent, TSOs feel, and are perceived, less as an officer, despite being employed by the SPS and being officially still an 'officer'.

In relation to the performativity of these identities, the ways in which gender is performed through exchanges and social contexts (West and Zimmerman, (1987) can help to account for the diversity of responses in this section. These illustrates a fluidity, as one clear, fixed TSO identity does not emerge. The diversity of responses in this section points towards a wider range of professional performance in contrast to the relatively fixed and narrow prison officer identities (Crawley & Crawley, 2008), although existing scholarship identifies a diversity approach of prison officers' to their work (E. Crawley, 2004; Crawley & Crawley, 2008; E. M. Crawley, 2004; Liebling, 2000, 2011; Liebling & Arnold, 2012; Liebling et al., 2011; Tait, 2011). The diversity of responses relating to TSO professional identities, illuminates the complexity, and at times contradictory nature of, professional performativity within and between custody and community.

Bodies (in uniform) That Matter - The significance of uniforms and ID badges for TSO performativity

The significance of occupational dressing norms has been established in a range of settings (Dellinger, 2002; Hollander, 2016). However, what this means for uniformed roles such as the prison officer has been neglected within criminology, despite uniforms being considered in a small amount of research (Ash, 2010).

Liebling et al (2011, 13) equate prison staff in their analysis to all uniformed staff in prison. Though 'white shirts' (a term used by both prison officers and people in custody) may have a functional purpose (i.e. quick identification at times of risk), they also serve a symbolic function which facilitates the legitimate use of authority (Ash, 2010). A key practical and symbolic marker of difference in relation to the TSO role in contrast to prison officer role,

relates to these staff not having to wear uniform to perform their work. We discuss the implications of this difference in the next part of this paper. Butler's analysis provides a framework for understanding the ways in which power and meaning work on a material and embodied level (1993), which helps to illuminate the meaning of uniforms for the professional identities of TSOs.

There was a consensus amongst all the interviewed TSOs that it was not possible to do their job in uniform, and that this constituted a barrier that would prevent them from successfully supporting those leaving custody. They felt that the uniform was associated with punishment and not with reintegration:

> "It's because you don't want to draw attention to the person and the fact that he's an ex-prisoner, he's now a service user, and you don't want to draw unwanted attention to him, and I think that would be the case, and that's the main reason why we try and just kind of wear our own clothes." (TSO13)

However, other TSOs regarded their uniform as insignificant, arguing that it was their *behavior* as a TSO which was more important. Initially, TSOs did wear their prison officer uniform in conducting their duties, although it was felt by a number of them that this put them at risk due to negative perceptions of feelings about people in uniform in the community, although it was unclear if this applied to anyone in uniform or specifically prison officers:

> "We were going out in the uniform and being in the Job Centre, and some of the looks we were getting, somebody would set about you. It was putting us in danger, I think, actually, for people, ex-prisoners, they were in the Job Centre, and you could see it with their eyes, it was hate." (TSO17)

That prison officers in uniform were viewed with contempt in the context of the benefits system, points towards the associations of the uniform with punishment and the state, as well as the often negative ways the prison and those working in prison are viewed in the community. Indeed, the significant risks to TSOs if they wore a prison officer uniform in the community was articulated by a number of them:

> "If you were out in the community, you wouldn't be safe [in a uniform]. Definitely not. Definitely not. Some places we go, you'd park the car and you'd be lucky to come back and there's wheels." (TSO 14 + 15)

Leaving aside the issue of their own safety, it was also felt by all TSOs that wearing a uniform would create a barrier to building trust and close professional relationships with their service users. The uniform was seen as a key marker of being a prison officer that defined prison officer roles in custody and pitted them against those under their control in prison:

> "I think the uniform is an immediate barrier. It's like them and us. When I was wearing it in the [prison] halls, I was there performing a different role. When you're out in the community, for a start it would be dangerous because you could get attacked, but again although we're there on an official capacity we're there as support rather than discipline." (TSO13)

For TSOs, uniforms had become symbolic markers of discipline and authority within prisons:

> "and I think when you look at a uniform it looks more disciplinary than supportive. I don't know if that's true but, you know, they're...it definitely...there's something...there's something there." (TSO11)

TSOs reflected that the risks associated with wearing uniforms were primarily for the service users, rather than themselves. For some TSOs, anyone in uniform in certain communities would result in problems for service users:

> "Well a lot of guys are kind of worried that they might be identified as a grass, or giving information, and you know, some of their associates might see them with the SPS and think, what you doing with them, and that kind of stuff." (TSO7)

Another reason for not wearing uniforms was so that TSOs would better fit in with the community agencies with which the TSOs worked, who also did not wear uniforms. The uniform formed a barrier between the TSOs and the service users, but also for the wider professional communities with which they worked:

> "And again, when you go to meetings with other professionals as well, sometimes you don't want to be sitting there in a prison uniform if everybody is just sitting round in tie and shirt and jeans and so on and so forth because you stand out." (TSO13)

The discussion of uniforms as potentially being a barrier in the TSO role, led to a wider reflection on their significance within the custodial environment. This related both to TSO's own safety but also to an association with authority and discipline which the uniform conferred:

> "I think certainly when I was working in the halls, I think a uniform was important.
>
> *Why do you think that is in that context but it's a barrier in throughcare?*
>
> I think because in the halls for a start you have to be visible to your fellow officers. If you're in trouble you want to be in the white shirt and you want them to come running

to you. I also think that, yes, we're trying to do the rehabilitation but there's also the, sort of, more disciplinary side which a lot of them benefit from.'''" (TSO12)

The uniform was central to the authoritarian role of prison officers in custody. Uniforms also played a central role in prison officers' own security in custody and the maintenance of security within the wider prison:

> "I think that it has everybody dressed the same, so in a, kind of, security side of things, aye it helps. I think that if you've got somebody in a, kind of, authoritative role, the uniform helps." (TSO3)

However, in a number of the interviews a small group of the TSOs felt that the uniform could be removed entirely from the prison service. These were TSOs from a range of prisons who had reflected on the ways in which not wearing a uniform provided a space for different relationships, between them and those they were supporting:

> "I think they probably could soften what they're wearing [in prison], make it more like, kind of casual, kind of slacks and maybe a tee-shirt… But no, I think, aye, the uniform could go." (TSO16)

Most of the TSOs stated they were treated differently by prison staff as a consequence of them not wearing a uniform. This was particularly relevant when TSOs were working within the prison, where their peers were still in uniform:

> "You felt weird, you felt really awkward walking round the prison with your own clothes on. And the fact, it's like, I've not got that many clothes to wear, what do you pick what you wear? You can't just put your uniform on." (TSO14 + 15)

Not wearing a prison uniform had important implications for how these staff were seen by their peers, and for some this represented a further subversion of their prison officer identity:

"It's funny that, because a lot of the guys do [still see you as a prison officer]. But then other people see you in civvies [civilian clothing], say, you know, they think you're not a prison officer. You used to be a prison officer, but you need to remind them, no, I'm still a prison officer, you know?" (TSO5)

For some TSOs, working in the community prompted a reconsideration of a fundamental aspect of working in a custodial environment: their uniform. Although uniforms were considered an impediment to their work as a TSO, both with service users and wider community partners, conversely, other aspects of professional signification (i.e. SPS lanyard, ID badge and logo) were regarded as continuing to be beneficial.

"I thought it [the SPS badge] would be a hindrance, but when you go with the SPS logo, it's almost, like, it's a wee bit of leverage with community partners." (TSO4)

This illustrates that for many of the TSOs the uniform was a potential barrier in the community, but that aspects of their uniform could be strategically utilized to mobilize cooperation with partners. The quote above further illustrates the ways in which prisons and prison staff are viewed by partners and how TSOs use their badge in this context. However, for some TSOs, the badge was not something that they displayed very often as this might cause problems for the people that they were supporting:

"You stick out, it [the badge] sort of highlights where they've been, and that's not what we want. But also, it lets people know, oh they've got workers, what's wrong with them? So that stigma is there right away, people are judging and criticizing them. But right away, it's we know what she's all about, she's having to get folk to come out

with her. And that alone, for building somebody's self-esteem and confidence, is

huge." (TSO2)

Many TSOs used the badge (and SPS logo on it) as a marker of professional identity subtly

and strategically in different contexts. This also illustrated the multiple tensions and

hierarchies in the Scottish criminal justice system and the place of prison within it:

> "If I'm going into the court or if I'm going into the police station or if I'm into a
>
> college and people see the SPS logo on my badge, then they are okay, it can open
>
> some doors if you like, it just makes people realize that I'm a prison officer. But also
>
> equally when you're actually going into peoples' houses and there could be other
>
> people there, I tend to cover the badge up." (TSO13)

This points towards power and hierarchy functioning in diverse interprofessional contexts,

and of the limitations of professionals associated with prison, working in the community.

While the TSOs didn't wear uniforms, badges in some instances were used as markers of

professional identity. This suggests that, while wearing a uniform was considered an

impediment, being identified as working for the SPS in some contexts, was not:

> "I think this badge identifies you as such. That's why everyone wears their lanyards,
>
> you know, out in the community. I think it's important that you have that identity as a
>
> professional worker. It does give you courtesy." (TSO5)

Being seen as being seen as a professional similarly to those working for community

partners, was formative. This illuminates the ways, not only in which the SPS is viewed by

other professions in the community, but also the ways in which prison officers working in the

community strategically mobilize their material capital to their advantage.

This section has explored the symbolic significance of uniforms, SPS badges and logos, for the performativity of TSO professional identities. It is evident that the investments some of these staff had in these previous physical manifestations of their professional identity were hard to let go. Ultimately, for the TSOs their role in the community was quite distinct from other operational roles within the SPS, and prison officer roles in other jurisdictions.

This analysis shows how TSOs constitute unique professional identities distinct from their prison officer role (in prison), and distinct manifestations of the materiality of performativity (Butler, 1993). The staff undertaking the TSO role are reflective of these differences, and in some instances, these were so pronounced in their perceptions that they no longer see themselves as prison officers. This had profound implications for their professional identities that emerge as fluid and socially constructed. It is evident in a number of instances that the fluidity in the TSO role is an opportunity that the TSOs use strategically in certain contexts. TSOs agentically adapt to different situations to get certain results depending on the hierarchy they are working within to meet the competing demands of their role.

Conclusion

In this article we have analyzed the experiences of a particular group of prison officers working as TSOs in an internationally unique role, to explore aspects of professional performativity. We have focused on the fluidity and materiality of TSO identities as a consequence of the changing place, powers and material markers associated with the TSO role. Butler's theories of performativity and materiality have been useful to analyze the data and contextualize the TSOs narratives within a wider body of research that has used Butler's theories to analyze professional identities (Bogaerts, 2011; Hodgson, 2005; McKinlay, 2010; Powell & Gilbert, 2007; Ruitenberg, 2007).

In relation to the place of prisons in the Scottish criminal justice system, our analysis shows how prison is perceived and how it is located within hierarchies of power and legitimacy with community partners. Numerous examples emerge in the interviews of TSOs agentically navigating these hierarchies in particular ways in order to achieve certain outcomes. It is evident that in some community contexts, being associated with the SPS is an advantage, while in others, this associating it is preferably obscured. The increased fluidity of the TSO role in the community compared to the prison officer role in custody enables to TSOs to creatively adapt their professional performativity to different circumstances. Additionally, our analysis illuminates the evolution of a distinct, and conversely in some respects similar, TSO professional identity to mainstream prison officer identities. That TSO identities are both similar and distinct from within prison officer identities illuminates the significance of the community and custody as a places shaping particular performances of professional identity. The community location of this prison officer work and the lack of the symbolic markers of the uniform and ID badge, constitute a further subversion of the resonance of Goffman's theory of the total institution (1961) as it relates to prisons in Scotland, through the increased 'permeability' of the prison walls. The experiences of the TSOs indicate that working in the community has a profound influence on their professional identities and more widely contribute to the growing literature critiquing Goffman's notion of the total institution (Moran, 2013). These accounts raise fundamental questions about whether it is possible for prison officer identities to be 'fluid', if the carceral space, and carceral powers, associated with working in custody, are removed.

The findings in this study illuminate the influence of a specific policy (throughcare support) for the professional identities of a group of prison officers in Scotland. The fluidity and diversity in these roles explored in this article suggests that prison policy can have profound implications for the ways in which prison officers think about and perform their duties. That

Butler's theory of performativity is in essence an individualized theory of the performance of gender, that there such a diversity of views, positions and reactions to the changes explored in this paper reflects the diversity of the individual staff and their individual performances of professional identity who undertake the TSO role. Additionally, our study provides a new perspective on the importance of prison uniforms for prison officer identities, through exploring the implications of TSOs not wearing uniforms to undertake their role. The example of the TSOs highlights the potential for creative prison policy to enhance the services provided by prison services and to extend the reach of prisons further into the communities that they serve.

This study has a number of limitations. In the first instance we did not interview TSOs from all SPS prisons and neither of the private prisons in Scotland. While this study relates to a Scottish specific approach to throughcare, such arrangements can be found in many jurisdictions globally resulting in international resonance of this study. The findings around the importance of 'place' in shaping prison officer identities, suggests there is great scope for these identities to be influenced by changing prison policy. This article has explored the consequence on identity of working in the community supporting the rehabilitation of those leaving custody. The TSOs' experiences raise questions about the context of prisons for working with those in custody, namely the extent to which the penal environment shapes specific, and perhaps narrow, professional performativities. The TSO role had given these officers more agency and scope to be creative in how they undertook their duties than was possible for them while working in custody (Authors, 2020).

Through differences in the place in which TSOs worked, differences in the types of work and partners worked with, and differences in uniform and identity, it has been possible to explore aspects of fluidity and materiality in these professional identities within the Scottish criminal

justice system. The diversification explored in this article resonates with research in other professional settings (Bogaerts, 2011; Hodgson, 2005; McKinlay, 2010; Powell & Gilbert, 2007) that have utilized Butler's notion of performativity (1990, 1993), with its underpinning notion that identities are not 'natural' but malleable and flexible (alongside aspects of stability and continuity). Butler's work has been a rich theoretical context within which to analyze the data collected in this study, and it is hoped that further research with explore the resonance and utility of Butler's theories with criminology.

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