

# Identity Performance and Gendered Culture: Becoming and Being a Neighbourhood Officer

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University

Cardiff Business School  
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## DECLARATION

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## Acknowledgments

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents. I doubt I will ever be able to repay them for all that they have done for me and will be eternally grateful for the lifetime of love, support and understanding that they have shown me. I continue to suspect that they may be the best parents anyone could ever have.

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## Abstract

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In recent years the police service has undergone a number of changes with the introduction of neighbourhood policing (NP) being one of the most significant. NP represents the latest in a long line of government endorsed attempts to introduce a more community orientated and customer focussed approach to policing. NP encourages police constables (PCs) and, the recently introduced, police community support officers (PCSOs) to spend more time engaging with the public, supporting vulnerable members of community and working in partnership with other agencies. This style of policing represents a significant departure from established understandings of policing which have become synonymous with 'response policing' with its focus on maintaining public order and arresting criminals. A great deal of research over the last 30 years has referred to the highly gendered culture of policing which has also been the subject of a great deal of criticism.

This research focuses on the identity performances of NP officers and the different ways that NP is enacted within different contexts and situated interactions. My conceptual framework draws on both ethnomethodological and poststructural approaches in understanding how officers in different contexts constructed, reconstructed and resisted discourses in the performances of particular identities. This framework is therefore sensitive to how power and resistance works through discursive constructions within particular contexts. To further improve our appreciation of context, emphasis is given to the importance of cultural meanings as an important source of discursive constraint. However, the research clearly shows that while some discourses may be dominant in influencing identity performances, these are always contested and it is through the clash of competing discourses that the agency of NP officers is revealed (Holmer-Nadesan 1996). The study adopts an ethnographic methodology, using participant observation and semi-structured interviews to examine four broad NP contexts. These are the PCSO training course and the three neighbourhood teams, all of which are located in a different policing environment. Drawing on ethnomethodology, my approach focused on the front and back stage contexts of neighbourhood policing, examining the relationships between discourses and performances within these contexts.

The findings reveal the strength of dominant policing discourses linked to gender, police professionalism, 'real' policing and community and also shows the ways that these discourses are also infused and subverted by different sets of meanings and ways of being. The PCs and PCSOs involved in the study were seen to manoeuvre and navigate these contested discourses in the ways they enacted NP in different contexts. The research also reveals the contested and fragmented nature of policing cultures and how these cultures may be best understood as a coexistence of multiple constructions of discourse (Mumby, 2011). The concluding discussion of the thesis presents a number of contributions in relation to the discursive construction of identities, the influence of gendered cultures as well as the challenge of introducing NP into British policing.

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# chapter One

## Introduction

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### 1.1 - Introduction

Like many of the public service organisations in the UK, over the past twenty years the police service has been subject to a significant period of change which has resulted in a number of new organisational objectives. One of the most prominent of these objectives was the introduction of neighbourhood policing (NP) policing that would answer criticisms that the police service had become a discriminatory organisation and did not reflect or understand the diversity found in modern communities (Savage, 2009). Historically ensuring community focus and confidence had been an important part of policing but this importance waned from the 1970s onwards as the police service became more distant from the public they served (Davies and Thomas, 2008). After a number of attempts at introducing this form of policing, the Labour Government's White Paper 'Building Communities, Beating Crime' (2004) formalised a Neighbourhood Policing programme and presented it as the future of policing in communities. NP represents a considerable change in the way in which the police service operate, rather than primarily focussing on maintaining public order and investigating crimes, neighbourhood officers are now required to work with partner agencies, engage with all members of the community, allow them to help determine policing priorities and provide better support for the victims of crime and vulnerable individuals. These aims and the way in which they are delivered (through public meetings and increased face to face contact) have led to NP being described by officers as feminine and 'pink and fluffy' policing (Davies and Thomas, 2008), placing it at odds with the masculine gendered organisational culture of the police service (Miller, 1999). Another significant impact of the introduction of NP is the addition of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), a front line, uniformed civilian officer that represents an entirely new role and occupational identity at work in the police service.

It is the conflict between the perceived femininity of NP and the dominance of masculine discourses within the police service that has profound implications for policing occupational identity and provides the motivation for this research. The established response style of policing means that occupational identity is intertwined with notions of 'real' police work (the use of force, making arrests etc.) and the introduction of NP has disrupted this for neighbourhood officers. They are no longer able to behave and police in the same way as they once had and this provokes a number of questions that this research seeks to address. At its broadest level the research will establish what the British version of NP consists of, the type of work that is performed, who the neighbourhood officers interact with on a regular basis and the different contexts in which these interactions take place, something which is currently severely under-researched. However, its main value will lie in revealing the struggles that neighbourhood officers engage in as they attempt to give meaning to NP in different contexts. The complex, contested and nuanced performances given by neighbourhood officers brings to light the constraining effect of gendered organisational cultures, of which the police service is often cited as an interesting and well known example (Chan et al., 2010, Westmarland, 2001). Gendered cultures act as a venue through which discourses operate and regulate the appropriate gendered behaviour of their members (Acker, 1990). However, where there is constraint there is resistance and the resistance that some officers display by refuting and rupturing gendered discourses will also be explored. The research will also examine the socialisation of new PCSOs and establish how culturally acceptable modes of behaviour are normalised and how individual performances are regulated (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Miller, 2009).

In order to access the impact of NP on officers' occupational identity, this research will draw on theories of identity performance. Continuing in the vein of other authors (Kelan, 2010, Maloney and Fenstermaker, 2002), two competing approaches to performance will be integrated into a single methodology and used to explore the performances of neighbourhood PCs and PCSOs. Ethnomethodology and poststructuralism both provide different insights into the performances of officers and represent complimentary ways of understanding the multi-contextual and multi-discursive setting that officers inhabit. Ethnomethodological theories are included to allow the research to focus on the contextualised micro-interactions that officers

engaged in (Goffman, 1959), while poststructuralism's sensitivity to power enables a better understanding of the discursive constraint that they are under in these different contexts (Butler, 2000, Hardy and Ainsworth, 2004). Using these approaches will provide greater insight into the way in which officers construct their performances through interaction, with different audiences, in different settings and under varying discursive pressures (Barry et al. 2006).

To gain insight into the performances given by neighbourhood officers the research uses ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews to collect data. By immersing myself in the neighbourhood teams, it is possible to observe all aspects of communication, not only what is said, but how it is said, the body language that is used and the other minutia that only ethnography can record, something which is essential when examining such a complex and nuanced research topic. As a result of using ethnography, the research can not only establish the different performances that officers construct in a range of different contexts but also on how they are constructed, the discourses that are drawn on and how these are represented in interactions.

## **1.2 – Structure of the Thesis**

In order to investigate the struggles that neighbourhood officers engage in as they try to give meaning to NP within the constraints of a highly gendered organisational culture, this thesis starts by exploring performative understandings of gender. Chapter two will begin by highlighting the failings of essentialist approaches to gender, which initially relied on biological understandings of men and women and later moved on, in the case of radical feminism, to treating men and women as homogenous groups. In light of these failings, the idea of performance and the social construction of gender will be introduced. Starting with the work of Garfinkel (1967), the chapter will then focus on Goffman's (1967) presentation of self, front and back stage interactions, the framing of the social production of the self and the role this work played in founding ethnomethodological approaches to performance. Goffman's contributions are built upon by West and Zimmerman (1987) and Martin (2006) who develop the ideas of 'doing gender' and 'practising gender' respectively. Although useful, the limitations of ethnomethodology, specifically its failure to fully account for the role of power and discourse within performative contexts, will be addressed and lead into a discussion of

poststructural theories of performance. Drawing on the work of poststructural authors like Butler (2000), Kelan (2010) and Kondo (1990), the section will highlight contested and complex nature of identity and the discursive construction of performance, focussing on the role of gendered discourses and their intersection with other identity discourses, such as age, class and ethnicity. The final substantive section will address the role of individual agency in performances in response to critics who suggest that poststructural theory is too deterministic (Maloney and Fenstermaker, 2002).

Chapter three will go on to explore the idea of gendered organisational cultures and their role in regulating individual performance. It will begin by exploring the development of the gendering of organisations and the different ways in which we can see gender working in organisations (Acker, 1974, Maddock and Parkin, 1994 and Walby, 1987). It will then examine gendered cultures and the different ways in which they can be accessed, through organisational symbols, metaphors and interactions (Acker, 1992 and Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997) and suggest that an organisation is likely to be made up of a variety of different cultures and sub-cultures (Martin and Frost, 1999). One of the key effects of gendered culture is the regulatory effect that it has on individual performance, evidence of both men and women responding to the regulatory pressure of dominant discourses to enact particular gendered ways of being and the subsequent internalisation of these discourses will be presented. The socialisation of new members of an organisation and the normalising of established performances is also addressed (Miller, 1999). The chapter will close with a discussion of resistance and the way in which individuals are able to refute, rupture and dis-identify with regulatory discourses and find space to perform in different ways and draw on different discourses in different ways (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996, Davies and Thomas, 2005).

Chapter four addresses the specific context of the police service. Beginning by exploring the gendered culture of the police service, the framework established in the previous chapter is used to highlight the gendered construction of 'real' police work (Davies and Thomas, 2008) and the informal canteen culture of police (Waddington, 1999, Miller, 1999). The chapter will then detail the pressure of change within the police service and culture of reform within the public sector that drove the

introduction of NP (Macpherson, 1999, Savage, 2009). NP represents the culmination of a number of customer focussed and community oriented policing programmes and the chapter will detail how it has been implemented, including the introduction of PCSOs and the ethos and rationale behind it (Home Office, 2004). Given NPs significantly different approach to policing communities, the difficulties in training officers will be identified (Ford, 2004, Chappell, 2006), which will then be followed by a detailed analysis of the different ways in which NP has been constructed, specifically as a 'softer' style of policing and the strategies some officers engage in to reconcile this with policing culture (Innes, 2005, Miller, 1999). Finally, the relatively new role of PCSO will be described and the difficulties that have been encountered attempting to introduce a large number of civilian officers into the police service (Johnston, 2007).

Chapter five details how the research was carried out, focussing on ethnographic research and its ability to collect rich and nuanced data about the interactions that police officers engage in and the contexts in which they take place. After a detailed summary of the methods used (participative observations and semi-structured interviews), the contexts in which data was collected and how the data was analysed, the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the role of the researcher in collecting ethnographic data and the importance of reflexively analysing how I became involved in the research setting (Ellis and Bochner, 2000) and ethical issues such as gaining informed consent from participants (Miller and Bell, 2002).

Chapter six introduces the first of three empirical chapters and explores the struggles involved in becoming a neighbourhood officer. Focussing solely on the data collected whilst observing the training of a new intake of PCSOs, the chapter begins with an analysis of the training school itself, paying close attention to the performances constructed by the two principle instructors. The chapter is then divided into four sections which address the way in which four discourses, gender, discipline, community and professionalism were constructed in different ways by the instructors in order to normalise particular performances in the new PCSOs. However, despite representing a number of macho and laddish discourses associated with policing canteen culture, the instructors did not draw on them consistently and their performances often became conflicted with their role as instructor. The chapter also



explores how the PCSOs were not passive recipients of the socialisation process and often resisted the dominant discourses present within the training school and constructed performances that did not represent policing canteen culture.

Chapter seven focuses on the different NPT contexts and the interactions that take place in the back stage. It begins by highlighting the different contextual layers present within all three stations, which serve to constrain the performances constructed by officers in different ways. In line with the work of Goffman (1967), the chapter then examines the interactions that take back stage, where officers are free from public scrutiny. The chapter will focus on the dominance of macho and laddish discourses associated with canteen culture (Waddington, 1999) and how they regulate the gendered identity performances of PCs and PCSOs. However, the chapter will then examine the way which these discourses are reconstructed and resisted creating space for officers to construct performances which draw on alternative discourses.

Chapter eight explores the interactions and discourses at work in the front contexts. It begins by examining the performances that PCs and PCSOs construct when working in anti-social contexts, times when the police come into conflict with the public. It will then examine the varying constructions of community that emerged during interaction, with the community being constructed as deserving or undeserving of police attention. Finally, the concept of policing professionalism will be explored, as contested notions of professionalism and how it relates to NP and discourses of 'real' policing and policing expertise are seen to be drawn on by different officers in different ways.

The final chapter draws together the findings of the previous six chapters and contains the key findings and contributions that the research has made to the extant literature. After reminding the reader of the context in which the research takes place, the theoretical perspectives that the research has adopted and the methods that were adopted, the key findings are presented. The three main findings and contributions of this thesis will then be discussed. Beginning with the theory of identity performance, the chapter will highlight the importance of context in understanding the relationship between discourse and identity within current debates. It will then address issues of power and regulation and suggest that identity performance are best understood by

focussing on how power works through situated interactions. Finally, my contributions to the relationship between identity performance, gendered culture and policing culture will be presented. The next section will reflect on the challenges of researching the police service using an ethnographic method and the way in which these challenges can be overcome. The chapter will conclude with a brief summation of my findings and implication for future research.

# Chapter Two

## Identity Performances

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### 2.1 - Introduction

Individual identity is a complex and contested terrain that is subject to significant social and discursive pressures. This chapter, and ultimately this thesis, will explore how identities can be accessed through performances, while paying particular attention to the construction of gendered identity performances. It will suggest that identities are constituted through everyday social interactions and examine how different performative contexts, practices and activities result in a wide range of different performances (Goffman, 1959). However, these performances are not unconstrained and in order to fully understand the way in which individuals construct their identity performances, this thesis will combine the insights from ethnomethodology and poststructural analyses of the effect of discourse. As such this chapter will explore how dominant discourses within particular fields, with a specific focus on gendered discourses, can be seen to act to restrict individual choice and constrain the identity performances that are be given (Laine and Vaara, 2007). However, despite this regulatory effect, individual agency can exploit the antagonisms and contradictions within these discourses space can be created for alternative identity performances (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). Research that addresses the discursive struggles that individuals engage in to reconcile organisational discourses and their own sense of self will highlight the ongoing processes on discursive refutation, reconstruction and resistance that are necessary to articulate these alternative performances.

The chapter will begin by exploring ethnomethodological approaches to identity performance, highlighting their focus on everyday interactions and practices. It will then address how this approach has been adopted by gender theorists, to understand gender identity performances (West and Zimmerman, 1987). However, although acknowledging the way in which performances are constructed within social frames,

ethnomethodology has been accused of obscuring the workings of power and social structural processes. In light of this, the chapter will also examine poststructural theories of identity performance and gendered identity performance and discuss the links between discourse, identities, power and agency (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, Hardy and Philips, 2004).

## **2.2 - Ethnomethodological approaches to identity performance**

The construction of identity has been approached in a number of different ways but an early attempt at exploring how identity can be performed can be seen with ethnomethodological approaches, something which will form an important part of the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis. Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods that individuals use when producing recognisable social performances through interaction with others. This social order has a meaningful, patterned and orderly character that is achieved through the constant work of individuals (Rawls, 2008). This understanding of society was first proposed by Harold Garfinkel (1967). Garfinkel suggested that ‘members to an organized arrangement are continually engaged in having to decide, recognize, persuade, or make evident the rational, i.e., the coherent, or consistent, or chosen, or planful, or effective, or methodical, or knowledgeable character of [their activities]’ (Garfinkel, 1967: 32). This rationality is not a presupposed scientific version but created through crafted interaction with other participants of the organised arrangement. As individuals make sense of these situations they are able to display their understanding of it and in turn make their actions rational and easily understood by others (Stokoe, 2006). Therefore, these situations can be understood as self-organising as the interactions between individuals form the character of the situation and what is rational. In other words, social order or societal understandings emerge through the way participants conduct themselves when interacting with each other and ethnomethodology is designed to explore how this happens.

Together with Garfinkel, Erving Goffman is also singled out as the originator of ethnomethodology. In his book, ‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’ (1967) Goffman seeks to set out an understanding of how individuals create an appearance of identity through social production and everyday interactions with other people.

Goffman was one of the first theorists to begin to describe day-to-day activities and interaction with others as a 'performance' and explore the agency that individuals demonstrate when shaping for example their gendered performance, although within the context of social 'frames'. He compared these interactions to performances on a stage, where individuals give a performance in order to create certain impressions amongst the audience, for example, to other members of the organisation (Kelan, 2009). It was only through performance and social production that a sense of self is created and, as such, Goffman did not believe in an inner essence that was awaiting expression.

Goffman (1967) makes three important claims about the nature of 'self'. The first is that the self is created by an individual's public claims to possess certain values or traits, in other words what an individual claims to be to an audience becomes her/his identity. Secondly, although individuals are free to make any claims they wish, they are reliant on social structures for validation; social organisations and their participants must validate any claims to status, societal roles or relationships. Finally, Goffman observes that any claims about the self which cannot be socially sustained will eventually result in a process he terms 'cooling the mark out', which involves the individual coming to a comfortable resignation of a lesser self. In other words, a self which could be seen as too overt or exaggerated will inevitably find a more realistic performance that can be maintained for longer more easily. Goffman suggests that this happens so regularly that it lends considerable support to the idea that we all have multiple selves and are all built from a number of loosely integrated social roles and when one is no longer viable, we take consolation in the others (Branaman, 1997).

Importantly, therefore, Goffman did not believe that individuals were entirely free to craft any performance that they wished; instead they must constrain their performances and present versions of themselves that can be socially accepted within the dominant norms of society. Lemert (1997) observes that Goffman was among the first to suggest that not only was 'reality' constructed but that reality was constructed by "definite, precise, and surprisingly universal social mechanisms" (1997: xxxvii) and that it is only through the abandonment of these taken for granted mechanisms of social life that its constructedness can be appreciated. This appreciation highlights how almost everything we do in daily life is a fabrication based on what we imagine

we ought to do in any given situation based on what we have viewed others doing in the situation before hand. It is the routine nature of this that results in the widespread belief that these processes are innate, inbuilt ways of behaving, and hence the popularities of theories of biological essentialism (Lemert, 1997). Thus, it could be suggested that Goffman's greatest contribution is that he explores the competing and interdependent influences on the self, portraying a highly complex and fluctuating world which produces and is produced by the performance of this self (Branaman, 1997).

In order to understand the contexts in which interactions take place, Goffman explored the relationship between society and the self and what constitutes the subjective meanings that we ascribe to particular social events and actions. Calling this 'frame analysis', Goffman explores how frames are not social institutions but the principles of organisation that govern events and determine how an individual constructs their understanding of a situation in a given context. This construction is not a subjective decision but is based on hegemonically established interpretations: 'Frames also organize subjective experience by providing meanings within which social events can be interpreted. Individual subjects are not free to frame experience as they please, for frames pre-exist interactional situations and govern and constrain the meanings that can pertain' (Brickell, 2006: 30). Frames can describe a variety of different social categories that will influence how an individual can behave and 'locate, perceive, identify and label' interactions so that they can be recognised by their audience (Goffman, 1974: 21). Frames do not only act to limit performances on their own but work at the same time. In a similar way to the workings of discourse, frames like class, age, ethnicity and sexuality can intersect with others and constrain the type of performance that individuals can give in different ways. For example, frames of gender and class will often intersect with the interactions that construct working class masculinity differing greatly from those that represent upper class masculinity, if they did not then it would be more difficult for an audience to understand behaviour and their gender and class performance. Having established how ethnomethodologists like Garfinkel and Goffman understood the self to be produced and, to some extent, constrained by social interaction, it is possible to examine what form these interactions take and the influence of contexts or 'stages'.

### **2.2.1 - Front and Back Stage Performances**

An important ethnomethodological contribution made by Goffman is the concept of front and back stages. Front stage actions are used by an individual to create an impression, or performance, for a given audience, depending on the environment. Goffman observes that the front is the 'part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance' (1959: 32). Individuals change their appearance, manner and behaviour in response to the physical setting and audience to which they perform. For example, Singleton (2003) found that men involved in a support group were far more likely to adopt an emotionally open and vulnerable performance because they were surrounded by like minded men adopting a similar performance and were in the 'safe setting' of a church support group, in effect, constructing a performance that drew on the available contextual factors. As such, performing in a variety of contexts requires individuals to construct a range of different performances to satisfy the social expectations of their audience, 'thus, actors rely on the use of scripts, props, masks, costumes, and so on, to lend an air of credibility to their performance' (Huey and Berndt, 2008: 181).

However, Goffman also identifies times when individuals do not have an audience to perform to, deeming these performances as 'back stage'. Back stage performances allow individuals to step outside the performances that they have given without fear of destroying the illusion of reality they have created, enabling them to voice opinions or act in ways that may have not been conducive with their previous performances. It is during back stage performances that Goffman suggests an individual can be free of social expectations and the actions they need to perform in order to give a successful performance, such as impression management (Brickell, 2005). However, the concept of back stage is problematic when it comes to conducting ethnographic research, since it is difficult to be 'not present'. Bearing this in mind, there are arguments in favour of treating the back stage as an alternative setting where different, or contrasting social expectations are anticipated from those in the front stage. Thus back stage can be distinguished from an official organisational front stage, where there is greater exposure to organisation discourses. The theoretical tensions with the traditional

understanding of back stage will be explored later in the chapter and the limitations of Goffman's work are explored.

Bolton (2001) explores the relationship between front/back stage performances and the emotional labour that nurses engage in whilst at work, viewing the front stage as an area governed by official organisational discourses and the back as a setting where performances are designed as relief from cynical performances. She found that nurses defined a set of 'faces' or demeanours that they used during the 'front-stage' areas of their work (dealing with patients, the families of patients and awkward people). Nurses found it easier to deal with the emotional stresses of their job by adopting a 'smiley' face (pretending that they are satisfied in an attempt to deliver a high quality service) and professionally prescribed face (in an effort to distance themselves from their patients and the emotional stress of illness). These 'faces' were all performed on the frontstage and described, by both the nurses and the author, as cynical performances given in order to comply with organisational expectations. On the other hand, the 'humorous' face was used to 'create and maintain familial bonds, to relieve anger and anxiety, to register their resistance to demands made of them by management' (ibid.: 95). This face was used in the back stage when in view of other nurses only (out of view of patients, members of the public and management), when the more sincere, 'inner' feelings of nurses were expressed. In the backstage, where power relationships were less prominent and nurses did not have to present a publicly acceptable face, nurses were able to share the burden of the role and support each other through humour. Bolton concluded that nurses were adept at changing faces and moving quickly between different faces, so quickly in fact that they become 'emotional jugglers' matching their mood with an appropriate face.

Thus, within organisations, there can be clear distinctions drawn between front stage and back stage performances, with each different stage resulting in a particular performance. This distinction will form an important part of my approach to identity performance, allowing different performative contexts to be identified and their impact on individual performance to be explored. By suggesting that organisational discourses work differently and with different effects in front and back stages, it also highlights the role of power in performance construction, an issue played down in Goffman's writings and an area that will be explored more fully later in this chapter.



Having identified how the concept of an interactionally produced self and the concept of back and front stages will become part of my theoretical framework, it is important to understand how these same features have been adopted by others in their exploration of gendered identity performances. Goffman himself devotes time to exploring the framing of gender, arguing against essentialist notions of gender and suggesting that the nature of men and women is nothing but the ability to learn and to be able to read a set of behaviours that have been designated 'masculine' and 'feminine' (Goffman, 1977). Goffman was one of the inspirations for West and Zimmerman's (1987) work on 'doing gender' and the interactional accomplishment of gender, along with other ethnomethodological understandings of gender (Martin, 2006). Goffman's conceptions of self, dramaturgical performance and societal framing of gender was developed by West and Zimmerman (1987) in their understanding of gendered identity performance.

### **2.3 - Ethnomethodology and Performing Gendered Identities**

Since their beginnings, ethnomethodological understandings of gendered identity performance have sought to avoid biologically essentialised understandings of gender. Essentialism, as seen in concepts like sex role theory (Parsons, 1951), dominated early attempts at exploring the role of gender in organisations and not only confined men and women to stereotypical roles but also assigned them traditional characteristics and trapped them in an unsubstantiated gendered hierarchy. These traditional interpretations of masculinity and femininity placed men in a dominant position and constructed men and women binary as binary opposites, limiting the possibility of viewing gendered identities as a more constructed and individual endeavour. Building on the interactionally produced approach to identity, ethnomethodologies on gender seek to reveal and challenge the taken for granted assumptions about the distinguishing characteristics and behaviours of men and women to suggest that gender is constituted through interaction and that men and women 'do gender'.

West and Zimmerman (1987) define 'doing gender' as 'crafting differences between boys and girls and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological.' These differences once established are then used to reinforce

essentialised notions of gender. Building on the work of Goffman, they suggest a world which is socially created and constructed through interaction and, within this world, it is possible to see how social interactions create the illusion of an objective and factual world. In this sense, we can appreciate how gender is considered to be an established set of understandings of what men and women are and how they should behave; and that individual's play out their day-to-day lives reflecting and conforming to these understandings. However, the 'reality' of gender is that it is through interaction that it becomes a reality. This means that the stability and rationality of manliness and femininity are a by-product of interaction. The continuing domination of the 'reality' of gender gives the impression that it is stable and 'natural'.

In order to observe how gender becomes a reality, ethnomethodologists examine the 'perceptual, interactional and micro-political activities as if they occur afresh in every new situation' (Kelan, 2010: 179). They seek to explore how body language, appearance, gestures and language have gendered meanings and contribute to gender being constituted through interaction. West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest that we know what gender to do during interaction because of the categories that we are all put in. They identify three different categories, all of which influence how we do gender. The first is sex, in which people are defined by the socially agreed upon biological criteria for sex classification, as either male or female. The second is sex category, which is the application of sex classification, whereby individuals identify themselves as men or women on a daily basis, making a potentially fluid dynamic appear stable. Finally, gender is then the activity of managing everyday interaction to ensure that they are consistent with the sex category that an individual has placed themselves within and gender becomes a means by which membership of this category is confirmed and enhanced. In other words, performing gender is the way in which we show others which sex category we consider ourselves to be. This performance is a process which individuals are constantly engaged in, where they draw on an established set of behaviours that communicate whether they are a man or a woman.

Other situations which require men and women to behave in certain gendered ways can be explored, for example the gendered nature of some workplaces often force men and women to behave in ways that are deemed to be appropriate. As a result, women

who work in jobs that are male dominated often have to tread a fine line between engaging in masculine behaviours to correspond with work norms whilst not alienating men by being too masculine, hence corresponding with feminine norms. This conflict is seen as a dynamic aspect of the gender relationship and this interaction is key to the process of individual gender accomplishment and on a wider scale, our understanding of essentialist gendered natures. West and Zimmerman sum up this approach to gender by observing that they 'have claimed that a person's gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others' (1987: 140).

The idea that gender is something that is done can be seen as a major influence in the work of Martin (2006). Developing the ideas of West and Zimmerman (1987), Martin suggests an understanding of 'doing gender' that uses the terms 'gender practices' and 'practising gender' to examine the way in which people act in gendered ways. Martin denies that individuals mostly practise gender intentionally, she acknowledges that on occasion this may be the case, for instance when a woman gets dressed she dons the symbols of femininity, skirts, high heels etc. In this way a woman is consciously presenting herself in a gendered way but once this it is done, this gendered presentation is largely forgotten. Martin's work clearly lays out how gender is actually accomplished in everyday situations, the motions that people go through in order to furnish their gendered identity, be this through presentation or through interaction, practices or practising. Gender practises are described as the less active side of the gender dynamic (Martin, 2006) and are the actions and behaviours that a society uses to 'do' gender. This can include ways of talking, dressing, demeanour, expressions, actions and interests that are particularly associated with a specific gender, and as such some practises are deemed suitable for only men or women, such as, in the case of women wearing make-up or high-heels. The majority of people actively choose language, appearance and expressions of self that are appropriate to their gender, which suggests an intentional choice to conform to societal expectations. The awareness that individuals have of the gendered signals these choices give is variable (often choices are largely forgotten once they have been made) and it can be that some people have very little awareness of this phenomenon.

Practising gender, on the other hand describes the actual doing and saying of gender. Whilst gender practises are largely typical, expected and predictable, the actions and behaviours that are involved in practising gender are much more variable and unpredictable. Practising constitutes gender in social life ensuring that gender continues to be embedded in institutions (Martin, 2006). This highlights the importance of practising to the perpetuation of gender issues and inequality in organisations. Practising takes place in real time and once it has been done, cannot be undone, although gendered reflection may take place afterwards but only after it has been practised. Importantly, practising happens immediately, and is rarely thought about before hand and responses to actions are rarely reflected upon before they are given. However, the setting, the relationship between actors, and how they interpret the actions, will influence responses. Practising is also emergent; it is impossible to anticipate exactly what will happen during encounters, although some imagining of the future is needed for encounters to occur. Individuals must imagine what is going to happen in order to establish what they will do and how this will be interpreted, in essence, 'one anticipates, imagines, co-ordinates and acts, not necessarily in that order' (Martin, 2006). An example of practising gender given by Martin is that of 'men rescuing women' (2006: 262). Martin illustrates practising with the experiences of a female worker who would often discuss a problem with her boss, only to find out that he would later 'solve' the problem and by doing so, diminish her status within the organisation. This need to rescue a woman in distress was seen as a type of paternalism that, although intended to be helpful, underestimated the abilities of female workers.

#### **2.4 - Incorporating Ethnomethodology**

The account of ethnomethodology presented previously has highlighted a number of features that will be incorporated into my own theoretical framework in order to allow a greater understanding of identity performances. Initially, the approach is useful because of the focus on the situated, everyday performances that individuals give and the way in which this enables access to identities that are constructed. Drawing on this feature means that it will be possible to identify the different ways in which the participants of my research construct their identities and how these can vary. The importance that ethnomethodology places on the constitutive role of interaction will

allow my framework to explore how these identities are constructed and the different ways in which individuals interact: the language they use, the demeanour they adopt, the symbols and material resources on which they draw, and the other myriad forms of interaction (Kelan, 2009). Crucial to the idea of constructing identity through interaction are the constraints that are placed on this process through social frames. Frames provide socially constructed norms and expectations that govern the acceptable performances that individuals are able to give. A multitude of frames act at the same time to limit individual performance in a variety of ways and begins to illustrate the complexity and conflict that may be present during interaction. This idea is of particular importance to my research given its focus on the multiple and fractured nature of organisational culture and the relationship with social frames like age, class and ethnicity. Finally, ethnomethodology will inform the way in which different contexts are conceived, with the idea of front and back stage being employed to highlight the influence of different audiences and social constraints.

In light of this discussion, the benefits of an ethnomethodological approach to gender lie in its ability to take as its subject the ‘complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine “natures” ’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126). It highlights how interactions are organised in a way that creates the illusion that gender is a fixed and natural state. By incorporating this into my examination of gendered identity performances, it will be possible to see how gender is done in context and how gender emerges through engaging in socially appropriate behaviour (Poggio, 2006). Being able to witness how gendered identity performances are constructed facilitates an assessment of the impact of gendered social norms within organisations, a key focus of my research. As ethnomethodology allows researchers to examine the situated processes, artefacts and the talk that individuals use to produce the appearance of gender, it will enable my research focus to be on understanding not only how gendered cultures constrain performances but also how gendered performances constitute them in the first place and prolong their dominance.

However, ethnomethodology is not without its limitations. Its focus on an individual’s ability to produce their gender performance through interaction it gives the impression of an unfettered form of agency for the individual. Such gender

performances might also be understood to be too overtly conscious and intentional. Moloney and Fenstermaker (2002) have criticised West and Zimmerman for not paying enough attention to the macro level of social structure and its normative power, preferring to concentrate on micro-political relations. As a result it has been suggested that this approach to constructing identity performances has obscured the broader mechanisms of power, and its focus on face-to-face interactions has made social structural processes invisible (Weber, 1995). The lack of acknowledgment of macro processes means that it makes it more difficult to illuminate the differences in experience of those that fit the dominant social expectations and those that do not. For example, individuals whose gender performances are considered more masculine may find it easier to exist in organisations than those with a more feminine performance. However, focussing on their face-to-face interactions, with no appreciation of broader social structures, may not make this immediately obvious, making feminine oppression harder to explore. In addition to this, the focus on the constitutive power of interaction is also problematic and Kelan (2009) questions what happens when people are alone, do they stop doing gender? Are they no longer accountable for their gendered actions? Even when alone, people will conform to gendered expectations and attempt to bolster their gendered identity. Kelan suggests that we must consider the 'internal audience' (2009: 46) and that gender can be done for this audience as well.

In light of these limitations of ethnomethodology, my theoretical framework will examine and draw on poststructural approaches to identity and the importance of discourse in processes of identity construction. It is hoped that by combining this approach with insights from ethnomethodology that a more robust understanding of power will emerge within my theoretical approach.

## **2.5 - Poststructural approaches to Identity and Performance**

Poststructural accounts of identity focus on the constitutive effects of discourse on an individual's sense of their self. This section will explore how a discursive understanding of identity construction will be incorporated into my theoretical framework in order to explore the forces that shape and limit individual performance within different contexts. Poststructuralist approaches place a special emphasis on the

role of power in identity construction, finding that in any given setting some discourses are more powerful than others in exerting influence over identity performances (Hardy and Philips, 2004). However, where there is power, there is also resistance, and discourses have been found to contradict and clash with one another creating space for the performance of different identities (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). And it is this appreciation of discursive struggle that forms a key theoretical thread in this thesis. In particular, I aim to examine how identity performances are regulated and normalised by dominant discourses but also how they are resisted through the discursive struggles that result from competing subjectivities (Laine and Vaara, 2007). In order to appreciate how discourses affect identity and gendered identity performance, it is important to establish how discourse is being conceptualised in this thesis and the relationship between discourses, power and identity, allowing for a theorising theoretical framework on gendered performance and identity performance that develops the insights already presented from ethnomethodology.

In line with the poststructural approaches to conceptualising identity, this thesis understands identity to be constructed and observable through performance. Within this constructed identity there are no fixed points of self but rather ‘identity themes’ that cross an individual’s sense of self, a number of multiple and fluid subject positions that are situation specific, becoming more or less important depending on the context (gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, occupation etc) which form an individual’s sense of identity (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009). Hall describes identity as the ‘temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us’ (2000: 190), suggesting that we are constantly renegotiating our identity in relation to the dominant discourses which give it meaning. The term ‘discourse’ has a wide variety of meanings and for the purposes of this thesis, discourse will be understood as the interrelated sets of texts that ‘systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972: 49). Discourses can therefore be seen as the forces that ‘constitute the social world by bringing certain phenomena into being, including objects of knowledge, categories of social subjects, forms of self and social relationships’ (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004: 154). In other words, it is through discourse that we are able to understand and represent the social structures and processes that govern society. These structures and processes are all located in and constructed by discursive fields, which are ‘competing ways of giving meaning to the

world and offer the individual a range of modes of subjectivity...and account for and justify the appropriateness of the status quo' (Weedon, 1997: 34). In effect, we only understand ourselves to be a certain class or a certain gender and act in accordance to that classification because we have been named as such by these dominant hegemonic discourses.

In understanding the constitutive nature of discourses it is also suggested that they contain different subject position against which individuals are interpolated and which inform their subjectivity, or identity. Subjectivity or identity then indicates an individual's sense of self, as located within particular discourses which determine their place in any organisational setting. This means the individual fitting themselves into a particular subject position and identifying with a chosen or dominant discourse. Identification is therefore likely to change as an individual moves between different environments and new discourses are introduced, as changes in power relations between rival discourses emerge, or through changes within discourses themselves as new subject positions become possible (Weedon, 1997).

Drawing from insights from Foucault, Kondo (1990) theorises identity by describing and exploring this fractured and conflicted nature. She suggests that the various moulds that a person may fit in (man, woman, mother, father, manager, worker) may reduce the dissonance in peoples' understanding of themselves but that any semblance of a united, complete identity is an illusion. Instead the various subjectivities are described as straining against one another, with the emphasis of identity constantly shifting depending on other actors, the environment and social structures. Kondo also identifies the self-transformation that individuals can engage in whereby they attempt to alter their identity performance through identity work, creating different meanings around actions that they engage in. In order to understand the contested and conflicted nature of identity, it is important to establish what causes this conflict, to explore the constraining nature of identity discourses.

Hardy and Philips (2004) highlight the mutually constitutive relationship between power and discourse. They find that at any given time, discourses shape the systems of power within a context by holding in place the social categories and identities upon which this system of power rest. They go on to suggest that the power relations that



exist between actors, the types of power that individuals can draw on and the types of people who can exercise power are determined by discourse and are for a time, fixed. Eventually discourses, and the power relations they constitute, continuously privilege certain identity performances and the individuals who give them to the point that they allow them to prolong the dominance of these discourses by controlling their future construction and dissemination. These discourses will ultimately become enshrined in discursive fields and become established as the dominant discourses of a context. Hardy and Philips neatly sum this up by observing that ‘discourse shapes relations of power while relations of power shape who influences discourse over time and in what way’ (2004: 299).

The power of discourse lies in its ability to constrain identity performances by defining how objects and behaviours are constructed within a setting and establishing some discourses as dominant (Foucault, 1980), creating a discursive cage within which only certain actions are possible (Prasad and Prasad, 2000). Discursive constraint is a common feature of identity research and numerous examples of dominant discourses affecting the way in which individuals behave and understand their own sense of self can be found. Ford (2006) examined how hegemonic discourses of leadership were seen to limit the performances that they could give. Despite the rhetoric around transformational leadership, macho-management discourses were still dominant and resulted in female managers distancing themselves from more feminine styles of management and adopting a competitive and driven style of managing. Thomas and Davies (2005) also explore how competing discourses serve to constrain identity performances in their research on new public management and public sector professionals. They found that new discourses of NPM caused professionals discomfort and feelings of difference as subject positions within discourses of NPM clashed with their preferred interests. This could be seen in the experiences of Susan, a head teacher who found tension between her desire to be a proactive leader and the need to internalise masculine competitiveness that treats, as she saw it, education and children as commodities which must be delivered as efficiently as possible, an important part of the modern education management.

Bergstrom and Knights (2006) conducted research on the recruitment processes adopted by the Swedish subsidiary of a large American consultancy firm and the

relationship between subjectivity and organisational discourses. Focussing on the interviews that were conducted to select new employees, Bergstrom and Knights explore how discourses were drawn on by the interviewers in order to illustrate what they understood to be desirable candidates and ensuring that candidates that wished to become part of the organisation were willing to adopt them. For example, during the interviews, the interviewer described the positive (training, a spirit of community and change) and negative (overtime, hierarchy and lots of travelling) aspects of working for the company. Although supposedly presented to give a clear and honest picture of what working for the company is like, it actually was a set of 'prescriptions or imperatives regarding how the working conditions should be understood and interpreted' (ibid. 2006: 366). They are then asked a series of questions that establishes that the interviewee understands and agrees with the description of the organisation, turning questions into acceptance. The interviews were thus seen to constrain the interviewees' identity performances by changing their own internal assumptions about the organisation and making them reflect organisational discourses.

However, whilst discourses have the power to constrain identity performances, their power is not total and there is always room for resistance. Many authors have suggested that understanding identity as the product of discourse results in a great deal of research falling into discursive determinism (Conrad, 2004), with Alvesson and Karreman (2011) arguing that there is a highly reductionist feeling to much of the organisational discourse research. Indeed, some applications of Foucault's view of power have suggested a too deterministic portrayal of discourse. Consequently, subsequent theorising has focused more on the conflicted and contested understanding of the role of discourse (Hardy and Philips, 2004). First, research has drawn attention to the polyvalent nature of discourses; how they are never complete or fully cohesive or without contradiction. For example, discourses such as masculinity can be constructed in a variety of different ways and can be linked with understandings of independence, aggression or overt sexuality amongst others, some of which can conflict. The second way of acknowledging conflict between discourses is recognise that discourses do not act in isolation and a single discourse is one thread in a larger mesh that simultaneously constrain and enable an individual's identity performance. The tensions between these competing discourses creates a space in which individuals are able to express agency (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996), 'in which the agent can play one

discourse off against another, draw on multiple discourses to create new forms of interdiscursivity, and otherwise move between and across multiple discourses' (Hardy and Philips, 2004).

It is to the everyday struggles in which individuals engage while trying to exploit the space between discourses which this chapter will now turn. The agency that individuals are able to display in constructing identity performances that contest and rupture dominant discourses will form an important part of my theoretical framework by suggesting that resistance to organisational and cultural discourses is always possible.

## **2.6 - Discourse and Agency: Struggles around Identities**

While the constraining effect of discourse is significant and serves to shape identity performances, actors also contribute to the enaction of discourses and it is through this that they are able to demonstrate agency. Part of understanding the role of agency means not only focussing on the meanings attached to particular discourses but rather focussing on the interpretive struggles that individuals engage in around these discourses, attempting to reconcile the mesh of discourses that simultaneously act on an individual in any given setting (Mumby, 2005). As such, this thesis will suggest that in considering individual agency, the researcher does not need to posit some essential subject but rather can focus on the way in which people actively manoeuvre in relation to discursive pressure (Newton, 1998). This manoeuvring can take the form of open criticism, disregard of hegemonic discourses or the manifestation of alternative discursive performances (Laine and Vaara, 2007). Importantly, this conception of the relationship between discourse and power does not conceive of this manoeuvring as resistance in the traditional oppositional sense but rather as part of the relationship, acting within it and as an integral part of it (Hardy and Philips, 2004). This section will highlight how discursive struggles and manoeuvring reveal the less than complete control that discursive pressure exerts, allowing individuals to create 'space for action' and the possibility of new identity performances that do not reflect dominant discourses (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996).

Discursive manoeuvring through dis-identification from hegemonic organisational discourses was a key feature of Holmer-Nadesan work (1996). Her study of service workers, primarily involved in cleaning work, shows how from the moment they were recruited they were subject to discursive pressure that sought to ensure these workers identify with organisational goals and improve performance. The employee handbook which was issued to employees at the beginning of their employment and represented the primary tangible method of communicating what their employment would be like, employees were encouraged to see the organisation as a family and embrace the team spirit common in the organisation. The institution had a 'working together' programme which attempted to encourage workers to create a positive experience of work by working together and empowering workers to improve their working environment. Any reference to individualism was dropped from the handbook and workers were told to only follow standardised procedures and report any problems outside of this to supervisors. Contrary to the discourses of team work and family, the management discourse continued in this highly autocratic way in which the workers were managed and controlled (to the extremes of being told to ensure they washed each day and wore deodorant). The conflict between these different discourses illustrates the incomplete nature of discursive pressure, as well as acknowledging their multiplicity within organisational settings. The response to constraints imposed on identity performance reveals how individuals demonstrate agency. Instead of constructing a performance that represented organisational discourses, many of the service workers articulated their identity through maternal discourses, focussing on how they cared for students and treated them as adoptive children, a key part of their role as they understood it. By doing this they were seen to exploit the conflict between the hegemonic discourses, dis-identifying with them and using the space that was created to construct performances that drew on more preferable forms of identity.

Further examples of discursive manoeuvring can be found by returning to the work of Laine and Vaara (2007). They examined the discourses which construct understandings of strategic development amongst managers and found that they were appropriated by more senior management to ensure that decision-making was still their responsibility and to encourage managers to engage in additional consultancy work. This constraining effect was communicated through discursive texts like official publications, external stakeholder meetings and more informal meetings and

discussions. While the managers that were observed were found to be under significant pressure to conform to managerial led discourses of strategic development, there was also evidence of room for manoeuvre around these discourses. Some middle managers distanced themselves from this discourse because of the threat it posed to their professional identity as project professionals. This distancing was achieved by mixing the organisations' established discourses of project management and rupturing the idea of strategic development with a highly sceptical attitude. The managers would focus on highlighting their expertise and experience in dealing with the concrete operations of their organisations while constructing strategic development as abstract. Other managers manoeuvred around the same strategic development discourses by legitimising contrary behaviours using an alternative discourse of 'enterprise', this allowed them to present their behaviour as more pioneering and valuable than the behaviours demanded by management. The sorts of behaviours observed amongst the middle managers demonstrate how it is possible to understand organisational discourses as incomplete and therefore capable of being ruptured and permeated with other alternative discourses.

In contributing to this research on the influence of discourses, this thesis will provide a more in-depth and nuanced examination of agency in the context of everyday struggles and in the ways that organisational discourses attempt to construct a coherent and appropriate identity performance (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2002). In some cases individuals struggle to reconcile the myriad of competing discourses present within an organisation, and this was a focus of the research carried out by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2002). They explored the experiences of a female director as she struggled to find space between her preferred discourses of leadership (which demanded that she move away from performing many bureaucratic tasks) and those of corporate bureaucracy, which she was less comfortable with (those which required most effort being put into ensuring that the organisation was run efficiently, as opposed to being leading others). They posit that identity should be considered a struggle to find comfort, meaning and integration within the mesh of discourses present within organisations and this requires some correspondence between individual self-definition and discursive pressure.

In light of this discussion, this thesis focuses on identity struggles and particularly the agency demonstrated in the discursive manoeuvring, distancing, and dis-identification that individuals engage in. Understanding agency in this way does not deny or reduce the constraining effect of discourses but instead highlights the role of the actor in constructing and reconstructing them in an effort to articulate an identity performance with which they are comfortable and which reflects the competing pressures they are under (Thomas and Davies 2008). Having established how poststructural understandings of identity performance, discourse and agency, as well as the resistance to discourses, our discussion will now turn to an understanding of the following section will draw together the key theoretical strands to consider how individuals manoeuvre between gendered discourses and the gendered identity performances that they produce.

## **2.7 - Gendered Identity Performance**

Poststructuralist understandings of discourse and identity have also been used to explore the performance of gendered identity. One of the most influential constructionist scholars in this regard is Judith Butler (2000). Drawing from both poststructuralism and psychoanalysis, Butler developed her theory of performativity, the central tenant of which is the idea that gendered identity is formed through the repetition of discursively produced gendered acts or 'performances' whilst being regulated by societal norms.

Butler (2000) suggests that gender identities are 'constituted and constructed by language, which means there is no gender identity that precedes language' (Salih, 2002: 64). This linguistic performativity can be connected to gender by suggesting that gender performativity constitutes gendered identity. It is by performing as a man or a woman that we constitute our gendered identity as either masculine or feminine. In other words, it is not a gendered identity that 'does' discourse or language, but rather discourse and language 'do' gender (Salih, 2002). Butler observes that even within other gender theories which suggest a great degree of subjectivity, 'the subject still encounters its discursively constituted environment...The culturally enmired subject negotiates its constructions, even when those constructions are the very predicates of its own identity' (1990: 195). In essence, Butler suggests that although

gendered identity performances are regulated by the culturally defined understandings of how a 'man' or 'woman' should behave, there is also room for discursive manoeuvre.

Performing as a man or a woman can include many different actions, 'across the whole gamut of behaviours, decisions, desires and 'corporeal styles' which we associate with being male or female' (Alsop et al. 2003: 98). Gender performativity can be described as "the evocation of gender through stylized modes of interaction and the recitation of particular cultural norms" (Tyler and Cohen, 2008). However, Butler questions the origins of these behaviours and actions. For Butler there is no original identity from which our understanding of masculinity and femininity stems from, it is all a copy, of a copy, of a copy or, to put it another way, that "gender identification is constituted through an imitative process. Femininity and masculinity are but imitations of an imitation with no original" (Campbell and Harbord, 1999: 229). These repetitions and copies are governed only by societal norms and constraints, there is no 'real' gender, only an impersonation that passes for real (Butler, 2000). As such there is no sense of a final and complete accomplishment of gender, performativity involves a great deal of ambiguity, fluidity, contestedness and incompleteness. By acknowledging the move away from fixed, knowable identities to a constructed, dynamic form, Butler believes that this can allow a greater potential for subversion and agency (Salih, 2002). Elaborating on this Butler (2000) goes on to suggest that "construction is not opposed to agency; it is the necessary scene of agency" (ibid.: 147), or in other words, constructing identities doesn't make them any less political but instead highlights the political nature of the way in which they are articulated. As a result of this, for change and subversion of gender to happen it must take place within the confines of existing discourses, for there is nothing outside them.

Although Butler's theory of symbolic gender performance is often criticised for being difficult to apply to empirical research (McNay, 1999), insights from Butler's notions on gendered identity performance have been adopted by some organisational researchers. Gherardi (1995) helped pioneer the idea of gender performativity in the workplace by exploring the changing nature of gender relations in society. She suggests that we cannot predict the nature and expressions of gender in the future but we can understand how gender is negotiated in day to day relationships and gender is

constructed through face-to-face interactions. Gherardi's research hopes to establish 'what...we do when we 'do' gender' (1995: 128). She suggests that gender is constructed at the symbolic and interactional levels and when people do gender they 'celebrate each other's gender identity and repair offences to the symbolic order of gender' (ibid.: 185). Organisations are also considered to 'do' gender, applying gender characteristics to people and exploiting this for productive ends, framing women and men through a hegemonic system that maintains male dominance.

In highlighting the performance of gendered identities, Gherardi spends a great deal of time exploring how individuals create a dual presence whilst at work. She defines dual presence as 'a material and mental space in which the genders are blurred, in which the signification of women's experience in the male symbolic universe (female rationality, female independence) is invented, and vice versa the signification of the male (male dependence, compliance, emotionality), and in which the everyday relations of co-operation and conflict that innovate gender relations are established' (Gherardi, 1995: 95). In other words, the boundaries between the symbolic nature of masculinity and femininity become unfixed and fluid, with individuals able to occupy both at once. This dual presence exists in organisations in the way in which, through careful consideration of social interactions, individuals produce a coherent gender performance that reflects the dominant cultural understandings of gender and simultaneously mitigate any incoherencies that may also arise so as not to expose the constructed nature of gender. 'Doing gender' in this way shows how it is possible to 'do' gender in a way which is not entirely constrained by gendered organisational discourses. Instead workers are able to do gender differently, manoeuvre within gendered discourses and innovate ways in which they can navigate gendered organisations.

Poststructural feminism has drawn on a variety of authors to highlight the plurality and complexity of gendered identity. Calas and Smircich (2006) suggest that poststructural feminism brings together ideas of power, language and intersectionality to emphasise the constructedness of gender. By adopting Foucauldian approaches to power, poststructural feminists have shown that there are significant commonalities between Foucault and feminism, citing the body as important as the site of domination and control. They focus on the role of discourse in perpetuating hegemonic gendered



power through the oppression of unrecognised and marginalised discourses (Diamond and Quinby, 1988: x). Poststructural feminist writers have also emphasised the intersections of gendered discourses with other dominant discourses, around age, ethnicity, race and sexuality (McCall, 2005, Butler and Scott, 1992, Fraser and Nicholson, 1988) and how these work together in the construction of identity performances.

Hall et al. (2007) considered issues of intersectionality in their exploration of the relationship between gender, age and class. They found that the respondent's sense of masculinity emerged in conjunction with not only discourses of masculinity but also age and class. For example, they found the intersections of age and gender meant that as they grew older, the fire fighters in their study were less reliant on physical expressions of masculinity and more on mental skills of common sense and clear thinking. Class also became an important means through which to examine masculinity as different groups used class signifiers to construct their identities. For example, the estate agents in their study who had worked their way up from humble beginnings to enjoy a far more affluent lifestyle constructed a sense of masculinity based on 'patterns of consumption and not production. Evidence of financial acumen [is] be flagged through possessions, dress and objects' (Hall et al. 2007: 546) and used to demonstrate success and the ability to provide (both stereotypically 'masculine' qualities). This, contrary to the 'working class hero' discourse that governs fire fighters, allowed estate agents to see themselves as masculine despite not working in a more 'masculine' profession. This research demonstrates the complexity of gendered identity that can result when the multiplicity of identity is considered and the subject of analysis expands to include more than one social category (McCall, 2005).

This section has illustrated how other researchers have drawn on poststructural approaches to identity and used them to understand how gendered discourses constrain performances and become intertwined with other discourses, limiting the behaviours they can enact. Drawing from these insights, my research will explore gendered identity performances and how dominant gendered discourses serve to assign certain acceptable behaviours to men and women. In addition, my research will question the extent to which individuals are able to exercise agency in their

identity performances, exploring how they challenge dominant discourses, by drawing on alternative understandings of masculinity and femininity, and with what effects.

## **2.8 - Conclusion**

Identity and gendered identity performance have been found to be complex concepts which have been approached in a number of different ways. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the discussion in this chapter, which contribute to a theoretical framework that allows for an exploration of the identity performances of neighbourhood officers. The first element of this theoretical framework draws from ethnomethodology, to focus on the way in which identity and gendered identity performance are constructed through everyday interactions. It is by examining the minute details of interaction, the material resources they draw on, the language that individuals use and the subtle meanings that can be articulated through body language, that identity performances can be explored (Martin, 2006). The second element of the theoretical framework also draws from ethnomethodology to emphasise the importance of contexts - the performative stages and audiences. This enables a more nuanced appreciation of how identity performances are mediated by different contextual circumstances. The third element in the theoretical framework moves from ethnomethodology to incorporate poststructuralist analysis of discourse and identities. Here, the interrelationship between discourse and agency draws attention to how discourses constrain the range of identity performances that individuals can present. Therefore, the third element of the theoretical framework will explore this discursive struggle in different contexts. In my theoretical framework I have placed emphasis on discursive constraint, but crucially by including ethnomethodological insights, this means a focus on discourses in context (Kelan, 2010). This will mean investigating the multiplicity of discourses that individuals are subject too in the different contexts in which they perform and how they serve to restrict the performances that can be given. However, due to the incomplete nature of discourse, it is possible to negotiate their influence and see the agency that individuals can display in rupturing dominant discourses and struggling to infuse them with alternative discourses. Achieving this creates space for individuals to construct identity performances that reflect their own choice to draw on alternative discourses. What we are left with is an understanding of identity performance that suggests it is the result of everyday, context-specific

interactions which are simultaneously constrained and ruptured by a range of organisational discourses.

Given the emphasis placed on situated performance and discursive constraint within my theoretical framework, the next chapter will explore the contexts in which performances are given in greater depth. Understanding the performances that individuals display at work means acknowledging the influence of organisational cultures. Organisational cultures provide a variety of different contexts in which performances are be given, each with a range of different discourses which will attempt to constrain and limit identity performances, regulating and normalising individual behaviour to conform to cultural expectations. However, as demonstrated within this chapter, discourses are not all encompassing and therefore the ways that cultural discourses are resisted and refuted will be explored.

# Chapter Three

## Cultures, Gendered Cultures and Control

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### 3.1 - Introduction

When attempting to understand the construction of identity and gendered identity performance, much has been made of the constraining function of discourse. Whether at broader social level, such as gender, age or ethnicity or more localised in nature, discourses work to constrain the range of identity performances that individuals can give; consequently, identity performances are often characterised by struggle. This chapter will critically explore organisations as arenas of discursive struggle and examine the ways that the interactions, practices, artefacts, symbols, myths and values that comprise organisational cultures serve to normalise particular types of behaviour and regulate identity performances (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997, Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Such identity regulation (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) will be shown to begin from the moment that an individual enters an organisation and continues to inform the socially acceptable way of behaving. Adopting this understanding of normative control, my theoretical framework will examine the normalising effect of discourse in gendered cultures, suggesting that individuals face significant pressure to adopt appropriate gendered behaviours and to construct certain performances because of their gender (Acker, 1990, Pilgeram, 2007). However, while acknowledging the strength of normative control, I will also argue, as in the previous chapter, that individuals are capable of displaying agency through challenging these norms, adopting alternative gendered identity performances (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004). The manipulation of performance allows individuals to move between the competing pressures of gendered cultures that are present within different contexts and to construct performances that allow them to cope with the range of organisational demands and expectations that are placed on them (Barry et al. 2006).

The chapter will therefore begin by exploring the concept of organisational culture, its features, constituents and the different ways in which it can be understood and

accessed (Alvesson, 2002, Martin and Frost, 1999). It will then move on to examine how these constituents of organisational culture can be understood as gendered and examine the concept of gendered organisational culture (Acker, 1990). The relationship between culture and normative control will then be considered, with particular attention being paid to the normalising effects of gendered identity performances. Finally, the chapter will consider how individuals are able to resist through multiple identity performances (Ford, 2006).

### **3.2 – Multiple and Contested Organisational Cultures**

Over the past thirty years organisational culture has become one of the most widely researched areas of academic research on organisations. It is suggested that even when organisations do not have specific cultural statements or pay special attention to its presence, the behaviours of its members are still influenced by the beliefs and values of a shared cultural nature (Alvesson, 2002). Interest in organisational culture has grown exponentially since the early 1980s, especially over the perceived link between and organisation's values and its performance (Watson, 2001). However, while managerialist writing has focused on how to manage cultures so as to increase organisational effectiveness, there has also been a parallel debate, from constructionist and critical approaches, over the communicative and controlling nature of organisational cultures.

A multitude of meanings can be attached to organisational culture and it is often described as the norms, values, beliefs and management styles of an organisation (Cunliffe, 2009) or the 'root metaphor' of an organisation, the natural and spontaneous reaction to the activities they are required to perform (Smircich, 1983). Kunda suggests that organisational culture provides 'the shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership in an organisation, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed' (1992: 8), Alvesson (2002) goes on to define what meanings and symbols are, indicating that they are important factors in understanding culture. He describes meanings as how an object, word or statement etc. is interpreted, the subjective way that expectations are associated to anything. Symbols, on the other hand, represent objects or actions that have connotations attached to them which give them a richer and more complex meaning. While there

are numerous definitions of culture within the research literature (Kunda, 1992, Martin, 2000, Shein, 1992), within this thesis it will be understood as ‘a shared and learned world of experiences, meanings, values and understandings which inform people and which are expressed, reproduced, and communicated...in symbolic form’ (Alvesson, 2002: 6).

Definitions of culture reflect a number of different paradigms and cognitive interests (Alvesson, 2002). It is possible to identify three major approaches to culture: the integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspectives (Martin and Frost, 1999). Each perspective represents a different set of underlying assumptions about organisations, ranging from a functionalist and unitary view of culture through to poststructuralist perspective, emphasising complexity, multiplicity and fragmentation. The integrationist perspective, which draws heavily on anthropology, is valuable in the sense that it gives an overall sense of an organisation, its values, sensibilities and assumptions and can provide a very rich picture of organisational life (Newman, 1995). This approach can provide a detailed understanding of how organisational culture persists and reproduces itself by giving new members the information and behaviours needed to adapt and be allowed entry. However, this kind of analysis ignores the internal variation and cultural diversity that is present in most organisations and tended to focus on the experiences and views of senior members of the organisation. It also ignores or plays down the role of power within organisations and how culture can be used to control individuals, putting pressure on members to enact certain behaviours and adopt certain constructions of social reality.

The differentiation perspective avoids this limitation by focussing on the sub-cultures that are present in organisations, offering an insight into the range of cultures present. Sub-cultures divide organisational culture by specific variables such as by department, function and profession and are based on geographical or social boundaries that establish groups of colleagues and co-workers that share an informal set of meanings and values (Newman, 1995). Understanding the multiplicity of culture also allows for cultural resistance to emerge through counter-culture, where individuals form groups that purposefully disidentify from the cultural hegemony. Whilst the differentiation perspective does suggest a less monolithic and unitary view of culture, it continues to focus on group membership and the security this brings, rather than focussing on the

effect cultural meanings can have on individual identity and how individuals become attached to culture (Meyerson and Martin, 1988).

The final perspective, the fragmentation approach, attempts to understand organisations as being constructed via multiple meanings and discourses and a variety of different and fluid identifications. It offers a means of exploring what happens when competing cultural meanings act on an individual. Advocates of this perspective suggest that the relationships among the different components of culture are inconsistent and contain elements of confusion and contradiction (Martin and Frost, 1999). In effect 'the essence of culture is ambiguity, which pervades all' (ibid.: 355). As a result of this ambiguity, power is diffused at all levels of the organisation and no individual has control over the way in which culture manifest itself and affects employees (Frost et al. 1991).

Adopting a fragmented perspective, Alvesson (2002) suggests that the different environments and issues that individuals encounter in organisations conflicts with the idea of a single, universal culture. He suggests that there are numerous arenas that individuals will find themselves in that require them to adopt different identities in order to adequately function within an organisation. For example, individuals are likely to be required to behave differently when interacting with the various groups that they come into contact in an organisation, from listening to senior managers, to trying to impress potential new customers or during informal break times with colleagues, each of these situations will require different behaviours (ibid. 2002: 165). However, despite these variations there is still, Alvesson (2002) argues, an overarching set of shared meanings and understandings that make moving between these different arenas easier and less confusing for individuals. Alvesson defines this as 'bounded ambiguity' (2002: 166) arguing that it may take the form of rapid switching between social identities in order to adapt different sets of ideas and meanings within cultural contexts.

However, these three perspectives are not without their limitations and one notable absence in all of these perspectives is the role of power and the unequal statuses of these different cultural domains, as they will not all constrain identity to the same degree in a consistent way. This being said, they each provide valuable insights into

culture which will inform how I approach culture within this thesis. This thesis will therefore draw on all three approaches to organisational culture, allowing an appreciation of the dominant cultural traditions of an organisation, creating an overview of the culture of a particular organisation, taking account of its history and how this has resulted in a unique set of values, beliefs and practices. It will also examine how this dominance does not go unchallenged, suggesting how a differentiation perspective can assist in understanding how culture can vary across different departments, proposing a less unitary version of culture and the potential for subculture to emerge. Finally, the fragmentation perspective on culture will allow me to explore the ambiguity of organisational life and the struggles that individuals experience when operating under the constraints of different cultural domains; as, amongst others, part of a larger culture, as a particular occupation, or gender, as a younger or older person and as a member of a number of social groups, all of which offer different appropriate identities (Newman, 1995).

Having established what this thesis will take to mean as organisational culture and the different ways in which culture has been approached, it is possible to begin to explore the gendered nature of organisational culture. Just as gender can be seen as a key component of identity performances, highlighting the need for gendered identity performances, cultures can also be understood as gendered. In light of this, this chapter will now turn to address how organisations are gendered contexts which create and are created by gendered practices.

### **3.3 - Gendered Organisational Cultures**

Taking the issues and approach to organisational culture that was established in the previous section, I will discuss how they can be understood as gendered, highlight how this will be important to my theoretical framework and form part of the basis of gendered identity regulation within organisations. It was the publishing of Acker's 'Hierarchies, bodies and jobs: a gendered theory of organizations' (1990) that marked the beginning of the 'gendered organisations' perspective (Martin and Collinson, 2002). Acker (1990) draws attention to how gender is implicated in organisational practices and knowledge about organisations; and that gender is therefore deeply embedded in organisations and organising. Since the publication of Acker's seminal



work, the gendered nature of organisations has come under far more scrutiny, spawning new research agendas on gendered organisations and their cultures and challenging the purported gender neutrality of organisational theory. .

Acker (1992) suggests four components that can be analysed in order to understand gendered culture, gendered interactions, gendered divisions, gendered symbols and gendered components of identity, which was further explored by Alvesson and Due Billing (1997). Acker (1992) suggests that culture can be understood through the interaction between members of an organisation and how these interactions establish dominance and subordination and include or exclude men and women. Sexual politics can play a hidden role in these interactions and a link between dominance and sexuality often helps maintain the dominance of men in the gendered hierarchy of an organisation. Feminine attributes like ‘sensitivity, solidarity, nurturing, emotionality, and so on...are the attributes of the powerless...women are not powerless because they are feminine, rather, they are feminine because they are powerless, because it is a way of dealing with the requirements of subordination’ (ibid. 1995: 15). This idea is formalised in the boss-secretary relationship. Pringle (1989, cited in Gatrell and Swan, 2008) examined the sexual and familial symbolism of this relationship and the way in which cultural discourses constructed these relationships with men and women fulfilling specific roles (in this case, men in the dominant role that sexualises the secretary and confines them in a servile role with little power). Thus, this relationship serves to reproduce gendered power and subordination by confining men and women and encouraging them to behave in certain ways. This is equally as applicable to men as it is to women, as any individual who appears or acts feminine is likely to find themselves in a position of subordination, hence why many men (and women) wish to avoid giving a gendered identity performance that might be interpreted as feminine (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999).

The idea that gendered culture is partly constituted by the interactions that take place in an organisation and how this culture is reproduced and prolonged by this very process speaks directly to the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. Given that interactions were found to be an important means by which individuals constructed their identity performances, then it follows that if interactions are engaged in a mutually constitutive relationship with culture, then culture can be viewed as an

important constraining factor in identity construction. Thus, the link between identity, gendered culture and interaction, which is a key focus of my theoretical framework, is given further support.

As well as examining interactions, Acker (1992) suggested other features of gendered culture, such as the production of gender divisions, which can be closely associated with structural understandings of gender inequality. Although advertising a job for applicants of a specific gender and paying men and women at different rates is no longer permissible by law, employers still tend to have predetermined ideas of which gender suits a particular job and the type of work that men and women are best suited for. This not only leads to the segregation of men and women in the workplace but also leads to men being seen as more suitable for senior managerial roles and to the creation of a gendered hierarchy. Unsurprisingly, given the historical dominance of men in the workplace, many authors have focussed on how masculine discourses work within organisations to ensure that masculine ways of working and stereotypically masculine skills remain privileged. Men are still more likely to occupy a disproportionate amount of senior positions within organisations, earn more money for equivalent work and be offered career enhancement through promotions and training (Gatrell and Swan, 2008).

The gendered divisions within organisations are effectively illustrated in Poggio's (2000) study. She examined the way in which men and women construct their gender in different, male dominated workplaces. Poggio interviewed individuals from the building, agriculture, computer technology, communication and engineering industries. Male dominated workplaces, like building tended to have very distinct masculine organisational cultures which made it very difficult for women to progress or be accepted by male colleagues. Women were seen as unsuitable because of the dirty working environments and the coarse language and joking banter. Even those industries that employ more women and purport to have an egalitarian organisational culture were still found to make distinctions between male and female workers and question the suitability of women for managerial positions. Poggio's research draws attention to how organisations are grounded in gendered assumptions, where gendered divisions of labour work both horizontally and vertically. Even in organisations

where women are not a minority, men and masculinity is still the norm from which both men and women are evaluated.

The remaining components of gendered culture, that Acker (1992) identified, deal with the symbolic creation of gender and how the gendered identity performances of the members themselves construct the gendered culture of the organisation. This can be seen in the “the creation of symbols, images, and forms of consciousness that explicate, justify, and, more rarely, oppose gender divisions” (Acker, 1992: 253). Organisations are sites of symbolic production and suffused with gendered images and connotations that help create a gendered interpretation of the organisation. Alvesson and Due Billing (1997) suggest three categories in which it is possible to see the presence of gendered organisational culture, rituals, artefacts and metaphors. Organisational rituals are repetitive events which contain symbolic elements that express something about the social norms and values of the organisation. Alvesson and Due Billing use the example of meetings as organisational rituals to explore how they can constitute and reproduce organisational culture.

For example, in Hodgson’s (2003) investigation of masculinity, subjection and resistance in a company providing life assurance, the confessional nature of one-to-one meetings is highlighted making it a good example of particular forms of gendered consciousness that reinforce gendered divisions. When reviewing the sales achievements of each member of the sales team, sales managers would hold weekly one on one meetings where they would be able to access knowledge that was inaccessible through other means. The highly personal interaction in these meetings isolated the achievements of each team member from the rest of their colleagues and instilled a highly competitive culture, where individuals were encouraged to relentlessly pursue the scarce rewards offered to employees. These one to one meetings were also used as means to influence employee subjectivity and encourage them to identify with corporate understandings of their perceived weaknesses. In these one to one meetings, the first person plural is stressed (‘we’ve agreed that you should make more telephone calls’ when describing how the management suggests an employee could improve) so employees begin to recognise the weaknesses that managers have identified within them themselves. All this is evidence of how this particular organisational ritual, amongst others, helps create a highly masculine

organisational culture where competitiveness and autonomy are prized commodities. Even the attempts to influence individual subjectivity are interpreted by employees as 'being masters of their own future' by developing their skills and improving their performance.

The second category Alvesson and Due Billing suggest is 'cultural artefacts'. They highlight 'buildings, offices, furniture, corporate logos, dress and other material objects' (1997: 111) as important signifiers of organisational culture. They point out the importance of dress in organisations, highlighting how women are expected to strike a fine balance by not giving a gendered identity performance that is too feminine (in order to present a serious and professional image) or too masculine (as to avoid appearing to parody masculinity or too butch) when dressing for work, this means dressing in sombre colours, wearing suits and not wearing revealing clothing. Therefore, 'Corporate artefacts can be understood as being aesthetically encoded or 'made (i.e. simultaneously produced and enforced) to mean' (Hancock, 2005: 32) in particular ways. It is also important to keep in mind, however, that the capacity to enchant is socially situated' (Hancock and Tyler, 2007: 515). In other words, just like gendered identity performance, cultural artefacts are giving meaning in social contexts and through dominant social norms. Hancock and Tyler (2007) illustrate this by examining and interpreting corporate imagery on publicity documents. In this analysis they use the example of a recruitment poster used by Easy Jet (a low-cost British airline) which depicts a young and attractive, barely clothed woman looking bored in bed. This image and the accompanying text have clear sexual and gendered connotations and serve to represent the cabin crew role as feminine and centred on the ability to provide gratification. This recruitment poster is unlikely to attract male applicants (who would not want to assume the exposed position of the woman depicted) and thus the occupation remains dominated by women who are willing to give a stereotypically feminine identity performance.

The final category suggested is 'gendered organizational metaphors'. This category focuses on the language used in organisations and how this can reinforce the gendered culture of the organisation (although importantly making sweeping and glib assumptions about the discriminatory nature of these metaphors should be avoided and instead examined in context and through the reactions of individuals (Alvesson

and Due Billing, 1997)). Alvesson and Due Billing (1997) highlight the common use of sporting and war metaphors in organisations and cite this as evidence of masculine domination (as was seen in the previously discussed work by McDowell (1997)). They also indicate that gendered metaphors may indicate broader themes that cannot be easily categorised in gendered terms. They use the example of team working and creating a sense of family and belonging within organisations, which may be superficially interpreted as feminine but were found to appeal equally to men and women.

The features of gendered organisational culture presented above will form a key means by which this thesis will explore the construction of gender within policing organisations. This will be achieved through investigating the interactions that members engage in, the divisions that exist around different skills and jobs, the cultural artefacts and the ways that symbols and metaphors are constructed within the organisations. The organisation is therefore described in gendered terms, discourses of masculinity or femininity are at work through them and provide access to the way in which these cultural discourses elicit different identity performances. Throughout the chapter it has been shown that organisational culture and gendered culture provides a shared set of meanings, values and experiences for members and the next section will explore how these inform the way people behave and how they are expressed and reproduced by members. Many authors refer to these processes as normative control.

### **3.4 - Normative Control and Organisational Cultures**

Whether an individual is entering an organisational culture for the first time or even if they are an existing member of an organisation, they will find themselves subject to discursive pressures which seek to encourage them to construct their identity performances within organisational norms. This section will explore how organisational culture and the organisational discourses that constitute them, serve to limit and constrain the range of identity performances that can be given by individuals, highlighting the role of normative control within my theoretical framework, and allowing a better understanding of the organisational environments in which discourses operate. Normative control was initially conceived of as a tool for management to gain greater effort and commitment from employees by appealing to

their values and beliefs and, if possible, attempting to align their beliefs with those of the company (Kunda, 1992). This understanding of normative control was criticised for presenting too functionalist an account of organisational culture and some argued that culture was not something that could be manipulated for managerial benefit (Gotsi, et al, 2010) but instead emerged from the practices, symbols, language, interactions amongst members etc., as described earlier in the chapter. This assumption suggests that while individuals are under significant pressure to adopt certain behaviours and identity performances, this pressure comes from the dominant discourses of an organisation's cultures.

Normative control can take many forms and often organisational discourses act in multiple ways resulting in the normalising of particular identity performances. Alvesson et al. (2008) point to 'embodied practices' or what an individual's occupation actually entails as a means by which identities are crafted. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) focus a great deal on how our occupations, in part, define who we are, whether this is through defining a person directly, by defining them as different from other people or as a part of a larger group with a lexicon of established understandings that are reproduced through informal talk, social gatherings and engendering a sense of community. Another distinctive means by which organisations seek to manipulate identity performance is through the 'establishing and clarifying of a distinct set of rules of the game' (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002: 631). These story-telling performances (Alvesson et al. 2008) are designed to communicate the established ways of doing things and the 'normal' and 'natural' ways to behave to new and existing members. These stories and pieces of advice form guidelines for the successful navigation of organisational discourse and when repeated by the majority of members forges a collective sense of identity that smoothes the operation of an organisation. Collinson (2003) cites Grey's (1994) work on the regulating power of careerism and the desire to be seen as successful. Working in a highly competitive organisational culture was seen to result in careerism becoming one of the central loci of identity performance, where the 'corrosive impact of careerism can be seen in the way that aspiring individuals come to treat all organizational, social and even personal relations as instrumental to career progress' (Collinson, 2003: 537). Whilst at work this obsession with career development resulted in continual attempts to engage in impression management in order to build a reputation for success. One of the key

discourses which emphasised the importance of a successful career was the masculinist culture in which achieving a successful career was an important part of successfully crafting a masculine identity.

Alvesson and Due Billing highlight the 'pressure for homogeneity and culturally competent behaviour' (1997: 107) and how the shared meanings associated with organisational culture lead to similarities in the way in which individuals relate to the reality of the organisation they inhabit. The acceptance of deviant performances within organisation is very limited, organisational goals and culture are aimed at achieving predictability amongst employees, making it easier for individuals to make sense of their environment and their place within it, thus reducing uncertainty. This pressure for similarity means that outsiders (those who are not similar) are avoided and rejected (ibid.: 108), as a result women can find it difficult to fit in to an organisation that is dominated by male behaviours and attitudes if they attempt to maintain any degree of femininity. In light of this, the range of identity performances given by individuals are extremely constrained, being dictated by the dominant discourses of the organisation where individuals are confined to a limited definition of what is culturally acceptable and recognisable.

Conforming to organisational norms and identity regulation, as described above, can be seen to begin from the very first moments an individual comes into contact with an organisation, even before if the organisation has an obvious and well documented organisational culture. Miller (2009) suggests that individuals go through three stages as they assimilate into organisations and undergo processes of socialisation, whereby organisations seek to instil their own cultures within them and encourage them to adapt to organisational expectations more quickly. The first stage identified by Miller is that of 'anticipatory socialisation'. This is where individuals learn about the work they will be doing, the nature of occupation and the particular organisation they will be joining. Most people will have learned, to some degree, about the nature of most occupations as they have grown up. By witnessing occupations being performed around them, by seeing their depiction on television and by being involved as customers, people will have an adequate idea about the occupation they wish to join and will have some preparation for life in that organisation. Part of this knowledge will include how one behaves as part of that occupation and individuals are likely to

anticipate that they will also be expected to behave in this way, for example if a person wishes to become a flight attendant then they are likely to know that they will be required to present a polite and helpful manner at all times. Prior to their first experience of an organisation, individuals will also research the company that they are joining, learning their organisational goals, aims and any cultural statements and will use this information to prepare for entry to the organisation.

Upon entry to a new organisation individuals will enter the 'encounter' stage. This stage is often the most stressful for individuals as they attempt to make sense of their new surroundings and the organisational culture (Miller, 2009). Organisations often seek to instil certain behaviours and attitudes within new employees in order to make their arrival as successful as possible. New recruits whose behaviour reflects the dominant cultural norms of the organisation are likely to be accepted more quickly and appear to be more committed (Trowler and Knight, 1999). Given that induction and training are suggested to be the most fertile time for transmitting organisational culture, it is important to explore these early processes of cultural identification (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). One of the major difficulties that individuals find during these initial encounters with a new organisation is the difference between the assumptions that they developed during anticipatory socialisation and the reality of working in the organisation. In light of this, individuals are required to learn how to exist and function successfully in a new organisation and forget their old assumptions. This process can be difficult for some workers as they are subjected to pressure to conform and give a certain performance within the organisation.

The individuals in the cultures described above were able to identify the dominant norms of the culture and how they'll be expected to behave as a result. Once this has been established the professional identity they will be expected to inhabit will become clear. However, this is not a straight forward process and individuals are likely to become anxious about whether they will achieve this convincingly (Hodgson, 2005). Learning these occupational identities is difficult and takes time (another reason why it begins from the moment an individual enters an organisation) and can have a significant impact on employees. Hodgson argues 'that this process should be read as far more than the mere acquisition of a tacit skill. The intention, if not always the effect, of professionalization...is the subjection of employees, offering both security



and dependence, 'subordination' and 'existence' (2005: 59). This draws attention to the role of organisational cultures in controlling individuals and directing their behaviours in certain ways. This final stage for socialisation occurs when individuals move from their 'outsider' to 'insider' status and begin to identify with their occupation and organisation. At this point individuals have been accepted into and participate fully in the organisation as they have been able to learn and reproduce the expected identity behaviours. This does not mean that an individuals understanding of culture and identity performance will remain constant. As Alvesson (2002) notes, culture is in a state of constant change and members will always be uncertain about their understanding of it. However, at the metamorphosis stage individuals understand enough of the dominant discourses working in organisational culture that they are better able to identify and adapt to these changes.

A key issue in the theoretical framework of this thesis is the way that normalising discourses act on individuals to socialise them into organisational culture, constraining the performances that they give. However, as my research focus is also on gender and gendered identity performance, it is important to examine the role that gendered culture plays in imposing constraints on individuals through cultural expectations of how men and women should perform.

### **3.5 - Normative Control in Highly Gendered Cultures**

Gendered organisational cultures have a significant impact on how individuals behave but also how individuals understand themselves and craft their gendered identity performances. Both men and women respond to regulatory pressures from dominant discourses to enact certain gendered ways of being and the outcome of these normalising discourses is not only a gendered performance that has been constructed by these discourses but also the perpetuation of their dominance. By regulating identity and creating an ideal type of individual, there is little to challenge these norms and they remain dominant until resistance is offered. Processes of normalisation and identification are not only constituted through discourse but also help to constitute them as well, the two processes being inseparably intertwined (Kenny, 2010). In relation to gendered cultures, there is a significant amount of research that shows how gendered identity performances will be altered in order to reflect the gendered norms

of an organisation. Butler (2004:1) emphasises that organisations act as ‘scenes of constraint’ for performances, limiting the number of performances that an individual can give. Thus when constructed within gendered organisational cultures, it can be suggested that gendered performances at work are constructed within the hegemonic norms of an organisation and that it is only by conforming to the different sets of gendered norms encountered within organisations that individuals will experience social acceptance from their colleagues. Thus there is significant pressure on workers to conform and give a certain type of performance or face alienation and exclusion from their organisation.

An example of a highly gendered culture where individuals have had to adapt their gendered identity performance in light of overt societal norms was presented by Pilgeram (2007). In her study of women who work on the culture of the American agricultural industry, a traditionally masculine and male dominated industry, she found that women gave significantly more masculine gendered identity performance in order to succeed in and gain acceptance from the industry. Whilst observing the public arena of the cattle auctions she found traditional displays of gendered relationships, with male farmers and their submissive, feminine wives, but this image was subverted by the presence of female farmers. These women were consciously trying to hide the symbols of their femininity, concealing their handbags and wearing similar clothes to the male ranchers, which can be seen as evidence of attempts to survive within a masculine environment by giving a more masculine performance. Even in the pseudo-private arena of the cattle auction, the back stage preparation area, they continued to behave in accordance with the hegemonic norms and again gave very masculine performances. This took the shape of swearing, roughly handling the livestock and ordering other men around, the expected behaviour of people in this context. By adopting a masculine gendered identity performance and succumbing to normative controls, these women are able to exist and succeed within a male dominated industry but their performances are highly constrained and there is only one type of performance available to them should they wish this success to continue. Having learnt what gendered identity performance to give in order to satisfy normative expectations; these women can be seen to have achieved the final stage of socialisation by achieving ‘metamorphosis’ (Miller, 2009).

In a similar vein Devine et al. (2010) explored the culture of the Irish Education sector and how it served to regulate the identities of the female managers who worked within it. Under the influence of an increasingly managerialised culture, the education professionals were required to spread themselves further and thinner in order to be seen as a competent manager and achieve success. This was evidenced by being constantly available for management issues and showing commitment to the strategic goals of the organisation. This had gendered implications for the female managers as the masculinised organisational culture which dominated the most senior positions meant that they had to reconstruct their identities and move away from feminine conceptions of the self. This often meant choosing not to have children, not only to avoid the related periods of time off work and competing pressures on time but to avoid the appearance that this might be in issue, regardless of whether it happened or not. Women were also careful not to appear to do too much 'busy work' and ensure that as much of the administration associated with their role was delegated to others, many commented that they did this in order to avoid associations with secretarial activities and the associated subordination. This process of masculinisation was seen by the women as potentially detrimental to their sense of femininity and their relationships with other women as they risked being only seen as a hardened, career women. By undoing the feminine parts of their identity, these women were succumbing to organisational discourses that construct the ideal manager as masculine and free from caring responsibilities. By acknowledging these discourses and constructing their gendered identities around them, the women are allowing organisational culture to dictate their behaviour, future career development and most importantly, sense of self. However, by conforming to these discourses they are also helping to reconstitute them and maintain their dominance, perpetuating the culture which caused them to regulate their identity in order to achieve success.

The two examples presented above show how the culture of an organisation, the gendered practices, symbols, expectations and interactions all work to constrain the gendered identity performance that men and women give, sometimes to the point where it is detrimental to individuals' sense of self. Overall, the normative control that results from organisational culture and discourses has been shown to be a powerful regulatory force within organisations. It signifies a set of cultural expectations that seek to reproduce and prolong culture and the values, symbolic

attachments and experiences that it represents through individuals. Given the links that can be drawn between the role of discourse in constraining identity performance (as shown in the previous chapter) and the presence of these discourses within organisational culture, shown through the symbolic meanings they attach to features of an organisation, it is important that this research acknowledges and takes into account normative regulation in its investigation of identity performance. However, despite the presence of normative control, the next section will explore how individuals are not simply passive recipients of organisational culture and control but how they can also exercise their own agency, through critically reflecting on their own identity performances.

### **3.6 - Resisting and Negotiating Normative Control**

While gendered cultures exert a significant amount of pressure on members to behave in certain ways, it does not follow that just because discourses act upon individuals they are willing to incorporate them into their identity performance. The regulating effect of organisational culture is not to be underestimated, but the power of culture is not entirely deterministic and members of an organisation are capable of manipulating their identity performances to respond to the fluctuating and competing discourses present in different contexts (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004). Instead of just conceiving resistance as opposition to the dominant discourses of a culture and demonstrated through performances designed to challenge and contradict them, this thesis will also take a more complex view of resistance, one which reflects the ‘moment-to-moment choices, tensions and inconsistencies’ that individuals face when performing identities (Ford, 2006: 96). As such, resistance will be understood more as the process of negotiating dominant cultural discourses, individual identity discourses (like age, gender, race etc) and the identification with other identity themes (like mother or professional role), all of which highlight the need for multiple identity performances (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). In relation to gendered cultures, Acker (1990) explores this idea by suggesting that individuals engage in identity work in order to ‘fit in’ within gendered organisations, adopting the appropriate gendered behaviours to correspond with organisational context. This has obvious correlations with the previous chapter’s discussion of the role of discursive constraint and agency within

performances. Acker's understanding of how individuals are accountable for their performances and craft them to ensure they are acceptable to their audience shows that, although performances are subject to discursive pressure, individuals also have the ability to display agency by tailoring their performance to their environment (Bruni and Gherardi, 2001).

Resistance to normative control can be understood to take many forms and the most obvious and easily observable of this agential action relates to organisational misbehaviour and the rejection of official organisational aims. Trowler and Knight (1999) whilst conducting research in universities on new academic appointees found that some academics they interviewed were willing to leave an organisation because they were unwilling to accept some of the practices of the university, especially when they differed greatly from the stated mission of the organisation (in this case a lack of inclusion of students from ethnic minorities through a failure to adopt a more inclusive curriculum). One academic in particular rejected attempts to normalise her behaviour and thinking and felt that she would be unable to maintain such a performance for any length of time. Another example can be found in the work of Thomas and Davies (2005). They applied this understanding of resistance to social service professionals/managers and their objection of the discourses of New Public Management, finding more traditionally recognised acts of resistance that focus on observable acts, like writing complaining memos, ignoring requests for information because of the volume of paperwork required of individuals and not adopting technological changes.

While these behaviours are an important means by which normative control is resisted, they do not represent the entire range of resistant behaviours and, as stated earlier, resistance can also be articulated through multiple identity performances. They allow the performer to react to the range of discursive pressures they may face in different organisational contexts and to construct identity performances that mitigate the diverse and competing expectations placed on them (Ford, 2006). Frank Barrett (2001) examined how men working in different departments within the US Navy draw on different sources of masculinity in order to satisfy the highly masculine organisational culture. Men working in the more overtly masculine roles, like fighter pilot and those who work and live on board large ships, found it very easy to access

sources of masculinity. Fighter pilots or 'fly boys' were seen to represent aggressiveness, technical mastery of complex machinery and the desire to take risks in the face of danger. Those working on ships relied on the ability to endure the austere conditions that life onboard could bring and demonstrating competence in the face of pressure (whether faced in training exercises or real life combat situations) and remaining calm. However, there are an increasing number of people working in non-combatant roles which do not have the same level of danger and pressure associated with working on the front lines. These individuals are admonished by those with 'real men's jobs' and described as 'supply pussies' or 'support weenies', illustrating that some men can find working in a highly macho culture as uncomfortable as a woman may, albeit in a different way. In an effort to differentiate themselves and achieve some degree of masculine recognition in the organisation, these officers rely on their technical abilities to ensure that the other areas of the organisation remain well supplied. They present their role as indispensable and suggest that the organisation wouldn't be able to function without them.

This example shows that while under the same pressure from dominant masculine discourses, members of the navy have constructed different identity performances which allow them to fit into the organisation's cultures. As not all officers have access to the same symbolic resources (the fighter jets) and overt masculine meanings attached to their roles (aggression and technical mastery), some officers have developed performances that allow them to manoeuvre around the dominant discourses and reinterpret them in a way which secures cultural acceptance from their colleagues.

Multiple identity performances have also been used to explore how individuals move between the different discursive contexts contained within organisations and find ways of reflecting the fluctuating and competing discourses present. This approach to resistance is especially important due to the fragmented and conflicted nature of organisational culture, as discussed earlier. Members of an organisation are not subject to the normative expectations of one culture but are subject to many, with various discourses influencing identity performances in different ways. As a result, individuals must attempt to navigate the different contexts of normative control by developing multiple performances that allow them to continually renegotiate the

relationship between normative control and their identity performances. Research by Barry et al (2006) identified these multiple identity performances in their exploration of 'shape-shifting' in academic organisations. They found that under the significant stresses and strains resulting from the introduction of new public management (which resulted in cuts in funding, increasing student numbers, pressure for research output and surveillance through peer review, regulation and audit, amongst others), academics renegotiated the relations between different organisational discourses, gender and identity in response to pressure to make them more managerial (ibid.: 292). Six different identity performances emerged, each of which related to a different aspect of the academic role and the discourses which governed it and gender emerged as a significant determinant in the degree to which they were taken up. The authors suggest that gender played a major role in determining when and how academics switched between identities, with male academics able to exploit stereotypical assumptions about men and women (the different ways that men and women work for example) in order to remain in their preferred role, while women were required to shift more often, taking on more personae and often having detrimental impacts.

Ford (2006) also explored the idea of competing normative discourses by examining those that act on public service managers, especially those relating to new approaches to managing staff. Primarily this involved organisational attempts at normalising more masculine and assertive forms of management over more feminine and communicative styles. In examining discourses of leadership, gender and identity, her study provided insight into the 'competing, multiple, contradictory and complex identities that can characterize part of managers' identities' (Ford, 2006: 96). She found that managers adopted a range of different identities at different times, sometimes fragmented and contradictory and at other convergent and stable as they identified or dis-identified with macho organisational leadership discourses. What was consistent was the appearance that all staff, even those managers who were willing to adopt the styles of leadership, reflected other discourses and ways of being within the organisation, suggesting that normative control was far from complete. This highlights the ambiguity and plurality around discourse that enables individuals to challenge and resist normative control and allows them to forge their lives and identities in their own particular way and in response to the ever changing environment in which they perform.

This section has focussed on the different ways in which individuals resist the normative control of gendered cultures and suggests that although open rejection and dis-identification from organisational norms is possible, resistance must also be understood in other ways. For most, open resistance is not an option and many individuals have preferred to focus on achieving methods by which they can manoeuvre around and negotiate the constraining discourses of organisational culture. While this approach does not seek to challenge dominant discourses, it does seek to mitigate their effect through the construction of multiple and alternative identities that draw on a range of discourses. This means that individuals are able to craft identity performances that not only achieve cultural acceptance but, through permeating normalising discourses with other identity discourses, are reflective of their preferred way of being within an organisational role (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Drawing on these understandings of resistance to dominant cultural discourse is important for my theoretical framework and links closely to my theorising of culture as fractured and populated by a number of different performative contexts, each of which will have their own normative expectations of performance.

### **3.7 - Conclusion**

This chapter has explored an important theoretical concept within my research by exploring the nature of organisational and gendered cultures and how they are constructed. By understanding the way in which interactions, artefacts, values, and metaphors constitute organisational and gendered culture, it is possible to gain greater insight into the contexts in which identity performances are constructed (Alvesson, 2002). Given the previous chapters emphasis on the performative contexts in which interactions take place, this is an important feature to understand and explore through my own research. The other major contribution that this chapter has made to the course of my research is to highlight organisational and gendered cultures as the venues through which organisational discourses are able to exert normative control over individuals (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997). Significant time was spent exploring the ways in which organisational cultures normalise certain socially acceptable behaviours and interactions within their members through discursive constraint and with this having obvious correlations with the exploration of the relationship between power and discourse in the previous chapter. However, due to



the fragmented and multiple nature of organisational culture (Martin and Frost, 1999), the conflicted and contested nature of organisational cultures and discourses becomes apparent, having significant implications for members. The complexity and multiplicity of culture means that individuals are subject to a number of competing discursive pressures, all of which act to constrain performances in different ways. As a result of this, resistance to this constraint was principally conceived as the ability to manipulate and tailor identity performances to the diverse and situated contexts that individuals are constrained by. This enables individuals to manoeuvre around and negotiate dominant discourses, while still maintaining identity performances that they are comfortable with (Barry et al. 2006). By incorporating this understanding of resistance into my research, it is possible to explore how the rupturing and refuting of the competing and contested discourses described in the previous chapter can take place within organisations and serve to alleviate the normative pressure of organisational culture.

Having highlighted the different ways in which cultures can be constructed and accessed and the importance placed on the constraining effect that organisational cultures can have of individual identity and gendered identity performances, it will be important to examine the organisation and cultures in which this research takes place. As such, the next chapter will explore the police service in greater detail, examining how the nature of policing roles and organisational symbols, norms and traditions have led to the emergence of highly gendered organisational cultures. These cultures will be shown to have normalised overtly macho, laddish and authoritative identity performances, distanced the police from the public they serve and come into conflict with the cultural and symbolic meanings attached to the relatively new neighbourhood policing function.

## Chapter Four

### The Police Service: Culture, Reform and Neighbourhood Policing

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#### 4.1 - Introduction

The police service has long been used as the archetype of a masculine gendered culture (Fielding, 1994). The nature of work within the police service and its mission to maintain order and police the most deprived areas of society has led to the emergence of an occupational culture that prizes aggressiveness, cynicism, toughness, independence and an extreme 'them and us' construction of society. These characteristics can be seen as typical representations of hegemonic masculinity and a great deal of literature has examined the importance of police officers incorporating them into their gendered performances (Fielding, 1994, Miller, 1999, Waddington, 1999, Westmarland, 2001). However, the deeply entrenched culture of masculinity present within the service lead to a number of criticisms of discrimination within the organisation, prejudiced interactions with the public and a huge disconnect from the public they are sworn to serve, the majority of which were formalised in the Macpherson report (1999). In the wake of this report the British government began to place more emphasis on new policing strategies that encouraged more interaction with and involvement in the community, returning the police to the 'bobbies on the beat' it had in the 50s and 60s before emphasis was placed on police response times in the 70s and 80s (Davies and Thomas, 2008). Over a number of years these strategies became more important and culminated in the UK government's commitment to implementing 'neighbourhood policing' (NP) in all policing areas across England and Wales by 2008. In order to implement NP, new neighbourhood police teams (NPTs) were introduced, consisting of neighbourhood PCs and the new role of Police Community Support Officer (PCSO). However, this new style of policing has been found to conflict with the dominant masculine culture of the police service, often being described as a 'softer', more feminine form of policing (Davies and Thomas, 2008).

This chapter will begin by examining the culture of the police service by exploring the nature of the police role itself and the more informal ‘canteen’ culture that is often the scene of the most masculine performances. It will be suggested that although police culture can be described as masculine, it is important to note that, as indicated in the previous chapter, that culture is not monolithic and its influence on gender performance varies a great deal. The pressure for institutional reform and an approach to policing which addressed the reassurance gap, which is the difference between the perceived levels of crime and the actual levels of crime, will be discussed as the drivers for the introduction of NP. Finally, the theory and practice of NP will be addressed, along with some of the tensions that it has created in relation to gendered understandings of police work and the impact of the introduction of PCSOs.

## **4.2 - Gender and the Police Service**

### **4.2.1 - The Gendered Nature of Police Work**

Policing is a highly gendered occupation which has long been dominated by men and a masculine organisational culture that prized officers who were ‘brave, suspicious, aloof, objective, cynical, physically intimidating, and willing to use force and even brutality’ (Miller, 1999: 3). Fielding (1994) suggests that although police culture shouldn’t become a caricature of masculinity, it is impossible to deny the dominance of masculine values. He suggests that it would be highly improbable that the culture of policing could be described as feminine and therefore (in the absence of the existence of genderless cultures) it can be characterised as having masculine ideals at its core. This masculine culture has not simply occurred as a result of the larger number of men employed (although this has contributed significantly) but can also be seen as the result of the nature of the work itself and the power relationships it relies on. Waddington observes that policing can be described as ‘a cult of masculinity, for the exercise of coercive authority is not something that just anybody can do. It is traditionally the preserve of ‘real men’ who are willing and able to fight. Confronting physical threat is widely regarded as ‘tough’ work and as such, this work is traditionally associated with masculinity’ (Waddington, 1999: 298).

For example, arresting people is the action that is perhaps most associated with the police. Arresting members of the public will be a feature of the role for the majority of police officers (although not all) and many authors have addressed how exercising and legitimising this power has gendered connotations (Dick, 2005). Westmarland (2001) devotes an entire chapter of her book to a gendered understanding of arrests. The ability to arrest someone requires a certain degree of physical prowess and strength, criminals will often use their own physicality to evade capture and officers must be prepared to chase and detain individuals. This process was closely linked with masculinity as women were not seen to be physically capable of arresting the stereotypical young, fit, male criminal. The ability to arrest people and demonstrate strength is a significant source of masculinity for male officers and many of them commented on the perception that female officers were not able to fulfil this role as well as men. They suggested that female officers didn't have the physical presence to arrest criminals and as a result they were not living up to expectations of the role. Although many male officers would tell stories of other male officers displaying courage and making arrests, it was rare to hear the same stories being told about women. Usually comments revolved around how women were not suitable for this particular aspect of the role, their failures at making arrests or how criminals were more likely to attempt escape or cause more problems if they are being dealt with by female officers. The supposed 'feminisation' of the police that has been documented in the police service has not reached this facet of the job as female strength still isn't viewed as substantial enough to equal that of men (Westmarland, 2001). In fact all 'capabilities at 'street level' seem to be controlled by maleness and reinforced by events, colleagues, members of the public and even those who are arrested' (ibid: 131-132).

A further example of how the work police officers do can be connected to hegemonic understandings of masculinity is the requirement to demonstrate bravery by entering dangerous situations or an omnipresent sense of cynicism. Crank (1998) suggests that police officers are required to display bravery in a number of ways. They must seek to control violent individuals, they must hide their personal feelings and fears on a daily basis and they must be constantly ready to support their colleagues in highly unpredictable situations, all of which can be seen as reflecting hegemonically masculine ideals of strength, toughness and male homosociality. Reiner (1992)

highlights the importance of cynicism in enacting police work. Cynicism, he suggests, results in a 'hard skin of bitterness, seeing all social trends in apocalyptic terms, with the police as a beleaguered minority about to be over-run by the forces of barbarism' (Reiner, 1992: 113). This cynical demeanour can be based on a perceived erosion of the moral order and a desire to maintain hegemonic social values but can also be transferred to social interactions within the police. Dick and Jankowicz suggest that rank and file officers can often view those that do not incorporate these masculine features of policing in their gender performance in a very cynical way. She suggests that rank and file officers often assume that 'management cops' are only 'in it for themselves' (2001: 195) and have not gained their position through merit but by playing political games and as a result are no longer able to take advantage of homosociality and the acceptance it offers. The homosociality within this occupational community offers police officers protection from the stigma that may be attached to their work by others because of its 'dirty' nature and mitigates the strain of the stressful and physically demanding work they do (Van Maanen, 2010).

Therefore, linked to the notion of masculine constructions of the policing role is the idea that some specialisms within the police service are more associated with masculinity than others. Although the tasks and characteristics identified thus far have been easy to construct within hegemonic understandings of masculinity, there are a number of policing activities that are considered less masculine. Roles like child and family liaison officers, roles that deal with the victims of sexual assault and activities like community engagement and victim support are all often constructed as feminine (Miller, 1999). As a result of this, it is not uncommon to find higher proportions of women in these roles and doing these activities because of their perceived suitability for the work involved. As a result, a major means of maintaining a masculine gender performance amongst male officers was the avoidance of departments that had a relatively high number of women (Westmarland, 2001). However, specialisms like the mounted unit, the marine unit, the firearms unit and traffic police, were all found to have a disproportionately small number of women working within them compared to the more common response roles. Male officers who work in the mounted and marine units suggest that this is because of the physically demanding nature of the role and, although female officers weren't specifically discouraged, that this required characteristics more associated with male

officers. Traffic officers were seen to furnish their masculine identities through their status as the Chief Constables 'blue eyed boys', constructing themselves as different and higher status than male and female response officers and by stressing the technical skills required to drive at high speeds and maintain a functional vehicle (Westmarland, 2001: 144).

By understanding that certain activities and roles in the police service are gendered and often constructed within masculine discourses it is possible to see why the service is characterised as a masculine occupation. However, as well as the masculine nature of policing roles and activities, it is also important to examine the backstage, 'informal' culture of policing which is constructed through the interactions of police officers.

#### **4.2.2 - 'Canteen Culture'**

As has already been established, masculine discourses have been used to frame a number of policing functions and masculine forms of behaviour and it has also been referred to as the dominant discourse through which interactions are constructed (Miller, 1999, Loftus, 2008, Chan et al. 2010). This has resulted in the back stage area of police culture becoming characterised as a venue for the most politically incorrect and overtly masculine behaviours within the service, primarily as a result of the private nature of these interactions (Fielding, 1994). One of the most influential theorisations of this part of police culture was suggested by Fielding (1994) who explored 'cop canteen culture'. Fielding observed that stereotypical understandings of policing culture are almost perfectly hegemonically masculine and involve 'exaggerated heterosexual orientations, often articulated in terms of misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes towards women; and...the operation of rigid in-group/out-group distinctions whose consequences are strongly exclusionary in the case of out-groups and strongly assertive of loyalty and affinity in the case of the in-groups' (Fielding 1994: 47). Evidence to support this description of the 'canteen culture' can be found in the extent literature.

For example, Karen Sharpe (1998) in her research on prostitutes and their relationship with the police gave a description of the different representations of canteen culture

that she encountered in different contexts and provides a comprehensive overview of the types of masculine interaction that she observed. Van culture, which described time spent between tasks (usually involving eating as well) or waiting for things to happen, comprised mostly of lavatorial humour, farting and belching competitions. Patrol culture, the time spent in police vehicles or on foot patrolling notorious areas, included making critical and judgemental assessments of individuals, usually members of the public who are going about their daily business and often peppered with racist and sexist comments. Office culture described the interactions between officers in the station house and often featured discussion of officer's appearance and sexual appetite, both male and female. Custody room culture was much more dependent on the officer in the custody room and reflected their own personality. Pub culture, the social activities that happened when off duty were a combination of the patrol, office and van cultures but also heavily reliant on discussion of sexual conquests, the amount of alcohol an officer could consume and recent sporting results. In order to maintain a good relationship with the officers of the vice squad, Sharpe was expected to accompany them to the after hours drinking sessions in the pub or risk being viewed with suspicion and disdain. A similar expectation was present within my own research, although this did not extend to out of shift socialising, I was expected to participate in the discussion of stereotypically male topics, as well as other forms of masculine interactions.

These types of interaction were also found by Loftus (2008) who observed a number of occasions when officers engaged in highly sexualised banter, homophobic behaviour and language and although racist language had been largely eradicated, Loftus suggests that this was as a result of the harsh penalties administered for its use and an adherence to 'political correctness', rather than an attitudinal change amongst officers. However, other facets of culture continue to remain important to its continuing performance, such as the expectation of excessive social drinking, has resulted in negative consequences for officers, who have been found to be at greater risk of alcoholism and marital breakdown as a result of the demands placed on them to embrace these aspect of canteen culture (Reiner, 1992). Sharpe's (1998) description of how different contexts elicited different behaviours from officers is a useful illustration of the variation in the informal cultures present within the police service. These behaviours again can be seen to correlate very strongly with

hegemonically masculine norms and incorporating these features into gender performance means that male officers are able to achieve a degree of acceptance from their colleagues. As experienced by the researcher herself, it was also expected that some of the behaviours be mimicked by women in the service as well. It was found that women were expected to be complicit in the male officers' gender performances and reproduce some of the elements in their own performances.

In light of this, it is evident that socialisation plays an important role in prolonging canteen culture and it has been suggested that as new police officers join their first police stations they observe and experience how police officers behave in order to 'fit in' and adhere to normative expectations of behaviour (Herbert 1998). In addition to this, other research has found that this process can take place even earlier and 'war stories' that are told during police training mean that officers are exposed to police canteen culture from the very beginning of their career (Ford, 2003). The importance of socialisation lies, not only in perpetuating a culture that has dominated policing for years, but also in conveying to both new and old officers the tools to cope with the demands of their job. Waddington (1999) suggests that the informal backstage area is one of the few places in which officers can engage in displays that will be witnessed only by their colleagues. The majority of police work (or at least the portion that can be boasted about to colleagues) takes place outside of the station and is often witnessed by very few people. The stressful aspects of an officer's work, especially when they are placed in dangerous situations, are often 'invisible' (as they are experienced alone) to their colleagues and canteen banter can be seen as a method of affirming a group view of the world and gaining reassurance and support. By telling war stories and sharing experiences in the canteen, officers are able to achieve a sense of belonging and helps reduce the severity of the stresses they encounter, 'officers retell versions of events that affirm their worldview: the canteen is the 'repair shop' of policing and jokes, banter and anecdotes the tools' (Waddington 1999: 295).

Many authors have suggested that although it is possible to characterise policing culture as masculine and identify common meanings attached to the work that is carried out and typical forms of behaviour, it should not be treated as monolithic or absolute and there can be significant variation in officer's experiences and performances (Fielding, 1994). These variations can be the result of the type of police



work that is carried out, the location of the police station and, in the case of performance, the variation amongst officers. Fielding (1994) suggests that although all officers will be familiar with the masculine features of policing culture, they may not all ally themselves with it. For example, young male officers that work in urban areas with high crime levels, new recruits to the police and officers that work in more physical roles like response are more likely to embrace policing culture than community-based officers. Christensen and Crank (2001) suggest that officers' understanding and appreciation of their work can be very different depending on the type of area they police, especially when comparing rural policing to urban policing. Whilst there are some themes that are common across these divides (the use of information technology), there was significant difference in the way in which they understood other areas. For example, rural officers' construction of 'personal safety' did not have the harder, masculine edge of urban officers, mainly as a result of their reliance on interpersonal skills rather than on force and aggression.

One area where significant variation in cultural conformity may be expected is in the experiences of female, ethnic minority and homosexual police officers. Research has constructed a highly complex picture of the experiences of these officers and has concluded that the police service, on the surface at least, has become a more tolerant workplace and more accepting of diversity and that alternative cultures were emerging to challenge the old ones (Loftus, 2008). However, Loftus (2008) warns against overstating this phenomenon and states that these emerging cultures have yet to displace the established understandings of police work. In addition to this, although many female officers attached similar meanings to police work and political correctness in the service, they still felt they had to work harder to prove themselves capable of doing certain work and were required to adopt the prevailing cultural norms if they wanted to gain acceptance from their male colleagues.

As well as recognising the different ways in which various minorities experience police culture it is also important to acknowledge that the canteen culture isn't necessarily reflected in the performances given by officers when interacting with the public. Research has suggested that whilst discriminatory attitudes may be present in the back stage, they are not usually allowed to affect the officer's performances when in the front stage (Fielding, 1994). It has been suggested that traditional, masculine

culture has been responsible for many of the recent criticisms levelled at the service, for example the mistreatment of ethnic minorities and discrimination against other groups within society. However, Waddington (1999) argues against this and instead finds that the much maligned masculine culture does not have the expected impact on the behaviour of police officers when in the public sphere. Instead he suggests that the police have become adept at saying one thing and doing another. He highlights the idea that behaviour in the 'back stage' area of policing does not influence the behaviour of officers when they are in the public arena. Citing numerous examples of research that demonstrates that whilst police officers have been seen to voice racist and other politically incorrect views in private, Waddington (1999) finds that there was little evidence that this meant officers' actions 'in the field' were likely to be motivated by racism. In other words, discussions and jokes within the confines of the station do not find representation and enactment when working with the public. He suggests that this gap between talk and action means that police sub-culture actually explains very little about routine policing. However, this could also be a result of, as discussed earlier, police sub-culture being more diverse than it is often depicted and the numerous examples of diversity amongst sub-cultures.

#### **4.3 - Reform within the Police Service: A Rationale for Neighbourhood Policing (NP)**

Having established the culture of policing and the dominant discourses which shape the way in which officers behave, it is important to examine some of the pressures that have been placed on the service to change this culture. A number of reasons for reform within the police service have been identified and it is possible to suggest that many of them have contributed to the emergence of NP within the service. Along with attempts to change the culture of policing by making it less discriminatory, reform within the police service also sought to change the way in which policing took place. It was hoped that by focussing on the issues that mattered most to communities, that confidence and satisfaction in the police would improve.

### 4.3.1 - Drivers of Change

Savage (2009) identifies five major 'drivers of change' over the last twenty years which had a significant impact on policing reform and have contributed to the focus placed on NP in today's police service. The first of these drivers was the systemic failures within the police service, embodied by incidents like the Brixton riots in the early 1980s, which were found to illustrate institutionalised problems within the service. Whilst the police service of the 50s and 60s were very involved in their local community and enjoyed a high level of public support and confidence, the increasing civil unrest seen during the 80s illustrated problems with the way in which policing was being carried out (Davies and Thomas, 2005). The resultant government report, the Macpherson report (1999), highlighted not only racial issues within the service but also the way in which the police service had become distanced from the communities they served and 'Policing had become *police-oriented* rather than *community-oriented*' (Savage, 2009: 206).

The malpractice and abuses of power that resulted from this disconnect between the police service and community was seen to have a significant negative impact on public attitudes towards the police service. In the wake of the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the failures of the subsequent investigation, the government ordered an inquiry into the accusations of discrimination within the police service. The subsequent Macpherson report branded the police service 'institutionally racist' (1999: 39), defining this term as 'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (1999: 34). Issues of sexism and homophobia have also been highlighted within the service, attributed to the dominant masculine, heterosexist culture referred to previously in this chapter. A report by Foster et al (2005) which examined the state of the police following the criticism's of the Macpherson report, suggested that whilst racist language had been almost completely eradicated, many female, gay and lesbian officers still felt isolated and excluded within their stations and that sexist and homophobic language was still common. As a result of these problems, many police reforms, NP included, have

been introduced to increase diversity within the service, to deal with discriminatory attitudes held by officers and to improve the relationship between the police and minorities (Fletcher, 2005).

The second driver of change referred to by Savage (2009) was the influence of policy makers in other countries and the ease with which developments in policing practice can transfer between different police services. A particular influence on the British police system and the development of more community oriented policing practices, has been the American police service which has been developing community policing since the early seventies in response to civil unrest stemming from the growth of the civil rights movement (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1994).

A third driver was the introduction of new performance measures that assessed different aspects of the service provided by the police. The introduction of New Public Management (NPM) resulted in focus being placed on 'greater financial accountability, the development of a range of measures of efficiency by which individuals, units and organizations are judged, marketization between service providers and within organizations, and the changing relationship between service providers and customers' (Thomas and Davies, 2005: 684). These changes, although initially resisted by the police service are now fully embedded within the organisation and play an important role in determining police practice (Savage, 2009). One of the major changes that NPM practices brought was an increase in the use of targets as a means demonstrating the work of police. Initially these targets focussed on volume crime like robbery and vehicle crime but this was seen to further distance the police from their communities as they focussed on arresting criminals and not on other issues that mattered to the community (Myhill and Quinton, 2010). As a result, new targets have focussed on measuring the public's satisfaction with the communication they have with police, ensuring that neighbourhood officers deliver a monthly community meeting and update community information websites at regular intervals.

The fourth driver of reform in the service was from within the police service itself. Savage (2009) suggests that not all reform is imposed on the police service externally but that 'policy entrepreneurs' have fought to develop new police strategies and championed their implementation. An example of this can be found in the influence of

a few senior police officers who, in light of the contemporaneous public service reform agenda, helped reorient the service towards greater efficiency and responsiveness to the needs of citizens (Reiner, 2000). The final driver identified was the increased politicisation of the police service in recent years. Maintaining law and order has become a highly scrutinised process, with any problems being highly publicised and reflecting poorly on the current government. As a result, government intervention and restructuring attempts have become politically motivated and are often intended to demonstrate that the government is aware of a problem and attempting to fix it. One such problem facing the labour government during the late 1990s and early 2000s was the growing reassurance gap, the difference between actual levels of crime (which were falling at the time) and the perception of crime and how safe the public felt in their communities, which communities felt was increasing (Quinton and Morris, 2008). In order to tackle this problem the labour government introduced NP which sought to directly affect the way in which the public view the police, the work that they do and encourage the public to become more involved in and better informed about policing in their community.

#### **4.3.2 - Police-Public Relations: Restoring Confidence in the Police**

In light of the growing reassurance gap, a significant motivation for the introduction of NP was a desire to improve the relationship between the police and the public. This is a two way relationship where both the police and the public can be seen to allow stereotypes and assumptions to form the basis of their opinions about each other, with the police increasingly viewing particular members of society as criminals and public believing that the police are corrupt and victimise the same social groups (usually young people from ethnic minorities) (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). The nature of the policing role and the culture in which officers work has been found to have a significant impact on the way in which they interact with the public. The very nature of the policing role can be seen to have an impact on police-public relations. Sunahara suggests that the impact of ‘corrosive street experiences’ (2002: 5) on officers and their frequent interactions with the most disenfranchised and criminal members of society can lead them to form stereotypical understandings of different social groups. These stereotypes are often a more important influencing factor on interaction than an individual’s behaviour and can often result in a negative impact on

the service that is provided to members of the public that they have constructed negatively (Hadaway, 1997, Fielding and Innes, 2006). The stereotypes that result from officer's experience 'on the street' have also been seen to contribute to an understanding of the community that is based on creating a 'them and us' distinction between the police and the public, with the public also being defined as those that are 'pro-police' and those that are 'anti-police' (Lloyd and Foster, 2006).

Of the stereotypes that police officers often construct, ethnicity, age, gender and socio-economic status have been seen to be important factors and influence the relationship between the police and different communities. The general public can be roughly split into three groups (Wake et al. 2010). Those that are 'pro-police' are generally older, white more affluent individuals. They are from higher socio-economic backgrounds and have university levels of education. Individuals who also felt safe in their community were also found to enjoy a better relationship with the police and more confidence in their dealings with them (Myhill and Beak, 2008). Generally those who are pro-police usually initiate contact with police and see them as a useful resource, acknowledging that their role involves more than arresting people. The second group are 'passive sceptics', who are largely positive but question the behaviour of some officers in certain situations and whether police resources are used effectively or not (with the lack of police 'on the beat' often being a prominent criticism). However, these criticisms are tempered by an acknowledgment that the police are only human and that their job involves making a number of tough decisions on a day to day basis (Wake et al. 2010).

The final group are the 'highly disengaged'. This group is thought to mainly consist of young, ethnic minority males who are distrustful of the police and view almost all officers they encounter with a high degree of suspicion. Interactions with the police are almost always initiated by officers and were usually viewed as unwelcome and resulted in 'negative contact'. Much of the negative feeling towards the police stems from their perceived racist motivations and the view that officers often attempt to goad young people into reacting during interaction so that they can arrest them. However, recent research conducted by Myhill and Beak (2008) suggests that ethnicity does not play an important part in determining an individual's confidence in the police and their effectiveness at tackling crime when considered independently of

other factors (such as family experiences of interactions with the police and neighbourhood context). In addition to these three groups, it should be noted that sex and age were both found to be significant determinants of confidence in the police, with women and those over 45 generally having a better relationship with the police than men and those aged between 16-24 having the least confidence in the police (Ibid. 2008).

While the way in which the police understand the public and vice versa clearly plays an important part in determining the relationship between the two, some authors have explained the link between confidence and satisfaction in the police and the perceived effect they have on crime by examining their performance, the policing strategies they adopt and interactions with the public. They suggest that low confidence in the police and poor police-public relations are caused by two factors, the appropriateness of police interventions in neighbourhoods and the quality of police-public interactions. Quinton and Morris (2008) found that public confidence in the police was significantly improved by the use of policing strategies that incorporated problem solving policing, targeted foot patrols, increased levels of community engagement and reduction in victimization. These programmes in turn had an impact on the incidents of crime and on the frequency of antisocial behaviour, both of which were seen to improve confidence in the police given that they often act as signals for public safety and security (Innes, 2004). The link between community engagement and problem solving oriented policing as a means of dealing with antisocial behaviour and public disorder suggest that the police should focus on these day-to-day community problems as much as they do on tackling crime (Myhill et al. 2010).

The second factor influencing public confidence in the police was the quality of interactions between the police and public. Myhill and Quinton (2010) found that confidence and satisfaction in the police was improved when the police were engaged in activity that focussed on meeting public expectations, when they showed interest and effort during interactions and endeavoured to keep the public informed about their activities. 'Being taken seriously' has also been described as a key constituent of good service from the police, along with 'the ease in contacting the police, whether the matter was dealt with straight away, and whether officers took the matter seriously and followed it up' (Bradford et al. 2009: 7). Innes and Fielding (2006) highlight the

importance of the demeanour of officers during interactions with the public. Examining the way in which police stop and search individuals in the street they suggest that the way in which this is done is often more of a concern than who is stopped, as ‘the majority of people stopped on street do not complain, the great majority of those that do are not critical of being stopped, but of the officer’s manner in dealing with them’ (Ibid.: 139). Being treated fairly and equitably was seen as an important part of police demeanour during police interaction, often more so than the actual outcome of the interaction itself. These examples suggest that ensuring that the police are easily approachable and interactions with them are fair and useful is an important means by which police-public relations can be improved.

Having identified the key factors that influence the relationship between the community and the police, it is possible to suggest that in order to deliver better customer service and improve the relationship between the two then police officers and the police service must embody certain characteristics. Mastrofski (1999: 2) as cited by Lloyd and Foster (2009) suggests these characteristics to be;

- Attentiveness
- Reliability
- Responsiveness
- Competence
- Manners
- Fairness

It is with these characteristics in mind that it is possible to identify a particular style of policing that would focus more on community needs and provide a service that would restore confidence in the police.

This section has sought to illustrate the various motivations and drivers that resulted in the government’s commitment to more community-oriented styles of policing. The presence of systemic and institutional discrimination of both officers and the public, the failure of the police service to understand the needs of their community and tackle problems that have the biggest impact on their lives and the growing reassurance gap



and falling confidence in the police have all been highlighted as major problems for the service. The chapter will now examine how the introduction of NP was intended to address many of these problems and become a key focus for policing in the present and future.

#### **4.4 - Neighbourhood Policing**

The current incarnation of NP that currently dominates policing strategy in the UK is the result of twenty years of development and can be seen as emerging from ideals of NPM (a focus on achieving efficiency and performance measurement) and collaborative governance (more joined-up working between government and external agencies) that were described above and was laid out in the government whitepaper, 'Building Communities, Beating Crime' (2004). NP is not a monolithic concept, but may represent a shift from the rapid response and authoritative-style policing to a form of policing which places officers in more contact with the community, sharing responsibility for reducing crime with the community and other partner agencies (Fielding, 1994). Home Office literature suggests that 'NP today is about fighting crime more intelligently and building a new relationship between the police and the public – one based on active co-operation rather than simple consent' (Home Office, 2005). In order to achieve this, the same report identifies three key features that the public ought to see in their policing (ibid.: 5). The first is 'more visible and accessible police', which is achieved by seeing the same police officers 'week in and week out' who stay in the community long enough to build long lasting, trust based relationships. Apart from major emergencies, these officers will never be pulled away from their neighbourhood duties. The second feature is allowing the public to have 'a better say', which involves allowing the public to set policing priorities as they 'are closest to the problems in their communities and are often best placed to help shape and participate in the solutions to them' (Home Office, 2005: 5). The third and final feature is 'holding people to account', which details how the police and other agencies like the council will be held accountable for their failure to tackle persistent problems in the community.

In order to achieve these aims, the police service has created specialist neighbourhood police teams (NPTs), which contain dedicated NP police constables (PCs) and Police

Community Support Officers (PCSOs). This team is responsible for delivering the 'policing pledge', which is a list of standards that the police must live up to in relation to engaging with the community. By 2008, every area in England and Wales had a NPT. NPTs were tasked with taking 'an intelligence-led, proactive, problem-solving approach to enable them to focus on and tackle specific local issues' (Home Office, 2004). In order to do this a number of delivery methods have been suggested, all of which were designed to work in conjunction with each other (Quinton, 2008). Increased visibility is achieved through targeted foot patrols of problem areas by PCSOs and neighbourhood PCs and police attendance at community events and meetings of community groups. This ensures that the public see police.

Another key delivery method of NP is community engagement. This involves intelligence-led identification of community concerns and taking effective action against them. In line with the discourses of this government endorsed version of NP, officers are encouraged to understand how different members of the community may face different problems and identify more proactive ways in which the police may address these problems. Community engagement is partly achieved as a result of increased visibility, allowing the public more access to their neighbourhood officers but also through the Partnership and Communities Together (PACT) process. This process is primarily enacted through PACT meetings which 'bring police, partners from local authorities, councillors, and local citizens together at a public meeting to hear updates on action, communities' views, and to set priorities for future action' (Gasper and Davies, 2010: 4). These are public meetings, held in different local wards approximately every one or two months. Although these meetings intended to involve a range of public service partners, they were initiated by the police and only the police regularly attend along with members of the public and often some local councillors.

The final feature of NP is a commitment to 'problem solving', which requires increased partnership working between the police, the community and local partner groups (such as the council, other public service agency and charity organisations) in order to improve the local environment and quality of life within the community. Problem solving requires the police to focus more on the causes of crime and develops solutions for this, rather than more reactive styles of policing that only deal with problems after crimes have been committed. It is hoped that by using problem

solving techniques to tackle the causes of community concerns that the police will be able to reduce overall crime. If the police are successful in dealing with a particular community problem then they are encouraged to share their approach with other NPTs across the country through the 'problem-oriented policing' (POPs) database.

In order to perform these new policing functions, it has been suggested that NP requires officers to possess a different set of skills than other styles of policing. Communication, networking and interpersonal skills have been identified as important for the successful enactment of NP (Cooper et al. 2006) and this has been reflected in the training of some neighbourhood officers (Birzer and Tannehill, 2001). However, these skills have often been constructed as feminine (Steinberg, 1990) and as a result can be at odds with the masculine culture of policing, something which has resulted in the integration of neighbourhood policing into all areas of the police service becoming a difficult and contested process.

#### **4.5 - Integrating Neighbourhood Policing into Existing Police Cultures**

As has already been discussed, there are significant differences between traditional, authoritarian styles of policing and more community oriented forms of policing. These differences have meant that the process of introducing NP into the police service was always likely to be a difficult one. A limited amount of research has explored this process, from changes that have been made in the training programmes used to instruct new police officers to the impact on officers as they move from 'harder' to 'softer' policing activities and how this change has been dealt with by officers. This thesis will contribute to this extant literature and further explore the introduction of NP into policing culture.

##### **4.5.1 - Training Neighbourhood Officers**

NP training is of extremely important to the overall success of NP initiatives and can have a significant impact on the way in which it is performed by officers given that 'the skills necessary for [community oriented policing] will not become second-nature if comprehensive training in the theories and methods of community-oriented policing are not provided' (Chappell, 2008). Police training venues, often referred to as

academies or schools, have been found, despite their focus on instruction and adult education, to have very similar cultures to police stations. Their culture is similarly based on discourses of masculinity and discipline and experiencing this culture during training is often seen as an important socialisation process which instils particular behaviours and points of view in new officers (Prokos and Padavic, 2002). As a result, some authors have suggested that the culture of some police training schools do not always fit well with the new ethos and demands of NP and they have been found to be organised along similar authoritarian lines as police stations, limiting the effectiveness of training on NP (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).

One crucial way in which this culture is established and maintained in training schools is through the presence and performances of the instructors. Almost all instructors employed in these schools have previously worked within police stations as regular officers and have been exposed to the culture found in police stations (Ford, 2004). In one ethnography of a police training school, this was found to have a significant impact on the way in which NP training took place and some authors have observed the NP ethos being undercut by instructors relying on constructions of the public that were based on 'us vs. them' attitudes and the importance of loyalty to colleagues and the police service (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). This construction principally manifested itself in the less formal aspects of training. Whilst much of the formal training curriculum was based on themes of community engagement and problem solving, the informal lessons and advice given to officers by instructors maintained a division between the police and the community they served. This division was usually based on the moral superiority of the police and their need to be beyond reproach, with the public typically being constructed as law-breakers.

Policing culture was also seen to impact on NP training by categorising what 'real' police work was and resulted in the training on these areas being more interesting and engaging to the new recruits, with recruits describing NP related training as boring. Subjects that specifically related to NP like communication and diversity were taught in a more generic and theoretical way. This was in contrast to the training on more traditional crime-fighting activities (self-defence and arrest procedure etc.), where instructors were encouraged to draw on their own experiences and delivered potent informal lessons that captured the imaginations of students. 'War stories' were often

employed by instructors and generally related to the physical side of policing like chasing criminals and the physicality of making arrests, rather than NP related activities like community engagement or problem solving and were seldom related to the specific training topic being delivered. As a result, the lessons learnt from these 'war stories' were seen to undercut the curriculum that focussed on NP issues as they encouraged the students to focus on elements of policing that were not directly related to NP (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). In light of this, Palmiotto et al. (2000) suggest NP training should focus on more self-directed styles of learning where group exercises allow new recruits to discuss training topics amongst themselves and use their own life experiences to supplement their training. Emphasis can also be placed on self directed group discussions that allow recruits to construct their own understandings of topics, rather than simply adopting their instructor's views. Doing this will allow NP classrooms to mirror the multiple and diverse set of viewpoints that are also present in the community and the recruits will be better able to understand this multiplicity when they are working within it.

In addition to how NP training is delivered, it is also important to examine what is being delivered and the problems of designing an NP curriculum that could be successfully implemented in police training schools. Palmiotto et al. (2000) points out that whilst NP has been at the forefront of many countries' policing strategies, the training curriculum that accompanies it often does not place enough emphasis on specifically NP related topics. As a result and whilst acknowledging that no curriculum suggestions can be monolithic, they advise that in American training school's community oriented policing, problem solving, police ethics and community diversity should all receive the most attention and that they should be linked to more authoritarian styles of policing through discourses of 'crime prevention'. By doing this it is hoped that the problems of introducing a more NP oriented knowledge base into policing training can be overcome and the distinctions between traditional and current forms of policing can be less fixed (Chappell, 2006).

#### **4.5.2 - Reconstructing Neighbourhood Policing: Hard Policing Vs. Soft Policing**

Along with the difficulties of reconciling NP and other, more traditional, response style forms of policing in the training school, it is important to understand how NP is

constructed by police officers. There is a long history of policing activities that do not fit into masculine policing culture being constructed and derided as 'feminine'. Miller (1999) uses the example of 'street' cops and 'office' cops, finding that police officers primarily involved in administrative, PR and managerial activities are described as 'ass kissers' and 'whores' who are unable to do 'real' police work. Given the strength of masculine discourses at work within the police and the change that NP represents, it is unsurprising that it is also often constructed in gendered terms. The dichotomy between the two types of policing has often been described as 'hard' policing versus 'soft' policing, with harder tasks and duties representing masculine work and softer, NP work being understood to be feminine (Crank, 1998). NP has also been more explicitly referred to in gendered terms as 'pink and fluffy' policing, further distancing it from the masculinity that dominates the police service (Davies and Thomas, 2008). 'Soft' policing can therefore be understood as 'the non-coercive aspects of police-led social control encompassing the provision of a visible presence of authority, persuasion, negotiation and community interaction' (Innes, 2005: 157), while 'hard' policing involves coercion through the direct application of physical force. There is significant evidence that this gendered construction of NP has meant that NP activities are treated with a degree of disdain and avoided in favour of more traditionally masculine activities (Chan, 1997, Reiner, 1992). This behaviour has been found to stem from officers desire to continue to do 'real' police work in order to maintain their occupational culture and the symbolic values that are placed upon masculine performances within it (Innes, 2005).

As a result of the dissonance between softer forms of policing and policing culture, many officers have attempted to give different meaning to NP and construct different performances within its discourses, occasionally making their 'softer' roles appear 'harder'. Davies and Thomas (2008) identify a number of different positions adopted by police officers that are involved in NP and by those that are not and found that NP discourses were reconstructed to align them with personal interests, sectional interests and their own understanding of policing identity. Some officers were found to embrace the 'serving', 'caring' and more 'feminised' aspects of NP and used the closeness they felt with their communities as a key part of their identity construction. This was in contrast to some officers (mainly those that worked outside of NP) who did not believe that NP represented 'real' police work and continued to undermine it

as 'pink and fluffy' policing. NP was constructed as a PR exercise and not viewed as an integral part of the policing function, with the image of neighbourhood officers being distanced from the image of 'real' masculine police officers. Other officers employed in NP but who were less keen to embrace its feminised image because of the ridicule from other officers were seen to legitimise NP by concentrating on its masculine components and focus on achieving results. Neighbourhood officers were described as needing to be 'Highly motivated, self motivated, a problem solver, certain amount of resilience, must be thief takers and focused on local crimes – know the criminals and must be professional – it's not about kissing babies and all of that' (Davies and Thomas, 2008: 633). This, along with an emphasis among neighbourhood officers that they needed to maintain their ability to exercise force and 'threaten criminals' (Ibid.: 635), allowed the officers to legitimise their role as 'real' police officers and their gender as 'real men'.

These findings are also supported by other research which has found similar attempts to 'redefine' community policing as a more masculine pursuit through a variety of means. Miller (1999), in her study of community officers in America, found that male officers would often request to be posted in the most dangerous areas, those with the highest crime rates in order to be able to cultivate a sense of masculine pride by fearlessly patrolling them and dealing with the most violent criminals. In addition to this, community officers were similarly keen to emphasise their previous experience in more traditional specialisms, such as drug enforcement or Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). By doing this they were not only able to demonstrate that they had not always 'just' been a community officer, but also display their proficiency in more aggressive styles of policing. Another means of securing a masculine identity used by community officers was to increase the visibility of their law enforcement activities. This typically involved answering general calls for assistance put out over police airwaves, especially during the night shifts. By doing this they were able to demonstrate that they still took an active role in law enforcement and were, to an extent, able to dispel the assumption amongst their colleagues that all they did was attend meetings and drink cups of coffee. Despite these strategies, patrol officers (those not involved in community policing) continued to treat their community colleagues with ambivalence although this focused more on the structure of policing

and the perception that they were frequently absent and did not work as hard, rather than the 'femininity' of the work they performed.

The difficulty in legitimising NP within existing police culture does not only involve discourses of gender but can also be examined in relation to the changes in professional responsibility. As NP represents a more democratic style of policing that is embedded within local communities and requires them to focus on signal crimes and quality of life issues, NP officers are often faced with problems that they cannot fix alone (Innes, 2005). Signal crimes like vandalism, anti-social behaviour and drug abuse must be tackled not only by the police but also by social services, the local council and other public agencies. As a result, NP officers have to invest more effort in political activities that seek to achieve social change (like attending council meetings), something which some officers have been found to do enthusiastically (Davies and Thomas, 2008). In light of this, it is possible to suggest that sometimes NP officers must engage in 'softer' activities in order to achieve 'harder' results and satisfy 'hard' measures of effectiveness. This suggests that in order for NP to be successful NP officers must find a way of incorporating both 'soft' and 'hard' forms of interaction into their gender performance, depending on the context in which they are performing.

#### **4.6 - PCSOs**

One of the most radical changes that NP has brought to the police service is the increased number of civilian members of staff within neighbourhood teams. The majority of this number are Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) who were introduced following the Police Reform Act (2002) and there are currently approximately 16,376 PCSOs working in England and Wales (Home office, 2010). PCSOs are tasked to contribute to '...the policing of neighbourhoods, primarily through highly visible patrol with the purpose of reassuring the public, increasing orderliness in public places and being accessible to communities and partner agencies working at a local level. The emphasis of this role, and the powers required to fulfil it, will vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and force to force' (NPP, 2007: 5). In line with this, the PCSO practitioners guide (2007) identifies the primary role of PCSOs is to patrol on foot and provide reassurance to the public and contribute to a



feeling of safety and security in their neighbourhood. This is achieved through a mixture of accessibility, visibility and familiarity. It was also hoped that the greater levels of diversity within the PCSO cohort would allow the Police service to engage with harder to reach groups within the community, such as ethnic minorities. PCSO's familiarity and knowledge of their community is also expected to yield higher levels of 'community intelligence' which often informs the investigation of more serious crimes in the community. However, this information, once collected is passed on to the relevant PC to investigate and should never be used by a PCSO.

PCSOs are supervised in a similar way to PCs with the majority of PCSOs being directly supervised by a neighbourhood sergeant who is responsible for the overall conduct of the PCSOs and their development and review. The recent introduction of neighbourhood beat managers (NBMs), who are usually at PC level has also embedded the PCSOs within the recently reorganised neighbourhood team structure and made these PCs responsible for the day to day tasking and shift patterns of PCSOs along with ensuring that they feel supported and that communication is easy and effective.

The powers that PCSOs may exercise are very limited in comparison to regular PCs and can vary in each constabulary, it is the decision of the Chief Constable which powers their PCSOs may exercise and which they may not. The Chief Constable also determines what equipment PCSOs carry, which always includes a stab vest but may also include a protective CS spray and handcuffs. This decision is based on the Chief Constable's assessment of whether the powers would be beneficial to the community and not divert the PCSOs from their primary functions. The most notable of these powers include the ability to issue fixed penalty notices, the power to require name and addresses from members of the public, the confiscation of alcohol and the ability to search minors believed to possess alcohol or drugs. PCSOs have also recently been granted the full powers of traffic wardens. Given the limited powers that PCSOs are given there are also a set of guidelines that sergeants and NBMs must follow when assigning work to the PCSOs. According to the ACPO Guidance on Police Community Support Officers (chapter 3.9) PCSOs must not be placed in situations:

- Wherever there is a clear likelihood that a confrontation will arise

- Where there is scope for exercise of a high degree of discretion
- Where police action is likely to lead to a higher than normal risk of harm to anyone
- Where there is a clear likelihood that police action will include any infringement of a person's human rights
- Where the incident is one which is likely to lead to significant further work.

The civilian status of the PCSOs and their limited powers sets them apart from their enlisted colleagues and this makes their status within the organisation less clear than might be expected. This has highlighted the importance of ensuring that while the PCSOs are engaging in a different type of policing that is less reliant on the use of force and reactive policing, they are still part of a larger disciplined organisation that requires them to behave in certain ways.

#### **4.6.1 - Introducing and Integrating PCSOs into the Police Service**

Having established what the PCSO role entails and how it differs from that of sworn in officers, it is important to explore how and why the role was introduced and how these civilian staff have integrated into the police service. Although civilian staff were already present within the police service (special constables, probationers and administrative staff) the introduction of PCSOs marked the largest increase in civilian staff in the service's history, with PCSOs projected to eventually make up one fifth of all people employed (Johnston, 2007). This change in the composition of the service has been seen to result in significant challenges to the successful introduction and integration of the role, challenges which still persist today.

In line with the intended impacts of the introduction of NP on policing culture, it was hoped that the PCSO role would be one that would appeal to a wider range of people and dilute the discriminatory culture that was present in the police service. McLaughlin (2007) suggests that the PCSO scheme was believed to represent an opportunity to increase the diversity of policing staff by ensuring that the PCSO role appealed and was advertised to individuals from different ethnicities and to women. This involved a 'refer a friend' scheme which gave cash bonuses to ethnic minority

officers who helped recruit other officers from a similar background. These programmes were supplemented by race relation improvement programmes within the service and it was hoped that the influx of a diverse PCSO cohort would have a significant transformative impact on policing culture. The extent to which this has taken place is debateable. There is significant evidence that police officers from ethnic minority backgrounds themselves are just as likely to hold prejudiced views as white officers and there is very little difference in the policing performed by female officers as male officers (Reiner, 1992, Loftus, 2008). Johnson (2007) also argues that the presence of other civilian police staff (special constables and probationers) in the service has not led to any discernable changes in police culture, something which is attributed to their assimilation into 'canteen culture' by more experienced officers. This being said, no previous attempt at police culture change has involved as significant an increase in civilian staff as the introduction of PCSOs and the full effects have yet to be assessed.

In addition to exploring the intended effects of the introduction of PCSOs, it is possible to examine how PCSOs have integrated into neighbourhood teams and how they have been received by other police officers. As has already been discussed, NP has elicited mixed reactions from existing police officers but some authors have suggested that PCSOs have received a far more negative reaction. Research has suggested that many PCs consider PCSOs to represent an attempt at 'policing on the cheap' (PCSOs earn far less than PCs and are not entitled to similar benefits and pensions) and are being employed instead of PCs rather than in addition to them (Caless, 2007, Kempa and Johnston, 2005, Merritt, 2009, Paskell, 2007). This has resulted in PCSOs being perceived as a threat to the job security of PCs and fears that fewer PCs will be employed in the future. This has then led to further criticism of the PCSO role focussing on their lack of impact on crime. Caless finds that some officers have questioned how effective PCSOs are, referring to them as walking around like a 'gaggle of lost shoppers' (2007: 188) and points to the decision of the Police Federation (the organisation that represents officers at all levels) to take out a full page newspaper advert that denounced PCSOs to the local community asking which they would prefer to be employed, PCs or PCSOs. This illustrates some of the negativity levelled at PCSOs from within the police service since their introduction and indicates why their integration into police stations may be difficult.

One contested result of integrating PCSOs into police stations and into teams with PCs is the impact it has had on officer morale. Johnston (2006) found that on one hand the introduction of PCSOs had released PCs from the more routine and mundane requirements of their role, the pressure to patrol certain beats, respond to low grade calls and conduct victim follow up visits, something which caused morale amongst PCs as well as PCSOs to improve. PCSOs felt they were providing valuable help to the PCs, whilst the PCs were able to concentrate on other aspects of their role. However, the presence of less well trained colleagues with lesser powers than their own meant that PCs felt that they spent an inordinate amount of time correcting PCSO mistakes and ensuring that they were performing the tasks they had been assigned in the correct way. This was seen to offset any time savings that the PCSOs may have introduced and actually meant that they had less time to spend doing other police work, something which resulted in some negative feelings in PCs towards PCSOs and questions about their capabilities and training.

A further problem encountered by PCs and sergeants in charge of PCSOs, which was seen to exacerbate the above problem, was their perceived lack of discipline. Evidence suggests that some PCSOs have been criticised for not understanding how a disciplined organisation, such as the police, works. Johnston (2007) found that some PCSOs in the station that he observed were often late for their shift, took unscheduled breaks, did not wear the correct uniform and in one case ‘an argument was observed in a Camden police station between two minority ethnic PCSOs after one refused to go out on patrol with the other. Each demanded to see a personal representative. Two and-a-half hours later, when the representative could not be found, they were placed at opposite ends of the front counter. They remained working there for a week while the matter was resolved’ (Ibid.: 130). These problems were partly attributed to the lack of supervision and mentoring from PCs and Sergeants, but most importantly to the training that the PCSOs received prior to their deployment in stations. Both PCSOs and Inspectors were quoted as saying that the limited training period that the PCSOs had (in this case three weeks) meant that the training instructors had failed to implant the importance of discipline and an understanding of the way things are done in the police service. One PCSO went so far as to suggest that during the training process,

the trainee PCSOs offered their instructors little respect, something which set a bad precedent before joining a station.

Some research has confirmed the lack of integration of PCSOs in stations and found that in two police stations that were surveyed, only just over half of the PCSOs felt that they had been fully accepted as part of their policing team and this figure represented a significant decrease from the previous year (Johnston, 2007). However, whilst this research has indicated that the introduction and integration of PCSOs into neighbourhood teams has been a difficult process, there is also evidence that PCSOs have generally found working in the police service to be a positive experience. In a survey conducted by the home office, 86% of PCSOs said that they were proud to be part of the police service and enjoyed their job and 55 % felt that the PCSO role had met their expectations (Home Office, 2006). There is also significant evidence to support the idea that although PCSOs have not been fully accepted into the police service, their presence is supported by the public. The same research found that the public appreciated the speed at which PCSOs responded to less serious calls and felt that it sent a message to the perpetrators that their actions had consequences. It also found that PCSOs were more approachable than PCs and the public were more likely to pass information onto a PCSO than bother a PC with it (Caless, 2007). This would indicate that whilst PCSOs have problems within the police service, there is some evidence that they have been accepted by the public as part of policing in the UK.

#### **4.7 - Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to illustrate the role that gender plays in not only the established constructions of police work and policing culture but also in framing the reforms that have resulted in the introduction of NP. Its introduction not only reflected an attempt to satisfy public demand for a police service that better understood the needs of local communities but also the criticisms that the police had become a institution where discrimination and prejudice was common, something which resulted in the dominance of male, white, heterosexual thinking and forms of behaviour. Evidence for this assessment of the service was found in both the way in which officers behaved in their private, back stage areas but also in the way in which some policing specialisms and policing functions were constructed through masculine

discourses. However, limited signs of change in policing culture can also be noted, with alternative cultures emerging and an exploration of the variation in culture that could result from the setting in which policing takes place and in different specialisms.

The dominance of masculine discourses with the service has also resulted in NP being characterised as a 'softer' form of policing and a feminising influence. Its fundamentally different approach to policing communities has led to a significant degree of conflict between established understandings of what 'real' police work is and NP's focus on community engagement, more visible forms of policing and problem solving. This conflict has led officers to find ways to reconcile their new roles with police culture and maintain their own sense of professional and masculine identity. This was found to be particularly important during NP training as officers drew on their prior experience of policing culture to resist and reinterpret the discourses of NP and limit the effectiveness of some of the training they received. When being enacted this conflict resulted in neighbourhood officers attempting to reconstruct neighbourhood policing by emphasising masculine behaviours. The contested nature of the introduction of NP was also found to be exacerbated by the introduction of PCSOs into the service, again revealing some of the disruptive effects that the introduction of NP has had on the police service.

In light of the complex sense-making processes engaged in by neighbourhood PCs, PCs involved in training and PCSOs it is important to understand how different 'policing' discourses influence gender performance in both the front stages, when the police are interacting with the public or other agencies and in the back stage, the private interactions that take place in the police stations, and how the two differ. This will highlight the importance of context in understanding the variation that exists within policing identity performances. As a result, the next chapter will examine the most appropriate research methods to examine these processes, to fully explore how different discourses are drawn on in different contexts by neighbourhood officers when constructing their identity performances.

# Chapter Five

## Methodology

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### 5.1 - Introduction

Ethnography, more than any other research approach takes time, effort, persistence and, importantly an understanding of oneself through reflexivity. However, these exertions have the potential to unlock a research setting and allow researchers to gain access to the minutia of everyday interaction. The theoretical framework which I developed in the preceding chapters highlighted the importance of contextualised interactions in understanding the construction of identity performances and this choice of research method will reflect this. Ethnography provided the best means by which to achieve the close study analysis of police officers performing in gendered cultures that my theoretical framework required. Drawing on insights from ethnomethodology, research settings are conceived as environments in which individuals make sense of the world around them through observable actions and performances. Poststructuralism is then integrated into the approach in order to further explore the power relations that constrain this sense making. My research methodology, therefore, focuses on the subjective experience of individuals as they enact the everyday interaction that brings reality into existence. A reflexive understanding allows the researcher to comprehend not only the way in which participants construct reality, but also the researcher's role in the research process.

Initially the chapter will lay out the research questions that have emerged from my review of the literatures on identity performance, gendered cultures and NP. It will then examine how a research approach was developed from ethnomethodological and poststructural insights into understanding the actions of the research participants. The chapter then moves to explore ethnography as a means of researching organisational culture and more specifically, policing culture. Following details of the research setting, the ethnographic methods I used are examined in relation to their suitability to answer the research questions. The penultimate section of the chapter explores how

the data gathered was analysed, both in terms of its credibility and reliability. The chapter then concludes by exploring the reflective issues I experienced when researching the police.

## **5.2 – Developing a Research Approach**

The first step in developing a research approach lies in an examination of what has gone before. Following my review of the ethnomethodological and poststructural identity performance theory, the literature on gendered cultures and the policing service and its culture, it became clear that when investigating the relationship between discourses and identity or interactive contexts, the vast majority of research has adopted a qualitative stance. My own desire to draw on aspects of poststructural and ethnomethodological theory in understanding the contested and conflicting performances of neighbourhood officers, along with my own personal preference for ‘hands-on’ research, means that it was to the qualitative research tradition that I turned. Before deciding how I would go about conducting my study, I first laid out what it was that I wished to discover. Although initially my focus changed and drifted, I knew that I wished to investigate the identity performances of neighbourhood officers and the influence of gendered cultures and, in drawing on the theoretical frameworks developed in the previous three chapters, the following research questions emerged.

RQ1 – How do officers understand NP within the gendered cultures of policing?

RQ2 – What discourses are mobilised and with what effects in terms of protecting or resisting particular identity performances?

RQ3 – How are these discourses and performances mobilised in the everyday interactional construction of NP and in the ‘front’ and ‘back’ stage of NP?

RQ4 – How are identity performances regulated and normalised through the gendered culture of policing and what are struggles and conflicts over meanings and performances?



These lines of inquiry reflect my interest in drawing on the two different performative theories by incorporating contextual factors into an understanding of discursive identity construction and normalisation. Given that my framework reflects different theoretical groundings, it was important to assess how elements of their respective methodologies could be integrated to allow the greatest insight into the research setting.

### **5.2.1 – Integrating Ethnographic and Poststructural Approaches to Research**

This section will explore the aims of ethnographic and poststructural approaches to research and identify the areas of commonality that allowed them to be integrated and adopted as the methodology for this study. It will begin by examining the ethnography, and more specifically, ethnomethodology as a means of understanding organisations before moving on to examining poststructural understandings of research and offering an argument for their integration.

In its simplest form, ethnography is a methodology based on direct observation, and as Watson succinctly puts it;

“a way of collecting ‘data’ through a process of *participant observation* in which the researcher becomes an active member of the group which is being studied... (In ethnography) there is a coming together of the ‘everyday’ thinking of the ‘subjects’ of the research and the body of academic knowledge to which the researcher has access... there is attention to meanings and the processes through which the members of particular worlds make those worlds meaningful to themselves and others.”  
(Watson, 1994: 6)

The primary aim of ethnomethodological approaches to research is to understand the phenomena under study in as naturalistic terms as possible, observing it in context as much as possible. As such, it adopts many of the conceits of naturalist approaches to research. Naturalism suggests that, as far as possible, research should be conducted within the natural setting and disturbed as little as possible by the researcher. Research methods that favour observing the social world in its natural state are preferable to those that remove participants from their natural environments and place

them in artificial ones like formal interviews or experiments (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The primary aim of this type of research is to describe what is happening, the setting in which it happens and how individuals understand their own behaviour and the behaviour of others, so I will draw on these ethnographic assumptions in order to conduct a close study analysis of identity performances.

Whilst many forms of research seek to identify and establish generalities across different research settings, ethnomethodological approaches to research are concerned with the actions that can be observed by researchers (Gobo, 2011). This focus on actions and their contingency on the environments in which they are performed means that ethnomethodology is often accused of being too individualist. Individualism suggests that research is too focussed on the participants of research and the particulars of the setting but this is not the desired outcome of ethnomethodological studies. Instead it explores how these actions form patterns and understandable ways of behaving which can be made public and be mutually recognisable to the other members of an environment using the contingencies of this environment (Rawls, 2008). Ethnomethodology attempts to avoid understanding the social world as being based on causal relationships but focuses instead on how individuals interpret social interactions (Coulon, 1995). Thus the contingencies of a setting are the stimulus for individual behaviour, people interpret these stimuli and construct their actions accordingly. As a result, the stimuli can be interpreted in different ways by different people and may result in different outcomes, this means that it is unwise to suggest that any hard and fast rules that predict human behaviour are possible (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This understanding of human behaviour can be seen as a direct criticism of positivist approaches to organisational research that posit a causal relationship between the manipulation of variables and the impact that this has on individuals.

Ethnomethodology is therefore not concerned with making statements about 'what is' and avoids making statements about the nature of reality and what it contains. It does not attempt to explore the macro-order of social discourses that inform any given environment, discourses like social structure, class relations, hegemonic understandings of gender and power struggles. It also doesn't seek to focus on micro-order phenomena either, denying the idea that these social structures are created from

below through the face to face interactions of individuals or through their self-interested actions. Instead ethnomethodology focuses on what 'there is', there are social structures, there are hegemonic expectations of gender and there are power struggles (Hilbert, 2009). Ethnomethodologists suggest that whatever research setting is examined will find 'social practices productive of, by and for the members, all of the micro/macro matters of relevance for those members in that specific setting' (ibid.: 170). These matters are not constructed in order to represent a conclusive understanding of a setting that will predict individual behaviour in the future but only represent what is occurring at any given time, in the environment that is being studied.

In accordance with this approach, in order to understand why individuals behave in the way that they do researchers must examine the meanings that guide behaviour. Ethnomethodology makes no attempt at understand large scale social discourses and, as a result is often accused of denying their existence, this is not the case however (Sharrock and Button, 1991). These social discourses are evident in the social practices that can be observed, it is through this that the forces that govern society and behaviour are evident and not through abstract theorisations of this role. It is possible to say this because individuals are not free to behave in any way they see fit and still expect to be treated as members of society. They are constrained and required to behave in an expected way and this constraint is observable through the identity performance given by individuals. Members constrain each other and it is often assumed that this constraint is an outside force, be they social expectations or cultural traditions etc. This assumption is a powerful one and is what causes individuals to manage the performances that they give to one another. These constraints on performance are 'real, not imagined; local, not "somewhere else"; empirical, not theoretical' (Hilbert, 2009: 172), and this summarises one of the key ontological cornerstones of ethnomethodology.

The work of Harold Garfinkel, one of the pioneers of ethnomethodology, supported this turn towards interpretivism and suggested that researchers should use language to understand and explain social interactions (Pollner and Emerson, 2001). Hence, ethnography and ethnomethodology '...is directed to the tasks of learning how members' actual, ordinary activities consist of methods to make practical actions, practical circumstances, common sense knowledge of social structures, and practical

sociological reasoning analysable' (Garfinkel, 1967: vii-viii). Garfinkel's other major contribution to ethnomethodology lies in the area of meaning and language. Garfinkel's suggested that large part of an individual's ability to make sense out of a setting was their ability to announce to themselves and to others what meaning they are getting out of the situation, in other words, as individuals make their interpretation of a setting clear to others, it attaches a meaning that becomes clear and stable (Atwell, 1974). This focus on language is reminiscent of poststructural accounts of ontology.

In methodological terms adopting poststructuralism means acknowledging that ontologically there is no known and fixed reality, no single truth but only that which we can construct through our own experiences and understandings (Kelan, 2010). These interpretations will greatly affect our actions and the nature of our social interactions with the rest of the world. People not only interact with their environment but they also make sense of it through their interpretation of events and people within these environments. As a result of this, an individual's actions may be seen as most meaningful within the context of these socially constructed environments (Saunders et al., 2003). This highlights how research can be greatly improved by conducting it within the context in which it is performed and why ethnography is an appropriate method for investigating poststructural understanding of identity. From an epistemological standpoint, poststructuralism reflects the growing appreciation that research cannot be conducted with certainty and in search of 'facts' but that the knowledge is interpreted by the researcher in a personal and subjective way. This has many implications for issues such as reliability and validity but has also helped prompt the emergence of reflexive thinking within research, which will be addressed later in the chapter.

In addition to these points, Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) suggest that 'poststructuralism frames power not simply as one aspect of a society, but as the basis of society'. Given the importance of power within any organisation, but especially the Police Service, this focus is extremely important and the research approach should reflect this. Kondo (1990) attempted to devise a means by which power strategies and ethnography could be successfully intertwined in order to avoid these issues. She attempted to understand how individuals construct their sense of self without ignoring 'the fields of power, hierarchy, and discipline within which people struggle over the

meanings of...what it means to work in a small factory...and of the conventions surrounding the construction of gender' (ibid.: 43-44). Kenny (2006), referring to the work of Kondo, goes on to suggest that 'a commitment to examining the non-spoken, non-written aspects of life in which politically inscribed discourses silently play out, is seen as key to overcoming this blindness to the operation of power' (1990: 59).

Having reviewed the ontological positions of these two approaches to conducting research it is evident that they make very different assumptions about the nature of reality and the fixed nature of social structures. Whilst poststructuralism suggests that the world around us is not governed by fixed forces but is subjective and open to interpretation, ethnomethodology on the other hand is less concerned with social reality and focuses more on how individual behaviour is constrained by concrete understandings of what is acceptable behaviour within any given context and not the macro discourses present in this context. However, whilst these two approaches focus on different aspects of identity performance they are not necessarily incompatible. Ethnomethodologies commitment to empirical inquiry and its focus on context make it ideal to study the performances that are adopted as a result of the constraints found in a specific gendered organisational culture. Poststructuralism also seeks to explore the constraints placed on individuals' identity performance but does so by examining the role of societal discourses and how these can be found in organisational culture. As such, although the two approaches have very different ontological positions they both explore the constraints put upon the identity performances of individuals by the environment in which they perform, albeit in different ways.

### **5.3 - Research Design**

Perhaps the most important part of any methodology is the research design. A good research design is fundamental to creating a reliable and authentic piece of research that answers the research questions it has identified. Whilst no research design is flawless, it is important to bear any research questions in mind when determining how they will be investigated and how useful the resultant data will be.

#### **5.3.1 - Ethnography**

When deciding what research methods should be used to investigate the performances given by neighbourhood officers a number of factors were considered but observing the performances as they were happening was deemed integral. Ethnomethodology requires first hand observation and a rich and detailed type of data would also allow better access and understanding to the contested and subjective nature of identity performance, as was evident from other ethnographic studies (Kelan, 2010). As a result, an ethnographic methodology was pursued. Ethnography has long been used by organisational researchers who wish to achieve the deepest insights into individuals and their relationship between their work and selves. Ethnography involves an extended period of immersion within an organisation, where the researcher listens to conversations, observes actions and asks questions of the subjects. It focuses on the understanding of organisational cultures and is a useful tool for cultural sense-making when the researcher is in an unfamiliar environment (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). The prominence of ethnography as a research tool reflected the growing division between mainly quantitative and positivist research, popular in 1930s and 1940s and qualitative studies that focus on naturalism (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1987). Rejecting the notion that knowledge must be statistically measured and valid, naturalism suggested that ‘the social world should be studied in its ‘natural state’...the research must be carried out in ways that are sensitive to the nature of the setting. The primary aim should be to describe what happens in the setting, how the people involved see their own actions and those of others, and the contexts in which the action takes place’ (ibid. 1987: 6).

Over the past fifty years, ethnographic bias emerged from anthropological and sociological studies of people as an important tool in business and management research (Chambers, 2000). Appropriating the conventions of these fields, organisational ethnography attempts to understand the way people behave and think when ‘organised’ and the social relations that develop when ‘coalesced around a subset of goal-orientated activities’ (Rosen, 1991: 3), as opposed to the more ‘general’ behaviour of people as they go about their everyday lives. Organisational ethnographies therefore began by looking at the way in which people existed under the pressure of being organised and how this translated into work behaviours and routine. Emerging from the Chicago school of Sociology, Roy’s (1958) ethnography

of immigrant workers in a factory examined the hidden aspects of work and how workers escaped the routine and boredom of repetitive labour by developing informal relationships and a series of non-work related break times. As was conventional at the time, Roy conducted his ethnography covertly and as an active participant in the setting, working in exactly the same way as the people he was observing were, something which is increasingly difficult to do. Similar covert methods were adopted by many researchers, such as Cavendish's (1982) study of women working on manufacturing lines, as the studies focussed on and greatly benefited from 'getting under the skin' of workers and experiencing exactly what the workers felt in the organisation (Strangleman and Warren, 2008).

During the 1980s, the rise in popularity of the study of organisational cultures prompted a resurgence in the use of ethnography to document and analyse them (Bryman and Bell, 2000). Watson (1994) used participant observation to study managers in a telecommunications firm, describing his ethnography as a written account of an organisation's culture, a 'coming together of the 'everyday' thinking of the 'subjects' of the research and the body of academic knowledge to which the researcher has access' (ibid.: 6). Ethnographies focus on the language and rhetoric used by individuals, understanding that what people say and what they don't say construct 'meaning and value in social life' (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008: 138), making them particularly useful in the study of organisational culture. In addition to this, through ethnography we can better understand how language, and through this identity, is constructed and influenced by socio-historical discourses that cannot be controlled at an individual level. These discourses are often so pervasive and taken for granted that in everyday life individuals are often unaware that they are under their influence. Whilst acknowledging the way in which discourse shapes language, we can also use ethnography to explore how language can be seen to constitute social life by defining, describing and solidifying the actions of individuals (Tedlock, 2002).

Ethnographies have often been employed by researchers investigating identity construction and performance because it is through the observation of the everyday rituals, the 'in-jokes', the casual comments and the unguarded expression of views that comes with familiarity that researchers can hope to come close to understanding the *thinking* of their research subjects (Blaikie, 2000). The nature of identity

performance is so that it is only through being present at its display that it is possible to examine it. Asking research subjects to recount how they acted and felt at a certain time or generally would mean that any data gathered would have been filtered through their own subjective opinions. This may mean that they fail to recount views or actions that may be considered controversial or politically incorrect to a researcher (Walsham, 1995).

Ethnographies have a long history of investigating the police and perhaps the most widely known of these is the work of Van Maanen (1988) and his ethnography of American police officers. Van Maanen's work has focussed on the occupational community found in policing and the prescriptions of police culture that are said to teach new (and existing) police officers about the day-to-day components of police work, by experienced officers, in learning how to police (Van Maanen, 2010). He has also focussed on the role of language in policing and the way in which language constructs meaning in policing, most flamboyantly in his article 'the asshole' (1978) where he examines power of the word asshole among the police officers. Van Maanen took an extremely active role in the police organisation he observed, going through the same training programme, becoming involved in a number of dangerous situations and even carrying a gun at one point (1988). This level of embeddedness in the police gave him unprecedented access to the culture of policing and officers understandings of their role. More recently, ethnographies have been used by researchers to investigate the cultures of Police organisations. Westmarland (2001) adopted an ethnographic research design in two case study organisations when researching the relationship between policing and gender and found that 'participant' observation allowed her to view 'gender in action' instead of relying on what Police officers say they feel and do. Christenson and Crank (2001) used ethnography in their analysis of a rural Police department and found that their use of ethnography meant that the subtle nuances of police behaviour and attitudes were evident, something that other methods would have missed. The ability to pick up on and record the important and unspoken language used by officers in the creation of policing culture highlights the benefits of using ethnography. Marks (1994) used ethnography to examine the 'frequent incongruity between behavioural responses and formal statements of change' (2004: 886), something that was only possible by accessing the officers in



situ and observing what they did and by building a trust and rapport over time, something that couldn't be achieved in an interview situation.

In order to best be able to observe the behaviour and language of individuals, ethnography can be conducted in a way which facilitates the building of trust and rapport between respondent and participant. Initial stages of ethnography can be used to gain an insight into the background of the research setting and to gain a rapport with research subjects (Mason, 2002). This is an important stage as it allows for the researcher to become comfortable and familiar with the setting and for the subjects to begin to trust the researcher enough to confide in them. The more time the researcher spends in an organisation the easier it will be for them to gain deeper insights into the social and political relationships of its members (Kenny, 2006). Key to gaining this level of depth is the researcher's ability to interact with their research subjects and 'fit in' with the culture of the organisation. However, this is not without its problems.

Much of the literature on conducting ethnographies refers to the fine line that researchers must tread, the line between integrating into an environment and culture and 'going native' (Tedlock, 2002). 'Going native' describes when a researcher identifies completely with their participants, losing the critical faculties required to interrogate the setting they're researching. The fear of going native within ethnography has led to an increasing emphasis being placed on the importance of researcher objectivity. Even though this is an important consideration for an ethnographer, it must also be remembered that the observation of performances by a researcher is also a subjective process and can never be truly objective. Researchers will have to interpret what they are seeing and hearing and attribute causes and motivations to these actions, all of which will be influenced by an individual's own opinions and assumptions, however hard they try to avoid it (Ellis, 1999; Mahoney, 2007; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). This issue will be explored further later in this chapter. Finally, one other difficulty that the ethnographer faces is how to translate the multitude of actions and experiences that they may have observed into a coherent account of identity performance without reducing it to essentialist understandings and to highlight its multiplicity and complexity. In line with the aims of this project it is also important that the influence of power be acknowledged in the writing of

ethnography, without dismissing the idea of individual agency when explaining performances.

Having addressed some of the different ways in which ethnography has been used to investigate organisational culture, gendered culture and policing culture, along with some of the difficulties, I will now move on to my own ethnography. This begins by outlining the different research settings in which I conducted observations.

#### **5.4 - Research Sites**

This section will examine the research sites from which my observational data is drawn. The research was conducted over a seven month period and involved three one month long periods of observation in three different neighbourhood police teams, all of which were part of the same Police area. The three neighbourhood teams were selected to reflect the diverse communities within this area and the issues that the Police must deal with across the country. The three stations chosen reflected neighbourhood policing experiences in a medium-sized town, a sector of a large city and a rural area with several small, isolated communities. In addition, I spent a number of days over a ten week period observing the training of new PCSOs in a classroom environment and during their testing within a local community. Examining the similarities and differences between the 4 research sites was important as they provided contextual information that was integral to understanding the identity performances that officers gave.

Ensuring that there was diversity in my research locations was important to provide an accurate and trustworthy description of identity performances within the different context or stages of Neighbourhood policing. Whilst some behaviours and emergent themes that are identified will be common to all Police officers, some will be related specifically to the environment that they work in. Prior reading on police behaviour suggested that the most masculine gendered identity performances for example would be given when dealing with more serious and immediate crimes, such as assault and disorder caused by alcohol. These crimes are far more likely to occur in busy city context with more licensed premises than in quiet rural areas that have few alcohol related problems, where identity performances are more likely to be geared towards

resolving neighbour disputes. In light of this, it was important that the research took place in a variety of settings so that it reflects the multiplicity of neighbourhood policing interactions.

#### **5.4.1 - Elshire Police Service**

Elshire Police Service is a large Police constabulary that serves over a million people and contains 4 large cities and numerous towns and valley communities. The Service employs over three thousand regular Police officers and over three hundred PCSOs who are split between eight divisions. Elshire Police service was criticised for its failure to deliver on the promises of their policing pledge (HMIC, 2010). Although it has recently made significant improvements in practice, this review highlighted the need for Elshire Police to improve customer satisfaction, especially with regards to victims of crime. In order to address this failing Elshire service has placed greater importance on Neighbourhood policing, seeing it as the best means by which to deliver citizen focused policing and keep victims of crime informed about case progress.

#### **5.4.2 - PCSO Training School**

There were 19 new PCSOs, split into a class of 10 (5 male, 5 Female) and a class of 9 (5 male, 4 female) and 3 main instructors (2 male PCs and 1 female PC). Figure 1 (p. 104) details how many sessions I observed and the topics that were covered by the instructors. When selecting what lessons I would observe there were a great deal of sessions that covered procedure and the 'powers' of the PCSO but I tried to concentrate on sessions that involved the 'skills' that would be needed when they took up their roles in a community. By focusing on the skills aspect I hoped that I would gain a greater understanding of the discourses influencing how the PCSO job is supposed to be 'done' and the gendered meanings conveyed through these discourses.

#### **5.4.3 - Radley**

Radley is a large urban town with a population of around 50,000 people and is seen as a local tourist destination. The town is made up of industrial, retail and residential

areas and contains 8 electoral wards, which also double as policing wards. There is also a large recreational park and a working port. Housing includes some areas of large detached and semi-detached houses but is dominated by terraced housing and small blocks of flats. Although there are small areas of affluence, the majority of the population are working class and two areas in Radley have been designated 'Communities First' areas. Communities First is a government scheme that aims to improve the living conditions and prospects of the people living in the most disadvantaged areas across the Country. These areas have a higher proportion of unemployed people, single parents and vulnerable adults.

Crime levels (based on a crimes per 1,000 people ratio) for the majority of these wards is average when compared with the rest of the County, however one central 'Communities First' ward has an 'above average' crime level (Elshire Police website, 2009). The most frequent types of crime across Radley are anti-social behaviour, violent crime and vehicle crime. Although it is the smallest geographical area in the sector, Radley has the highest population and has therefore has the largest neighbourhood team of PCs and PCSOs. The team is based in a large, centrally located police station, which is the headquarters for the police sector and also the base for the senior officers in the sector. Radley neighbourhood team was made up of 22 PCs (18 male and 4 female), 14 PCSOs (6 male and 8 female), 3 Sergeants (2 male and 1 female) and a male inspector.

#### **5.4.4 - City Heights**

City Heights is a district of a large city and is located on the outskirts of the city centre. It is a highly varied sector with seven policing wards which encompass a number of different types of community. Three of the wards can be described as large, urban residential areas with small shopping high streets and good transport links into the city centre. These areas are primarily working class. One of these three wards is a 'Communities First' regeneration area, due to the lack, and poor condition, of existing facilities in the area and the high levels of deprivation. Three other wards are made up of small villages surrounded by semi-rural areas and countryside, including wooded and mountainous areas and a large river. These three wards have small village shopping areas and limited public transport services to the main city. They are

primarily populated by middle and upper class residents. The final ward is Pailston, a large suburb to the north of City Heights which until recently had its own station and five dedicated officers. Recent restructuring of the Police service and the introduction of neighbourhood policing has meant that it is now part of the City Heights sector and no longer has its own police station. The area has a large shopping high street and shopping centre, numerous schools and a hospital. It is mainly populated by middle class families and the elderly.

The crime levels in City Heights are average when compared to the rest of the county, although the Communities First area has an above average level of anti-social behaviour. The most common types of crimes in these areas are anti-social behaviour related to alcohol consumption, vehicle crime and violence. Anti-social behaviour and violent crimes are more linked with the urban and deprived areas of City Heights whilst vehicular crime, such as parking issues and speeding are more associated with the affluent, semi-rural areas. The neighbourhood team for City Heights primarily operates from City Heights Police station, a large station located in the centre of the Communities First ward. However, there are also a number of small community 'drop-in' rooms located in three of the wards which are staffed by the neighbourhood PCs and PCSOs to give the community greater access to the Police. These drop-in rooms are located in council owned buildings and are not permanent Police buildings. There is also a larger and permanent 'shop front' that the Police use in Blackfriars, a small village within the area. This shop front was established to placate the residents of Blackfriars following the closure of their Police station and is staffed by a member of Police staff Monday to Friday. The neighbourhood team in City Heights is made up of 13 PCs (7 male, 6 female), 8 PCSOs (3 male, 5 female), 1 male Sergeant and 1 male Inspector.

#### **5.4.5 - Greenside**

Greenside district has a large geographical area covering fourteen policing wards. The sector contains 3 small villages which also serve the surrounding communities but no major town or urban areas. The housing is almost entirely terraced, indicative of its mining past, with some villages having a small number of dilapidated council houses which are in the process of being replaced. The area can be described as rural

or semi-rural and is largely made up of farming land and country parks. Three of the fourteen wards in the Greenside sector are Communities First wards, reflecting the widespread degeneration that can be seen across the sector and the lack of facilities and transport links available especially for the younger population. The communities in this area are working class, former-mining communities and have been seen to enter into decline since the loss of this industry. Since the closure of the mines unemployment in the area has been high and those with jobs are required to commute into larger neighbouring towns and cities due to the lack of employment in the immediate vicinity.

Crime levels in Greenside sector are also average in comparison to the rest of the County; this covers crimes like burglary, violence, robbery, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour. The primary criminal concerns in the area are vehicle crimes, mainly parking infringements and speeding, alcohol related youth annoyance and drug-dealing in one ward. The parking concerns tend to centre on the small shopping areas, which were not built to cope with the influx of traffic they now receive, whilst the speeding concerns are more prevalent in the rural areas which are not as developed. The neighbourhood team covering Greenside is based in a Police station to the south of the sector. The station is a converted dwelling which also serves as the base for the areas drug unit and local coroner, with the areas response team based in a neighbouring large town. In addition to this, another station in the north of the sector is also used but only by the Officers tasked with the surrounding areas as a more convenient place to work from; this station is also a converted dwelling. Finally, one 'drop in' office is run from a community hall, this office has recently been upgraded with computers linked to the police network in order to allow Officers to work away from the main Station more easily. Greenside neighbourhood team is made up of 7 PCs (5 male, 2 female), 7 PCSOs (4 male, 3 female) and 1 male Sergeant.

Having established the similarities and differences between the research setting the chapter will now go on to address how observation and interview data was collected.

## **5.5 - Conducting my Ethnography**

In order to collect the data needed to explore my research questions, my ethnography adopted two methods. The primary source of data was observational and this section will explore the role that I took as observer in the training school and NPTs. It will then address the different sources of data that were available to me during my time in the service, addressing each different research setting in turn. The ethnographic tools that I used to record my observations are then discussed, including the difficulty of keeping field notes whilst patrolling with the officers or when in the station. Observational data was also supplemented by data gathered through a number of semi-structured interviews. This final section will detail the interviews that took place and how these interviews were conducted.

### **5.5.1 - Participant Observation**

An ethnography of the police service required that I make a number of decisions about my behaviour whilst observing. The most important of these decisions was to be the role that I would adopt whilst conducting my ethnography. This decision involves determining how involved a researcher wishes to become in their setting, a set of four researcher types was developed by Gold (1958) and is still used to define researcher roles today. A 'complete participant' is a fully functioning member of the organization and their role as a researcher is unknown, meaning that the research is conducted covertly. A 'participant as observer' stance is similar to complete participant but the status of the researcher is known by all, they take part in organizational activities and engage in regular interactions with the members of the organization (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The 'observer as participant' is mainly confined to an 'interviewer' role and only contains a limited amount of observation with less emphasis placed on interacting with individuals as they do their work. Finally, the 'complete observer' eschews all contact and interactions with their participants and the presence of the observer is disregarded by members of organization.

In light of my desire to explore the informal social aspects of police activities and the organizational culture of policing, I pursued a more involved stance during my fieldwork. There were some obvious limitations to my potential involvement in the police service, some activities were too dangerous for me to observe, let alone

participate in but for the most part I was able to participate in the majority of neighbourhood policing activities. As such becoming a 'total participant' (where a research participant fully and can only function as a researcher after the interaction has taken place), as described by Gans (1968) was not possible but it was possible to adopt a 'researcher-as-participant' position. This describes a situation where a researcher is able to participate in the setting but is not fully involved and is still able to operate as a researcher whilst interacting with others. I feel that this best describes my role within a lot of the interactions that I observed, during my time with the police I spent time teaching 4 year old school children how to cross roads, participating in a community development seminar and chatted with elderly members of the public on reassurance visits with PCSOs. At other times I was required to adopt a 'total researcher' role because of the nature of the events unfolding. During arrests and times when officers were engaged in potentially dangerous situations I was often required to observe at a distance and ensure that I did not become involved or provide a distraction to the officer. Using Gans (1968) approach is useful as it shows that whilst a researcher may adopt a participant observation stance, there is often more variation during the course of a research project.

Becoming a participant observer was possible because most of the officers were happy to involve me in their work from my first arrival in the station, although I was required to adapt some of my behaviour whilst working with the neighbourhood officers. I will discuss these experiences later during my reflexive discussion of conducting research within the police service. A researcher's ability to adapt to their research setting and the people they will be observing has a profound impact on the different interactions that they will be able to observe. Initially, whilst I was still an unfamiliar presence in the neighbourhood team and still had a limited knowledge of the work taking place in the team, my observations could be described as descriptive (where a researcher observes anything and everything in order to gain an understanding of the organization) and generally opportunistic, being guided by the inspectors and seniors officers suggestions of what I should see. This was useful as I was able to observe the variety of different tasks that neighbourhood officers performed. However, some drawbacks emerged as I spent more time observing officers. It quickly became clear that the officers tended to perform the tasks over and over and I was soon overwhelmed by data examining reassurance visits performed by



PCSOs. This problem was exacerbated by a desire amongst the senior officers to avoid placing me in any potential danger which often meant that they preferred me to spend my time with the PCSOs during the day rather than the PCs during nightshifts. However, as I became more familiar to officers I was able to adopt a more selective approach to observing them, allowing me to focus on activities that provided an insight into the different contexts in which the neighbourhood officers perform.

### **5.5.2 – Collecting Data through Observation**

A fundamental part of any ethnography is observation, the when, where, what and who of what was seen and felt by the observer. This section will outline what I observed and how these observations were conducted. In understanding what data it is possible to collect through observation, Burgess (1984: 78) provides a useful framework of what can be observed by identifying a number of specific features. First Burgess identifies the space in which observations take place. For me this meant examining the layout of locations, where rooms in buildings were and whether observations took place inside or outside of the organisation. This last point was significant for given the focus that I placed on back and front stage interactions within my analysis of performances. Linked to observational spaces are observable objects, the furniture, decoration and equipment contained within spaces. As I conducted observations in four different settings, different spaces and objects were observed, each of which are explored in the following sections. Next the actors who were observed are addressed and this meant identifying the key people involved in the research. As my focus was on the identity performances of the PCs and PCSOs, they were a primary focus but attention was also paid to the other officers working in the station, their inspectors for example and the members of the public that the officers would encounter whilst giving front stage performances. A detailed breakdown of the policing personnel will also be included in the following section.

The activities which actors engaged in are another crucial form of observational data identified by Burgess. During my time observing the Police, I witnessed a range of occurrences including the comforting of victims of crime, issuing warnings to teenagers engaged in anti-social behaviour and the arrest of a number of individuals for crimes ranging from driving offences to assault and public order offences. I was

also able to observe their back stage activities, the mundane admin they engaged in, the daily briefings and the break times where they all ate together in the canteen, amongst others. My presence at these times allowed me to observe the workings of the police that aren't privy to the public; their private conversations and views, their in-jokes, their attitudes towards criminals, towards victims and towards each other. Burgess also highlights time as an important observational issue, suggesting it is important to examine how time is organised. Observing the identity performances given in policing required me to be present at all times during their working day. This ranged from attending the morning briefing with senior officers, walking the beat with PCSOs, having lunch in the Canteen with the other officers to patrolling the twilight streets in Panda cars. Due to their fluctuating work rotas I tended to follow a nine to five working pattern, this allowed me to be present whilst a number of 'shifts' were present in the station and increase the amount of time I spent with officers engaged in activities other than computer based paperwork. I also tried to spend time working into the night, partly because it was usually the most exciting time to be an observer but also as it allowed me to see the stereotypical aspects of policing in action and gave me invaluable insight into identity performance during highly charged and tense moments.

This section will now go on to examine each of the different contexts in which observations took place. For each different setting, a description of the NPTs will provide some insight into the observational data that was available and the sorts of activities that I was able to observe the officers participating in.

### **5.5.3 – PCSO Training School**

The PCSO training school was located amongst other Police offices on an industrial estate outside of a large town. All of the classes were held in a large portacabin that had been split into two classrooms and a small kitchen area. Despite not being a permanent building the classrooms were comfortable, bright and largely conducive to teaching.

Figure 1 – Observations in PCSO training school

<b>Day</b>	<b>Lessons Observed</b>
1	Course Introduction, Recruits Expectations and Needs
2	Diversity
3	Partnership Orientated Problem Solving, N.I.M. Training
4	ASBOs
5	Parade, Communication Skills
6	Patrol and Tackling Crime Effectively, Victim Support
7	Lost Property, Confiscation of Alcohol
8	Traffic Training
9	Parade, S.O.L.A.P.
10	PACT Meeting Session
11	Domestic Violence
12	Child Protection
13	Practical Exams In Local Community
14	Feedback from Practical Exam

Observing the training sessions required a different understanding of how discourses can work within a very structured context. Using the work of Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) it is possible to analyse meetings not just in terms of what the meeting covers but also the initiation, conduct and termination practices that are evident within the meeting. Whilst not meetings in the typical sense, the training sessions I observed represent a very similar pattern of behaviour and were supposed to allow for dialogue between the PCSOs and their instructors and free discussion of topics. In this sense it is possible to see how conduct within the sessions and the micro actions that both the instructors and students engaged in illustrate the discourses at work within the Police. In addition to this, both Bergstrom and Knights (2006) and Conti and Nolan (2005) point out how the recruitment and training procedure can be used to establish universal authority and generate obedience within the cohort. This can be achieved through the use of discursive moves and focussing on how the information is presented to achieve these aims. In the case of the PCSO training school by looking

at the language and discourses of conformity that were used by the instructors was key to instilling the officers with the required and stereotypical 'police identity'.

#### **5.5.4 – Radley**

The Neighbourhood Policing office was a relatively small area given the number of Officers that could be working there at any one time. The limited space meant that the office often felt cramped and much busier than it actually was, none of the officers had permanent desks and I was often awkwardly jostled from one of the eight desks to another as officers came and went. The main office was an uninspiring place to be, predominately decorated in shades of institutional grey and canvassed with mug-shots of prolific criminals and the odd outdated police poster, neither I nor the Officers considered it a pleasant place to be. The small size of the office also meant it was constantly very cluttered and difficult to move about in, it wasn't until the Chief Constable arrived for a meeting in the Station that the order was given to clean up the office in case she inspected the neighbourhood area.

The neighbourhood Inspectors office opened directly onto the main neighbourhood office at one end, while the 4 neighbourhood Sergeants shared an office at the opposite end of the main office area. The Inspectors office was comparatively bare compared to the main office and mainly dominated by Police inspection reports that were haphazardly attached to the wall. I spent little time in this office as, during my time there, the neighbourhood Inspector was filling the role of Inspector in the response team of the station. The Sergeants office on the other hand became very familiar to me, as it was the site of a number of my interviews, and was dominated by humorous, police-based cartoons and jokes and a large poster of Gene Hunt, the 'old style cop' (BBC, 2009) featured in 1970s based Police drama 'Life on Mars'. The Police canteen in Radley was small, on the other side of the building and only accessible via a labyrinth of corridors. It was used quite regularly by the staff, by both neighbourhood and response officers, PC and PCSO alike.

The figure overleaf details what I observed during my time in Radley neighbourhood team.

Figure 2 – Observations in Radley

<b>Radley</b>	
<b>Day</b>	<b>Duties Observed</b>
1	Introduction, Computer Systems, Patrol With PCSO
2	Patrol with PCSO, Partnership working with Licensing Authority
3	Senior Officers Briefing, Foot Patrol with PC, Patrol with PCSO
4	Meeting with local council workers, Patrol with PCSO
5	Induction of new PCSO, Patrol/Ward tour in Riot Van with PC & PCSO
6	Multiple patrols with PCSO
7	Nightshift patrol in Riot Van
8	PACT Surgery, Patrol with PCSO
9	Foot patrol with PC, House calls with PC
10	Meeting with Residents Association, Roadside seatbelt checks
11	Patrol with PCSO, Patrol with PC in Panda
12	Conducting Interviews/ Day spent making observation in back stage
13	Conducting Interviews/ Day spent making observation in back stage
14	Nightshift Patrol in Panda Car with PC and PCSO

### 5.5.5 – City Heights

The main Neighbourhood Policing office in the City Heights station was the largest and most spacious of the offices that I observed, roughly three times the size of the office in Radley and helped by the large windows on two sides. Due to the size of the office, all of the officers in City Heights were able to have their own desk. As a result of this, moving around the office was much easier and there was always a desk available for me to use. The size of the office also meant that conversations and jokes were often held across the office, including everyone who was present, making it much easier to observe and listen to what the Officers were talking about. Like the Radley office, the office at City Heights was covered with pictures of ‘nominals’ (persistent offenders that were well known to the police) and the PACT priorities of the wards but, because of the space, they felt less oppressive and distracting. The City

Heights office also had a picture of Gene Hunt and the cast of ‘Ashes to ashes’ that had been torn out of a newspaper and graffitied with the names of Officers from the team. The Inspector’s and Deputy Inspector’s office opened directly onto the main office and was also quite large. Along with the usual filing cabinets and a wardrobe to hold a change of clothes, the most notable piece of decoration in the office was a framed Norwich United football shirt signed by members of the team which belonged to the Inspector, who informed me on my first day that he was from Norwich and supported the team. The canteen in the City Heights station was on the floor above the office but rarely used by the Neighbourhood officers at peak times. The only time it was used was during the nightshifts, when it was generally empty.

The figure below lists the duties that the PCs and PCSOs engaged in whilst I was observing them.

Figure 3 – Observations in City Heights

<b>City Heights</b>	
<b>Day</b>	<b>Duties Observed</b>
1	Tour/Arrest with PC, Patrol with PC
2	Nightshift with PC, Search of House
3	Speed camera checks
4	House calls with PCs, PACT meeting
5	Traffic Operation
6	Foot Patrol and House Calls with PCSOs
7	Foot Patrol and Neighbourhood Watch Visit with PCSO
8	Foot Patrol with PCSO
9	Nightshift with PCs
10	Meeting with Neighbourhood Mgt. Team
11	Conducting Interviews, PACT
12	Conducting Interviews
13	Nightshift Patrol with PC
14	Foot Patrol with PCSO

### 5.5.6 - Greenside

The Police station in Greenside was by far the smallest office (reflecting the fewer number of Officers working out of the station) and was made up of a number of small connecting rooms; one small room serves as a briefing room, another as a computer room for updating Police systems, a small office for the acting-inspector and a room with a small kitchen that serves as the station canteen. As a converted, grade two listed building, the station was small, cramped and, as suggested by many Officers, not really fit for purpose. It was generally only used for briefings and for updating computer systems and there was very little interaction between officers inside the station. Following the briefing at the beginning of the shift, most Officers left the station and did not return until the end of their shift. As well as accounting for the small size of the offices, the age of the building also meant that there were only a limited number of windows and, as a result, the entire building was generally quite dark. Unlike the other offices I observed, the Greenside station did not display pictures of prolific criminals on the walls but kept them in folders, instead there were a number of newspaper articles about the work of the neighbourhood team and some Police information posters.

The figure overleaf shows the duties that I observed during my time in Greenside neighbourhood team.

Figure 4 – Observations in Greenside

<b>Greenside</b>	
<b>Day</b>	<b>Duties Observed</b>
1	Tour and Calls with PC
2	Nightshift with PC and PCSO
3	Foot Patrols with PCSO
4	House Calls with PC and PCSO
5	Foot Patrol and School Visit
6	Nightshift with PC and PCSO
7	Foot Patrol with PCSO
8	Workshop with Communities First Group
9	Partnership work with Council
10	Foot Patrol with PCSO
11	Conducting Interviews/ Day spent making observation in back stage
12	Conducting Interviews/ Day spent making observation in back stage

### **5.5.7 – The Tools of Data Collection**

The field diary is an essential tool for any ethnographer but it can also be a barrier to gaining information. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that even those conducting overt ethnography must be careful to only take notes when it is considered socially acceptable to do so, as the open and excessive taking of notes in front of research participants can 'be perceived as inappropriate or threatening, and will prove disruptive' (ibid.: 177). As my time in the police was a mixture of meetings, house calls, chance encounters on the streets and idle time around the Police station, it was not always appropriate for me to take notes during encounters and hardly ever appropriate for me to write down the verbatim words of officers and members of the public.

I limited my note-taking to times when I felt it wouldn't arouse interest or suspicion. This meant taking notes when the officers returned to their stations to update the 'occurrences' (the term used by the Police for 'cases') that they had just dealt with. During this downtime, when many people were either typing on computers or filing in their pocket notebooks, it did not seem out of place to have my own notebook out and sit at a desk and jot down what had just happened. Before I began to write openly in front of officers, I informed the senior officers that I would be writing notes and that these notes would be a simple record of what I had been doing in the day, rather than an analysis of what I had seen that day. As well as achieving something useful during time which otherwise would have been spent watching people type, it also gave the officers the impression that I was occupied with something else rather than watching and listening to what they were doing and saying, hopefully putting them at ease and allowing them to act as naturally as possible. Of course, this was not the case and whilst writing I was always aware of what was going on, this was one of the few times that I was able to write down things that were happening verbatim. As well as at these times, I would also make notes of what had happened as soon as possible after I had left the station. The process of writing notes was considerably easier in the PCSO training school given its classroom setting. The entire class were taking notes during the sessions, so I was able to freely take notes and appear to be making notes



about the content session, rather than recording this and what the students and instructors were saying as well.

However, this being said, the process of writing notes did not go unnoticed, particularly in the City Heights office. The City Heights officers were notably more curious about what I was writing in my note book and jokingly asked whether I was working for the senior ranks and reporting back what they got up to. This was taken a step further as the officers began using my notebook in their banter, often suggesting that, if one officer made a particularly insulting suggestion, I write it down by saying ‘make sure you write that down in your book!’ or by jokingly announcing ‘I’m making a formal challenge to your behaviour!’ and wanting me to document it. This sort of behaviour gives an indication that, at least in the City Heights neighbourhood team, the officers were not perturbed by my taking notes in plain sight.

## **5.6 - Semi-Structured Interviews**

In order to supplement the data gained from observing the Police officers at work, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with PCs and PCSOs. These interviews focused on their experiences of working in the Police Service and the major sources of satisfaction and frustration they face. Each interview took place in the Station in which the officer was based, usually in an unused office or room. Importantly the interviews always took place in private so that the officers could feel free to express their views without fear of being overheard and identified.

Using semi-structured interviews allowed the respondents to feel at liberty to discuss reactions, opinions and behaviours relating to their role within the Police Service (Ghuri and Gronhaug, 2002). Questions in semi-structured interviews are almost always open ended allowing the respondent the freedom to answer questions and make points which they feel are important, with full justification and emphasis (Mason, 2002). By using this style of interview I was able to appreciate what Segal (1999: 159) described as ‘the importance of collecting ‘thick’ data, which is rich enough to expose the fragility, contradiction and context-bound resistance or compliance within gendered experiences and performance.’ The areas that I wished

to investigate through the semi-structured interview, such as the sources of frustration for the officers, had the potential to cover some quite controversial topics and had I relied on a questionnaire or structured interview I believe that the information I gained would be very different. Williams and Heikes (1993) found that by allowing respondents to express themselves more freely they offered their opinions more easily. They observed that some respondents were more willing to offer more controversial opinions because they were able to justify them through explanation, something that would not have been possible if using a questionnaire or structured interview.

In order to make the process of conducting my semi-structured interviews as straightforward as possible, I reminded the senior officers of each neighbourhood team of my plan as I arrived for my first day, even though I had made my desire to conduct interviews clear in my project outline. I then tried to mention them to as many officers as possible during my time there. I hoped that by making people aware that I wanted to conduct interviews during my last week in each team that I could allay any fears they may have but also allow them time to adjust and become comfortable with the idea of being interviewed. Consequently, during my last week and after telling the Inspectors that I would be conducting interviews, instead of making myself available to shadow the officers as they worked outside the station, I remained in the neighbourhood offices and asked any officers that were around if they had time to be interviewed.

This opportunistic means of gaining interview data was a direct result of the unpredictable nature of policing. I, along with most of the neighbourhood officers, was never sure who would be available to speak to me on any given day because it was common for a pressing issue to take precedence over my interviews and the limited amount of time I had to spend with each shift meant I could only conduct interviews as the opportunity arose. As a result of this, any sort of purposeful sampling strategy became very difficult to implement.

In total 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted with PCs and PCSOs across the three different neighbourhood teams. A Breakdown of the respondents can be seen below.

Figure 5 – Gender and Occupation Break of Interviews

	<b>Male PC</b>	<b>Female PC</b>	<b>Male PCSO</b>	<b>Female PCSO</b>	<b>Female Sgt</b>
<b>Radley</b>	2	0	3	3	1
<b>City Heights</b>	2	3	1	3	0
<b>Greenside</b>	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>

The interviews all took place in private, generally in either the Inspector’s office or meeting rooms within the last few days of my time in each station. They were recorded using a Dictaphone, so that the responses could later be transcribed verbatim. At the beginning of each interview, in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University, I asked each participant to sign a consent form (which can be found in the appendix A) and asked if they were comfortable being recorded. None of the officers I interviewed objected to being recorded.

Although I had developed relationships with many of the officers during my time observing them at work, the interviews were approached with a degree of detachment and all officers were asked the same questions. This was done in an effort to ensure that the neighbourhood officers had the opportunity to give their views of policing instead of following issues that I had identified during my observations. The interview covered a number of different areas, including basic biographical data, what motivated officers to join the Police service, what part of their jobs they found frustrating and those which they found rewarding, the ethos behind neighbourhood policing and the skills required, whether they felt valued within the organisation and the impact that working in the police has had on their private life. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in the appendix B. The interviews were designed to allow officers to express their opinions on and understandings of their own occupation

with as little 'corporate' jargon and thinking as possible. In light of this, the questions that were asked were almost all open ended and designed to allow the respondent to make clear what they thought was important. Although this meant that occasionally the information that I gathered wasn't strictly relevant to my study, it also meant that I discovered information and opinions held by the Officers that I hadn't previously considered.

Whilst identity performances were relatively easy to identify by observing the behaviour of the officers, accessing identity during the interviews posed a much greater problem. As my research project was not framed in terms of identity, asking officers questions that were directly related to identity and the role it plays in policing was likely to be suspicious and could possibly inhibit the answers that were given (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Therefore, the questions were designed to generate answers that could then be analysed for identity indicators.

## **5.7 - Analysis of Data**

Participant observation and semi-structured interviews create a vast amount of rich and detailed data that has to be carefully analysed in order to identify emergent themes and answer the research questions discussed earlier. Discourse analysis can take many forms but my focus will be on how discourses, such as texts and the language of an organisation constitute the social world in which they are enacted (Mason, 2002). Understanding discourses this way means understanding that discourses are not simply a reflection of the social world but actively play a role in producing it. This means examining what, how and why we say some things and not others and the emphasis we place on language, which is designed to have certain effects on others and as a result, have an impact on their and our sense of reality (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

One criticism of using discourse analysis to analyse observational data is that researchers are often prone to ascribing data with meanings that it doesn't have. Benwell and Stokoe (2006) identify a number of potential problems linked to this, beginning with the danger of making essentialist claims about conversational data or performances. For example, when looking at discourses of gender, it is tempting for

researchers to label certain topics of conversation or aspects of performance as highly gendered, that these ideas construct masculinity and femininity within identity performances. However, this assumes that we can describe certain topics of conversation or actions as particularly male or female, something that poststructural understandings of gendered identity seek to avoid. Secondly, there is often no distinction between when an individual is seen to be performing gender and when they are not, if a particular action or phrase cannot be seen as masculine or feminine then the gender performance is seen as contested or multiple but the performances are rarely categorised as anything that far away from essentialist understandings of gender.

The data collected through the semi-structured was transcribed and analysed using thematic data coding techniques, as described by Silverman (2011). Silverman suggests that thematic analysis can be conducted in five stages. The first of these involved familiarizing yourself with the dataset, making notes and comments of ideas that emerge in relation to research question. From these notes and ideas initial codes are generated which can then be used to code all of the data. Next, similar codes are grouped together creating broader theme, such as gender or identity. These themes are then reviewed and checked against the data set, often to find examples that don't fit. Finally, themes are refined so that it is possible to identify the linkages between them and their complexity becomes apparent. Following this outline once the data had been transcribed and read, broad categories were developed in order to 'sort' the data. This was achieved by comparing interactions and responses that may be in common within a described category, grouping them together. In practice, the data was examined and read many times, with the emerging themes and analytic memos being marked in the margins of the transcription. Then all the evidence that fell into this category was gathered to gain as much supporting information as possible. This supporting information was then used to justify the development of an analytical framework.

In recent years, a number of computer programs have been developed to assist the qualitative researcher in organising and analysing their interview data. Programs like NVivo and Nudist allow users to search their data for particular terms, sort extracts by theme and quantify qualitative data (Richards and Richards, 1998). When analysing my interview data I chose not to use these programmes despite the potential benefits

that they can bring. I based my decision on my desire to remain 'close' to the data; I felt that reducing the data into multiple extracts relating to particular themes loses some of the intrinsic value of the data when it is understood in the context of the rest of the interview. Interview data must be considered within the context of what preceded it and what follows it, this, in my opinion isn't aided by analysis programmes.

A theoretical and practical concern of carrying out observation is the highly contested issues of reliability and validity. All research, regardless of its quantitative or qualitative nature must be able to prove that its findings are reliable and the conclusions drawn are valid. Much of the literature around these issues is geared towards statistical modelling but a number of authors have written on how the robustness of qualitative research may be improved (Silverman, 2011, Taylor, 2001). Guba and Lincoln (1994) developed an often cited framework by which quantitative measures can be similarly applied to qualitative work. Their contribution to this field was extremely helpful in ensuring that my own research. Credibility, instead of the traditional internal validity, examines the extent to which the observations made by the researcher match the theoretical ideas that they develop (Bryman and Bell, 2003). According to Bryman (2001:271) credibility refers to 'whether there is a good match between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas as they develop'. In order to ensure that match was present within my research I ensured that I did the following. Firstly, ensuring that the descriptions I made were valid, truthful and representative of what happened by ensuring full and accurate notes were taken and by recording interviews. Next during the interpretation of the data I ensured I could justify the interpretations that I was making. Finally, I ensured I interrogated the data in relation to the relevant theoretical literature. This meant seeking out other explanations for what I was observing and presenting the data in way that supported my theoretical assertions.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) also highlight the dependability of research, paralleling dependability in quantitative research and describe it as establishing the merit of research in relation to its trustworthiness. They advocate using the auditing approach to ensure dependability. Doing this as part of my research study initially meant ensuring I kept good field notes and that interviews were transcribed verbatim. This

allowed me to go back to them during the analysing process and reflect on what I was writing and whether my inferences could be justified. This was not an easy task given the vast amount of data that I generated through observation and interviews, with this problem being flagged by other researchers (Bryman and Bell, 2003). However, it did allow a degree of conformability within my study, whereby I was able to show that I had not let my own personal inclinations or theoretical focus sway the findings of the research.

Finally, the authenticity of my findings must be considered. I attempted to increase the authenticity of my study by conducting a number of interviews with the PCs and PCSOs that I observed. This gave them the opportunity to put forward their own views which, if in agreement with my own findings, supported my conclusions and if in disagreement with my findings could be used as a tool for further reflection and interrogation of data. Another concession that must be made in the interests of rigour and reliability is the idea that any observations or conclusions made regarding neighbourhood police officers are filtered through the researchers own interpretation of their world. This implicates the idea of reflexivity and the acknowledging that a researcher cannot help but influence the research process. It is to this idea that the chapter will now turn.

## **5.8 - Reflexivity**

Traditionally, researchers have been encouraged to distance themselves and their own 'self' from their research in the name of objectivity and reliability (Ellis, 1999). In fact, Van Maanen (1988) describes an entire genre of ethnographic writing, 'realist tales' that endeavour to pass on objective and scholarly descriptions of an organisation that is stripped of all researcher bias, political motivations and morality. However, a poststructuralist methodology would argue that self-perception plays an important part in the interpretation of meaning but that this sense of self is the result of competing subjectivities. In the absence of a single and fixed identity, a researcher must engage with new ways of constructing knowledge that don't presuppose an objectivity within the researcher that does not exist. Denzin suggests that 'humans are always already tangled up...in a secondhand world of meanings and have no direct access to reality' (1997: 246) and so, with the growing importance of reflexivity and

new ways of approaching research being developed, the incorporation of a researchers own biography and feelings is becoming a more common feature of contemporary research. Gergen and Gergen (2000) provide this useful overview of reflexivity.

‘Here investigators seek ways of demonstrating to their audiences their historical and geographical situatedness, their personal investments in their research, various biases they bring to their work, their surprises and “undoings” in the process of the research endeavour, the ways in which their choices of literary troupes lend rhetorical force to the research report, and/or the ways in which they have avoided or suppressed certain points of view’ (Gergen and Gergen, 2000: 1027).

Adopting elements of a poststructuralist methodology requires the acknowledgment that knowledge is constructed by the researcher and impacted upon by their own subjectivities, the process of examining how subjectivities have this potential is known as ‘reflexivity’. The ‘reflexive ethnographer’ has been the subject of a great deal of study in recent years, focusing on the influence researchers have in constructing, analysing and interpreting the research subject and setting (Choi, 2006, Hardy and Clegg, 1997, Hardy et al. 2001 and Rhodes and Brown, 2005). The use of reflexive practices has become a growing feature of many different research disciplines but still remains most prominent in research that seeks to understand how reality is constructed during research (Alvesson et al. 2008). This also includes an examination of the authorial voice and the responsibility that researchers have in ensuring that the ‘story’ of their research is as authentic and truthful as possible by ensuring that (Rhodes and brown, 2005). However, other authors have taken reflexivity a step further and turned the reflexive lens on themselves and examined how it is important for researchers to be aware of issues such as gender and impression management when conducting their fieldwork (Bruni, 2006, Ortiz, 2005, Roberts and Sanders, 2005).

### **5.8.1 - Reflexively Researching the Police**

Prior to beginning my time in the Police Service, my primary understanding of policing culture came from two sources, popular culture depictions on television and film and the academic descriptions of other researchers experiences with the Police.



Whilst the former deals in stereotypes and cliché and the later takes a more objective and analytical point of view, they both present very similar pictures of what it's like to work in the Police Service.

As discussed earlier the culture of Policing is a highly masculine one, where the gendered identity performances are some of the closest to the hegemonic ideal that can be observed in modern society. These types of gender performances weren't solely limited to the male Officers but were also present in the female Officers. Like their male counterparts, female Officers displayed masculine attributes that were seen as key to being an effective Police officer, such as confidence, cynicism, rationality and emotional detachment. The female officers were just as likely to tease their male colleagues, use the crude language associated with homosocial masculine cultures and confidently challenge any member of the public that they believe are not showing them the proper respect. This sort of masculine behaviour was a common occurrence and numerous other examples could be given here to illustrate the ubiquity of masculine gender performances and why they are important if an individual wants to be accepted. As a result of this, conducting an ethnography in this kind of environment posed a number of problems that might not have been as apparent in a less gendered organisation and required me to reflexively address my behaviour and attitudes whilst in the field.

Generally I found that the best way to gain acceptance into the police working culture was to adopt a similarly masculine gender performance and mimic the behaviour of the Police officers (Hunt, 1984). By achieving this acceptance I hoped that I would be able to gain a better understanding of the officers and their lives, instead of the superficial, measured responses that respondents can often give to researchers they are unfamiliar with. I sensed that being the subject of research was of particular concern to some officers, who questioned my motivations and the impartiality of my study on a number of occasions. I would suggest that this was a result of the many recent undercover investigations looking at institutionalised racism in the Police Service and a general feeling amongst the officers that only the mistakes and questionable behaviour of the Police is highlighted, leaving the general public unaware of their successes.

Deciding what sort of gender performance to give was a fairly straight-forward process. The binary assumptions that underpin understandings of gender within the Police service made it fairly obvious what would be expected of me in order to 'fit in' at the station. Being a man I was subject to the hegemonic assumptions about masculinity and the impact these have on the attitudes of the Officers towards male and female behaviour. These assumptions were projected onto me on arrival and throughout my time with the Police, I was only required to ensure that my behaviour did not contradict how they expected me, or more accurately men, to act.

Therefore, I was required to address my own gender performance. Whilst being male gave me some advantage when entering a heavily male dominated environment, I anticipated that my distinctly un-macho performance would have to be manipulated to aid my acceptance into Policing culture. On a day to day basis this required a constant awareness of how I behaved, the language I used and how I reacted to the other Police officers. This meant avoiding becoming involved in conversations that revolved around 'feminine' subjects and participating in 'masculine' exchanges, laughing and taking part in the in-jokes of the Neighbourhood office and ensuring that my clothes and body language would be seen as 'masculine' as possible.

The 'canteen culture' described by Fielding (1999) was still very evident and was omnipresent despite my presence. This meant that conversations often revolved around drinking, sport and computer games. Sometimes it was impossible to avoid situations which required a certain degree of masculinity to fit in. For example, during a Friday night shift patrolling in a Police van a meal break was taken in the home of one of the male Police officers. During this break the two male Officers, a female PCSO and I sat for 45 minutes and watched the second half of an international under-21s rugby match between Wales and England. Having previously revealed that I was English, I was required to engage in a debate about why the English rugby team was superior to the Welsh team using the meagre amount of rugby knowledge in my possession. This resulted in me making some very general statements about the English rugby team and then encouraging the other Officers to continue giving their opinions and demonstrating their encyclopaedic knowledge of rugby.

### **5.8.2 - Ethics and Reflexivity**

Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest that the link between research ethics and reflexivity is rarely made, that reflexivity is primarily seen as a tool for ensuring rigour in research but that a fuller account of reflexivity can lead to better research. They suggest that reflexivity can be used to ensure that researchers are prepared for the micro-ethical issues involved in fieldwork, something which seems particularly appropriate for ethnographers.

Reflexivity and ethical practice means first acknowledging that ethical issues don't stop after the requirements of procedural ethics have been satisfied, that the researcher must be constantly aware of micro-ethical concerns (Ellis, 2007). Further to this, researchers must develop a sensitivity to the ethically important moments of research and, in light of these moments, develop strategies to respond and deal with these occurrences when they present themselves, perhaps even pre-empting them (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). Whilst adopting a reflexive stance does not give a prescriptive method by which to deal with these ethically important moments, it does mean that researchers will be more prepared for them when they arise and understand their importance. It also means that there will be an appreciation of the impact that the researchers presence can have on the participants working lives before fieldwork has even begun, allowing them to plan their responses to any situations they can anticipate, although it is unlikely that all ethical situations can be foreseen. Pre-empting as many potential ethical situations as possible is important as the decisions made in response to them are difficult and only become more difficult when made in the spur of the moment.

Conducting an ethnography brings with it a great deal of ethical complexity, for an ethnographer consideration of ethics should not stop with the ethical approval of the institutions involved in the research (termed procedural ethics by Guillemin and Gillam, 2004) but must be ongoing. Ethnographers must consider ethics in practice, or 'microethics', which are the ethical issues that arise during research as a result of the complex interactions between researcher and participant. This consideration is best practiced when done in conjunction with reflexive practice. However, the importance of 'procedural ethics' should not be underestimated, satisfying the ethical

issues covered by ethics committee was not only important to my academic institution but also important to the Police themselves.

In order to ensure the anonymity of my participants, they have all been given pseudonyms and their personal information has been disguised as much as possible. During the semi-structured interview process, in order to assure that informed consent was given, the respondents were asked to read and sign a consent form which detailed the topic that the interview would cover, how long the interview would take, what would happen to the data during analysis and where they could direct any concerns they had about the interview data.

Achieving the consent of the officers was particularly important task in light of the hierarchy and power structures evident in the police (Miller and Bell, 2002). At the beginning of my time in each of the three stations I visited I asked whether it would be possible to conduct a number of interviews at the end of my time there. All of the commanding officers that I asked were more than happy for their staff to be interviewed and although it was not my intention, this made it much more difficult for the PCs and PCSOs to refuse. Although most organizations have hierarchies that subordinate employees and allow superiors to manage them, the police have a much more defined, militaristic and visual display of hierarchy which allows senior officers to give 'orders' of sorts. Thus when it came to conducting my interviews the Inspectors would 'volunteer' PCs and PCSOs to be interviewed, largely without establishing whether they wanted to be interviewed first or not. As instructions given by superior officers are rarely, if ever, questioned then it is unlikely that they would voice their objection to being interviewed, especially in front of me, an outsider.

As a result of this, before the interviews began I took extra steps to ensure that the PCSOs and PCs were being interviewed of their own accord. I gave them the opportunity to privately withdraw from the process, although no officers chose to withdraw. In addition to this, during the interview itself I looked for visual and language based cues that might indicate that the respondent was uncomfortable with the current line of questioning. The only area that any Officers displayed discomfort was when questions inquired about the atmosphere in the neighbourhood office and about the relationship between PCs and PCSOs. These topics were politically charged

and officers may have been afraid that despite my assurances of confidentiality that their answers might become known and impact on their working environments and the relationships with their colleagues. If I thought that officers were uncomfortable with these questions then I was sure not to press the issue and moved on to another area.

Examining consent in this way is important given the procedural manner to which it is often approached. I found that during the course of my research, consent did not end with a signature in an interview situation but was a constant issue. This was discussed by Mason (2002), who found that informed consent can never truly be given and that a researcher must be reflexive and sensitive to the powerful position they find themselves in. Gaining the consent of officers to be observed whilst performing their day to day tasks was a daily task. Although it did not take the form of written consent forms, I felt that I needed to ensure that all the officers that I shadowed were happy with me observing them. Generally, all of the officers were happy to be observed and the only time I was refused was when there were questions about my safety if I was present. However, whilst I was not refused there were a number of times when I felt my presence was an imposition and that a number of the officers were uncomfortable with my presence whilst they performed their day to day duties.

This only occurred when I tried to observe PCs and was never explicitly stated but evident none the less. When arriving at the station it was usual for me to ask the officer in charge, who knew what each of his team would be doing that day, who I would be observing. The senior officer would try and vary what I saw so that I could get as full a picture of neighbourhood policing as possible. However, I soon noticed that most of my time was being spent with PCSOs and, whilst acknowledging that this was important and not wishing to appear demanding, I asked to spend more time observing PCs at work. It was then that it became more evident that some PCs were trying to avoid being observed and debates would happen about who I was to follow. I believe this may have been because having me there as an observer meant that the officers had to consider my safety as well as their own and their teams and, as a result, they may not be able to act exactly as they wanted to and I would become a hindrance to their work.

The final issue of consent that was encountered was when the officers I was observing came into contact with individuals outside of the Police Service, which was understandably often. Achieving informed consent in this case was much more difficult given how brief the encounters were but ethical practice should compel researchers to seek consent wherever possible at the earliest possible time (Li, 2008). Shadowing officers meant that I was present when they visited victims of crime at home, informed parents when their children had been warned about anti-social behaviour or when offering advice on crime prevention. These visits could often touch upon very sensitive topics and be very emotional times for the member of the public; as such I felt it was appropriate that I should ask for permission to be present. This was usually done through the officer I was with, who would introduce me as a researcher and ask whether I could be present during the subsequent interactions. This was the greatest degree of informed consent from the public that could be achieved and none of the members of the public had any objections to my presence.

As well as members of the public, I was also involved in interactions with another group of individuals, those people that had been arrested or were suspected of committing crimes. Much like the interactions involving members of the public discussed above, being arrested, breathalysed or investigated by the police is a very sensitive time for most people and perhaps not something they wish to be observed. This placed me in an ethical dilemma, asking permission to observe someone being arrested would likely result in refusal and mean I could not experience an important feature of policing. However, not asking removes the right of these people not to be part, however small, of my research. In addition to this, the unpredictable nature of arresting someone means it would not be possible to ask for permission before it happens. Having considered these factors, I did not ask the permission of people being arrested. In effect, this decision meant that to these people my research was covert which brings with itself a number of ethical issues (Li, 2008). Subsequently, according to Paradis (2000) the guidelines surrounding consent should be reviewed when dealing with complicated social situations, as in my research.

## **5.9 - Conclusion**

The ethnographic methodology that I have outlined in this chapter enabled me to conduct a close study analysis of the different research contexts to be understood and allowed access to the multiple and contested ways in which NP officers constructed their understanding of social reality. The methodological approach taken placed emphasis on the exploration of how individual officers constructed their identity performances. This was carried out to make sense and navigate the dominant discourses in policing culture. This was achieved by becoming a participant observer, where I was granted first hand experience of these identity performances and even entered into my own reflexive gendered identity performance. The ethnomethodological focus was incorporated into the selection of research sites, where a diverse range of performance contexts were examined in order to further explore the impact of context on performance. In trying to make my account as reliable and authentic as possible coding techniques, reflexive interrogation of the data and semi structured interviews, which enabled me to authenticate my conclusions were carried out. Furthermore it was necessary to take a reflexive approach and ensure that I accounted for the impact of my personal identity on the research process.

After establishing the methodological approach used to investigate the identity performance of officers, the next chapter will explore my findings from the PCSO training school.

# Chapter 6

## Becoming a Neighbourhood Officer

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### 6.1 - Introduction

Performances are constructed through interactions between individuals but these interactions do not take place in isolation (West and Zimmerman 1987). They occur within organisations which are contested environments made up of competing discourses. These discourses provide the resources needed to construct performances; they act by attaching meanings and relations to objects, actions and other performative statements (Alvesson, 2000). It is through discourse that organisations and their social impact are defined and contested but it is also through discourses that individuals define and construct themselves. This is a complex process, which is open to constant revision as individuals struggle to make sense of these meanings (Weedon, 1997). However not all discourses are equal and within organisations, some discourses will be more dominant than others. Dominant discourses of organisational control seek to regulate and normalise certain behaviours and create and manipulate particular forms of identity (Barry, 2006). However, although regulated by discourse, individuals are not merely passive recipients of identities inscribed upon them by discourse. They are able to display agency in this process of construction of self. Agency may be demonstrated by the constructing, reconstructing and refuting discourses in the performance of particular identities. While, as a result of being constrained by dominant discourses, individuals cannot perform any identity they wish, this does not mean that they cannot make choices. Agency can be seen in the choices that they make that are forced on them through the clash of competing subject positions when different discourses collide, it is through this choice that space can be made to display a particular identity performance (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996).

The police service, like any other organisation, presents us with a discursive field in which performances must be constructed. The discourses which regulate individual performance are in constant flux and the introduction of neighbourhood policing (NP)



potentially brings in a new configuration of discourse (as part of the change agenda), which might conflict (or complement) other established discourses of policing. The government prescribed version of NP addressed a number of different elements of policing in a different way and has been described by some as a move from ‘hard’ activities to ‘softer’ policing (Fielding, 1995). Primarily this has meant an increase in community interaction and engagement and an appreciation of the diversity of different groups within communities. This acknowledgment of diversity was also intended to have an internal affect on the service, which has historically been the subject of accusations of sexism, racism, homophobia etc (The Macpherson report, 1999). It was hoped that a greater understanding of diversity and less stereotypical understandings of individuals may lead to a less prejudice and less discriminatory organisation.

The chapter will focus on identity performances, symbols, artefacts and interactions in showing how particular discourses are constructed, reconstructed and refuted in the PCSO training programme. The chapter highlights the struggle around the meaning of NP and how it competes with the dominant discourses of policing cultures and in doing so draws attention to how discourses are translated in their construction in specific contexts (Barry et al., 2006). While the training programme and the PC instructors regulated and normalised the performances of the PCSOs, inscribing particular PCSO identities, through the interaction of performance, body and artefacts within the context of the training school, a close examination of the instructors and trainees’ performances reveal the contradictions within and between different discourses. Therefore what is revealed is a more complex and nuanced set of struggles around competing discourses of gender, discipline, professionalism and community in constructing and reconstructing NP and the performances of the instructors and trainees.

## **6.2 - The Training School**

The PCSO training school was held in a large portacabin that was divided into five rooms, an entry hallway, a small kitchen and lounge with a few easy chairs, a store room and two classrooms. The portacabin was situated in the grounds of a larger police building that performed various administrative functions, as well as performing

training in other areas, such as firearms and dog handling. The PCSO cohort was to be split into two groups and inside the two classrooms were desks that were arranged in a horseshoe style facing a large whiteboard, these arrangements allowed for roughly 14 people to sit fairly comfortably. The walls of the classrooms were littered with various posters promoting different aspects of the police service, from the HR department to anti-drink driving campaigns. In both classrooms was a large poster outlining the 'Policing Pledge' that the service was promoting as part of its attempt to deliver greater levels of customer service and satisfaction. Next to this poster was another equally large poster that detailed the 'efficiency savings' that the service must make in the coming year if they were to stay within their proposed budget. The juxtaposition of demanding greater levels of customer service whilst reducing resources seemed emblematic of the direction that the police service has taken since the introduction of NPM measures and NP (Savage, 2009).

On the first day, as I entered the portacabin which was to serve as the classrooms for the ten week course I was struck by the silence in the room. Even though at least three quarters of the nineteen-strong cohort had arrived, there was almost no communication between the new recruits, the majority of whom were sat in silence waiting for the training to begin. The lull in conversation was only broken by the instructors. On the first day the students were greeted by two of their three instructors, Steve and Tom. Steve was in his mid-forties, tall and muscular, he epitomised the traditional image of the Police officer. His uniform was immaculately presented, something which I would later find out he took particular pride in, and his natural state when standing seemed to be bolt upright and at attention (a possible by-product of his previous career in the military). In addition to his physical presence, Steve was also a very confident and out-going man who exuded strength and masculinity. His voice was deep and commanding, something which added extra credence to almost everything he said. Tellingly, throughout my time with the PCSOs he compared his humour to that of Roy Chubby Brown and Bernard Manning<sup>1</sup>. The second PC in charge of training, Tom, was of a similar age and level of experience to Steve. Together both Steve and Tom formed a double act and would spend time joking together about the service and the PCSOs. Tom was very similar to Steve, having a

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<sup>1</sup> Both British comedians famed for their politically incorrect jokes about women and ethnic minorities.

similar degree of authority and conviction about him, making the two a formidable pair of instructors. Both Steve and Tom had been conducting the training for at least 4 years although I never determined exactly when they began working within the training school and training new PCSOs. They have taught numerous intakes of new PCSOs but were also partly responsible for training other PCs, who are not solely NP oriented and receive training on a much wider range of subjects. Prior to their role as trainers both of them had worked for at least 10 years as response PCs but had no experience of working within NPTs.

Steve and Tom's performance had a significant impact on the way in which they approached training the PCSOs, something which was reflected in the dynamics of the classroom. Their commanding presence and levels of experience meant that the communication between instructor and student was usually one way. They were the principle source of all the information that the students had and, apart from a few externally produced training videos and a small number of guest speakers on terrorism and computer systems, there were rarely any occasions when understandings of NP were drawn on that weren't part of Steve and Tom's message. It was very rare for the students to ask questions or challenge a view espoused by Steve or Tom. This was particularly important given that many of the training sessions were delivered in a lecture style by the instructors, with only occasional group work and presentations.

Although absent from the first day of the course, there was another instructor, Leah, a female PC in her late twenties. She was a new addition to the training school and this was her first intake of students. Her tenure at the school only lasted two weeks before she broke her leg and was on sick leave for the remainder of the course. During her brief time with the PCSOs she became a well liked instructor but was markedly different from Steve and Tom. The fondness the students displayed for her was possibly due to the political and sensitive nature of the topics which she taught. The students often remarked that they found her sessions to be interesting while describing other dryer and more procedural topics presented by Steve and Tom as 'boring'. When it was announced that Leah had injured herself and would not be returning, the PCSOs organised a 'get well' card for her expressing their sympathy. Although she seemed to get on well with Steve and Tom, she did not instruct the students in a similar style, adopting a different approach to teaching the PCSOs. This differing

approach was acknowledged by Steve who described her as ‘the nice one’ because she didn’t cause the PCSOs any ‘pain’, unlike himself or Tom. Leah adopted a far more interactive style of teaching which the PCSOs seemed to enjoy. During her sessions she would often employ different teaching tactics to encourage the PCSOs to contribute to discussions, for example labelling corners of the classroom with different responses and asking the PCSOs to stand in whichever corner (or response) they identified with when presented with a policing scenario. This meant that every PCSO had to participate and make their opinion known instead of being able to remain quiet and allow others to dominate the conversation.

Leah’s performance whilst training was less authoritative than her male counterparts and drew on more participative discourses that allowed her to connect with the PCSOs in more approachable and friendly way, adopting a more feminine style of teaching (Southey et al. 2007). She would joke with the PCSOs during her sessions, but unlike the male instructors she would not tease or make fun of them. Instead her jokes would create a sense of identification between her and the students, for example during one session she and a female PCSO laughed about their dislike of children’s TV, remarking that they would give anything not to have to watch another episode of ‘Bob the Builder’ (neither of them had children and they were referring to their nieces and nephews). Her performance seemed better placed to create a dialogue with the students and create a level of trust between instructor and student that would help in the discussion of sensitive topics such as victim support. However this feminised view of her may be coloured by my own gendered assumptions about her given the obvious physical differences in age, gender and stature between her and the male instructors.

The training covered a wide range of topics that were selected to give the PCSOs all the skills and knowledge that they would need to work in their communities immediately after ‘passing out’ or graduating from the PCSO training school. Steve told the PCSOs that they would be able to work straight after the training course but also said ‘I can’t teach you to be a good PCSO but I can give you the skills you’ll need to be a good one’. Figure 6 shows the training topics that the instructors covered during the 10 week course. The morning sessions began at nine in the morning and lasted for three and a half hours, while the afternoon sessions began at quarter past

one and lasted two hours and forty five minutes with a forty five minute lunch break between the two. The PCSOs usually ate their lunch in their classrooms (hardly ever mixing between the two classes) and were never given the opportunity to go inside the training department's main building to eat in the canteen, although some PCSOs who lived close to the venue opted to eat at home while others went to a local retail park and ate at the supermarkets or fast-food restaurants.

Figure 6 – The PCSO Training School Timetable

Week	1	2	3	4	5
Monday Morning	Welcome Needs, Concerns & Expectations	Diversity	Anti-Social Behaviour	Tackling Crime & Patrol Effectively	SOLAP
Monday Afternoon	Uniform Fitting SWP Annual Plan	Diversity	Anti-Social Behaviour	Victim Support Health and Safety	SOLAP
Tuesday Morning	Parade Welfare and HR Guest Speaker	Diversity Human Rights	ASB with Vehicles Challenging Behaviour	Pocket Notebooks	Police National Computer
Tuesday Afternoon	Unions Health and Safety	Public Inquiry Preparation Public Inquiries	Challenging Behaviour Managing Conflict	Cautions and Significant Statements	I.D. Photograph Immunisations
Wednesday Morning	Immunisations Pensions	The Law in England and Wales The Criminal Justice System	Parade Communication Skills	Powers of Arrest	Statement Writing
Wednesday Afternoon	DNA Data Protection	Neighbourhood Policing (Community Issues)	Crime Reporting Racist Incidents	Powers of Entry & Use of Force	Statement Writing
Thursday Morning	PMA's Welsh	Neighbourhood Policing Teams	First Aid	Radio Procedure Airwave	Officer Safety Training
Thursday Afternoon	Finger Prints Tutorials	The Role and powers of the PCSO	First Aid	Airwave	Officer Safety Training
Friday Morning	Police Ethics and Values Code of Conduct	POPS Crime Reduction	First Aid	Reasonable Suspicion Discretion	Protecting the Environment Lost & Found Property
Friday Afternoon	Teambuilding Exercise	Crime Reduction National Intelligence Model	First Aid	Stop and Account	Confiscation of Alcohol
Week	6	7	8	9	10
Monday Morning	Civil Disputes	Roads Policing	NICHE	Counter Terrorism	Community Roleplays
Monday Afternoon	Policing Schools	Traffic Signals and Traffic Warden Powers	NICHE	Firearms Awareness	Community Roleplays
Tuesday Morning	Parade Midway Exam	Fixed Penalty Notices	NICHE	Major Incidents Giving Evidence in Court	Debrief
Tuesday Afternoon	Debrief of Exam	Fixed Penalty Notices	NICHE	Giving Evidence in Court	Protected Learning Time
Wednesday Morning	Practicals	Traffic Practical's	Theft/Burglary Criminal Damage	Assessed Roleplay	Final Exam
Wednesday Afternoon	Practicals	Traffic Practical's	Assaults Harassments	Assessed Roleplay	Final Action Planning
Thursday Morning	Tutorials	Parade SOLAP Exercises	Mental Health Missing Persons	SOLAP Exercises	Tutorials
Thursday Afternoon	Tutorials	PACT Meetings	Missing Persons Exercise	PNB Entry	Tutorials
Friday Morning	Drugs Awareness	Community Presentation Preparation	Domestic Violence	Crime Scene Management	End of Course Admin Parade
Friday Afternoon	Community Engagement	Presentations	Child Protection	Statement Writing Exercise	Declaration Ceremony

During the first week the PCSOs were issued with a course booklet created by an external training agency which contained the majority of material that the sessions would cover. Unfortunately I was unable to obtain one of these books as the instructors had only prepared enough for the PCSOs. It was from the manuals that PCSOs would be set their reading prior to the training sessions and revise from when preparing for their exams. In addition to this the students were also given smaller booklets that covered topics like basic Welsh and the NATO phonetic alphabet. When in the classroom the instructors relied on PowerPoint presentations to structure the sessions with the information on the slides being drawn from a training handout given to the PCSOs. In addition to the sessions which dealt with the skills and

procedures they were required to learn, there were also a number of days devoted to ‘tutorials’. These were one on one sessions which the instructors used to deliver individual feedback to the PCSOs and give them the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns they have about their progress on the course. The whole programme represented a standard and prescribed format for the training of PCSOs, driven and developed nationally by the Home Office, and is used in all police services across England and Wales (although with some regional variation depending on PCSO powers and equipment).

The progress of the PCSO recruits was assessed in two different ways, through multiple choice exams that were taken midway through the course and at the end and through a day of ‘practical’ exercises. These practical exams involved a number of volunteers from a local sixth form college, residential homes and the St. John’s Ambulance who engaged in role-playing various scenarios around a local town. The PCSOs were then put into pairs and given patrol routes which would cause them to encounter these scenarios and they would be assessed on their ability to deal with them. This assessment was completed by experienced PCSOs who had received training for this role. During the period of my research, I was able to follow two of the PCSOs from this intake into their new positions into one of the NPTs, Radley, and gain their views of the training course. The information collected from these interviews will also be discussed in the chapter. From conversations with these PCSOs I was able to establish that there was a feeling amongst the PCSOs that their assessment was of limited value and it was described by one male PCSO, Carl, a middle aged man, (who was interviewed after successfully completing the course), as ‘farfical’. According to Carl the final exam was full of misprints and poorly worded questions and when the instructors went through the answers it became clear that some of these were also wrong. When individual PCSOs engaged in one on one time to discuss their performance in the course they were given reports which detailed their progress, but when comparing their reports with colleagues they were all found to be very similar. Carl complained that he had received a similar report to some individuals who had struggled with the training and others who had ‘been top of the class’. As a result, he felt that this feedback lacked any real value but that if more time and care had been taken over them it could have been a useful tool to improve their performance.

The training location, instructors and how the training was delivered are important as they provide vital contextual information that will help in understanding how this training programme is translated and enacted by the PC instructors as well as received by the PCSO recruits. Having established the context in which the training is delivered the chapter will go on to explore the four dominant discursive fields that were present, gender, discipline, professionalism and community, and how they were constructed differently by individuals. The discussion will start by examining gendered discourses. During the review of the literature around policing cultures in chapter four, it became clear that gender discourses were an important constitutive element of the police service and play a role in constructing many aspects of policing roles. In light of this, the next section will explore the way in which gender performances were constructed by the PC instructors and PCSOs. Gender will continue to be implicated in the construction of the other discourses discussed.

### **6.3 – Gender Performances in PCSO training: The influence of Policing Cultures**

The dominance of different masculine discourses in a range of policing cultures, the laddish and macho behaviour constructed by the informal canteen culture or the discourses of force and authority inherent in response-led policing has been well documented but has also led to accusations of institutionalised sexism and racism within the service (Prokos & Padavic, 2002 also Loftus, 2008). NP has inevitably incorporated many of the organisational changes happening within the service and, in addition to focussing on the fair treatment of all members of the community, has become part of the attempt to make the police service a more inclusive and less discriminatory organisation (Savage, 2009). As described in chapter four, one key aim of NP was to challenge the dominance of policing cultures that had marginalised women and undermined the dominance of masculine policing culture. However, during the training it was possible to identify how both instructors and PCSO recruits drew on a set of gendered discourses and symbols in constructing masculine performances embedded within the police service. These gendered discourses were also resisted and refuted through contradictory and antagonistic performances, revealing the tensions and struggles in the performance of individuals as they navigate their way through the training programme.

### 6.3.1 – Gender Discourses within the Training School

From the outset of the training it was clear that the discourses of police ‘canteen culture’ played an important role in constructing gender performances despite the PCSO training taking place at a dedicated training site and not in a working police station. The dominance of gender discourses was evident from the first day of the training course and they were particularly evident in the performances of the PC instructors. The interplay between gender discourses, power and rank was captured on the first day of the training after a welcome address from a senior female officer. As had been previously rehearsed, the arrival of the senior officer was heralded by a command of ‘Attention!’ from Steve which resulted in everyone, including me, standing until being told to take our seats by the senior officer. The senior officer was a middle aged woman who was dressed in full uniform which included a skirt. She was in charge of a division that was responsible for major and organised crime and counter-terrorism.

Despite the overt respect afforded to the senior officer whilst she was present (everyone remained attentive during her speech and answered the questions she asked fully), as soon as she left Steve and Tom began to openly criticise her in front of the new PCSOs.

*“Oh my God! She wears a lot of perfume!”* Steve told Tom with feigned shock as he made an exaggerated show of opening the nearest window, even though the classroom was already very cold.

*“I know!”* Tom replied whilst turning to and addressing the class. *“I notice she told you to sit down...eventually.”* This comment was laden with negative subtext with Tom wanting to suggest that the female officer was intent on reminding everyone who was in charge.

The class didn’t respond to these comments. Steve went on to comment that he had only ever seen this Officer wearing a skirt once before and that it wasn’t the norm for female Officers to wear skirts anymore.



This interaction can be viewed as encapsulating the way in which gendered discourses and gender power relations are infused with understandings of hierarchical power resulting in a complex set of interactions and performances within highly macho and rank based organisations such as the police. It can be seen as an example of someone who is hierarchically senior (in a rank based organisation) to the PCs, entering their environment and destabilising the established power relations. The interaction between the PCs and the senior officer (standing to attention, remaining quiet and attentive during her speech) is typical of what you would expect in a hierarchical and disciplined organisation such as the police, and especially given the instructors focus on discipline. However, on her departure, the subsequent comments made by the PCs, aimed at disparaging her, in a highly gendered way, suggest an attempt to restore the power dynamics of the training course with the instructors reinstating their control and influence over the PCSOs. They do this by critiquing the feminine symbols associated with her in a highly sexist way, focussing on her perfume and skirt instead of the more important substantive contributions she made to the class through her welcome speech. By highlighting inconsequential aspects of her appearance and perfume they undermine her status and importance within the training school and restore the dominance of overtly masculine performances.

At other times during the training, Steve's performances drew on essentialist gender discourses, perpetuating stereotypes that have dominated police cultures. During training on potentially sensitive topics, it was not uncommon for the instructors to make distinctions based on essentialised understandings of gender often suggesting that men and women were better suited for particular tasks. A training session on domestic violence brought these views into sharp relief. Steve recalled, for the students, cases of domestic violence he had dealt with as a response PC. One example focussed on a call that had come into the station reporting an attack on a woman by her boyfriend.

“A lot of the male officers ran out the back [of the station] because it's difficult to deal with. When I got to the house the boyfriend had been taken to the station to cool off. I told her that next time I'd be coming back with a body

bag. She said “I know but....” Fucking women! She was still in the “but I loves him!” stage.”

The other examples that Steve gave were of a similar nature and expanded on the ‘I loves him stage’ by explaining that often women (or others) would report instances of domestic violence and have the offenders arrested, only to later drop the charges when the man had calmed down enough to apologise for his actions. This process would be repeated so often that police officers would regularly attend the same houses and become accustomed to the process. Steve appeared to be suggesting that male officers lacked the ability to empathise with these victims because of an innate inability to understand the emotional aspects of this sort of work. These views on gender seem to resonate with a particular policing identity that is constructed using discourses of emotional detachment and rationality which eschew interactions that do not require enacting policing authority. This allows them to refute any discourses which may result in this identity becoming more sympathetic and concerned with emotional wellbeing, and as a result, conflicted. This was reinforced by the following comment that he made to his class, *“Police are not social workers, we never have been, it’s not in our remit. Our job is the here and now, catch ‘em and lock ‘em up, that’s it.”*

Refuting of some discourses was also observed in the session when the issue of rape was discussed in relation to domestic violence. Steve began by informing the class that they’d all have to pretend to be women, smiling at the male members of the class as he said it. He then launched into a rather lengthy and unprovoked outburst about the differences between men and women, sex and the experience of rape.

Sex is different for men, sex is sex, you can have sex with anyone and love one person. There are levels to it but generally that’s it. Sex is more important to women, it’s all sex and romance, with men it’s just sex. Sex without consent to a woman is a big deal but for a man it just means we get a bit less sleep that night!

Men aren’t as emotional as women. There is a difference between men and women, we are built different, our brains are wired different ways but

relationships aren't as important to men. We do them and when they're over we move on and 'get over it!' Now imagine a man came home and forced himself on you [to the female PCSOs], almost raped you, that's something we [the men in the room] don't have to deal with. We think differently, as men we don't understand rape, it can't happen, we can't be penetrated....unless they've been to Anne Summers [laughs]. No we're treating this seriously but would any of you [the male PCSOs] report a rape? We can't go there, it can't happen to us, it doesn't happen to blokes, generally. We can't go to the places you [female PCSOs] go to, which makes it difficult for us to understand as Police officers.

During this speech, many of the PCSOs, especially the men, were nodding and agreeing with what was being said. Steve is drawing on highly gendered discourses of emotion and sensitivity. Men are constructed as emotionally shallow, operating in a resolutely detached and insensitive way and unwilling to demonstrate the weakness that is perceived by admitting that they require companionship or understand the impact of being physically violated. This construction relies on discourses of the 'red-blooded' alpha male that is independent, self-sufficient and prefers to concentrate on logical and straight-forward interactions as opposed to the inner workings of emotion and vulnerability, something which is constructed as the domain of women. These stereotypical understandings of men and women can be linked to similar gendered constructions found in the policing cultures that the PCSOs will eventually work in and that PCs will have already experienced.

Having previously worked as response PCs, the two male instructors would have spent a number of years embedded in the masculine police cultures and we see how the dominance of gendered discourses within these cultures influenced the identity performances of the PCs during these interactions. Both of the interactions demonstrate how the instructors performed strongly gendered identities which draw on essentialist understandings of men and women and masculinity and femininity. These identity performances could be viewed as corresponding to gendered ideal types for these PC instructors, constructed through a history of their previous interactions and embedded within policing cultures in which they have been located for many years. Such performances are a fairly frequent occurrence throughout the

training course and have a significant impact on their interactions with the PCSOs. In the next section some further examples will be provided of how highly gendered identity performances were constructed in the interactions between the instructor PCs and the PCSOs. However this discussion will also show how particular masculinist discourses are at times ruptured by contradictions and infused with other discourses within policing cultures, resulting in a display of more subtle and nuanced performances.

### **6.3.2 – Gendered Interactions**

As already discussed, the instructor's physical appearance and clothing can be understood to form part of a hegemonically masculine performance that helped assert their dominance over the PCSOs and privileged macho discourses of discipline and intimidation. However, their talk and the gendered artefacts within the training school also contributed to the construction of their performance and were often used to assert their own power within the context. After the early departure of Leah from the training scheme, the PCSOs were left with PCs Steve and Tom for the vast majority of the training course. During the first day of training and throughout the course, both Steve and Tom's performances could be described as 'laddish', as they joked with each other and with the students. These jokes could take the form of banter that often focussed on highlighting parts of the students' biography and appearance, exaggerating it for comic effect.

Similar to the way that the instructors focused on the senior female officer's perfume and skirt, also on the first day, significant attention was paid to any feminine symbols that were present in the classroom. At one point Steve marvelled at one female PCSO's decision to wear a pair of small heeled shoes and advised her that she'd better wear flat shoes until their uniforms were issued because 'there's no room for heels in here'. Tom then joined in by commenting on the size of another female PCSO's handbag, "*Look at the size of that! What have you got in there?!*" The PCSO replied that it had her lunch in it, "*Well we can't have everyone bringing bags that size in or we won't be able to move!*" He then turned to one of the male PCSOs and joked, "*So leave your handbag at home next time Sean!*" The class chuckled at the inference that Sean might also have brought a large handbag for his lunch.

In addition, it also wasn't unusual for the officers to reference overtly laddish masculine topics whilst interacting with the PCSOs. For example, on a Friday morning Tom began the day by addressing the class and saying *'Right what are we doing today then? Protecting the environment...lost and found...and then getting pissed this afternoon!'*. It was also common for both of the male instructors to swear whilst delivering the training material, something which the PCSOs barely even reacted to, although it was something of a concern for the instructors themselves (the instructors would occasionally suggest that their swearing whilst teaching was inappropriate and should stop, but any attempts rarely lasted more than an hour). These types of interactions could have been designed to relax the PCSOs and make them feel more comfortable whilst in class but they also formed an important part of the dynamic between the instructors and the PCSOs. Whilst it seems unlikely that any of these comments were made in an attempt to oppress or victimise female PCSOs or to make any negative inferences about male PCSOs' masculinity, they used humour and gendered artefacts such as the high heeled shoes and handbag in constructing their performance.

Whereas these types of laddish and macho interactions may be dominant in many areas of the police service (Miller, 1999, Sharpe, 1998, Waddington, 1999) they seemed somewhat misaligned within the training school and as a result served to restrict the willingness of the PCSOs to participate in the class and engage in discussion. On one occasion I overheard a female PCSO telling another about a question that Tom had asked but that no one answered. *'I thought I knew the answer to that question he asked...'*. The other female PCSO asked why she did not say anything. *'Well I didn't want him to laugh at me if I got it wrong.'* Another example can be seen when Steve singled out one female PCSO, Ellie, for not being able to polish her shoes correctly. After making her remove her shoes he made a number of jokes about an imaginary smell coming from her feet and the state of her socks, all of the class laughed at these jokes. During the lunch hour the same female PCSO commented that *"It's a good job we can take it [the jokes Steve made], you might get someone who's more sensitive who might get upset"*. To which another female PCSO replied *"Yeah, but if you were sensitive then you wouldn't be in this job, would you?"* This can be seen as evidence of the anticipatory socialisation that Miller (2004)

suggested was a key part of an individual's socialisation into an organisation. It suggests that prior to their arrival at the training school, at least some of the PCSOs expected that they would be entering a macho culture and that teasing and mockery would be common types of interaction, something which they would be required to accept and participate in.

Both of these events serve to illustrate the potential that the instructors' performance had to limit interaction in the classroom, as noted earlier in the chapter. Although Steve and Tom's jibes and sexualised banter created a familiarity in the classroom, this may have been detrimental to the teacher/student relationship. The remarks provide limited evidence that some officers may have not felt able to fully participate in the training. This could suggest that the instructors' performance was hindering the training of the PCSOs by not creating a degree of trust between them and the instructors which allows them to ask questions and offer their views on the subjects being discussed. It could be suggested that the instructors' construction of their identity performances were strongly influenced by dominant discourses embedded within the 'canteen culture' of masculine forms of policing. The examples discussed resonate with the laddishness and bravado described by other researchers (Miller, 1999 and Sharpe, 1998) who have investigated the gendered nature of policing.

However, the performances that the instructors constructed through interaction with the PCSOs did not always draw on the same discourses and on occasion they resisted these dominant discourses constructing a more sensitive identity performance. This was achieved by drawing on discourses of emotional vulnerability and powerlessness, which was in stark contrast to the macho discourses they often relied on. For example, Steve would often talk about his own past experiences to illustrate points being discussed and this occasionally led to frank and emotional interactions. On one such occasion Steve told the PCSOs how he had once been responsible for a man's death, having driven over a man who was lying in the road with the intention of committing suicide. He began his account with the question "*Have I told you that I've killed a man?*". Although at the beginning he told the story with almost a sense of bravado, by the end Steve was discussing the profound and lasting impact that it had on him and his future life, confessing that he still gets emotional when he talks about it.

The story was designed to illustrate the gravity of the situations they might encounter as PCSOs and the impact that it might have on them. In addition to this, during the training the PCSOs received on child protection Steve told how he had been abused as a child by an adult but had not told anyone because *'we don't do that do we!'*, seemingly referring to the shame and fear that is felt by victims of abuse. Although less frequently, Tom also would acknowledge a 'softer' side to his usual jovial and unemotional performance. On one occasion Tom talked about the first time that he encountered a very bloody crime scene and fainted, much to his own embarrassment and rupturing the macho and tough performance that he gave most of the time. He also discussed the problems he had with his son who had been in some trouble with the police and described the difficulties and conflict he felt knowing the officers who were dealing with him. The way in which he talked about this event suggested that he felt worried that his colleagues might believe that he could not control his own son and this would diminish his credibility as a police officer.

These examples illustrate that both Steve and Tom were able to give performances that incorporated a degree of vulnerability and perceived weakness. They demonstrate different types of identity performances that are not as constrained by laddish and macho cultural expectations, drawing on other gendered discourses that privilege a greater degree of emotional openness. The instructors are drawing on their previous experiences in a way which creates a range of performances that reflect the different discursive contexts in which they are interacting. Behaving in different ways at different times and representing more than the masculine discourses which dominate policing cultures means that they are able to navigate the competing demands of their fractured occupational identities, drawing on their experience of policing, the discourses of NP and, as we will see, their role as instructors at appropriate times (Bruni and Gherardi, 2001, Barry et al. 2006). Performing in the context of the training school meant that Steve and Dave represented discourses that privileged the importance and seriousness of training PCSOs and incorporated this into their performances. This was principally displayed by Steve who would sporadically begin a training session with a goal for himself. These goals were usually 'to not swear as much' or 'joke around less' and would result in him catching himself after swearing and saying 'I shouldn't have said that' or after jokingly asserting a fact or suggestion, saying 'I'm joking obviously', to make it clear what

was meant as serious instruction during training and what was not. This continues to highlight the complexity of the instructors' performances, which could easily be essentialised as overtly masculine but instead points to other competing discourses that they struggled with in constructing their identity performances. .

### **6.3.3 – Gendered Interactions amongst the PCSOs**

Having established the extent to which Steve and Tom's own performances often drew on discourses linked to policing 'canteen culture' but could also represent alternative discourses, we can identify similar processes of identity construction amongst the PCSOs. some PCSOs, both male and female, gave macho and laddish performances suggesting that they were constrained by the same dominant gendered discourses as the instructors, engaging in interactions that involved stereotypically masculine subjects and behaviours as they were socialised into the service (Austin, 1996, Prokos and Padavic, 2002, Van Maanen, 1973). However, other PCSOs gave alternative performances that did not represent macho discourses but instead drew on other discourses such as age in order to refute the laddish performances of others. Female PCSOs were also observed constructing performances that questioned the macho and prejudice behaviour of others and represented a confidence in their own 'feminine' identities.

The identity performances of the PCSO recruits were most visible in the more informal settings, such as breaks during the training day. The most obvious and overt performances during these breaks were those of the male PCSOs who constructed their performances by drawing on overtly masculine gender symbols. We can see this clearly with reference to the identity performances of Luke, one of the younger and most vocal PCSO recruits who often dominated the interactions. During the first day of training Luke, in one of his initial conversations with three of the other young male recruits, spoke at length about the time he had recently spent in America and his love of American football; this was intertwined with the drinking culture that surrounds it. He spoke about the physical prowess that the game required and the size of the players that he used to play with and also spoke enthusiastically about day long drinking sessions.



During these conversations the other three male PCSOs listened intently, making appreciative sounds at the appropriate times. This was typical of the sorts of interactions that these four male PCSOs engaged in. Subjects that were often discussed included sporting events, drinking, action films, cars and computer games (one of these PCSOs even brought in a laptop with a football managing game on and would discuss his team selections with the others). These topics were discussed with enthusiasm and passion and never chatted about casually, especially alcohol consumption, which was constructed as a source of pride and self-respect for the younger male PCSOs. Monday mornings often began with a discussion of where they had been and how much they had drunk during the previous weekend, with many of the male PCSOs boasting how drunk they had been or how hungover they were the next day. These examples are indicative of the pressure that gendered cultures, like the one found in the training school, put upon individuals to adopt gender-appropriate behaviours and attitudes (Acker, 1992), in this case stereotypically masculine behaviour.

Another common feature of these overtly laddish performances was the teasing of younger female PCSOs. On one occasion, a young, attractive female PCSO, Amy, was applying make-up and perfume in the classroom before the afternoon session was about to begin. On seeing this, Mark, one of the male PCSOs goaded her and suggested that she was only doing this because she knew that Steve would be sitting next to her as they watched a video. She seemed distinctly unimpressed with this suggestion and shrugged it off as the rest of the class laughed. Another source of teasing between these two PCSOs focused on driving ability. Some of the PCSOs who lived some distance from the training school shared lifts and Mark and Amy often travelled together. On the occasions that Amy drove, Mark would take great pleasure in telling the class how badly she drove, that she had almost crashed or that she drove very slowly. In reply, Amy would accuse Mark of driving too quickly and recklessly, suggesting that she, and women in general, were better drivers in general.

These examples demonstrate how some of the male PCSOs in the training school constructed laddish identity performances and this is partly as a result of the similarly macho and laddish discourses that have been constructed in the training school through the performances of the instructors. However, it is also typical of wider

gendered social interactions and in-group identifications when groups of men and women work together. This sort of behaviour creates subcultures which draw distinctions between men and women, allows men to confirm their group membership and acceptance and position within the gendered hierarchy by portraying women negatively and as different from them, bolstering their laddish identity performances by highlighting what they are not (Hunt, 1990, Martin and Jurik, 1996 and Prokos and Padavic, 2002). These sub-cultures have been a feature of the police service for a number of years and has resulted in different specialisms within the police service, firearms or traffic departments for example, being considered to be 'men's work', while dealing with the victims of sexual abuse or children is seen as 'women's work' (Miller, 1999).

While the dominance of laddish and masculine discourses within identity performances is clear, these discourses were also refuted and denied by some of the PCSOs, both male and female. PCSO Carl was approximately 35 years old and had previously worked in the hospitality industry, he was married with two young children and had joined the service to enter a more stable career that had the potential for progression. Carl's interactions with other PCSOs served to refute the particular macho discourses that constrained some of his colleagues' performances. Carl's age and position in life (married with children) meant that his performance drew more readily on discourses of age and experience and this meant his interactions with the other PCSOs represented a different type of masculine performance, one that was less concerned with bravado and machismo and more concerned with securing the respect and admiration of his colleagues.

The female PCSOs also resisted the dominance of laddish interactions. As described earlier, while the teasing of the younger female PCSOs was common, it was not accepted and many of them rejected being positioned as victims or as 'inferior' within this particular macho discourse. Instead they were able to manoeuvre around the dominant gendered discourses that were laid down by the instructors and some of their colleagues, at times continuing to rupture these discourses and at other times legitimising the gendered constraints that they represented. They were just as willing to engage in this banter as the male recruits, displaying confidence and self assuredness in their own abilities. For example, when some of the male PCSOs

would adopt a particularly overt masculine performance or describe women in a particularly stereotypical way, Ellie, a young female PCSO, would often object to this. For example, one PCSO made a comment to the room, who were discussing television programmes, that *'I watch 'Ross Kemp on Gangs', 'Top Gear', 'The Long Way Down'<sup>2</sup>, I don't watch the reality TV shit!*' Drawing on a previous comment Ellie challenged him and said *'What about 'I'm a Celebrity'<sup>3</sup>?'* To which he replied *'Well only when 'she's' (his girlfriend) got it on!'* On another occasion Ellie refused to accept a premise put forward by some of the PCSOs, both male and female, that women should not drink from pint glasses when in a bar, but should only drink half-pints, *'Why should I drink half pints when it's more expensive to buy two of them than one pint?'* This sort of behaviour allowed the female PCSOs to construct performances that did not represent them as weak or 'girlie' but as equal to their macho colleagues, creating space for a range of performances and to, when desired, incorporating more feminine discourses into their performances. For example, the female PCSOs were also willing to include less masculine elements, such as concern over their appearance, evidenced through the use of makeup and concern over the uniform that they were required to wear. Many of the female PCSOs described the uniform as unflattering, uncomfortable and bemoaned the fact that they had to wear 'men's' clothes and a great deal of their discussion focused on what they would look like in the uniform.

These examples show the complex and nuanced set of struggles around the competing contextual discourses of the training school that the PCSOs, like instructors, had to navigate. For the PCSOs who resisted the normalising effects of the dominant masculine discourses, manoeuvring through the laddish and masculine interactions that the instructors and some of the PCSOs represented could mean acknowledging or refuting them but always infusing their identity performances with other discourses like independence, self-confidence and emotional openness. However, whilst more visible in some individuals like Ellie and Carl than in others, it is through the clash and contradiction between and within dominant laddish and masculine discourses and alternative discourses that all of the PCs and PCSOs were able to create space for a

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<sup>2</sup> All programmes geared towards male audience

<sup>3</sup> 'I'm a Celebrity, Get Me out of Here!', A reality TV programme

range of identity performances, as evidenced by the instructors in their struggle to reconcile competing occupational identities.

The effect of the gendered discourses on the PC instructors and the PCSOs has been found to be a key means of gaining insight into the training school and it will continue to play a role in understanding the other discourses that are present in policing cultures. As such, the next section will examine how disciplinary discourses, so integral to quasi-military organisations like the police (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010), played a significant role in determining the way in which PCSOs were trained.

#### **6.4 – Disciplinary Discourses: Joining the Police Family**

Discipline has been found by many researchers to be a cornerstone of the police service and policing culture (Reiner, 1992, Johnston, 2007) and, as with gender, disciplinary discourses were drawn upon in a number of ways to regulate the way in which PCSOs behaved. The police service has been described as a quasi-military organisation and one that places far greater emphasis on power and its organisational structure than many other public services (Kiely and Peek, 2002). Members do not hold positions within the organisation but ranks and these ranks guarantee an officer a certain level of power over other members, encouraging a high degree of discipline amongst officers. This process has been seen to highlight the importance of power, conformity and obedience where any sort of challenging behaviour or criticism of senior officers is frowned upon (Thomas and Davies 2002). However, along with the requirement to maintain discipline and to not question superior officers and the conformity this creates, membership of a disciplined organisation can also bring a heightened sense of belonging. Members of the police service become part of the ‘policing family’ with a strong sense of loyalty and solidarity between officers and an “us versus them” mentality which can result in high levels of support between officers whilst at work (Paoline et al. 2000). However, research has shown that in the field officers are able to display a great deal of discretion and this can be in conflict with the strict disciplinary discourses which seek to regulate officer behaviour (Rowe, 2007).

Disciplinary discourses were first drawn upon by PC Steve on the first morning of training, when he informed the PCSOs that they were now part of a disciplined organisation and they would now be expected to adopt certain behaviours (such as standing to attention for senior officers). Both Steve and Tom were strong proponents of the importance of discipline and their framing of the police service as a disciplined organisation indicated that they felt the PCSOs should be aware of this immediately. The importance of discipline was evident and communicated to the PCSOs in a variety of ways. Below are some examples of the techniques used to maintain order in the classroom, some rely on behavioural displays from the instructors, visual methods that were designed to shame the PCSOs into conformity and others that relied on embodying an idea of obligation and dedication to the service and a requirement to live up its expectations.

The behaviour of the instructors and the ways in which their interactions with the PCSOs took place provided evidence of the disciplinary discourses present within policing culture. Given their prior experience as response PCs, the instructors would have been very familiar with 'disciplined behaviour' and it could be argued that the lack of discussion and dialogue that took place in their classrooms was an attempt to prepare the class for the way in which interactions would take place when they join their neighbourhood teams and the inherent power structures which require them to follow orders. The teaching methods used in the training programme, especially the avoidance of discussion or debate, revealed how disciplinary discourses were constructed in the training with the effect of regulating the performance of the PCSOs and inscribing a highly disciplined PCSO identity. This conclusion is supported by other research which has found a similar focus on instilling discipline within neighbourhood officers through the emphasis placed on formal command structures and disciplinary procedures with a focus on the socialising effects this can have on new recruits (Chappel and Lanza Kaduce, 2010).

At the beginning of the second week, Steve took his drive for discipline to a new, visual level with the introduction of a discipline system. Steve had pinned a large piece of paper to a notice board and on which he would put people's names, with a corresponding mark when they committed infractions against Steve's personal understanding of what disciplined behaviour should look like. The marks were a tally

system whereby the PCSO with the most marks was seen as the worst behaved in the class. These infractions ranged in type and seemed fairly arbitrary, they could include not sitting in your assigned seats, failing to have properly read the preparatory readings or talking out of turn (usually when Steve was talking). The marks never resulted in any particular punishment but the PCSO with the most marks was occasionally selected to answer a question or be the first to make a presentation. Rather than actually trying to regulate the PCSOs' performance and encourage them to behave in certain ways, this system was more about encouraging discipline through the public nature of the marks and through a clear display of those who were conforming and those who were not. Those who were not conforming were almost shamed into changing the way in which they behaved in order to avoid staying on the board and further humiliation. In addition to this, it can also be seen as reflecting the existing power structures within the training school and Steve's authority and dominance over the class.

The instructors' direct and uncompromising identity performances, along with the lack of dialogue they had with the class during training and public shaming of officers that did not meet the instructors' behavioural expectations, demonstrates how disciplinary discourses were constructed within the training school. However, these discourses were also resisted and reconstructed by the PCSOs and by PC Leah, the other instructor on the course. By belittling the regulatory tools used by Steve and Tom and by questioning the way in which they were taught, the PCSOs were able to refute the disciplinary discourses through their identity performances. Despite her position, Leah was also observed constructing a performance that denied the importance of these discourses, in preference to articulating more inclusive and teaching-oriented discourses. As already indicated, Leah's approach to teaching was far more participative and her performance drew on discourses of student engagement, involvement and training that was less influenced by the dominant disciplinary discourses of policing cultures. This enabled her to focus on building a rapport with the PCSOs which allowed her not only to impart information but also help the PCSOs develop their own understanding of policing the community. Leah's performance could be a reflection of her more limited experience of working as an officer within police stations and a less reified understanding of policing occupational identities, allowing her to incorporate these other discourses into her performance.

Similar resistance was also displayed by the PCSOs, who drew on a variety of discourses, such as disobedience, independence and commitment to neighbourhood policing, in order to rupture the emphasis placed on discipline by Steve and Tom. For example in response to the attempt at public shaming of individuals on the notice board, the PCSOs responded with indifference. Although they would often tease each other about being on the board this was done in fun rather than to disparage each other and would usually be laughed off by the PCSO in question. The lack of seriousness stemmed from the arbitrary nature of Steve's decisions to admonish people, with one PCSO responding to another who criticised him for being on the board by saying '*It doesn't even matter, I'm only up there because I wasn't sitting in the seat he told me to!*'. In mocking and belittling Steve's attempts at disciplining them, the PCSOs are constructing identity performances that resist attempts at regulation and instead question the value of Steve's actions, implicating discourses of independence and disrespect for the teaching methods used. This might suggest that Steve's view on the importance of discipline within the service hadn't necessarily been fully transmitted and embraced by the PCSOs.

As was discussed earlier some of the PCSOs that were subsequently interviewed questioned the way in which certain topics were covered and the way in which the teaching was delivered. Ellie, who had previously been a postwoman openly voiced her criticism of some of the behaviour displayed by the instructors, but her resistance to disciplinary discourses was evident in other interactions. She was very vocal in the classroom and was not afraid to speak her mind when it came to issues on the course, openly voicing criticism about the instructors and course content. Whilst it would be unfair to say that any of the PCSOs disliked her, there was a noticeable, if subtle sense of friction and animus in many of her interactions with other members of the group. Ellie was considered a disruptive and unpredictable presence in the classroom by her fellow PCSOs, as she often questioned their and the instructor's behaviour. Relations with her were not as friendly as between other PCSOs who were more ready to tow the line and conform to expected forms of behaviour.

Although she was a good student, clearly understanding the material that was presented and went on to become a competent PCSO, Ellie was far more resistant to

the disciplinary discourses that sought to regulate her social interactions with her colleagues as well as her professional performance during the training course. In essence she appeared unwilling to reproduce the behaviours that would allow her to become part of the policing family and develop a bond with the other officers. Ellie was far more willing to question what was presented by the instructors as well as the views that some of the other PCSOs had on the training material and the performances they gave in class. For example, during the training on the Student Officer Learning Assessment Process (SOLAP)<sup>4</sup> and the time that the PCSOs were given to complete parts of it, many of the recruits complained about the monotony of filling in the forms which they found to be highly repetitive. In making these complaints Ellie was particularly forceful and she described the process as '*boring*' and '*a waste of time*'. During the break times that followed other training sessions, she also participated in discussions with others in the class that revealed her dissatisfaction with the level of training they had received, for example during child protection and victim support sessions, where she expressed her lack of confidence in dealing with such situations because of the poor quality of the training.

These comments were made while the instructor was out of the room but Ellie was also willing to question why things were done in certain ways when he was present. Often Steve would end the class with a cursory '*Everyone clear? Any questions?*' expecting the class to remain silent and more often than not it would be Ellie who would ask for clarification on something that had just been covered. From the curt way in which Steve would answer these questions, it felt to me that she was often seen to be speaking out of turn and the instructors would have preferred her to remain quiet so they could finish the lesson on time. Along with many of the other female recruits, Ellie would openly complain about the uniform she was required to wear, complaining about not being able to polish her shoes to a high enough standard for Steve or Steve's requirement that her hair be tied in a pony tail even though she felt it was short enough to be tucked behind her ears.

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<sup>4</sup> The SOLAP mainly involved the PCSOs filling in a portfolio that required them to provide evidence that they demonstrated the necessary skills to pass the PCSO training and probationary processes.



Ellie was not the only PCSO to express dissatisfaction with the training process. Many of the students felt that some areas of the course were not given enough attention and were rushed through by the instructors. During an interview that would be conducted in his first posting, Carl, the male PCSO in his mid-thirties who criticised the final assessment on the course, also found fault in the way in which certain areas were addressed.

*'It [the training] was good, but there were times when you thought the trainers were rushing through things, maybe didn't give some things the time it deserved. One day I think we had domestic violence and child abuse in the same day, so we had domestic violence in the morning, broke for dinner and then rushed through child abuse in ten minutes! It's not something you rush through in ten minutes, it's something you need to know, the signs and things, how to pick up on things, you need out in the real world.'*

PC Carl

However, unlike Ellie, Carl rarely voiced contrary opinions in front of the instructors; instead revealing them after they had left and the PCSOs were alone or saving them for our interview, after the training had been completed. As a result he constructed a performance that more closely reflected the established social behaviours of the police service and maintained the existing power structures.

The examples shown above of some PCSOs contradicting disciplinary discourses and criticising the way in which the instructors taught, what they taught and the way how they interacted with the PCSOs continues to reveal the difficulty that the PCSOs have in navigating this discursive field. With few of the PCSOs having ever experienced working within a disciplined organisation, it is unsurprising that the attempts at normalising disciplined behaviour were not always successful. The PCSOs clearly struggled with aspects of the course and the disciplinary methods used and discourses of instruction and teaching (adopted by Leah at the beginning of the course, before her absence) were replaced with direction, unquestionable orders and a single-mindedness that did not encourage them to discuss the topics covered. This created tensions within the context of the training which is a time when individuals are still trying to reconcile new discourses with the uncertainty of an unfamiliar context (Miller, 2009).

The result of this struggle was the rupturing of discipline through the inclusion of contradictory discourses, linked to independence, disobedience and aspects of NP. In addition to their intended regulatory effect, disciplinary discourses were also constructed as beneficial for police officers. The meanings associated with working in a disciplined organisation often centre on an increased sense of loyalty between officers and a greater sense of belonging to the organisation (Fielding, 1994, Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010). These meanings were communicated on the first day by the senior female officer. In her welcome speech she told the PCSOs that that they were no longer an individual but now represented the State and were part of *'the policing family'*. The price of membership of this family was hard work and that *'uniform carriers'* would not be tolerated. This officer presented the service as a welcoming environment for PCSOs as long as they were willing to show equal commitment in return. However, there were contradictions within this discourse and there was significant contradiction around the construction of *'the police family'* from the PC instructors. Steve's understanding of the service was very different. His account of the service emphasised individualism, stating

*'There are very few people in the organisation that I trust, it's just easier that way...to trust no one.'*

Both instructors also alluded to the difficulties and even hostility that some of the PCSOs might find in their neighbourhood teams, suggesting that some neighbourhood PCs are not fully supportive of the PCSO role and still view it as *'policing on the cheap'*.

This section has sought to illustrate how the PC instructors drew on disciplinary discourses in constructing both their identity performance and the methods used to normalise a disciplined PCSO policing identity. The way in which the instructors drew on understandings of the service as a *'disciplined organisation'* and incorporated this into how they taught the students demonstrated how the instructors constructed their performances through discourses present within policing cultures. Their focus on one way communication with a lack of discussion or debate illustrates the strength of disciplinary discourses within the training school and how they influenced the way in which the instructors performed and taught the students. However we also see how

these discourses are contested and the struggles that PCSOs and to some extent the PCs engage in when constructing their identity performances.

So far this chapter has addressed dominant discourses within policing cultures relating to gender and discipline. The training programme also drew on a number of discourses more closely linked to aspects of NP. The final sections of the chapter will focus on two discourses central to understandings of NP, firstly those linked to police professionalism and secondly to community. These sections will again show contradictions within these discourses and the way that hegemonic understandings within police cultures were drawn on in reconstructing these discourses, revealing the tensions and struggles between different policing identities.

### **6.5 - Discourses of Professionalism: Bureaucratising Neighbourhood Policing**

The idea of ‘professionalism’ within established police culture is intertwined with discourses of ‘real’ police work and what that represents. ‘Real’ police work typically involves the ability to use physical force, to arrest criminals and investigate crime and other activities that allow officers to reaffirm their identities as ‘real’ police officers (Miller, 1999, Chan et al. 2010). NP includes a very different set of priorities that relate to citizen or customer satisfaction and to reducing the reassurance gap (Fielding and Innes, 2006). This style of policing requires officers to develop new skills that previously may not have been an important part of their working day. Officers are required to network with community members and other service providers, develop problem solving skills and provide emotional support to members of the public. These skills and this type of work have often been seen to carry less prestige and respect than force-led policing, and this has become an important feature of a PC’s occupational identity (Westmarland, 2001). As such the introduction of NP has led to questions about professional identity, focussing on the practices of NP and policing in general (Innes, 2005 also Davies and Thomas, 2008).

During my time in the PCSO training school I examined the way the instructors addressed some key activities and skills that have been associated with NP. The focus here is on how much attention is given to these skills and on how NP professional practice is constructed within the training programme. Referring to the training

timetable that was presented we can see how many sessions in the ten week training programme focussed on topics such as the use of the police radio, the correct way to fill in pocket books, how to issue parking tickets and the use of the police computer systems. Training sessions, specifically on softer, more intuitive neighbourhood skills did not receive much attention and were taught in a very similar style to the more procedural aspects of the programme. The link between professionalism and identity can be found in its regulatory effect, creating and manipulating a particular identity at work, one that reflects the established norms of knowledge and conduct (Hodgson, 2008). Within the training school, particular discourses of professionalism drew on sets of bureaucratic routines used to discipline, constrain and normalise PCSO performance. These sessions tended to be taught using models, acronyms and flow charts that emphasised the various stages PCSOs should follow but with little focus on the context in which particular skills were used or on the realities of policing in the community. Insights from other programmes where softer skills have been present have shown how these aspects receive less attention in the workplace and are bureaucratized to the point that the skill or activity gained a harder, quantifiable appearance. For example, when examining New Public Management, Swan and Fox (2010) found that its impact on diversity work resulted in a more 'technocratic approach' where the codification of knowledge along with the use of checklists and best practice guides became commonplace.

### **6.5.1 - Giving a 'Professional' Performance**

A discourse of 'professionalism' was most noticeably drawn on in training sessions that implicated emotional engagement and greater understanding and connection with members of the community. One such training session was the time devoted to 'victim support'. This training session began with PC Steve taking the PCSOs through various situations that they might encounter using PowerPoint slides. These situations ranged from a case of recurring domestic violence to a gay male couple who had one of the windows of their home broken and suspected a neighbour of doing it. The PCSOs were then asked to put themselves in the position of the victim and discuss how they might feel. The PCSOs offered their opinions and suggested that the scenarios might make them feel angry, scared, isolated and abused. The PCSOs were then asked to consider what the police should be doing and how they could live up to

their requirements of providing good service to the public. As described in chapter four, the requirements that would have to be satisfied were taken from the recently introduced 'policing pledge', which stipulates that 'If you have been a victim of crime the police need to agree with you how often you would like to be kept informed of progress in your case and for how long. You have the right to be kept informed at least every month if you wish and for as long as is reasonable' (Elshire Police Pledge, 2009).

The PCSOs were told that as long as they lived up to these requirements and behaved 'professionally' then they could not be accused of giving a poor service to the victim. The only reference to the importance of reassuring and comforting the victim was contained in a single bullet point in the power point presentation that read 'reassure victim'. This was read out aloud by Tom before he moved on to the next point. The remaining points dealt with other outside organisations that the PCSOs could refer members of the public to, which included 'Support after Manslaughter and Murder', the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Salvation Army. At no point were any organisations mentioned that might cater for minorities or other specific groups of people, such as the elderly, the gay community or women.

The PC instructors also drew on this type of professional discourse in presenting their training on communication. The PCSO role was partly introduced into the police service so that each member of a community had a single point of contact for their area to report problems to or to answer any questions they may have. Therefore it would be important to PCSOs to be able to effectively communicate with all types of people, something which could happen on a day to day basis but also in more formal situations such as PACT meetings. It is important to note the fairly limited time devoted to communication skills within the training timetable. Despite communication skills being described as integral to the PCSO role (Lumb and Breazeale 2002) it was only two hours long and delivered in a single morning session by Steve and began with a discussion about the various ways in which the PCSOs could communicate with the public. He highlighted the distinctions between the actual words spoken, the ways in which these words are said and the body language and facial expressions adopted by the PCSOs. Using statistics to support his arguments, he suggested that the majority of our information from interaction comes

through body language and facial cues. When the subject of what the PCSOs should actually do, how they should handle aggressive or distressed members of the public, the advice given to them was that they should determine what was appropriate and what was not, but above all to remain ‘professional’.

The discourses of ‘professionalism’ drawn on by the instructors contained a number of different facets. It defined how PCSOs should interact with the public, suggesting that a professional performance was one of routine, emotional reservedness, impartiality and matter-of-factness, discourses more associated with a response-style of policing. Its primary aim was the collection of unbiased information and procedural responses that would satisfy the minimum standard of service required by the police. In line with PC occupational identity, showing concern and empathy for the victims of crime and members of the public was superfluous to these aims, reflected in the limited attention paid to victim support and communication skills during the training. It also represented the ‘them and us’ attitude that has become engrained in PC identity (Savage, 2009, Lloyd and Foster, 2006) and did not draw on discourses of customer service. Delivering customer service and victim support ‘professionally’ meant meeting minimum standards of service, as defined in the policing pledge and avoiding any accusations of poor or discriminatory treatment, and referring people to other agencies that are better suited to dealing with these issues. This idea was also present in the way PCSOs should communicate with others and professional behaviour meant ensuring that appropriate language was used. In this context Steve confessed to being very ‘*anti-political correctness*’ and preferred police officers to make their own judgements about what could be deemed as offensive in a particular situation. The PCSOs were also advised not to make assumptions and if this was too difficult then to again ‘remain professional’ when dealing with the public.

This professional performance was related to highly rational and unemotional elements of a professional discourse, defining appropriate language and focussed on referring issues to others agencies. In light of this, it is possible to argue that this discourse was aligned and legitimised within the broader discourses of ‘real policing’ (Fielding, 1994). The PC instructors, in drawing on their past experiences as response PCs reconstructed NP to be more aligned with this style of policing and its dominant

discourses and this approach continued in other areas of the course, being particularly evident in the way some sessions were taught and in the bureaucratising of NP skills.

### **6.5.2 - Bureaucratising Skills**

In addition to a focus on remaining ‘professional’ during encounters with the public, the way NP discourses were constructed in the training were closely aligned to bureaucratic routines and to the instructors’ understanding of police work and to their own experience as a PC. During the formal training on communication, many of the skills and issues were covered using various acronyms and models that attempt to codify and categorise interactions. An example of the type of acronym used by the instructors was L.E.A.P.S. which stood for listen, empathise, ask questions, paraphrase and summarise. This procedure was suggested as a good way to structure encounters with members of the public to ensure that the public is left feeling satisfied. Models and communication theories, like transactional analysis (Berne, 1964) were also covered in some detail and the PCSOs were familiarised with the ‘ego states’ that, it was suggested, influenced actions.

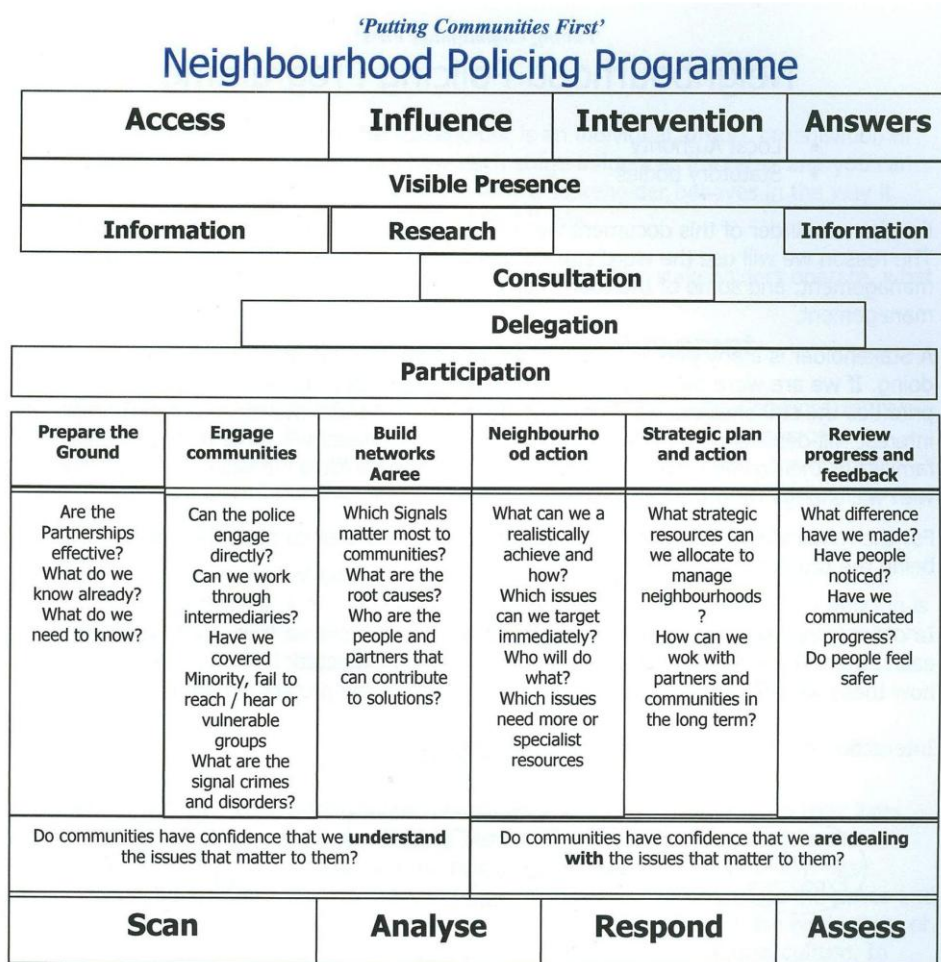
This bureaucratisation of skills sets was also seen during the training session on community engagement and in the material provided to the PCSOs. This training relied on the ‘engagement spectrum’ which categorised different forms of engagement. These were listed as;

- Providing Visible Presence
- Giving and receiving information
- Research
- Consultation
- Participation
- Delegation

The majority of the material that followed this definition consisted of very complicated diagrams and charts that illustrated how officers could engage with the community and the questions that they might ask themselves in order to ensure they

were ‘performing effectively’, an example of these sorts of diagrams can be seen below (Fig 7).

Figure 7 – Communication skills diagram issued to PCSOs



This chart was used as an example of the importance of communication within the PCSO role and this and many of the models used, focused on quantifiable checklists in an attempt to ensure effective communication. Little attention was paid to the actual processes of interacting with other individuals and groups within these sessions. At the very end of the material there was a few lines written about the importance of ‘familiarity’ with the community and PCSOs were advised to collect email addresses and phone numbers of key contacts within the community. This use of these ‘theoretical academic formats’ has been criticised in other studies of PCSO training programs (Johnston, 2007). Bureaucratic forms of training have been criticised for not taking into account PCSO needs and at being relatively poor at communicating



values and conduct, making it difficult for officers to perform well from the beginning of their placement (Belos, 2003),

However, the bureaucratising effect of the professional discourse was contested with some PCSOs complaining that they were unprepared for the field. For example, Carl, the middle aged male PCSO, commented that while he felt that overall the training was useful, in certain areas, especially the ones described above, it was inadequate and the reliance on models was too great.

‘The training was quite good...not all of it was relevant...the way you communicate with people, the communication skills, we went into all these models and we weren’t really told how to talk to people in a circumstance, you know. You know if someone’s been broken into, you should be told, taught how to talk to that person on a one-to-one basis, rather than just have some model to go by...so for me that was just irrelevant and there should be specific scenarios and go down that line. In training they fill you up with all these models and when you are out there in the real world you can’t recall anything you’ve been taught in training but if you’ve been taught that specific thing then it’ll come back.’

Carl’s criticism of the training reveals his disappointment in the bureaucratic teaching methods he has encountered and how he instead preferred to draw on discourses of community engagement and the importance of interactions in establishing good relationships with others. It should be noted that these discourses were represented in other forms of teaching used and PCSOs were given some opportunity to engage in role plays and to give presentations. Towards the end of the course the PCSOs role-played in mock PACT meetings which focussed on developing their communication, presentation and community engagement skills. This provided practical training in these areas and to an extent prepared them for the realities of their role. In a similar way, it could also be argued that the final assessment that the PCSOs underwent, the mock scenarios acted out in a local town, would have also been a useful learning experience for the PCSOs.

This section has sought illustrate the ways in which the instructors constructed professional discourses around NP that privileged discourses of emotional detachment, rationality and bureaucracy. This was achieved by quantifying NP skills into routinised procedures, limiting the time spent on particularly ‘soft’ NP skills and by encouraging the PCSOs to offer a minimum standard when required to engage emotionally with members of the community. Therefore being professional was closely aligned with detachment and not getting emotionally involved and this was seen to be in conflict with discourses of community involvement and engagement and with the roles that PCSOs may be expected to perform (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). In this way professionalism can be seen as a contested discourse which highlights the contradictions within NP and PCSO interaction with the community is an important aspect of NP and the final section of this chapter focuses of the complexity and ambiguity of the concept of ‘community’ and how this was understood within the training school.

## **6.6 - Discourses of Community: The Deserving and Undeserving**

Policing culture has been shown to have a significant impact on the relationship between the police service and the community it serves (Lloyd and Foster, 2006). One of the main drivers behind the introduction of NP was the perceived ‘them and us’ attitude present within the police service which meant that police officers were often viewed as distant figures with no connection to communities. This section will explore the different constructions of the community presented to the PCSOs, despite the fact that it was often referred to as a single, stable entity (Herbert, 2006). At times and in different training sessions the instructors presented the community as ‘undeserving’ of police engagement, a view usually supported again by drawing on their own experiences of working as response PCs or from an understanding that the community should not be involved in determining policing priorities. At other times members of communities were constructed as ‘deserving’, and a valuable source of intelligence for the police. Some specific community groups were also referred to as vulnerable and therefore also deserving of police contact. The different ways in which the community is constructed represents the contested discourses around this concept and we see how they influence the performance of policing identities.

## 6.6.1 - The Community as 'Undeserving' of Police Engagement

At different times during the training course, the community was portrayed negatively and in opposition to the aims and functions of the police service.

### 6.6.1.1 - The Community as 'Delinquents'

A prominent representation of the community within the training school was as delinquents who had an adversarial relationship with the police. This was most notably articulated by Steve through his views on the traveller community. During one of the training sessions Steve confirmed that he had not participated in the diversity training that the PCSOs had received because of his views on travellers, or large groups of people who have a cultural tradition of nomadism. In this session, at which none of the other instructors were present, Steve stumbled on to the subject of how working in the Police service was likely to have a massive impact upon the societal views of the PCSOs saying, *you come into contact with the most deprived and criminal sectors of the population*. He continued to use the example of his interactions with travellers during his career as a response officer.

Prefixing his remarks with a statement that made it clear that these were his own personal views and that he understood that they were inappropriate and based solely on his own subjective experience, he described how his interactions with the travelling community has led him to form a very negative opinion of them.

*'Now I know it's not P.C. to say this and these are my views based on what I've found from being a PC but travellers...most of them are thieving and very dodgy, they must be because they don't work but they've got cars and can afford to live quite a nice life. I've been to traveller's sites and it's disgusting, the kids are running round, none of them go to school and they're playing in the rubbish and in the shit from the caravans. We'd go round there because we've had a complaint from someone or someone has been linked to a crime and are wanted by the police and they'd close ranks, protect their own like, to the point where they'd actually hide people in other caravans so we'd never find them.'*

Steve explained how he was required to put these feelings aside and treat the travellers in the same way he would treat anyone else and advised the students that if they were ever in this position then they should ensure that they remain professional and adopt the ‘minimum standard’ approach they had been taught.

*‘But you know, you have to deal with them and put these feelings aside and get on with job, that’s the only way things are going to get done, you just have to focus on the work and make sure that you do that properly.’*

This outburst lasted around 5 minutes and during this time the PCSOs were silent and did not show any reaction to what was being said by Steve. Whilst Steve made it clear that the views he held about the travelling community were his own and he knew that they were inappropriate, the fact that he discussed them was illustrative of how he had constructed this minority group within the community. He presented travellers as ‘delinquents’ and undeserving of police engagement. This ‘delinquent’ construction of this community seems to have emerged from Steve’s previous experience as a response PC and reflects the findings of other research that found response PCs often viewed the public in very stereotypical ways (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007 and Sunahara, 2002). It suggests that some members of the community have contradictory aims to that of the police and are, as a result, unworthy of police contact. Steve’s own reference to how inappropriate these views were reveals the difficulty that the instructors had in divorcing the training they were delivering from their own experiences of policing the community. This construction of the delinquent community is aligned with the broader ‘them and us’ discourses that have traditionally characterised police-community relations (Savage, 2009). In light of this, it is important to consider the effect that the discursive construction of the community as delinquent will have on the PCSOs. By presenting it during training, and in light of Steve’s status as a trainer and as a PC, it attempts to normalise the performance of a ‘minimum standard’ of policing, making it acceptable for the PCSOs to give lower standards of service to groups within the community that they do not believe are deserving, thus undermining one of the key tenants of NP.

#### **6.6.1.2 - Community as ‘Time Wasters’**

Another account of the community as undeserving was made in the training on Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings and centred on the communities' role in determining policing priorities. PACT meetings had been introduced as part of the NP agenda for improving community relations and allowing the public to attend and highlight any problems they have in their communities. During the training course, community consultation through PACT meetings received a great deal of attention from the instructors, with a session that described the procedure for conducting the meetings and their intended outcomes. A lengthy role play was used to instruct the PCSOs on how to manage these meetings. The PCSOs were given time to read up on fictional areas and then participated in mock meetings with outside volunteers acting as members of the community. The training session on PACT began with Tom highlighting the benefits of PACT, which also appeared in the training material given to the PCSOs. The material described the following benefits:

*'PACT gives a structure that will deliver the main requirements for Neighbourhood Policing to be effective....It means delivering community engagement and problem solving policing of low level localised policing and partnership issues, whilst gathering community intelligence. PACT means giving everyone the chance to see members of their neighbourhood team at least once per month and is about communicating with local people and telling them what their neighbourhood team is doing for them.'*

As with the training on communication, PACT training was delivered using a variety of acronyms and models. The session on running PACT meetings was structured around the P.E.A.C.E. acronym (Planning and Preparation, Engage and Explain, Assembly, Closure and Evaluation). The PCSOs were taken through this step by step model which explained exactly what the outcome of each stage should be and how this could be achieved. For example, during the 'Engage and Explain' element, the PCSOs were told how they need to engage with the attendees before the meeting starts and begin to build relationships with them, this would make everyone more comfortable and encourage a healthy discussion in which everyone participated. The 'explain' element featured another model, 'Reason, Routines and Routemap', which required the PCSOs to explain to their audience the reason or motivation behind the

meeting, the rules of the meeting and how issues should be raised and passed to the panel for prioritisation. The training material also gave the PCSO a sample text which could be read out with appropriate blanks for the PCSOs name/ward. The bureaucratisation of the PACT training through models again reflected a focus on the standardisation of processes rather than on developing skills which the PCSOs might use when in the field.

One interesting issue that emerged during this training on PACT was how the PCSOs should go about conducting a PACT meeting. PC Tom infused the PACT process with a sense of pointlessness and opposition as during the initial stages of the session he asked the rhetorical question.

“You know why the public will be there?...to moan, and rightly so.”

Similar to the previous construction of the travelling community as undeserving of police assistance, the instructors constructed another part of the community as ‘time wasters’. In this example, instead of viewing the PACT process as a venue for useful interaction, it is presented as one of pointlessness, and of limited value to the police. This was compounded by Tom who warned the PCSOs to be conscious of the ‘ambush’, described as when a meeting is dominated by a small number of people who have personal agendas, either linked to an individual problem or to a vendetta against someone else, something which could result in unimportant or inappropriate policing priorities being set. This idea was further evidenced by Tom who identified a set of prepared responses within their training material that the PCSOs could read out if they felt that the PACT meeting was being dominated by individuals with their own agenda or if a discussion of an irrelevant topic had gone on for too long. This instruction was coupled with a warning to the PCSOs that they should be firm in their chairing of the meetings and be prepared to control anyone who tries to dominate the discussion, presenting a rather adversarial portrait of the PACT meeting. Instead of viewing PACT as an opportunity to engage with the public, the emphasis seemed to be on how these meetings can be controlled and on the need for PCSOs to maintain their authority and discretion.

In a similar manner to the distinctions drawn between the police and ‘delinquent’ communities, constructing the community as ‘time wasters’ drew on discourses of police expertise and on how they, rather than the uninformed and emotional community members, were better able to determine what issues the police should focus on. The way in which Tom described the community’s increased involvement in policing as ‘moaning’ as well as preparing them for potential difficulties in PACT meetings is further evidence of his attempt to downplay the benefits of community involvement in policing. The construction of the community as ‘time wasters’ seems to be based on Tom’s privileging of the police’s expertise in dealing with community problems and in drawing on discourses not only of police expertise but also of police legitimacy and governance. He suggests that the public are not informed enough and are too concerned with their own problems to rationally determine policing priorities, whereas the police have traditionally been tasked to rationally assess how best to serve the community.

### **6.6.2 - The Community as Deserving of Police Interaction**

At other times during the training programme positive constructions of the community were observed which the PCSOs were encouraged to embrace.

#### **6.6.2.1 – The Community as a Source of Intelligence**

The instructors were very positive about the potential benefits of using members of different communities as a source of information about crimes in the area. During the training course this issue was often linked to the recent increased threat of terrorism that the police need to deal with and interaction with community members was promoted as an ideal way for the police to be better informed. During one training session, the PCSOs were addressed by a guest speaker who took them through the National Intelligence Model (NIM) and the link between NP and intelligence led policing was made clear. The PCSOs were instructed about the importance of submitting information gathered from their community through this model and that recent terrorist plots had been averted as a result of such community intelligence. This discursive construction of community presents it as a useful resource for the neighbourhood team and one that can benefit other functions of the police service.

Community members are understood as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the police, favourably positioned and a valuable resource in the prevention of crime and terrorism. This is closely aligned to accounts of the main benefits of community engagement within government publications (Maguire and Johns, 2006).

#### **6.6.2.2 - Vulnerable Members of the Community**

At times during the training course Steve and the other instructors would highlight other groups and minorities that would require special treatment from the PCSOs. Steve often cited the elderly as a group in the community that the PCSOs would frequently come into contact with and who require a softer approach from the PCSOs. He suggested that they could often feel unsafe in their own home, especially if they were on their own and that certain issues, such as youth anti-social behaviour, have a disproportionate affect on their quality of life. As a result of this, the PCSOs were encouraged to think about how small issues, that they might not consider a problem might be very significant for them, and to ensuring that they provided reassurance when they interacted with them.

Steve suggested that this reassurance might not involve any discussion of police issues but could be as simple as having tea with them and making small talk. During the PCSOs’ diversity training, Leah identified the gay community as a minority group that may require a specialist approach from police. She recommended that when the PCSOs were dealing with complaints from gay men or women, regardless of whether they thought their sexuality was implicated or not, that all incidents are treated as potential cases of homophobia. Finally, it was suggested by all the instructors that the PCSOs should become familiar with as many vulnerable adults in their communities as possible (usually those with physical or mental disabilities were cited) in order to ensure that the PCSO could build a relationship with them, making it more likely that they would bring problems to their attention. By identifying these groups within the community the instructors were constructing them as vulnerable and therefore deserving of police interaction, highlighting the potential improvements that the PCSOs could bring to their quality of life. These community discourses construct a policing identity performance that represents them as ‘servants’ of the community, upholding laws and protecting the vulnerable.



Given NP's focus on providing a more community focussed style of policing, the concept of community is extremely important and different understandings of this complex entity are likely to have profound impacts on the way in which it is enacted (Herbert, 2006). This section has shown that while 'the public' or 'the community' are often referred to as a single, homogenous entity, the different constructions of the community as deserving and undeserving illustrates the conflicts and contradictions in its meaning within the training programme. The ways in which the community was constructed reveal the competing discourses that the PC instructors and PCSOs recruits have to navigate as they construct meanings around NP and the policing of these communities. As with many of the discourses discussed throughout this chapter, the PCSOs will be affected by the regulatory nature of these discourses and they may also reconstruct or refute them in creating an identity performance and delivering NP to different members of the community.

## **6.7 - Conclusion**

This chapter has emphasised the complex and contradictory discourses that are revealed in, not only the way that NP discourses are constructed by the PC instructors and the PCSOs during the training, but also through the identity performances of the PCs and PCSOs themselves. Many of the discourses drawn on during the training were shown to be highly contested, with multiple constructions becoming evident. The most obvious of these was the discourse of community which represented members of the public as either deserving or undeserving of police attention. This construction was seen to emerge from the PCs own experience of policing and discourses of 'real' policing which constructed the public as 'delinquents' or 'time wasters'. Professionalism was another contested discourse where conflict existed between an emotional investment in the community that NP advocated and the rationality that is seen as an important part of policing professionalism (Mumby and Putnam, 1992). These contested discourses were shown to have a significant impact on the way in which training material was delivered, something which was identified by the PCSOs; they questioned their ability to perform NP activities in the future.

This chapter has also highlighted the struggles that officers face in the way they navigate these discourses in the different contexts in which NP is performed. The analysis of the instructors' identity performances, which drew heavily on macho canteen culture and discourse of 'real' police work, revealed antagonisms between the policing cultures and discourses of NP. However, it was also evident that their performances were complex, conflicted and did not simply reproduce the gendered discourses they were familiar with but also incorporated other elements to their performances, such as a commitment to NP and displays of emotional vulnerability that conflicted with the macho performances they often gave (Barry et al. 2006, Thomas and Davies, 2008).

The review of the literature around gendered cultures suggested that dominant gendered discourses often served to normalise the performances of members (Acker, 1990; Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002). There was evidence within many of the performances given by the PCSOs that the same gendered discourses which were drawn on by the instructors were also drawn on by the PCSOs. Macho and laddish interactions were common, although not universal. In fact, many of the female PCSOs resisted their construction as weak and inferior. This resistance manifested itself in their willingness to challenge stereotypical feminine constructions, through their own gendered discourses, which represented discourses of self confidence and assertiveness. These performances demonstrate that in reconstructing the gendered discourses present PCSOs were able to occupy a subject position within these discourses, which created space for alternative performances (Holmer-Nadsen, 1996).

The contested discourses found here and the way in which officers navigated them, through identity performance continued to be significant in the other research settings examined. Similar conflicted performances were observed in the PCs and PCSO who were already working in NPTs. The competing discourses of policing culture, which were seen to constrain the performance of instructors and PCSOs continued to be especially prevalent in limiting the performance of officers in the informal, back stage of the NPTs. The next chapter will continue our focus on dominant policing discourses in the back stage of NPTs. The analysis will also examine how competing discourses are constructed and reconstructed in the performance of particular gendered policing identities, beginning to reveal the complexity of 'being' a neighbourhood officer.

## Chapter 7

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### **Policing in Private: Back Stage Performances**

#### **7.1 - Introduction**

This chapter will explore the interactions and identity performances of officers and PCSOs in the back stage of NPTs. Using an adapted version of Goffman's (1959) theory of back stage and front stage, the back stage is conceived as a performative setting in which official organisational discourses are displaced by the informal canteen culture of policing. As was seen in the previous chapter, overtly macho and laddish discourses are dominant in informal police interaction and normalised performances to reflect cultural expectations. However, as observed in the training school, the performances of officers in the back stage were contested and conflicted with a variety of alternative performances observed. This suggests that the normalising effect of gendered culture is not complete. The range of competing discourses provided alternative resources (age, experience and commitment to NP) which allowed for the performance of alternative identities (Weedon, 1997). The chapter will, therefore, draw upon discursive analysis to better understand the dynamics of power and resistance (Ford, 2006, Hardy and Ainsworth, 2004) in constructing different identity performances.

The chapter will begin by looking at the different contextual layers that were present in the back stage. Given the emphasis I have placed on culture, these layers are important factors in the understanding of identity performance and therefore I will be examining the similarities and differences between the three different NP teams and focusing on the different ways in which interactions between PCs and PCSOs can be conceived. The chapter will then examine the gendered cultures of the NPT offices and how the discourses of these cultures normalised macho and laddish performances amongst the PCs and PCSOs. Finally, the chapter will address those officers that

resisted dominant gender discourses and constructed alternative performances, an action which demonstrates the contested and fractured nature of policing culture.

## **7.2 – Neighbourhood Policing Teams: Performing in Context**

The discussion of identity performance and discourse in chapter two and the focus on gendered cultures in chapter three suggested that the performance that an individual gives is determined, in part by the context in which it is given and the discourses that are dominant in particular fields. To investigate the different back stage performances that neighbourhood officers give, it is important to identify the context in which they take place. This section will explore three central ‘contextual layers’ which are important for understanding the ways that NP discourses and performances are constructed in the different back stage interactions that were observed in this research. These are: the physical surroundings, artefacts and symbols of the different the neighbourhood offices, the areas in which the NPTS are and the differences in PC and PCSO working relationships.

### **7.2.1 – Placing the NPTs in Context: Internal and External Factors**

The most obvious way in which context can be understood is in the physical surroundings that the NP officers inhabited, with the majority of time being spent in the neighbourhood office or their patrol cars. Each of the NPTs was based in its own neighbourhood office located within a police station. The neighbourhood offices of Radley and City Heights were both housed in large stations which also included a response team, CID and senior management offices, along with a canteen area. Greenside was a far smaller station, a converted large residential dwelling, and only the NPT was based there, with some of the rooms in the upstairs of the building occupied by a local coroner. As indicated in the methodology chapter, Radley NPT was made up of 22 PCs, 14 PCSOs, 3 Sergeants and 1 inspector. City Heights NPT had 13 PCs, 8 PCSOs, 1 male Sergeant and 1 inspector and Greenside had 7 PCs, 7 PCSOs and 1 sergeant. Only City Heights NPT had any non-uniformed civilian staff working within the office, a front line support officer who was responsible for much of administration of the team. Neither City Heights nor Greenside had any consistent non-uniformed presence. Both Radley and City Heights’ neighbourhood offices were

large, open spaces in which the neighbourhood officers mixed freely. Greenside had a considerably smaller office that was made up of a number of interconnected rooms but this did not seem to hinder interaction between the NP officers. This being said, there were a significantly smaller number of officers at Greenside and as a result there were fewer interactions to observe. In all of the offices it was uncommon for officers from other departments to enter the neighbourhood office unless it was related to a police investigation.

All of the neighbourhood offices were equipped with computers on which the officers were able to update incident files with new developments, add information to the POPs database detailing measures taken by the police to deal with local problems (which can be accessed by other NPTs across the county) and contribute to the police's community information website with information about police involvement in the community and upcoming PACT meetings. The offices were also used to store police equipment, like stab vests and CS spray. Whilst both the Radley and City Heights offices were open plan, the Radley office was significantly smaller than the office in City Heights, a problem made worse by the larger number of officers working out of the Radley office. Whereas City Heights was spacious and had ample room for each officer to have their own desk, Radley was cramped and officers shared desks with those who worked on the opposite shift. The cramped conditions and limited space made the office a fairly uncomfortable place to be and officers frequently complained about the limited number of computers in the office and a lack of working space, often preferring to leave the office to escape its confines. Both of the offices were decorated in a similar fashion, institutional grey walls broken up with a mishmash of 1980s notice boards on which a variety of official police poster campaigns (tackling issues like domestic violence and drink driving), mug shots of prominent or wanted criminals and maps of the surrounding area were displayed. Occasionally these notice boards would be broken up with pictures of the officers taken at community events (which were often graffitied by the other officers), police related cartoons and a poster of the cast of 'Life on Mars'<sup>5</sup>, the connotations of which will be discussed later. Little effort had gone into converting the residential dwelling that housed Greenside's neighbourhood office, with two of the three ground floor

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<sup>5</sup> A televised British police drama set primarily in the 1970s and notable for its depiction of sexist, homophobic and racist behaviour amongst officers.

rooms filled with desks and computers and the other acting a briefing/break room with a large central table and television on which the daily briefings were shown. All of the rooms were painted beige but were now rather grubby and the walls were covered in similar decoration to the other neighbourhood offices.

As dictated by the Home Office, all of the NPTs had similar internal command structures. The neighbourhood teams had a specified hierarchy which placed the neighbourhood inspector in charge, followed by their sergeants, who controlled the different shifts that worked at different times. These sergeants were then in charge of the PCs and PCSOs who were responsible for policing the various wards in the community. Some of these PCs were dedicated neighbourhood beat managers, who had specific responsibility for assigning tasks to PCSOs and the other PCs, who had no formal role within the NPT, other than being a 'neighbourhood officer'.

Whilst the command structures were all very similar across the three teams, the way in which the Inspectors led their teams and emphasised different aspects of NP was very different. During my time in Radley and Greenside it was clear how the inspectors emphasised the importance of officers' spending time in, and getting involved with, their communities. At Radley, the inspector would often monitor the amount of time each officer, especially the PCSOs, spent in the community, providing a visible police presence. Officers from Radley also commented that their inspector was always very accommodating, allowing them to switch shifts so that they could attend community events. A comparable focus on 'closeness' to the community in Greenside was achieved in a similar way and was facilitated by a much stronger sense of community in this area. The small size of the villages within Greenside area meant that it was easier for neighbourhood officers to build relationships with residents and community groups and local businesses and this was actively encouraged by the senior officers. Comparing my time patrolling with the Greenside PCs and PCSOs to the time spent in the other areas, it became evident that they had developed the most stable, committed and useful network of neighbourhood contacts.

In contrast the Inspector in City Heights seemed more focussed on partnership working as a priority of NP and often spoke of the benefits of a partnership forum that met regularly and included officers from the police, the fire brigade, local councillors,

representatives from local community regeneration projects and agencies and local business owners.

*'We've gotten a football pitch built in a local park, we're helping out the 'hug a hoodie' campaign and working with local businesses in the town centre has cut down anti-social behaviour a huge amount, I don't think we'd be as far along as we are if we didn't have these meetings and hold everyone accountable for change'.*

It should be noted that the City Heights NPT comprises a deprived inner city area which attracts greater funding to facilitate this type of partnership working. The role of the inspector is an important feature of the NPTs to acknowledge as the Inspectors fill a position of power which allows them to play an important part in constructing the dominant NP discourses within the different NPTs. The performances of the officers that serve under them are likely to be influenced by the way in which their superiors want NP to be performed and this, as we have seen, varied across the different teams.

The physical geography of the areas that I observed also had an impact on the interactions that the officers would engage in. As well as acknowledging the size of the different areas, it is possible to differentiate the three areas based on their population and levels of crime. As stated earlier in chapter five, Radley was a large town and was a relatively self-contained community with a long and established history. Although there was a town centre, the majority of Radley was residential and crime was generally considered to be fairly low and mainly restricted to low-level antisocial behaviour and theft. Similarly, Greenside had low levels of crime, with most of the NP officers concentrating on minor anti-social behaviour and infrequent car theft. Greensides' sense of community was evident fairly early on in the observation period. It comprised of a number of close-knit small villages and when the PC gave me a tour of the area he was repeatedly stopped by residents for informal chats, and appeared highly interested in the events of the area (individuals would often come to the windows and front doors of their houses whenever a patrol vehicle would stop in a street and officers knew many prominent residents by name). In contrast, City Heights comprised one area of a large city and, as well as covering a number of medium sized towns, consisted of built up inner-city areas that were

considered by the City Heights officers as crime hotspots. The inner-city environment of City Heights also seemed to have less of a sense of community spirit when compared to areas like Greengate, with the police only really knowing the names of individuals that had been in contact with the police previously.

In summary, the physical environments and surroundings of the NPTs, the different understandings of NP constructed by the Inspectors and the areas in which the NPTs were located all provide key contextual constraints to the type of performances that the neighbourhood officers will give. This contextual layer is important to understand as it sheds light on some of the discourses that are drawn on during interaction and begins to highlight and explain the multiplicity of back stage identity performances. However, to fully understand the range of contextual discourses that influence performance, this section will go on to examine the working relations between PCs and PCSOs.

### **7.2.2 – Fragmented, Cohesive and Collaborative Relations: Interactions between PCs and PCSOs**

One area of significant variation between the NPTs was the working relationship that existed between the PCs and PCSOs. Although NPTs across England and Wales are structured similarly, with PCSOs being subordinate to and intended to support neighbourhood PCs, the nature of this support is less well defined. Within the three NPTs differences emerged in the way in which PCSOs and PCs worked together, primarily stemming from the different ways that neighbourhood PCs understood the PCSO role and how it could be best used to police the community. Unlike other specialisms within the police service, NP is the only area in which regular officers work side by side in the field with civilian uniformed officers. The close proximity in which the two roles operate, along with the increasing expansion of the PCSO role, has meant the line between the PC and PCSO can begin to blur. As a result of this, issues of power and professional status and identity within the neighbourhood office are likely to be more complex and varied than in other areas which are populated only by PCs.



By examining the working relations in the three NPTs it was possible to characterise them as fragmented, cohesive and collaborative. Fragmented working relations describe environments where PCs and PCSOs were not observed working together on a regular basis and where the functions of the two roles remained largely separate. This was often accompanied by clashes of occupational identities that resulted from differences in the construction and understanding of the PCSO and neighbourhood PC roles, as supported by literature in this area. Despite PCSO subordination there is still a significant amount of tension around the PCSO role and many have questioned its usefulness, arguing, as explained, earlier, that they represent 'policing on the cheap' (Kempa and Johnston, 2011) and are an inefficient use of resources given their limited powers and the time that PCs must spend ensuring they remain safe (Johnston, 2007). A Cohesive working environment refers to the presence of close working relationships between PCs and PCSOs, where both parties feel that they are contributing towards shared goals and assist each other in achieving them. Although both parties often perform different tasks, there is a greater degree of overlap between functions and the roles are less separate than in fragmented relations. Finally, collaborative working relations suggest a relationship that involves PCs and PCSOs working together and often completing tasks together, with less regard for restrictions placed on PCSOs. Collaborative working breaks down the divide between the PC and PCSO role, allowing PCSOs to perform a more varied set of tasks and provide a greater level of support to PCs.

By examining the interactions that took place in the three NPTs it was possible to observe a high degree of cohesion within Radley and Greenside NPTs, where PCs and PCSOs seemed to spend more time working together than those in City Heights. It was common for PCs and PCSOs in both these areas to patrol together (especially at night) and each shift began with a briefing that ensured that all officers knew what the rest of their colleagues were doing and any potential assistance could be offered. I observed how this assistance could take the form of a PC offering a PCSO transport to a partner meeting, advice on a problem or a PCSO offering to help a PC canvas for eye witnesses of a crime. As a result of this, the working relationships between the PCs and PCSOs was often described as close, something which assisted both parties in better policing their areas. The cohesive relations in Radley were a good basis for more collaborative working, which was evident in the support given to the PCSO role

in Radley, where PCSOs were encouraged to develop and enhance their role. This resulted in a number of PCSOs undertaking training courses that enabled them to drive police patrol vehicles and some had also achieved qualifications that allowed them to mentor other PCSOs in their probationary periods and to assess them within the training school. When interviewed many of the PCs and PCSOs commented on the supportive environment within the NPT and that they felt the PCs and PCSOs worked well together, with the PCSOs suggesting that they their role allowed the PCs to concentrate on other tasks.

*'I think that the relationship here is excellent...when PCSOs first came into the force, we weren't ready for them. There were no guidelines, no instructions and PCs and line managers didn't know how to deploy them, what their capabilities were. But now, in Radley NPT we use PCSOs in an enforcement role, we take them out on low level enforcement jobs. We, as PCs, are still the enforcers but the public, youths especially, get to see the PCSOs in an enforcement role and....they have more respect for them and what they can do.'*

PC Colin, Radley

Carl, a PCSO who I had observed in the PCSO training school also identified Radley as a positive place to work.

*'They seem to be a friendly team here and the PCs and PCSOs seem to get along quite well, I think I'm fitting quite well...I was quite worried that PCSOs would be frowned upon by the PCs but I've found it vice versa and the PCs realise what you're doing, you're doing what they would call the crap of the job and you're taking that off them, which I think they appreciate.'*

PCSO Carl, Radley

These quotes illustrate the collaborative environment that was present in Radley and many officers cited this as the reason for the good working relationships within the NPT and the lack of friction over policing roles. PCSOs felt valued because whenever possible the PCs would support them in their desire to develop within their role through additional training and being included in more interesting assignments. PCs on the other hand benefited because they were able to task the more routine and

mundane jobs to PCSOs, allowing them to deal with other issues and spend more time on aspects of their role that they enjoyed.

On the other hand, the NPT in City Heights was a more complex environment characterised by fragmented working relations. During my observations it became clear that many of the PCs preferred not to work with their PCSO colleagues, even the ones that were assigned to their ward. On a number of occasions I observed the PCSOs being told to 'take a walk' during their shift by their NBMs, something which some of them commented on during their interview (suggesting that it made them feel undervalued and underutilised). PCSOs were often deployed by the PCs at the beginning of the shift to patrol low level crime areas but were then not contacted again for the rest of the shift. During the interviews, many PCSOs reported that they could have entire shifts without seeing their PC counterparts because their shifts would start at different times and the PCs had little interest in what they were doing.

*'Because of our shift patterns are different we don't always start at the same time, sometimes you're in at 8am, you check the system for your tasks that day, you go off and do them and you don't come back until the end of your shift....and unless you radio them you're pretty much left to it.'*

PCSO Maggie, City Heights

As a result, the PCs had no institutional connection with PCSOs and little cause for interaction with them outside of informal interactions in the neighbourhood office. In addition to this, during my time within the NPT, as well as in the interviews with a number of the PCs and PCSOs, I got to know about a recent conflict that had occurred within the team prior to my arrival. From the limited information I was able to collect, this conflict seemed to centre on the role of the PCSOs within the team with a number of PCs becoming concerned that the PCSOs were acting outside of their duties and encroaching into areas that had previously been the sole domain of the PCs. Although I raised this issue in many of the interviews I conducted, most officers were unwilling to comment, claiming either not to have any knowledge of such a problem or that they were not directly involved so felt unable to discuss it. PCSO Will was one of the few officers willing to discuss the issue, after I had pursued it in a slightly more pressing way during his interview.

*'The last 18 months have changed quite a lot...just a few sort of attitudes have changed and I suppose being a PCSO there's different ways to do the job and, ummm, things have happened where people don't like the way some people have done their job and have raised issues that have changed attitudes a little bit I suppose and the way we do the job. That put a downer on it a bit. We went from working very, very closely with the PCs, patrolling with them, assisting them with calls and that, working with them all the time to it being a bit more, ummm, "this is what you're going to do, this is what you'll do on a daily basis, go out and do it" and you can't do what you used to. I used to go out with the PCs, attend calls with them, help them out, I'd do my bit as well because I'd be in my area but then other officers didn't like that we worked so closely with other officers and they started to speak to bosses and raise issues which they obviously have to look into then ...'*

PCSO Will, City Heights

PC Abby also brought up the issue during her interview.

*'My relationship with the PCSOs is okay, there are certain PCSOs that I just don't interact with because they don't want to interact back or tell us when they've got meetings or certain things. As PCs and PCSOs, everyone in City Heights, I don't think it's a very good working relationship at the moment. It's only been like that for the last year, there are certain people, not just PCSOs but PCs as well, who will not interact, not work together, not tell you when there's a meeting, not tell you when they go here or there, so you don't know what's going on. I don't think it's right. Because we are police officers, maybe we do expect too much of them at times but PCSOs have to understand that our role is completely different to theirs.'*

PC Abby, City Heights

From these examples it is possible to suggest that whilst PCSOs in Radley and Greenside were just as constrained in their role as those in City Heights, the PCs understood this and worked with them, forming cohesive and collaborative working relationships which benefited both parties. In City Heights NPT, the meanings attached to the PCSO role were more contested and there had emerged a clear demarcation between the roles of these officers. To some extent this had resulted from

complaints from some PCs that PCSOs were encroaching on their tasks, and this undermined their understanding of their own professional identity. According to PC Phil in City Heights:

*'I don't agree with the introduction of PCSOs, I don't think they're value for money and I think that they're used instead of police officers rather than in addition to them'.*

Unlike in Greenside and Radley, where PCSOs felt that PCs were helping them develop within their role, many of the PCSOs in City Heights felt the opposite and that they were being constrained by their neighbourhood role and by the PC's desire to maintain control over the act of 'policing' and their identity as a 'police officer'.

In light of the above discussion, it is possible to begin to understand the variation that exists within the NPTs. In addition to the differences in the physical surroundings in which officers work, it is evident that each of the NPTs has its own working environment and understanding this will be crucial to fully comprehending the context in which identity performances are constructed. Whether a PCSO or PC works in a close and collaborative environment or a fragmented one where a distinct divide exists is likely to have a significant impact on the backstage identity performance that they construct. The different working relations provide further constraining effects on identity performances as officers must construct them within the prevailing discursive environment and negotiate the established social norms of the team. As such, this section offers another contextual layer that will better inform out understanding of the performances that are given in the backstage.

Having established some of the contextual layers that were present within the NPTs and why understanding their influence will be key to gaining insight into the backstage performances of neighbourhood officers, this chapter will move on to its primary focus and begin to explore the role of gender. The next section will focus on the gendered symbols, behaviours, interactions and language that were present in the NPTs and how they represented gendered cultures within the NPTs and, in turn, the constraining effect that culture has on the gendered identity performances of officers.

### **7.3 – The Gendered Cultures of the NPTs**

The focus of this chapter will now turn to the gendered cultures present within the NPTs and how their dominant discourses serve to regulate the gendered identity performances of neighbourhood officers. Chapter three explored the concept of gendered cultures and how by examining the gendered interactions, artefacts, assumptions and metaphors within a research setting, a better understanding of performative contexts and its role in normalising identity performance can be gained (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997). This understanding highlights not only the gendered identity performances which incorporate dominant discourses but also those which refute, reconstruct and manoeuvre around them (Ford, 2006), drawing on alternative discourses and revealing the complexity and contestedness of gendered culture (Martin and Frost, 1999). Within the extant literature, policing culture has become synonymous with discourses of masculinity and numerous researchers have highlighted the laddish and macho behaviour that dominates life as a police officer, especially in the police station and other private arenas where ‘canteen culture’ was prevalent (Miller, 1999, Sharpe, 1998, Waddington, 1999). This section will explore the gendered identity performances constructed by neighbourhood officers when they are in the ‘backstage’, performing in their police stations, patrol cars or other spaces where they were hidden from the scrutiny of the public. Conceiving of these private areas as backstage allows us separate this context and examine the discourses that act on officers whilst interacting with each other in their NPTs and how they are represented and reconstructed through performance. It will suggest that, despite attempts to change the masculine culture of police stations (Savage, 2009), the macho and laddish discourses of canteen culture still dominate the performances constructed in informal contexts found in the NPTs. However, it will also explore how some officers gave identity performances that negotiated these discourses and allowed them to infuse them with different meanings, constructing alternative, preferred ways of performing in the backstage (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003).

#### **7.3.1 - NPT Office Culture: Normalising Gendered Identity Performance**

The most obvious way in which gendered interactions served to normalise identity performances was through the conversations that the officers engaged in. Generally

the atmosphere within all three neighbourhood offices was relaxed and informal, PCs and PCSOs mixed without restriction and were all on a first name basis. Rank was only used to distinguish the Sergeants and Inspectors. Sergeants were often referred to as 'Serge' and were rarely treated any differently than any other officer. It was only the neighbourhood Inspectors who received special attention because of their rank and PCSOs especially seemed far more deferent to this rank than the PCs. PCSOs were rarely observed mocking their Inspectors, where it was not uncommon for PCs to engage in this sort of behaviour, with one PC hiding their Inspector's glasses before a meeting and joking about the football team that he supported. The informality of the working environment in all the NPTs meant that few conversational subjects or forms of interaction were out of bounds. The layout of the offices and the informality between officers meant that non-police related matters were often discussed, even when police work was being done, for example during morning briefings. The conversations could cover a wide range of topics but tended to veer towards particular masculine topics such as sport, computer games and the younger officers' social activities. Coarse language (which was part of many officers' everyday vocabulary), joking and teasing were all commonplace within the neighbourhood offices and was seen as integral to coping with the stresses of the job as well creating a sense of camaraderie amongst the officers (Dick, 2000).

*'The working atmosphere is good, this shift, we have a lot of banter but nothing is meant to be serious at all, I think it's quite healthy and no one crosses a line and if somebody says something that upsets someone then they'd probably be pulled aside and told that it was a bit too far and that would be the end of it...we have a laugh and joke and get on with our work but it's a coping mechanism, it probably happens with doctors and nurses y'know.'*

PCSO Miles, Radley

An example of this 'laddish banter' was observed when I first arrived at City Heights station and was confronted by a very excited office. It was red nose day and the officers had printed a number of pictures of PCSO Josh, a young male PCSO in his early twenties, had photo-shopped them to make him look like Freddie Mercury and pinned them around the office. Everyone seemed to be enjoying this, even PCSO Josh, who played up to pictures and seemed to enjoy the attention from the other

officers. Similarly in Radley, I observed one of the PCs drawing a caricature of one of the male PCSOs who spent a lot of time in the gym lifting weights, the picture showed him with extremely large muscles intended to highlight his perceived vanity. A final example can be drawn from Greenside where on one occasion the name of one of the female PCSOs was graffitied under a picture of local teens on a notice board in the office, highlighting how young the PCSO looked and how she could be mistaken for one of the track suited teenagers. None of the PCSOs complained or objected to these pictures and both of the male PCSOs played up to the joke and seemed to enjoy it (I was not present when the female PCSO saw her picture). After Josh discovered the pictures he did not try to take them down but laughed and asked who had done them and set about creating his own picture of the PC responsible. The public nature of this joking and teasing within the NP offices, while it did not seem to be designed to embarrass the PCSOs did require a performance that demonstrated that officers were able to take it 'on the chin' and laugh at themselves and others. In doing this these officers constructed an identity performance that was self-confident and that achieved social legitimacy by incorporating this type of laddish banter.

In the previous chapter, it was suggested that the teasing and joking that the PC instructors engaged in served to normalise this sort of behaviour and causing it to be incorporated into some of the gendered performances of the PCSOs that they were training. The continuing presence of this sort of behaviour in the NPTs confirms that the inspectors were preparing the PCSOs for the dominant discourses that would be present in the context in which they would be working in the future. Similarly, the instructors' use of gendered symbols and artefacts to construct gendered identity performances to construct laddish performances in the training school was also present in the NPTs. It was common for neighbourhood officers to draw on the objects and equipment, over and above the functional and utilitarian uniform that the officers were required to wear, that were present in backstage to assist in the representation of the discourses of canteen culture.

The first and most recurrent gendered symbol that was present within all the neighbourhood offices were posters of Gene Hunt from the television series 'Life on Mars' accompanied by a number of quotes from the series, which were displayed in pride of place in the office that the neighbourhood Sergeants shared. The Gene Hunt



character is perhaps most famous for his sexist opinions about women and for his support of very aggressive policing methods, reflecting the prevailing views held in the 1970s when the series is set. In City Heights one of the PCs had a companion book to the series which was a guide to policing as written by the Gene Hunt character. At different times a male PC and female PCSO both read parts of this out loud while other officers present chuckled in agreement. The following excerpt is one example of the book's content from a section about 'dealing with female officers' and was read aloud by a male PC.

'Take them seriously: I know they have a head full of candyfloss and hairspray most days but sometimes you can learn about the female motive, which is helpful. Plus they love it when you listen. Look the sensitive sort and you'll have your y-fronts off before you can say 'modern man'' (Adams, 2007 p. 99).

The presence of these posters and texts, combined with the examples of the PC and PCSO reading aloud for the amusement of their colleagues serves to illustrate the dominance of these laddish masculine symbols and the ways that these symbols and discourses were drawn on in constructing and legitimising particular types of gendered performances by both male and female officers within these neighbourhood teams. The legitimisation of gendered performances was further reinforced in Radley and City Heights by the occasional visits by officers working in other specialisms, as these officers occupied the same building. Response officers and members of CID would sporadically drop in to tell the neighbourhood officers a particularly funny story from the previous shift or to share a war story from years ago, with one instance ending in a very literal display of 'battle scars' by one response PC. The symbolic value of battle scars and war stories lay in their ability to further reinforce the macho discourses that some officers used in constructing their identity performances. This did not happen in Greenside as the neighbourhood office was a stand alone building with no other types of officers working there.

Another symbol which formed part of the NP policing identity and which embodied particular gendered discourses was the patrol vehicle. A certain status was achieved and attached to being able to drive a patrol vehicle and the better and faster cars were usually fought over by the neighbourhood officers. Generally the male officers won

this battle and were able to drive the best cars. An example of this occurred during an evening shift in City Heights where the NPT had available to them only one marked patrol vehicle and one unmarked civilian car, which did not have signage or a siren. Before the officers left the station one male PC insisted on having the new, marked car (the cars model was named 'the detonator' and was the largest and most powerful patrol vehicle in City Heights) and the two female PCs, Hannah and Abby, were left with the unmarked car. I joined the female PCs and we left the station behind the male PC who was driving 'the detonator'. As we drove behind this car Abby, an outgoing female PC in her mid thirties, remarked to Hannah

*'Boys and their toys! They have wet dreams over that car! It's sad really, he'll never let any of us [female PCs] have that car, he keeps the keys on him the entire shift in case he's called out, just because it's faster and looks better than this.'*

The meanings attached to the patrol vehicle by officers draws on hegemonic discourses of male supremacy, power and machismo. By insisting on driving the most powerful car and making it the preserve of male PCs, the male officers are able to use it in the construction of a macho performance, where the female PCs are not. By possessing this car they are able to demonstrate that they are capable of handling its power and craft an image of themselves that reflects the macho discourses of police culture. However it should also be noted that the way in which Hannah describes the male PCs affection for the car also reveals something about the way in which officers, both male and female, gender the context through the use of coarse or sexualised language and that identity performances are constructed in many different ways.

The interactions, symbols, artefacts and performances described above can be seen to be partly constructed through drawing on the discursive resources of macho self-confidence and these resources were also present in sexualised discussions that took place in the neighbourhood offices, designed to represent exaggerated heterosexuality and demonstrate the virility of the officers. Little regard was given to the potentially sensitive nature of sexual discussions and many officers seemed comfortable to participate in these sorts of discussions. On one occasion I entered the neighbourhood office at City Heights after a patrol with two female PCSOs to find that all the other

officers (3 male PCs and 2 male PCSOs) were all clustered at one end of the office having a discussion about a film that one of the male PCSOs had seen the previous night. The film was 'Lesbian Vampire Killers', a comedy/horror film seemingly marketed at young men, and one of the PCSOs was bemoaning the lack of 'boobs' in the film, *'although loads of the women kiss each other'*. The two female PCSOs that I had arrived back with sat down at the other end of the office and began to update the tasks that we had worked on during the earlier patrol. Although this may be the primary reason why they did not join their colleagues, the bravado and machismo at the other end of the room was evident and there definitely seemed to be a sense of a 'boys club' about the group of men that it may have been seen as too intimidating to approach them and join in. As this line of conversation continued, PCs Hannah and Abby arrived back in the station, and unlike the PCSOs they joined the 'the boys' straightaway and seemed to have no problem giving as laddish a gender performance as the men, giving as good as they got and laughing to each other about the obsession the men seemed to have with the idea of lesbians, and mocking them for it.

PC Hannah in particular seemed to find it easy to construct a type of masculine 'ladette' identity in the back stage, behaving in a boisterously assertive and often crude way. The first time I met Hannah we were introduced by the NPT inspector during a meeting of all the NBMs in City Heights (roughly eight officers were present) and her first words to me about five minutes after her initial *'hello'* were *'Are you married? How big are your feet?'* This joke was laughed off by me and the rest of the PCs who were present and after asking me my religion (she was Jewish and said that she could only marry a Jewish man) she laughingly apologised for making the joke and the meeting continued. Throughout my time at City Heights, I observed how PC Hannah was not afraid to comment on men that she found good looking or to speculate about the relationships of other officers. One occasion, whilst on break and eating a curry that she had cooked for the entire team, she speculated that a male PC and a female PCSO were in a relationship.

*'They're definitely shagging, you can't tell me that they spend all that time out in that office and nothing has happened, you just have to look at them, they're definitely at it and he'll finish it because he's married and she'll be gutted but it serves her right.'*

These examples illustrate the contradictions that could be present within identity performances. Hannah's performance draws on a number of competing discourses that reflect gendered assumptions about femininity but also the gendered culture of policing. By cooking a meal for the other officers (something which no male officers were observed doing while female officers in all of the NPTs would bake cakes or make communal meals) Hannah was incorporating a stereotypically feminine behaviour into her performance, representing discourses of care and mothering. Further to this, hegemonically feminine discourses of sympathy and concern for her colleague who she believes is being used by the male PC are present in her performance. This is in stark contrast to the course 'ladette' language which she uses to express this sympathy, along with its use in everyday interactions with others. This, along with the references to sex and sexual behaviour suggest that her performance was also constructed within the same dominant laddish discourses of the team that her male colleagues drew on. These examples reveal the competing gendered discourses that Hannah draws on in constructing a fluid identity performance that draws on a variety of different discourses depending on the audience and the context in which she is performing (Kondo, 1990).

Macho identity performances were also not confined to the NPT office but were also displayed during the patrols that PCs and PCSOs would make during the day and at night. During one routine night shift patrol that I participated in with PCs Gavin and Rhys and PCSO Liz in Radley, it was decided that a break was in order and we would drive to a local kebab shop to buy some food (The kebab shop was a regular haunt for the PCs and PCSOs and they all received discount from the owners). Gavin and Rhys were both in their early thirties and had over ten years of experience in the police service, the majority of which had been spent in response teams. Liz was in her mid twenties and had been a PCSO for almost four years, all of which had been spent in Radley. Given the distance we were from the station by this point, I expected that the food would be eaten in the van or outside but was surprised when everyone got back into the van and we were driven to Rhys' house, where he lived alone. I was welcomed in with the other officers and given a plate and some cutlery and everyone settled down into the living room and watched the second half of an international under-21s rugby match.

Being in Rhys' home made me feel quite uncomfortable and having to participate in conversations about rugby did not help the matter. It was taken for granted that I would know the details of Welsh rugby and I employed a number of very general platitudes to navigate the conversation. PCSO Liz was reticent and remained fairly quiet throughout our stay, not getting particularly involved in the conversation. On the other hand Gavin and Rhys talked at length about the performance of the teams currently playing before broadening the discussion out to the Welsh rugby team. They began recounting stories about times during their times as response officers when they had become involved with the rugby team on a drunken night out in the city centre and were forced to intervene and ensure they caused no trouble, referring to some of them as 'drunken idiots' in the process. I was relieved when the match ended and we all returned to the van to resume patrolling Radley. The officer's choice of viewing can be seen to conform to the masculine gendered policing culture. In the local area rugby has been closely linked with particular notions of masculinity given the characteristics of its participants (strength, stamina and competitiveness) and the culture of heavy drinking that often surrounds those who watch it. By choosing to watch the match the officers are engaging with this cultural construction and they draw on these discursive resources as well as their experience of policing 'rugby events' in constructing their macho policing identity performances.

In summary, the teasing that neighbourhood officers engaged in, the course language that they used, the overt references to sexual behaviour and their choices of recreational activity have revealed the dominant macho and laddish discourses that are present within all the NPTs. Both male and female PCs and PCSOs are, to some extent, constrained in their identity performances by these dominant discourses, all of which are linked to the canteen culture of policing and to a set of meanings that normalised behaviours that represented self-confidence, virility, competitiveness and physical prowess, as well as the desire to assert dominance over each other (Fielding, 1994, Herbert, 1998, Waddington, 1999, Westmarland, 2001). It was also demonstrated that in the backstage NP officers, both men and women, represented these discourse in different ways, negotiating their roles in different ways. For men this meant a performance which represented the 'red-blooded' ideal of the overtly macho male PC and, in the case of female officers, meant refuting stereotypically feminine behaviour and performing as a 'ladette'. However, there was also evidence

of other types of identity performances, revealing the struggles and contestation around competing discourse linked to policing cultures and different aspects of NP.

### **7.3.2 - Alternative Back Stage Performances: Resisting Gendered Culture**

Whilst many of the backstage performances that were observed reflected the gendered cultures of policing and were constructed through particular types of macho or laddish masculine discourses, there was evidence of other back stage performances. Chapter three explored the idea that individuals were not always bound by dominant discourses but that sub-cultures could emerge which operated with a different set of discourses and resulted in different performances (Martin and Frost, 1999). These alternative performances drew on a range of different discourses that can be understood to be separate from policing 'canteen culture'. Commitment to neighbourhood policing, hard work, age and experience were all seen to be discursive resources drawn on by officers when constructing alternative performances, distinguishing their performances from the majority of their colleagues.

An example of a female officer who did not align her performance with canteen culture and those of her colleagues was Kathleen, an older PCSO in her late forties. Kathleen seemed to spend most of her time patrolling alone rarely chatted with the other younger officers when she was in the office, and did not join in when they were joking with each other. Although she avoided interacting socially with many of her colleagues, there did not seem to be any animosity between Kathleen and her colleagues. Her interactions with her colleagues were primarily related to work matters, involving discussion of events in Radley or internal organisational matters like shift patterns or the planned changes to NP. Instead of drawing on the same macho discourses as her colleagues, her identity performances were constructed through discourses of hard work and commitment to the neighbourhood role and much of her time was spent out in the community rather than in the neighbourhood office.

Kathleen had previously worked within the armed services and so was familiar with working in a militaristic and macho organisational culture. During her interview she commented that

*'some of the male PCs can look down on you and at the end of the day, I've done eighteen years in the military and I'm twenty odd years older than a lot of them and I deserve a little respect I think and I will speak up if I think I have to'.*

This suggests that whilst in the backstage Kathleen constructed a self-confident identity performance that drew on discourses of age and experience, resisting the more dominant macho discourses within this context. Out on patrol with her in Radley, Kathleen, when talking about the atmosphere in the NPT, indicated to me that she'd 'been there and done that' during the time she had spent in the army and that she was very familiar, and to some extent comfortable, with working in a masculine environment. She described how she was happy for her younger colleagues to joke with each other and engage in the sort of macho banter that was also common in the military and that she didn't think any less of them as a result, but that she did not want to behave in the way same way. Kathleen's identity performance is important as it simultaneously legitimises some of the macho discourses drawn on by her colleagues but also constructs a 'space' for her own alternative performance. This space was created by drawing on discourses of age and experience that were used to legitimise her performance, along with a commitment to her PCSO role and hard work.

Another alternative performance was given by PC Phil, who was a beat manager in one of the most distant wards in City Heights, which also had its own local neighbourhood office and who has previously been cited as objecting to the introduction of PCSOs. During his interview Phil stated that he tried to spend as much time as he could in this office and in patrolling in his area, which meant that he spent little time in the central neighbourhood office. Even when Phil was in this central office I observed how he would avoid the joking and non-work related conversations that the other officers engaged in, preferring to keep himself to himself. He could often be found sat at one of the computers searching the internet and POPS database for policing literature. As a result he displayed an identity performance of being serious and highly committed to his role. Phil's non-participation had the effect of segregating him from the other PCs even though he was of a similar age and background to many of his colleagues. During his interview, Phil commented:

*'I joined the NPT because I was tired of rushing around like a headless chicken, chasing after criminals etc. and I wanted the opportunity to work in a more rural area and more with the wildlife trust and this role came up and I took it.'*

These motivations suggest that Phil's performance not only drew, like Kathleen's on discourses of NP and hard work but was also a rejection of harder, response styles of policing. This contributed to his avoidance of masculine forms of social interaction as they are closely intertwined with response policing.

The two cases that have been discussed above do not cover all of the alternative performances given in back stage contexts across the three NPTs but are emblematic of the way in which macho discourses of the 'canteen' culture were contested and refuted by individual officers in constructing their identity performances. Drawing on alternative discourses, such as age, experience and a commitment to the goals of NP, the officers are able to negotiate the competing discourses present within the back stage area of the NPT. This represents a unique setting within the police service where discourses of the canteen culture clash with those linked to NP. These competing discourses create a space that allows individuals to escape organisational regulation and enact individual interests (Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). Whilst these alternative identity performances were observed within the back stage contexts of all three NPTs, the dominance of the gendered culture of policing and its influence on identity performances should be acknowledged. One potential reason for why it is so difficult to resist regulatory forces could be the negative side-effects alternatives performances can have for the performer (Alvesson and Due Billing, 1997).

The discussion around the normalising of gendered identity performances to reflect gendered culture means that it is important to explore what happens when individuals do resist and what impact alternative gendered performances can have on an individual's cultural acceptance. Alternative performances that do not draw on dominant discourses, run the risk of being singled out as unacceptable, leaving the performer vulnerable to exclusion or ridicule, as was suggested in chapter three (Devine, 2010, Hunt, 1990, Prokos and Padavic, 2002). One example of this was found in Greenside and the backstage performance of Debbie. Debbie, a young female PC who had worked in the NPT for 2 years and had yet to work on response,



had written plans for an operation to tackle underage drinking in the area and had spent a great deal of time planning the operation (which involved PCs and PCSOs visiting local pubs and checking the age of the people inside) and typing it out on the station computer. After she had finished, she printed the document and submitted it her Sergeant for approval. Whilst she was doing this, the two male PCSOs also assigned to her ward (Matt and Evan) began looking through their copy. Matt was the first to comment, *“Look, she’s put a picture on the front! A chain, because it’s operation chain!”* Evan responded *“She really does go all out, doesn’t she? She loves this sort of thing, writing operations and stuff”*. These comments were meant in a derogatory way that criticised Debbie’s commitment to her role, the aesthetic of the operation manual that she had written and her desire to ensure that it looked as professional as possible. This was emblematic of the way in which many of her colleagues viewed her, although they did not dislike her, many were amused by the fastidious way she would adhere to almost every aspect of the guidelines laid down, ensuring that her pocket book was always correctly filled in and making sure that she completed all the follow up calls that related to occurrences she has dealt with, something which the two PCSOs would discuss whilst on patrol.

Whilst the PCSOs and Debbie largely engaged in friendly interaction, this instance seemed designed to undermine the performance that Debbie was giving. Debbie was constructing a back stage performance that draws more on the discourses of neighbourhood policing than those of the canteen culture and this example demonstrates the negative consequences that can result from this performance. To some extent Debbie is denied social acceptance, is separated from her colleagues and, for a time, excluded from the social aspects of the NPT. Similar to the way the male PC instructors in the training school treated a superior female officer, the comments made by the PCSOs also reveal the complex dynamics of gender and power. The comments of the male PCSOs served to undermine Debbie’s performance and status within the team, despite her seniority to them. This illustrates the link between gender and power, whereby constructing someone as feminine is seen as negative, especially in a macho gendered culture (Butler, 2000).

Although Debbie’s performance was undermined because it focussed on ensuring that NP was performed properly, there were also examples of performances being

undermined through gendered discourses. This was evident on the arrival of PCSO Carl and Ellie in Radley, who I had followed into this station from the PCSO training school. Their identity performances received different reactions from their colleagues despite arriving at the same time and with a similar level of experience in the role. As described in the previous chapter Carl adopted a less overtly laddish performance than his fellow PCSO recruits in the training school but one which nevertheless achieved acceptance due to his age and experience. Carl continued to give this type of performance in Radley and felt that he had fitted in well. During a conversation between a male PC and PCSO Liz (who was his probationary supervisor) the male PC observed that *'He's a good bloke, he knows what he's doing, he's got his head screwed on right'*. Liz agreed with this and suggested that he'd be a good PCSO once he had gained some experience. The way in which they described Carl seemed to indicate that he would find social acceptance an easy prospect.

On the other hand, from a conversation I overheard, in which she was not present, it would seem that Ellie would face more of a struggle. In the previous chapter we saw how Ellie had challenged many of the dominant discourses within the training as well as in the police culture generally and in the NPT I observed how some officers singled her out for ridicule. During some downtime in the office a PCSO mentioned Ellie, to which one male PC said *'Oh you mean 'Ugly Betty'<sup>6</sup>'?* All of the assembled PCs and PCSOs chuckled and one male PC responded *'You can't call her that!...'* to which the male PC who made the comment replied *'Oh it's okay, I'm not saying that she looks like her or anything!'* This comparison was not intended to be a flattering one and, given that the PC had chosen to focus on her appearance rather than her job performance, had gendered connotations. The focus on her appearance rather than any other aspect of performance suggests that the male PC was attempting to undermine her by making a sexist remark. Ellie's back stage performance, one of self-confidence, bordering on obtuseness that she constructed in the PCSO training school, again displayed a resistance to the dominant laddish discourses of canteen culture and put her at odds with her colleagues.

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<sup>6</sup> A character from an American comedy series who wore similar glasses to Ellie's and is viewed as ugly by the other characters

## 7.4 - Conclusion

This chapter began by exploring the differences and similarities between the three NPTs which were observed. It found that each NPT displayed different characteristics, especially in relation to the relationships between PCs and PCSOs. This is significant as these types of contextual factors have been shown to influence the performances that are constructed, both in the back stage and the front (Martin, 2006, West and Zimmerman, 1987). Many of the performances within the back stage were found to be dominated by discourses of policing canteen culture. Macho and laddish interactions served to reinforce and normalise the overtly masculine culture that exists within the police service (Sharp, 1998, Waddington, 1999). Whilst the regulatory effect of gendered discourses was significant, it was not total. Some PCs were seen to occupy other subject positions related to age and experience and draw on alternative discourses which reflected other discourses, such as commitment to NP and a propensity of hard work. Whilst performances were varied and contested, what has been illustrated is the importance of understanding the role of organisational culture in constructing identity and gendered identity performances. Where by they act as scenes of constraint for individuals who must display agency through navigating the competing and conflicting discourses culture contains (Butler, 2000).

By highlighting the importance of the NPT context and the discourses of policing culture this thesis will now explore how these concepts affect the front stage, where similar contestation around policing discourses emerge.

## Chapter Eight

### Policing in Public: Front Stage Performances

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#### 8.1 - Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to continue to reveal the importance of the struggles of neighbourhood officers as they navigate the competing discourses and contested meanings of NP in the different contexts in which it is performed. Having explored how the back stage identity performances of officers are constructed in private spaces, it is possible to examine how officers engage in similar sense-making activities in the front stage (Alvesson, 2002). The chapter will show how the front stage is not a single context but is instead made up of multiple contexts, each of which represent a particular discursive field where competing discourses are drawn on in the construction of identity performances (Hardy and Phillips, 2004). This chapter will therefore examine the range of contexts within which NP is performed in the front stage and how different identity performances are constructed in situ by PCs and PCSOs. As in chapter six in relation to the training of PCSOs, we see within these contexts struggles over the meanings of community and professionalism and the contested discourses that are revealed in the way NP is enacted (Davies and Thomas, 2008). As a result, we see how officers construct, reconstruct or refute different discourses in their performance of particular identities within particular contexts. The continuing influence of policing culture is also felt in the construction of these performances as the types of masculine performances that were influenced by the gendered canteen culture discussed in chapter seven will, in some cases and contrary to other research (Fielding, 1994, Waddington, 1999), be transferred to front stage contexts.

The chapter will begin by examining how PCs and PCSOs draw on different discourses in constructing identity performances within dealing with the public in 'anti-social' contexts, where different meanings are attached to 'law-breakers'. It will then continue to examine the meanings of 'community' by exploring how

neighbourhood officers understand members of the public in different ways and how identity performances are constructed to reflect this (Wake et al., 2007). Finally, the notion of professionalism will be explored. Reflecting the findings of chapter six, the conflict between established understandings of ‘real’ police work will be seen to clash with the discourses of NP and the new type of professionalism it represents (Crank, 1998, Innes, 2005).

## **8.2 – Disorderly Behaviour: Dealing with Conflict**

One of the multiple contexts in which neighbourhood officers were observed performing in centred on interaction with individuals who were engaging in some sort of anti-social behaviour. Although neighbourhood officers are tasked with delivering a specific type of policing that encourages them to develop relationships with their community and partner agencies, they are still expected to fulfil the police service’s primary role of maintaining public order and upholding the rule of law when required. All police officers are expected to willingly enter situations where they must interact with disorderly members of the public who may be intoxicated or behaving anti-socially (Fielding, 1994, Miller, 1999). In these anti-social contexts, citizens or community members are constructed as law-breakers and a potential danger or nuisance to the general public and in conflict with one of the police’s primary functions. This section will begin by exploring the performances constructed by PCs and how they can be seen to be influenced by established notions of ‘real’ police work but also how the particular types of masculine performance observed in back stage are also represented. It will then move on to examine how PCSOs, with their limited power and ability to enter into potentially dangerous positions draw on different discourses when performing in this context.

### **8.2.1 – PCs in Anti-Social Contexts**

In exploring how PCs performed in anti-social contexts it became evident that their performances were heavily influenced by discourses of ‘real’ policing, the performances that are associated with response style policing and the gendered cultures that constructed back stage performances. The vast majority of neighbourhood PCs working in the NPTs had previous experience of this style of

policing while working in response teams so were very familiar with macho response style identity performances and during their interviews many of these NP officers stated that they preferred performing in this way and were keen to distance themselves from NPs 'pink and fluffy' image.

*'When I joined the police force, I joined to arrest people, I still do arrest people so I find that quite easy. I use all my powers well, my arrest powers, my stop search powers, that's really what I gravitate to, arresting people, stop searching people is second nature, I did it for eleven years...and that's what I do because I'm a police man....It's [NP] not the policing that I'm used to, coming from London, it's very different, very different type of policing, unfortunately I can see NP as very 'touchy, feely' and that's not why people join the job, well when I joined the job, that's not why I joined and I don't know if it's what I want to do.'*

PC Nick, Radley

*'[When working on response] It's the pace, the variety, the deals with crimes, the job satisfaction is more because you feel like you're doing more. Although what I'm doing now [NP work] is work, you don't feel like you're doing a lot because you're doing things in a different way and it's a slower pace and I'm used to a faster pace'*

PC Abby, City Heights

These views are compounded by the way in which many PCs asserted that they did not want to be 'social workers', 'youth workers' or 'counsellors' and felt that their NP roles were increasingly requiring them to act this way. This feeling was typified by a male PC in City Heights during a car journey when he observed that:

*'This role, neighbourhood policing, I mean, you've got to do things like this, sorting out people's problems and stuff but we're not social workers. You hear people say that we should be out catching criminals and part of me thinks the same'.*

The views of these PCs indicate how the identity performances they describe and prefer are understood more readily as 'real' police work. There were many examples during my observations of the three teams where, in 'conflict' situations, neighbourhood PCs readily and to some extent eagerly, displayed the types of macho

performances associated with response style policing. Many of these situations of involved interacting with intoxicated members of the public or teenagers congregating in large groups in areas known for anti-social behaviour.

The first of these examples occurred when two male officers from Radley, Rhys and Gavin, who were the PCs who were seen to readily draw on macho discourses in their backstage performances while for example watching rugby during their breaks from patrolling, questioned a group of teenagers who were congregating in a park known as a site of anti-social behaviour. As we parked outside the park a group of approximately fifteen youths were gathered, the majority of whom were wearing hooded jumpers with the hoods pulled up. As we are getting out of the van, Rhys informs me that they just want to tell the group that they can stay within the confines of the park if they keep away from the local shops, which had complained about being frequent victims of vandalism. Rhys and Gavin approached the group with confidence and without any sense of intimidation, they called the group over and began to tell them how they wanted the night to go. PC Rhys began talking to the group.

*'Come over here guys.....You don't have any alcohol do you? I don't mind if you want to sit out here in the cold all night as long as you don't cause a nuisance but stay away from the shops up there.'*

The teenagers vehemently objected to this saying that they only go to the shops to buy food and drinks and didn't commit any vandalism.

*'Yeah that may be but you go in big groups and hang around in the doorways, imagine your mum or your nan were walking down the street and saw you in a big group, do you think they'd want to push past you to get it in? No, they wouldn't so have a bit of sense.'*

The tone used by Rhys was firm and fairly loud so that everyone would hear and understand that they were in charge. At this point a hooded teenage boy aged around 15 began mumbling 'but we haven't done anything!' in an aggressive and annoyed way before turning to walk away.

*'Oi! Look at me when I'm talking to you! Pull that hood down, look at me! What's with the attitude? Have a little respect when someone's talking to you. Right, if anything goes wrong tonight with you guys, then I'm coming looking for you! Got it!?'*

With this the boy nodded and grunted and the group of youths were left to return to congregating around the swings and we returned to the Police van. Within this example it is possible to see how Rhys constructed an authoritative performance in this anti-social context and in response to the potentially disruptive behaviour of the teenagers. During the interaction the presence and behaviour of the teenagers represented a potential threat to public order, the safety of local businesses and, when objecting to being seen this way by the officers, they are constructed as anti-police and unruly. As a result of this, Rhys' behaviour during this encounter, attempting to reason with group but also to impose control when some members of the group were perceived to be resisting his advice drew on discourses of police power, status and control. These discourses continued to be represented as Rhys' identity performances become more forceful and aggressive in reply to the youth's ongoing resistance to the officers' attempts at gaining control of the situation and the lack of respect they gave to his position.

These types of performances were displayed by other officers throughout my time observing them in anti-social contexts and were especially prevalent amongst PCs when they were required to deal with intoxicated members of the public. One illustrative example of the interactions that took place with drunken individuals came when I observed Ben and Rhys, again in Radley, although similar incidents also occurred in City Heights. The shift began with the two PCs conducting targeted patrols around Radley in a police riot van focussing on areas that were often scenes of anti-social behaviour and we were soon joined by PCSO Liz. As the van approached a junction, Ben and Rhys spotted a man in his early twenties shouting across the street at a woman of similar age. The atmosphere in the van seemed to change in a split second after the man on the street turned his attention to the police van and shouted '...and you can fuck off too!' Ben stopped the van dead, still in the middle of road and both PCs leapt from the van to confront the man.



Ben and Rhys forcibly escorted the man away from roadside and advised the man that his behaviour needed to change.

*'Look mate, you've had a few to drink, I can tell, you need to calm down and walk away, you're not seeing you're girlfriend tonight so you might as well go home.'*

The man objected to this and began to question the PCs.

*'You can't tell me what to do, I haven't done anything!'*

*'Look! I'm telling you, TURN AROUND! WALK AWAY!'*

*'Or what?!'*

*'Or you're coming in! Walk away!'*

By now the PCs and the man were squaring up to each other and Ben was either pointing at or poking the man (it was difficult to tell from the door of the van, where I was sat). Whether the man was pointed at or poked, he began to become visibly more aggressive. Ben responded to this.

*'Don't you eyeball me! I've given you a warning, walk away now or that's it!'*

The man remained motionless, staring at Ben. Almost immediately Rhys grabbed the man by the arm and pinned him against the van with the man's arm now behind his back. The man began to shout and struggle against Rhys whilst he was handcuffed and put in the back of the van. We arrived at the custody yard at Radley police station and Rhys went inside to begin the paper work relating to the arrest of the man. Ben, Liz and I remained outside in the yard and Ben began to smoke. My shock at the speed and suddenness of the arrest must have been evident to Liz who asked me whether I was feeling okay. I confessed that what I had witnessed had shaken me, especially given how quickly the officers were able to switch from relaxed chatting to

the overt expression of power needed to arrest someone when required. Liz understood, saying that she had felt the same when she had witnessed her first arrest,

*'It's quite shocking isn't it? I remember when I first started and saw people being arrested, it's something you get used to but watching someone you see every shift in the office shout and handcuff someone was quite difficult at first'.*

As with the performances given when dealing with the teenagers described previously, the context in which this interactions took place had a significant impact on the way in which the officers constructed their performances. In this anti-social context the behaviour of the drunk man represented a potential danger to others and himself and could have resulted in a crime being committed. The confrontational behaviour of the man when asked to walk away also questioned the police officers' ability to uphold the law and meant that their performance had to address this challenge and restore control.

The discussion above has highlighted how, when performing in anti-social contexts, PCs preferred to construct performances which drew on dominant discourses of police authority and force that are representative of response style policing (Miller, 1999). This is attributed to not only their previous experience of working in response teams but also the association that this performance has with established understandings of 'real' policing. From the interviews it is evident that for many of the officers, the act of policing should not involve discourses of care and concern (those associated with being a social worker) but meant enforcing the law and maintaining order. The association that these macho policing performances have with 'real' policing also implicates gendered policing cultures and the role they have in perpetuating this construction of policing identities (Davies and Thomas, 2008). Just as policing culture was seen to normalise overtly macho and laddish behaviour in the back stage, its influence is felt in the front stage, in the way that officers preferred to construct macho performances. This suggests that while these officers may be working within the NPT, within this context, their behaviour, understanding and preferred performance of policing is still greatly influenced by the discourses of response policing and the legitimacy it is given through gendered policing cultures.

However, this was not the only way in which neighbourhood officers were observed performing in anti-social contexts. The next section will examine how, when faced with similar situations, PCSOs drew on different discourses in constructing their identity performances.

### **8.2.2 - PCSOs in Anti-Social Contexts**

The role of PCSOs in anti-social contexts is less clear given their limited powers and equipment, along with their civilian status, which means that they cannot interact in the same ways as their PC colleagues. The PCSO role is 'non-confrontational' (Metropolitan Police Service, 2011) and they are instructed to avoid situations that may place them in physical danger. Their non-confrontational status means that they are only equipped with stab vests (although this varies from force to force) for protection and have no combative equipment, unlike PCs who carry CS sprays, batons and handcuffs. They also only receive limited personal safety training in anticipation of the relative safety of their role. Due to these differences between the PC and PCSO role, PCSOs were primarily confined to interacting in disorderly contexts involving children and teenagers that were not seen as a threat to their safety. However, the disorderly conduct performed in these contexts can still be understood to represent conflict with the aims of the police service and require a specific identity performance from the PCSOs.

Due to their limited powers and lack of equipment, PCSOs were unable to give a similar performance to their PC colleagues when confronted with anti-social contexts. Instead, their performance centred on discourses of community spirit, collective responsibility and guilt and was seen to accomplish a similar end result. This was seen in my observations of PCSO Kathleen, who worked in Radley and who in the backstage rejected the laddish masculine discourses and bravado of the canteen culture. . On one foot patrol we encountered a group of boys and girls, approximately thirteen years of age, in a local park and who appeared to have been misbehaving. The swings in the park had been twisted around their frame to the point that they were no longer usable, Kathleen approached the group.

*'Hi guys...did you twist those swings around the frames?'* The group turned and responded to Kathleen's question.

*'No they were like that when we got here.'*

*'Oh okay, it's just I could hear the chains rattling as we walked up the street and it looks like you've been here a while so I thought you'd know something about it.'*

Realising that they'd been caught out, the group continued to deny they had anything to do with the swings but tried to start restoring them to working order.

*'Good, hopefully you can get them down, you see why there's a problem though don't you? Because mum's and their kids will come down tomorrow and if the swings are still tangled up there then they won't be able to use them will they? And can you make sure you take any of your rubbish with you as well please because we want it to be a nice place for everyone tomorrow, don't we?'*

The group agreed and picked up a few bottles from the floor and put them in the bin. As we walked away Kathleen was happy with the exchange and told me that she preferred to deal with situations in this way. Kathleen's identity performance was friendly but firm and the discourses she drew on emphasised the importance of community, family and individual/collective responsibility. By highlighting the other members of the community that use the park and how their behaviour was going to make it more difficult for these people to use the park, Kathleen was drawing on broader family and societal discourses that are more likely to resonate with the children. In displaying this identity performance I saw how Kathleen was able to create a dialogue with the children and achieve the results she desired without the need to control or intimidate them. It is suggested that Kathleen, and the other PCSOs, when confronted with anti-social behaviour were less influenced by discourses of police control and force and drew on a broader range of discursive resources, some of which are linked to wider aspects of NP and community engagement.

This performance reflects a very different approach to the performances adopted by PCs and reflects Kathleen's avoidance of harder, more authoritarian discourses

contained within policing culture, something which was also reflected in her back stage performance, further illustrating how discourses influence performance in both stages. The performances given by the PCSOs in this context suggest that they were less influenced by established occupational identities and response style policing as the PCs and as a result, better able to incorporate discourses of NP more easily.

The anti-social context required officers to restore order and challenge potentially illegal behaviour and the PCs and PCSOs were seen to have very different approaches to achieving this outcome, related mainly to the powers afforded to their roles and their established occupational identities. Although all of the performances can be seen as authoritative, PCs relied on discourses of power, force and status in order to achieve their desired aim, while PCSOs relied on a sense of community spirit, collective responsibility and discourses of family in order resolve the situations. The way in which officers draw on different competing discourses within the same context illustrates the agency of officers in constructing their identity performances and the way in which these performances are constrained and regulated by dominant discourses. The performances given by the PCs were seen to be highly influenced by masculine understandings of 'real' police work and an occupational identity that is based on traditional, response style forms of policing. PCSOs on the other hand, were better able to construct performances that included discourses and meanings more associated with wider aspects of NP because of their role's closer association with this policing style and their main focus on community engagement.

As well as illustrating the competing discourses present within anti-social contexts, this section has highlighted the relationship between performative contexts. Goffman's (1959) concept of front and back stages suggests that the two are entirely separate, that performances in the front stage are only geared towards the current audience and in the back then they are free of constraining social frames (or discourses). However, just as others have explored the potential benefits of exploring the tensions between front and back stages and suggest that the two stages should not be treated as separate (Bolton, 2001, Brickell, 2005), the performances of the PCs and PCSOs illustrate how performance can endure across different contexts. Just as dominant discourses within policing culture normalised laddish interactions in the back stage, the discourses of response style policing were drawn on in anti-social

contexts. This suggests that normalising affect of policing culture is felt in the front stage as well as the back, especially in this context where anti-social behaviour is dealt by constructing an overtly macho performance which emphasises force and authority. This is contrary to the findings of Waddington (1999), who argued that behaviour in the police station is not necessarily related to behaviour when dealing with the public. PCSO Kathleen's performance can also be connected to her back stage performance, where she was found to eschew the dominant discourse and construct a performance which highlighted her commitment to community engagement and hard work. This same focus is reflected in her behaviour in anti-social contexts, where she again drew on discourses of community engagement and community spirit to manage the situation. Community engagement is a fundamental aspect of the NPTs' front stage contexts and it is to this concept that we now turn.

### **8.3 – Community Engagement: Contested Meanings and Discourses**

This section will examine the different contexts in which discourses of community were constructed. The concept of community is important as one of the primary aims of NP is to improve the relationship that the police service had with the community and one way to achieve this is through increased community engagement by neighbourhood officers (Home Office, 2005). This engagement is designed to make local officers more aware of their communities needs and to improve the relationship between the police and the most disenfranchised societal groups (Savage, 2009). It was intended that by making neighbourhood officers responsible for this engagement that victims of crime, vulnerable adults or any individual who came into contact with the police would have a more satisfying experience of dealing with the service. Thus, an important discourse within neighbourhood policing constructs a singular view of the community as deserving of police attention and also deserving of care and concern. The Police service is no longer seen as an organisation that is solely responsible for apprehending criminals but is constructed as having a duty of care to all member of the community and is expected to ensure that their safety is maintained at all times. As a result of this, the aims of NPTs in this context can be seen to have much in common with other service organisations, such as social services and charities.

This duty of care creates a context which, for some officers, represents a significant departure from the sort of environments that police officers are used to performing in. As was discussed in chapter four, it is these sorts of demands that have often led to NP being seen as ‘soft’ and a more feminine style of policing (Innes, 2005, Miller, 1999) and we have already seen in this chapter how many neighbourhood PCs have difficulties with this aspect of the role, rupturing this discourse of ‘care in the community’ with the alternative discourse of ‘real policing’ and of catching criminals or upholding law and order. As indicated in Chapter 6, community engagement and support requires officers to demonstrate communication skills, victim support skills and become embedded in their communities. However, within that earlier chapter it was shown how the concept of community is both ambiguous and complex and is the subject of contested meanings and discourses. This section will suggest that at different times the community was constructed as deserving of police support and attention, while at others the public is understood to be undeserving, when a minimum level of service is given or when time spent with them is seen as wasted.

### **8.3.1 – Dealing with the Deserving Community**

Over the course of the observation periods in the three NPTs, it became evident that the ‘deserving community’ was primarily constructed during interactions with vulnerable members of the public. PCSOs especially could spend entire shifts making calls on individuals that had little or no connection to traditional policing matters (relating to crimes that had been committed etc.). The time and energy put into these interactions meant that many of the PCSOs that were observed had built up a number of close relationships with the vulnerable adults in their ward. The identity performances that they adopted whilst doing this were always friendly and concerned, connecting with individuals on an emotional level. These officers emphasised the importance of engaging with the community and viewed vulnerable community members as deserving of police attention. Many of the PCSOs suggested that part of their job was often to do the work of a social worker or other non-policing roles. PCSO Arthur, a male in his early 50s working in Greenside suggested in his interview that

*'As a PCSO, you've got to be many things, a teacher, a social worker, an active member of the community, you know, it's about being lots of different things to different people.'*

This observation was not made to point out a negative reality of the PCSO role but instead confirm that Arthur felt that the PCSO role included a significant amount of social care which meant forming a variety of different relationships with different types of people. Arthur demonstrated the 'teacher' performance whilst on his weekly visit to a local school where he took the children out on to the streets to teach them road safety. As we left the school he took two of the fifteen five year olds by the hand and led them across a number of roads asking what they should be doing to ensure that they crossed the road safely and telling them that their teachers, parents and himself all wanted them to be careful when near roads so they wouldn't come to any harm. This identity performance came easily to Arthur, who later told me that he had grand children of a similar age. Whilst patrolling with Arthur in Greenside I was able to observe another interaction which took place with a vulnerable member of the community and why he felt that the PCSO role could be confused with that of a social worker. As we walked through Arthur's ward he decided that we should call on an elderly man who was housebound and received daily visits from a carer. After walking to the house and ringing the doorbell, there was no answer. This worried Arthur as he knew that the man's carer should have arrived by now and he circled the house looking in windows for signs of movement. After finding none he consulted his pocketbook where he had written the number of the nursing agency who provided the carer and while dialling he said:

*'I visit here most shifts, just to check in on him and I've got the number of his agency just for times like this, the nurses should be here by now and he can't get out of bed without them'.*

However, just as Arthur began speaking with the agency, the man's nurses arrived and said they had been held up in traffic. They let Arthur into the house and he checked that the man was okay and chatted for a while. This lasted a little over five minutes but demonstrated, along with the lengths that Arthur was willing to go in order to ensure the man was not in any distress, the discourses which Arthur used to construct



a 'sympathetic' identity performance. The performance was constructed within the broader discourse of community engagement as Arthur sought to maintain the relationship that he had built with that man but this specific interaction also represented discourses of care for the vulnerable and concern for the man's wellbeing, akin to those found in social work.

Another example of a PCSO performing in a similar context was found in the visits that I made with PCSO Liz in Radley. Our first visit was a follow up call to a woman with mental health issues who has been involved in a number of disputes with her neighbours. She lived in a set of low level flats that are used to house people on social security and was well known to Liz, who had been required to visit her on a number of occasions to discuss disputes between her and her neighbours. She seemed pleased to see Liz and immediately invited her in and, after Liz explained who I was, invited me also. The flat was full of smoke from the woman's cigarettes and not very clean but Liz was unfazed and immediately began enquiring about the woman's wellbeing. She chatted without difficulty with her, beginning with by saying

*'Alright Trace? How are you? What are you up to today? Have you got your class at the memorial hall today?'*

She seemed to know a great deal about her life, she knew who her boyfriend was, what her hobbies were and where she was planning on going on holiday. What I was most surprised by was the ease at which they chatted, had Liz not been in uniform they could be mistaken for friends. The only police business that was discussed was a quick question about whether there had been any reoccurrence in the neighbour disturbances. The sympathetic performance that Liz constructed during the visit drew on similar discourses to that of Arthur. She demonstrated compassion for the woman and expressed concern about her wellbeing without needing to rely on her position as PCSO. We have seen how Liz in previous encounters and interactions within 'backstage' contexts navigated some of the masculine discourses of policing culture and here we see her subverting these discourses through engaging in a caring way with a vulnerable member of the community.

Examining the performances given by Arthur and Liz in contexts where ensuring the welfare of others is prominent gives an insight into how they understand the PCSO role and how they construct an important part of their occupational identity, especially in terms of particular gendered connotations. The ways in which they constructed their identity performances in dealing with vulnerable and deserving members of the community are based on more stereotypically feminine performances of care and sympathy and subverts the dominance of masculine discourses which are inherent in some constructions of policing. My observations of the NPTs suggested that it may be easier for PCSOs to construct these performances as they may be less constrained by the 'macho' discourses of real policing. The civilian nature of their role and the relatively recent introduction of PCSOs may contribute to them being less bound by response-led, policing culture and the way it can regulate identity performance. These performances may also fit with the PCSOs' preferred construction of self as during their interviews they talked about the satisfaction they derive from getting to know the community. Whilst talking with Liz as she made her patrols it was clear that she had spent time as a PCSO establishing her presence in the community and being friendly with, or at least known by, many of most vulnerable members of her ward. During Liz's interview she expressed that this was one of the parts of the PCSO role that she enjoyed the most.

*'The best thing I like is, I say the social aspect but it's not, it's getting to know your community and you see such a wide range of people throughout the town and because my area is so spread out you have so many different varieties as well...I enjoy getting to know them, that's when a rapport builds up and it's easy then.'*

*PCSO Liz, Radley*

The excerpt from Liz's interview is illustrative of views held by many of the PCSOs who were observed and interviewed and it was primarily PCSOs who highlighted the importance of engaging with a diverse community as a feature of NP that they enjoyed.

### **8.3.2 – Dealing with the undeserving community**

In contrast to performances described previously, some interactions with members of the community were conducted in a very different way. In some contexts the community were treated as undeserving of police time and attention and this was reflected in the performances of the officers. This section will explore how some officers provided a 'minimum service' to members of community that they believed brought problems on themselves, a view of the community that was also present in the PCSO training school. It will also address the response of officers to the increased involvement in determining policing priorities, finding that the community are often constructed as time wasters. Both of these understandings of the community will be shown to stem from traditional policing identities.

### **8.3.2.1 – Providing a 'minimum' service**

Frequently neighbourhood officers were required to deal with vulnerable members of the community on a regular basis. Often due to their circumstances they could become involved in ongoing disputes that require prolonged police involvement. One example of this context has already been discussed, in the example of PCSO Liz, but her sympathetic performance was not the only one given in this context. Instead of viewing these members of the community as in need of support and concern, some officers constructed them as distractions from more important issues and only requiring a 'minimum' level of service. The performance that resulted from this view of the community was observed when I accompanied two PCs visit to a member of their City Heights ward. PC Abby and PC Chris' visit was to a woman who had persistently reported nuisance phone calls and unwanted visits from her ex-partner. During the car ride to the woman's house both Abby and Chris made it clear that they thought that this woman brought most of her troubles on herself and her house was considered a 'drop-in' centre for a number of 'undesirable' people in the area. As we approached her front door, through a small front garden populated by a number of dead plants, Chris turned to me and said 'ready for the witch?' and laughed. He then knocked on the door and the woman pulled up the blind of her window and realised it was the police. The woman was probably in her early forties and was wearing her dressing gown. Chris then turned back to me and said 'makes you sick doesn't it?'

During PC Abby and Chris' discussion with the woman (which was conducted through the kitchen window) they repeatedly questioned the woman's claims, asking whether she had given the partner her mobile number and whether she had invited the people she was complaining about to her house in the first place. PC Abby led the conversation with the woman.

*'So your ex-partner still has your number from before yeah?'*

*'Yeah'*

*'Well have you thought about getting a new number, that way he wouldn't be able to ring you anymore.'*

*'Yeah well I did get a new number but he got it off a friend of mine and now he rings me on that number, asking me if he can come round and I tell him he can't! But he does anyway.'*

*'Ahh, he got it off your friend did he? And you definitely didn't invite him over?'*

*'No I only invite my friends round but sometimes he's with them and comes with them.'*

Their questions implied that they did not necessarily believe everything that the woman was saying and their behaviour during the interaction was less about engaging with a vulnerable member of the community than it was about investigating whether the matter was deserving of police intervention or whether she had brought the problem on herself allowing them to leave. After the questioning was complete the officers confirmed to me and each other that although the woman was a victim of unwanted calls and visits that she brought them on herself and even if they took the matter further the CPS wouldn't prosecute because she was considered an unreliable witness and had failed to turn up in court on previous occasions.

The difference between the performances adopted by the PCs described here and PCSO Liz was clear. Where as many PCSOs, such as Liz and Kathleen, had

embraced NP ideals like community engagement in both the front and back stages, it is clear that Chris and Abby were not that engaged with the process. One potential explanation may lie in their work environment. As already established previously, the inspectors at City Heights placed far more emphasis on partnership working than community engagement as a means officers may not have engaged with this type of work as much. This outcome was supported during an interview with Abby, when she discussed her role within the NP.

*'I didn't look to go into the department for that type of work, I went to go in as a tutor. It's not what I wanted to do, ideally I would have stayed on response and tutored there because that's what I enjoy...it was never anything that I would have applied for, to do the role I do now...It's not that I don't enjoy it, it's a different role and a slower role and I didn't come to the department to do it, I came to tutor, I didn't want to do the role, I wanted to tutor and pootle along back to [a response] shift when I was done. I don't want to sound all negative because I am trying to embrace it but for me, I know it's a temporary measure at most and at the moment I'm looking for jobs...To be honest, this isn't a hard role to do, the majority of it can be done by PCSOs and I will get crimes to investigate and I like that because it takes me away from the community side of it...the hardest thing is probably the community contact...the talking to Mrs. Jones about her neighbour's cat...'*

PC Abby, City Heights

Instead of focussing on building a relationship with the woman, who she had met a number of times before, Abby adopts a performance that remains emotionally dispassionate and treats the situation in a highly procedural way, as she would any other criminal investigation, only establishing facts and apportioning blame. She constructs NP as undemanding, unexciting and a less challenging form of police work and this part of the community as undeserving of their time and effort. This has a significant impact on her performance as she draws on discourses of 'real' police work and refers to community engagement as work that is best performed by PCSOs, something which has previously been commented upon as PCSOs suggest that their major contribution is to deal with this sort of work so PCs are free to engage in harder forms of policing. During other parts of the interview Abby made it clear that she

understood and agreed with the goals of NP but that she had little interest in achieving them and she was actively seeking redeployment. Thus it is unsurprising that her attempts at community engagement are still constructed through an emotionally detached view of the community and her interactions echo the style of policing more associated with response teams. Although I was unable to conduct a similar interview with Chris, views that he voiced during my time at City Heights suggest that he may have had similar views about NP and Chris's behaviour also seemed to reflect a similar struggle.

### **8.3.2.2 – The Community as ‘Time Wasters’**

A second undeserving construction of the community was found in relation to their involvement in determining policing priorities. As part of the NP programme, neighbourhood officers are required to hold regular PACT meetings which enable the community to set priorities that they feel need police attention. Officers are also expected to work in partnership with other groups such as community groups, neighbourhood watch groups and local charities. Despite conducting these meetings or working with these groups it was common for neighbourhood officers to express their uncertainty about the benefits that community involvement brings. Whilst riding to a PACT meeting, I asked PC James, an experienced PC in his 40s who had worked in NPT for 2 years, what he thought about the upcoming meeting.

*‘Well, it’ll be the same as last time. I know what they’re going to say, they’ll complain about the kids that hang around outside the shops, they’ll complain about the speeding cars by the school and dog fouling will probably come up again. We’ll set those three as priorities and we’ll focus on trying to stop it. Thing is, whatever we do, it’s never enough, they just tell us the same thing, and things like dog fouling aren’t even in our remit, that’s the councils job!’*

I asked him if he saw any benefits to the PACT process.

*‘Well I definitely know the community better than I would otherwise and they know me, but it is the same hardcore of people who attend every month and raise the same issues over and over, it’s almost impossible to get new people to attend.’*

This view of PACT and the community's involvement in policing represents a different construction of the community, one where listening to the self-interested input of a small 'hardcore' of individuals in formal meetings is seen as a waste of police time. Echoing the warning that the PC instructor offered the PCSO recruits, that people at PACT meetings 'are there to moan', many of the neighbourhood officers felt that their time was not being effectively used when they were listening to community input. This has obvious associations with officers' professional identity and discourses of 'real' policing and will be explored in greater depth in the next section.

#### **8.4 – Performing Professionally: Contested understandings of Policing Identities**

The multiple constructions of community and the performances that were given as a result begin to illustrate the conflicting and complex understandings of NP professionalism. Much has been made of the new style of policing the NP represents and its conflict with discourses of 'real' policing (Davies and Thomas, 20008, Innes, 2005). As was seen in chapter six, professionalism was understood to be represented through conflicting understandings of emotionality and rationality, where rational behaviour was deemed 'professional' and acting emotional and engaging with the community was unprofessional. Dominant discourses of 'real' policing construct professionalism were seen to be implicated in partner working. Partner working requires neighbourhood officers to allow non-policing groups to play a part in determining how the local community policed and as a result discourses of cooperation and compromise are present. Discourses of expertise are also important but remain contested as different forms of professional knowledge and aims possessed by the participating groups compete for priority. With the exception of the government, the police have historically been the only group that have determined policing priorities and an important constituent of PC occupational identity was the way in which policing knowledge and expertise is privileged over that of the general public's. Working in collaboration means that this privilege is less important and other views and opinions must be taken into account, even if they are in conflict with the police's. In addition to discourses of policing expertise, the other agencies

involved have their own spheres of knowledge and experience of tackling problems in a particular way which may place them in opposition to the police service.

The discourses present in partnership contexts resulted in different performances being constructed as officers chose to craft them in a variety of ways. Some neighbourhood PCs chose to continue to privilege police expertise and construct other partner agencies as lacking the necessary experience and knowledge to become properly involved in policing matters, continuing to focus on tackling criminal behaviour or potentially criminal behaviour instead of broader community issues that partner agencies might wish to concentrate on. This 'professional' performance meant that PCs engaged in partnership working and acknowledged the input of other groups but did not believe it to be as important as their own understandings of community problems. On the other hand, other PCs were seen to embrace partnership working and construed performances based on discourses of cooperation and teamwork that resulted in a commitment to closely working with other agencies.

Interestingly, it was difficult to observe any PCSOs taking the lead in partnership contexts and generally they were either absent or allowed PCs to dominate the context by giving fairly reticent performances that allowed the PCs to direct the tone of any interactions. The restrained nature of the performances given by the PCSOs when accompanying their PC colleagues is likely to be the result of the differing statuses of their positions. The PCSO role is primarily designed to support the neighbourhood PCs and as a result they avoided constructing performances that may place them in conflict with the PCs, many of whom did not want to fully embrace discourses of cooperation. The limited role that the PCSOs fulfil and their relatively recent introduction means that they also do not have the wealth of experience that PCs have to draw in support of their avoidance of partnership working and so cannot fully represent this in their performance. It is also possible that working within the culture of policing has socialised a similar belief within PCSOs that policing professionals are best able to determine the policing strategies required in a neighbourhood.

#### **8.4.1 - Privileging Police Expertise**



As has already been suggested, many of the PCs chose to construct professional performances that drew on policing expertise and experience. For example, during a monthly meeting with a local residents association I observed how PC Colin and PCSO Ian constructed this type of performance. In attendance at these meetings were members of the local residents association, representatives of a local community regeneration project, the council and the police. PCSO Ian was fairly quiet and the majority of the questions were answered by Colin who was rather defensive about the Police's activity within the area. This became more evident when the residents raised some complaints about drug taking and sexual activity behind a garage on a local estate. Residents claimed to have witnessed people smoking drugs, injecting themselves and having sex during the late evening and early morning. Colin disputed this and told them that during their patrols, neither he nor Ian had seen any of the paraphernalia that would suggest these activities went on. He tried to placate the association by saying that he would increase the frequency of the patrols in the area but continued to defend the actions of the police within the area. The association seemed happy with this. The remaining issues on the agenda covered issues surrounding local gates, sewers and renovations, all of which were dealt with by a member of a building firm who was in charge of the community renovation project. During the meeting Colin answered the questions that were put to him succinctly and directly but never seemed to become actively involved in the meeting and didn't seem that enthusiastic, yawning on one occasion.

After the meeting had concluded, we walked back to the panda car and Colin elaborated on his feelings towards the sort of things he had been discussing in the meeting.

*'See what I mean, hardly any of that was anything to do with us, it was pointless wasn't it!? I know where they were on about and I can tell you categorically that there's no drug use going on there or anyone having sex there, if you'd have seen the place you'd know why! Who would want to have sex there?! And I've never found a needle there either. They see teenagers hanging around there and maybe smoking and they just assume that's what they're up to.'*

PC Colin, Radley

The performance that Colin gave and his comments after the meeting suggest that he constructed a performance which did not facilitate greater community involvement in policing. The way in which Colin criticises the quality of information that came from the meeting and how it contradicted the views that he had formed based on his own patrols suggests that his performance was drawing on discourses of professional expertise and knowledge. Although Colin did engage with individuals at the meeting and half-heartedly agreed to act on their intelligence, his comments afterwards would suggest that he is not representing the discourses of cooperation and community involvement that are present in this partnership context. Instead his performance continues to favour behaviours that are concurrent with PC occupational identity and how it maintains the PCs control over determining what criminal behaviour should be tackled.

A further example of this sort of performance within partnership work was observed during a local community council meeting in Greenside that was attended by PC Debbie and her two male PCSO colleagues. Debbie's performance in the back stage has already been seen to be constructed around discourses of professionalism and this continued in the front stage, this time resulting in a performance that centred on maintaining police authority and control over policing priorities. The meeting was a not part of the official PACT programme but the police attended as part of their community engagement mandate and Debbie sat with the local councillors at the front of the room. The meeting was poorly attended and only six members of the public were present. The meeting began with a few routine community council issues but quickly moved on to levels of crime. The council leaders suggested that levels of crime and anti-social behaviour had been increasingly recently and gave a few examples of areas, mainly a central clock tower, where they suggested there was a problem. As has already been noted Greenside had a statistically low rate of crime and anti-social behaviour and Debbie relied on this during her responses.

*'You're right, there have been a few incidents around the clock tower recently but this has always been an area where kids congregate and the crime statistics that we have, which are also available on the internet say that crime has actually gone down and my colleagues and I always keep an eye on that area to make sure that nothing too serious happens there.'*

Despite Debbie's insistence that these crime statistics were publicly available, the councillors challenged her to produce them and 'prove' that crime had decreased. During the meeting Debbie remained measured and professional despite the councillor's focus on police issues and their unwillingness to accept Debbie's assurances that crime in Greenside was decreasing. Her responses to the councillors were matter-of-fact and she remained fairly dispassionate during the meeting. However after the meeting concluded and we were walking back to a patrol vehicle, Debbie vented her frustrations.

*'I just don't get it! There's always trouble there and it's no worse than usual, it's like they've got nothing better to do but worry about this stuff. We now what's going on, we see it everyday. I'm gonna take the stats next time and prove them all wrong.'*

PC Debbie, Greenside

What these two performances typify is a professional performance that is constructed around discourses of policing expertise and knowledge. Both Colin and Debbie construct the people attending the meetings and their input into dealing with crime in the community as uninformed and subjective, whilst their views are constructed through dispassionate objectivity and a better and privileged understanding of crime in the area. This performance can be seen to be the result of the emphasis on partnership working within NP being constructed as an infringement on PC status and effectiveness. As a result of this, the PCs are rejecting the discourses of community involvement in policing. This is a dominant discourse within public service reform agendas emphasising user involvement, professional accountability and responsiveness to user demands. The PCs ensure that their front stage performances were not openly dismissive of the members of the public but their performances demonstrated a degree of procedural compliance to the discourses of cooperation and compromise present within partnership contexts. In other words, the PCs acknowledge that their role requires them to listen to the views of the community and their performances also draw on other discourses which result in these views being treated with a high degree of scepticism and usually disregarded in favour of their own, which are based on the understanding that PCs were better placed to make these decision

#### 8.4.2 - Embracing Partner Working

While some neighbourhood officers rejected the idea that the community should be involved in determining policing priorities and holding the police to account, other officers embraced the opportunity and constructed their performances accordingly. A typical example can be found in Phil, the male PC in City Heights who was seen to provide an alternative performance when in the back stage, one which to an extent alienated him from his colleagues. Phil's front stage performance was also less influenced by the established discourses of 'real' policing and response style policing and instead drew more on discourses of cooperation and partnership and constructed a his own performance as an 'expert' NP performance, something which was encouraged by the inspector at City Heights. Whilst observing Phil it became clear that he had built a strong network of contacts within his community, having established a small satellite NP drop in centre within his ward, where community members could visit. He also appeared to have a good working relationship with local farmers and community groups, all of whom he interacted with in a friendly manner, referring to them by their first names. The ease at which Phil adopted this performance was likely to have been enhanced by the ward in which he worked, which was a fairly rural and self contained village that still had a strong sense of community, judging by the fete which was scheduled to take place that summer. Phil's ease at networking and the sense of accomplishment he got from partner working was also discussed during his interview.

*'I enjoy having time to do stuff, instead of racing around quickly when you're on response, you have more time to try and make a positive impact on people's lives, trying to help support people where need be and to work with other agencies, a multi-agency approach to problem solving. I enjoy that and I have managed to do that...bridge building, building relationships. Whether that's with local councillors, the council themselves, environmental health, the environment agency, the farmers unions, those sorts of things, I've enjoyed and found challenging.'*

PC Phil, City Heights

During the interview, Phil went on to discuss how he felt that many of the neighbourhood PCs and the higher ranked officer did not understand NP properly and

this was often the reason why he felt it was not implemented correctly. Phil was one of the few officers who had been sent on a NP course, which, he felt, gave him an in-depth understanding of the programme and greatly assisted him when doing neighbourhood work. Phil's performance when engaged in partner working, the excerpt from his interview and the idea that he felt he was better trained suggests that he constructed a neighbourhood performance that drew on discourses of community improvement and that this was best achieved through partner working and other NP methods. This performance was also evident in the backstage where he continued to draw on discourses of hard work and commitment to NP and, unusually, felt that most of this work should be conducted by PCs and not PCSOs. It is possible that Phil's understanding own understanding of PC occupational identity was markedly different from his colleagues, not allowing response style policing to be the dominant discourse. This was confirmed during his interview as he cited a 'bobby' that he knew as a child as a major reason for his decision to join the police force.

## **8.5 – Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed the contested discourses which are present during front stage NP interactions, where neighbourhood officers must navigate discourses of NP and 'real' policing. A number of different discourses were identified, each of which were constructed in different ways. Three categories were identified, discourses of anti social behaviour and conflict, contested notions of community and differing understandings of police professionalism. Agency was demonstrated through the discursive struggles that officers engaged in whilst reconstructing these performances to represent an identity performance which reflected their preferred interests (Barry et al, 2006). Generally, it was found that there was continuity within occupational groups for the PCs and PCSOs where by PCs reconstructed these discourses in relation to their concept of 'real' policing. This was especially present in City Heights and Radley, where the policing environment was more urban and prone to conflict, highlighting the importance of contextual factors in understanding identity performance (Goffman, 1959). This meant that their performances in various contexts tended to be governed by their established notions of what 'real' policing should look like. On the other hand, PCSOs seemed less bound by the real policing discourse and

largely embraced the discourses of NP when interacting with the public. Furthermore, it was possible to identify how dominant discourses of policing culture endured across the stages, meaning that those whose performances were normalised to reflect canteen culture in the back stage, often represented discourses of ‘real’ policing in the front (contradicting Waddington, 1999). This consistency of performance across stages highlights the difficulties in approaches used to alter policing performances (Thomas and Davies, 2008).

Having concluded a discussion of the empirical data collected the next chapter will explore how we can bring the findings of chapters six, seven and eight together and contribute to the extant literature.

# Chapter Nine

## Discussion

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### 9.1 – Introduction

This thesis set out to explore how officers make sense of neighbourhood policing (NP) within the gendered culture of policing. This involved a study of the range of identity performances that officers enacted in different NP contexts and how these were regulated and normalised by the discourses that are dominant in policing culture but also how such discourses could be resisted. The introduction of NP within the police service presented a fertile ground for exploring the construction of identity performances given the radical change that it represents for the organisation. In recent years, the police service has come under a significant amount of pressure to change and the extant literature has highlighted the lack of confidence that the public has in the police service, which is viewed as being prejudiced, distant and separate from the community that it serves (Macpherson report, 1999, Savage, 2009). In response to this pressure attempts have been made to increase the quantity and quality of police contact (Myhill and Beak, 2008, Quinton and Morris, 2008) and to encourage the police service to adopt a more community oriented and customer focussed style of policing (Fielding and Innes, 2006, Home Office, 2004). This has resulted in a different style of policing and one that is focused more on community engagement, working with partner agencies to tackle community issues and providing support for victims of crime and to vulnerable members of community. It is recognised that this policing style is very different to more traditional forms of policing where the focus is on maintaining public order, investigating crimes and the use of force and authority (Innes, 2005, Miller, 1999). The discourses of community engagement and partnership (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010) associated with NP have been shown to conflict and clash with established understandings of ‘real’ policing that are embedded within policing cultures and which privilege the use of force and authority in maintaining public order and arresting criminals (Chan et al. 2010, Davies and Thomas, 2008).

In order to investigate how neighbourhood officers manoeuvre and negotiate contested discourses in the performance of particular identities my theoretical framework drew on both poststructural (Butler, 2000, Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004) and ethnomethodological (Goffman, 1959, West and Zimmerman, 1989) approaches. The rationale for utilising both approaches resulted from the recognition that each offered important benefits to my conceptual framework and combining them enabled a more detailed, nuanced and power sensitive understanding of the ways that identity performances are constructed through discourse in particular contexts and within a distinct organisational culture (Kelan 2009). Poststructuralism has provided my approach with a clear focus on the ways that power and resistance interact in relation to discursive constructions of identities (Hardy and Philips, 2004) while ethnomethodology has ensured that adequate attention has been given to the contexts and situated interactions in which identity performances take place (Brickell, 2006). My conceptual approach has therefore focused on the everyday interactions and different contexts in which NP was enacted, providing a rich and nuanced account of these situations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2005, Segal 1999) and of the ways that discourses within the gendered cultures of policing (Chan et al 2010, Fielding 1994, Sharpe, 1998) are constructed, reconstructed or resisted in the performance of identities.

The chapter will begin by highlighting the key findings of this research and the contributions that they make to our understanding of identity performances, gendered cultures and neighbourhood policing. Following this the chapter will reflect on some of the challenges of conducting research within the police service, especially those that relate to issues of gendered identity performance. It will then suggest future areas of research and finally, the chapter will end with a conclusion which brings together the most important findings and contributions made through the thesis.

## **9.2 – Key Findings**

This section will consider the major findings that emerged through the three empirical chapters and discuss the contributions that have been made to the literature on which the research was based.



### **9.2.1 – Identity Performances and Discourses within Multi-Level Contexts**

Within this thesis individual identity has been conceptualised as multiple, fluid and context specific, with different subject positions becoming more or less important depending on the context in which an individual is performing (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009). This suggests that individuals are constantly in a process of renegotiating their identity performance in relation to the dominant discourses which give them meaning (Hall, 2000). The approach adopted has accessed identity performances through a study of the minute details of behaviour and of particular contexts and interactions, the language that is used, the subtle meanings that are transmitted through body language and the material resources that are implicated in performance (Goffman, 1974, Martin, 2006). An important aspect of my understanding of these performances was the recognition of important dynamics in relation to power and resistance, that individuals are not free to behave or perform in any way they choose and that in particular contexts certain discourses may constrain and limit the identity performances that are given (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, Butler, 2000, Weedon, 1997).

Using this conceptual framework I have been able to conduct a close study analysis of the identity performances of the NP officers, demonstrating the range of contested and competing discourses that officers navigate in constructing their identity performances. We have seen how discourses of NP are neither fixed nor stable and that multiple and conflicting constructions were present, attaching different meanings to concepts such as professionalism, community and gender. For example, competing constructions of professionalism had a significant impact on the choice of identity performances that were displayed by officers. In the training school, the PC instructors constructed a 'professional' NP discourse by emphasising an emotionally detached and highly rational approach which conflicted to some extent with the more emotional construction of NP professionalism of some of the PCSO recruits who spoke of the importance of providing support and developing communication skills. This contested understanding of professionalism was also revealed in the identity performances of the neighbourhood officers in the NPTs. For some, being an NP officer and carrying out activities such as partnership working, involved a highly

procedural and almost disinterested identity performance, which drew on professional discourses of policing expertise and authority. This was in contrast to other officers who privileged the importance of community engagement and partnership working within the NP professional discourse and drew on these particular meanings in constructing their performances.

Similarly, discourses of 'community' within NP were highly contested and in the training school and the NPTs, members of the community were constructed as either 'deserving' (vulnerable and in need of support from officers or good sources of community intelligence) or 'undeserving' (wasting police time by proposing unimportant policing priorities or having recurrent issues that did not require police attention). Again we saw how these competing discourses were drawn on in the construction of particular identity performances that either privileged an emotionally engaged community focus or alternatively a superior expertise and authority of policing professionals over the experience and knowledge of community members. Finally, we also saw in NP identity performances competing discourses of gender. While dominant masculine discourses privileged stereotypically macho and laddish performances and interactions, these discourses were not uncontested. Both PCs and PCSOs constructed different gendered identity performances which drew on alternative discourses of masculinity and femininity. For example, in the training school the younger female PCSOs rejected the gendered constructions of their male colleagues that viewed them as weak and sensitive, displaying an identity performance that was as confident and self-assured as their male colleagues. In the NPTs, there were more examples of how laddish and macho performances were also contested as PCs and PCSOs drew on other subject positions, like age and experience, allowing them to construct alternative performances which represented less overtly gendered discourses.

The examples above show how PCs and PCSOs' choice of particular identity and gendered identity performances emerged as a result of discourses of NP becoming ruptured by dominant understandings of 'real' policing (Thomas and Davies, 2008, Ford, 2006). A key contribution of my research, in understanding this discursive construction of identity performances, is to highlight the importance of context and the ways that discourses have effects, or may be more dominant, in particular contexts.

The research identified three broad contexts, the training school and the back and front stages of the NPTs, as well as a number of different situated interactions within these contexts. In each of these contexts particular discourses were dominant and were constructed and resisted in identity performances. In the back stage of NP, dominant macho discourses of the police canteen culture were constructed as well as resisted whereas in the wide range of interactions in front stage contexts, when dealing with anti-social behaviour, engaging with vulnerable adults or working in partnership, PCs and PCSOs displayed a range of identity performances. At different times and in different situations officers were seen to construct or refute competing discourses of, for example, 'real policing', community engagement, the macho culture, partnership working or police expertise and authority.

The importance of context in understanding the relationship between identity and discourse is a key feature of current debates (Leitch and Palmer, 2011) and therefore my research offers a contribution to these debates. I would argue that the central focus in understanding the discursive construction of identity should not only be on the discourse itself but on the effect of the discourse and on how it is articulated through performance in context. This appreciation allows us to use discourses to highlight their own conflicted and contested nature, and to understand that 'who we are and what we do [is] situationally performed, strategically confirmed and opportunistically appropriated' (Iedema, 2011: 1172) depending on the context. My research has therefore shown how a focus on multi-level contexts can be used to enhance our understanding of identity construction, acknowledging the range of contested discourses present in the different contexts and which influence identity performances.

### **9.2.2 – Power, Regulation and Identity Performances**

Ethnomethodological accounts of identity performances have often been accused of providing a limited appreciation of the influence of power (Moloney and Fenstermaker, 2002, Kelan, 2009, Weber, 1995). Although Goffman's (1959) frame theory does present some attempt at describing how normative social expectations limit the behaviour and interactions of individuals, it does not comment on the relative power of these frames. A poststructural discursive approach was adopted to better understand the dynamics of power and the ways that performances may be

constrained and regulated by dominant discourses (Butler, 2000, Foucault, 1980). Prasad and Prasad (2000) have suggested that identities are constructed inside a discursive cage in which only certain actions are possible. Alvesson and Karreman (2011) also talk about the presence of dominant or ‘muscular’ discourses within different contexts and the ways that individual behaviour is subject to normalisation and regulation, limiting their performances and perpetuating and reinforcing the discourses (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, Hardy and Philips, 2004).

The performances given by the PCs and PCSOs in both the training school and the NPTs showed evidence of identity regulation and normalising discourses. Within the training school, the identity performances of the PC instructors were normalised by many of the dominant discourses found within policing culture. These findings support the conclusions that were drawn by Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce (2010) in their research on the socialisation which takes place to resolve the tension between traditional and community policing in a police training academy. Within my research I have shown how these instructors constructed their performances through macho and laddish gendered discourses, discourses of rationality and emotional detachment and traditional understandings of policing, closely associated with response styles of policing. These performances, along with the symbols, artefacts and documents used in the training programme also helped us to understand how different discourses were constructed in the training programme and how these were used to regulate and normalise the performances of the PCSOs. For example, the instructors’ gendered identity performances reinforced the gendered discourses of policing canteen culture, inscribing a particular PCSO gendered identity. This was evident in the way that non-curricular interactions between the instructors and PCSOs, where teasing and bravado were common laddish and macho discourses were dominant.

Within the NPTs, especially within the back stage contexts, dominant and normalising discourses that resulted in gendered identity performances were also evident. This was especially the case in Radley and City Heights where laddish and macho behaviour was very common amongst the NP officers. These two NPTs policed communities in which anti-social behaviour was common, as well as being in close proximity to the response teams located in their station, a policing team where macho discourses may be very strong. These contextual factors may contribute to the finding that within

these NPTs, the use of humour, teasing, coarse language as well as overt expressions of sexuality were frequently used, strengthening the gendered discourse and normalising a particular type of masculine performances. However, alongside normalising discourses there is always resistance and within the training school and in the back stage contexts of the NPTs, power can also be understood in terms of the resistance to macho gendered discourse, showing how normalising processes are always incomplete.

Within the training school, resistance to the macho discourses and response style approach to policing represented by instructors was evident through the alternative performances given by some of the PCSOs. The contested nature of the discourses drawn on by the instructors in attempts to normalise PCSO identities allowed the PCSOs to imbue them with other, alternative meanings, thus gendered discourses no longer constructed a stereotypical view of femininity and masculinity but instead highlighted the capabilities and confidence that the female PCSOs performed, this was evidenced in some female PCSOs refusal to allow their colleagues to perpetuate female stereotypes. It is important to note that context played a key role in this process as, although many of the PCSOs were willing to resist normalising forces, they were only willing to do so in certain contexts, when the instructors were not present and they were performing for their peers, meaning their resistance would not threaten the prevailing power relations of the classroom. Resistance in the NPTs was also context specific. Resistance in the back stage again took the form of alternative performances that drew on alternative discourses, those of hard work and commitment to NP. This was seen in the gendered identity performance of the female PC from Greenside who preferred to identify with her role as an NP officer instead of the macho and laddish performances of her colleagues. However, this performance drew ridicule from her colleagues illustrating that her resistance did little to challenge the dominant gendered discourse.

Front stage contexts were more varied and to some extent were not exposed to the same normalising pressures and constraints as the back stages. Within these contexts, the nature of situated interactions influenced the strength and power of particular discourses. In anti-social contexts for example, discourses of force and authority associated with response policing were dominant, while officers engaged in

partnership working primarily drew on discourses of police knowledge, experience and expertise. Therefore within front stage contexts, whereas in some interactions (especially in dealing with anti-social or drunken behaviour) discourses of police force and of 'real policing' were dominant in normalising identity performances, as indicated previously, a range of alternative and contested discourses linked to concern for the community, partnership working or community engagement also exert power and demonstrate how different discourses are constructed and/or resisted in the performance of particular identities.

Over recent years the regulatory and constraining influence of discourses on identity performance has been well established. As well as highlighting the impact of dominant discourses, attention has also been paid to the way in which these discourses can be resisted. Authors have argued how 'spaces' are created from the clash and contradictions between and within discourses so that individuals can choose their preferred way of being in an organisation (Davies and Thomas, 2008, Ford, 2006, Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). My research has sought to contribute to the extant literature by illustrating the importance of an adequate understanding of power and resistance within a more nuanced ethnomethodologically influenced approach to understanding identity performances. I have shown how a more detailed appreciation of these identity performances can be accessed through a focus on how power works through situated interactions in context. In this way a focus on discourses as forces of constraint (either in relation to gender or professionalism) is not then limited to a focus on the 'constituted' individual, as some have argued (Alvesson and Karreman, 2011), but also allows researchers to explore 'constituting' processes, struggles and conflict that individuals encounter as they navigate the discursive fields in which they perform (Mumby, 2011).

### **9.2.3 – Gendered Cultures and Identity Performances**

An important focus of my research was the influence of organisational and gendered cultures on identity performances. Culture has been described as 'a shared and learned world of experiences, meanings, values and understandings which inform people and which are expressed, reproduced, and communicated...in symbolic form' (Alvesson, 2002: 6). Within this research culture was understood as a context through

which discourses are able to act as ‘scenes of constraint’ (Butler, 2004) and there are many existing studies that have examined the ways in which organisational cultures normalise certain socially acceptable behaviours and interactions. (Miller, 2009, Pilgeram, 2007). Gendered cultures in particular were shown to have a significant regulatory impact on gendered identity performances of individuals, whereby the performances of men and women are often limited by the dominant gendered discourses of their organisation (Gherardi, 1995). The police service was highlighted as a particularly gendered organisation where the nature of the work carried out (Westmarland, 2001) and the ‘canteen’ culture (Waddington, 1999) which dominated informal interactions amongst officers was seen to normalise stereotypically masculine performances (Chan et al. 2010). However, the fragmented nature of organisational cultures (Frost, et al., 1987, Martin and Frost, 1999) means that dominant discourses are not absolute and there are many diverse and competing discourses at work. All of these may be drawn on by individuals in different ways, providing the opportunities for varied identity performances within different cultural contexts (Barrett, 2001, Ford et al., 2006, Barry et al. 2006).

The research found that the macho and laddish identity performances that many of the neighbourhood officers gave reinforced the gendered cultural discourses that have become synonymous with the police service, especially the canteen culture that has been highlighted by other researchers (Loftus, 2008, Fielding, 1994, Miller, 1999). This was evident in the gendered meanings attached to objects within the PCSO training school and in the back stages of the NPTs through the use of masculine artefacts, such as the ‘life on mars’ posters and books, topics of discussion and the language that was used in these conversations. In addition to gendered discourses, cultural discourses of ‘real’ policing and discourses associated with response policing were also influential in constraining identity performance in the front stage. These discourses were in conflict with other meanings within NP that were more focused on delivering customer satisfaction and community engagement and were shown to be dominant across a variety of stages and contexts.

The detailed nature of my research, in studying identity performances in both front and back stage contexts of the NPTs, enabled a close examination of dominant cultural discourses. The research found that officers constructed performances in

front stage interactions drawing on established cultural discourses from the back stage, adopting macho and laddish identity performances. This often took the form of representing discourses of 'real' policing and response policing during NP situated interactions. Contrary to some suggestions (Waddington, 1999), this goes some way to demonstrating that the policing culture which exists in the back stage areas endures and has a significant impact on how officers perform when they move into the front stage and interact with the public. However, these types of performances were not universal and other officers constructed their performances through other types of NP discourses linked to communication, community engagement and concern for vulnerable members of the community into their performance. This shows that despite the dominance of particular policing discourses, the struggles and contestation between NP discourses reveals the fragmented nature of policing culture where meanings are not shared but where multiple cultures exist, reflecting different individual experiences of work.

Although cultural regulation was seen to have an effect on PCSO performance, there was also evidence, in both the training school and in the NPTs, of PCSOs demonstrating agency by constructing their own distinct and alternative performances and the beginnings of a separate occupational identity, one which does not entirely reflect discourses of police culture (Johnston, 2007). During interviews and whilst being observed, PCSOs commented that they enjoyed interacting with the community and found it a rewarding experience. When constructing their front stage performances, PCSOs were frequently observed drawing on NP discourses such as those of community improvement, concern and empathy for others and collective community spirit. Given that the PCSO role is very separate to that of the PC, it is possible that the large scale acceptance of NP, which was not present in the PC cohort, suggests that a PCSO occupational identity would be less reliant on policing culture and response-led understandings of policing and at least represent a front stage performance that draws on NP discourses such as community engagement, partner working and concern for the community.

The idea of a separate PCSO occupational identity would take into account the regulatory pressures placed upon them by policing canteen culture, acknowledging the importance of the normalising effect that their relationships with PCs can have, and



the specific aspects of their role that mean they often embrace the NP and its 'softer' form of policing. Although there is space for many different back stage PCSO performances, as with the neighbourhood PCs, the laddish and masculine discourses of canteen culture remain the dominant regulatory discourses which construct performances (aided by the socialisation experienced by PCSOs during training). However, unlike the PCs, the PCSOs do not have access to the 'harder' aspects of policing and as a result have embraced their neighbourhood duties in the front stage, creating a hybrid occupational identity that embodies the clash between the two gendered constructions of NP and allows for a performance that satisfies the demands of their role and cultural expectations.

This study shows clearly the importance of the cultural context for the identity performances of the PCs and PCSOs in the NPTs. It suggests that organisational cultures and gendered cultures have a profound effect on the construction of identity performances and that they represent significant scenes of constraint for individuals. While dominant culture discourses exerted a strong influence over identity performances, as I have indicated previously in this discussion, these dominant discourses are not uncontested and I have shown clearly, through the varied performances of the PCs and PCSOs, the multiple and fragmented cultures of policing. My thesis has therefore contributed to an understanding of culture that resists closure around a set of shared meanings, supporting an approach that focuses on the coexistence of multiple constructions of discourse (Mumby, 2011). Thus the issue for exploring culture becomes one of revealing how individuals are able to construct identity performance side-by-side, within the same organisational culture through discursive struggles and sense-making. This is achieved not by getting into the heads of individuals but rather exploring the public and observable ways in which discursive meanings and performances are related.

These findings shed light on the difficulties of changing policing identities that result from the pervasive nature of policing cultures (Thomas and Davies, 2008) and inform a better understanding of the future prospects for change within the service. NP represents a concerted government effort to change the way that the police tackle crime within communities and although numerous Home Office documents lay out one approach to enacting NP, the officers that implement the approach in practice

reconstruct NP to reflect their own understanding of policing, established policing cultures and the context in which they police. Thus, in the future, as NP continues to evolve to reflect changes in communities and the police service, an appreciation and acknowledgment of the way discourses are reconstructed as well as resisted is essential to achieve a better understanding of policing occupational identities and the impact these have on how NP is delivered. The cultural context of policing and the discourses that are constructed in different situated interactions play a vitally important role. The type of community that is being policed, the impact of the working environment in different NPTs and the gendered culture of policing all influence the way neighbourhood officers (re)construct NP and the way that NP identities are performed.

Understanding the role of interaction, discourse and context has been shown to be fundamental to understanding identity performances and gendered culture. In developing my findings and contributions, in the way that I have, the importance of methodology cannot be underestimated. Conducting ethnography and semi-structured interviews has been integral to collecting the required observational information. This study has adopted ‘the perspective that all knowledge is recognised as being partial, situated, localised and self-referential’ (Linstead and Thomas, 2002: 8) and that I played a significant part in constructing and interpreting events and the constructions of the officers. It is with this in mind that the next section addresses the challenges that I faced in researching gender within the police service.

### **9.3 – The Challenges of Researching the Police**

Having presented the major findings and conclusions of this study, it is important to look back and discuss the issues that arose during the research process which had a significant impact on the way in which it was conducted. As discussed in chapter five, carrying out an ethnography can be a very difficult and complex means of gaining research data and a number of challenges inherent with the method can present themselves. By immersing myself in the research setting and allowing myself to play an integral part in collecting and interpreting the data, my own identity performance as a researcher became intertwined with the work that I was doing. Given the highly gendered culture of policing, it was unsurprising that my own gender performance

became an important consideration. Attempting to enter a masculine gendered culture can be very daunting especially for researchers, like myself, who are unfamiliar with this sort of environment and negotiating the social norms of such an organisation can be an exhausting and tense experience. The strength of the dominant discourses, especially those associated with canteen policing culture, and the constraining effect that they have on performances made me realise that, to some extent, if I was to fit in and gain acceptance from the neighbourhood officers then I would have to tailor my own performance to fit in with these social norms. This was a difficult process but one that is obviously worthwhile given that researchers who fail to 'fit in' can very quickly find themselves on the periphery of the setting and being unable to collect data with the depth and richness that is desired (Katila and Merilainen, 2002).

Reflecting on challenges of giving a gendered performance which reflected the gendered discourses of police cultures highlights the role that my own gender played. As suggested in the methodology, my unfamiliarity with overtly macho and laddish environments caused some difficulty and discomfort. It is possible that this discomfort meant that I did not achieve the level of rapport that some other researchers achieved when investigating the police (Sharpe, 1998, Van Maanen, 1988). However, as stated in the methodology, by being male I was granted fairly easy access to not only some of the more dangerous aspects of the offices' work but also the back stage interactions, something which, in my opinion would not have happened if I was a female researcher. While I maintain that my decision to alter my own gendered identity performance to reflect the macho environment was beneficial, there is also something to be said for performing a different type of masculinity whilst conducting research in the police. Hunt (1984) suggested that by living somewhere 'betwixt and between' masculinity and femininity she was able gain access to the male policemen but also maintain her role as researcher. I believe that a similar hybrid took place during my research, although I never quite veered into femininity, by not concentrating on giving the same macho performance as the officers I was able to stand back and look at what was going on, I became more aware of all the gendered discourses and not just overt masculine ones. As with other police researchers (Marks, 2004, Westmarland, 2001b) and ethnographers (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), what I observed, how I interpreted it and later reported it was no doubt filtered through my own feelings and beliefs and I would argue that the different type of

masculinity I performed actually made it easier to identify the range of gendered behaviours that were present. I also believe the different type of masculinity that I performed and my status as researcher allowed me to gain rapport with those officers who were also on the fringes of canteen culture and were also giving alternative gendered identity performances. In essence, by reflexively engaging with gender and the idea of gender performance researchers can also mobilise their identities to enhance their research and benefit from better relationships with all of their participants (Ortiz, 2005).

## **9.5 – Conclusion**

This research has engaged in a close study analysis of neighbourhood policing ‘from within’ and has attempted to understand the identity performances of neighbourhood officers in a variety of contexts and situated interactions. My analysis, and the theoretical framework which I have adopted, has shown how the ways that NP is performed is the result of the agency of officers and the processes of contextualised discursive construction, reconstruction or resistance that they engage in. This research’s continued focus on the importance of discourse and context, both of which have been considered to be key themes in the current debates about identity and identity performances, has advanced an important means of accessing and understanding any organisation, its culture and its members. It presents a compelling vindication of the importance that was placed on conducting situated observation and its ability to incorporate nuanced analysis of power relations and the multi-level contexts in which they occur.

The study has placed the neighbourhood officer at its centre and understood the introduction of NP within the police service through their actions and performances. By doing this, a new and important insight into policing culture has been achieved during a particularly uncertain and turbulent time in the police services history. Highlighting the fractured nature of policing culture and the competing discourses of NP, canteen culture and ‘real policing’ has presented an interpretation of the police service which significantly adds to our appreciation of the strength of policing culture and the difficulties of attempting to deliver changes within the organisation. Our understanding of policing culture could be further improved if this line of inquiry

were explored further and the efforts that have and could be made to change the culture of policing, in order to make it more receptive to new styles of policing, explored in greater depth. This might mean examining the training of officers and the ways that discourses of NP policing that focus on community engagement and the importance of partnership working can imbedded within the service.

One of the key tenants of this thesis' understanding of NP and its exploration of police culture has been the role of the PCSO. This research has provided a new and unique contribution to the study of policing in the UK by exploring the impact of the increasing number civilian staff. The contribution has identified not only the impact of PCSOs on policing culture but also their particular processes of discursive reconstruction when delivering NP in communities. Their relatively recent introduction means that PCSOs are severely under-researched and their experiences at work, the political landscape they inhabit in NPTs and the impact they have on police culture will be integral to understanding the modern police service in the future.

The account of the police service and its culture presented in this thesis is by no means complete or exhaustive account; the service is a large and sprawling organisation with numerous subcultures, too vast for a single research project. It instead has provided a persuasive, in-depth and nuanced account of NPTs through which we are able to better examine and understand the varying and competing cultural discourses which help mould the way policing is performed. Doing this allows us greater access to policing culture and role it plays in how policing, especially new styles of policing, are performed in public and in private. Given the expectation that the police service must change and evolve to reflect the external political landscape, the approach and theoretical focus of this thesis provides a salient example to others wishing to explore how the service and its officers react to and reconcile new discursive forces that may emerge in the future.

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## Appendix A

### Consent Form

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#### **CARDIFF BUSINESS SCHOOL Consent Form – Confidential data**

##### **A Study to assess the Skills used in Neighbourhood Policing**

I understand that my participation in this project will involve a researcher observing me at work for an extended period of time. [ ]

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. [ ]

I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time. If for any reason I experience discomfort during participation in this project, I am free to withdraw or discuss my concerns with the project supervisor, Professor Annette Davies (029 20875757). [ ]

I understand that the information provided by me will be held confidentially, such that only the experimenter can trace this information back to me individually. The information will be retained for up to five years when it will be deleted/destroyed. I understand that I can ask for the information I provide to be deleted/destroyed at any time and, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, I can have access to the information at any time. [ ]

I also understand that at the end of the study I can be provided with additional information and feedback about the study. [ ]

I, \_\_\_\_\_ consent to participate in the study conducted by Paul Bennett of Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University under the supervision of Professor Annette Davies.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Schedule**

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Did you always intend to the join the police service?

What made you want to become a police officer/PCSO?

What did you do before you joined the police service? Have you had jobs prior to working in the police?

Have you worked in other areas of the police service?

Did you volunteer to join the NPT or were you transferred here?

What made you want to join the NPT?

How long have you been working in the NPT?

What do you enjoy most about working in the NPT?

What do you enjoy the least about working in the NPT?

Are there aspects of your job that you find easier then others? Why do you think that this is?

Are there aspects of your job that you find more challenging than others? Why?

What do you think are the most important skills for an NP officer to possess? What sort of qualities should an NP officer have?

How does this differ to other policing specialisms?

Are you satisfied with the level of training that you received before joining the NPT? Are there areas where you think more training may be required?

How would you describe the goals of NP?

Why do you think there is such an emphasis on NP in the service today?

How effective do you think PACT meetings are?

How do you think NP viewed by the rest of the service?

PCSOs: How do you think PCSOs are viewed by the service?

PCs: What do you think of the PCSO role?

How do you think the public perceive NP? Are they aware of it? How do they perceive PCSOs?

How would you define the relationship between NP and other departments e.g. response?

Do you think there's a stigma attached to NP by officers who work in other departments?

How would you describe the working environment of your NPT?

What is the relationship between the PCs and PCSOS like?

Do you feel like a valued part of the organisation?

How do you respond to the suggestion that NP is often described as 'pink and fluffy'? Is that a problem for you?

Do you think that being a man/woman makes a difference in performing your duties?

Do you think you have to be a particular type of person to be a member of the police service? What type of person do you have to be?

Does joining the police service change what you think about yourself? Has becoming a member of the police service changed you?

Is it hard to draw a distinction between your work life and your private life?

Do you think that NP officers become more involved in their work? Do they invest more?

Will you stay in NP/ as a PCSO? What would you like to do in the future?

Were you comfortable be observed?

Are there any other issues that you'd like to discuss that we haven't covered already?