

# Police recruit training and 'community engagement': unintended consequences

Being a thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Education

At the University of Leeds, School of Education

by

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Date: July 2009

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### Acknowledgements

My grateful thanks are due to all those who assisted me in this research.

My gratitude is extended to the Police Service for the financial support received under the Bramshill Fellowship Scheme.

To my academic supervisors, Professor Miriam Zukas and Dr Paul Armstrong for their encouragement, advice and support throughout my research, as well as other tutors in both the Leeds University School of Education and Department of Sociology whose seminars I attended as part of the Doctor of Education Programme.

A heartfelt thank you to all the student police officers who took part in the research and allowed me to interview them.

To Mrs Rebecca Goring, Mr Robert Grimes and Dr Madeline Knightley a special thank you for proof reading drafts of this thesis.

The time spent on this study has been both interesting and stimulating but would have been impossible without the support, understanding and advice of my partner Laura, who has tolerated the many hours and days devoted to this task. I know that she is aware of my appreciation but I wish to register it publicly.

## Abstract

### Background

This thesis is concerned with a 'radically' new programme to train British police recruits. The Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) was designed to address longstanding concerns around professionalising the police service and changing its culture. To achieve these aims the IPLDP was structured around the concept of 'community engagement'. As such, recruits in some police forces undertake part of their training at local universities. A case study was conducted in one such police force which sends its recruits to a university to complete a Foundation Degree. The aim of this study was to examine the influence of community engagement on the recruits learning and the implications for their identities as police officers.

### Methodology

The methodological strategy employed in this study comprises qualitative data collection and analysis and is grounded in a philosophical position which is interpretivist. The research design was longitudinal and the empirical data was drawn from multiple interviews with 25 police recruits. The theoretical approach to learning adopted in this study is premised on three key assumptions which are supported by the data. Firstly, that learning is both an *individual* as well as a *social* process. Secondly, that learning is also linked to a process of 'becoming'. Finally, that not all learning which takes place is positive.

### Conclusions

The study finds that the concept of community engagement was being used in an overly simplistic and partly symbolic way. This was coupled with an approach which held the police service to be having problems with communities and which envisaged training as a 'panacea' to solve them. The thesis argues that not only was this approach always unlikely to achieve its intended objectives, but that the training produced 'unintended consequences'. The social theory of Pierre Bourdieu is employed to show how aspects of the university training operated to undermine the development of professional identity and reproduce negative facets of police culture.

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# **Introduction and Rationale**

## **Chapter One**

### **Training matters but so do secret policemen**

## 1 Training matters but so do secret policemen

---

Unless we get [recruit] training right the culture change, in terms of police reforms is not going to happen. It is when people first come into a service that you set their standards, their ethos, their skills and the nature of the encounter that they have with the public, so that is hugely important to me.

*Hazel Blears, MP<sup>1</sup>*

In 2003 a television documentary, *The Secret Policeman*,<sup>2</sup> made national headlines when it exposed racism at a British police recruit training school. The documentary was filmed by an undercover reporter who had infiltrated Greater Manchester Police to become a trainee officer and investigate attitudes to race. The programme depicted several officers using racist language and behaviour. In one scene an officer donned a white pillow case to simulate a Ku Klux Klan hood and demonstrated how he would 'kill a Paki'. In the aftermath nine officers resigned and there were familiar calls to eliminate racism in policing (Travis 2003).<sup>3</sup> The measures needed were argued to include the psychological profiling of recruits to detect racist attitudes and improved training (Macaskill 2003). However, it was both fortunate and ironic that this public disgrace of police training came at a time when the development of a radically new programme to train police recruits was already underway.

The previous year a damning inspection report, *Training Matters* (HMIC 2002a:73), had already concluded that police recruit training was not 'fit for purpose'. A pressing concern centred on what was then termed insufficient 'community involvement' across the training programme (p 24). The assumptions behind this perceived deficiency will be explored later, but suffice here to note that this criticism was rooted in longer term concerns about the acceptance of diversity in British policing (HMIC 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 2000a, Macpherson 1999). *Training Matters* recommended that the training delivered to police recruits was restructured to 'provide an in depth understanding of the community to be policed whilst ensuring that officers are also able to cope with the diversity of the police service itself' (HMIC 2002a:107). In April 2005 the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) was launched.

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<sup>1</sup> Rt. Hon Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State for Home Affairs. Abstract from House of Commons minutes of evidence taken before Home Affairs Committee on Police Reform (26/2/04).

<sup>2</sup> BBC TV Panorama: *The Secret Policeman*, screened October 2003.

<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the *Secret Policeman* documentary and its ramifications see McLaughlin, E (2007: Chap. 6).

## **Radical change**

Although in recent years police recruit training has been restructured on numerous occasions (Allard 1997), the IPLDP offered a 'radical change' (Peace 2006) from previous training programmes. According to the Home Office (2004a) the primary goal of the IPLDP was to implement 'modernised' recruit training and more specifically the programme had been designed to address longstanding concerns around *professionalising* the police service and changing its *culture*.

### *Police culture*

Much of the research and theorising about policing is based on the premise that the police possess a distinctive occupational culture (Cain 1973, Chan 1997, Manning 1977, O'Neill et al. 2007, Smith & Gray 1985, Van Maanen 1973, Waddington 1999). Previous research has shown that the traditional police training school is a site where the new recruits become 'socialised' (Fielding 1984, 1988) into the police service and start to assimilate some of the undesirable aspects of that culture (Prokos & Padavic 2002). However, one of the most radical features of the IPLDP was that police recruits would undertake part of their training at local universities, where they would gain recognised professional qualifications.

### *Professionalisation*

It is a moot point as to whether the police service is a profession. Using a straightforward descriptive definition of professionalism, Watkins (1999) notes how both the Department for Education and Employment and the current Standard Occupational Classification define a professional as a person who holds a minimum of a degree level qualification. Whilst there have been ad hoc schemes in some police forces to educate senior officers on university based programmes (Lee & Punch 2004) historically, British police recruits receive no externally recognised qualification at the conclusion of their training period. This had long been regarded as unsatisfactory (HMIC 2002a) and the Home Office decided that police forces must train their recruits to a minimum of NVQ level three standard<sup>4</sup> (Home Office 2006). The introduction of an external qualification was seen as a foundation for professionalising the police service in England and Wales (Home Office 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) are work-related competence-based qualifications. They are organised into five levels based on the competences required. See Qualifications and Curriculum Authority at [http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/qualifications/index\\_nvqs.htm](http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/qualifications/index_nvqs.htm), accessed July 2009.

### **Bramshill Fellowship**

At around the same time that the *Secret Policeman* was being screened on television I was awarded a Bramshill Fellowship. The Bramshill Fellowship is a scheme promoted by the National Policing Improvements Agency (NPIA) which provides support to police officers undertaking research degrees. At that time I had been a police officer for 15 years and although most of my service had been spent on operational duties I had also worked in various training roles. My academic background was in politics and sociology and I had also recently completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. In 2003 I embarked on the Doctor of Education (EdD) Programme at the University of Leeds. Armed with my Fellowship I considered researching for a traditional PhD, but the more structured combination of undertaking taught modules, research training and original research, which formed the core of the Leeds EdD programme attracted me.

The other appeal of undertaking a professional doctorate was the close link between theory and practice. According to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC 2005:93), 'professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in producing professional knowledge'. Burgess et al. (2006:2) explain how the independent research required for an EdD is expected to include:

...'real life' issues concerned with practice, and an expectation that close interaction with professionally related problems would lead to opportunities for personal and professional development through the process of research.

By 2005 I had completed the taught modules and was seeking a 'real life' issue to research. I had also recently been promoted to the rank of Sergeant and would soon be posted from operational duties to the Police Training School, to work on the nascent IPLDP. Not only would this new role be challenging professionally, but there were two aspects of the IPLDP which interested me from an academic research perspective. These centred on the related ideas of 'community engagement' and the university training.

### **Community engagement**

As already indicated, the previous regime of training recruits within the confines of a police training school had been criticised for its insularity and lack of opportunities for community involvement. In contrast, however, the IPLDP would be explicitly structured around what was now termed 'community engagement' (Home Office 2005a). At first sight, structuring the programme around engagement with communities seemed like a laudable and logical move to return policing to its ideological roots. After all, the police

service provides a paradigm case of an organisation which has always sought to associate itself alongside the idea of community. Despite the recent discursive shift towards ‘neighbourhood policing’<sup>5</sup> (Home Office 2004a, 2008) the concept of community has long played an important ‘rhetorical’ (Klockars 2005) and symbolic role within British policing. The historical idea that ‘the police are the public and the public are the police’<sup>6</sup> still provides the central theoretical tenet of policing in this country and it is axiomatic that police recruits must have a sound understanding of the communities that they will serve.

At the same time, however, the diagnosis that new recruits *need* something called community engagement suggested a deficit model of police training, which seemed to assume that the officers had somehow been recruited from a place where they had no previous experience of living in a community.

Moreover, although the term community engagement had become increasingly prominent in policing (APA 2004) and wider government policy (CRU 2005) within the UK, even within the Home Office (2005a) there was uncertainty about what it meant, and from wider social science perspectives the concept seemed under-theorised.

### **University training**

If the meaning of community engagement was a little unclear then the idea to train British police recruits at university was certainly untested. Historically, police recruits attended District Police Training Schools where they were trained by police officers. In 2005, however, a partnership was formed between my own police force and a local university (hereafter, the University), whereby the new recruits were to spend part of their initial training on the University campus and were required to complete a Foundation Degree in police studies, part time, over the two years of their probationary period. A review of the course material, Home Office literature, as well as local force documentation, suggested five key aims of the University training as summarised below.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Innes (2005) neighbourhood policing is a ‘wholly political construct’ which was adopted by political actors within the Home Office to try and bring together numerous different reform-oriented projects that have been established within the UK policing sector over the past few years.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Robert Peel, circa 1829. Quoted in Police Federation (2008).

### *1. Professionalisation and broader educational experience*

The Foundation Degree curriculum is broadly based and contains subjects underpinned by the disciplines of criminology, sociology, education and law.

### *2. Learning is relevant to the workplace*

This academic content was mapped against the 22 competence based National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the police service <sup>7</sup> to ensure that the learning is relevant to the workplace.<sup>8</sup>

### *3. Engender a culture of lifelong learning*

It is envisaged that that the awarding of an externally recognised qualification to police officers and their experience of university study will engender a 'culture of lifelong learning in the police service' (Home Office 2006).

### *4. Modernise the culture of the police service*

As noted above, the traditional police academy is a site where the new recruits begin to assimilate some of the undesirable aspects of police culture. However, the officers attend the University campus at the start of their training period and this can be seen as an attempt to disrupt the police culture socialisation process.

### *5. Community engagement*

The first educational aim of the Foundation Degree is to 'understand and engage with the community'<sup>9</sup> and this idea is integrated into the programme on several different levels. The degree is modular and the students must successfully complete a number of academic modules with direct relevance to community issues. As an important component of these modules the students also attend two 'community placements'. Whilst placements are an established pedagogic approach within other areas of professional education (e.g. teacher training, social work) this is the first time that they have been used in police recruit training.

As well as the explicit community content in the curriculum and placements, there is a further implicit but significant engagement aspect to the University training. The recruits

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<sup>7</sup> See Skills for Justice: NOS for the Police Service at <http://www.skillsforjustice.com/> accessed July 2009.

<sup>8</sup> See *Appendix Four*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p 6.

attend the University campus as ‘student police officers’,<sup>10</sup> where they wear civilian clothes and where, in theory, they have every opportunity to interact with other students and members of the wider community.<sup>11</sup> It is envisaged that this will lead to greater community engagement and the breaking down of police and public barriers at an early stage of the officers’ careers.

### **Intellectual puzzles**

According to Mason (2004:18), all qualitative research should be constructed around an ‘intellectual puzzle’, and should attempt to produce some kind of explanation of that puzzle, or an argument. As I examined the IPLDP at the time of its launch, it occurred to me that there were several such puzzles relating to aspects of the new programme. Whilst the IPLDP seemed like a radical attempt to change police training and place it on a more professional footing I realised that there were some significant assumptions behind facets of the new programme and that many of the ideas were untested in a British policing context.

However, it was not my intention to conduct an evaluation study of the IPLDP, and there were three main reasons for this decision. First, the IPLDP is a national programme and an evaluation study would be beyond the scope of an EdD research project. Second, I was aware that other institutions would conduct such studies<sup>12</sup> and I was conscious of the need for my own research and thesis to make an original contribution. Finally, from a methodological perspective the idea of an evaluation study held no interest for me.

Rather, my main research interest was around the more specific idea of *community engagement*. I judged that this would enable me to focus on defined and key aspects of the new training programme, such as the University training and the community placements, which seemed central to the community based approach. The key intellectual puzzle was: *could these interventions lead to the desired professionalisation of the police service and a change in police culture as intended?*

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<sup>10</sup> In total, police recruits typically undergo a two year probationary period. Hence the historic term ‘probationary officer’. Since the inception of the IPLDP the term ‘student officer’ has entered policy and policing discourse. However, legislation has not been amended to reflect this so the correct legal term remains probationary officer. See *Police Act* (2005) Regulation 13.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix Four.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Adult Learning Inspectorate (2005) *Evaluation of the New Initial Learning and Development Programme*, London, ALI.

A national evaluation is also being undertaken by the National Policing Improvements Agency.



I would like to stress immediately that these are still ambitious questions and I recognised that as an individual researcher I could only attempt to address them at the level of *individual* officers and not in terms of the whole police institution. My intention therefore was to examine the effect of the training on what I will refer to at this stage as their identities<sup>13</sup> as police officers. Specifically, then, my research aim was:

*A case study to examine the influence of community engagement on student officers learning and the implications for their identities as police officers.*

The following research questions were also formulated:

1. What is meant by the concept of ‘community engagement’ with reference to the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme?
2. What are the key aspects of community engagement within that training programme?
3. What learning takes place?
4. What are the implications of this learning for their identities as police officers?
5. More specifically, has this learning led to: a) professionalising the police service  
b) a change in police culture?

### **Argument and organisation of thesis**

This thesis will argue that the concept of community engagement was being used in an overly simplistic and partly symbolic way. This was coupled with an approach which regarded the police service as having problems with communities and engagement and which envisaged training as a panacea to solve them. The argument that will be developed is that not only was this approach always unlikely to achieve its intended objectives, but that the training produced ‘unintended consequences’ (Merton 1936). It will be contended that rather than leading to a greater sense of professional identity and positive change in police culture, aspects of the training produced the *reverse* effect of that which was planned. More specifically, the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1991, 1992) will be employed to show how the University training operated to undermine the development of professional identity and reproduce negative facets of police culture. Having set out my rationale and some of the background in this introductory chapter, the argument and organisation of this thesis will proceed as follows.

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<sup>13</sup> It will be explained later how I came use Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus in preference to the term identity.

The structure of this thesis is relatively straightforward and is organised into three parts. Part I deals with further background issues and questions. Chapter Two is concerned with police culture and the concept will be examined through a review of relevant sociological literature. Although the idea of a homogenous police culture will be rejected, a number of widely shared and core characteristics of that culture will be identified. The chapter will also serve to introduce the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu and, in particular, to show how his foundational concepts of field and habitus have been used to analyse police culture and the possibilities for cultural change.

Chapter Three will provide a historical overview of the main developments in police recruit training from the inception of the 'modern' police service in 1829 to the publication of *Training Matters* in 2002. Methodologically, this will be achieved through critical review and analysis of key training policy documents, and academic literature. The aim is to show how in recent years police training has been restructured on numerous occasions. As such, it will be the central purpose of Chapter Three to explain why training within the police service is often viewed as a panacea to make changes and right perceived wrongs.

Although Chapter Three describes how police recruit training had already undergone significant change, it will be seen in Chapter Four how the IPLDP is different from previous training programmes. The concept of community engagement will feature as a sub theme. Drawing on the work of Cohen (1985) it will be argued that the concept can usefully be theorised in symbolic terms. This will be linked to a body of literature which draws attention to the symbolic and dramaturgical aspects of policing.

Part II deals with methodological and ethical issues and is organised into three chaptered 'bite-sized' chunks. My main aim in Chapter Five is to justify my decision to conduct a case study approach. It is also the purpose to provide further details on the local police force and the University as well as the background and structure of the Foundation Degree.

In Chapter Six I will set out and offer a rationale for my broader methodological strategy. After explaining my theoretical position, I will provide further details on the research method and case study. In relation to this, I will then discuss a number of important ethical issues. As well as the general issues of participant consent, confidentiality and anonymity, I will also examine a number of context-specific ethical

concerns and it will be seen how my decision to conduct a case study in my own police force presented me with ethical and professional dilemmas.

It only remains in Part II of this thesis to explain my methods of data analysis and this will be the main purpose of Chapter Seven. However, the argument which will be developed is that analysis is an *ongoing* process rather than something which occurs towards the end of the research. I will therefore begin this chapter with a review of my interview data collection strategy before discussing my approach to transcription. I will then explain why I used the computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo to help organise, retrieve and analyse the data. This was initially informed by a methodology drawing on the ethos of grounded theory, though I will explain why I subsequently moved to an interpretive approach influenced by the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu.

Having set out in Parts I and II the background to this research as well as methodological and ethical issues, the focus of Part III will be on the findings from the data, or put in the discourse of qualitative inquiry, the *story* (Wolcott 1990) of this research. My aim in Chapter Eight is to begin this story by examining data from interviews conducted with the research participants around the broad theme of community engagement. More specifically, I will explore data on the participants' backgrounds as well as their interpretation of what community engagement means. An initial but important early finding will emerge from this analysis: namely, that whilst there are real and practical aspects of engagement within the training programme the concept is being used in an overly simplistic and partly symbolic way.

Having previously identified aspects of community engagement in the IPLDP, Chapter Nine will shift the focus towards research question two and begin to examine some of the learning that has taken place. The argument which will be developed is that learning is a complex process and, as such, educators should be cautious before making simplistic or taken-for-granted assumptions about communities and engagement and how and what individuals learn. To develop this argument I will start by focusing on the community placements and the participants learning in relation to them. I will then relate my findings to relevant literature on adult learning and widen the discussion and analysis, setting out the broad theoretical approach to learning adopted in this study. Based on my analysis of the data as well as the literature this approach will be premised on three key assumptions. The first is that learning is both an *individual* as well as a *social* process. Following on from this is the second assumption which is that learning is also linked to a

process of 'becoming' (Hodkinson et al. 2008). The final assumption, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Ten, is that not all learning which takes place is positive.

In Chapter Ten I will focus on the University training, which became the main story of this research. Like the previous chapters the narrative will unfold as part 'realist', part 'confessional', and here, part 'autoethnographical' tale (Sparkes 2002, Van Maanen 1988). This will be a tale of both intended and unintended learning and consequently a tale of unintended consequences. This will be a tale of an educational intervention which has more likely led to a reinforcement of police culture rather than its negation. Yet the irony is that this will be a tale of a laudable educational initiative which should have worked well and perhaps still has potential to do so.

Finally, in Chapter Eleven I will draw together the themes of the earlier chapters and present some general conclusions and implications for police training, as well as identifying several areas for further research.

# **Part I: Background**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Police culture**

## 2 Police Culture

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[Police officers] lead something of a schizophrenic existence: they must cope not only with the terror of an often hostile and unpredictable citizenry, but also with a hostile - even tyrannical - and unpredictable bureaucracy.

*Brown (1998:9)*

### **Chapter overview**

This chapter is concerned with police culture and the concept will be examined through a review of relevant sociological literature. Whilst other occupational groups have their own cultures it will be argued that police officers are often viewed 'distinctively'. Following earlier research it will be contended that the culture emerged as a type of 'coping mechanism' (Brown 1988). Although the idea of a monolithic and homogenous police culture will be rejected, a number of widely shared and core characteristics of that culture will be identified. The chapter will also serve to introduce the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu and, in particular, to show how his foundational concepts of field and habitus have been used to analyse police culture and the possibilities for cultural change.

### **Police culture: an initial understanding**

The concept of police culture originally emerged from ethnographic studies of routine police work, which uncovered a layer of informal practices and norms operating under the bureaucratic structure of police organisations (Cain 1973, Holdaway 1983, Manning 1977, Van Maanen 1973). Subsequently the concept has attracted wider sociological interest and now lies at the centre of most of the research and theorising about policing (Waddington 1999). With a few notable exceptions (Holdaway 1983, Young 1991) the bulk of this sociological research has been carried out by 'outsider' academic researchers (see most recently the collection in O'Neill et al. 2007). Whilst this is in some ways understandable, it will be seen in Chapter Six that a significant volume of literature is devoted to the 'insider/outsider' debate in sociological research (e.g. Arnold 1994, Deutsch 1981, Jarvis 1998, Labaree 2002, Merton 1972), as at issue are a number of important conceptual, epistemological and ethical questions. Recently there have been suggestions that police practitioners should become more involved in sociologically grounded policing research (Thatcher 2008, Wood et al. 2008) and the present thesis anticipates this call.

Commensurate with general sociological and anthropological definitions of culture, the police culture refers to 'a set of shared informal norms, beliefs and values that underpins and informs police outlooks and behaviour towards people' (Loftus 2008:757). At this point it should be noted that what researchers and commentators are usually referring to is a police *occupational* culture as opposed to a police *organisational* culture. Schein (1985:6) defined an organisational culture as the:

deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic taken-for-granted fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment.

One of the main differences between an organisational culture and an occupational culture is the site of cultural influence. While organisational cultures are usually defined from the top of the organisation down, occupational cultures originate and are maintained by front line workers (Van Maanen & Barley 1984) and are therefore 'bottom up'.

Although other occupational groups have their own cultures, police officers are often viewed 'distinctively' for at least two reasons. First, whilst the police institution is in many ways a classic bureaucratic hierarchy, it is also atypical, in the sense that those at the 'bottom' of the organisation (the front line 'street cops') often wield the most power. As Foster (2003:199) explains:

The nature of street police work requires even the most junior of officers to be assertive and exert control over others. This, combined with the levels of discretion exercised by street-level officers and the degree of autonomy and control they impose on their work (which still pertains even in these performance-driven days), is a powerful mix and one that is potentially difficult to manage.

The most abundant literature tends to describe a dominant monolithic culture that serves to manage the strains created by police work (Brown 1988, Crank 1996, Fielding 1988, Skolnick 1994, Van Maanen 1973, Westley 1970). This has frequently led researchers and commentators to assume that the dominant ('street cop') culture is representative of policing *per se*. However, other research finds variation, and describes important differences between and within different roles, ranks and specialisms, as well as between officers of different sexes (Fielding 1984, Martin 1979) and ethnic background (Holdaway 1996). Manning's (1993) typology research has identified 'three subcultures

of policing': 'command', 'middle management', and 'lower management'; whereas Reiner's earlier study described the below four officer types:

- The 'bobby' (the ordinary copper applying the law with discretion and common sense)
- The 'uniform-carrier' (the completely cynical and disillusioned time server)
- The 'new-centurion' (dedicated to a crusade against crime and disorder, seeing detective work as the central function and emphasising the street cop as the repository of all truth)
- The 'professional' (ambitious and career-conscious, with an appropriately balanced appreciation of all aspects of policing from crime fighting to sweeping the station floors) (Reiner 1978:chap. 2).

Other studies have identified similar characteristics, though with different labels (Broderick 1973, Walsh 1977, Worden 1995).<sup>14</sup> Although typology research rightly challenges the notion that all officers see the world through the same lens, the majority of studies identify a group of officers that carry many of the outlooks of the traditional conceptualisation of the police (Paoline 2004). In his extensive review of the literature on police culture Waddington (1999:296) concludes that there is something approaching a universal policing sub-culture:

In contradiction to the intellectual fashion that seeks to erode and relativize police sub-cultures, I maintain that there is indeed a police sub-culture whose core elements are to be found across a remarkably broad spectrum of police talk in a wide variety of jurisdictions... Whilst differences between police operating in varying social, political, economic and legal contexts are hardly surprising, it is their common subscription to mission, macho, Us/Them and cynicism that deserves attention.

The second reason why police culture is thought distinctive is that its impact is usually regarded as negative, in a way that is not necessarily applied to other occupational groups (e.g. teachers, academics, social workers or lawyers). This is unfortunate, as there are some positive aspects to the collectiveness of culture which are often overlooked. HMIC (1999a:9) suggested that the term 'canteen culture' is as misleading as it is mischievous, as it negatively labels officers and fails to acknowledge that those who conduct their work professionally emanate from the same culture as those who exhibit its worst characteristics. Other academic research has noted how the culture

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Worden's (1995) synthesis of American typology research identified five officer types: (1) Tough-Cops, (2) Clean-Beat-Crime-Fighters, (3) Avoiders, (4) Problem-Solvers, and (5) Professionals.



helps both new and established occupational members to learn the 'craft of policing' (Manning 1995, Van Maanen 1974). It also is argued that the collectiveness of culture helps to buffer the strains that officers face on a daily basis (Chan 1996b, Waddington 1999). Indeed, it has been posited that the culture emerged and is sustained as a type of 'coping mechanism' (Brown 1988) to insulate its members from the hazardous environments of policing. As Paoline (2003:202) explains:

Coping mechanisms prescribed by the police culture work to minimise the stress and anxiety created by the environments, guiding both attitudes and behaviours. In this sense coping mechanisms help officers regulate their occupational world.

Whilst aspects of the culture can, therefore, be regarded as positive, the concept is more typically invoked to condemn a broad range of perceived practices such as racism, sexism, authoritarian conservatism, the already mentioned sense of mission, macho, cynicism and an Us/Them division of the social world (Paoline 2003, Reiner 2000, Waddington 1999). We will return to some of these negative facets of police culture in a later chapter, however, in the next section it is necessary to consider if the culture can be changed.

### **Can police culture be changed?**

In recent years interest in police culture has developed primarily out of a concern that it is seen as one of the main obstacles in the way of police reform (Chan 1996a, Dean 1995, Skogan & Hartnett 1997). However, because the culture is primarily occupational rather than organisational, it has been argued that it is very difficult to bring about cultural change. Wilson (1968:4), for example, in an early study of American policing, concluded that 'the constraints' placed on police officers because of the 'nature of [their function] put real limits on the degree to which [their] behaviour can be modified by organization directives'. This scepticism about the possibilities for changing police officers attitudes and behaviour has been shared by a number of commentators to the extent that the apparent unchanging nature of police culture has, until recently, become part of policing mythology (Foster 2003:219) .

This perspective, however, paints a static, deterministic and insular view of police culture and as Chan (1996a:112) has argued, 'a satisfactory formulation of police culture should allow for the possibility of change as well as resistance to change'. In an important study that moved the conceptualisation of police culture forward, Chan (1996a, 1997) drew on the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu to emphasise that

occupational culture does not exist in a vacuum, and to suggest how cultural change may be accomplished. In order to understand the relevance of Bourdieu's social theory to the study of police culture it is necessary first to understand the constructs underlying the theory and in the next section I will briefly review some of those constructs. This will set the stage for an explanation of how they were used in Chan's study, as well as laying some groundwork for how I came to draw on Bourdieu's sociological approach in my own research.

### **The social theory of Pierre Bourdieu**

Although his work has been used extensively within educational research (Reay 2004) it is often overlooked that Bourdieu is primarily a theorist of class and cultural *reproduction* (Jenkins 1992, Shilling 2004) and that his model of social relations has its roots in Marxist theories of class and conflict. One of Bourdieu's central intellectual projects was to explain class reproduction; of how one generation ensures that it reproduces itself and passes on its privileges to the next. However, Bourdieu argued against the traditional Marxist view that society can only be analysed in terms of classes and ideology and much of his work concerns the role of cultural and educational factors. In order to understand this sometimes complex body of work it is necessary to get to engage with his three foundational concepts of *field*, *capital* and *habitus*.

#### *Field*

According to Bourdieu, society is comprised of an ensemble of relatively autonomous fields. A field is a social arena in which people manoeuvre and struggle over power and resources and, in the course of that struggle, modify the structure of the field itself. Moi (1991:1021) quotes Bourdieu as defining a field in this way: 'a space in which a game takes place, a field of objective relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake'. That stake is the accumulation of capital as a means of ensuring the reproduction of the individual or institutions class.

#### *Capital*

However, Bourdieu did not intend capital to be understood in purely Marxist terms and one of his key conceptual innovations was the classification of three different types of capital: economic, cultural and social. The concept of economic capital is readily understood and comprises forms of material wealth.<sup>15</sup> Cultural capital, however, is a

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<sup>15</sup> There is some debate as to how much weight Bourdieu gave to the different types of capital. According to Grenfell and James (2004) Bourdieu's position is that ultimately all capital is derived from economic forces and gives rise to economic consequences.

concept unique to Bourdieu's theoretical framework and includes forms of knowledge, taste and education. Whereas cultural capital is based on an individual's stock of cultural resources, social capital is located more in their relationships and networks of support. For Bourdieu then, positions in a field are dependent on the kinds and strengths of capital possessed. As Field (2003:20) outlines, 'Bourdieu compared the social field to a casino: [where] we gamble not only with the black chips that represent our economic capital, but also with the blue chips of our cultural capital and the red chips of our social capital'.

### *Habitus*

The final concept to consider is habitus which represents Bourdieu's ambitious attempt to transcend the traditional division in social theory between agency and structure. It is used to explain some features of social life that he suggests cannot be explained simply by understanding the combined actions of individuals, but rather are influenced by history, tradition, customs and principles that people do not make explicit. Habitus is developed by imitation as people unconsciously incorporate behaviours into their lives, imitating other actors within a field through a process of iterative learning (Lane 2000). However, the habitus leads to a wide repertoire of possible actions, simultaneously enabling individuals to draw on both transformative and constraining courses of action (Reay 2004). As Bourdieu (1990:87) explains:

Habitus is a kind a transforming machine that leads us to 'reproduce' the social conditions of our own production, but in a relatively unpredictable way, in such a way that one cannot move simply and mechanically from the knowledge of conditions of production to knowledge of the products.

For Bourdieu, it is the interaction of habitus, capital and the field that generate the 'logic of practice' and he has explained this interaction in terms of an equation: (Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice (Bourdieu 1984:101). This relationship has been explained succinctly by Rhynas (2005:182) when she writes:

Habitus interacts directly with capital as individual actors work in pursuit of capital but are internally regulated by their habitus. However, the influence of the field is crucial, as the action is both constrained and given meaning by the context in which it takes place. This can be understood in terms of structure and agency, with the capital and field forming the structure within the relationship and individual practice, or agency, being regulated by the habitus.

### **The field and habitus of policing**

Although Bourdieu's concepts can be used to analyse police culture in general terms, Chan's application of the concept of field was specific to her study of the New South Wales Police (Chan 1996a, Chan 1997). If the field represents the structural or objective side of the relationship, Chan (1996a:115) interpreted this as consisting of:

...the historical relationship between certain social groups and the police, anchored in the legal powers and discretion police are authorised to exercise and the distribution of power and material resources within a community.

She also put forward a specific interpretation of what she regarded as 'the habitus' of police work, which she saw as being close to the idea of 'cultural knowledge'. On my reading Chan realised that there were limitations to Bourdieu's framework when applied to the idea of cultural change. It was suggested above that Bourdieu's framework is substantially a theoretical account of how elites in society reproduce through cultural means. This has led some critics to invoke charges of structural determinism against his work (Jenkins 1992). Although others have argued that his theories do allow for the possibility of social change (Morrison 2005) there is little explicit theory of change to be found in his writings. In order to address this crucial issue, Chan drew on Sackman's (1991) 'culture as knowledge' perspective as a means of 'filling out the habitus of police work'.<sup>16</sup> In Sackman's framework the concept of cultural knowledge is posited as a link between strategy and organisational processes and it is argued that changes in organisational culture first occur at the top (axiomatic knowledge), which in turn sets off other changes. Chan argued that many of the 'dramatic changes' in New South Wales Police had been aimed at the habitus of police work (defined using Sackman's framework) but not at the field. In Chan's view this may have accounted for why the changes had not led to any substantial improvements. Her conclusion was that in order to change police culture it is necessary to change both the habitus and field of police work.

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<sup>16</sup> Briefly, Sackman classifies cultural knowledge in organisations into four dimensions: (1) *dictionary knowledge*, which provides definitions and labels of things, (2) *directory knowledge*, which contains descriptions about 'how things are done', (3) *recipe knowledge*, which prescribes what should or should not be done and, (4) *axiomatic knowledge*, which is often held by top management, and which represents fundamental assumptions about why things are done the way they are in organisations.

## Conclusion

We will return to this argument later in this thesis, however, the conclusion to be drawn here is that Chan's framework offers a useful and sociologically sophisticated way of conceptualising police culture. By integrating Bourdieu's concepts of field and habitus with Sackman's culture as knowledge perspective, Chan has managed to address some of the deficiencies in previous models. In particular, the concepts of field, habitus and capital assist our understanding of the relationship between the structural context of policing and cultural practices.

However, her framework raises at least two important theoretical issues to be addressed. First, it can be argued that Chan presents a somewhat reified *collective* conceptualisation of 'the habitus of police work', when, on a more faithful reading of Bourdieu's sociology (1977, 1984, 1990, 1991), there are only *individual* police officers with their *individual* habitus. Second, and in relation to this, Chan's treatment of the concept of habitus makes it seem as if a police officers' habitus did not exist prior to their police career and is completely located in that career. Epistemologically it is probably impossible for any of us to reflect on what constitutes our own habitus. After all, habitus is a largely internalised and subconscious battery of dispositions that orientate a person's action in any situation (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). However, as a 46 year old police Sergeant, I would argue that my habitus cannot be boiled-down to four *organisational* dimensions. What about my background, my education and my life outside of the police force? In subsequent chapters it will be argued that the idea of a police officers habitus needs to be explored in more biographical and relational terms; and the relevance to this study of other concepts and ideas from the social theory of Bourdieu will also be explained. In the following chapter, however, it will be necessary to return to more practical matters relating to the development of police recruit training in Britain.

**Chapter Three**

**Historical overview of police recruit training**

### 3 Historical overview of police recruit training

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Training is key in equipping staff with the skills necessary to handle effectively both the external and internal aspects of diversity.

*Robin Field-Smith, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary: Personnel, Training and Diversity*<sup>17</sup>

#### Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical overview of the main developments in British police recruit training from the inception of the 'modern' police service in 1829, to the publication of *Training Matters* in 2002. Methodologically, this will be achieved through critical review and analysis of key training policy documents, and academic literature. The aim is to show how, in recent years, police training has been restructured on numerous occasions. The important but previously unexamined role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in influencing this process will also be discussed. As such, it will be the central purpose of this chapter to show how training within the police service is often viewed as a panacea to make changes and right perceived wrongs. The following three reasons will then be posited for this outlook: (1) that someone-had-better-do-something-now,(2) that training solutions resonate with the wider (dominant) discourse of lifelong learning, and (3) that training *individualises* perceived problems and solutions.

#### From inception to the 1960s

Sir Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police in 1829 and that date is usually regarded as the start of modern policing (Emsley 1991). It can safely be argued that, in those days, police recruit training was not primarily concerned with 'engagement with communities', but was dominated by the need to learn powers and procedures by rote, and through 'job shadowing' as encapsulated by the following extract from the Chief Constable of Merseyside's opening address to a new intake in 1852:

For the first three or four weeks you are of no use to me; but that is not your fault. You cannot perform your duty until instructed. You are formed into a probationary class and taken to the police court, where you will see constables in

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<sup>17</sup> Preface to *Diversity Matters* (2002a), London, Home Office.

the position you will be by and by. Observe how differently one constable gives his evidence from another. One speaks low and thick, tells a long story which is so rambling that when he has finished you hardly know what he has been talking about. Another stands erect, fills his chest, speaks distinctly, with voice sharp and clear, telling his case in very few words, and when he has done you know all he heard, all he saw and all that happened. When you come out of court ask yourself: have I learnt anything? (Quoted in Critchley 1978:2).

Following the Second World War the need to recruit large numbers of officers resulted in the establishment of District Training Centres, utilising some of the redundant armed service facilities, such as Hendon and Dishforth. The curriculum content was defined by a committee of Chief Constables, with delivery having a strong militaristic flavour. For many years there was little development in the approach of recruit training, which relied heavily on didactic teaching methods intended to ensure detailed knowledge of law and procedures (HMIC 2002b). Other learning for effective operational performance was expected to take place subsequently on the job (Oakley 1994).

### **From the 1960s to 1980: growing concerns for police and community relations**

However, by the late 1960s it was recognised that changes were needed to address the preparation of police officers to deal with new issues and problems which had started to emerge. Allard (1997) identifies three reasons for that change. First, there was growing dissent from the general public about the service they were receiving from the police. Second, there was increasing spread of industrial unrest across both the public and private sectors. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there was growing concern for relations between ethnic minority communities and the police. Rose (1969), in a survey of race relations in Britain, recommended that initial training for police officers should give more emphasis to social studies, so as to equip officers to understand minority communities and society generally. Similar recommendations, though with more emphasis on the theme of 'race relations', were put forward in Lambert's (1970) study of *Crime, Police and Race Relations*. In 1972 the Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration examined what they called 'police and immigrant relations during the early 1970s'. The subsequent report<sup>18</sup> concluded that better communications across cultural boundaries would be enhanced by changes in a number of areas of police work, and especially in training. Consequently, in 1973, a Home Office Working Party recommended that police training should concentrate more on

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<sup>18</sup> *Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Police Reform* (1972), House of Commons, London.



community relations and less on criminal law, drill and first aid (Home Office 1973). Although race and community relations became a specific part of the curriculum that year, it has been argued that much of this early training lacked focus, and was poorly conceived (Rowe & Garland 2003, Southgate 1982).

### **1980s: a 'crisis' in British policing**

The inner-city disturbances in the early 1980s brought police community relations to a 'crisis point' (Oakley 1989) and the subsequent publication of the Scarman Report (1981) was a 'watershed' (Fletcher 2005) in British policing. Lord Scarman argued that the root cause of the disturbances was a breakdown in trust and communication between the police and local communities: a breakdown that was especially evident in inner-city multi racial areas. The report made a series of recommendations for the development of police training in community relations. According to Lord Scarman, the underlying theme of that training should be, 'the police officers' role as a member of the community he polices, and his need to maintain law and order through gaining the approval, confidence and respect of the community he serves' (p 81).

Following Lord Scarman, a fundamental review of recruit training was carried out which led to a Working Party being set up under the aegis of the Police Training Council (PTC) .<sup>19</sup> The resultant report (PTC 1983) recommended changes to the recruit training system and proposed a further, more in-depth, analysis. The Home Office commissioned a team comprising predominantly academics from the University of East Anglia (UEA) to carry out this work, which became known as the Stage II Review. The subsequent report (UEA 1986), recommended fundamental changes to recruit training provision, including a revised programme based on modules, interspersed with workplace learning. Despite the wait, however, the system did not meet universal acclaim (Allard 1997, HMIC 2002b). According to HMIC, 'a lack of central direction and resourcing, together with the failure to integrate the workplace training with classroom-based instruction, led to its demise' (ibid p16). Allard (1997), however, suggests that there was a concern that control of police training had now shifted away from Chief Constables to academics appointed by the Home Office.

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<sup>19</sup> A separate PTC Working Party was set up to examine the wider issue of Community and Race Relations Training for the Police. See Police Training Council (1983a), *Community and Race Relations Training for the Police*, London, Home Office.

As well as fundamental changes to the curriculum and structure, the UEA academics were instrumental in introducing radical changes to police training methodology. As noted in Chapter One, historically, police recruits had been trained by police officer trainers, or ‘instructors’ as they were still referred to at that time. As the label implies, the pedagogic style was didactic and direct (MacDonald 1982) with the instructor being regarded as the ‘font of all knowledge’. However, the UEA critique also led to the development of a new National Police Trainers Course. The underpinning methodology encompassed the principles of humanistic education and psychology; and police trainers now embraced related concepts and techniques such as facilitation, experiential and student centred learning (Heslop 2006). For many in the service, however, the police pedagogic pendulum had swung too far, and anecdotally, this was the period when police training developed the unlikely reputation of being ‘touchy-feely’.<sup>20</sup>

These issues led to a further review being conducted in 1995 (NPT 1995), followed by yet more reviews in 1997 (Home Office 1998) and then 2001 (Bradshaw 2001). On top of this recruit training had, in more recent years, also evolved as a result of recommendations from various reports including: *Managing Learning* (HMIC 1999b), *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report* (Macpherson 1999) and *Police Training: The Way Forward* (Home Office 2000).

### **The role of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary**

The role of HMIC is to examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the 43 police forces in England and Wales.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, HMIC undertakes thematic inspections into aspects of police management and activity that are deemed to be of particular concern. In 2000, as part of the Government’s ‘Way Forward’ programme, a separate arm of HMIC was set up to deal specifically with Personnel, Training and Diversity.<sup>22</sup> Looked at from a wider political context, HMIC is a key player in the ‘audit’ (Power 1997) and ‘inspection’ (Jackson & Wallis 2006) cultures. Whilst it would be an overstatement to suggest that HMIC is able to dictate police training policy, their role is buttressed by the

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<sup>20</sup> I joined the police in 1988 and the new training programme and changes in methodology were introduced the following year, at the half way stage of my own two year training period.

<sup>21</sup> In theory, it is an independent inspectorate located outside the tripartite structure (of Home Secretary, Police Authorities and Chief Constables). However, it works closely with all parties. The role of HMIC is defined in the Police Acts (1994 and 1996), which allow it to report to the Home Secretary on the efficiency and effectiveness of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, and the Local Government Act 1999, which relates to ‘Best Value’.

<sup>22</sup> Robin Field-Smith was appointed HMIC, Personnel, Training and Diversity in August 2000. However, in this thesis the term HMIC is used to refer to an office or organisation and not to an individual.

political authority of the Home Office and it would be a brave Chief Constable who completely ignored their recommendations.

Despite their importance, however, HMIC's work and influence remains unexplored in the policing literature and, as such, their role is potentially worthy of a doctoral research project in its own right. Contrast this with the admittedly wider field of post-compulsory education and training (PCET), where there is a growing body of work on the methodology and impact of the various inspection regimes (Hodkinson & Bloomer 2000, Jackson & Wallis 2005, Strathern 2000). Much of this work is necessarily critical, yet there is no equivalent of this in the field of policing, where the methodology, findings and recommendations of HMIC are often uncritically accepted and adopted.

As indicated in Chapter One, a recent example of the influence of HMIC is the development of the IPLDP, following the publication of *Training Matters* (HMIC 2002b). This work can be seen as a continuation in a series of reports and subsequent training interventions where training is viewed as a panacea. In order to develop this argument, however, it will be necessary to widen the analysis and focus briefly on another area of police training. Having achieved this I will then return in Chapter Four to the specifics of recruit training and the arguments and recommendations in *Training Matters*.

### **Training as panacea**

Although the phrase training-as-panacea is commonly heard, and appears within the lifelong learning literature (e.g. Cruikshank 2002, Francis 2002), one seldom hears, or reads any further explication of what the term actually means. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,<sup>23</sup> the etymology of the word panacea is derived from the Greek, *panäkeie*, meaning an 'all healing' or 'universal remedy'. As will be seen below, within certain perspectives on lifelong learning, the training is viewed as a universal remedy for *individuals* who need to constantly retrain in order to remain competitive in the global job market (Coffield 1999, Cruikshank 2002, Gouthro 2002). However, within the public sector the phrase is more commonly thought of, and deployed in a collective sense, as a remedy for problems within the *organisation*, which are not necessarily linked to economic competitiveness; and it is in this second sense that the phrase training-as-panacea can be most accurately applied to policing. This is, of course, not to say that training is put forward as the only solution to the problems of policing, but as

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<sup>23</sup> Oxford English Dictionary on CD Rom (2000 Version) OED, Oxford, England.

the quote from HMIC which opens this chapter confirms, training is usually seen as the *main* solution.

This chapter has shown how, from the 1960s onwards, the important issue of police and community relations was addressed in large part by making changes to police training generally, and recruit training in particular. However, a further example of the role of HMIC in influencing the training-as-panacea approach is the related area of what was initially called ‘equal opportunities’, but which subsequently became ‘race and diversity’. In the nine years between 1993 and 2002 HMIC published no less than seven reports on this theme (HMIC 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 2000a, 2000b, 2002a). On top of this, there were numerous other relevant official publications (ACPO 2002, BAWP 2000, CRE 2005, PRU 2000, Macpherson 1999, Morris 2004). To paraphrase Stronach and Morris (1994), we might be forgiven for thinking that this prodigious output was bordering on a case of diversity report ‘hysteria’. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in a full exposition of this literature, however, suffice it to point out that ‘in virtually every case, the response to the allegations of unfair treatment in all its forms included in some measure, the issue of training’ (Clements 2002:21).

What is more relevant to consider in this chapter, however, are the reasons *why* training in the police service is often viewed in this way; and it will be argued here that three reasons can be put forward for the training-as-panacea outlook, namely: (1) that someone-had-better-do-something-now, (2) that training solutions resonate with the wider (dominant) discourse of lifelong learning, and (3) that training individualises perceived problems and solutions.

#### *Someone-had-better-do-something-now*

The American sociologist Egon Bittner (1974, 1990:249) provided the classic definition of policing as ‘something-is-happening-which-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-someone-had-better-do-something-about-it-now’. It is my contention that this definition applies not only to operational police work, but it can equally be applied to police training. In other words training is often seen as offering a quick solution to issues and problems and one which shows, or at the very least gives the appearance, that something is being done now. As Holdaway (1998:342) argues:

Training was training, unanalysed in terms of the impact it could have on routine police work. The sufficient and adequate task was to do something called

training without consideration of the extent to which it could change a hierarchical organisation like the police.

It is not as if training is inexpensive; indeed, far from it. In 2008/9 the budget for running my own Training School was £9.5 million;<sup>24</sup> and nationally, it is estimated that 8 to 12 percent of all officers are involved in training at any one time (Oakley 1994). What this does draw our attention to is a burgeoning infrastructure of training across the 43 police forces in England and Wales and also encompassing national organisations such as: HMIC, NPIA, Skills for Justice and The National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT). Put bluntly, there is a significant vested interest in designing and running training solutions to policing problems which contributes to the training imperative.

*Training solutions resonate with the wider (dominant) discourse of lifelong learning*

As suggested above, in recent years lifelong learning emerged as a key concept within adult educational policies (CEC 1994, 1997, DfEE 1998, OECD 1996) which as Gouthro (2002:334) argues, has been conflated to mean little more than ‘lifelong training’. Linked to this is the trend towards credentialism and professionalisation which require continuous educational upgrading and certification (Coffield 2000). Whilst this orientation is most prevalent within the global market place, it can also be argued that it is an increasing feature of public sector organisations, where individuals are largely valued in ‘human capital’ terms (Coffield 1999).

*Training individualises perceived problems and solutions*

By emphasising training as a solution to perceived problems and issues such as diversity and community relations, the problems are, therefore, seen to rest with *individuals*. Consequently, wider and more intractable structural issues can be downplayed or ignored. This individualisation of perceived problems also meshes with the broad underpinning methodology of police training. As I have argued elsewhere (Heslop 2006), police training pedagogy is underpinned by a combination of both behaviourist and humanistic educational philosophies. Whilst it can be argued that this approach is based on two opposing psychological traditions (Tennant 1997) what they share is a highly individualised and de-contextualised account of the learning process.

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<sup>24</sup> It is difficult to accurately assess the cost of police training nationally, due to the variation in the criteria used throughout the service. In 1999, HMIC ‘conservatively estimated’ the cost to be as high as £391.4 million. See HMIC (1999). The figure of £9.5 million for my own force comes from an internal budget planning document and can be regarded as accurate.

**Conclusion: the training paradox**

However, we can conclude this chapter with a paradox to the training-as-panacea outlook. Whilst it has been shown that significant (and perhaps undue) faith and responsibility are placed on training and trainers, it remains a 'low status activity' (Oakley 1990, 1994) when compared to operational policing. As HMIC (2002b:78) argued:

Unfortunately, entering police training is all too often seen as a negative career move for police officers. The emphasis on operational policing experience takes precedence to an undue extent within promotion boards and other areas of career development... If the Service wants to attract quality police officers, training must be a respected and worthwhile career path for staff.

In Chapter Ten I will draw on Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field, to suggest that this issue of status is not unrelated to the tensions, and conflict, which have developed between the police and University. However, in the following chapter it will be necessary to turn to the development of the IPLDP. For having just explained how police recruit training has undergone significant historical change, my aim is to show how the IPLDP is different from previous training programmes.

**Chapter Four**

**Initial Police Learning and Development Programme**

## 4 Initial Police Learning and Development Programme

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A police officer needs to know nothing more and nothing less than what is contained in a National Occupational Standard.

*Adrian Jackson, Chief Executive, Police Skills and Standards Association.*<sup>25</sup>

### Chapter overview

The aim of this chapter is to lay out in further detail the development and structure of the IPLDP. Although Chapter Three explained how police recruit training had already undergone significant change, it will be seen how the IPLDP is different from previous training programmes. At the same time, it will be argued that the IPLDP is the British police service's least standardised system of recruit training. This is ironic, as it will be seen how the IPLDP is an attempt to apply common training standards across the service. The concept of community engagement will feature as a sub-theme. Drawing on the work of Cohen (1985) it will be contended that the concept can usefully be theorised in symbolic terms. This will be linked to a body of literature which draws attention to the symbolic and dramaturgical aspects of policing.

### Not fit for purpose

In 2001 HMIC undertook a thematic inspection of police recruit training,<sup>26</sup> and the subsequent report, *Training Matters*, was published the following year (HMIC 2002b). Despite all the development of recruit training outlined in the previous chapter, *Training Matters* was critical, and came to the damning conclusion that the system was 'not fit for purpose'. Whilst an examination of the full report cannot detain us here, two key areas of the report are relevant to this thesis, and warrant further exploration. These are: (1) the consistency of training, and (2) community involvement.

### *Consistency of training*

With the benefit of hindsight a questionable finding in *Training Matters* was the 'inconsistency of training delivery'. Whilst HMIC noted how recruit training was, at that time, based on a common programme, inconsistencies were found across four relatively minor areas.<sup>27</sup> Although it would be inappropriate to disagree with the detail of these

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in White (2006:388). The Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO) are now Skills for Justice.

<sup>26</sup> As part of the methodology HMIC also involved, for the first time, the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI).

<sup>27</sup> (1) Rules and Regulations, (2) report completion, (3) specialist training, and (4) trainer-student ratio (see HMIC 2002: 54).



findings, I suggest that the Inspectorate missed the big picture. HMIC explained how the core of the formal training comprised a 15 week residential course, delivered at one of the designated District Training Centres. With the exception of the Metropolitan Police Service,<sup>28</sup> all the other 42 police forces sent their officers to one of these regional training sites. The sites were all centrally managed by National Police Training,<sup>29</sup> which, at that time, was also responsible for designing and monitoring the programme. There is, therefore, no doubt that there was a national curriculum and that it was closely regulated.<sup>30</sup> As will be seen below, it was just that this curriculum was not at that time competence-based. Indeed, not only did this system provide a broadly consistent approach to recruit training, but it will be argued in Chapter Ten that it was an equitable system as well.

Looking to the future, *Training Matters* concluded:

Whatever training and development option is taken, success will only be assured if a Service-wide approach is adopted around consistency of delivery. Inconsistency can lead to a fragmented provision of learning and undermine the credibility of [recruit training] (HMIC 2002:53).

This chapter will go on to suggest that the IPLDP does not provide a consistent approach to recruit training.

### *Community engagement*

A second major concern identified in *Training Matters* was, what was then termed, insufficient ‘community involvement’ across the training programme. Leaving aside, if only for the time being, the massive sociological question of what constitutes community,<sup>31</sup> it is clear that police training in general, and recruit training in particular, had been insular. The District Training Centres were often situated in remote locations, away from the public gaze; and when lecturers from the wider community were employed, they were usually wheeled in, and then out again, following a few hours input to the students. This led some academics to question if this was mere ‘tokenism’ (Zukas

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<sup>28</sup> The Metropolitan Police Service has historically trained its officers at its own training centre at Hendon, London.

<sup>29</sup> Who in 2002 became Centrex, and then in 2007 the National Police Improvements Agency.

<sup>30</sup> To the extent that the same lesson would usually be running at the same time across the different District Training Centres.

<sup>31</sup> HMIC did not attempt to address this issue.

& Taylor 1988).<sup>32</sup> In the report HMIC made a link between the lack of community interaction at this crucial early stage of an officer's career and the well rehearsed concerns for diversity outlined earlier. HMIC recommended that the training delivered to police recruits should be restructured to 'provide an in depth understanding of the community to be policed whilst ensuring that officers are also able to cope with the diversity of the police service itself' (HMIC 2002b:107).

Subsequently, a Probationer Training Modernisation Project (PTMP) was established to take forward HMIC's recommendations. However, no sooner had the work begun than it was given urgent impetus by an audacious and groundbreaking piece of undercover investigative journalism.

### **Secret policemen**

The difficulties in conducting academic research into the police have been well documented (Chatterton 1973, Holdaway 1982, Young 1991). Paradoxically, however, from a public viewpoint, the work of police officers appears familiar. In part, this may be due to the enduring appeal of the copper within popular culture, particularly television (Sparks 1992, 1993), which is awash with police dramas and documentaries, to the extent that characters such as *Inspector Morse* and the cast of *The Bill* seem as recognisable as our neighbours. Looked at from a wider sociological perspective, these fictional representations offer not just discrete and localised accounts of police work, but are 'one of the principal reasons by which English society tells stories about itself' (Loader 1997:2). However, this attachment, and apparent familiarity, belies an organisation which is mistrustful of intellectuals (Young 1991), and which can be extremely difficult for any outsider to penetrate. Indeed, within the literature of police studies it is commonplace to read of a 'war between the police and the academe' (Reiner 1994, Lee & Punch 2004) and, in particular, a police mistrust of academic research (Chatterton 1973, Young 1991). As former police detective turned anthropological researcher Malcolm Young explains:

While the police make statements welcoming research and applaud intellectual debate, they strive to impose a rigid control over a system of preferred rules and regulations that negate open enquiry, so that systems are quietly but firmly deployed to deny the critical approach (ibid p 10).

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<sup>32</sup> See this paper for Zukas & Taylor's account of their own experiences of teaching at a police training school as 'visiting lecturers' in the late 1980s.

Faced with these, and other practical and methodological difficulties, some researchers have chosen to employ covert methods. Whilst working as a Police Sergeant, Holdaway conducted a covert ethnographic study of officers in his own police station (Holdaway 1982, 1983) Having wrestled with the professional and academic ethical issues at stake, Holdaway justified his methods thus:

[The] problem is encountered during research of many organisations; however, the case for covert research is strengthened by the central and powerful situation of the police within our society... When such an institution is over-protective, its members restrict the right to privacy that they possess. It is important that they be researched (Holdaway 1983:5).

Although Holdaway correctly anticipated that his colleagues would criticise the publication of his research, at least they did not arrest him.<sup>33</sup> This, however, was the fate of BBC reporter and police recruit Mark Daly<sup>34</sup> who conducted a covert investigation of Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and its District Police Training Centre, during 2003.<sup>35</sup> It will be remembered that Sir William Macpherson's report into the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence had concluded that the Metropolitan Police Service was 'institutionally racist' (Macpherson 1999).<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, the 42 Chief Constables of the provincial police forces were also invited to 'sign up' to the report and, therefore, confer on their own organisations the same diagnosis. According to the BBC, GMP were singled out for covert investigation because it had accepted that there was institutional racism which had not been stamped out (Plunkett 2003).

To say that the subsequent screening of the BBC *Panorama* documentary caused acute embarrassment for the Government and the police service would be an understatement (McLaughlin 2007). The Prime Minister himself commented that he had been 'appalled and shocked by the revelations of racism' (Carter 2003). Of most concern for police educators, however, the most damning footage was shot not, in the notorious station canteen, but at the Training School itself, and the scenes reportedly caused one senior

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p 13. Following the completion of his research Dr Holdaway was awarded his PhD and he resigned from the police service to take up an academic post at Sheffield University where he is now Professor of Criminology and Sociology in the Department of Law.

<sup>34</sup> Daly was charged with criminal deception and damage to a police vest (which he had 'adapted' to conceal his camera). However, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) subsequently dropped all charges.

<sup>35</sup> Whilst the District Police Training Centre was within GMP area, it was, as noted above, at that time managed by the organisation then known as National Police Training.

<sup>36</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the findings and implications of the report, see McLaughlin and Murji (1999) and Marlow and Loveday (2000).

officer 'to feel physically sick' (ibid). As well as the incident described earlier, one recruit was filmed declaring, 'I'll admit it, I'm a racist bastard'. Although there were no Metropolitan Police officers involved, the comments of another recruit caused that force particular embarrassment, when he was filmed saying that Stephen Lawrence 'deserved it', and describing his parents as 'spongers'. In what was described as an 'embarrassing u-turn' (Hodgson et al. 2003) the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, apologised for initially calling the documentary a 'stunt', and said that the task now was 'to root out racism in the force and that meant implementing new assessments and the *training* [my italics] of recruits' (Travis 2003).<sup>37</sup>

## **IPLDP**

The PTMB subsequently became the Initial Police Learning and Development Board (IPLDB), and, following evaluation of a pilot, the Home Office commenced the national roll out of the IPLDP in April 2005. In line with previous recruit training systems, the new programme is structured over a two year time frame, though as noted in Chapter One, the trainees are now referred to as 'student officers'. The training still combines formal classroom based learning, and structured role plays, with workplace coaching, experience, reflective practice and assessment. However, the primary goal of the IPLDP is to implement 'modernised' recruit training (Home Office 2004b) and, as such, it is different in three key aspects.

### *1. Competence-based curriculum and work based assessment*

Following strong recommendations from HMIC (2002b, 1999b) the IPLDP curriculum is based on a suite of 22 competence-based National Occupational Standards (NOS) and evidence of competence across all the standards is captured in a Student Officer Learning and Assessment Portfolio (SOLAP). In a devastating critique of the theoretical underpinnings of NOS, White (2006:386) convincingly argued that these frameworks are based on 'intellectually impoverished' and 'discredited technical rationality models'.

### *2. Training is delivered locally*

Whereas previously, police recruits were trained at centrally managed district sites, individual police forces are now responsible for training delivery. In making the case for change, the then Home Office Minister, Hazel Blears, said, 'if we are going to devolve more training at a local level I want forces to take responsibility for doing this in their

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<sup>37</sup> An inquiry was also launched by the Commission for Racial Inequality CRE and the subsequent report, *The Police Service in England and Wales*, was published in 2005.

own communities, I want them to involve local people'.<sup>38</sup> Although the curriculum is based on National Standards it is 'designed to allow individual forces every opportunity to tailor their programmes to local needs' (Home Office 2005a). As explained in Chapter One, police forces must train their officers to a minimum of NVQ Level Three and forces have been encouraged to form partnerships with local further and higher education providers. In seven police forces, student officers undertake Foundation Degree programmes which differ markedly in content and structure.<sup>39</sup>

### 3. *Community engagement*

In recent years the concept of community engagement has become increasingly prominent in policing (APA 2004, Home Office 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004c) and wider government policy (CRU 2005, SEU 2000, DETR 1998) in the UK. In police forces across the country, practitioners are involved in a range of initiatives to 'engage the community'. This work is supported by a National Practitioner Panel for Community Engagement, as well as an Engagement in Policing Website.<sup>40</sup> In 2005 the concept of community engagement also became central to the IPLDP (Home Office 2005a). However, even within the Home Office there was uncertainty about what the term meant.

What does community engagement mean? There is no simple answer - it can, more or less, be whatever an individual force believes will ensure that their recruit constables are better able to meet the demands of policing within a community context, having regards for the guidance and requirements of the IPLDP...(ibid p15).

Whilst there is now a body of literature which is primarily aimed at guiding practitioners about community engagement (APA 2004, NPIA 2007, Home Office 2003c, Myhill 2006), from a sociology of policing perspective, the concept remains under-theorised. Although it is possible to deploy a number of theoretical standpoints, it will be the purpose of the next section to suggest how the concept can usefully be analysed in terms of its *symbolic* function.

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<sup>38</sup> Rt. Hon Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State for Home Affairs. Abstract from House of Commons minutes of evidence taken before Home Affairs Committee on Police Reform (26/2/04).

<sup>39</sup> These are: Cleveland, Kent, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Sussex, West Mercia and West Yorkshire Constabularies.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.communityengagement.police.uk/> accessed July 2009.

## Community

The concept of community is usually traced back to the basics of sociological thinking in the nineteenth century (Durkheim 1964, Simmel 1950, Tönnies 1963), principally because concern with ‘loss of community’ was central to early sociological thought (Nisbett 1967). The classic work is *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* (Community and Society) by Ferdinand Tönnies (1963) who has been described as the ‘founder of the theory of community’ (Marshall 1998: 97). In this work, Tönnies put forward ideal-typical pictures of these forms of social association; where *community* signifies the organic and cohesive world of ‘traditional’ society, while *society* refers to the fragmented world of modernity, with its rationalised and individualised structures.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in community (Delanty 1998, 2003, Marinetto 2003). Indeed Delanty (1998:40) has gone as far as to argue that, ‘it may be that community is becoming the universal idea of our time and is usurping the idea of the social’. Nevertheless, the concept remains notoriously problematic and its meaning is hotly debated across the social sciences. Within the discipline of sociology, at least three conceptualisations of community are widely recognised.

The first pertains to the well understood *geographic* notion of community, such as a village or physically bounded urban neighbourhood. However, as Correia (2000:220) argues:

Increased communication and physical mobility make it difficult for police agencies to rely entirely on structural boundaries to define the democratic principles that guide their operations because they do not necessarily reflect the diversity that may exist within and across these bounded areas.

Hence the second approach emphasises *networks* of human interactions and social ties as the defining features of community. After all, for most of us, our deepest sense of belonging is to our most intimate social networks, especially family and friends. Beyond that perimeter there are myriad other possibilities for belonging based on, for example: work, civic life, religion, ethnicity, lifestyle and gender. Again, however, this approach is not without its difficulties for policing. Whilst this conceptualisation encompasses the organic qualities of community, such as trust and shared values, it plays down the territorially specific aspect that is usually thought necessary for operational policing.

In *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985) Anthony Cohen put forward a different account of community. Rejecting attempts to reduce community to geographic or institutional categories, Cohen argues that communities are best approached as 'communities of meaning'. In other words, community plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging. As Delanty (2003:46) explains:

According to this interpretation community exists ultimately in the symbolic order rather than an empirical reality; it is a form of consciousness or awareness of reality; and as such community is a symbolically constructed reality.

At first sight, this perspective seems to have little relevance for the analysis of policing. However, there is a growing body of literature that draws attention to the symbolic and dramaturgical functions of the police at both the institutional and interactional levels (Innes 2002, 2003, Loader 1997, Loader & Mulcahy 2003, Manning 1997). In other words, there is a view that the police are as important for what they symbolise and stand for, as for what they actually do. Recognising the dramaturgical aspects of policing, Manning (1997) argues that the police have long relied upon strategies of 'impression management' to engender popular support and enact social control. In similar vein, Innes (2002) draws on symbolic interactionist sociology to show how murder investigations are 'symbolically constructed'; whereas Loader (1997) has employed Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic power' to explain the role and functioning of the police in society. According to Bourdieu (1991:170) symbolic power is:

A power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic) by virtue of the specific act of mobilization.

Loader explains how this symbolic power is internalised in individuals, through their habitus so as to incline them to act and react to policing in certain ways:

Such dispositions amount - as Bourdieu would say - to an unthought-of category of thought that habitually leads people to couple crime and policing together as one. An idealised force for good is imagined as struggling with, and seeking to contain an unknown, unpredictable and demonised evil (Loader 1997: 4).

We will return to Bourdieu's social theory and in particular the concept of habitus later in this thesis, however, the main point to establish here is that the idea of community is often invoked to symbolise and legitimise the role and power of the police. After all, the British police service provides a paradigm case of an institution which seeks to associate itself alongside the idea of community, rather than that of society. In police and public discourse why do we never hear calls for more 'society policing' or 'society engagement'? As previously suggested, while society is associated with the negative aspects of modernity (i.e. rationalisation and individualism), community more successfully incorporates the emotional needs of trust and solidarity. Particularly when it is wrapped up in the contemporary packages of community policing or community engagement the powerful notion of community is invoked to symbolise this 'rosy' and affective dimension.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up the argument so far, the IPLDP came about for two main reasons: first, as part of the political fallout from the BBC documentary *The Secret Policeman*; and second, because of the influence of HMIC. In *Training Matters*, HMIC (2002b) highlighted a lack of community engagement in police recruit training, though this criticism and the BBC investigation had their roots in longer term concerns about the acceptance of diversity in British policing. The IPLDP can be seen as a continuation of a series of interventions in which training is viewed as a panacea to make changes to and right the perceived wrongs of policing.

This said, the IPLDP is radically different from previous training programmes and, in particular, the community placements and the University training are novel in the context of British policing. As such, these areas call out for academic investigation. After all, it 'is the task of social science to gain an understanding of the social world, as a product of human activity and practice, and to investigate the limits of social change' (Schwarzmantel 1994:19). The key question which emerges from the analysis so far is: *can this new training lead to the desired professionalisation of the police service and a change in police culture as intended?* As I argued in Chapter One, as a single doctoral researcher it is appropriate to address this question at the level of individual police officers and not in terms of the whole police institution. Moreover, whilst the national IPLDP curriculum is based on national standards, police forces have been encouraged to tailor the programme to meet local circumstances. Of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, seven have formed partnerships with local universities to enable their officers to study for a Foundation Degree; and, as I have indicated, these programmes



differ markedly in content and structure. Therefore in the following chapter my methodological decision to conduct a case study approach can be justified and I will shift the focus to the particulars of the case study site.

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**Part II: Methodological and ethical issues**

**Chapter Five**

**The case study**

## 5 The case study

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One cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality.

*Pierre Bourdieu (1993:271)*

### Chapter overview

My approach in this important middle part of the thesis is to deal with methodological issues in three, chaptered, 'bite-sized' chunks. Although examination of my broader methodological strategy will be the main focus of Chapter Six and my methods of data analysis the topic of Chapter Seven, Part II begins with a justification of my decision to conduct a case study approach. My aim in this chapter is to explain why a case study is justified on methodological, logistical and strategic grounds. Having already set out above the national features of the IPLDP, I will also shift the focus to the particulars of the case study site. Further details will be provided on the local police force and the University as well as the background and structure of the Foundation Degree.

### Case study: an initial understanding

It should first be noted that a case study is neither a method nor a methodology (Bloomer & James 2001). As Stake (1994:236) explains, 'as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of enquiry used'. Yin (1994:13) proposes a broadly positivist approach to case research and defines a case study as:

...an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

The intention of a case study is generally proposed to be to gain an in-depth understanding of concerned phenomena in a 'real-life' setting. Such an approach can explore, describe and explain complex relationships and 'bring to life' meanings and issues through contextualisation and what Flyvbjerg (2001) calls 'the power of example'. The decision to conduct a case study in my own police force can be justified on methodological, logistical and strategic grounds.

### *Methodological grounds*

As will be explained in more detail in Chapter Six, the methodological strategy employed in this study comprised qualitative data collection and analysis and is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly 'interpretivist'. Cavaye (1996:227-228) explains how case research is appropriate to the interpretivist paradigm:

Case research can be carried out taking a positivist or an interpretive stance, can take a deductive or an inductive approach, can use qualitative or quantitative methods, can investigate one or multiple cases. Case research can be a highly structured positivist deductive investigation of multiple cases; it can also be an unstructured, interpretive inductive investigation of one case; lastly, it can be anything in between these two extremes in almost any combination.

Darke et al (1998) suggest that a case study approach is useful in newer, less well-developed research areas, particularly where examination of the context and the dynamics of a situation are important. As explained previously, aspects of the IPLDP such as the community placements and university training are innovative in a policing context and the programme structure differs across the individual force areas. However, as Golby (1994) argues, a case study is '...not the study of uniqueness but of particularity. That is to say, case study is concerned with intelligibility, which in turn is a matter of connecting the case with others of its kind'.<sup>41</sup> In other words, although the researcher's first obligation is to understand and make intelligible the particular case (Stake 2005) it is then important to try and make links with other situations and phenomena.

Within quantitative research this would usually be conceptualised in terms of a study's 'generalisability'. However, as Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2001) suggest, in the context of qualitative methods, findings do not have to be justified in terms of 'generalisation' because of the connotations of that term for statistically significant large scale surveys. 'Rather, the issue is what case studies can tell us about situations beyond the actual case that was studied' (ibid p 11). According to Hodkinson & Hodkinson good qualitative case studies can do that in at least three ways: (1) theory can be transposed beyond the original sites of the study, (2) they can provide provisional 'truths', and (3) findings can 'ring true' in other settings.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Bloomer and James (2000:6).

<sup>42</sup> In relation to point (2), they argue that the provisional truths are in the 'Popperian sense', that the 'truths' should stand until contradictory findings or better theorising has been developed.

### *Logistical grounds*

The force has an establishment of 5901 police officers and 4611 police staff.<sup>43</sup> Each year approximately 300 new officers are recruited, predominately to make up for planned retirements. The force participated in the pilot of the IPLDP mentioned in Chapter Three and was also an ‘early adopter’ force in terms of its national roll out.<sup>44</sup> More importantly for my own research interest, this force is one of the seven which requires its recruits to complete a Foundation Degree as part of the IPLDP and, as such, it is clear that the force sees itself at the forefront of developments in recruit training and as a model for good practice.

According to Bloomer & James (2001:7), ‘it can be argued that a case study has special potential for researcher-practitioners’. Leaving aside for the time being the epistemological basis for this claim, it can be seen how from a purely logistical perspective this is so. As a Police Sergeant within the organisation I have, over time, established numerous contacts and it might even be claimed gained a level of trust and professional credibility. Within my role at the Training School I already enjoyed a degree of access to police manager (‘gate-keepers’), student officers and academic staff at the University.

### *Strategic grounds*

From a strategic perspective the decision to conduct the case study within my own force was also a sound one. The locally designed structure of the IPLDP seemed both coherent and logical, and more importantly, key aspects of that structure integrated well with my own longitudinal research design. The local approach was to divide the two year training period into the below four phases:

#### Phase 1: Induction

The force recruits cohorts of approximately 40 student officers every six weeks. They spend the first two weeks at the Training School where they are inducted into the force, attested into the office of constable and undergo basic officer safety training.

#### Phase 2: Community and partnerships

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<sup>43</sup> Internal police force documentation.

<sup>44</sup> Although the IPLDP was launched nationally in April 2005 this was under a phased roll out programme and those forces taking part in the first phase were called ‘early adopter’ forces.

The student officers then attend the University campus for four weeks where they commence the Foundation Degree in Police Studies. On top of this, the National IPLDP curriculum makes reference to the student officers having a minimum of 80 hours community engagement activities (Home Office 2005a). The local approach was to divide this into two, one week (40 hours) community placements. As will be described in more detail later, immediately following the University the officers then participate in the first five day community placement which is linked to an academic assignment.

### Phase 3: Legislation and supervised patrol

Following the placement, the officers return to the Training School for a further 15 weeks where they receive a traditional policing education based around legislation and procedures. However, a further innovation of the IPLDP is the increased use of role plays which now take place in the public gaze at locations such as shopping centres.

Having graduated from the Training School the officers are then posted out to their operational police stations where they will spend at least ten weeks with an experienced tutor constable. It can be argued that the tutor constable system has been the one historical constant of recruit training as the tutor's role has not changed in any significant way over many decades (see Naylor 1988). Indeed, it will be contended in Chapter Eight that when examined from a theoretical perspective the tutor/student officer relationship provides a classic example of participatory learning similar to that of an apprenticeship, as the novice learns from the experienced practitioner (Lave & Wenger 1991).

### Phase 4: Independence and confirmation

At the same time as coaching the student officer one of the key roles of the tutor is to assess them to determine if they are competent for independent patrol. If so, they will then spend the remainder of the two years as operational officers where they will be further assessed against the 22 competence based National Occupational Standards for the police service. Over this same period, they will also complete a number of academic assignments for the Foundation Degree. In the second year of their training the officers return to the University campus for a further two weeks; and at week 83 they complete a second community placement. After two years, if they have completed both the Foundation Degree and the Occupational Standards, their appointment into the force will be confirmed.

As Table 1 suggests, the research design was longitudinal and I set out to interview 25 student officers, from three cohort intakes, on three separate occasions. The main strategic intention was to be able to gain access to, and then interview the participants at key points over the two year training period. The first interviews took place right at the start of their policing careers when they had completed the four weeks at the University and the first community placement, but before they had any experience of operational policing. The second interviews were conducted after approximately twelve months of police service when the officers returned to the Training School for a planned two weeks additional training course. The final interviews took place towards the end of the officers two year training period, after they had completed the further two weeks at the University and the second community placement.

**Table 1: Chronology of interviews**

<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Total number of cohorts involved</b>	<b>Number of research participants interviewed<sup>45</sup></b>	<b>Point of interview during participants two year training period (approximate)</b>
First interview	3	25	10 weeks
Second interview	3	20	12 months
Third interview	3	16	20 months

### **The University**

The University has a strong pedigree and reputation in delivering vocationally based programmes. However, before the launch of the IPLDP the University had no previous academic heritage in police studies, and the majority of the academic team were recruited specifically to develop and deliver the Foundation Degree programme.

### **The Foundation Degree**

In September 2001, the Foundation Degree was introduced into the United Kingdom awards system by the Government as part of a strategy to widen participation and to enhance the development of vocational awards at higher education level. The award was controversially called a 'degree', despite the fact that it was only of two years duration and not at honours level. Smith & Betts (2003) argue that:

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<sup>45</sup> See Chapter Seven for a discussion of research participant 'drop-out' rate.

The origins of the Foundation Degree were less to do with the development of a carefully honed concept derived through recognition of the need for such an award across the academic community, but more to do with the Government's desire to achieve certain key policy objectives.

To that end, according to Morgan et al. (2004:355), Foundation Degrees '...are another in a long list of government schemes aimed at combining or bridging the academic-vocational divide or at least providing an HE-based curriculum with a vocational content'. The defining characteristics of these vocational degrees include the integration of academic and work-based learning throughout, and the close and continued collaboration between programme providers and employers.<sup>46</sup>

The Foundation Degree in Police Studies is a joint venture between the police force and University and which also integrates aspects of the national IPLDP. In their research into a scheme to send senior officers to study at university on full time degree programmes, Lee & Punch (2004:247) argued that 'it defeats the purpose if officers take a degree together in a tailor-made programme or if the content is shaped to be overly functional for policing'. Whilst the Foundation Degree in Police Studies is, indeed, tailor-made and officers do take it together in cohorts of approximately 40, the curriculum is broadly based and contains subjects underpinned by the disciplines of sociology, criminology, education and law. This academic content was mapped against the 22 National Occupational Standards for the police service to ensure that the learning is relevant to the workplace.<sup>47</sup> The educational aims of the programme are to develop police officers who are able to:

1. Understand and engage with the community
2. Enforce the law and follow police procedures
3. Respond to human and social diversity
4. Position themselves in the role of a police officer inside the police organisation
5. Understand and exercise appropriate professional standards and ethical conduct

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<sup>46</sup> See Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Handbook for Foundation Degrees*, <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationDegree/handbook/handbook04.asp#a>, accessed July 2009.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix Four.



6. Develop a personal development plan to take them forward in their chosen career in the pursuit of lifelong learning
7. Exercise qualities of professional judgement and decision making
8. Understand those principles and concepts of social sciences and of law which inform and influence the environment in which they operate (*University Student Handbook, 2007*).

In order to be awarded the Foundation Degree, the student officers must successfully complete the below nine academic modules over the course of the two years, giving a total of 240 credits, as set out in Table 2:

### Level One

Understanding Social and Community Issues	20 Credits
Equality, Diversity and Rights	20 Credits
Learning Process and Professional Development	20 Credits
Legal and Organisational Framework 1	20 Credits
Practice-Based Learning	40 Credits

### Level Two

Legal and Organisational Framework	20 Credits
Professional and Community Partnerships	20 Credits
Assessment, Advice and Support	20 Credits
Practice-Based Learning 2	60 Credits

**Table 2: Foundation Degree modular structure**

Every module is assessed, and a variety of assessment strategies are used on the programme. Most of the assessments take the form of written assignments and/or presentations.

### Conclusion

In concluding this chapter let me reiterate that the partnership between the local police force and the University offers a radical change in British police recruit training methods. Whilst the Foundation Degree has been explicitly designed to lead to accreditation and professional development, it is implicit that the University education also seeks to bring about attitudinal and cultural change. Therefore when seen in terms of Chan's (1996a) framework for analysing police culture explained in Chapter Two, this is predominantly an educational intervention to change what she terms 'the habitus'

of policing. However, as we will see later, both theoretically and empirically, it is the contextual *relationship* between *habitus* and *field* that is important. Though in the following chapter, it will first be necessary to discuss in more detail my broader methodological approach.

**Chapter Six**

**Methodology and ethical issues**

## 6 Methodology and ethical issues

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We are what we write, we are what we read and we are what we make of what we read. Researching and theorising, like other forms of learning, are historically, socially and personally positioned and constructed.

*Bloomer et al. (2004)*

### Chapter overview

In this chapter I will set out and offer a rationale for my methodological approach. After first outlining my theoretical position I will provide further details on the research method and case study. In relation to this, I will then discuss a number of important ethical issues. As well as the general issues of participant consent, confidentiality and anonymity, I will also examine a number of context-specific ethical concerns. Here it will be seen how my decision to conduct a case study in my own police force presented me with ethical and professional dilemmas. These included: (1) 'insider'/practitioner as researcher, (2) police supervisor researching subordinates, and attendant issues of power, and (3) role conflict.

### Methodology and theoretical perspective

Methodology is taken to mean an approach to systematic inquiry developed within a particular theoretical perspective (or paradigm), with associated ontological and epistemological assumptions. This should not be confused with research *method*, which, as will be seen below, refers to the more specific procedures used to gather and analyse the data.

The methodological strategy employed in this study comprises qualitative data collection and analysis and is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist. An interpretivist approach not only sees people as the primary sources of data but seeks their experiences or what Blaikie (2000) calls the 'insider' view, rather than imposing an 'outsider' view. At this point one may be expected to contrast and perhaps even justify this methodology against the positivist or post-positivist paradigm. But why should we? Would a researcher writing up a quantitative study feel the need to justify and compare their methodology against a qualitative interpretive approach? The answer is probably no, because as Hodkinson (2004:10) argues, within educational research 'certain methods are regarded as superior to others'. At the top of that hierarchy is what Hodkinson terms 'the new orthodoxy', which endorses 'the technically rational aspects of positivism and empiricism [and] where research is primarily concerned with

the prediction and control of educational practices' (ibid). Whilst comparison will serve below as a useful heuristic technique, it is not felt necessary to justify my own methodology and theoretical perspective *against* any other research paradigm. Rather the task here is to show that my methodological strategy and theoretical perspective are appropriate for the research context, aim and questions (Mason 2004).

It has been explained in various chapters that in this study we are engaging with complex ideas and concepts such as: learning, identity, habitus, culture and professionalism; and that, importantly, we are exploring these at the level of individual police officers. As I will go on to show, this calls for a theoretical perspective which is concerned with how the social world is *interpreted* by individuals and which foregrounds the role of socially constructed *meaning* in understanding human practices.

### **Interpretivism**

I take 'theoretical perspective' to mean the philosophical stance lying behind a methodology. As Crotty (1998:66) explains:

The theoretical perspective provides a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and its criteria. Another way to put it is to say that, whenever one examines a particular methodology, one discovers a complexus of assumptions buried within it. It is these assumptions that constitute one's theoretical perspective and they largely have to do with the world that the methodology envisages. Different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world.

The theoretical perspective adopted in this study, *interpretivism*, emerged in contradistinction to positivism in attempts to understand and explain human and social reality. As Schwandt (1994:125) outlines, 'intepretivism was conceived in reaction to the effort to develop a natural science of the social. Its foil was largely logical empiricist methodology and the bid to apply that framework to human inquiry'.

Interpretivism is often linked to the sociological thought of Max Weber (1949, 1962), who suggests that in the social sciences we are concerned with *Verstehen* (understanding). This has been taken to mean that Weber is contrasting the interpretive/understanding approach needed in human inquiry with the explicative (*Erklären*, explaining) approach, focused on causality, that underpins the natural sciences. Weber believed that things that exist in space are merely appearances and have no independent existence from our thoughts. The social world cannot be described

without investigating how individuals use language and symbols to construct what social practices and experiences mean for them. For according to Weber, it is only when we come to understand the individual experience and its subjective *meaning* that we begin to understand why social actors behave in particular ways.

Following Weber, interpretivism has become more of an ‘umbrella term’ (Grix 2004) for a wide range of perspectives including: hermeneutics, phenomenology, social constructionism and symbolic interactionism. However, it is possible to identify a number of interpretivisms broad ontological and epistemological assumptions which have underpinned my own methodological stance.

### *Ontology*

Ontology is the theory of being, or in other words what entities exist in the world. The positive paradigm assumes that there is objective reality which is subject to natural laws such as cause and effect and that there are universal truths which can be discovered through systematic inquiry. Whereas in contrast, interpretivism posits that there are multiple socially constructed realities and that reality and the person who observes it cannot be separated. These social realities are the product of processes by which social actors negotiate meanings of and for actions and situations (Blumer 1969). Importantly, social reality is not some ‘thing’ that may be interpreted in different ways, it *is* those interpretations. From this perspective we cannot privately step outside of language and individually occupy a concept free space. Rather we can only collectively operate within a conceptual and linguistic framework (Derrida 1976). So in this sense social reality has also already been ‘pre-interpreted’.

### *Epistemology*

Epistemology is the philosophy of the theory of knowledge. To borrow a useful quote from a former tutor ‘scholarship is distinguished from lay opinion not by what is known, but by how you know what you know’.<sup>48</sup> Epistemology is therefore the theory of how we know what we know. In the positivist paradigm the object of study is perceived to be independent of the researcher and knowledge is discovered and verified through direct observation or measurements (empiricism) of phenomena. In contrast, an alternative interpretive perspective suggests that knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomena studied (Mason 2004). The social researcher enters the

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<sup>48</sup> Webb, K (1995) unpublished paper on *Research and Methodology*, presented at Open University course *Global Politics* Summer School, University of East of Anglia, August 1995.

everyday world (e.g. through observation or interview) in order to grasp socially constructed meanings, and then reconstructs these meanings. At one level these latter accounts are regarded as re-descriptions of everyday accounts; at another level, they are developed into concepts and theories.

### **Research method**

As noted above, within the interpretative paradigm people are regarded as the primary sources of data and consequently in this study the main research method was qualitative semi-structured interviewing. Kvale (1996:5) defines qualitative research interviews as 'attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations'. Whereas according to Seidman (1998:4) qualitative interviewing:

...provides access to the contexts of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience...Interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding their action.

Importantly, for both Seidman and Kvale, the emphasis should be on seeking to uncover the *meaning* of people's experiences and not 'just the facts'. As Dilley (2004:128) explains:

Meaning is not 'just the facts' but rather the understandings one has that are specific to the individual (what was said) yet transcendent of the specific (what is the relation between what was said, how it was said, what the listener was attempting to ask or hear, what the speaker was attempting to convey or say).

Whilst at the most basic level, interviews are 'conversations' (Kvale 1996) this does not mean they are easy to conduct; nor does it mean that they can be undertaken with an overly formulaic approach. Kvale, for example, advocates a rigorous, yet non-universal 'craftsman like' approach to conducting interview research:

In order to develop the qualitative interview as a form of research it is necessary to go beyond the dichotomy of all method verses no method. I will discuss a craftsman like approach that bypasses the opposition of rigid formalism or naïve

spontaneity. Craftsmanship here includes a shift from method to the person of researcher, relating science to art, a skill model of transition from novice to expert, and the learning of research through apprenticeship (Kvale 1996:105).

As I am not approaching anything close to ‘expert’ status, the notion of research as an apprenticeship rings true. As an experienced police officer, I have conducted countless ‘investigative interviews’ and have run training courses in interviewing skills. However, in terms of the conducting of qualitative research interviews I regarded myself as a complete novice.

### **Access and the research sample**

As indicated in Chapter Five, the research design was longitudinal and 25 student officers, across three cohort intakes, were interviewed on three occasions. However, before any interviews could be conducted it was first necessary to gain access to the student officers and then recruit and select the research sample. Although it was suggested in an earlier chapter that the police service can be a difficult organisation for a researcher to penetrate, for me, the issue of access to the student officers and Training School was relatively straightforward, which, as I will expand on below, was in large part due to my ‘insider’ status. In order to obtain volunteer participants, I initially spoke to groups of student officers and explained about my research. I was surprised to obtain many more volunteers than was perhaps necessary, or I could logistically cope with, so there was a need to select a more manageable sample.<sup>49</sup>

Although the terms sampling and selection are usually associated with the statistical logic of quantitative inquiry, Mason (2004:121) writes to ‘dispel any notion that somehow rigorous or systematic sampling strategies are not really important or relevant to qualitative research’. However, it was not my intention to select a statistically representative sample, but rather to select a sample which encompassed a relevant range. As Mason explains:

...the aim is to produce, through sampling, a relevant range of contexts or phenomena which will enable you to make strategic and possibly cross-contextual comparisons, and hence build a well-founded argument. In this version, the sample is designed to encapsulate a *relevant range* in relation to the

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<sup>49</sup> Having selected the participants I then followed this up with a letter formally inviting them to participate in the research. See Appendix One.



wider universe, but not to represent it directly. This might mean a range of experiences, characteristics...or so on (ibid, p, 124).

The sample comprised 12 female and 13 male student officers. Although policing remains a male-dominated occupation (Brown 2007, Heidensohn 1992), more female officers are being recruited than ever before, and the research sample ratio of male to female approximates to the current recruiting position.<sup>50</sup> Like a number of other public sector organisations, the police service is subject to Government targets for the recruitment and retention of officers from ethnic minority backgrounds (Home Office 2005b). Currently officers from a black minority ethnic (BME) background account for four percent of the force strength and one participant from the research sample could be regarded as BME, which again is broadly representative. Although the participants came from varied backgrounds, they probably fit the traditional socio-economic profile of police officers, i.e. working to lower middle class (Cohen 1979, Emsley 1991, Reiner 1978, Steedman 1984). As will be seen in later chapters, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital was relevant to my analysis, and 10 of the sample already had first degrees, although none held any postgraduate qualifications.

### **Insider research**

A significant volume of literature is devoted to the insider/outsider debate in qualitative research (e.g. Arnold 1994, Bogdan & Taylor 1984, Labaree 2002, Merton 1972), as at issue are a number of important conceptual, epistemological and ethical questions. First, however, it is possible to argue that the insider/outsider debate can be conceptualised on at least two broad levels.

At a *paradigmatic* level, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is one of the fundamental methodological issues which distinguish different approaches to empirical inquiry. As already suggested, within the positivist paradigm, 'objectivity' is a key notion that guarantees the scientific status of knowledge and which implies that the researcher can adopt the role of a detached investigator. From this perspective scientific knowledge is regarded as superior to all other forms of knowledge, such as traditional or local knowledge which may be regarded as mere opinion; and any hint of subjective involvement is to be deplored (Blaikie 1993). Brayant (1995), however, calls this the

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<sup>50</sup> Female officers comprise 20 percent of the case study police force establishment; though the current recruiting ratio is more balanced at approximately 60 percent males and 40 percent females.

‘view from no where’, because there is no place for the identity and interest of the researcher; the researcher is not in view, he/she is an outsider. In contrast, the fundamental goal of the interpretative alternative is to understand meaning, which requires a different methodological stance. The researcher cannot enter the ‘lifeworld’ (Habermas 1984) of the research participants, through an objective stance. As Habermas argues, ‘meanings-whether embodied in actions, institutions, products of labour, words, networks or cooperation or documents-can be made accessible only *from the inside*’ (ibid, p112).

A different though related way to conceptualise the insider/outsider dichotomy is at a more cultural/organisational level. Here there is a considerable and growing body of literature which addresses research undertaken by *practitioner* researchers. Robson (1993) describes the advantages and disadvantages of being a practitioner researcher, while Jarvis (1998) and Gray (2004) briefly examine the possibilities and limitations. From this perspective, it should also first be pointed out that the categories of insiderness and outsidership are not necessarily mutually exclusive or easily defined (Deutsch 1981, Labaree 2002). In the case of my research, I am an insider in terms of the police organisation and its culture, yet at the same time I am an outsider in relation to the student officers’ knowledge of the University and community placements. In this sense ‘we are all multiple insiders and outsiders’ (Deutsch 1981:174) and ‘the boundaries of insiderness are situational and [may be] defined by the perceptions of those being researched’ (Labaree 2002:101).

Although commentators cite a variety of interrelated advantages to insiderness Labaree (2002:103) identifies and summarises four ‘broad values’:

[1] the value of shared experiences, [2] the value of greater access, [3] the value of cultural interpretation, and [4] the value of deeper understanding and clarity of thought for the researcher.

At the same time, however, it has to be conceded that there are a number of methodological and ethical dilemmas faced by the insider practitioner researcher. Arguably the first methodological issue to negotiate is the maintenance of accuracy and ‘objectivity’. Whilst this doctoral candidate rejects the idea that any research (interpretivist or otherwise) can be truly objective, there remains the need to report and interpret the participants meanings in as accurate a way as possible. Thus, as Labaree cautions:

...the insider, already existing within the community...possesses a considerable amount of pre-constructed assumptions and knowledge about the community...[yet] possession of advanced knowledge should not lead to a disregard for questioning one's own insider knowledge.

The second methodological issue insider practitioner researchers must negotiate concerns 'the crisis of representation' (Lincoln & Denzin 2000) in the text and whether or not it is necessary to tell a story about oneself if the research is about others. As Sparkes (2002:9) explains, 'this crisis asks the questions, Who is the "other"? Can we ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other, or an Other?' According to Denzin (1989), all research is really about the researcher, but in order for the research to be of value it must move beyond the researcher and the researcher's situation. Although it is intended that this will be achieved within the narrative of this thesis it is recognised here, that its authoring is not a detached or mechanical process. As Richardson (2000:293) argues:

Although we usually think about writing as a mode of "telling" about the social world, writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of the research project. Writing is also a way of "knowing"- a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable.

Whilst there are, of course, a number of different ways in which this particular story could be told, the thesis is predominantly authored as part 'realist', part 'confessional' and occasionally, part autoethnographical tale (Sparkes 2002, Van Maanen 1988),

### **Ethical issues**

There is significant body of literature concerned with the ethical issues in conducting social research (Lee-Treweek & Linkoge 2000, Loue 2000, Mauthner et al. 2002, Oliver 2002) and, more specifically, educational research (Aubrey et al. 2000, McNamee & Bridges 2001, Sheehy et al. 2005). On top of this, relevant guidelines have been produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA)<sup>51</sup> and the British Psychological Society (BPS).<sup>52</sup> Although a number of other professions (e.g. medicine, social work, and teaching) have policies, procedures and committees relating to research into and involving their members and institutions, there is no such equivalent in

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<sup>51</sup> Available on-line at <http://www.bera.ac.uk> accessed July 09.

<sup>52</sup> Available on-line at <http://www.bps.org.uk> accessed July 09.

policing. In some ways this is surprising, as in many other respects the police service is a highly regulated and bureaucratic institution. However, this may be explained in view of the somewhat 'anti-academic' nature of the police organisation mentioned in Chapter Three, which suggests that research and intellectual inquiry are not key aspects of the institutional ethos.

Based on my review of the above literature, one can identify a number of general ethical principles which inform most social research projects and which I sought to uphold in this particular study. The principle of *voluntary participation* requires that people should not be coerced into participating in research. This is especially relevant in a case like this, where my research sample was initially recruited from a 'captive audience' (i.e. a cohort of student police officers at a training school). Closely related to the notion of voluntary participation is the requirement of *informed consent*. Essentially, this meant that my prospective research participants had to be fully informed about the procedures and general aim of my research, as well as explaining that they could withdraw their participation at any point. There are two further standards that were applied in order to help protect the privacy of the participants. Almost all research guidelines guarantee the participants *confidentiality* and in this study all the student officers were assured that any personal identifying information would not and will not be made available to anyone other than myself. However, a stricter standard is *anonymity*, which essentially means that the participants and institutions remain anonymous throughout the study through the holding back of institutional names etc. As indicated in Chapter One, institutional names have been withheld in this thesis and as will be seen in Part III pseudonyms were assigned to all individual participants. Finally, ethical standards also require that researchers do not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of either physical or psychological harm. Whilst operational policing is an inherently dangerous occupation, I judged that there was no increased risk for the participants in my research.

As well as the above general ethical issues, there were also a number of contextual ethical concerns which to a large extent revolved around me being reflexive about my own position as an insider practitioner researcher and, more specifically, my role as a police supervisor. It can be argued that even in the most 'democratic' forms of research methodology, such as 'participatory action research' (see, for example, McTaggart 1991, Wood et al. 2008) there will always be a power imbalance between the researcher and those being researched. However, in a disciplined, hierarchical organisation like the police service there is perhaps a need for even greater reflexivity, explanation and care in putting the participants at ease before and during interviews; as well as in the

formulation of questions. Although the interviews did take place on police premises, they were always conducted at the end of the working day and never whilst I was wearing uniform.

A further ethical issue which I had not fully anticipated during the research planning stage, was the potential for role conflict. Again, this is one of the potential drawbacks for the insider practitioner researcher, but when that researcher is also a manager within organisation the pitfalls can be more acute. As will be seen in Part III, much of the data relating to the University training was critical and I was faced with a dilemma as to how to respond to this. Whilst as noted above, there are no specific internal ethical guidelines relating to the conduct of research, I am nevertheless subject to the *Police Standards of Professional Behaviour*<sup>53</sup> and have clear responsibilities as a manager within the organisation to support colleagues and report/deal with any problems they encounter. In Chapter Ten it will be seen how this dilemma was dealt with, following guidance and support from my supervisors. In later chapters the issue of the refusal of the University tutors to be interviewed as part of my research will also be explored.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have set out and justified my methodological approach. As I argued above, my aim was not to justify this methodology in the *abstract* sense, nor was it to seek justification *against* any other research paradigm. Rather, the objective was to show that my methodological strategy and theoretical perspective were appropriate for the research context, and questions. This chapter has shown that an interpretivist approach provides a logical and coherent basis to explore complex ideas such as habitus, culture and learning.

The chapter has also engaged with some of the challenging ethical and professional dilemmas in conducting qualitative research as an insider practitioner. Therefore in the final Chapter of Part III of this thesis, it remains only to explain my methods of data analysis.

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<sup>53</sup> *Police Conduct Regulations* 2008.

**Chapter Seven**

**Data analysis**

## 7 Data analysis

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'Reality' is *always already* interpreted. Thus data never come in the shape of pure drops from an original virgin source; they are always merged with theory at the very moment of their genesis.

*Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000:17)*

### Chapter overview

It falls to this final chapter in the methodology section of this thesis to explain my methods of data analysis. However, the argument which will be developed is that analysis is an *ongoing* process rather than something which occurs towards the end of the research. I will therefore open this chapter with a restatement of my research questions and interview data collection strategy before discussing my approach to transcription. I will then explain why I used the computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo to help organise, retrieve and analyse the data. This was initially informed by a methodology drawing on the ethos of grounded theory; though it will be seen how I subsequently moved to an interpretive approach influenced by the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1991, 1992).

### Research questions

To recap from Chapter One, my research centred on the below five questions:

1. What is meant by the concept of 'community engagement' with reference to the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme?
2. What are the key aspects of community engagement within that training programme?
3. What learning takes place?
4. What are the implications of this learning on their identities as police officers?
5. More specifically, has this learning led to: a) professionalising the police service  
b) a change in police culture?

### Overview of interviews and strategy

The data comprised 61 interviews from three cohorts of student officers. As indicated in Chapter Five, I began with 25 participants, with the strategic intention to interview them

on three occasions. However, as with most longitudinal designs I anticipated that some of the participants would ‘drop out’ for a variety of reasons. Indeed, as explained above, one of the key ethical principles underpinning this study was informed consent and I had informed the participants that they could withdraw at any point. I had also correctly anticipated that a number of the officers would resign from the police service before completing their two year probationary period.

As one of the most widely used methods in educational research (Borg 2006), I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. Whilst a structured interview has a formalised and limited set of questions, a semi-structured interview is more flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says (Seidman 1998). By avoiding ‘forced-choice’ responses a semi-structured interview facilitates the researcher’s task of interpreting participants experiences from their points of view (Ely 1991) and of representing these experiences in participants’ own language (Kvale 1996) . The interviewer in a semi-structured interview usually works from a framework of themes to be explored. As I planned to produce and work from a guide in all three interviews, I realised that the themes in the later interviews also had to be informed by data and analysis from the earlier stages. To that end it was necessary to conduct an initial analysis of the data following the first interviews, and to recognise that analysis and interpretation is an *ongoing process*, rather than something which occurs towards the end of the research.

### *First interviews*

In the first interviews, I began by asking the participants questions about their backgrounds. Whilst it was not strictly part of my research agenda, it then seemed logical to follow with questions about their motives for joining the police. In any event, it is good practice at the start of any interview to begin with straightforward questions and to build a rapport with the interviewees (Kvale 1996, Seidman 1998). These were followed by questions around the idea of community engagement and the participants’ identification of aspects of engagement within the IPLDP. As suggested above, my main aim here was to encourage the participants to identify what they regarded as the aspects of community engagement, so that this could form the basis for later questions in this and subsequent interviews. While the details of these aspects are examined later, it can be stated here that three potential themes emerged: (1) *the community placements*, (2) *the University*, and (iii) *the Police Training School*. These themes, which were directly relevant to research questions one and two, were then developed with further questioning.



### *Second interviews*

Having completed all 25 interviews in the first phase, I conducted a further 20 interviews in phase two. By this time, four of the participants had resigned from the police and one had not replied to my request for a second interview. Without wanting to be complacent I judged that this was an acceptably low number of participants to 'lose' in this way; and I hoped that the remaining participants continued involvement could be explained by their genuine interest in the project. Alternatively, a more reflexive explanation in terms of the power dynamics should not ignore the fact that these were recruits in training responding to a request from a Supervisor. However, four officers resigning from the police service was a greater number than I had expected.<sup>54</sup>

In these second interviews we discussed their experiences of tutored on the job training, as well as being independent operational police officers. At this juncture, I was particularly interested to learn about their emerging identities as police officers and my strategy was shifting to gather more data relevant to research questions three, four and five. These interviews also included further and more exploratory questions on the previously identified themes of the community placements, the University and the Police Training School.

### *Final interviews*

The third and final interviews took place when the officers were approaching the end of their two year training period. Whilst there had been no more resignations, a further four participants did not attend for the final interview, which meant that of the original sample of 25 officers, 16 fully participated in the full longitudinal study.

In these final interviews, my strategy included questioning the participants about the second community placement which they had recently attended. However, as I will explain in more detail later, by this stage issues and concerns around the University were becoming central to the interviews and research.

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<sup>54</sup> Personal communication with the force Personnel Department revealed that around 10 percent of recruits resign prior to completing their two year probationary period; yet in this case the four participants represented 15 percent of the total sample. Whilst it would have been interesting to interview these officers about their reasons for leaving the service, this was not part of the research design nor was it possible within the time frame of this study.

## **Transcription**

All the interviews were digitally recorded with an average length of 35 minutes. Following discussions with my supervisors, I decided to personally transcribe all of them; not an insignificant task in itself as I completed over 150,000 words of transcript. Ultimately, however, this meant that the data was both logistically easier to work with and from a methodological perspective I became more familiar and 'closer' to it. As with the writing of the thesis, the transcribing is not some task which is separated from the research process but is an important part of the analysis and theoretical development (Kvale 1996).

## **NVivo**

The interviews produced a large quantity of rich data and, following transcription, I was presented with further questions relating to how to organise and analyse it. At this point I was in total agreement with Mason (2004), that the impulse to impose order and organisation on my data was 'overwhelming'. Initially, however, a choice had to be made between using qualitative or quantitative data analysis or a synthesis of both. Whilst originally it was my intention to stick as closely as possible to qualitative methods, the volume of data made me question how this could be achieved. I recalled an earlier conversation that I had had with one of my supervisors, who had said that one of the significant challenges in doing qualitative research is how to analyse the data without 'counting' it.

Whether qualitative or quantitative, most educational and social research is dominated by an approach to data analysis based around coding. As Colley and Diment (2001) explain:

The basic technique is to identify key categories relating to the original research questions, and then code portions of the data according to these categories. Fundamentally, the process of data analysis is described as one of identifying similarities and differences between different extracts of the data (Dey 1993, May 1997). The process then moves on to the elaboration of more abstract concepts and the interconnections that can be made between the categories.

In the early stages of this process at least, and even within qualitative research, this coding is necessarily based around identifying the *statistical* frequency of categories, or

put more simply ‘counting’. Having reconciled myself to this, I decided to use NVivo to help me organise, retrieve and analyse the data.

Whilst there are a range of CAQDAS options available (e.g. NUD\*IST, Ethnograph, ATLAS), NVivo is both a popular and intuitively easy-to-use package. Although the use of NVivo should not predispose the researcher into adopting any one particular underpinning theoretical approach, this package is particularly suited to grounded theory (Richards 1999).<sup>55</sup>

### **Grounded theory**

Since its ‘discovery’ in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss, grounded theory has arguably become the most widely used qualitative interpretive framework in the social sciences (Denzin 1994:508). Indeed, according to Turner (1998), ‘the qualitative researcher has no real alternative to pursuing something very close to grounded theory’.<sup>56</sup> Despite its popularity however, grounded theory has not avoided criticism (e.g. Bryman & Burgess 1994, Haig 1995, Reason & Rowen 1981, Silverman 1993, Thomas & James 2006). Although it is the case that it arose out of a reaction against the dominant positivist paradigm of the 1950s and 60s (Kinach 1995), it should nevertheless ‘be understood within the predominantly scientific context in which it was created’ (Seale 1999:100). As Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000:12), point out, ‘Glaser and Strauss’s grounded theory has dual roots, one in symbolic interactionism in the person of Strauss, and the other in the statistically oriented positivism that was part of Glaser’s intellectual luggage’.

Symbolic interactionism represents a leading qualitative methodological movement which appeared in the USA at the beginning of the twentieth century (Hammersley 1989). Heavily influenced by pragmatism, the Chicago tradition of sociology, and the philosophical writings of George Herbert Mead, the term itself was coined by Herbert Blumer (see Blumer 1969). More recently, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2001) identify a number of ‘intellectual goods’ which grounded theory has retained from symbolic interactionism. These include an emphasis on: ‘ideographic research’, ‘qualitative method’, ‘exploration and sensitizing concepts’, ‘cognitive symbols and social action’, and finally, ‘closeness to the empirical material and successive induction’.

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<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the name of the software is derived from the coding typology within grounded theory, where there are essentially two types of codes: those which are found direct in the data, since they are stated by the actors (‘in vivo codes’), and those which the researchers construct from the material (‘in vitro codes’) see Strauss, (1987).

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000:13).

As noted previously however, symbolic interactionism was not the only source of inspiration for the development of grounded theory which was also built on a statistics - processing model (Glaser 1992). At the very least, grounded theory offers what may be termed a 'dataitistic' conception of inquiry (Bunge 1967), in which the process is driven by a rigorous and systematic collection and analysis of the data (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000).

In essence, the phrase 'grounded theory' refers to theory that is developed inductively from a body of data. This contrasts with the hypothetico-deductive method, where theories are generated from testing and refining of a previously constructed hypothesis. The grounded theory approach, particularly the way Strauss developed it, consists of a set of steps whose careful execution is thought to 'guarantee' a good theory as the outcome (Strauss 1987, Strauss & Corbin 1990). The method is used to 'ground' the theory or relate it to the reality of the phenomenon under consideration (Scott 1996). It could therefore be argued that the intention of grounded theory falls within the interpretivist paradigm, whereby the researcher is directed toward a faithful rendition and interpretation of the situation from the participants' perspective. However, whilst the goal of qualitative inquiry is, indeed, interpretation, grounded theory has unwarranted pretensions towards explanation and even prediction (Thomas & James 2006). Notwithstanding this and other problems, which I will address later, grounded theory at least offered me a starting point and initial sense of direction for my analysis. For as Thomas & James first ask and then explain, 'what does one do with ones' data? Surely one just can't talk about it. Grounded theory offers a solution: a set of procedures and a means of generating theory' (ibid, p768).

The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as interview transcriptions) and 'discover', or label variables (called *codes*, *concepts* and *categories*) and their interrelationships. In brief summary, this process of analysis is usually divided into four stages. First, the key points are marked with a series of *codes*, which are extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts*, in order to make them more workable. From these concepts, *categories* are formed, which are the basis for the creation of *theory*.

Within NVivo the coding method and categorisation is based around the slightly different terminology of 'nodes'. Whilst a node is made up from a collection of codes,

the most basic way to think about a node is as a *theme* which emerges from the data.<sup>57</sup> For coding purposes NVivo has two main types of node: tree nodes and free nodes.<sup>58</sup> As the name suggests, tree nodes are organised in a hierarchical structure, moving from a general category at the top to more specific categories further down the tree. In contrast, a free node is a ‘stand-alone’ node, which appears to have no logical connection to other nodes. Because one of the main aims of qualitative analysis is to look for *interrelationships* between themes, it follows that the majority of nodes are likely to be tree nodes.

Indeed, for me, the process of constructing tree nodes was one of the things that I found most useful about using NVivo, as it enabled me to see in schematic form the key emerging themes and their relationships. Whilst this did not fit authentically with the grounded theory method, it seemed more logical to start by identifying the broad themes and then work downwards, as these themes were still ‘grounded’ in the data. Table 3 below shows the top level of themes which emerged from my initial analysis of the first interviews.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of sources</b> <sup>59</sup>	<b>Number of references</b> <sup>60</sup>
University	25	290
Community placements	24	128
Community engagement	24	121
Participants backgrounds	25	108
Emerging identities	24	74
Police Training School	24	47
Reasons for joining	24	43
Issues or concerns about becoming operational	8	15

**Table 3: NVivo top level themes**

From the categorisation of these top level themes it became a relatively straightforward task to identify sub themes; though as noted above, where themes do not readily fit in to

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<sup>57</sup> Throughout the main body of this thesis I will hereafter refer to ‘themes and sub-themes’ in the data instead of using the terminology of ‘nodes’.

<sup>58</sup> Strictly speaking, there are three further types of node used in NVivo: cases, relationships and matrices.

<sup>59</sup> Number of sources refers to number of interviewees who discussed this issue.

<sup>60</sup> Number of references refers to the amount of times the theme was coded across all the first interviews.

the tree node structure, they can be coded as free nodes pending the collection of further data or analysis.

### **Limitations of CAQDAS and grounded theory**

My experience of using NVivo demonstrated how it could be a useful resource for organising, indexing, retrieving and to an extent, analysing data. However, computers and their software offer no substitute for the human researcher *thinking* conceptually and theoretically (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1988, Flyvbjerg 2001).

For as suggested above, coding around descriptive themes, such as community, community placements and the University is a relatively straightforward process. It can be seen from Table 3, for instance, how in the first interviews, issues around the University training became one of the central themes in the research. Under this heading, for example, some of the participants discussed and compared their experiences with previous universities they had attended. Some discussed what I coded as ‘positives’ at the University such as the ‘diversity input’ and their ‘changing views’. More frequently, however, the interviewees discussed ‘negatives’ at the University, such as ‘being separated’ from other students and ‘tutors who they saw as being anti-police’.<sup>61</sup>

However, whilst it is one thing to code descriptively it is much more challenging to code theoretically and conceptually, yet the literature shows that the conceptual framework is one of the most important aspects of any doctoral research and examination (Leshem & Trafford 2007, Trafford & Leshem 2002). According to Rudestam and Newton (1992:6):

A conceptual framework, which is simply a less developed form of theory, consists of statements that link abstract concepts to empirical data. Theories and conceptual frameworks are developed to account for or describe abstract phenomena that occur under similar conditions.

As previously suggested, the whole *raison d’être* of using grounded theory as a method of data analysis is that concepts and theories should derive from the data. As Strauss and Corbin (1998:34) explain:

...one must remember that *emergence* is the foundation of our approach to theory building, a researcher cannot enter an investigation with a list of

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<sup>61</sup> See Table 3 on page 115 below, which shows how I coded and developed ‘the University’ tree structure and its sub themes.

preconceived concepts, a guiding theoretical framework or a well thought out design (sic). Concepts and design must be allowed to emerge from the data.

However, my experience of attempting to use grounded theory in an authentic way and my reading of more critical literature highlighted at least two fundamental epistemological flaws in this approach.

First, as Thomas & James (2006:781) rightly ask, 'how are grounded theorists to quarantine themselves, as social selves, from the data they are analysing and re-analysing to enable 'theory' to emerge? Whilst this doctoral candidate cannot speak for other researchers, I know that in my case the answer is that I can't. As Alvesson & Skoldberg (2000:17) point out, this is not just a question of trying to approach our data with a 'thin perspective'; 'instead we always insert a whole set of cognitive and theoretical frames of reference into our perception of reality.' As researchers, we may want to recognise that these theoretical frames of reference are not necessarily guided by any logical or rational process, but are just as likely grounded in our own 'ontogeny and habitus' which both enable and constrain our academic work (Bloomer et al. 2004).

The second critical response to the argument that concepts and theories should only emerge from the empirical data, is based on the view that one of the key roles of social science research is to uncover *deeper structures* at play in the social world. This is a goal which has both a long history and which is found across a diverse range of theoretical perspectives such as: Marxism, structuralism, critical realism and other critical theories. Whilst a semi-quantitative analysis of qualitative data may be a good *starting point* for analysis and theorising, it can never reach down to the *deep structures* in the empirical material, but finds itself confined to the 'surface structures' (see Chomsky 1965).

### **Pierre Bourdieu and the 'epistemological break'**

From this perspective the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1991) is useful here. Strongly influenced by the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (Grenfell & James 1998) Bourdieu argues that sociologists need a radical 'epistemological break' from the experiences of the individuals who are studied. For according to Bourdieu, one of the greatest dangers in social science research lies in a reduction to 'common-sense knowledge' or 'every day events'. In other words, all academic work and research needs to be something else other than the discourse of the people who sociologists study. As Bourdieu et al. (1991:37) argue:

Sociologists would be less prone to the temptations of empiricism if it were sufficient to remind them, in Poincaré's words, that 'facts do not speak'. It is perhaps the curse of the human sciences that they deal with a *speaking object*. When the sociologist counts on the facts to supply the problematic and the theoretical concepts that will enable him to construct and analyse the facts, there is always the danger that these will be supplied from the informants' mouths. It is not sufficient for the sociologist to listen to the subjects faithfully recording their statements and their reasons, in order to account for their conduct and even the reasons they offer; in doing so he is likely to replace his own preconceptions with the preconceptions of those whom he studies.

At first sight, however, Bourdieu's position seems incompatible with an empirical interpretivist methodology. Yet for at least three reasons this is not so.

### *Theory of practice*

First, it was briefly explained in Chapter Two how Bourdieu's work is an ambitious attempt to transcend the traditional division in social theory between structure and agency (or objectivism and subjectivism). Bourdieu (1992a:25) argued that, 'of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between objectivism and subjectivism'. Bourdieu suggests that objectivism often uses subjective observations and meanings that it does not make explicit. Whereas subjectivism, often neglects to take account of objective structures and social conditions that contribute to subjective meaning making. These deficiencies are addressed by his *theory of practice* (Bourdieu 1977) which incorporates both objectivity and subjectivity to create a theory that represents the practices and experiences of a social group. As Grenfell and James (1998) explain:

There is continual dialectic between objectivity and subjectivity. Social agents are incorporated bodies who possess, indeed are possessed by structural and generative schemes which operate by orienting social practice. This, in a nutshell is Bourdieu's theory of practice. Practice, the dynamic of which is probably captured by the words *praxis*, is a cognitive operation; it is structured and tends to reproduce structures of which it is a product.

### *Theory as method*

Second, Bourdieu was perhaps unusual as a sociologist, in that he was both a world class theorist, as well as being completely *empirical* (Jenkins 1992). Bourdieu insisted that he



had no wish to be part of abstract theoretical discussions that were divorced from the world of practice (Bourdieu 1989). He argued that his approach is a *theory as method* and only makes sense in relation to empirical matters. Central to this method are a number of conceptual tools such as habitus, capital and field which were briefly explained in Chapter Two, and which according to Mahar et al. (1990), provide the researcher with ‘a way of thinking and a manner of asking questions’. Furthermore, this theory as method offers researchers a *relational* approach to the analysis of social practices. As Hodkinson & James (2003:394) explain:

Bourdieu contrasts relational with substantialist thinking: the latter treats the preferences and activities of individuals or groups as if they indicate an essence, whilst the former sees them as instances of the intersection of relationships and positions in social space (see, for example, Bourdieu 1998, p4).

### *Reflexivity*

A final key feature of Bourdieu’s methodology is his emphasis on a radical form of *reflexivity*, wherein the background and interests of the researcher and in particular their relation to the object of study are of primary concern. Whilst there are a number of different ways in which reflexivity is deployed in sociological writing (see Kenway & McLeod 2004, Pillow 2003), Bourdieu’s approach to the concept is both distinctive and characteristically sophisticated. By reflexivity, Bourdieu meant the continual need to turn the instrument of social science back on the sociologists (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). This emphasis was based upon Bourdieu’s belief that one of the most serious mistakes a sociologist can make is to treat the world as an interpretive puzzle to be solved rather, than a mesh of practical tasks to be accomplished in real time and space (Bourdieu 1989).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, NVivo and grounded theory provided me with a useful starting point for the analysis of my data. The central feature of this approach is that concepts and theory should emerge from and be grounded in, the data. However, whilst all knowledge has to start from ‘common-sense’ knowledge it should not remain at that level (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2000). To that end, I turned to the sociological and methodological approach of Pierre Bourdieu. In particular, Bourdieu’s theory of practice and theory as method provided me with a theoretically coherent set of conceptual ‘thinking tools’. This approach also entailed me looking at the data relationally as well as reflexively in terms of my own presence on the conduct and interpretation of the research. In Part III of this

thesis I will present my interpretation of that data. For it should be remembered that qualitative investigation never tells *the* story of the research situation but only *a* story.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Of course, it can equally be argued that neither can quantitative investigation tell the story of a research project; it is just that the researchers operating under this paradigm often purport to have done so. However this is a methodological debate that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## **Part III: Data and findings**

### **Chapter Eight** **Community Engagement**

## 8 Community engagement

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For qualitative researchers the story is paramount. And nothing is so important to the story as the words we use, both intuitively and creatively.

*Janesick (2001:539)*

### Chapter overview

The preceding chapters set out the background to this research as well as ethical and methodological issues, including my approach to data analysis. The focus of Part III will be on the findings from the data, or put in the discourse of qualitative inquiry, the *story* of this research. My aim in this chapter is to begin this story by introducing data from interviews conducted with the research participants around the theme of community engagement. More specifically, I will examine data on the participants' backgrounds as well as their interpretation of what community engagement means to them. An initial but important early finding will emerge from this discussion and analysis: namely that whilst there are real and practical aspects of engagement within the training programme, the concept is being used in an overly simplistic way and partly symbolic way.

### Intended consequences

To recap from Chapter One, my review of Home Office literature, IPLDP course material and local force documentation, identified six intended aims of the new training:

1. To modernise the culture of the police service
2. To professionalise the police service
3. To provide police recruits with a broader educational experience
4. To ensure that learning is relevant to the workplace
5. To engender a culture of lifelong learning
6. To achieve all the above within a central organising framework of community engagement.

### Community engagement or life on Mars?

As indicated earlier, structuring the IPLDP around the concept of community engagement seems like a laudable and logical attempt to return policing to its ideological roots. Sir Robert Peel's (1750-1830) historic assertion that the 'police are the public and the public are the police', still provides the central theoretical tenet of policing in Britain and it is axiomatic that recruits must have a sound understanding of the communities that they will serve. At the same time, however, the diagnosis that the officers need

something called community engagement, suggested a deficit model of police recruit training and at the risk of sounding glib, almost seems to assume that they have somehow been recruited from an alien planet, where they have had no previous experience of living and working in a community.

Although the research sample broadly fitted the traditional socio-economic profile of police officers,<sup>63</sup> they joined the service from a diverse range of backgrounds and with a wide variety of experiences.

Seven of the 25 participants had previously been to university and held first degrees in disciplines including: computing, business, history and the social and natural sciences.

Alison,<sup>64</sup> for example, was a 23 year old officer with a first class degree in Biology. She told me that although it was a 'really interesting degree', half-way through the course she realised that she did not want to be a scientist, but wanted to become a crime scene examiner. However, she had concluded that:

It was really difficult to get into that, so I thought let's not do that and I remembered that my friend's mum used to be a police officer and I always used to think, wow, that would be amazing (interview, 29/3/06).

However, she did not think that she would be accepted into the police directly from university, so she went to work in a hotel for a year as a bar supervisor; which she 'really enjoyed because every day was different' and she 'met so many different people'.

Adam was a 26 year old male recruit from a black minority ethnic (BME) background. Having graduated with a degree in Computer Studies, he went on to work for a number of well-known large retail organisations in managerial roles. Adam told me about a police Sergeant friend of his, who was from an Asian background and who had left the police 'due to racism'. This had not put Adam off joining himself and he had been encouraged by the recruiting policy of the local police force:

I know they are concentrating now on ethnicity and diversity, because again, that was one of the reasons why I applied, because they were specifically asking for people to join from ethnic backgrounds (interview, 19/4/06).

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<sup>63</sup> Working to lower middle class.

<sup>64</sup> As indicated in Chapter Six, pseudonyms have been assigned to all the research participants.

Adam told me that he ‘wanted to make a difference’. Certainly, with his education, professional background and outlook he seemed to have the foundations for a successful police career:

I’m quite an outgoing person and at the end of the day Bobbies are just people you know and that’s what I want to be because I’m very much a people person. You know, I’ve managed people for years and I get on with people... Yeh that’s what’s spurred me on to join (interview, 19/4/06).

As well as the seven participants who held degrees, two of the recruits had commenced degree courses but had not yet completed them. Ben was a 27 year old officer, who was married with a young son. Ben told me that he had a strong interest in civil rights and that he had completed the first two years of an American History degree. For six months he had been an exchange student at an American university, but he had to suspend his studies for ‘personal reasons’. Prior to joining the police, he had worked for a number of well-known telecommunications companies as a customer relations adviser. Ben told me that at some point in the future he would like to complete this degree, perhaps through the Open University (OU).

Chris had studied psychology and social sciences at the OU, but had not yet gained sufficient credits for a full degree. Chris was 34 years old and had been both a Special Constable<sup>65</sup> and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) before being accepted into the regular police. He had a ‘lifelong ambition’ to join the service and saw his previous experience as ‘valuable’. ‘I learnt a lot of skills that I’d never done before, like beat management and attending community meetings’. Chris also saw his age as giving him some advantage, ‘at 34 I think it will make me a better bobby than someone coming in at 18. Well I’m sure it makes you a better bobby’.

Chris was not the only participant from the research sample to have previously worked for the police as five others had worked in various roles in the organisation. Since the Police Reform Act of 2002, the somewhat ‘ambiguous idea’ (Johnston 2007) of the ‘extended police family’ has formed an important plank of the Government’s Workforce Modernisation Programme (HMIC 2004). Part of this programme entails the creation of

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<sup>65</sup> The Special Constabulary is made up of volunteer members of the public who, when on duty, wear a uniform and have full police powers. There are over 14,000 Special Constables serving with police forces across the UK. See below regarding the introduction of Police Community Support Officers.

completely new police support roles, such as Police Community Support Officers, and Accredited Financial Investigators, as well as greater civilianisation of existing police functions. Traditionally, police constables have worked in the custody ('cell') areas of police stations in the role of a 'gaoler', yet recently this function has been taken over by civilian Detention Officers. After serving for five years as an engineer in the Royal Air Force, David worked in a variety of jobs before becoming one of the first civilian Detention Officers. In his first interview he explained to me how he became good at this job because he could 'speak to people':

I don't look at myself as being a power person or anything like that. I'm straight talking and I used to get on quite well with some of the regular prisoners. I was always used - and not just because I'm a big lad - to calm people down. Cos I can speak to people, come on what do you want? Straight talking. No problem (interview, 10/3/06).

A number of other recruits had previous experience of the Armed Forces. Edward was a well-spoken 23 year former Air Cadet who had recently turned down a place at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS)<sup>66</sup> to join the police. His father had been in the Air Force and much of his 'busy' childhood had been spent either living abroad or 'zipping round the country'. After graduating with an upper second class degree in Environmental Sciences he also had worked in a variety of jobs before simultaneously applying to be a police or Army Officer. Edward explained to me why he chose a police over a military career:

I'm quite inquisitive or nose-y as other people put it. A lot of people told me I should think about the police. So in my final year at university and in my year working after university, I went round speaking to different police officers to get an idea of what they did. I compared it to my experiences in the military and decided that's what I wanted to do (interview, 4/10/06).

As well as police and military backgrounds, several participants had worked in other public service organisations such as the Civil Service and National Health Service (NHS). The former civil servants included Francis, who, over the previous 15 years had worked in various departments mainly in Scotland, and Claire who had worked as a Benefits Manager before joining the police.

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<sup>66</sup> The RMAS is the British Army Officer Training Academy.

Denise, in contrast, was a 23 year old qualified nurse who had previously specialised in caring for people with severe learning difficulties. Although she enjoyed the challenges of the role and particularly ‘the people side’, she explained to me how over time it became emotionally difficult work:

I was coming home and thinking it’s such a hard life and you see people that have like, I hate the term normal, but you know, have lived a life like you and me have lived, but then something happens like they might get neuron disease and their life is a down hill slope from there. It’s really sad to see. So I think that was one of the reasons as well that I left (interview, 15/11/2005).

The above are merely a snapshot of the varied backgrounds of some of the research participants and of the career choices that they had made. However, at this stage of the discussion two important points need to be made.

First, as I started interviewing the participants I was struck by the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences. This feeling was reinforced in my subsequent analysis of the data, and as I sought to make sense of it, I was drawn to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus.

In an important discussion of the uses of habitus in educational research Reay (2004) critiques the contemporary fashion of overlaying research analyses with Bourdieu’s concepts, rather than making the concepts work in the context of the data and the research settings. Whilst there are always myriad theoretical perspectives which can be utilised in any research, in this case, the emergent data, setting and literature background, called out for a Bourdieusian framing.

It will be remembered from Chapter Two, that habitus has been used as a conceptual tool in previous research into police work (Chan 1996a, 1997). Here it was explained how the concept was used in a specific way using Sackman’s (1991) ‘four dimensions of cultural knowledge’ as a ‘convenient approach to summarising the habitus of policing’ (Chan 1996a:30). However, as I suggested earlier, whilst it may be convenient to ‘summarise’ the habitus in this way, it can be argued that this has the effect of tying the concept far too closely to the *organisational context*. Put another way, such treatment of the concept makes it seem as if the individual officer’s habitus did not exist prior to their police careers and is completely bound up in those careers.



My research, however, confirmed to me that habitus cannot be boiled-down to four organisational dimensions, no matter how theoretically coherent this may appear. What about these officers' backgrounds, education and previous (and current) life outside the police service? Bourdieu's concepts have been used in relevant and sophisticated ways by other educational researchers (see, for example, Bloomer & Hodkinson 2000, Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2004). In this work the concept of habitus is often explored in more *relational* terms and through a range of biographical and contextual data. As Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000:598) explain:

[The habitus is]... influenced by who the person is and where in society they are positioned, as well as by their interactions with others. It is an embodiment of the complex amalgam of what some would call structural factors, such as social class, gender and ethnicity, together with a person's genetic inheritance, all of which continually influence and are influenced by others through interaction'.

Individual backgrounds are therefore vital to understanding the concept of habitus which should be conceived as a 'complex interplay between past and present' (Reay 2004:434).

Second, as I started to think about these individual officers' backgrounds and habitus, I also began to question further the purpose and utility of the idea of community engagement. My initial findings showed that far from having been recruited from sheltered backgrounds, these were well rounded and socially aware individuals. Of course, I should not have been surprised by this. Whilst policing remains a challenging occupation there are no shortages of recruits to join the service. Research with the force Personnel Department showed that there are approximately 40 applicants for each of the 300 or so police recruit vacancies each year.<sup>67</sup> After a short-listing process, applicants are required to complete a National Police Initial Recruitment Test (PIRT). The process is specifically designed to test candidates' awareness of community and diversity issues and to select officers with good communication and people handling skills.

In Chapter Three I argued that the concept of community is often invoked to symbolise and legitimise the role of the police in society. As researcher *inside* the organisation I was, of course, aware that there were real and practical aspects of engagement within the training programme. At the same time, however, I started to suspect that the concept of community engagement was being used in an overly simplistic way and partly symbolic.

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<sup>67</sup> Personal communication with Force Personnel Department.

It was useful that in the first interviews I had asked the participants to explain what the idea of community engagement meant to them. Perhaps it was my poor phrasing of the question or perhaps the concept is purposely vague, in any case as the below quotes show, there was confusion amongst some of my participants about what the idea really meant:

I'm not sure I fully understand the question but I'll try anyway. Do you mean just getting to know the community in which you're going to be working, getting to know what the specific problems are? (Alison, interview, 29/3/06).

Erm, interaction, knowing your community that you are going to be policing. Erm, you're basically just knowing a bit about your work really cos you're policing the community aren't you so [nervous laugh seems to be finding this question very difficult] (Julia, interview, 28/2/06)

### **'Ploddledycook'**

In a recent article which received national media attention, The Plain English Campaign criticised the police service for the language it uses to communicate with the public.<sup>68</sup> This organisation has coined the phrase 'ploddledycook' as a neologism to describe the increasing and inappropriate use of 'new managerialist' jargon (Avis et al. 1996), such as 'citizen-focused command centre'<sup>69</sup> and describing members of the public as 'customers'. Although the article and term ploddledycook has a somewhat humorous element, it also implies a serious point. Whilst in recent years the police service has sought to address diversity issues (HMIC 1996, 2000b, 2002a) and present an image of inclusivity, the over-use of vague sounding and conceptually opaque terms, such as citizen focus and community engagement can be confusing, even exclusionary and therefore counterproductive. Put in plain English, if some police officers do not fully understand such terms, then what hope is there for ordinary members of communities?

Nevertheless, the data showed that a small number of the participants did have a grasp of the concept of engagement and could see the purpose and relevance of what the Home Office and police service were trying to achieve. Julia went on to explain that it meant:

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<sup>68</sup> See Plain English Campaign (2008) Police forces accused of using 'ploddledycook' at <http://plainenglish.co.uk/news.htm> accessed July 09.

<sup>69</sup> Previously and in more plain English, this would have been referred to as a 'Communications' Room.

Not just burying our heads in the law and forgetting the community because obviously it's going to be where we are working. Just knowing your community I think. Talking to it and getting some experience of working with community. Cos I've already been on a community placement (interview, 28/2/06).

As the quote from Julia suggests, at this stage the participants tended to conflate the idea of community engagement with the community placements. Elizabeth was a 26 year old officer who also had a varied career before joining the police. After graduating with a degree in Human Resource Development (HRD) she had worked for a number of organisations in a HRD role before pursuing her ambition to work in beauty therapy. When I asked Elizabeth what community engagement meant to her she told me that it was:

Basically that really. When they said, oh you've got to do a community placement, at first I was a bit oh, I didn't think we did that, police officers. It's about maybe making the community more aware or trying to get the police more involved with what goes on outside of the service, so its not just, police, police, police. It's trying to broaden our views (interviewed 4/5/06).

To an extent it was not surprising that a number of the participants saw the placements as being synonymous with the idea of community engagement. As previously indicated, these first interviews took place when the officers had returned to the police Training School after having just completed the first placements. As explained in Chapter Seven, one of my main strategic aims at this stage was to encourage the participants to identify what they regarded as the key aspects of community engagement, so that this could form the basis for later questions in this and subsequent interviews. Like Elizabeth, Ben felt that the most significant aspect of engagement was the community placements he had just attended:

The biggest thing we've done is the community placement which has been the biggest involvement community wise. I had two different placements, it was four days, but I did two days at a sort of homeless drop-in-centre. Then I did two days with WRVS, Meals on Wheels (interview, 23/2/06).

However, it was surprising that many of the participants did not immediately make the link between the idea of community and the four weeks they had just spent on the University campus. The reasons for this will be explored in Chapter Ten, but it will suffice here to recall that both explicit and implicit aspects of community engagement in

the University training were envisaged. In their first weeks at the University, the student officers study an academic module on *Social and Community Issues*. As well as this explicit community content in the curriculum, there is a further implicit and potentially even more significant aspect in that the recruits attend the University campus as student officers, where, in theory at least, they have opportunity to interact with other non-police students and members of the wider community<sup>70</sup>. Although some participants made the more obvious link with the curriculum content, initially at least, this implicit and situated aspect of community engagement was not recognised and frequently I had to encourage the interviewees to reflect on and then discuss this point:

**Researcher:** Some people have also said that the actual experience of going to university is also part of the engagement. Not just in terms of knowledge, but the idea that you are at a university campus, away from a police training school. Do you have a view on that?

**Ben:** I had not necessarily thought about it like that before to be honest, but when you look at it now, there's a lot more involvement than obviously you realise. It's not on a base where public really don't have access. It's not something that I'd really thought about (interview 23/2/06).

Of course, just because Ben and other participants may not have given initial thought to this, it does not mean that learning has not or will not take place. The theoretical approach to learning adopted in this thesis will be explained in later chapters, but it will be accepted here that learning has an 'unconscious' dimension, (Britzman 1998, Felman 1987) as well as being a process requiring subsequent reflection (Kolb 1984, Mezirow 1991, Schon 1983, 1987). Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of the student officers did not initially think of the University campus as a site of community engagement, was an early indication that aspects of the new training programme were not working as intended.

Indeed, the data showed that initially more of the participants identified the Police Training School as being more to do with community than the University and again this was a surprising and ironic early finding. It will be remembered from Chapter One that the previous regime of training recruits within the confines of a police academy was criticised for its insularity and lack of opportunities for community involvement (HMIC

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix Four.

2002b). A recent development as part of the new IPLDP, however, has been the increasing use of role plays which take place in public spaces such as shopping centres. The evolution of situating role plays in public places seems to have brought a degree of realism to the training; and the research participants could see numerous benefits including consolidation of classroom based learning and developing their identities as police officers through interaction with the public. As Robert explained:

I found the role plays at the shopping centre to be very helpful, cos obviously that's our first real interaction in uniform and me and [names fellow student], as we were walking round people were coming up to us and just mentioning things and as we were finishing we had two ladies come up to us and they said to us, though we didn't understand at first, they said, we're not used to seeing police officers with legs and we looked at each other and said 'how do you mean'? She said, oh in Barnsley we never see police officers with legs (interview, 29/3/06).

## **Conclusion**

Taking stock then, 25 individuals, all 'with legs' and from a range of backgrounds were recruited into the police service. As we have touched on, these individuals joined the police with their own identities or what might be better termed their habitus. As Colley et al (2003:477) explain:

Habitus is a concept that expresses complexities that are not perhaps so well conveyed by the notion of 'identity'. It incorporates both the subjective, personal dispositions and the collective structural pre-dispositions shaped by class, race and gender that are combined in each individual.

In contradiction to previous research into policing which has utilised concept of habitus (Chan 1996a, 1997) these individuals' habitus did not somehow just start when they joined the police but, as it were, *is* them and is the sum of all the experiences in their lives so far. These individuals came from diverse backgrounds, with a wide range of previous educational and work experiences. Their habituses had been partly formed by living all their lives in communities. How could they not have? And they were, in the main, recruited from the local communities in which they would work as operational officers. The diversity of their backgrounds and habitus throws into question the purpose and utility of the idea of community engagement and it is difficult not to conclude that the concept is being used in an overly simplistic and partly symbolic way.

However, this is not to say that the officers did not need to broaden their knowledge and outlooks. As will be seen later, some of them were recruited with few if any educational or professional qualifications. Moreover, the increasing diversity of communities means that policing is becoming an evermore complex activity. However, they joined the service at a time when police recruit training had just undergone radical change in order to try and address that diversity and complexity.

In the interviews they told me about their backgrounds, about aspects of their training and about the idea of community engagement. Again, there was some confusion amongst many of the participants about what was meant by this concept. The data suggests that the majority of the participants did not regard the University campus as a site of community engagement and this was a surprising early finding. In contrast, however, most of the participants saw the community placements as being synonymous with community engagement. Therefore it will be to the community placements as well as questions of *learning* that we will turn to in the following chapter. The argument which will be developed is that learning is a complex process and, as such, educators should be cautious before making simplistic or taken-for-granted assumptions about communities and engagement and how and what individuals learn.

**Chapter Nine**  
**Community placements**

## 9 Community placements

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Context is central to understanding what social science is and can be.

*Flyvberg (2001:9)*

### Chapter overview

Having started to identify areas of community engagement in the IPLDP, this chapter will shift the focus towards research question three<sup>71</sup> and begin to examine some of the learning that has taken place. Specifically, I will start by focusing on the community placements and the student officers' learning in relation to them. I will then relate my findings to relevant literature on adult learning and widen the discussion and analysis, setting out the broad theoretical approach to learning to be adopted. Based on my analysis of the data, as well as the literature, this approach will be premised on three key assumptions. The first is that learning is both an *individual* as well as a *social* process. Related to the first assumption is the second, which is that learning is also linked to a process of 'becoming' (Hodkinson et al. 2008). The final assumption, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters, is that not all learning which takes place is positive.

### Community placements: overview and questions

As already mentioned, as part of the IPLDP the student officers attend two, one week community placements. The first placement takes place immediately following their initial four weeks at the University and is linked to the academic module on *Understanding Social and Community Issues*. The second placement takes place in year two of their training and forms part of the module on *Professional and Community Partnerships*.

As well as serving an academic purpose, the placements are also designed to fulfil a major part of the wider community engagement aim of the training programme. As noted earlier, whilst placements are an established pedagogic approach in other areas of professional education, this is the first time that they have been used in British police training; and this raises both practical and theoretical issues.

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<sup>71</sup> Research questions: (1) What is meant by the concept of 'community engagement' with reference to the IPLDP? (2) What are the key aspects of community engagement within that training programme? (3) What learning takes place? (4) What are the implications of this learning on their identities as police officers? (5) More specifically, has this learning led to professionalising the police service and/or a change in police culture?



### *Practical concerns*

The practical concerns include issues of integrity, confidentiality and health and safety. It is a historical fact of British policing that recruits are sworn in as constables<sup>72</sup> immediately they join the service and before they have any policing skills or understanding of law and procedures. Although the student officers attend the placements in civilian clothes and are introduced as 'students,' they possess all the powers of a police constable. Consequently, the first placements are arranged in what are regarded as 'safe' environments such as: community centres, schools, charity shops or hospitals. However, by the time of the second placement, more challenging placements are organised with what are referred to as 'hard to reach' community groups (Home Office 2001).<sup>73</sup>

### *Theoretical questions*

As well as the practical issues, the placements also raise a number of theoretical questions and a key aim of my research was to situate them in terms of adult learning theory. Following the first interviews I had collected a large amount of data around this theme and as indicated previously, whilst I was not conducting an evaluation of the IPLDP, I initially coded 84 references to the placements as a 'positive learning experience'.

Peter, for example, was a 24 year old officer with a degree in geography. After leaving university his intention was to complete a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and become a teacher. One month spent on a placement in a comprehensive school, however, had been 'enough to put him off' a career in teaching, so he decided to join the police. Peter explained that for his first placement he was sent to a local community centre which helps young adults with learning difficulties:

Only there for four days, but they were just extremely valuable, I've never had so much of an intense kind of experience with people with learning disabilities and it was really kind of educational. The week before I went on this community placement I may have had a certain idea of what a learning disability is and what

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<sup>72</sup> All police officers, regardless of rank, are holders of the office of constable. As such, police officers are not employees but are holders of an independent office under the Crown which confers on them their police powers and responsibilities.

<sup>73</sup> Although there are difficulties with the term 'hard to reach', the Home Office (2001:7) suggest that these groups may comprise of the following eight defining characteristics: (1) small population size/and or relatively widely dispersed, (2) suspicion of the police, (3) diffuse or poorly organised internal organisation, (4) acute socio-economic deprivation, (5) social invisibility, (6) cultural or ideological barriers, (7) distinctive service needs, (8) language barriers.

effects it's going to have on people. After the placement I had a completely different way of looking at it (interview, 21/11/05).

Helen was a 22 year old officer who, like most of the other recruits, had worked in a variety of jobs before joining the police. For her first community placement she attended a local Drugs Dependency Unit and was enthusiastic about the experience:

I thought that was fantastic, the community placement. I mean some people didn't enjoy theirs as much as I enjoyed mine, but I got loads out of it Just being able to sit and talk to people, just see it from their point of view (interview, 15/7/06).

It is implicit that the placements are regarded as a key site where the officers might confront and even change their own assumptions and attitudes. I was therefore interested to find out what Helen had learnt and, in particular, if she had learnt anything about herself. Helen told me that at first she did not think that she would get much learning out of the placement as her sister had been a heroin addict and she thought she knew all about drug users:

I don't mind telling you that my sister used to be a heroin addict and I think she's still addicted to speed, so I thought I had a wide knowledge of drug users. I thought I knew quite a lot about it. I didn't. And I think it helped me because I was going thinking I know what drug users are like first hand and then when I found out more than I ever thought I knew, I realised I knew nothing. Sometimes you think you know a lot, but when you are actually put in that situation you don't know nothing and that's what I found out (interview, 15/7/06).

On her placement she spoke to a man who was a drug user, but who was going through rehabilitation and she was 'shocked' by how she had stereotyped and made assumptions about him. He had been talking about his relationship with his girlfriend and Helen asked him about the possibility of them having a child:

I said, don't you and your girlfriend ever think of having a child and he went, 'what when I'm like this? No, not until I'm clean. I'm not bringing a child into the world like this'. And like for some reason, obviously like through my sister, and the way I've been brought up I thought, my God he's got values, he's got morals. And then I was shocked to think that well, because he's got values and

morals he's a human being, but because I automatically thought that people like that didn't have values, morals and stuff like that (interview 15/7/06).

Her experience on the placement caused her to rethink her attitudes to drug users in general and her sister in particular. As Helen explained, 'I learnt that I'd maybe even judged my sister and I didn't even have enough knowledge to be able to judge her, so I learnt loads out of that'.

Like Helen, Ben went on his placement with some strong preconceived ideas about the people he was going to meet. However, his time at a local 'drop in centre' for homeless people also caused him to see things from a different perspective:

Before I'd been there I did have images of them always drinking, always on drugs etc and I've seen a completely different side of things, that basically anybody, given a few circumstances are maybe only three or four steps from being homeless. And you could, really appreciate the situation putting yourself in their shoes, you could see how easily you could get to that point and they were actually just normal people who'd been dealt a bad hand more often as not (interview, 23/2/06).

Space precludes discussion of numerous other examples captured in the data from the first interviews of participants seemingly altering their views and perspectives, following reflection of their experiences on the placements. Of the 84 references I coded from the first interviews as a 'positive learning experience', I further sub-coded 24 of these as participants' learning things about themselves'. However, as I argued in Chapter Seven, whilst it is one thing to code descriptively it is another thing to code conceptually and theoretically. Although it initially seemed somewhat 'messy', there were a number of what at first seemed like unconnected but potentially relevant theoretical ideas and approaches with which I was grappling with. These were (1) transformational learning theory, (2) the debate between individual versus social theories of learning (3) the concept of communities of practice, and (4) the concept of habitus. In the following sections I will present some of the key characteristics of these approaches and discuss their relevance to this study.

### **Transformational learning**

As the above quotes from Helen and Ben suggest, initially the data seemed to be supporting Mezirow's (1991) influential theory of *transformative* (or *transformational*) *learning*. Mezirow conceptualises transformative learning as development through

challenging old assumptions and creating new meanings that are more integrative, discriminating and open to alternative points of view. This idea of learning came out of Mezirow's earlier theory of *perspective transformation* (1978) which is similar to Habermas's (1984) concept of 'emancipatory action'.<sup>74</sup> Mezirow (1981:6) defines a perspective transformation as:

...the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-structural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see our relationships, reconstructing this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings.

Mezirow's transformation theory claims to be a comprehensive model of adult learning and development. As such, the model seemingly provides a theoretical basis for both police officer learning and change. Change is viewed as a process of altering *meaning structures*. In Mezirow's cognitive model, meaning structures act as 'culturally defined frames of reference' that are inclusive of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives (Taylor 1998). *Meaning schemes*, the smaller components, are 'made up of specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgements and feelings that constitute interpretations of experience' (Mezirow 1991:5-6). The final component, *meaning perspectives* is a general frame of reference, world view or personal paradigm. As Taylor (1998:7) explains:

Meaning perspectives operate as perceptual filters that organize the meaning of our experiences. When we come upon a new experience our meaning perspectives act as a sieve through which each new experience is interpreted and given meaning.

The theory posits that for learners to change their meaning structures they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a transformation of perspective. This process is fundamentally rational and analytical.

This, however, is not the same thing as perspective transformation which is argued to occur much less frequently. Mezirow believes that perspective transformation usually results from a 'disorienting dilemma', which is triggered by a life crisis or major life

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<sup>74</sup> For a thorough explanation of Mezirow's theory and its background, as well as empirical studies applying the theory of transformative learning to various contexts of adult experience, see *The Theory and Practice of Transformative Learning* by Taylor, E, W (1998).

transition, although it may also result from transformation of meaning schemes over time (Mezirow 1995:50).

*Limitations of transformational learning theory*

Mezirow's theory has been subject to much debate and criticism.<sup>75</sup> It can be argued, for example, that Mezirow's model is both overly schematic and places too much emphasis on rationality. A further unresolved critique of transformational learning theory has been its decontextualised view of adult learning. As Clark and Wilson (1991:90) point out:

Essentially Mezirow has attempted to remove the very element which brings meaning to experience. The theory itself, locating perspective transformation within the individual predicated upon humanistic assumptions of a decisive unified self, fails to explore the constitutive relationship between individuals and sociocultural, political, and historical contexts in which they are situated.

As argued above, Mezirow's theory provides a basis for individual learning and change. Indeed, by the time of the second interviews the data showed that there *was* a change in many of the participants' views. Paradoxically, however, it was a change towards more negativity about the purpose and relevance of the placements.

For her first placement Denise had been sent to a local Community Family Centre on a large local authority estate where we might expect to find economic deprivation. When I first interviewed Denise immediately following the placement, she also told me that her experiences had been a 'real eye-opener' and that she had learnt a lot. However, when I interviewed her again seven months later it was evident that there had been some change in her views:

That particular placement, I don't think it has helped me in any way really. Like I say, only as far as having the drive round that estate and seeing the kind of houses that I'll be going to, but that was ten minutes out of the week. Other than that, not really no. No it didn't, I mean obviously speaking to members of the community, but it's something I've done before you know, speaking and interacting with people, it's never been a problem for me anyway so it didn't sort of improve it (interview, 17/7/06).

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<sup>75</sup> See Taylor (1998).

Like Denise, Helen's views about the relevance and usefulness of her placement had changed. When I interviewed Helen for the second time six months later I personally found it difficult to get out of my mind an image of her sister and what she had previously told me about her addiction. However, it was clear that since our first interview Helen 'had not really given it much thought' to her placement and that she had 'just forgotten quite a lot about it'. Nevertheless, I encouraged her, to think back and reflect on what she had told me about her sister and the other drug users. In particular, what she had previously said to me about being 'shocked' by her realisation of how she had stereotyped them. Having thought about this for some time, Helen made the interesting point that whilst she looked back on the placement as still being 'useful', it took place in an environment which was completely different to how she might interact with some drug users in her 'real' working life. As Helen explained:

Yes I did speak about stereotyping before, but the problem is that when you speak to somebody in a nice atmosphere it's different. I mean, all the drug addicts that we did speak to were recovering drug addicts. I was out of uniform. They see you as a person, you see them as a person. You can sit down and have a one-to-one chat. But when you are in your uniform and they are swearing and bawling and spitting at you, it's pretty hard to get that out of your head (interview 29/11/06).

In seeking to account for this change in the participants' views in theoretical terms, I realised that that there were processes at play in terms of the background and context for the learning that could not fully be explained by Mezirow's theory. I therefore found it necessary to move beyond the constructivist and decontextualised premises of transformational learning theory and revisit the debate between individual versus social accounts of learning.

### **Individual versus social theories of learning**

According to Sfard (1998), there are two broad 'metaphors' for theorising learning that are at the root of many debates within educational research. The first, which according to Sfard is as old as 'civilisation', is the *acquisition* metaphor, which conceptualises learning as a process of acquisition of knowledge by the individual learner. Under this metaphor it might be said that the mind is a sort of a 'container' of knowledge, and learning is a process that fills the container, implanting knowledge there. While the ideas

are, of course, more physiologically and psychologically complex than this,<sup>76</sup> the notion of acquisition is commensurate with ‘in the head’ views of cognition, that take the mind to be a processor of knowledge and the world outside to be its source. Importantly, however, Sfard employs the acquisition metaphor to encompass not only the notion of transmission of concepts, but also construction and conceptual change (i.e. schemata, mental models). Indeed, many constructivist learning theories are also related to this metaphor if they concentrate on individual learning processes and building up of knowledge structures in an individual’s mind.

Whilst constructivism may not be as old as civilisation, it nevertheless has a long pedigree, although many different perspectives coexist within it (Piaget 1966, Von Glaserfeld 1984, Vygotsky 1978).<sup>77</sup> According to Fenwick (2000:10), ‘all views share one central premise: a learner is believed to construct, through reflection, a personal understanding of relevant structures of meaning derived from his or her action in the world’. As suggested above, in the literature of adult learning this constructivist premise is embedded in the writings of, Mezirow (1991) as well as many others, (e.g. Boud et al. 1996, Boud & Miller 1996, Kolb 1984, MacKeracher 1996, Schon 1983, 1987).

### *Participation*

An alternative approach, according to Sfard, is the *participation* metaphor, or what is alternatively termed, *situated* perspectives on learning. In this approach, learning is seen as a process of participating in various cultural practices and shared learning activities, rather than a simple process of individual knowledge formation (Brown et al. 1989, Greeno 1997, Lave & Wenger 1991, Rogoff 1990).

The work of Lave and Wenger (1991) is a well-known example of situated learning theory in which learners participate in a *community of practice* that is developed through activity and social interaction in ways similar to that in craft apprenticeships. Lave and Wenger based their theory on observations of different apprenticeships (Yucatec midwives, Vai and Gola tailors, US Navy quartermasters, meat-cutters, and non-drinking alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous). Initially people have to join communities and learn at the periphery. As they become more competent they move more to the ‘centre’ of the particular community.

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<sup>76</sup> Whilst the acquisitive metaphor is epitomised by cognitive thinking, there is a view that learning is also ‘embodied’ (Dewey, 1957). That is to say that learning involves the mental, the emotional, the physical and the practical, and that these are interrelated, not separate (see also Beckett and Hagar 2002, Vosniadou, 2007).

<sup>77</sup> Philips (1995) identifies six distinct views of constructivism.

Accordingly, this metaphor assumes that knowledge does not exist either in a world of its own, or in the head of a person as intellectual concepts produced by reflection, but as part of the very process of participation in the immediate situation (Fenwick 2000).

It is important to note, however, that Sfard did not rank one metaphor above the other and indeed suggested that it was 'dangerous' to do so. She instead argued that there is a complementary relation between the metaphors of acquisition and participation; each one focusing attention on different but important aspects of learning and that by employing both metaphors, Sfard suggested that researchers can form a more complete picture of learning. In similar vein, Duit & Treagust (1998) also argue that different perspectives can complement each other, rather than competing for pre-eminence. In discussing constructivist and social constructivist views on learning, they write:

Further research should not focus on the differences but present an inclusive view of learning and conceptualize the different positions as complementary features that allow researchers to address the complex process of learning more adequately than from a single position (p.26).

### **Learning as becoming**

Recently Hodkinson et al. (2008) have sought to bridge this theoretical divide and present an inclusive view of learning.<sup>78</sup> In their paper, *Understanding learning culturally* these researchers make the case for a 'cultural view of learning' that decentres conceptual change and cognition, but develops ways to integrate the individual *and* the situation within such a learning theory. To achieve this, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field are deployed, together with the use of 'becoming' as a third metaphor to understand learning more holistically.

It will be remembered from earlier discussion that one of Bourdieu's primary concerns was to transcend the traditional division in social theory between agency and structure. In taking culture as their central concept, Hodkinson et al. explain how Bourdieu's notions of field and habitus can also help overcome the 'either-or' of subjectivist (agency) and objectivist (structure) readings of culture and how this relates to learning.

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<sup>78</sup> Their theoretical development grew out of a major empirical study of learning within English further education colleges called 'transforming learning cultures in further education' (TLC). This was a 4-year longitudinal project which ended in 2005. For further information see James & Biesta (2007) and two Journal special issues: *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, vol.55, part 4 2003; *Educational Review*, vol. 59, part 4, 2007.



In line with anthropological definitions of culture, culture is taken to mean, ‘a particular way of life, whether of people, a period or a group...that is produced and reproduced by human activity, often but not exclusively collective activity’ (p, 33). As Hodkinson et al. acknowledge, other scholars have claimed that learning is a cultural phenomenon and activity theory approaches derived from Vygotsky, often use the term socio-cultural to define their work. However, these authors reject an ‘agency driven’ view of culture and following Bourdieu (1977) they argue that:

Cultures are (re)produced by individuals, just as much as individuals are reproduced by cultures, though individuals are differently positioned with regard to shaping and changing a culture - in other words differences in position and power are always at issue too. Cultures then are both structured and structuring, and individuals’ actions are neither totally determined by the confines of a learning culture, nor are they totally free.

Hodkinson et al. utilise Bourdieu’s concept of field as a way to understand how learning cultures work. As suggested in Chapter Two, a field is not necessarily a geographically bounded location but is theorised as a social arena in which people manoeuvre and struggle over power and resources. Indeed, Hodkinson et al. note how Bourdieu’s use of the term has more in common with a ‘force field’ and in the following chapter I will develop this physics analogy further by suggesting similarity to a *magnetic* field, where forces act to ‘push’ against each other. Here it will suffice to point out that any learning culture functions and is constructed through the forces of one or more fields (Hodkinson et al. 2008:36).

However, in starting with the ideas of a learning culture and field, Hodkinson et al. are also anxious to avoid what they see as the ‘classical error’ of ‘not seeing the person behind the student’, which they see as a deficiency in some participatory accounts of the learning process (i.e. Wenger 1998). We are reminded that ‘individuals are part of learning cultures just as learning cultures are part of individuals’ and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is used to help understand the complexity of this interrelationship. On this central point it will be helpful to quote Hodkinson et al. at some length:

The concept of habitus expresses the sense in which the individual is social. Whilst all individuals are in some way unique, a person will share characteristics with others sharing similar social positions, backgrounds and experiences. However, because everyone’s life experience is partly unique and changing, habitus as a concept is neither deterministic nor totalising. This approach helps

solve a problem raised by Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) in relation to the learning of people of different ethnicities. They use the terms *culture* and *cultural* to refer to the ways in which learning may differ between such groups. We agree with them, when they argue that any such differences cannot be adequately explained as traits or learning styles possessed by all members of such groups and that a better way of explaining this sort of cultural difference is through differences in participation in cultural practices over time. The concepts of *habitus* and *field* provide a way of doing this, recognising the significance of what Gutierrez and Rogoff term cultural regularities, or patterns of similarity between members of the same ethnic group, as well as retaining individual differences. For within a cultural view of learning, *habitus* helps us to keep in view the individual *and* the social nature of a persons learning (p, 39).

To help further conceptualise their hybrid of constructivist and participatory learning theory Hodkinson et al. put forward a third metaphor: 'learning as becoming'. Again these authors accept that they are not the first to write about learning in this way, as Wenger (1998) highlighted the importance of learning as a process of identity formation. However, the idea of identity is rejected as a 'slippery and ill-defined notion' and the concept of *habitus* is preferred as this is argued to provide more theoretical purchase. Hodkinson et al. explain how through participation in any situation, an individual's learning, 'can change and/or reinforce that which is learned, and can change and/or reinforce the *habitus* of the learner. In these ways a person is constantly learning through becoming and becoming through learning' (p, 41).

### *Metaphors of police training*

The above debates have seemingly bypassed police training which is predominantly premised on the metaphor of *acquisition* (Centrex 2003, HMIC 2002b, Home Office 2002). As I have argued elsewhere, police training methodology is underpinned by a mixture of humanistic and behaviouristic educational principles (Heslop 2006). Whilst, at bottom, *humanism* and *behaviourism* are two 'opposing' psychological traditions they share an individualised and de-contextualised account of the learning process (Tennant 1997). Yet my analysis of the data from this study showed that, whilst there are clearly individualised cognitive aspects to learning, social interaction and context are also important. At the same time, however, it will be seen below, that in the context of the community placements I found that the theory of communities of practice also had limitations in this case. I therefore found it useful to turn to Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and Hodkinson et al's related idea of learning as becoming which seemed to

offer more explanatory purchase. In order to appreciate this, let us return to Helen and the change in her views some months after her first community placement

When Helen attended that first placement at the Drugs Dependency Unit, her habitus was not yet that of a police officer. As suggested in Chapter Eight, Helens habitus did not somehow just ‘start’ when she joined the police, rather it *is* her and everything that she had experienced in her life. However, at that point her experiences and therefore her habitus was not fully that of a police officer. In the first interviews I asked all the participants if they ‘felt like police officers yet’. Helens response was typical:

No I still feel like are playing dress-up (laugh). I don't think it will for a while. Though it kind of did on Friday when we did our role plays out in the shopping centre. Then I started to think Oh my God this is actually becoming quite real and as we go along there's a few things that I think Oh God I am actually really doing it...I suppose I'm still quite pessimistic when it comes to things and I still think don't think too far ahead because you might not do this you might not get there and even though I know I can do it I still feel like we are playing dress up and I still see police cars driving past and I think oh a police officer I still get that oh even though I've done nothing wrong, even when they are driving round here, I think oh there's a police car there, then I think, course there is I'm at the Police Training School.

As already indicated, there are both sound logistical and pedagogical reasons for structuring the first placements in this way. By sending the officers on placements only seven weeks into their training programme they will hopefully benefit from some early interaction with members of communities. This is at a time when they have just spent four weeks at university and it is envisaged that they will be open to learning new things and seeing things from different perspectives.

At the same time, however, this also means that while their experiences on the community placement are, of course, real and meaningful for the officers, they are *not* situated in their own *communities of practice*. As suggested above, one of the central assumptions behind participatory perspectives of learning is that individuals are there to learn about the *work* itself. However, what is fundamentally different about the community placements is that the student officers are not there to become full members of a community of practice but rather to learn about communities. The knowledge that they gain on the placements is still an experience which is largely removed from their authentic workplaces. It is therefore plausible to suggest that the learning may not be as

powerful or 'embedded' as that which takes place in an authentic situated working environment as theorised by scholars such as Lave and Wenger. It is one thing to talk to a drug user as a student on a community placement, but it may be another thing entirely to be spat at by a drug user whilst working nights in a police cell area.

### *Becoming police officers*

Significantly, by the time of the second interviews the data showed that the participants had undergone some form of change and they now 'felt like police officers.' The data suggests that there are two aspects to the change that they felt had taken place. The first aspect might be termed as a form of professional or technical competence in identifying themselves as police officers. This is a realisation that they had the technical skills such as the legal and procedural knowledge as well as many of the social skills needed to perform the role. As Clair explained:

I am a lot more confident to how I was six months ago I think. As I was leaving the Training School it was a case of fair enough, I know the law and I know the legislation, but I couldn't see how it was going to work in practice; and you go to something and it's like this is the legislation, this is how I put my handcuffs on. Now it all flows and I feel a lot more comfortable (Clair, interview 24/7/06).

The second aspect is perhaps more amorphous and equates to a feeling that there had been a broader change in their habitus. Jennifer had worked in various roles in the Civil Service before deciding to join the police. Like all the other research participants, when I first interviewed her whilst undergoing her initial training she told me that she 'did not feel like a police officer', and like Helen, she told me that she thought that she was still 'playing at it'. By the time of her second interview, some six months later, however, she indicated to me how she felt differently:

We went to America on holiday and they asked me what my job was and I said I'm a police officer. And then I started to laugh. And my husband looked at me and said 'you're not supposed to laugh, cos you are one'. And I thought I am. And I feel like one now, definitely (interview, 20/7/06).

The changes that the participants felt were described in numerous different ways. Simon, for example, explained how he had noticed changes in his thinking and behaviour whilst off duty:

Last week, for instance, I was on leave and on the Friday I had to call into the police station as one of the Training Officers wanted to see some paperwork. So I brought my wife into the town centre first to do a bit of shopping. As I was walking around I was picking out all the target criminals<sup>79</sup> and really looking at people. I notice that if I am out wherever, I am looking at people and seeing them in a way that I would do as if in uniform (interview, 18/07/06).

Whereas, Edward, or more accurately his father, had noticed that Edward had started to take on at least one attribute of police culture.

Cynical. I had my dad pop over to see me and he mentioned how cynical I had become. And you see children out in the street and you're automatically looking for offences and getting annoyed that they are there; whereas two years ago I would have thought it's kids playing; just leave them alone (interview, 19/7/06).

In later interviews I asked the participants to tell me how they had learnt to become police officers and from my analysis of the data a clear pattern emerged. Almost without exception the officers indicated that the learning took place across two distinct phases. The first phase was the Police Training School, where they learnt legislation and procedures. The learning which took place in this phase was described by the participants in numerous different ways, such as gaining 'background' or 'theoretical' knowledge, but the majority of them described this training as being 'valuable' or 'necessary' in giving them the 'theory' to start to perform their roles. Again, without exception, however, the participants described the most important learning as taking place in the *situated* workplace. As Edward explained to me a year later:

I think the most important thing was practical experience. You get a lot of training here [the Police Training School], which is very necessary, you would not be able to do your job without it. But it's when you go to jobs that you start putting theories and legislation into practice (interview, 3/7/07).

**Researcher:** So you think that has been the main way that you have learnt to be a police officer is by interacting with colleagues?

**Edward:** Definitely. I remember when I first started my tutor constable said to me that he'd teach me his way, then once I left him then I would pull a bit of every one and create my own way. I think that's very true looking back. When

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<sup>79</sup> A common British policing phrase used to denote an individual (usually with a previous criminal record) who the police seek to gain intelligence on.

I've been working with certain people I've seen the way that they have done some things. So I think that everyone that I have worked with has had some kind of effect on where I am now (interview, 3/7/07).

As Edward suggests, initially the key participatory relationship was with the tutor constable. As explained in Chapter Four, although police recruit training has, over many years, undergone significant change and development, the tutor constable role has arguably provided its one historical constant. Indeed when examined from a theoretical perspective the tutor/student officer relationship provides a classic example of participatory learning similar to that of an apprenticeship, as the novice learns from the experienced practitioner (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Following their time with a tutor, participation with other more experienced colleagues takes on more importance. When I interviewed Mary for the final time she also summarised what she saw as the key points of the process of learning that she was going through:

Obviously I learnt the law and stuff when I was initially at the Police Training School, but when you get to division and you are with your tutor you watch and learn from him and you learn by experience. If you do one job a certain way and the next one a similar kind of job you learn what benefited you and the other people and you adjust and change and adapt to the next job. Every job is different, but it has similarities and you just learn as you go along you learn from all the different people that you work with cos everyone works in a different way and you can pick up good things and also bad things from different people. And you just learn yourself by reflecting on what you have done and trying to improve it next time (interview, 20/3/2007).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have sought to cover a lot of chronological and theoretical ground. Chronologically, I have examined data which shows how learning takes place for the participants' across their two year training period. At this stage of the argument at least four theoretical points can be also be made. First, on their own, neither the metaphors of acquisition or participation can account for the learning which takes place, as learning for the participants is both an individualised and social process.

Second, learning is also influenced by the participants' changing habitus or what Hodkinson et al. would term the process of them 'becoming' police officers. On this important point it will be remembered that when I started this research, one of my research questions was: *what are the implications of the learning on their identities as police officers?* Yet following my analysis of the data I came to realise that a 'better question' (Hodkinson et al. 2008) would come at this in reverse and ask: *what are the implications of their changing identities [or, their habitus] on their learning?* The data shows that there are implications and this was particularly evident in relation to the learning that took place around the community placements. When the officers attended and then subsequently reflected on the learning that had taken place around the first community placement, they thought about and were open to ideas about what they could learn about themselves. Subsequently, however, as they 'became' police officers, learning things about themselves seemingly became less meaningful for them on the placements at least, and they described key aspects of learning in more *functional* terms relating it to how they thought they could use it in their operational roles. This was even more evident when I interviewed the officers about their experiences on the second community placement, by which time the data suggests that they had 'become' police officers. The below quotes from Edward and Sean were typical:

We went to the Drugs Intervention Programme this time. It was a lot more relevant to my job than the first time. As I said with the first placement, it was good for the essay but not a lot else. I still haven't attended an incident where the Jewish faith has been relevant. This [second] placement is a lot more relevant, especially to policing the area that I do. A lot of criminals I arrest and bring in do have some involvement in drugs. (Edward, interview, 5/4/07).

I think this placement, I just got the feeling was less about community and more about policing. I suppose you think the two go hand in hand, but with the first community placement obviously I was not looking at it from a police point of view but on my second one I was thinking about policing (Sean, interview, 2/4/07).

Third, related to their changing habitus, the learning that took place on the community placements and at the University was not seen as meaningful as that which took place in their situated workplaces. When the participants told me about how they had learnt to be police officers few of them mentioned the placements or university.

Finally, as the above quote from Mary suggests, although the learning which takes place in situated environments is powerful, there is also potential to learn what she terms ‘bad’ things. Stated differently, this is a form of *unintended* learning which is an aspect of learning that is often neglected in both participatory and individualised theoretical accounts of the learning process. For this reason we will explore both intended and unintended learning in the final chapters.



**Chapter Ten**  
**The University**

## 10 The University

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I admit I'm not attracted to Sociology,' says Carmody, 'especially the way it's taught here. But I do work. I work hard. You admit that in your comments on the essays. I mean, you say there's too much work and not enough analysis. But we know what that means, don't we?' 'Do we?' asks Howard. 'It means I don't see it your way,' says Carmody. 'Yes' says Howard, 'you don't see it – sociologically.'

*Malcolm Bradbury -The History Man (1975)*

### Chapter overview

In this penultimate chapter I will predominantly focus on the University which became the main story of this research. Like the previous chapters the narrative will unfold as part realist, part confessional, and here, part autoethnographical tale. This will be a tale of both intended and unintended learning and consequently a tale of unintended consequences. This will be a tale of an educational intervention which has more likely led to a reinforcement of police culture rather than its negation. Yet the irony is that this is a tale of a laudable educational initiative which should have worked well and perhaps still has potential to do so.

### Police officer and student

Bourdieu (1992) reminds us that qualitative research should involve reflexivity, based on the belief that the researcher cannot be entirely neutral, objective or detached from the research process. However, when I started this research I believe that I had an open mind about how the participants would interpret the new training. Indeed if pushed, my intuitive feeling was that the University experience, in particular, would have a positive impact on the officers' development. On reflection, this was almost certainly shaped by my own experiences, both as a police recruit and mature student. When I joined the police in 1988, police academy training comprised what Rowe & Garland (2003:399) rightly term 'instruction in legislation and military style drill'. In comparison, the idea of getting paid to debate social issues and theory, without being shouted at seemed appealing.

My own experience of combining university study with a police career has, I believe, had a positive influence on my identity, both as a person and professionally. Having joined the police with few educational qualifications I went on to study for degrees in politics and sociology. For me, this experience was literally transformational and it opened my mind to new ways of thinking about the world. One way was to think about

policing and wider society in more sociological terms. Whilst police officers are not required to be sociologists they do need to have a broad understanding of society and the complexity of its issues. Perhaps like me, police training was previously more insular and in need of development; but as will be seen, that development needs to be carefully planned and executed.

### **Unintended consequences**

It is, however, an old saying that ‘nothing ever goes according to plan’. Understandably then, the theme of unintended consequences has long provided a prime area for sociological research; and many commentators have distinguished between the stated purpose or intent of social actions and their sometimes unrecognised but objective, functional consequences.<sup>80</sup> Whilst the idea can be traced back to the economic theory of Adam Smith (1723-1790)<sup>81</sup>, it was the sociologist Robert K Merton who popularised the concept of unintended consequences in the twentieth century. In an influential article titled ‘*The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action*’ (1936), Merton sought to apply a systematic analysis to the problem of ‘unanticipated consequences’ of ‘purposive social action’.<sup>82</sup> He emphasised that his term ‘purposive action’ is ‘concerned with “conduct” as distinct from “behaviour”’. That is, with action that involves motives and consequently a choice between various alternatives’ (ibid, p594). Although many social actions and policies produce positive unanticipated results, sociological discussion of unintended consequences usually refers to the situation of ‘perverse’ outcomes, which may be the opposite of what is intended.

As explained earlier, following initial analysis from the first interviews I coded 290 references to ‘the University’ and this became the unexpected main theme in the research. At the same time, of course, it should be pointed out that I did not really need NVivo to ‘tell me this’, as this had become immediately apparent from the first interviews. Not only were the majority of the participants telling me similar things, but as the below quotes suggest, the strength of criticism was alarming.

I would say it's almost the reverse of what you would expect. Because they have pushed you to one side and because of how the staff are towards you. People off

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<sup>80</sup> According to Bilton (1996:672) unintended consequences can be defined as ‘repercussions or outcomes which result from actions initiated for other purposes’.

<sup>81</sup> Adam Smith’s ‘invisible hand’, is an example of a positive unintended consequence. Smith maintained that each individual, seeking only his own gain, ‘is led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention,’ that end being the public interest.

<sup>82</sup> Merton identified 5 possible causes of unintended consequences: (1) ignorance, (2) error, (3) immediate interest, (4) basic values, and (5) self-defeating prophecy.

my cohort if you want to call it the police culture, there were lots of moaning and inappropriate jokes and stuff, it seems to emanate more from the University than the Training School where the staff are a lot more friendly and warm. I don't know if that's how it was before but it's almost the opposite way round towards what I would have expected before the police (Edward interview 4/10/06).

I feel as though they are very anti-police, very you know, not interested in what we do. They are just interested in this is what we do and whether you like it or not this is what we're going to deliver and I feel as though they are very political people (Adam, interview, 19/4/06).

The style in which the University part was delivered was patronising at best. I understand that they do the same thing every six weeks and so it's obviously quite tedious for them, but they make us feel like we are inferior to them (Edward, interview, 4/10/06).

I felt like I was bullied by one of the module leaders. I don't know whether you want me to go into that? (Jenny, interview 4/4/06).

However, as I indicated previously, NVivo was useful for statistical confirmation of my ongoing analysis as well as for categorising and seeing the emerging sub-themes in schematic form. Of the 290 references I coded to 'the University' I further sub-coded 174 of these as 'problems at the University'. Whilst this may seem like a crude classification it provided me a starting point for my analysis. Table 4 below shows the initial sub-themes I coded under this heading:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of Sources</b>	<b>Number of References</b>
University and community	21	56
University work not relevant to vocational role	13	36
Police officers are not treated as 'real' students	14	32
Academics unwilling to accept alternative points of view or minimising views of officers	12	32
Identity as professionals (not treated as such)	11	26
Lack of support	10	24

Officers are not academically prepared	8	18
Separated from other students	15	11
Academics stereotype the police officers	5	12
Academics are 'anti-police'	8	11
University work not intensive enough	7	14
University work too complex	6	11
Police officers do not act professionally	4	7

**Table 4: NVivo University tree node structure, including sub-themes**

Many of these early emerging themes were 'in vivo' coded in the authentic grounded theory sense, in that they were constructed wholly or partly from phrases stated by the participants themselves.<sup>83</sup> For example, in the quote above, Adam uses the actual term 'anti-police' to describe how he thinks some of the University tutors act and behave. As this phrase was also used by several other participants it was assigned as a theme. Other early themes emerged 'in vitro', in that they were constructed by me, although they were still 'grounded' in the data'.<sup>84</sup>

### **Pierre Bourdieu's 'thinking tools'**

However, as I argued in Chapter Seven, it was not my intention to remain faithful to the methodological principles of grounded theory, rather I was seeking to analyse the data holistically<sup>85</sup> and make what Bourdieu (1991) termed an 'epistemological break' from it. Indeed, not only was I seeking to follow Bourdieu's methodological prescriptions, but the more I analysed the data, the more I started making links to other aspects of Bourdieu's substantive social theory.

As I will go on to discuss in more detail below, when I thought about the data surrounding the University training more holistically, I was faced with an overriding

<sup>83</sup> As explained in Chapter Seven, within grounded theory there are essentially two types of codes: those which are found direct in the data, since they are stated by the actors ('in vivo codes'), and those which the researchers construct from the material ('in vitro codes') see Strauss, A (1987).

<sup>84</sup> An example of this from the table above is that of the theme of 'identity as professionals'. In this case, the participants told me about the effect of the University on their development as police officers, though they may not all have used the actual terms 'identity' or 'professional'.

<sup>85</sup> The *Oxford Dictionary* (2000) defines the term holistic as being 'characterised by the view that a whole system of beliefs must be analysed rather than simply its individual components'.

sense of *conflict*; and in trying to make sense of this in theoretical terms, I was again drawn to Bourdieu's conceptual 'thinking tools' and, in particular, his notion of field.

### **Field and conflict**

Whilst so far in this study we have been predominantly focussing on the concept of habitus, according to Bourdieu, it is the *field* which provides the primary area of study for any area of social life (Grenfell & James 2004). Although for analytical purposes the field maybe considered to be 'bounded' it is not a static, geographical or spatial entity, but can better be thought of as a series of structures, institutions and activities all of which relate to the people acting within the field. The concept was most developed via his work about art, where he wrote that a field is a 'configuration of relations between positions objectively defined, in existence and in the determinations they impose upon the occupants, agents or institutions' (Bourdieu 1992b:72-73). Bourdieu's prose here is characteristically difficult to penetrate and fortunately a number of metaphors have been put forward to help us better understand the concept. Most usefully, these include: 'force field', and 'game'<sup>86</sup>.

#### *Force field*

Of course, the notion of field is itself a metaphor having its origins in the physical sciences and which acknowledges the operation of energy in space (Hodkinson et al. 2008). As Hodkinson et al. (2008:35) explain, 'at its simplest this means that instead of seeing the properties of objects or things as the main focus, the relationships between them are seen as the key to understanding'. It is also important to note that the boundaries between fields are not fixed. Fields both 'overlap' and vary in how much they depend on the characteristics of other fields to define them (Grenfell & James 2004). For present purposes the institution of and activities and relationships surrounding the University are of central structural interest in this field. However, taking this as our starting point, the University is itself part of the wider field of English higher education and in the context of this case study overlaps with the fields of police training and British policing. Consequently, the particular structure of a field is given by the struggles over authority and legitimacy and boundary maintenance (Bourdieu 1995).

#### *Game*

For as indicated in Chapter Two, a further analogy for understanding Bourdieu's concept of a field is that of a game. The notion of a game draws attention to the idea that

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<sup>86</sup> Other metaphors for field include those of 'market' and 'circuits'. See Hodkinson et al. (2008).

participants are in *competition* for the maintenance or increase of capital, whether economic, social or cultural. Therefore whilst there will sometimes be alliances, the field is often theorised as a site of conflict as the participants struggle and manoeuvre over power, resources and boundary maintenance.

As indicated above, there was an overriding theme of conflict in the data, such that many of the participants believed that some of the academic staff to be 'anti-police':

I got the impression that they didn't necessarily like the police force or they weren't - I can't think of the word that I'm looking for - they weren't big fans of the police service if that makes any sense and I think that came across (Steven, interview 4/5/06).

[Names tutor] was ex probation service I think and I've never met anybody who's more anti-police as per [names a different tutor] or whatever her name was. Two more anti-police people I don't think I've ever met and it comes across in their lectures (Keith, interview 19/4/06).

As I argued in Chapter Seven, qualitative investigation never tells *the* story of research situation but only *a* story and I realised early on that there was another side to this story which perhaps needed to be explored. As I will discuss in more detail later, I subsequently decided to adjust my research strategy and sought permission to interview the University tutors. Although it will be seen that they declined to be interviewed, a different side to this conflict was provided by some of my participants:

Because it became quite unruly at times and I could see that some people were reacting to that and some people just weren't being professional. They weren't disciplined. We were fresh off the street, a week of safety training and a week of induction and we had twenty year old people who were sat in a lecture theatre thinking this is shit I'll read the paper, and they were reading the paper and it was a zoo some days (Roy, interview 24/11/06).

There would be people messing about sometimes in the class and I just thought this is like being back at school. So I could understand that they [the tutors] may have been frustrated at that (Becky, interview 4/5/06).

I think people were bored, but people had gone in with definite I don't want to be here, I'm not doing it. I think some people had definitely gone in with that idea that I don't want to be here, I don't think it's important. So like I say, there

was newspaper reading, a bit of silliness whatever. (Samantha, interview 24/10/05).

If some of the academics were 'anti-police' then at an individual level this could be attributed to their previous professional experiences and prejudices, which form part of their own habitus. In similar vein, the student officers own unprofessional and inappropriate behavior could be put down to their own backgrounds which they now bring with them to the police service. However, in this study we are attempting to move beyond the individualisation of issues and phenomena, rather we are seeking to understand and attempt to explain what is taking place in broader and relational terms. To this end it will be remembered that in Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the medium of all relations within the field is *capital*. All capital - whether economic, social or cultural - is *symbolic* and the prevailing conditions of it shape social practice (Grenfell and James 2004). Whilst economic and social capital may not be of central relevance in this study, I came to realise that cultural capital, or more accurately the lack of it, had huge significance.

### **Cultural capital**

Although many graduates join the police service, it remains the case that unlike virtually all other professions there is no minimum educational requirement in order to do so.<sup>87</sup> However, prior to the University training this hardly mattered because the traditional police training school curriculum was focused predominantly on police legislation and procedures. Whilst such a curriculum has its obvious limitations, it was, nevertheless, an unusually equal form of training, as a recruit's previous background provided little advantage. At the risk of becoming self indulgent here I am once again a case in point. Though I joined the police with few qualifications, through sheer application (or what a senior officer rather patronisingly called 'exam technique') I graduated from the District Police Training School as the 'top academic student' and I still have the prize to prove it.<sup>88</sup> The point here is not to boast about my own academic abilities but to show that historically recruit training has been a great 'leveller'. As an organisation, the British police service is an archetypal meritocracy and until relatively recently even the majority of Chief Constables were not graduates before they joined the police (Reiner 1991). However, the fact that new recruits now find themselves on a university campus, where

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<sup>87</sup> As explained in Chapter Eight, after an application form based short-listing process, applicants are required to pass a National Police Initial Recruitment Test (PIRT). As such, many recruits join the service with few or indeed any recognised academic qualifications.

<sup>88</sup> This was also referred to as the 'Book Prize', as the winner was awarded a book donated by the Police Mutual Assurance Society (PMAS) who sponsored the award.



they *are* required to perform and compete on a much wider academic level means that background is important.

Before joining the police Jenny had held a variety of jobs including working as a nanny and in a bank. When I interviewed her for the first time she told me that she had left school at the age of 16 with only a ‘handful of GCSEs’. Jenny’s experience of school was very negative and she explained to me that she ‘hated it with a passion’ and at the age of 16, was ‘ready to leave and get out into the working world’. Having done no real studying since then, she joined the police at the age of 31. However, she explained to me that on her very first day at the University she looked round the classroom and it suddenly dawned on her that half her colleagues already had degrees:

I just felt at a disadvantage and I would always be playing catch up and you think gosh there’s more pressure on me cos I think half the class have got degrees (Jenny, interview 4/4/06).

A number of these officers who had already been to university, explained to me that they empathised with their colleagues who were struggling with the academic work. Elizabeth, for example, was a 26 year old officer who before joining the police had previously graduated with a good degree in HRD. As Elizabeth told me:

I’ve been to university and I understand the academic side of work. But the majority of the class that I’m in now have never had to write essays at that level; so it’s been really hard for some of them; really daunting, and I can see their fears (Elizabeth, interview 4/5/06).

For those well read in the literature of lifelong learning the finding that cultural capital counts on a university programme might seem singularly unremarkable if not obvious. However, two points need to be emphasised. First, it is worth reiterating that many of the student officers have been recruited with few if *any* academic qualifications. As Jenny went on to state:

I can’t understand why you can join the police with no qualifications and yet you’re expected to do a Foundation Degree; it’s just beyond me that nobody’s made that connection. I felt out of my depth (4/4/06).

Second, the above quote highlights how this is also an unusual if not unique situation for the University. On the majority of degree courses, the typical student will have

undergone at least some form of academic progression, in the form of A levels, an access course or via accreditation of some other prior learning or experience (APEL). Of course, teaching students without the usual entry requirements would prove challenging for even the most experienced and competent tutors. We might therefore expect that such students would be given sufficient support and that, wherever possible, the academic content of the course would be structured to account for their different abilities and experiences. However, a number of the participants suggested to me that they were in effect, thrown in at the academic ‘deep-end’ with insufficient support.

### *Alan’s story*

In one way Alan’s experiences were fairly typical and as such, it will be relevant to my argument to focus in some detail on his experiences and background. In another way, however, Alan was atypical in that unlike all the other participants he approached *me* to request to take part in the research.

I first met Alan when he was taking part in some training ‘role plays’ mentioned in Chapter Eight. On that day I was supervising the role plays and I was also working in the role of an assessor. I remember being impressed with Alan’s performance. Alan was 38 and was the oldest recruit on his cohort. Indeed, as I watched and attempted to ‘assess’ his performance he seemed to me to have that quality which all police officers need, but which is probably impossible to define or quantify: namely, ‘common sense’. I was also impressed with his communication skills as well as the way he interacted with his colleagues and the public.<sup>89</sup> Alan like Jenny had also left school at the age of 16 with only a few GCSEs. Following school he had served in the ranks of the Army for six years before leaving to work in a variety of manual of jobs. These included working as a security guard and then working in a pub, as well as on a large country estate where he met his future wife.

Alan had originally applied to join the police in 2004 but he was then diagnosed with cancer, so his application had to be put on hold. By 2006 his cancer was in remission, though he was starting to think that at 38 he might be too old to join the service:

I honestly thought I was too old to apply. I’m 38 and am currently the oldest person on this cohort, which I get plenty of flack for and I just thought I was too old to join. It wasn’t until I had met other serving officers and they said its life

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<sup>89</sup> As explained in Chapter Eight, the training role plays take place in public and this one was taking place in a large shopping centre.

experience that counts, common sense, and you know people skills which I think I've got a reasonable grounding in through my various jobs (Alan, interview19/4/06).

As well as having concerns about his age, Alan also thought that his lack of academic qualifications might prevent him from joining the police:

I thought that with my lack of academic qualifications they'd look at it and go thanks very much, try again. But as I came through the selection process, I did my carousel<sup>90</sup> and my written tests and all that side of things and every one of them said verbal communication 100%. I didn't drop a point on that. Common sense was also well marked... But it was all very impersonal the process. My interviews were just horrendous. A guy just sat there. He didn't want to know anything about me, just wanted answers to four questions. Very very impersonal, but obviously they thought I was suitable material and here I am now.

Alan was indeed 'here' and he approached at the end of the role plays to tell me that he had heard that I was conducting some research into the training and to ask if he could volunteer to participate. Even when I was speaking to him then, it was clear that Alan had some strong concerns about aspects of the training, but at that stage I could not really see any ethical or professional dilemmas in including him in the research sample and interviewing him.

In fact, I interviewed Alan the very next morning when we were both back at the Training School; and after we discussed his background and reasons for joining the police it was clear that all he really wanted to talk to me about was the University. Alan made an interesting and incisive analogy between his experiences of learning mathematics at school and the University and in doing so encapsulated why he thought that he and some other students were struggling to cope with the academic side of the course:

You go into a classroom as a school child and your lessons are slowly but surely geared up. You start at the very basics, one plus one is two, two plus two is four and as your lessons go on you go through that process. Then you move

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<sup>90</sup> We can assume that Alan is referring here to the PIRT (see footnote 73 above). The 'carousel' to which he specifically refers is an Objective, Structured, Performance, Related, Exercise (OSPRE).

on to decimal fractions and division and whatever else goes on. However, I felt with the University we walked in on day one, sat down and there was this preconception that right you're already at the decimal fraction stage. So let's talk about sociology, let's talk about Lombrosian theory,<sup>91</sup> lumps on head, let's talk about criminology and strands of criminology, and whoa! what do I know about these subjects you know? And you're talking to me as if I have a wealth of experience and I've been doing this all my life, which I haven't. I'm no academic.

Whilst Alan did not think that he was an 'academic' he nevertheless struck me as being an intelligent and astute individual whose background and experiences had not necessarily given him the requisite capital to cope with this type of course. Therefore I asked Alan, along with many of the other participants, if he was getting enough academic support. Alan's response was typical.

No I don't think we have. I think, we discussed it, a few people amongst ourselves, we sort of said it was almost like 'hi there we're the University, come in sit down, here's four weeks of psycho-babble and ologies, all they do is ologies and they baffle you with it. Right here's list of assignments thanks very much for coming. Oh by the way if you do need any help here's a telephone number or here's our email address and its almost like thanks very much and you've got these little numbers, now preferably we wouldn't want you to use them but if you do then we'll speak to you. We tried to arrange, when we went back for a study day, we tried to arrange appointments to see lecturers to thrash ideas and sort problems out but they were all far too busy.

A few weeks later I learnt that Alan had resigned. As I touched on in Chapter Seven, four of the participants left the police before completing their training period and at this stage I have been unable to conduct any further interviews with any of these individuals. It would therefore be inappropriate for me to speculate on the reasons why such a promising officer as Alan chose to resign.

However, Alan was the first of my research participants to resign and it was my experiences with Alan, in particular, that caused me to start to reflect on and re-evaluate the professional and ethical dilemmas inherent in conducting this research. I will discuss these issues in more general terms later, but in Alan's particular case I reflected on how I

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<sup>91</sup> A Criminological theory formulated by Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) which is based on the premise that criminals can somehow be scientifically differentiated from non criminals. See, for example, Maguire, M, et al. (2002).

had dealt with him as an *individual*. Looking back, I thought about his motives for requesting to take part in the research and my motives for interviewing him. At the time I probably flattered myself that he was interested in my research. However, it is just as possible that Alan was not really interested in my study but rather was seeking help from someone who was not just a researcher but whose primary role, as he saw at least, was as a manager in the organisation. If this was the case then did I help him enough? Even as I am writing this now I cannot fail to see the irony of the fact that in this very chapter I am suggesting that the University and its tutors perhaps did not offer Alan enough support. But then again did I? At the same time it might be contended that as a researcher I had no real obligation to help or support Alan with his academic work, as I had enough responsibilities and challenges with my own. Yet as I will now go on to show, as the research progressed, and the data on the University became more critical, the professional, ethical and even methodological dilemmas became more pronounced.

On one level, much of this criticism could have been put down to many of the officers not seeing the relevance of the University work to their vocational roles. As highlighted in Table 4 above, the data showed this was a theme brought up by more than half of the participants. Looked at from the other perspective, however, this means that some of the participants *could* see what the University and police were trying to achieve.

I can see where they are coming from. I think they're trying to create a different type of police officer that's more academic and more aware of things, perhaps who will look a bit deeper into things like. I can see where they are coming from. Just personally I don't see how I would use that, though I can see the reason behind it. I can see why for some people it would be an advantage. If people enjoyed that kind of learning and found it interesting and they felt they could use that, fine I just personally didn't have that connection with it (Graham, interview 2/3/06).

Of course, it needs to be remembered that the student officers first attend the University only two weeks after they have joined the police. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that many of the officers 'do not have that connection with it' as Graham states, as they cannot yet see the relevance of this wider academic work to their vocational roles. As Katherine also explained:

I just don't see the relevance at the moment anyway. Maybe I will in a few months or a year down the line, but we can't relate that to anything at the moment. Well we couldn't like a few weeks ago, yes we've learnt a bit over the

last few weeks but it's very hard when you have had no kind of input from the policing side of it for someone to start telling you theories and stuff that has gone on in the past and relating it to what we were doing now and at times there was just no relevance and I personally and a lot of people switched off. It's like what do we need to know this for? And it's not what we want to do. To be honest there is a lot of negative vibes the whole time about the University side of it (Katherine, interview 3/4/06).

As Katherine suggests, it would not be an easy task for any tutor to teach students who had 'switched off' and it is plausible to suggest that to some extent this can account for the 'negativity' and even conflict at the University. However, in making this argument it is again necessary to look beyond the descriptive accounts provided by the participants and analyse the data in more theoretical terms.

Starting at a structural level Bourdieu's concept of field has further theoretical relevance here. It was suggested above, that whilst the institution of and activities surrounding the University are of central structural interest for analytical purposes, it is also necessary to consider other 'overlapping' fields. In the context of this case study the key overlapping field is that of policing; and this is the field that the participants join and to paraphrase Katherine it is what they 'want to do'. However, looked at from the other perspective many of the police officers find themselves placed in a field where they perhaps *don't* want to be:

I never wanted to go to university. I came here, knew there was a university phase but I didn't know what it entailed really. So it was a bit of a shock when you get there. I struggled. I really struggled to find the relevance in a lot of it you know that I could tie in with police work (Graham, interview 2/3/06).

Of course, in examining what the University experience means to an individual in this way we are also engaging with the idea of their habitus and the relationships between those and the fields. As Warren & Webb (2007:3) contend:

The aim of social scientific research should be to identify the particular logics of practice within fields of social activity that give rise to the boundaries of probable and possible practice, and to do this through a constant iteration between 'field' and 'habitus'.

As I argued in Chapter Two, this suggests that habitus both constrains and enables an individual's course of action. According to Reay (2004:435) these possibilities can be envisaged as a 'continuum':

At one end the habitus can be replicated through encountering a field that reproduces its dispositions. At the other end of the continuum, habitus can be transformed through a process that either raises or lowers an individual's expectations. Implicit in the concept is the possibility of a social trajectory that enables conditions of living that are very different from initial ones...However, within Bourdieu's theoretical framework he/she is also circumscribed by an internalised framework that makes some possibilities inconceivable, others improbable and a limited range acceptable.

Whereas Bourdieu (1992:127) uses the more evocative analogy of a 'fish in water' to explain this dynamic:

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside social agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted.

However, when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar the reverse will often be the case. The position of many of the student officers like Alan who are sent to the University is that they are, so to speak, like 'fish out of water' and even for those officers who already have degrees some of them were still in a field where they don't want to be.

But in her [names a tutor] defence I think a lot of the people who were there said that they'd joined to become a police officer. They didn't see the immediate benefits of what they were doing. They didn't see what they were getting out of it. A lot of people were really frustrated with being sat in lectures and a lot of them already had degrees and I think as time went on that kind of boredom frustration came out. (Roy, interview 24/11/06).

As this is a longitudinal study I will return to the issue of the relevance of the University training later in this chapter. However, at this point it is necessary to remain with the experiences of some of those participants who had previously been to a university. As mentioned above, 10 of the participants held first degrees, though none held any

postgraduate qualifications. In seeking to understand and interpret what was taking place at the University I was particularly interested to find out how these particular participants' experiences of being there, compared with their previous experiences of being students at different universities.

### *Elizabeth's story*

As I touched on above, Elizabeth had previously completed a degree in HRD and like most of the other participants she held a variety of jobs before deciding to join the police at the age of 26. Whilst Elizabeth explained to me that she joined the police to make a difference she also told me that until a few months previously it was a career that she 'had never imagined [her] self doing'. However, she went on to explain how by chance she had met an old friend who was now in the police:

I got chatting to her and she told me that she was in the police. I thought that sounds interesting, though it was something I had never imagined myself doing. It was her influence really. From chatting to her I met another person who I knew was a Sergeant and I thought yes it sounds really interesting. I went to a recruitment evening and thought, yeh I can do that job (interview 4/5/06).

Before joining the police Elizabeth had originally intended to study radiography but she 'changed her mind at the last minute', because she knew that she 'wanted to work with people' and so she decided to study HRD at a university in the north east of England. Elizabeth was attracted to that particular university because the course was also linked to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualification. She told me that she really enjoyed her course and time at this university.

In the first interview with Elizabeth I asked her what she thought about the University and Foundation Degree. She explained to me that she was 'positive about the University' though she, 'purely put this down to the fact that [she was not] as scared by the University as some people'. For as I indicated above, Elizabeth's main concern was for some of her friends and colleagues who she judged were not really academically prepared for the course:

I was a bit thrown when the new training concept came out as to where it fitted and in some ways I still am slightly, but I think my views of it are a bit more positive in that I can see the idea of learning about the more social side of criminology, racism, prejudice rather than the police side of it. It's very useful, but I do think that it is unfair on the people that-I don't mean this in an awful



way- but aren't academic and don't really want to sit down and write a 1000 word essay about a social concept when they're not quite sure what that actually even means. Cos it took me some time to get my head round it, so I know for a fact that a lot of my colleagues found it really hard so I can see both sides (interview 4/5/06).

Putting the issue of her concern for her colleagues aside, I went on to ask Elizabeth how her experiences compared with those at her previous university:

This will sound really daft but my experience of lecturers in the past was no different to the lecturers that we had and I couldn't see any faults particularly in them, because without being detrimental a lot of lecturers are very academic. They've got loads of information they want to share with you and they'll whiz through it and sometimes throw in words that you don't understand and you have to have the guts to put your hand up and say I don't understand that word you've just said and sometimes they don't realise they have even said it. A couple of the lecturers were fantastic, for example, [names two tutors] because they have a police background, it's because we all thought, oh the police they've been and done it, so a lot of us opened up a lot more to them (interview 4/5/06)

Whilst Elizabeth's experiences at the University were largely positive, the above quote once again highlights the need to analyse some of the issues at the University in relational terms. Although it was noted in Chapter Five that as an institution the University had no previous heritage in Police Studies, at least two of the tutors had previously worked as operational police officers.<sup>92</sup> Whilst it will be argued below that many of the participants were very critical at times of the University and its teaching, the data showed these two tutors with police backgrounds were often singled out for 'praise':

I mean the one week we did have that was great was the week when [names tutor] the police officer she came in to do the equality, diversity and rights and it was the one week everybody really enjoyed and I don't know whether it was the way it was delivered and she's quite a bubbly person and you know it's really interesting or whether it was the fact that we knew she was a police officer, I don't know what it was, but that was one thing we kind of said I wonder if it is because of that? Cos we were all so itching to get back here [to the Police

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<sup>92</sup> In fact, one of the tutors was a serving police officer who helped to teach the module on Equality, Diversity and Rights.

Training School] and start, you know, learning the police side of it (Katherine, interview 3/4/06).

There are a number of points here which deserve more emphasis. First, as Katherine admits, even she does not know why she and other students reacted to these tutors in different ways. Second, Katherine was not the only participant who seemed pleased to be 'back' at Police Training School and the data showed a distinct contrast in the way that the participants thought about and experienced the Training School and the University:

Love it. Brilliant. Completely different to the University. I think here we are taught in a way that is understandable and we are taught things that are clearly relevant to what we are doing (Steven, interviewed 4/5/06).

Perhaps the tutors with police backgrounds are simply 'better' tutors or perhaps their police experiences and examples that they draw on in lessons seem more relevant to Katherine and the other students. Whilst it is probably the case that there is no one single reason for the participants' views on this, Katherine and Steven's comments about the Police Training School suggested to me that there must be an extent to which this is due to their changing and emerging habitus as police officers and sense of who they and other students identify with as part of their 'own field'.

However, whilst I am arguing here that some of the issues at the University were related to the officers' sense of changing habitus and the wider field of policing, the data also suggested that some of the issues emanated from the University itself.

Like Alan, Alison also resigned from the police service less than one year into her training period. Unlike Alan however, Alison had been to University and held a degree in the Natural Sciences. Alison explained to me that she had been looking forward to the University side of her training and had 'great expectations for it'. However, when I interviewed her shortly after having just spent four weeks on the University campus she apologised to me for being 'so negative about it'.

I guess the main difference would have been how we were taught. Not even so much how we were taught but the way we were taught by the tutors. I know a lot of people have mentioned this probably, but at [names previous university] we were treated quite differently to how we were treated by the teachers at the University. At [previous university] they realised that we all wanted to be there,

that it was important to us all. We were all treated you know quite respectfully, but I just don't think that was the case at the University, I definitely don't. It felt a bit like they looked down on us, as though they didn't really want to be teaching us so it was quite, quite different. At [previous university] it was always very positive, they encouraged us to talk and to ask questions and I don't think that was the case at the University (Alison, interview 29/3/06).

In the above quote from Alison it is once again implicit that some of the officers did not want to be at the University. However, Alison also raises a number of concerns about the way that the tutors treated the students, which became recurring themes in the data.

### **Not real students**

As indicated in Table 3, from the first interviews I had coded 32 references to the theme of officers not being treated as 'real students':

There wasn't any discipline to what we did, but they did make it clear that we weren't real students. While we were there the rest of the student population were on summer holiday and we were told about the next course [of police officers] having trouble when the real students were there (Edward, interview 4/10/06).<sup>93</sup>

In relation to the theme in the data that they were not treated as 'real students', there was a feeling expressed by some of the participants that some of the tutors 'resented' the police officers getting to university through an unorthodox route and, as such, they did not want to 'teach them'. Robert was another of my participants who resigned from the police service before completing his training. Robert was 22 years old and although he had not previously been to University he did start a Business Studies course at a college of further education, which he did not complete. When I first interviewed Robert it was clear that like Alan, he was struggling with the academic side of his training. As Robert explained:

I personally didn't enjoy the university phase, but from what I've heard I didn't like it the most. Like I said I'm not an academic person, I pick things up from the theory side but my personal point of view is that I learn more by doing rather than sitting there and watching a presentation or something. I pick it up a lot easier if I'm out doing it (Robert, interview 29/3/06).

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<sup>93</sup> The Foundation Degree in Police Studies operated outside of the normal academic year semester periods.

However, Robert had some strong concerns about the way he and other students were viewed and treated by some of the tutors:

A lot of the tutors treated us as equals, but there were the odd one or two that, I don't know if I'd say they resented us being there kind of thing and they treated us as if we were a bit thick. I think they kind of thought that we were taking up their time if that makes sense. I personally got the feeling that some of them resented us being there, because we were getting paid to be there and it was part of our job and they were thinking I'm only teaching this cos I have to. But it could just be my personal take (Robert, interview 29/3/06).

The data showed that this was not just Robert's 'personal take, rather this was a view that was repeatedly confirmed by other participants, including Adam:

They don't really want you, I suppose, was the impression I got. You know you go to University, you go in to University to do this, and this, but we weren't able to get involved with any of the University culture as such, apart from like the library and this and that. They separated us to one part of it (Adam, interview 19/4/06).

As this quote from Adam suggests, it was not just the students' interactions with the tutors that led some of them to believe that they were not treated as 'real students', but it was also related to where they were physically located on the campus. The University Police Studies Department was housed in what can not too inaccurately be described as a large Portakabin (temporary) type building, located on the periphery of the campus. Whilst there may be perfectly sound administrative reasons for placing the police students there, the data showed that the location and structure became symbolically significant:

We were in a Portakabin which was completely as far away from the main buildings as possible and it was like we'd been segregated. It was like you're different; we're trying to interact you with the public as if you are students, but we're going keep you separate. That was sort of what it felt like; we were just shoved to one side (Jenny interview 4/4/06).

The building is just right on the outskirts of campus. I don't know, part of me thinks they have been forced in to teaching us. Maybe they don't really want to

do it, that's why they kind of pushed us to the side, so no one else sees us (laugh) (Alison, interview 29/3/06).

It is of course ironic that the IPLDP had been brought in to replace the previous regime of police recruit training which had been criticised for its insularity and lack of opportunities for community involvement. More to the point, it will be remembered from Chapter One that the first educational aim of the Foundation Degree programme was to 'understand and engage with the community'.<sup>94</sup> However, there was only a limited amount of evidence that that was being achieved:

I suppose, we were in the town especially within the University on the campus and the other students see you there. They are all aware of who you are, as you're walking round with your little police bags and I suppose yeh you get to interact with them a bit. You know the other students will speak to you and ask you a little bit about what you're doing and I think that's reassuring to them to see you are learning a lot of stuff and you're not just some bobby who's going to bash them with a stick (Graham interview 2/3/06).

Indeed the data supported the view that there was little or no interaction with other students, as Becky explained:

You don't have that much interaction with the other students because we are totally separated really, in that little Portakabin. It's like this is where we will put all the police officers but you can go in the other building if you want for your dinner (Becky, interview 4/5/06).

When I discussed this issue with Samantha she also used some strong terminology to describe her interpretation of what had taken place:

**Samantha:** But then we were bunged in a little Portakabin (laugh) at the top of, out of the way. So yeh just shoved in there. Yeh out of the way really because with all the University stuff going off further down the campus and we were just kind of out on a limb at the other side, segregated (interview, 27/4/07).

**Researcher:** Segregated, that's a strong word.

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<sup>94</sup> University Student Handbook, *Foundation Degree in Police Studies* (Revised May 07).

**Samantha:** Yes but it's like keeping them away from the wrong people, I don't know. Because you had to walk from where we were parked, we had to walk all the way through the University past the library and you know refectory and past another refectory and past another bit and then we were kind of right on the edge. So I suppose we did not feel we really belonged really, because we were tucked away. But I think that's where their offices were as well actually, upstairs.

**Researcher:** Yes I am not suggesting that's intentional.

**Samantha:** Obviously that must be why but I suppose it makes you think how important it is. It's just a bit of cash for the University it's not the main thing they just bung you in the corner. They still get paid the same amount of money whether you have got good facilities or not.

**Researcher:** How much do people interact?

**Samantha:** Not with other students, no you didn't really. I mean we used to go to the refectory and you know, at your break times. But I think most lunch times I went off the campus anyway into town, I think most people did. Perhaps we used the coffee shop and a shop on the site but there were no kind of interaction. Literally, you arrived in the morning and go to your lessons keep out of the way and then everyone was like jumping in the car and away really and it's like when we went to the library you just went to your little section and on the computer and that was it really, sat there. You didn't kind of mix really, at all.

As well as making links with Bourdieu's social theory, I also started to think about the data in terms of the literature on police culture. Indeed, as noted above, one of my research questions was to assess if the learning that took place for the student officers had led to: a) professionalisation, b) a change in police culture. Leaving aside for the time being the issue of professionalisation it was clear that the training was probably having an impact on aspects of police culture, though not as intended.

### **Them and us**

As indicated in Chapter Two, many commentators have stressed social *isolation* and defensive *solidarity* as amongst the defining features of police culture (Waddington 1999). To some extent the occupation itself operates to separate officers from society (e.g. shift work, erratic hours, possession of coercive authority). However, a key factor is

also the hostility that officers often face that serves to separate police from ‘nonpolice’ (Reiner 2000). This separation has been variously referred to as a: ‘them and us’ (Reiner 2000), ‘Us/Them’ (Waddington 1999) or ‘we versus they’ (Westley 1970) outlook. Whilst some social isolation is inevitable and solidarity is not necessarily a bad thing, it can be seen how such an outlook can lead to a number of negative consequences. First, the idea of them and us goes against the central tenet of policing in Britain: that officers are part of the communities they police. Second, once police officers start to think in terms of ‘them’ it becomes a slippery slope to further subdivide the ‘them’ (as well as ‘us’) into other social and cultural groups.

I think there is a big them and us and I think definitely at the university, it’s kind of pressed home (Edward, interview 3/6/07).

The data suggests that the student officers felt ‘isolated’ and for this as well as other reasons what can be termed a ‘them and us’ situation developed. It is clear that they were physically separated on the University campus, but it could be argued they were ‘emotionally’ separated as well; they were not ‘real students’. On top of this there was little interaction with members of the wider community. As I argued in Chapter Eight, when I first interviewed the participants most of them initially failed to make a link between the idea of community engagement and the University. This was despite the fact that the first educational aim of the University Foundation Degree programme was ‘to understand and engage with the community’; and they had just spent four weeks on the University campus.

It is therefore plausible to suggest that to some extent this sense of separation contributed to the ‘them and us’ situation. On top of this, the situation was also not helped by a sense of hostility and conflict that many of the participants stated they felt at the University. However, as I have already noted, this is not to say that the students *themselves* did not contribute to this conflict and hostility. When I interviewed Samantha again, we discussed the two further weeks she had spent at the University in the second year of her training programme:

**Samantha:** Embarrassing. I’ve found it really embarrassing. We went back to the University, I think we were there last week in September first in October and were all having a laugh to make it a bit light hearted and whatever. But when [names a tutor] came in it was just horrendous and you got people practically having stand up arguments with her and you think she’s only come in to give

some guidance on your assignment. That is her job at the end of the day and she said, and to be fair to her, you do it or you don't do it, I am only here to help you get through it. But I felt for her because they were having arguments about everything and it weren't even relevant to what she was there to talk about (interview, 27/4/07).

**Researcher:** Why was that? Why did she come in for that?

**Samantha:** I think probably because when we went to the University the first time she was a bit strong with some of the things she was saying. But with some of the things she is saying it's not necessarily what she thinks, she is trying to get people debating and talking about issues. But I think some people thought that she was trying to have a personal go at them. But then some of the stuff she was saying was right. Like there were people sat reading the *Daily Star* at the back, so I mean that's going to annoy her and she was probably thinking that a lot of the group were not listening. So I think a lot of people got off on a bad foot with her from day one.

**Researcher:** It sounds like chicken and egg situation. Is it possible for you to say what the underlying cause was?

**Samantha:** Well I think to be fair she didn't do herself any favours when she first started because at first everybody was quiet and you didn't really know anything. Nobody would have dreamed of doing that at the beginning and she didn't help herself because people were thinking oh God what's this all about. Because people were fine with [names two tutors with police backgrounds mentioned above]. There is no respect to the fact that she is a tutor at the end of the day and there were people having arguments and you wonder what's the point really, it's just arguing and cos people are under pressure and they don't want to do essays but you think well you are probably speaking to the wrong person here you should be speaking to them at the Training School and let them know what's happening because she is employed by the University and she is just doing her job.

**Researcher:** But some people have said to me that there is an anti-police feeling amongst some of the staff, is that unfair?

**Samantha:** Don't know, because I thought they were just doing their job really. I don't know, perhaps they are just used to people sitting there and studiously taking notes but that's what they are used to. They are used to talking to people



who have chosen to go and do that at university, whereas for a lot of us in our group you have got to go, it's not optional, so they would just sit there and look out of the window and doodle and all the rest of it and I suppose I guess that's going wind them up as well cos they just think what's the point of me stood here. So it's both sides.

The above quotes highlight the complexity of what was taking place at the University. As Samantha suggests it probably is 'both sides', but looking at this more theoretically in terms of the concepts of field, habitus and capital it is, of course, much wider as well. Looked at from their position within their own field of higher education the tutors are probably used to teaching students who want to be at university and who have at least some of the cultural capital to be there. Conversely, as Samantha suggests, many of the student officers are now in a field where they do not want to be, or do not have the cultural capital to cope.

As I explained above, the physics analogy of a force field is often used to help us understand Bourdieu's concept of field. However, what seemed to be taking place here seemed more like a *magnetic* field, where energy can act to push bodies apart.<sup>95</sup> Of course, it is possible to push this analogy too far. At an institutional level the fields of higher education and policing had been 'attracted' to and brought together by the partnership between the University and local police force. Looked at in terms of capital there is an economic relationship<sup>96</sup> between the parties, but there are also wider issues of *status* at play as well. As explained in Chapter Three, training is regarded as a 'low' status activity within the field of policing. However, within higher education, teaching and research are the *raison d'être* of that field. Whilst a British police training school might build up a good reputation as a *training* provider, the school and its trainers are unlikely to have the same status as a University and its academics. When it comes to education and educating it is the institution of the University which holds the status and its academics who possess the capital, both cultural and social. Seen from this perspective it is not surprising that the police force is attracted to the University and the related status this will bring. However, within social science research it is *context* that

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<sup>95</sup> It is accepted that there are some limitations to this physics analogy. Magnets have an area around them called a magnetic field. The ends of magnets are called magnetic poles, which is where the force of a magnet is the strongest. All magnets have a north pole and a south pole. Whilst different poles attract each other, like poles will always push away or repel each other.

<sup>96</sup> As stated in Chapter Two, Bourdieu's position is that ultimately all capital is derived from economic forces and gives rise to economic consequences. This position is close to Marxist views.

counts (Flyvberg 2001) and at the more local level of this case study site things play out in a different way. The status and capital that the University and its academics possess are not necessarily those recognised by some of the actors in the field and at this level that there is seemingly more 'repelling' than 'attraction'.

Perhaps more importantly, these issues which play out in the field, impact on an officer's learning and become internalised as part of their habitus. As explained in the previous chapter, Hodkinson et al's (2008) metaphor of 'learning as becoming' provides a sophisticated way to theorise this process. As these authors state:

Within any situation an individual may learn, through the integrated processes of participation and their ongoing (re)construction of their own habitus. In these processes, that which is learned can be modified as it becomes part of the person... Learning can change and/or reinforce that which is learned, and can change and/or reinforce the habitus of the learner. In these ways a person is constantly learning through becoming and becoming through learning (ibid, p 41).

Because, as Hodkinson et al. argue, individuals learn 'within any situation' this is an expansive theory of the learning which extends the process well beyond what is taught in the formal curriculum. Taken to its logical conclusion this means that individuals will not always learn what they are expected to learn and there can be unintended learning and unintended consequences in any learning situation. However, this is something which is often overlooked in most of the literature on adult learning. As I have argued elsewhere (Heslop 2007), most of the research and theorising about adult learning is premised on the ideal that the learning is a positive process whereby actors learn, or try to learn, socially useful things. Whilst it is and they do, my own research confirmed to me that there are situations where not everything that individuals learn will be positive. The unintended reproduction or reinforcement of negative facets of police culture, provide examples of this, as ideas such as 'them and us' and other aspects to be discussed below, become taken for granted ways of thinking and acting as they 'become' police officers. Seen from this perspective the issue of 'them and us' is even more acute, as *the officers are, in effect, learning or internalising the idea of a 'them' before they have even fully become an 'us'*.

### Neither 'real' students nor professionals

Of course, to some extent it is not surprising that the participants do not yet have the habitus of a police officer. After all, when they attend the University campus for the first time they have only been in the police service for two weeks and they have had no situated operational policing experience. However, it will be remembered that one of the key aims of the new training was to 'professionalise' the police service and that one of my research questions was to assess if the learning that took place for the student officers had led to this. I was therefore interested to find if, whilst at the University, there was an attempt to develop them as professionals. The data showed overwhelmingly that whilst many of them did not feel like they were treated as 'real students' neither were they treated as professionals.

I don't think we were treated as professional police officers, not in any sense. I think because we were so kind of fresh to the job we didn't know anything about policing, they never saw us in a uniform and there was just nothing that gave that impression to them... I never ever got the impression that I was a police officer, you know like you can feel like a police officer by the way someone acts towards you I never got that impression from [names a tutor] never. But as students I felt that somehow in her eyes that she kind of saw you as slightly less than normal students (Roy, interview 24/11/06).

As the quote from Roy alludes to, professionalisation is not just about police officers having an 'externally recognised qualification' or letters after their names, but critically it is a sensibility about how they as *individuals* think, feel and act. Again looking at this in terms of habitus, it can be seen how the way they are treated becomes internalised as taken for granted ways of thinking and feeling.

However, whilst many of the participants reported that they felt that they were not treated as professional police officers, somewhat ironically some felt that they were 'labelled' (Becker 1963) with police cultural stereotypes:

They always taught everything as if they talked down to you, which again is partly because they are used to dealing with children or young adults and now they deal with people with a bit more life experience. I also think it's possibly their stereotype of police officers and the way that they perceive police officers and the way that they want to treat police officers. [Names tutor] made her opinion known that this is how she saw police officers and this is how she was going to change the way that we policed. And it was very much her opinion that

we were all sexist, racist, bigots, bullies and that's where it comes from that she sees us all in that role model and therefore she deals with us in a particular way (Chris, interview 26/11/06).

They had preconceptions of us. They had already got a stereotype of us and I think it was wrong because we had been a week at [The Police Training School]. We had had our attestation which all right you get a warrant card to say you are a police officer but you're not actually a police officer until you know what you're doing. Then we had a week of baton and cuff training then we went to university and they were treating us like we had two years service, like we had the stereotype of a cocky police officer who thinks that they know everything and they treated us like that. I said to [names a tutor] where it said what's your occupation, we write down police officers, but we have no idea what a police officer does so you can't think of us as police officers yet.... And I thought when you are trying to teach a course which contains equality rights and diversity, which is all about don't stereotype a person, don't judge a book by its cover and the first question she asked us about stereotypes and I thought straight away well that's not particularly professional (Mary, interview 29/11/06).

With reference to the above quote from Mary, it is of course entirely possible that the tutor that she refers to was, in fact, being professional and was merely saying things for 'effect', as part of the intended learning for the session. However, the data shows that this was not necessarily interpreted by Mary or the other participants; and again it is, at the very, least possible to see how the unintended learning of these ideas such as that they are 'sexist bullies' or that it is right to stereotype can become internalised by them instead. As Chris and I discussed in a later interview:

**Chris:** I would be lying to say it was just the University, but I think the University has devalued the role of policing it has devalued what we are there to do because it's trying to change your thinking. I may be biased because of the last assignment I have to be honest. But that's the most recent thing that has happened in a string of events with the University. But I think they have completely devalued the role of a police officer for me; cos it's just not the same. Stigma is the wrong term but what the uniform means, it's just [long pause].

**Researcher:** In what ways has it devalued it? I know you have said earlier that the tail is wagging the dog so that's obviously an issue for you. How else can it have devalued it do you think?

**Chris:** Because of the value judgements they put on the role of a police officer, because of them being that anti-police when they are putting you all into boxes as bigoted, racist, homophobic, sexist and this is what you are. Then I think, well you know, there has been research which has been done that, I don't know who did the research, but blue eyes, basically they told everyone with blue eyes, which ever way it was.<sup>97</sup> It's exactly the same here you tell someone long enough that that's what you are and eventually you start thinking well yes this organisation, there has got to be elements of it in there otherwise why the hell are they telling us that we are all bigoted, homophobic, sexist, everything else (Chris, interview 26 July/07).

In relation to the idea that they were treated as neither 'real students' nor professionals, the data also showed that many of the participants often felt that their own views were minimised or that tutors were unwilling to accept alternative points of view.

They were constantly asking for debates and challenges and trying to get us to interact. But then if you did and it wasn't what they wanted you were shot down in flames. You know, they were asking for your opinion, but if it didn't match what they were looking for or think, then it was wrong in their eyes. Whereas I always thought the idea of debate was to see other people's points of views (Jenny, interview 4/4/06).

I found them a bit patronising. Well one specifically [names tutor] I would just say she's quite patronising and the impression I got when I tried to speak out and say something I felt that she was of the opinion that you can have an opinion so long as it's the same as mine. So if you were trying to give an opposing view to what she was saying she wasn't particularly interested and then would come at you directly trying to twist what you said and kind of make you feel silly. So I didn't particularly think that was a good thing. I think if you want to express an opinion, everybody's entitled to an opinion and we all have differences of opinion and you don't fall out about it, you just accept it don't you? (Becky, interview 4/5/06).

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<sup>97</sup> We might assume here that Chris is referring to the so called 'Blue eyes Brown Eyes' experiment' conducted by teacher Jane Elliot in 1968. See <http://www.janeelliott.com/> accessed July 09.

Chris's comments here are also a good example of what the sociologist Anthony Giddens (1987) termed the 'double hermeneutic'. The theory posits that everyday 'lay' concepts and those from the social sciences have a two way relationship. As Giddens explains, 'the concepts of the social sciences are not produced about an independently constituted subject-matter, which continues regardless of what these concepts are. The 'findings' of the social sciences very often enter constitutively into the world they describe" (ibid, p 20).

Of all the issues at the University I found this one perhaps the most surprising and again it was difficult to analyse this without thinking about my own experiences of higher education. My own experience of studying social sciences, in particular, has led me to the view there are no absolute truths (Lyotard 1979/1984) and that all matters are open to debate and interpretation. I was therefore genuinely surprised that many of the participants believed that they were being required to think in a particular way.

When you are at the University and you're putting across, your life experience you know, I can understand if it's coming from some 19 year old that's just left college and joined the police. He knows nothing. But people who have been out in the world, we are not all wet-behind-the-ears-kids, I don't mean this in a bad way, we're not wet-behind-the-ears-kids. You put forward a valid point, but because it's perhaps a police point of view it almost just gets shot down in flames as being irrelevant and you were getting chopped off all the time. And people were coming away from some lectures saying, he or she they are so anti-police, anti us, whatever we say its wrong you know, their point of view is the only one that matters (Alan, interview 19/4/06).

In later interviews, I was interested to find out if there was any change in the participants' views around this area when they returned to the University campus for a further two weeks in the second year of their training period. As noted above, by this time they had completed a number of academic assignments and had 'become' police officers. I was therefore particularly interested to find out if they felt that the new symbolic capital that they had acquired in the situated workplace counted for anything in the field of the University classroom. Whilst once again I did try and approach the research with an open mind, by now, if anything, I suspected that there would be possibilities for more conflict. Indeed most of the participants still reported that their views were being minimised and again this seemed to have a negative effect on the learning:

They'd ask an opinion and people have obviously all got different opinions, but when people said things that they didn't agree with it was just, well no that's not right. But I thought that's the whole point of debating isn't it? You just felt that, a lot of the time, you just ended up thinking I'll be quiet because it's not getting me anywhere and it's not been listened to (Katherine, interview 3/4/2006).

The data showed that often it was not just the officers' opinions that were said to be dismissed, but their own *practical* experiences of policing situations which did not seem to fit with the tutors' academic and theoretical take on police work:

There is a divide. There is definitely a them and us and I suppose as well I think a lot of us think, especially now cos at the beginning we weren't police officers, so especially now that you get used to the fact that when you go out on the streets people speak to you in a certain way and they have to show respect to you because you are in an authoritative role and you can't have people coming up and speaking to you like that. And when they do the first thing you say is hey up remember who I am when they start cheeking you. So it's hard now, when you sit in a class and you have people talking to you like you are children and you think I am a police officer (Mary, interview 22/6/07).

**Ben:** They have negative stereo type views of police officers in general, yet they are teaching police officers. That's a conflict to say the least.

**Researcher:** Why is that a conflict?

**Ben:** It's down to things like you express your view point and they instantly dismiss it even if it's from your own experience. They say, well that's not true and you think well I work this job day in day out I know what I see. You don't do this job so you're all right commenting in theory, but the reality is what we see day in day out. So unless you back your self up with some academic text, then your view doesn't count, but again, even they have never done the job (interview, 3/9/07).

### **Symbolic violence**

Bourdieu has argued that educational institutions often practise a form of *symbolic violence* on students and this concept is also central to understanding how culture can be reproduced (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). By symbolic violence, Bourdieu did not mean physical violence, but rather a soft sort of violence which is exercised upon an individual with his or her complicity. It is an act of violence because it leads to the constraint and subordination of individuals, but it is symbolic in the sense that it is achieved indirectly and without physical force or coercion. As Bourdieu (1992:168) explains:

[Symbolic violence] presupposes on the part of those who are subjected to it a form of complicity which is neither a passive submission to an external constraint nor a free adherence to values... The specificity of symbolic violence

resides precisely in the fact that it requires the person who undergoes it an attitude which defies the ordinary alternative between freedom and constraint.

Symbolic violence is practised in numerous ways. Bourdieu argued, for example, that it is performed by educators who impose meanings as 'legitimate by concealing power relations which are the basis of its force' and at the same time communicating a logic of disinterest (ibid, p4). However, it is contended here that it is also a form of symbolic violence to devalue or minimise professional experience and subordinate it to theoretical perspectives. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is also related to his concept of habitus as it is through the habitus that the effects of the violence become internalized as taken - for - granted ways of thinking and behaving. As Bourdieu (1988:21) argues:

Legitimation of the social order is not the product of a deliberate and purposive action of propaganda or symbolic imposition; it results rather, from the fact that agents apply to the objective structures of the social world structures of perception and appreciation which are issued out of these very structures and which tend to picture the world as evident.

### **'Making things fit'**

As well as having their views minimised in the classroom the data also showed that some of the students felt unable to express their own opinions in the academic assignments. As Ben continued:

**Ben:** My essays are not necessarily my view points. I've learnt what they want to see in an essay and I tailor my essays to meet what they want to see rather than what my viewpoints are because that way it passes.

**Researcher:** How do you feel about doing that?

**Ben:** I really don't like doing it to be honest but it's a means to an end (Ben, interview 3/9/07).

Similar views were expressed by Philip when we spoke during his third and final interview:

I am writing for the sake of it, putting stuff in, you're just writing stuff. I mean they are asking you to say how you feel about incidents when you are going to jobs and relate it to like certain legislation. If you are honest you are not thinking



about anything from the University, it just doesn't happen. When you are going to a job you are thinking, right you listen to the radio and you have got enough on your plate just thinking of that. But you are having to write to say when I was going to this incident I was thinking about this and that, and then you have got to go through all these worksheets to think right what can I put in to make it fit sort of thing (Philip, interview 22/3/07)

At bottom, these are worrying examples of a type of 'coping strategy' and again it is possible to relate this to ideas of police culture. Consider the below quote, this time from Jenny:

In the assignments I am not necessarily putting down my views. Rather it's what they want to hear. Unfortunately it does not come from the heart because you are putting what they want you to put not how you actually feel yourself. Which is a shame really. In a way it feels like lying really. You are being mistrustful because you are literally putting what they want to hear and it might not necessarily be what you are feeling or I am not saying I have blatantly lied but you kind of bend things to fit in an assignment (Jenny, interview 10/1/07).

For anyone not familiar with police jargon, the references above to making things fit and 'bend things' means to change the evidence. It has been argued that the police culture occasionally requires officers to make evidence against suspects stronger than it is (McLagan 2007, Morton 1994). This has been shown to occur in statements, evidence files or police officers' notebooks. Within the police culture this is not necessarily seen as lying (although it clearly is) but is perhaps more euphemistically referred to as 'bending' the evidence. Whilst this is also a version of what is sometimes called 'noble cause corruption' (Alderson 1979) the practice is both highly unprofessional as well as illegal and cannot be condoned in any circumstances. Whilst it must be made perfectly clear that these student officers are not doing anything even remotely corrupt or illegal, it is at least possible to see how when they realise that this works in an academic essay, the practice could become habitualised to 'bend' things in some other circumstances. As Connolly & Healy (2004:16) state:

The more that they employ such thoughts and actions and find them to 'work' in particular circumstances and social contexts the more they become a durable and 'habitualised' part of their consciousness.

### **Police officer and researcher**

As already mentioned, as the research progressed I began to think more about my own professional and ethical dilemmas. As well as the concerns that I discussed earlier as part of Alan's story, there were at least two other issues that were causing me particular concern.

First, and as already stated, I was genuinely surprised at the level of criticism that was being directed at aspects of the University training. Of course, were I an 'outside' researcher then it would perhaps be more appropriate to see these criticisms as mere 'findings' and, therefore, purely part of the research process. However, I was and still am, very conscious of my own position as a police officer and supervisor. Without wishing to overplay the 'uniqueness' of this position, it should be remembered that most of my professional life has been concerned with investigating and reporting matters in a particular way. Put in other terms, my own habitus is usually more police officer than academic researcher, though this can change depending on the particular field I find myself operating in. As suggested earlier, at bottom, the police organisation is a classic bureaucratic hierarchy<sup>98</sup> and this is the field that I was operating in most of the time. Within that field I have a professional duty of care for subordinates and colleagues, as well as a duty to investigate, deal with and *report* up that hierarchy matters which are of concern. In my position as supervisor and role at the Training School this does not just apply to matters which are against the law, but also things which are inappropriate or of concern for the organisation.

Following the first interviews, I judged the level of critique against aspects of the University training was so consistent, that I considered writing an early report about my concerns for senior managers in the organisation. However, following a number of discussions with my academic supervisors about this, we agreed that from a research point of view this would not necessarily be appropriate at that time. After all, this was a longitudinal design and it was possible that as time moved on and more data was gathered, a different picture would emerge. On top of this, I also realised that other people, including other managers in the organisation, were aware of some of the issues around the University. The Training School was conducting its own evaluation of all aspects of the new training and I knew that many of the findings in the evaluation

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<sup>98</sup>I have always agreed with Waddington's (1999) succinct and accurate description of the police organisation as that of a 'punishment centred bureaucracy'.

reports 'triangulated' with my own data.<sup>99</sup> More, importantly, however, whilst it has been seen that the data was critical and showed conflict at the University there was no evidence that anything seriously unprofessional or inappropriate was occurring.

The second issue that began to concern me as the research progressed was the 'one sidedness' of the story. As I have already indicated, I realised that there would be another side to this story that could come from the University staff. As explained in the introductory chapter, because I was focusing on the effects of the new training at the level of individual officers it was not part of my original research design to interview the University tutors, or for that matter the staff at the Training School or community placements. However, as Mason (2004:7) argues:

Qualitative research should be strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual. This means that qualitative researchers should make decisions on the basis not only of a sound research strategy, but also of a sensitivity to the changing contexts and situations in which the research takes place.

The data now seemed so critical that a change in the research approach was justified. Again, I discussed this matter at length with my supervisors but this time, we were all in agreement that it would be useful to adjust the research strategy and seek permission to interview some or all of the University tutors. In order to try and facilitate this I corresponded with the Foundation Degree course leader at the University and then subsequently was invited to a meeting where we discussed my research and where I sought permission to interview him and his colleagues.<sup>100</sup> I was requested to follow this up by providing the University with a written list of broad questions that I would ask in the interviews. Having supplied this, I was reasonably confident that I would be allowed to conduct the interviews. However, I was subsequently informed that my request had been refused, on the grounds that the tutors had concerns about their anonymity, though they did provide me with a short 'collective' written response to my questions which is attached at Appendix Four. Again it would be inappropriate for me to speculate further on the reasons for the tutors refusing my request to take part fully in the research and of

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<sup>99</sup> Following guidance from the Home Office (1991) most police forces use the 'Kirkpatrick' model for evaluation of training. As part of this methodology, aspects of the IPLDP, including the University phase were evaluated predominantly through the use of structured questionnaires, which were completed by the students. From these questionnaires reports were then produced for managers at the Training School. Although these reports were made available to me I made a decision not to incorporate this data directly into my own findings. However, an example of one of the reports is included at Appendix Two.

<sup>100</sup> See Appendix Three.

course, I had to and still do respect their decision not to participate. At the same time, however, I would be neglecting my responsibilities as a researcher not to, at the very least, point to the potential irony of this situation. As suggested earlier, within the literature of police studies it is commonplace to read of a 'war between the police and the academe' (Lee & Punch 2004, Reiner 1994) and, in particular, a police mistrust of academic research (Chatterton 1973, Young 1991). However, in this case, the *reverse* was the case.

In terms of the impact of this on my study, I had no choice but to proceed as planned with the original research strategy. Indeed the data showed that, as time moved on, there was little change in most of the participants' views about the University training and in particular about its relevance to their professional development and role. As I explained in Chapter Nine, in the final interviews I asked the participants to look back and try to explain to me the process of how they had learnt to become police officers. The data overwhelmingly showed that the most important learning took place in their situated work places followed by their time at the police Training School, which provided them with the 'background' and 'theoretical' knowledge to carry out their roles. In clear contrast, however, the data showed that the majority of participants still did not see much relevance in the University training. For example, from the discussion above it will be remembered that Elizabeth was one of the few participants whose views were broadly positive about her experiences at the University. Whilst that remained the case, in her final interview I asked Elizabeth how relevant the academic side of her training had been to her development as a police officer. As Elizabeth stated:

I would say that I've learnt some information that I would not have done if I had just been to the Police Training School, but how it actually fits into doing the job at the moment it doesn't so much, apart from bits like remembering things about victims, I found that quite interesting and just remembering to try and put yourself a bit more in their shoes. So it's little things, but yeh little things, but in my case I've found it has not made a massive impact (Interview 27/10/07).

As with Elizabeth, when I interviewed Ben for the last time, he also found 'small bits' of the University training to be relevant:

In all honesty I am glad it's out of the way and done with. I've found very little relevance in it whatsoever to be quite honest. If you were studying some sort of criminology or sociology degree that was different to this then it might be relevant, but you have not got time to look at underlying factors why people

commit crime. If they have done it you have not got time to think well they have come from underprivileged backgrounds or look at it differently cos you are that busy day in day out. So small bits I've found relevant, but the majority no (interview 3/9/07).

Finally, however, as Graham explained:

I don't like to be negative about anything, but I can honestly say hand on heart that I've got nothing from that university, I've transferred no skills from it whatsoever, you know. The work placement we did I wasn't really up for that at the time, I've taken a little bit from that. But the University, I can honestly say the only thing that's done is hinder my policing in that I've got to spend time writing essays, instead of developing my skills with the police or sorting out crimes or doing my SOLAP. It's just another thing it just gets in the way. For me no, I haven't got any thing from that, if I'm honest (21/12/06).

# **Conclusion**

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Conclusion**

## 11 Conclusion

Practice has a logic which is not that of logic.

*Pierre Bourdieu*<sup>101</sup>

As noted in an earlier chapter, whilst my first concern has been to explain and understand this particular case study, at issue is what the case can tell us about situations beyond it. This concluding chapter therefore seeks to draw together the themes of the earlier chapters and to present some general conclusions and implications for police training, as well as identifying areas for further research.

The aim of this thesis has been to develop an argument. That argument has been constructed around empirical case research into a ‘radically’ new programme to train British police recruits. It was seen in Chapter One that this new programme came about for two immediate reasons: first, as part of the political fallout from the television documentary *The Secret Policeman*; and second, following recommendations in the HMIC inspection report *Training Matters*. A pressing concern in *Training Matters* centred on a lack of community engagement in the previous training programme, though this criticism and the *Secret Policeman* investigation were rooted in longer term concerns about the acceptance of diversity in policing. The response was the launch in 2005 of the IPLDP.

Chapter Three argued that the IPLDP is therefore part of a continuation of a long list of interventions in which training is viewed as a panacea to make changes to and right the perceived wrongs of British policing. A number of reasons were posited to explain this training-as-panacea outlook, including the idea that this approach ‘individualises’ perceived problems and solutions, so that wider and more intractable structural issues can be down played or ignored.

It was explained in Chapter Four that the overall aim of the IPLDP was to implement ‘modernised’ recruit training and more specifically the programme had been designed to address longstanding concerns around professionalising the police service and changing its culture. To achieve these aims the IPLDP was explicitly structured around the concept of community engagement. In structuring the programme around engagement with *communities*, police educators and other actors within the Home Office and HMIC

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Flyvberg (2001:38).

were seeking to return police training to its ideological roots. At the same time, however they had decided to organise the training around one of the most ‘slippery concepts’ in social science (Delanty 2003). As far back as 1955 G.A Hillary analysed no fewer than 94 definitions of community, but then somewhat unhelpfully he concluded that they all had one thing in common, ‘all of the definitions deal with people. Beyond this common basis there is no agreement’.<sup>102</sup> Whilst this doctoral student is equally unable to offer a definitive answer to the question of what constitutes community, it is contended that the concept can usefully be theorised in terms of its ‘symbolic’ function (Cohen 1985). Indeed, as argued in Chapter Four, the concept of community has long played an important symbolic role within British policing.

A central argument of this thesis is that the concept of community engagement has therefore been used in an overly simplistic and partly symbolic way. Of course, this is not to say that there are no practical aspects of community engagement within the IPLDP. The community placements which the officers’ attend as part of their training are novel, in the policing context and in Chapter Eight I explained how and why these placements were regarded by participants as a key area of engagement within the programme. Whilst I then started to shift my focus to the question of *what* the participants learnt, I realised that before this question can be answered it was first necessary to think about the process of *how* learning takes place. As I argued in Chapter Nine, learning in the police service has most often been theorised to be an individualised process based around the metaphor of acquisition. However, my research confirmed Hodkinson et al’s (2008) view that learning is both an individualised and social activity and which is also linked to a process of the participants ‘becoming’ police officers. This was a key theme of Chapter Nine, when I explored the process of how and what the participants learnt across the two community placements. On top of this, my research suggested that any learning which did occur on the placements was not as meaningful for the participants, as that which took place in their situated workplaces.

These findings have a number of implications for police training as well as highlighting an area for further research. First, from a training perspective, the research suggests that the placements were only of limited value to the participants. Second and as already argued, training in the police service is often viewed as a panacea; and by training is meant a *particular* type of training, which is classroom based and which is posited on the metaphor of acquisition of knowledge by individual learners. However, policing is

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Marshall (1998:97)



an inherently practical activity in which officers almost certainly learn their craft, including how to 'engage' with communities, in the situated workplace environment. However, this is an area which has been largely unexplored in the police studies literature and more research should therefore focus on how police officers learn through participation in the situated workplace.

Looked at from one perspective, sending police recruits to a university campus follows this established pattern of trying to address problems and make changes to policing through training and education. However, the Foundation Degree partnership arrangement between the police force and University was new in the British policing context. As such, whilst this seemed like a laudable and radical attempt to change policing and place it on a more professional footing, there were some significant assumptions behind aspects of the new training, although it was understandable why some of these assumptions came about. Writing about their own research into a scheme to send senior officers to study at university on full time degree programmes, Lee & Punch (2004:248) concluded that:

Policing needs to be continually enriched with critical, enquiring and challenging minds. Uniformity and conformity lead to stereotypical thought and conduct that undermines this. A sound university education still provides the best basis for this thought.

Before I commenced my own research I would have had no hesitation in agreeing with this sentiment and claim. However, in making these assumptions were we failing to recognise that universities have their own cultures which are not always positive and that educators who are part of those cultures are also capable of conforming to stereotypical thought and conduct? This thesis has argued that the culture of a university has undermined the development of critical, enquiring and challenging minds.

A further key assumption about the university training was that it would lead to a greater community engagement. However, as I argued in Chapter Eight, whilst both explicit and implicit aspects of community engagement were envisaged in the University training, the research showed that few of the participants regarded the University as a site of community engagement, and this was a surprising and ironic finding. Indeed, if anything, the reverse was the case. As Chris explained:

I think the university is trying to bring in community involvement, but by the way they are doing it they're building up barriers (Chris, interview 22/2/06).

The idea of building up barriers between the police service and any section of the community could not be further removed from the original aim of the IPLDP. In part this was due to where the officers were physically located on the campus and, in part, the way that they were 'emotionally separated' from other students as well; they were not 'real students'. It is therefore not surprising that the new university training has not led to greater professionalisation or a positive change in police culture as intended. As I argued in Chapter Ten, professionalism is not just about police officers having letters after their name but much more crucially it is a sensibility about how they as *individuals* think, feel and act.

### **Bourdieu would have predicted it**

All along in this thesis, however, my aim has been to move beyond the individualisation of issues and phenomena, rather, I have been seeking to understand and explain the situation in broader and relational terms. Whilst there are always numerous theoretical approaches which can be deployed in any research, in this case the data called out for a Bourdieusian framing. Were it possible to have consulted Bourdieu, we might well argue that he would have cautioned us against making some of the simplistic assumptions about the new police training. Indeed, we may even speculate that he would have predicted some of the outcomes. After all, Bourdieu was primarily a theorist of class and *cultural reproduction* for whom the field of education was of central sociological interest (Bourdieu 1967, Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Bourdieu would remind us that universities are not neutral disinterested institutions, but rather are sites of symbolic power and violence (*ibid*).<sup>103</sup>

As I argued above, Bourdieu's work can be thought of as an ambitious project to overcome the traditional binaries in much of social theory between structure and agency. To achieve this synthesis of objectivism and subjectivism, Bourdieu forged an original set of conceptual 'thinking tools' which I have made use of throughout. In particular, his notion of *habitus* offers an invaluable tool for exploring the interdependence of social constraint and human agency. It will be remembered that I started out this research with the aim of examining the influence of community engagement on the participants

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<sup>103</sup> Bourdieu (1984) in fact envisaged education as part of a larger macrocosm of symbolic institutions that reproduce existing power relations.

learning and its implications for their *identities* as police officers. However, my research led me to utilise Bourdieu's concept of habitus in preference to the notion of identity, as this offered greater theoretical purchase. My analysis of the data also made me realise that I had perhaps started out by making the wrong assumption about habitus and learning. Whilst my aim was to examine the implications of the participants learning on their identities, I came to see that a 'better question' (Hodkinson et al. 2008) would have been posed in the reverse to ask : *what are the implications of their changing habitus on their learning?* The data showed that there are implications and this was particularly evident in relation to the learning that took place around the community placements and University, which again showed that learning is linked to the process of them 'becoming' police officers.

Although I am not the first police researcher to draw on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, this thesis has argued that a police officers habitus is not only related to the organisational context as, for example, Chan's (1996a, 1997) work suggests. In other words, police recruits *bring with them* their dispositions, experiences, social and cultural capital into the field of policing and other fields with which policing overlaps. Whilst Bourdieu might have predicted that the bringing together of the fields of higher education and police training had potential for *conflict*, some of the consequences I have highlighted in this thesis were *unintended* for the police service, and university. When it was decided that police forces should send officers to be trained on university campuses who would have thought that this would lead to the 'building up of barriers,' and the reproduction of negative aspects of police culture, rather than their negation?

The thesis therefore has both practical and conceptual implications. Conceptually, the research contributes to the ongoing work around theorising police culture and change. The study supports Chan's earlier findings that police culture does not arise in a vacuum and engages with her argument that in order to bring about a positive change in police culture it is necessary to change both 'the habitus' and field of policing. However, it has been argued that it is erroneous to conceptualise 'the habitus' of policing in the *collective* sense, as there are only *individual* police officers with their individual habitus. That theoretical point aside, it is concluded that in this case study, neither changes in habitus or field have been achieved. Making remedial changes to the training so that the police recruits spend time at a university campus rather than at a police academy has merely swapped one cultural socialisation process for another. This thesis has shown how negative attributes of police culture such as a 'them and us' and 'making things fit'

attitude then become internalised by individual officers as part of taken-for-granted ways of thinking and behaving.

Looking at these implications from a more practical perspective, the then Minister of State for Home Affairs, Hazel Blears, argued:

Unless we get [recruit] training right the culture change, in terms of police reforms is not going to happen. It is when people first come into a service that you set their standards, their ethos, their skills and the nature of the encounter that they have with the public.<sup>104</sup>

There is, of course, some merit in Hazel Blears claim here. However, whilst a good system of initial training for police recruits is perhaps a *necessary* condition in order to address perceived failings and bring about cultural change, it will never be a *sufficient* condition. This thesis concludes that classroom-based training is not and will never be a panacea to make changes to and right perceived wrongs of policing. On this point Chan is correct, that in order to bring about cultural change it will also be necessary to make changes to the wider *field* of policing.

Whilst I am confident of my research method and conclusions, this is *a* story of the research and there are other stories that could have been or could yet be told. In particular, further research could try to focus on the story from the University tutors' perspective.

As explained above, there are six other police forces which train their officers in partnership with local universities and these educational programmes differ markedly in structure and content. Whilst it is intended that my findings should 'ring true in other settings' (Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2001) it would be useful if further case research was carried out at one or more of these sites to examine similar questions and to make comparisons with my findings. At the very least, these sites should prove to be a fertile area of research for both 'outsider' and 'insider' researchers.

Finally, I would personally like to conduct follow up research on the four participants who resigned from the police force. As discussed earlier, they certainly made me think

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<sup>104</sup> Rt. Hon Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State for Home Affairs. Abstract from House of Commons minutes of evidence taken before Home Affairs Committee on Police Reform (26/2/04).

long and hard about the ethical and professional dilemmas in conducting this research as an 'insider' practitioner. Whilst those issues were (and I anticipate still will be) challenging for me, the personal journey has been incredibly stimulating and developmental and I have enjoyed every single moment of conducting this research.

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## Appendix 1



Richard Heslop  
Mobile 0000000  
Email [r.heslop@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:r.heslop@tiscali.co.uk)

26 January 2006

Dear.....

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research project into the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP).

As you are aware I am researching for a Doctorate in Education at The University of Leeds. Although I cannot promise it, I hope that your taking part may help you to think about some issues relevant to your own academic studies at the University

I will explain all about the research when we meet and, of course, I will be happy to answer any questions.

Briefly, I would like to interview you about your views and experiences of certain aspects of your training programme. The interviews will be very informal, though it would assist me greatly if I could use a tape recorder.

The interviews will be **confidential**. If I do publish the results in the form of a thesis or paper no real names will ever be used.

Ideally I would like to interview you on at least three occasions. The first interview will take place at some time over the few months, whilst you are still at the training school. The second interview will take place in approximately 12 months time, after you have had experience of operational policing. The final interview will take place in approximately 18 months time, as you are nearing the completion of your initial police training. Each interview could last up to 60 minutes.

You can, of course, withdraw from the project at any time.

I would be very grateful if you would either phone me on my mobile, or drop me an email in order to arrange the first interview. I anticipate that for this first interview we could perhaps meet at the training school after class. However, I am very flexible and am prepared to meet you at any time and location convenient to yourself.

I look forward to hearing from you soon

Kind regards

Richard Heslop

PS 1369 Heslop Team Four : Police Station

## Appendix 2

## Course evaluation feedback form

In relation to each objective listed below in relation to your Community Placement please state how able you are to....

1. Developed an initial awareness and understanding of the needs of society in general
2. Understand how the particular community placement attended operates and how they view the Police Service.
3. Begun to establish some links in the community within your Division
4. Developed an initial understanding of the complexity of community life in your area.
5. Begun to identify ways in which the Police can serve the community.
6. Developed an initial understanding of ways in which the authority, power, leadership, attitudes and behaviour of police officers may either create or undermine public trust and confidence in the Police Service.

3.5	
3.67	
3.75	
3.75	
3.58	
3.92	

### UNIVERSITY INPUT

In relation to the time that you spent studying at the University please consider the following questions and on a scale of one to five (five being the highest) please indicated your view.

- Was the information presented in an understandable format  
 Did the Lecturers use language which was clear and understandable  
 Was the training pitched at the correct level

2.83
2
2.25

### Comments on the trainers

- [Names two tutors with police backgrounds] were very helpful
- Lecturer's came across as being biased against Police Officers. Each and every lesson seemed like it was set up to belittle us. Attitudes of some lecturers need to change dramatically before a real and serious problem comes from this
- The university lecturers were often negative towards police force. They seemed to struggle with the thought of us not being typical undergraduates. One lecturer [Names a tutor] used a particular confusing word which 99% of class had never heard of. When one student queried what the word meant, the lecturers response was something along the lines of " As Police Officers I would have thought you'd know that "
- I think that across the board, there needs to be a better appreciation of the variety of abilities and experiences of the cohorts - difficult as it is to account for old/young, graduates/non-graduates, ex-PCSO's/civilians, it seemed as though the course was set at one level. As a result, certain aspects , e.g. essay writing techniques went awry on myself, certainly
- They need to understand that not everyone in the group is academic. The attitudes on the whole were less than supportive and certain lecturers appeared to have negative opinions about police students from our first few days. Although I have successfully completed a similar degree I found some of the teaching methods over complicated for those who may have a lesser understanding
- I believe that a few of the lecturers lack respect for Police Officers and tend to

## Course evaluation feedback form

treat us as children. Input from [Names same two tutors with police backgrounds] was first class. [Names another tutor] lecture was difficult to participate in. Overall the learning environment was strained, although I did come away from Uni. feeling as though I had learned something

- Being in a class with a wide range of academic capabilities it was obviously hard to teach at a level relevant to all the students. This was achieved on the whole but some tutors seemed to try harder to overcome this problem than others
- I found some of the trainers did not take on board some of our ideas and beliefs. I also found some of them to be unhelpful and conveyed information with words that I have never heard of. Most also gave the impression of head teachers at school in that we are the students and what they say should not be questioned. I also got the impression that most of them had a complete bias against the police
- I feel sorry for anyone on the course who has no previous University experience; the course is aimed at degree level students. People from different backgrounds in my view were not aided in anyway. Personally I had few problems

### OVERALL

Over the whole course please carefully consider the course as a whole and please indicate how well you thought that the course prepared you for the next stage of your development.

Not very well  
Quite Well  
Adequately  
Adequately  
Extremely Well

8.3
41.7
50
0
0

Any other comments about the course overall or anything which you think should be altered

- Timing of it, not sure if it should be at beginning
- Civilian Lecturers should have more interaction with Police
- Accommodation at Uni- Either too hot/ too cold and miles away from the main campus
- On top of learning how to be a police officer and all the law and procedures that go with it I find the University work very demanding and extremely time consuming. I also feel that the amount of work and the lengths of the essays is far too much
- I believe the course is part degree for the sake of it. I failed to see the relevance of its parts.

--

## Appendix 3

**Copy of Email sent to the University, Foundation Degree Course Leader  
dated 4 April 2007**

Dear

I am a Sergeant in the . Police and I am researching for a  
Doctorate in Education at the University of Leeds.  
Briefly, I am researching aspects of the Initial Police Learning and  
Development Programme as it is being delivered in  
Police.

My research is sponsored by the Police under the  
auspices of a 'Bramshill Fellowship' that I was awarded 3 years ago.  
The research is being supervised by Professor Miriam Zukas and Dr Paul  
Armstrong from the Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Leeds.  
As part of my methodology I am interviewing 25 of our  
(volunteer) student officers, across 4 cohorts, and at various key  
points of their two year training period.  
Thus far, a substantial part of the interviews has focussed on the  
officers' experiences at ... University and whilst studying for the  
Foundation Degree.

I am particularly interested in the concept of 'police culture' and  
in exploring how this new training intervention impacts on their  
emerging identities as police officers.

I am aware that you have been closely involved in developing the  
partnership with West Yorkshire Police and in delivering aspects of  
the Foundation Degree and I wondered if you would be prepared to speak  
to me as part of my research.

Sincerely

Richard Heslop  
Police Sergeant 1369  
Police

**Copy of Email Sent to University Foundation Degree Tutor dated 8 May 2007**

Dear

It was really good to meet with you the other week. Thanks again for your time and hospitality.

As promised, I am sending you a provisional outline of my semi-structured interview schedule. The schedule contains a little bit of information about me and the background to the research. Perhaps you might consider circulating a copy of this to each of your colleagues prior your meeting.

When we met before you asked me if my research was likely to feed into the 'Review' of the Foundation Degree partnership. To be honest with you I did not think that I answered this question particularly well. To be absolutely truthful I was not even aware that there was a Review being planned! Two central principles which guide my research are anonymity and academic independence. Although I am conducting the research under the auspices of a 'Bramshill Fellowship', I have total independence as to how this research is conducted and importantly as to how it will be written up.

There are no plans to feed my findings into any Review. However, if you and your colleagues do participate, you may find that discussing some of the issues with me helps to clarify and focus certain things which you may subsequently want to feed in to the Review process.

I had a meeting with my supervisor, Professor Miriam Zukas, last week. Miriam and I both feel that my research would now greatly benefit from a 'university perspective'. As you know, I will answer any questions about the research and Miriam will also be pleased to speak to you or any of your colleagues if that would help you in coming to a decision. Miriam's contact details are:

Miriam Zukas: Professor of Adult Learning

Email: .....

Tel .....

When the research is complete I would, of course, be pleased to present the findings to a seminar at your university, if invited to do so.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Kind Regards

## Appendix 4



**Copy of Email received from University dated 31 May 2007**

Dear Richard,

Please find attached our collective response to your questionnaire. Once again, apologies for not being able to go along with your preferred option of semi-structured, individual interviews but I hope, nevertheless, that this will be of some use.

Best wishes for the remainder of your research,

.....

- 1) Can you please tell me a little bit about your own role in the Foundation Degree Programme?

The Foundation Degree is delivered primarily by staff in the Division of Criminal and Community Justice. The Division is also responsible for the BSc (Hons) in Applied Criminology, the progression route for any student officers interested in continuing their studies at Honours level. Colleagues in the University Business School provide teaching input on law for the Foundation Degree

The core team comprises 9 full-time teaching staff, who share the majority of teaching and marking for the Foundation Degree and who also have other teaching and management responsibilities. A small number of other University colleagues and outside specialists contribute specific teaching sessions to the programme.

- 2) Can you tell me a little bit about your own academic and research interests?

Team members have been specifically recruited not only on the basis of their relevant academic and professional qualifications but also for their considerable and recent experience in the field of criminal justice (i.e. policing, probation, prison work, community safety, crime prevention, etc). Their research interests include risk assessment/management, domestic violence, sex offender registration, and young prisoners

- 3) What do you think is the broad purpose behind sending the recruit officers to your university to undertake a Foundation Degree?

The main purpose is to enable them to meet the underpinning knowledge requirements of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for police officers. The Foundation Degree has been meticulously mapped across to the Home Office Learning Modules in which, under the IPLDP, the NOS are embedded.

A secondary purpose, consistent with the move away from centralised, residential police training, is to encourage student officers to engage with the University community, itself a part of the wider communities which they will be expected to serve.

Central to all of the Foundation Degree teaching is a basic message that there are no easy answers. Although student officers do not always like

this message or accommodate it very readily, it represents a fundamental challenge to formulaic and over-simplified responses to complex issues.

- 4) In what sense, if any, do you think this has to do with the idea of what some people term 'Community Engagement'?

The process of deliberately locating the Foundation Degree teaching away from police premises and sharing the responsibility for assessment between police trainers and community-based civilians/academics, symbolically emphasises to student officers that they need to interact with, learn from and be accountable to others beyond the immediate police 'family'. This subliminal message that effective and fair policing is characterised by constructive engagement with communities, rather than separation from and acting upon them, is explicitly reinforced throughout all of the teaching and feedback. This is especially true of the second-year module, Professional and Community Partnerships wherein community engagement is a central theme

In addition, the wide range of professional backgrounds from which teaching staff are drawn means that within the classroom itself student officers are exposed not only to a multi-agency perspective but also to a very broad experience of working with complex community issues.

- 5) Can you tell me about your experiences of tutoring these student officers? (clearly there is much scope for supplementary questions here).

Student officers have shown a variable degree of willingness to engage with the University community and the Higher Education process. A significant minority of student officers in the earliest cohorts have remained actively or passively disengaged, possibly because of being unaware at the point of recruitment that the Foundation Degree would be part of their probationary training. Others, however, have shown considerable enthusiasm and commitment, as reflected in:

- the high quality of their classroom and written work;
- the thoughtful contribution of student representatives to Course Committees;

- the keen interest of a number of student officers in 'topping up' the Foundation Degree by joining the third year of the BSc (Hons) in Applied Criminology;
- the purchase and wearing by some student officers of University sweatshirts.

6) What do you think the officers have learnt from the programme?

It is clear from their assignments that student officers, despite their inevitably variable receptiveness to academic study, are developing a deeper understanding of a number of issues central to 21st Century policing: e.g. anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, immigration, diversity, child sexual abuse, professional and community partnerships, the needs of victims, their own learning styles and biases, etc.

Furthermore, they are demonstrating an ability, sometimes at a highly sophisticated level, to apply such knowledge to 'real world' situations: i.e. community placements and case material from their periods of tutored and independent patrol. This would suggest that learning from the modules and a specific requirement constantly to reflect upon what they do is helping to inform and improve their practice and to enhance their impact, effectiveness and engagement within the communities which they serve.

7) In what sense do you think this new venture is to do with 'Professionalising' the police service? (this may have already been answered at 3 above).

According to the Home Office (2005: p4), the IPLDP

"..... has to be seen in the wider context of police reform and modernisation and recognised for the opportunities it offers towards professionalising policing, and improving performance and service quality delivery."

Given the detailed mapping of the Foundation Degree to the IPLDP, it is entirely consistent with this vision of professional, 21<sup>st</sup> century police officers who not only meet the performance criteria of the National Occupational Standards but also demonstrate that they have the requisite knowledge and values to engage effectively with the increasingly diverse communities which they serve.

8) The new venture is described as a 'partnership' between the police and university. What has been your experience of that partnership relationship?

Despite the inevitable teething problems which characterise any new partnership, constructive formal and informal relationships between University and personnel continue to evolve at all levels, including increasing direct contact with Divisional Training Officers.

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