Implications of New Public Management and Modernization Policies within the National Probation Service: An Interpretative Approach.

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the implications of New Public Management and Modernization reform policies in the National Probation Service. In an attempt to understand how National Probation Service employees make sense of those reforms, actors' organizational context, their organizational identity and roles have been explored. The study takes interpretivist, qualitative approach. It is based on ethnographic data, collected over a one-year period in an English regional probation service (RPA). In the course of the fieldwork, forty. five employees were interviewed. Data were also collected through participant observation, and analysis of formal documents. Empirical and theoretical contributions emerge from this thesis. The former relate to control, organizational identity, and role issues in the probation service, while the latter relate to resistance.

Table of Contents

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This first chapter illustrates the 'what, why, and how' of my PhD. I concisely illustrate the research focus, its rationale, the outline of the chapters and the research questions, and the specific objectives of the study.

1.1 Research focus and rationale

My objective in this thesis is to theoretically account for the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies in the probation service. I aim to develop an understanding of how probation service employees' lived experience is influenced by those policies. This is worthwhile investigating for a number of reasons.

From a theoretical perspective, the study of the characteristics and implications of New Public Management and the Modernization agenda has generated a vast body of literature in the last twenty years. From looking at the key aspects of New Public Management (Hood, 1991; 1995), to the analysis of the incompatibilities between the assumptions of its managerial policies and the specificities of public sector organizations (Adinolfi, 2005), researchers have sought to enrich our knowledge of the subject. In spite of those many theoretical and empirical works, the issue still offers scope for further research. Researchers (Hood, 1991; 1995; Ferlie, 1996; Brignall and Modell, 2000; Pollitt, 2001; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004) have mainly focused on the change perspective of New Public Management and Modernization policies. In other words, in previous studies those policies are seen to be driven by and oriented to change. Little has been written on other possible, alternative interpretations of the New Public

Management and Modernization policies.

From an empirical perspective, there are three main reasons that can justify further research on the New Public Management and Modernization waves in the public sector. The first one is that those issues have been examined mainly within the National Health Service (NHS) (Ferlie, 1996; Pollitt, 2001; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004), thus, there is scope for analysing the above aspects in other public sector organizations which differ from the NHS in terms of values and objectives. Doing so would offer a wider understanding of the implications of the reforms. The second empirical reason for studying the implications of New Public Management and Modernization in the public sector is the fact that previous studies show a notable lack of focus on organizational actors' views and interpretations of their work experience in organizations affected by those initiatives and my study aims to address this limitation. The third empirical reason supports my choice of focusing on the National Probation Service. This organization differs from any other one in the public sector because of the nature of its main value which is rehabilitation through social work. Analysing the impact that New Public Management and Modernization policies have on the National Probation Service can suggest how and to what extent the nature of its core value was affected by the reform policies.

My personal interest also justifies my choice of focus. I am keen to investigate the effects of private sector dynamics (which characterize those policies) on the way public sector employees make sense of their lived experience in their organizations. I came across many public sector managers who discussed their views on the positive and negative effects of the reform policies on their organizations; however, I never really grasped the impact of those reforms on employees as the organization as a whole was often considered by those managers as the only unit of analysis.

1.2 Outline of the chapters

In understanding how to theoretically account for New Public Management and Modernization policies in the probation service, I start by reviewing the literature on New Public Management and Modernization in the public sector, and in particular in the probation service. This is treated in the second and third chapters of the thesis.

As government's attempts to develop new and more sophisticated forms of organizational control emerge as an underlying theme of the restructuring of the public sector in the UK, the fourth chapter takes a closer look at the issue of control. In this chapter I discuss what I see as the most significant (in relation to this research project) literature on control and control mechanisms and relate it to the New Public Management and Modernization policies in the public sector. The analysis of the literature in this fourth chapter suggests leads to the identification of one research question, namely "how can we theoretically account for probation service employees' lived experience of the New Public Management and Modernization policies"? As some authors (Hoggett, 1996; Gabriel, 1999) suggest that control and control mechanisms have an influence on actors' construction of organizational identity and the interpretation of their roles in the organization, the fifth chapter analyses the literature on identity and roles and links it to the reforms that occurred in the public sector, and particularly in the probation service. At the end of this chapter a further question emerges and relates specifically to the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies on: a) the organizational identity of probation service employees, and b) probation service employees' organizational roles.

The sixth and seventh chapters describe respectively the methodology used in this study, and the organization in which the fieldwork was carried out. The eighth, ninth and tenth chapters present the empirical findings. In these three chapters I use the discussions with probation service employees and top managers, and the observational data to explore what actors think about the New

Public Management and Modernization policies and the implications of those policies on the construction of their organizational identity and the interpretation of their roles. I explore the extent to which actors' views link to the literature framework already examined in the attempt to shed further light on its usefulness, but also its inibitions. The last chapter is structured around some key empirical and theoretical themes that emerge from my study. I propose three contributions building on the insights that these themes may offer.

1.3 The research and its specific objectives

This is interdisciplinary, contextualized research which adopts an interpretive and qualitative approach to the study of New Public Management and Modernization policies. Great attention has been given to the uniqueness of the experience and to the richness of the data which were collected through multiple methods. No imposed research agenda was used, but the inductive approach adopted made it necessary to interpret and analyze new conceptual elements while they were emerging. As in every Ph.D. project, the process has not been linear, but rather iterative and reflexive. This thesis is therefore the product of a recursive process of adjustment where reformulations and changes were allowed for refining the way of proceeding as the new situations evolved. As new concepts emerged from the data analysis, I had to refer back to the theory in order to explore the literature on the subject and to scope possible implications for my study. In addition, the emergence of unexpected elements from the data suggested revisiting some key aspects of the conceptual positioning. Finally, the focus of the research itself shifted several times before assuming its definitive form which aims at achieving the objectives of: providing a holistic contextual and situated account of the organization through the reflexive accounts of individuals; exploring actors' interpretations of New Public Management and Modernization policies; and investigating the implications of the adoption of those policies in the probation service.

1.4 Conclusion

In this introductory chapter I illustrated the rationale for the research, I gave a brief outline of the chapters, and I explained the research and its objectives. The aim of this chapter was to give a broad idea of the type of work and understand its focus. In the next chapter I will look at the broad context of the research.

Chapter II

New Public Management, Modernization Reforms and the Specificities of the
Public Sector

2.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to highlight the broad context of the thesis. My first aim is
to illustrate the factors that define New Public Management (NPM). I will also
discuss Modernization, which followed NPM and exerted a strong influence on
government policies. With regard to both policy streams, I will explain the
characteristics, the reactions, and the effects and implications that they have
generated. In the last part of the chapter I will compare the characteristics of
NPM and Modernization, with the specificities of public sector organizations.

2.1 The main features of New Public Management

New Public Management began to develop in the late 1970's and early 1980's.
It is a management philosophy used by governments to modernise the public
sector, and it describes the wave of public sector reforms apparent throughout
the world since the end of the 1970's. Based on public choice – which looks at the
decision-making behaviour of voters, politicians, and government officials - and
managerial schools of thought, NPM seeks to enhance the efficiency of the public
sector (Lawton, 2005). The main hypothesis of the NPM reform wave is that
greater market orientation in the public sector will lead to more cost-efficiency
for governments.

NPM first movers were the United Kingdom (from 1979 by means of a series
of Conservative Governments) and local governments in the United States, which
suffered heavily from recessive developments that impacted on the gross
domestic product (the market value of all final goods and services produced

within a country in a given period of time). After the reform successes in these countries and in other Commonwealth countries that had implemented them, administrative reforms were put on the agendas of almost all OECD countries (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and a lot of other countries in the world (Gruening, 1998). An institutional perspective could offer some insights into the spread of NPM as the conforming to given structural forms, or to sets of rules with the aim of achieving efficiency could be one explanation of this trend of adopting NPM policies across the public sector. Although this could be a perspective worth investigating, it will not be specifically analysed in this thesis.

Central to the change in modes of public management was a shift towards new doctrines of public accountability and public administration, initially aimed at limiting corruption and the waste and incompetence that are held to go with it (Hood, 1995; Lawton, 2005). These ideas formed the basis for the Progressive public administration (PPA – antecedent to NPM), which put emphasis on both the clear distinction between the public and the private sectors, and the limitation of political and managerial discretion to avoid favouritism and corruption. Moreover, PPA focused the attention on the processes rather than results.

New Public Management soon replaced the PPA model. According to Hood (1995) there are several different ways to explain the rise of NPM: (1) *'English Awfulness'*, the poor economic performance and arrested development of welfare state policies which characterize the English speaking countries (Castles, 1989); (2) *party politics*, the advent of new Right governments that had interest in dismantling the PPA model in order to roll back big government and state-led egalitarianism and *welfarism*, and to reshape the public sector like a private business (Pollitt, 1993); (3) *a response to fiscal stress and poor macroeconomic performance*, possibly caused by the changes in income level and distribution (Hood, 1995); (4) *initial endowment* from which different administrative systems start: specifically, for an administrative system to move towards NPM there must be a state of outsize government and/or fiscal stress, but also the opportunity for

politicians to influence and reform the public sector as a whole (Hood, 1995).

NPM involved a different conception of public accountability. The basis of NPM reversed the two cardinal points of PPA: lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector and shifting the attention from process accountability to results accountability. Accounting was thought to be a key element in this new conception; it revealed high trust in the market and private business methods (Hood, 1991, 1995).

Hood (1991; 1995), a key writer in the field, argues that NPM has been associated with approximately seven dimensions of change; each of these replaces a doctrine of PPA. The following table concludes this section by illustrating the main dimensions of NPM highlighted by Hood, the correspondent doctrines of PPA that they have replaced, and the operations significance of each dimension with its possible accounting implications.

Table 2.1 - Dimensions of NPM and doctrines of PPA that they have replaced (adapted from Hood, 1991; 1995)

	Dimensions of NPM	Replaces	Operational significance	Possible accounting implications
	Unbundling of the public organizations into corporatized units organized by product, to make units manageable, focus blame, split provision and production to create anti-waste lobby	Belief in uniform and inclusive public sector to avoid underlaps and overlaps in accountability	Erosion of single service employment and devolved budgets	More costs centre units
	More contract based competitive provision with internal markets and term contracts, the competition aims at lower costs and obtain better standards, while the contracts aim at explicating performance standards	Unspecified employment contracts, open-ended provision, linking of purchase, provision, production to cut transaction costs	Distinction of primary and secondary public service labour force	More stress on identifying costs and understanding cost structures; so cost data becomes commercially confidential
	Stress on private sector management practice to apply proven private-sector management tools in the public sector	Stress on PS fixed pay and hiring rules, model employer orientation centralized personnel structures, jobs for life	Move from double imbalance PS pay, career service, unmonetized rewards, "due process" employee entitlements	Private sector accounting norms
	More stress on discipline and parsimony in resource use to cut direct costs, raise	Stable base budget and establishment norms, minimum standards,	Less primary employment, less job security, less	More stress on the bottom line

labour discipline, do more with less	union vetoes	producer-friendly style	
More emphasis on visible hands-on top management to have a clear assignment of responsibility, and not diffusion of power	Stress on policy skills and rules, not active management	More freedom to manage by discretionary power	Fewer general procedural constraints on handling of contracts, cash, staff; coupled with more use of financial data for management accountability
Explicit formal measurable standards and measures of performance and success to have clearly stated aims, and hard look at goals (efficiency)	Qualitative and implicit standards and norms	Erosion of self management by professionals	Performance indicators and audit
Greater emphasis on output controls for a greater stress on results	Stress on procedure and control by "orders of the day" coming on an *ad hoc* basis from the top	Resources and pay based on performance	Move away from detailed accounting for particular activities towards broader cost centre accounting; may involve blurring of funds for pay and for activity

2.2 Varied reactions, effects and implications of NPM policies

According to Christensen and Laegreid (1999), there is little evidence that the application of reform strategies based on NPM actually leads to the desired result. The effects and implications of NPM are often assumed or promised, they are hard to measure and much debated. Christensen and Laegreid (1999) argue that public reform processes, such as those related to NPM, are evidently filtered, interpreted and modified through the combination of two sets of factors. One is the political-administrative history, culture, traditions and style of governance developed in an evolutionary manner; the other one is represented by the instrumental actions taken by political and administrative leaders to further collective goals through administrative design and active national administrative policy. This implies that NPM may have different effects and implications in relation to the country in which it is implemented (Christensen and Laegreid, 1999). Brunsson (1989) suggests that some countries may adopt NPM policies because of strong international environmental pressure to do so. However,

political leaders may use only some parts of the reforms, or try to redefine reform elements in a national context to match instrumental goals, or they may even consciously manipulate the reforms pretending to implement them, but having little intention to do so. This move would make them be perceived as proactive by other countries, but with the minimum reform effort (Brunsson, 1989). Moreover, political leaders can also accept the reforms and leave the responsibility to implement them to administrative leaders, in order to adjust the reforms and to tailor them on the basis of institutional-cultural needs (Christensen and Laegreid, 1999).

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) also agree that reforms have not been as uniform as accounts of NPM often imply. In contrast to Christensen and Laegreid (1999), who highlighted, in a general way, the possible reasons that brought countries to adopt NPM policies, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) specifically identify four basic approaches to reform: (1) a tightening up of existing controls through budget cuts, freezing recruitment, drives to eliminate waste and so forth (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000; Gruening, 1998; Martin, 2003), (2) attempts to modernize administrative systems through a combination of private-sector management practices and political reforms designed to produce more responsive, flexible organizations, (3) the introduction of market-type mechanisms intended to increase competition between public-sector organizations and other providers, (4) strategies based on minimizing the presence of the state through privatization or contracting out public services (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000, Martin, 2003).

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) explain that NPM should not be seen as a reform that renders obsolete some of the basics of public administration. In their view, the barriers to effective implementation and the influence of political, administrative, and legal systems are issues that need more attention than the mere idea of reforming the system.

Despite the fact that there is little evidence to suggest that different countries are adopting the same management practices (Christensen and Laegreid, 1999), Lawton (2005) argues that where changes have occurred they have often been ad

hoc, sometimes in response to critical events, other times reflecting changing political agendas. Countries, though, often struggle with tensions generated between (Lawton, 2005): (1) centralization and decentralization of government, (2) regulation of the individual behaviour of public officials by compliance and trusting in their individual integrity, (3) control of managers through rules and allowing them discretion and the "freedom to manage", (4) public and private delivery of public services, (5) resources available and public expectation, (6) professional peer accountability and outside regulation and scrutiny, (7) traditional mechanisms of accountability and enterprise risk taking (Lawton, 2005). These seven types of tensions can be seen as consequences of the seven dimensions of change that Hood (1995) highlighted (table 2.1, section 2.1 of this chapter).

The changes (Hood, 1995) and the tensions generated by them (Lawton, 2005) raised a number of ethical implications at the levels of society, government, organizations, individuals and groups (Lawton, 2005). According to Lawton (2005), some of these implications can be seen in the following elements: the *growth of regulatory bodies and regulations* designed to investigate and regulate inappropriate behaviours; the *change of organizational structures*, relationships and partnerships – the external structure of the public sector has become more fragmented and the internal structure of individual organizations has become flatter and less bureaucratic. The ethical issue in this second case relates to managing the relationships and partnerships with other organizations (Lawton, 2005); the *public sector ethics* – the adoption of private-sector models drive a different ethos because of the different interplay between structures and the individuals' commitment and role within the organization (Lawton, 2005); the *individual virtue* (specifically referring to organizational culture reflected through the individual) that, according to the public sector doctrine, is expected to be procedural and legalistic while, in the private sector, takes on warmth, intimacy, and affection (Lawton, 2005). In spite of these issues, the main challenge is to reconcile the different sets of interpretations that underpin rules, regulations,

codes, structures, integrity and culture.

Hood (1991) also put forward some major criticisms of NPM. First, he argued that NPM has no substance because it has changed little: apart from the language that managers use when speaking in public, the old problems and weaknesses remain. The second criticism is that NPM budgetary and control framework have actually destabilized bureaucracy and generated ineffectiveness in delivering service because of the cut in costs. The third criticism to NPM is related to its being a vehicle of particularistic advantage, aimed at promoting the interests of the high management rather than the mass of public service customers or low-level staff. Finally, Hoods (1991) directs the fourth criticism to NPM towards its claim of universality, while NPM policies do not actually produce the same results in all the countries that adopt them (Christensen and Laegreid, 1999) because of the different structures, systems, backgrounds and cultures.

Notwithstanding these arguments for and against NPM, in my opinion both criticisms and successes should be debated with regard to the way countries interpret NPM and to what they want to achieve through it. NPM should be looked at in relation to how it worked in a variety of contexts, and how we can understand patterns, differences and similarities related to it. With respect to national contexts, as Christensen and Laegreid (1999) argued, some countries apply NPM because of the strong international pressure; others may do it to show that it has been implemented indeed without altering the operational dynamics of the "old" public management. Countries may be influenced by NPM policies in different degrees, but NPM policies may as well be influenced by the context in which they are implemented.

2.3 From New Public Management to Modernization in the UK

As discussed in the previous section, in the UK New Public Management was initiated by Conservative Government and lasted over a period of nearly twenty years. When the New Labour government came into power in 1997 with the agenda to reform public services, Modernization was announced as the key strategy to achieve the reform. Modernization aimed at fostering adaptation to changed external circumstances (Nellis, 1999). Central to this is the idea of renewal through collaboration, partnership and inclusion (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003). Modernization is at the heart of the renewal of the public sector which has been promoted since the New Labour came to office. As mentioned, the focus of the agenda was to bring about a program of 'reconciliation and renewal' (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003). The essence of the former is both the reparation of the relationship between government and public services, which had followed a stream of excessive privatization by hand of the Conservative government, and the implementation of a new relationship between citizens and the State in order to revitalize the image of the public sector in the eyes of citizens. Renewal instead does not just refer to public institutions, but also to public services, which have a major role in transforming society.

Modernization was introduced by the New Labour government as an imperative to keep up with a more demanding society. It is usually associated with progress in both technological and moral respects, with the application of scientific understanding and with movement towards greater civilization (Nellis, 1999). The need to modernize is rooted in a number of attributes of public sector organizations that generate a lack of efficiency, dynamism and effectiveness in the services that are supplied. Ahmad and Broussine (2003) highlight that public sector organizations have been described by the government as (1) self-centred, because they operate around the interests of providers rather than users; (2) bureaucratic, because the maximization of funding rather than outcomes is the driver; (3) prone to inertia, because they are unaccountable between elections

(Ahmad and Broussine, 2003); (4) risk-averse, because there is a low propensity of the workers to take risk seizing new opportunities; (5) poorly integrated, because "policies and provisions are devised and implemented without much consideration of people's needs" (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003).

According to Ahmad and Broussine (2003), the critiques of public sector organizations forebode a deeper concern about the welfare state itself. The New Labour strategy shows continuity with the Conservative vision that aimed at breaking the tradition of a state that promoted a culture of dependency, inefficiency and bureaucracy. The Conservatives began by privatizing public services and subjecting the ones remaining to the rules of the market. The idea was that competition would have increased efficiency, quality of service, and effectiveness. Ahmad and Broussine (2003) explain that the main changes brought in the public sector by Conservatives were characterized by a managerialist and neo-Taylorist imprint, particularly underlined by, respectively, the target-setting and performance indicators, and the belief of management as the cure for all economic and social ills (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003). The changes in the public sector represented the beginning of a process that aimed at transforming power, relationships, culture, control and accountability. The debate on whether modernization represents change or continuity with the Conservative agenda is ongoing, according to Ahmad and Broussine (2003); however, it seems that the aim of a pro-market, anti-collectivist set of values has continued even if New Labour has shifted the emphasis from 'competition' to 'partnership and collaboration'. The focus of the New Labour reforms was to ensure that policy was formulated with respect to professional, organizational and sectoral boundaries. On the contrary, Conservative reforms, while acknowledged as having brought more efficiency and effectiveness, were criticized for not considering the above-mentioned boundaries in the formulation and implementation of policies.

The three core imperatives of modernization according to Mitchell (2000) are first of all, ensuring that policy is made linking across government agencies to

foster the solution of problems in a joined-up way; making public services more responsive to users; and finally, achieving higher quality and efficiency in public services. The emphasis on measuring performance and establishing standards was driven by some concerns related to (1) the coordination of services across sectors; (2) the lack of clear objectives for services; (3) the lack of standards for what service users could expect; (4) the need for measures for judging the effectiveness or successes of services; (5) the variability in the availability and quality of services nationally; and (6) to the lack of efficiency standards across the country (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003). However, amongst public sector employees, the result of measuring performance and establishing standards generated a feeling of being constantly under surveillance. Moreover, this strengthens the assumption of Modernization that public sector workers have a *fordist* mentality, being highly specialized, and are resistant to change. According to Ahmad and Broussine (2003), as consequences of this, Modernization increased the power of managers - a decision that highlights how New Labour has maintained continuity with the fundamental assumptions of the previous Conservative governments by accepting free choice in the market place, hegemony of the employer in the workplace and regimes dominated by managerialism (Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997). Nevertheless, the New Labour agenda also emphasizes the quality of services, an aspect that was not particularly stressed by the Conservatives.

Reforms did not only affect the organization of the public agencies, but also rebounded on the morale of employees. From public workers' perspective, feelings of powerlessness, devaluation and deskilling, have given rise to a general sense of demoralization. Not arguing about the appropriateness of its purposes, Ahmad and Broussine (2003) explain that Modernization has been implemented in a way that has alienated many employees and has not yielded the expected results in relation to efficiency, and quality of service.

This brief description of the main features of NPM and Modernization has aimed to provide the reader with a better picture of the context of my case study

organization: the National Probation Service. Like other public sector organizations, the reforms that have been implemented in the last decades to change the image of a "laid back" State through interventions in the public sector, have also impacted on this service and the way it is performed. An overview of the National Probation Service and of the changes that were imposed on it will be illustrated in the next chapter.

2.4 The fundamental assumptions of managerial policies vs. the specificities of public sector organizations

The hybrid nature of NPM – whose philosophy stands between State and Market – makes it difficult to combine all the elements that characterize it (i.e. privatization, creation of internal as well as external markets for public services, decentralization, separation between politics and administration) in one coherent and adequate approach related to the needs of the public sector (Ferlie et Al., 1996; Luberto, 2006). In this section I aim to highlight this difficulty by juxtaposing the fundamental features of NPM with the distinctive elements of public organizations. This will illustrate how the logics of NPM cannot always respond to the needs of all the contexts in which resources are deployed in order to achieve objectives. The first part of this section will illustrate the myths of NPM (Adinolfi, 2005), while the second one will explain the details that should be considered when managing public sector organizations. This section should be interpreted as a completion to the chapter that, otherwise, would have only underlined the evolution of NPM and Modernization policies and their diffusion across the World, without considering aspects that I believe critical to understand the context of this research.

NPM draws on various economic theories, such as Public Choice and Agency Theory. While it is not my intention to examine either of them in this research, I will briefly highlight some central aspects of both. The critical idea of both theories is that individuals are interests *maximizers*, such that their actions are

instrumental for obtaining the complete satisfaction of their personal interests (Gauthier, 1986). This idea is quite contrasting with the public sector philosophy, which instead develops around the concept of diffusing common good (Bhatta, 2003).

Agency theory looks at the relationship between principal and agent. The former, on the basis of responsibilities and contractual conditions that aim at getting a job done, employs the latter. Applied in the public sector, this theory would be defined by the Ministers (principal) and the public officials (agents). Public Choice instead looks at understanding the problems related to bureaucracies addressed by the assertion that all individuals are interests maximizers. Both theories recognize the importance of using incentives as means for modifying behaviours (Bhatta, 2003).

The arguments that fostered the implementation of NPM and Modernization logics were both the incapability, in the public sector, of achieving efficiency levels as those within the private sector, and the lack of discretion managers had in administrating public sector organizations. Therefore, in order to improve the levels of efficiency, the government decided to confer to managers decisional discretion and responsibility over actions and over results (Bhatta, 2003). Drawing on Agency theory and Public Choice, managers became Ministers' agents and incentives became a popular tool to motivate them in achieving efficiency (Bhatta, 2003).

Moving on from talking about the theoretical bases on which NPM and Modernization were founded, I will look at the five assumptions that are attributed to these policy waves (Adinolfi, 2005), namely, universalism, mono-centrism, rationalism, technicality, and organizational individualism. I illustrate each of them as follows.

Universalism refers to the universal application of managerial principles, whichever the context, representing, therefore, the remedy *par excellence* to all sorts of organizational needs. The problem with applying managerialism to all types of contexts and needs is that there is a high degree of differentiation among

public sector organizations both within them and across them. The variety of organizational situations (i.e. difference in objectives, difference in authority relations, difference in performances, differences in structures of incentives, and so forth) drives towards the adoption of a differentiated approach within public management (Adinolfi, 2005).

Mono-centrism, as second assumption of NPM and Modernization, refers to viewing public administration covering a *super partes* position, thus, entitled to plan and impose performance standards across the Public Sector. This puts emphasis on management and implementation of policies, in general, rather than on their design and development. The tendency to focus on strategic planning and top-down management is very strong in the Public Sector, although it has been surpassed even in the private one (Dixon et al., 1998; Adinolfi, 2005).

Rationalism sets public administration responsible before stakeholders, thus, engaged in providing adequate standards of efficiency and effectiveness. This commitment implies a rational analysis of the relationship between costs and benefits and, consequently, the need for measuring objectives and their degree of achievement by public sector organizations. The applicability of this idea has been strongly criticized. Researchers (Mintzberg, 1994; Cyert and March, 1963; Weick, 1979) have argued that the clear and measurable definition of the objectives can be compromised by difficulties in identifying unvarying strategies that can work across all the organization, by managers' subjectivity in formulating the strategies to apply to the organization, by the need for organizational flexibility in order to face unexpected circumstances, and by cognitive limitations that characterize individuals who are not able to completely evaluate the costs and consequences of all possible alternatives available for pursuing organizational objectives.

The fourth assumption of NPM and Modernization is technicality. This indicates the need to solve problems related to efficiency, productivity and costs within the Public Sector by using technical experts. This comes from the conception that certain difficulties need to be solved only by experts, namely

managers. The consequence of technicality is that NPM and Modernization have a managerial orientation, politically neutral to favour the responsibility towards the public rather than towards politicians (Adinolfi, 2005).

The last general assumption of NPM and Modernization is the belief that the public sector can be subdivided into its various components in order to exert hierarchical control, to clearly distribute authority and responsibility, and, thus, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, neglecting the processes that are carried out within the organizations. The scarce attention to inter-institution relations generates limitations, namely, redundant actions (e.g. when there is a useless duplication of activities that waste resources), omission of activities that may be specifically important for few organizations (for example, because of the nature of the service these carry out), and conflict among the actions of the organizations that should instead operate according to a network logic (Adinolfi, 2005).

The implementation of NPM and Modernization policies seems to have failed to consider the specificities of public sector organizations. The fundamental differences between these organizations and those of the private sector represent the main argument of the critics of NPM and its myths (Savoie, 1995). Public organizations differ from the private ones in terms of planning processes, decision processes, and accountability. The idea of transferring private sector imperatives to the public sector can be questionable. What joins the two types of organizations is that both make use of resources to achieve their objectives (i.e. producing value for the users or for the consumers). However, they differ in terms of the types of values on which they stand, the nature of the resources that they use, the productive skills needed, and the environment and context in which they perform (Adinolfi, 2005). .

Adinolfi (2005) argues that there are four main distinctions between the public and the private sector. First of all, in the Public Sector managers have to produce public values, such as: providing a framework based on law and order, which can create and preserve the suitable conditions for granting a successful, operational market (for example, acknowledgment of patents to protect new

ideas, new products); avoiding market failing situations through the production of public goods and services (e.g. public transport); and promoting equity (Adinolfi, 2005; Alford, 1993; Nozick, 1974; Stokey and Zeckhauser, 1978; Stone, 1988).

Secondly, there is a contextual difference with regard to the production of public values compared to that of the products of private organizations. Actors operating in the public context are more numerous and varied than the stakeholders of the private sector. This implies that every time public managers adopt alternative strategies of value production they should be aware of the effects on the various interests involved also considering that stakeholders can form interest groups and exert strong influence within the context.

Thirdly, the types of resources used for the production of goods and services also differentiate the public sector from the private one. While in the latter resources are mainly economic (i.e. raw materials that are purchased by organizations on the market), in the former together with economic resources there is also the legitimate authority of the State which allows to use the force for accomplishing government objectives (Alford, 1993).

Finally, the public sector also differs from the private one in terms of production factors (i.e. workforce, raw material, equipment). While the latter can draw them from within the organization, the former can draw them also from external contexts (i.e. other organizations that form the public sector). Private sector organizations can do this to the extent to which they belong to a network of organizations where there are high levels of trust and collaboration between operators (e.g. industrial districts in the North East of Italy).

Based on Adinolfi's (2005) analysis, the differences between the two sectors help in characterizing the specificities of the Public Sector, namely, poli-centrism, polirationality, attention to extra-economic factors and attention to the extra-organizational dimension. These differences are clarified as follows. Poli-centrism refers to the need for public sector organizations to integrate with the socio-political environment in order to promote cooperation and new ways of

creating public value.

Polirationality emphasizes the difficulty for the government to pursue univocal interests. Given the plurality of organizations and institutions that make the Public Sector, given the plurality of interests that these agencies pursue, and given the plurality of objectives that they aim to achieve, it becomes difficult to think of a decision process equally efficient and effective for the public and for the private sector. The network nature that characterizes the public sector reduces the possibilities of any individual actor possessing all the information, the knowledge and the resources needed to make decisions which can solve different and complex problems (Prasser, 1990).

The attention to extra-economic factors stresses the fact that the Public Sector is characterized by complex networks (organizations and agencies that are part of the sector and that interact with one another – i.e. Police and Probation) and the interactions that happen within it are not necessarily based on economic values but on elements such as legality, legitimation, and equity (Adinolfi, 2005).

Finally, the importance of the relations among public sector organizations and between them and the stakeholders (i.e. taxpayers) stresses the relevance of inter-organizational interactions and does not allow to focus only on internal management (Adinolfi, 2005).

Adinolfi's (2005) perspective is very helpful; it summarizes the key differences that make NPM and Modernization policies not fully appropriate for addressing the needs of the public sector. As discussed above, the latter has different characteristics from those of the private sector, which are the bedrock of NPM and Modernization reforms (Adinolfi, 2005).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I aimed to provide a broad view of the general context of my research before exploring the literature and the context of the National Probation Service in more detail in the next chapter. I explained the conditions that drove the initial change in the public sector – namely, limiting corruption and the waste and incompetence that are held to go with it. I then focused my attention on the main characteristics of NPM as suggested by Hood (1991; 1995) and on Modernization, since they have strongly influenced the way the probation service has been restructured by the government in the last decades. I conclude the chapter by discussing criticisms of NPM and Modernization reforms emphasizing, in particular, how the lack of contextualization of NPM and Modernization policies in a sector characterized by policentrism, polirationality, and attention to extra-economic values, generates uncertainty, ineffectiveness, and contradictions that limit the capacity of those policies to exploit the full potential of the public sector.

Missing from this extensive literature, however, is the perspective of individual actors. Apart from some considerations of Ahmad and Broussine (2003) on the effects of the reforms on employees' morale, there has been very little research into the way in which people who work account for this changing context.

Chapter III

The National Probation Service

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the evolution and the characteristics of the specific context in which I carried out my study. While the excursus on New Public Management and Modernization, highlighted in the previous chapter, had the objective of illustrating the general context of the research, this part of the thesis describes the particular public institution that I looked at, the National Probation Service, and underlines how it was influenced by the New Public Management and Modernization policies.

Following this introduction, I look at the historical origins of the probation service in order to understand its nature and the motives that justified its existence and its interventions in society. In the third section of the chapter, I turn to the approaches and the objectives of the service, explain how the main perspectives underpinning its philosophy have radically changed from its origins to nowadays, and discuss the perspective from which present social needs are looked at and addressed.

In the fourth and in the fifth section I focus on the introduction of New Public Management and Modernization orientations in the probation service, particularly highlighting the performance oriented view, the imposition of special measures and the ways the philosophical paradigm of the service has been consequently changed by these initiatives. Next, I illustrate the response to these changes. In the last section I highlight the principal elements that define the National Probation Service today, in relation to its history, development, philosophy evolution, objectives and government interventions.

3.1 Origins of the Probation Service

The National Probation Service is an agency that refers to the Criminal Justice body of England and Wales, mainly responsible for the supervision of offenders within the community to ensure that they fulfil the obligations of their court orders. Although, the service was established in its present form by the April 2001 Criminal Justice Act, it has existed since 1907 as a totality of services integrated and interactive with the central government.

The probation service is rooted in the common law practice of releasing offenders on the condition that their behaviour would be in accordance with the rules of society and that they would undergo judgement if necessary. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some voluntary groups associated with the Church of England Temperance Society, which aimed at promoting moderate consumption of alcohol, appointed a group of missionaries at London police stations. Their initial objective of rehabilitating the alcoholics was then extended to rehabilitating criminals in general. This evolved into the practice of releasing offenders only on the condition that they kept in contact with the missionaries accepting them as guides.

In 1907 the role of supervising criminals was enforced by the law and this allowed courts to appoint and employ officials. These officials were then formally authorized to work with offenders carrying out a function of counselling and assistance. The major changes happened when these officials started to be included in court activities, related of course to the rehabilitation of offenders in society. For 67 years the service worked without the support of other agencies until, in 1970 new partnerships started between the probation service and agencies linked to the criminal justice area. This gave rise to new precautionary measures systems, alternatives to custody, crime reduction initiatives, special programmes, and the equivalence of the probation order to the court order (Probation Boards' Association, 2006).

From 1907 until 2001 the probation service was a set of area-based services

interacting with the central government. The 2001 Criminal Justice and Court Service Act renamed the probation service as National Probation Service of England and Wales and replaced the fifty-four existing probation committees with forty-two Boards. This legal measure established as well that the total funding of the National Probation Service would come from the Home Office (until 9th May 2007, since when the funding comes from the Ministry of Justice), created the figure of the Director General of Probation and regulated the functions of the forty-two areas directors. Finally, it established the Secretary of State as the only figure with the power to appoint the Boards and their members.

At present the National Probation Service is part of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). NOMS was a part of the Home Office until May 2007 but now is within the Ministry of Justice. The forty-two areas that comprise the National Probation Service coincide with those of the police. These areas are financed by NOMS and are held accountable to their Boards (made of fifteen members appointed by the Secretary of State) for what relates to ordinary administration, while to NOMS for what relates to performance and service agreements (Probation Boards' Association, 2006). The Offender Management Bill, introduced in Parliament in 2006, was intended to enable some probation areas to become trusts to open the service to greater competition from the voluntary, community, and private sectors. On 1st April 2008 six probation trusts came into being, namely Marseyside, South Wales, Humberside, Dyfed/Powys, West Mercia, and Leicestershire & Rutland.

At a national level the probation service counts nineteen-thousand employees and the number of offenders under its responsibility each year is about one-hundred and seventy-five thousands. The main activities carried out by the service are the analysis of offenders' backgrounds, collaborating with courts in defining the most appropriate sentence, and the rehabilitation of offenders through their introduction in the work arena.

3.2 Underpinning approaches and objectives of the National Probation Service

The historical development of the probation service has obviously influenced the definition and the evolution of its objectives. The early missionary vision was slowly put aside because, over time, it was seen to have little impact on rehabilitating offenders. Consequently, coercion began to be considered as a plausible and legitimate alternative to remove intemperance which was the major obstacle to rehabilitation. The missionary ideal was marginalized from the philosophy of the service because of courts' intervention, and probation work transformed from a largely social activity into a more technical type of work. In fact, while initially zeal in helping others was the major requirement for those who wanted to work in probation, after court and Home Office resolutions of 1936, the competence pool demanded from officers and potential officers widened, and their way of performing became more technical (McWilliams, 1983). The type of theoretical and empirical knowledge and the philosophy that characterized the probation service from that moment on became that of social assistance rather than vocation. Nevertheless, this underpinning element came to be as contested as the previous missionary ideal because it was considered not completely effective in contextualizing the management of the relationship between probation officers and offenders that needed rehabilitation. This led to the development of a new perspective, more pragmatic, particularly influenced by the managerial, bureaucratic orientation and according to which offenders needed to be managed on the basis of a system of rules and policies and not according to a system of diagnose-treatment, which was the foundation of the previous probation perspective (Pease, 1999).

In sum, the major streams of thought that underpinned the probation service philosophy from its inception, and that determined its approach with offenders have been, respectively, faith (or religion), psychology, and managerial science.

Because of these, the motives supporting action in the service were, namely, the need for morality, factuality, and efficiency. In turn, the means through which the objective of rehabilitating offenders was pursued were moral reform, scientific treatment, and social control. In court these means were translated respectively as an appeal to compassion, as a diagnosis associated with a treatment plan, and as the application of a disposition within a policy oriented to reduce the number of custody measures (to achieve bureaucratic efficiency).

According to Pease (1999) the pragmatic, managerial approach continues to persist while the altruistic nature has basically disappeared, both at an individual level (i.e. that of the probation officers), since those who work within the system are exposed to organizational politics dynamics that favour career paths often guided by competition and, in some cases, cynicism; and at a service level because of the abolition of the initial, explicit moral foundation as the soul of the service (Pease, 1999).

On the basis of this philosophy, the major objective of the agency remains rehabilitation of offenders within the society; however, it is coupled to other similar objectives, such as, protecting the public, reducing re-offending, and making offenders aware of the damage they caused to the victims and to the public.

3.3 The National Probation Service and the New Public Management and Modernization reforms

Newman and Nutley (2003), who carried out a significant study on the transformation of the probation service and the impacts of change in this field, explain that throughout the 1980's and in particular in the 1990's crime and proposals to discipline crime became a key election issue. The Probation service played a critical role in helping the courts make decisions about the sentences which should be imposed and in enabling a greater deflection of offenders from prisons into community sentences. Government attention to crime, from a financial perspective, worked out in favour of the Probation service because of its support role. Basically, the budgets for probation service areas expanded. However, in the period 1993-97 there was a redirection of money towards prisons because of the conservative perspective that "prison works", thus the Probation service moved from a central position in the criminal justice system to a secondary one. There were three important initiatives that contributed to this scenario (Newman and Nutley, 2003): the publication of revised national standards for the supervision of offenders which introduced a tougher attitude in relation to punishment in the community and reducing professional discretion; the publication of a review of recruitment and qualifying training skills for the Probation service which proposed the removal of social work qualifications as the route into probation work; and the publication of a consultation paper, "Strengthening punishment in the community" that proposed toughening community service orders so that they represented physical hard labour (Home Office, 1995).

The New Labour government, since 1997, introduced some initiatives in order to reduce crime (the crime *reduction toolkits* is an example. It is a guide made available by the government to assess crimes and develop local solutions for local problems). The Government believed that individual criminal justice agencies (the prison, the police, and the probation service) had too much autonomy and

that they worked on the basis of poor information sharing, different accountability systems and different approaches to risk assessment. Moreover, the belief that the application of management disciplines to criminal justice could produce a more rational approach to policy-making and policy-implementation brought the government to officially accept and adopt managerial principles for the re-organization of the agencies operating in criminal justice (Nellis, 1999). These actions affected the Probation service, which became the object of a restructuring campaign aimed at both the reduction of re-offending and the increase of effectiveness and efficiency, strengthening the managerial science underpinning discussed in the previous section. Efficiency and effectiveness were planned to be achieved through greater use of competition from private and voluntary providers establishing a purchaser/provider split (NOMS, 2005). The idea of a "what works" policy started to emerge when some studies (Garrett, 1985; Andrews et al., 1990; Lipsey, 1992), in line with the New Public Management and Modernization policies, concluded that there are some actions that have a positive impact on the reduction of re-offending. These actions became the core of the agenda and consist of: targeting high-risk offenders; focusing on offence behaviour or criminogenic behaviour and attitudes; using a community-based approach; emphasizing cognitive and behavioural methods; using a structured and directive approach with clear objectives; ensuring that the completed work fulfils declared aims and methods. After the launch of the "what works" policy, the government started an initiative aimed at outlining a strategy to carry out the "what works" principles (the *Effective Practice Initiative*, Home Office, 1998) and which required a considerable cultural change and an increase in control on the activities of the service (Newman and Nutley, 2003).

According to Newman and Nutley (2003), "what works" produced a change in the knowledge pool upon which professional practice is based. As mentioned in the previous section, it influenced the social relationships within probation work, and it shook pre-existing professional organizational identities. The first point relates to organizational roles and suggests that there has been a change

35

not only in the content of knowledge (for example, the shift from social case work to cognitive-behavioural approaches in dealing with offenders), but also in the form of knowledge that is valued (the shift from implicit, tacit and local knowledge to codified, formal and scientific knowledge). The change in the form of knowledge should be considered carefully because of the risk that can derive from trying to codify all knowledge that is needed in following the Probation service mission. In particular, situations that require intuitive understanding based on experience are frequently not accommodated within rational and formalized understandings and prescriptions.

With regard to the issue of social relationships, "what works" shifted the one-to-one supervision of probation officers on offenders, blurring the boundaries between qualified and unqualified staff. In fact, knowledge is no longer seen as a source of professional power over the client, but rather as a source of professional legitimacy with other stakeholders in the criminal justice system (Newman and Nutley, 2003). This means that probation officers supervise offenders not because of the probation knowledge they possess but because of their professional title. Individuals covering the role of probation officers may not have an in-depth knowledge in the field, the type that in the past used to qualify them to the extent of the profession. The shifts in professional knowledge and social relationships had an impact on the third issue, professional and organizational identities, by suggesting new ways of thinking and acting, and a new repositioning of the service within the criminal justice system. An example of this last point is the joint-work that should be carried out by the probation and the prison. This requires a deep shift in the ways of acting and thinking, and also suggests a repositioning of the Probation service in the criminal justice system. The probation service culture has been build around the moral commitment of keeping offenders out of prison where possible. The probation work was based in part on undoing the damage caused by a prison sentence (Nellis, 1999) and the culture of the service has never wholly been compromised in this respect. At its base there was the scepticism for imprisonment. Inter-agency collaboration

between prison and probation deeply influences this perspective as well as employees' roles and the way they get to do the job since it pulls together two agencies with totally different backgrounds, with the aim of creating a common view and working to accomplish a common objective. The reduction of re-offending is the primary aim of probation, and it is also the overall aim of the prison service, however, the ideologies that drive its implementation from the two agencies are significantly different from one another. Fostering inter-agency work with prisons generated tensions in framing the identity of the probation service (Nellis, 1999).

Cannings (1997) made a point by arguing how the complexity and ambiguity of the probation service (also in organizational terms, with forty-two areas interacting between each other and interacting with the central government), needed to be considered in order to guarantee a positive effect of the managerial-oriented reforms (e.g. New Public Management and Modernization policies). However, despite criticisms, the need for rapid modernization of the service was considered crucial by the government, for a number of reasons, namely, having a structure that could have been publicly considered accountable for its actions; that could have reacted readily to government policies (i.e. flexibility and adaptability); and that could have had a unanimous and professional voice in society (i.e. centralized). This last paragraph recalls the aspects highlighted by Adinolfi (2005), namely poli-centrism and mono-centrism which represent, respectively, the need for public sector organizations to integrate with the socio-political environment in order to promote cooperation and new ways of creating public value, and the view of public administration as covering a *super partes* position which entitles it to plan and impose performance standards across the public sector. From my analysis, on the one side Cannings (1997) contextualizes the concept of poli-centrism of the probation service as he suggests that the complexity of the interactions, thus the need for integration, within and across the service should be considered to guarantee the successful outcomes of the New Public Management and Modernization policies. On the other side instead,

government's will to create an accountable, flexible and centralized structure for the probation service contextualizes the concept of mono-centrism. These two views are an example of the tensions between the concepts of mono-centrism and poli-centrism, as defined by Adinolfi (2005), in the case of the probation service.

3.4 The target-oriented performance approach

The activities of the probation service have been modified to reflect greater control and implement the new direction of the public administration within the modern Criminal Justice field. National standards are part of a larger plan aimed at increasing the responsibilities of the probation officer in punishing offenders even outside the prison walls. However, beside the physical boundaries of custody, the possibility of controlling offenders is uncertain and the terms of responsibility between probation officers and offenders are open to individual interpretations. National standards are protocols adopted for controlling, regulating, monitoring and evaluating offenders, their probation officers and the probation areas of which they are part. The reform policies have explicitly been implemented by the Home Office to produce the specific consequences of supporting, assisting and counselling officers and also controlling, monitoring and dealing with offenders (Worral, 1997).

Government has slowly introduced guidelines and standardized services to which the probation service has had to quickly conform. The background of New Public Management and Modernization reforms fostered Home Office preferences to the detriment of the relative independence that the probation service had had up to the implementation of the reforms. In the reconfiguration of the service there has been a shift in the nature of the agency, from being a problem-solving organization to a performance organization (Sparrow et al., 2002) within which the concept of responsibility has been stressed to the point of aligning internal resolutions to public ideals. This reconfiguration encouraged the application of national standards to provide a means of comparison for the

government to evaluate the performance of the probation service. This aimed to overcome the difficulties generated by the lack of formal responsibility of the service, and the lack of a decision-centre common to all areas of probation. Not only are national standards provided to address the agency in its general orientation, but they also give precise guidelines and templates on how to draft the probation orders. This shows how centralization encompasses aspects that used to be considered up to professional discretion. The complexity of the probation activities has been reduced to a set of formalized actions within a set of prescriptive guidelines aimed to develop a standardized product across all the probation service areas. These prescriptive actions seek to guarantee the exclusivity of the government in deciding and administering the sanctions for offenders' rehabilitation. However, it has been constantly observed that rather than offenders' behaviour, is the performance of the probation service and of its officers that is now subject to constant scrutiny. Kemshall (2002) observes that very often special measures are used in probation areas to keep organization performance under control. 'Special measures' is a status applied by the Home Office to public sector organizations which perform poorly. Areas under special measures are subject to frequent (e.g. once a month) inspections from the Home Office to verify that administrative work and, for the probation service, probation work routines (e.g. checking on curfew conditions) are carried out accurately. Although they are now bound to operate within a set of objectives, the context of action of probation areas is very uncertain both for the unlimited propensity of offenders to commit crimes, and for the vicissitudes of the local context in which they operate. One could argue that what is needed is greater professional discretion. According to Sparrow and others (2002), who looked into this aspect, for many employees of the probation service this control of working processes has drastically reduced the importance of the role of professionals. It has narrowed the difference between them and general criminal justice employees, who are interested only in technical aspects. Being a probation employee appears to be more and more like a job that equals any other type of clerical jobs, rather

than a vocation (Sparrow et al., 2002).

In line with the points of mono-centrism and changes in the nature of probation work and roles made before, the intensification of managerialism and the attention on performance within the probation service have brought bureaucratization and standardization to the concept of community rehabilitation. This has generated the shift of probation interest from treating individuals in relation to their crimes, their family background, their education level and their social context, to controlling groups, since the former approach was considered too inefficient. The change from individual offenders' rehabilitation to strategic management of the punishment in the community has significantly re-shaped the probation service. The tradition of facilitating the practice of probation officers through guidance and discussion has been replaced by the idea that this type of work needs to reflect more explicitly the intentions of the policies implemented at a government level, with no space for opinions and judgement. The argument is that national standards provide more precise terms of comparison. Through those it should be possible to understand if the activity of punishment within the community is efficient or not. The aim is to obtain a generalizable, measurable output (associable to the reduction of crime in society) for fostering objectivity, transparency and comparability of performance results (Sparrow et Al., 2002).

Despite the fact that from the introduction of the New Public Management and Modernization policies up to now the productivity of the probation service has increased 18% according to Parliament reports (www.publications.parliament.uk), equivalent to sixteen million pounds, only eighteen of the forty-two national areas inspected by the national audit office have reported improvements in staff productivity as a direct consequence of the new policies.

While the need to renew the system to identify the responsibility of the probation service before the taxpayers is understandable, the way this was accomplished and the results it has produced are still widely debated especially

by those within the agency. In the following section I consider research into service employees' reasons to the introduction of the new policies.

3.5 Proposals and reactions to change within the National Probation Service

In spite of the acclaim that the "what works" policy received from managers and some practitioners, it encountered some resistance among probation officers themselves. However, the ability of the organization to resist or influence the government's agenda was not helped by the increasingly fractured nature of the probation voice (Nash, 2000). With regard to the policy-making process, the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) was consulted less than in the past compared to the Association of Chief Officers of Probation (ACOP). This arguably weakened the ability of probation officers to challenge fundamental change (Nash, 2000). Notwithstanding the need for a change in probation work, the nature of the actual change was directed by managers not by the employees that operated within the service.

One of the fundamental issues driven by the "efficiency" view promoted by the government was the inter-agency work. This led to a closer collaboration between the police and the probation service within the criminal justice system. The aim of blurring the distinctions between agencies was to encourage the singularity of purpose and to create agreed, shared objectives, facilitating communication and enabling decision-making to respond quickly to the needs of the community and to be based on similar criteria (Nash, 2000). This trend characterizes New Public Management and Modernization policies as illustrated in chapter II. However, according to Nash (2000), the cultural dissimilarities between probation and police service generated considerable resistance in spite of some history of joint working between police and probation (e.g. child protection, monitoring offenders, etc.). As a result of the collaboration, a new shared language has emerged which, according to Nash (2000), may sound more like that of the police than the traditional probation service. As with the police

service, the government pushed parts of the probation service closer to prisons as well. The main objective was efficiency, once again. However, these actions brought to a loss, on the probation service side, of the distinctiveness of the service (Nash, 2000). As I mentioned in the previous section, the probation service was more oriented to reduce re-offending through social work, off-setting the toughness that may characterize police and prisons. The closer collaboration with police and prison brought the driving values of these agencies to prevail.

The most recent government proposals for restructuring probation come from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) that published "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-Offending" (Home Office, 2005). The key issue at the basis of the proposal was the awareness that over half of crime is committed by people who have already been through the criminal justice system; a fact that discredited the work of the National Probation Service. The main principles of the proposals are related to: offender management, commissioning, and contestability. The first one, according to NOMS, will ensure that offenders are managed in a consistent, constructive and coherent way during their entire sentence. It introduces a single figure, namely the Offender Manager, for each offender who will work with them throughout their sentence, whether in a custodial or community setting, and accurately assess their needs, so improving the selection, sequencing and targeting of interventions for each offender. The second issue, commissioning, involves separating out the specification of services to be delivered from the delivery of those services. The commissioner decides what services are needed, sets priorities and enters into service level agreements or contracts with providers to ensure that they are delivered. The third issue, contestability, is about challenging existing suppliers to demonstrate that they continue to offer best value for money to the taxpayer (Home Office, 2005). Contestability is a clear example of Government's trend to promote competition and, in general, market dynamics in the public sector aiming at the achievement of better levels of effectiveness and efficiency.

According to the Home Office, the National Association of Probation Officers

(NAPO) appreciated the interest of the government in reducing re-offending. However, with regard to the proposal "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-Offending" (Home Office, 2005), NAPO argues the government's mistake was replacing the National Probation Service with a combination of providers – public, voluntary and private – competing with each other to provide what in the end are probation services. This government's decision reflects the fundamental purposes of New Public Management and Modernization policies discussed in chapter II. With regard to the above criticism, the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO, 2005), suggests strengthening partnerships and multi-agency work with other criminal justice operators, but dropping contestability, since only by retaining probation work as a public service and retaining the position of the public National Probation Service can the government be confident of meeting its commitment to reduce re-offending and to protect the public.

In relation to the issue of contestability, the belief in introducing private sector dynamics in order to foster efficiency within the public sector cannot be fully supported if we think that the latter aims at guaranteeing public interests. The core difference in the type of interests that characterize the two sectors is the reason why certain strategic choices of the private do not apply to the public, and vice versa, and it is also the reason why two distinct sectors exist, the private and the public. Adinolfi's (2005) framework addressed in chapter II helps in understanding the nature of those differences. For the criminal justice sector, Raine and Willson (1997) argue that it makes no sense to apply the same principles of the private sector since first of all in the criminal justice sector there is no market, secondly, there is no real consumer and there is no real prospect of creating one given the special character of the key "customer" (the offender), and thirdly it is difficult to think of entry and exit barriers for the providers (in fact there are neither problems of having patents, or particular technologies for entering, nor problems of sunk costs, but this is because the criminal justice sector is not a market). Given these elements, there is no real basis for

competition between providers (Raine and Willson, 1997).

3.6 Professional identity and the probation service

The previous sections suggest how for the government it has been relatively straight forward to address probation at the national level and to agree on some general elements constituting probation work, but also how those actions posed challenges to the probation service. Examining the issue of professional identity may help understanding why government policies have been experienced as challenging within the probation service. Because of the nature of its employees' background one can think of this service as of a professional organization.

Professional organizations have been highlighted in social science and organization theory as those in which professionals undertake their work (McAuley et al., 2000). McAuley et al. (2000) who conducted an in-depth research on the relationship between professionals and their organizations, observe how the literature portrays professional organizations in two different ways. On the one side these organizations are seen as disseminating its powers directly to all its workers providing them with extensive autonomy. On the other side, professional organizations are seen as becoming increasingly difficult to recognize because of their focus on business and management rather than on professional norms and values (McAuley et al. 2000). At first glance this dual understanding of professional organizations reflects the challenges encountered in the probation service in facing the new government policies, recalling the struggle between professionals' autonomy and managerialism mentioned by Nellis (1999). Cohen et al. (2004) examined how bringing the public sector closer to the market was experienced by public sector scientists and general medical practitioners, and concluded that this re-framing has implications on actors' sense of professional expertise. These authors argue that taking on board "an enterprise culture is not a straightforward process for professional workers as their customers tend not to be distinct and uniform entities" (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 23). In other words professionals negotiate their expertise and express it in

different ways in relation to the type and nature of the person they are dealing with. Their identity as employees is mediated with the one "derived from their professional autonomy and identification" (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 23).

Dent and Whitehead (2002) capture the challenges faced by increasingly managerial professional organizations arguing that "professionals are still trusted but that trust is mitigated through the process of being managed, inspected and audited by external actors and systems" (Dent and Whitehead, 2002, p. 2). These authors suggest that professional identity is the outcome of the discourses that put the professional into existence: flexibility, team-working, lifelong learning to name a few. The implication that springs from having a professional identification is that of individuals raising themselves above the others in order to differentiate their status (Dent and Whitehead, 2002) and in some cases mark themselves as having a greater role than managers (Watson, 2002). Professionals have been portrayed as giving a meaning to themselves which emphasized their role of 'prima donna' which differentiates them from non-professionals and managers (Burns and Stalker, 1961, p. 176).

The concept of professional identity has received little attention in probation research. As well as for what emerged in McAuley et al. (2000), in the studies that looked at the probation service no assertions are made "of professionals which place great emphasis on their individualistic nature" (McAuley et al., 2000, p. 109). This may sound contradictory to those who interpret the probation service as mainly orbiting around the professional figure of the probation officer. The main study in the field (Newman and Nutley, 2003) that mentions professional identity in the probation service does not highlight whether or not this concept applies exclusively to probation officers and does not particularly suggest the elements on which it is constructed by actors in the service.

What is highlighted in some probation studies (Newman and Nutley, 2003) is the probation identity. The government changes that were implemented in the service led to the emergence of tensions between old welfare values and the new forms of identification with concepts, such as contestability, that never

characterized the probation service before. These changes at a national level (particularly those portrayed by the 'what works' agenda that I extensively illustrated in this chapter) were meant by the government as the new source of identity and legitimacy but actors interpretation of their probation identity did not match government's expectations.

3.6.1 The probation identity and NAPO

The probation identity is partly constituted through the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO). NAPO aims to protect and promote the interests of all members in the National Probation Service and not exclusively those of probation officers (http://www.napo.org.uk). NAPO protects and promotes members' interests by ensuring job security with improved pay and work conditions, always considering the changes arising from the NPM and Modernization policies. NAPO particularly emphasizes the maintenance of members' work integrity. The socialization of probation identity is influenced by NAPO's campaigns as the 'Justice under stress' one which aims to "defend jobs and services in the Justice Sector and to fight against privatisation and for more resources" (http://www.napo.org.uk); but also by the information this association spreads through its periodical publications. These publications mainly denounce the consequences of the NPM and Modernization policies for the National Probation Service. NAPO exposes the risks that derive from the pursuit of privatization and expresses its concerns for the absence of probation personnel in senior positions in the NOMS' (National Offender Management Service) hierarchy (NAPO, Probation under stress, 2009). NAPO affects the probation identity by promoting the emergence of a "probation voice" (NAPO, Probation under stress, 2009, p. 10).

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the history and the development of the National Probation Service. I particularly highlighted how its objectives as well as its underpinning philosophy have been subject to the influence of the various government policies that regulated the Criminal Justice field, over the years. I have also shown the reactions generated within the service by the restructuring and by its consequences. New Public Management and Modernization policies have caused deep changes in the nature of the National Probation Service and in particular in its organizational identity (i.e. vocational, professional, or competitive?). The enduring characteristic of the probation service, as the reader can detect from this chapter, has been adapting to government and criminal justice needs. In the last section of this chapter I illustrated the aspect of probation identity and the role of NAPO socializing it among probation service employees.

By looking at employees' interpretations of their lived experience in the service, the empirical work will illuminate aspects related to control, identity and roles in the probation service.

Chapter IV

Control and New Control Mechanisms

4.0 Introduction

An underlying theme of the restructuring of the public sector in the UK has been the attempt to develop new and more sophisticated forms of organizational control (Hoggett, 1996). As argued in chapter II, this objective generated a growth of regulatory bodies and regulations (Lawton, 2005) as control was identified as one of the dimensions of the public sector which needed to improve (Hood, 1991; 1995). The literature on the probation service shows how the activities of the service have been modified to reflect and implement this shift (Worral, 1997). Thus far, the literature suggests taking a closer look at the issue of control. In this chapter I will discuss what I see as the most significant (in relation to this project) literature on control, and control mechanisms. I will pay particular attention to new control mechanisms (Gabriel, 1999) as from my analysis these seem to inform New Public Management and Modernization policies with regard to the dimension (Hood, 1991; 1995) of control. Given my interests in this thesis, in presenting the main academic positions that emerge in the literature on control, I will concentrate on the public sector.

4.1 Organizational Control

The term *control* can be ambiguous to interpret not exclusively because of the various ways in which its meaning can be constructed, but also because of the different matters that can be subject to control and to its related and possible implications (Brocchini, 1991). Following Ouchi (1975; 1979), in this section I

illustrate personal and impersonal modes of control and the different needs that they can address. In spite of acknowledging the existence of more recent research developments on organizational control, I will mainly focus on early studies because of their impact on informing government choices in this respect.

Until the late 20th century, organizational theorists considered control from four main perspectives, namely, as related to power and influence (Tannenbaum, 1968; Etzioni, 1965), as a problem in information flows (Galbraith, 1973; Ouchi and Maguire, 1975), as a problem in creating and monitoring rules through a hierarchical authority system (Weber, 1947; Perrow, 1972; Blau and Scott, 1962) and as a cybernetic process of testing, measuring, and providing feedback (Thompson, 1967; Reeves and Woodward, 1970). Most of this literature conceptualized two alternative modes of control, personal vs. impersonal (sometimes described using different terminology, e.g. 'behavioural' and 'mechanichal' or 'output control' Ouchi, 1975). Personal controls imply a direct observational supervision on the employee, while impersonal controls imply more clerical work measured against performance records (Ouchi, 1975). These two different modes of control characterize the public sector respectively as direct supervision of the manager, and performance measures and targets.

The two forms of control serve different purposes, therefore, they could be considered as independent from one another (Ouchi, 1975). In spite of this argument, Thompson (1967) suggests that personal and impersonal control can be used interchangeably under a restrictive set of conditions (Thompson, 1967). In particular, this is the case when goals are stable and crystallized and when the relations between means and ends (e.g. what activities need to be carried out to achieve a specific target) are understood by actors. In fact, if goals are not agreed upon then impersonal control could not be used, since there is little against which to measure the progress of work; and if means-ends relations are not understood personal control could not be applied because what is considered to be the appropriate behaviour is not known. For deciding which of the two types of control suits a specific context, according to Ouchi (1975) it is important to

consider the size of the organization. In very small organizations (e.g. ten workers) impersonal control is not necessary because in those contexts usually the means-ends relations are well understood and knowing what to do and how to do it could be sufficient to achieve the objectives of the organization. However, in large organizations even if the relations means-ends are known by all employees, it can be difficult to achieve the objectives if only personal control is implemented. In this case impersonal control becomes indispensable.

To clarify the difference between the two modes of control, it can be useful to look at the different needs they satisfy. Turning first to impersonal controls, Ouchi and Maguire (1975) suggest that: "output measures serve the control needs of the organization as a whole" (Ouchi and Maguire, 1975, p. 568). These controls, according to the two authors, satisfy the need for quantification. However, they are sometimes also used when least appropriate, such as for objectives that are difficult to quantify. In contrast, Ouchi and Maguire (1975) suggest that personal modes of control serve "the quite different needs of the individual manager who has one subunit to oversee" (Ouchi and Maguire, 1975, p. 568). This characteristic makes personal control very subjective and not useful in comparing performance between the subunits of a company.

As mentioned, the size of the organization is a fundamental element to consider when looking at control mechanisms. For a long time researchers did not distinguish structure and control from each other (Ouchi, 1979), they understood control as embedded in the structure of organizations. A change in this belief became manifest when three strong streams of work (Thompson, 1967; Perrow, 1965; Reeves and Woodward, 1970) started considering the effects that technology (e.g. the way tasks or production are carried out within an organization) has on the definition of the structure and on the determination of control and coordination needs, therefore, on the choice of control mechanisms. From this point on structure started to be looked at as distinct from control mechanisms.

While structure relates to vertical and horizontal specialization (e.g.

respectively, who is in charge of who, and who does what within the organization), formalization (e.g. codification of procedures), and distribution of power (e.g. centralization, decentralization), control systems relate to "the set of conditions which govern the forms of control to be used" (Ouchi, 1979, p. 96) and to the control system itself. Forms of control are governed by conditions such that of using personal control modes for dealing with situations where means-ends relations are known, or that according to which impersonal control modes are required for dealing with situations in which objectives are crystallized. The control system itself, instead, generally consists of a process for monitoring and evaluating performance, and of preconditions that specify to what extent evaluations can be effective. According to Ouchi (1979), control systems are essentially based on monitoring and evaluating performance or behaviours, nevertheless, although in the former case the means is selectively rewarding workers' outputs, real control occurs only through changing worker's behaviour.

This section clarified the difference between personal and impersonal modes of control to highlight a categorization of control modes used in the public sector.

4.2 Control Mechanisms

The illustration of the two modes of control, personal and impersonal, needs to be examined together with the sources of the main control mechanisms (Ouchi and Maguire, 1975; Ouchi 1979) as this will provide a broad platform for understanding the theoretical frameworks that inspired New Public Management and Modernization policies with regard to the control dimension. According to Ouchi (1979), evaluation and control in organizations can generally be addressed by using three fundamentally different mechanisms, namely, markets, bureaucracies, and clans. Although the three mechanisms overlap and could occur in various combinations, they have been treated as conceptually distinct from one another.

Markets could be used as mechanisms to control the relations between the

organization and the external environment. "In a market, prices convey all of the information necessary for efficient decision-making" (Ouchi, 1979, p. 835). The price is the result of the competitive process that takes place in the market, and, while it may not be totally fair in representing exactly the value of the good or service purchased, it serves the objective of keeping opportunism under control (e.g. on the basis of this mechanism, if I purchase a product in a store, the price of the product not only will represent the value of the good – because of the market laws that regulate prices - but will also represent the amount of money that anyone interested in that same product will need to pay in order to buy it. Instead, if I am interested in purchasing a product privately – for example, a car from a person that I know - I can hardly be sure that that informal seller is telling me a price that reflects the fluctuations of the market, and I can hardly be sure that he/she will apply the same price to all possible buyers – he/she may apply a different price to a person he/she likes more than me). Markets are looked at as an adequate control mechanism to discipline transactions between the organization and the external environment. Although the market mechanism mainly characterized the private sector, with the introduction of more contract based competitive provision with internal markets and term contracts (Hood, 1991; 1995) this mechanisms was extended by the government to the public sector as well. The probation service started referring to the market mechanisms with the introduction of contestability which was illustrated in chapter III.

Bureaucracies, instead, involve close personal surveillance and direction of subordinates by superiors (Ouchi, 1979). Control is exerted through rules rather than price and the main difference is that while "price emerges from a comparison between alternative buyers or sellers of the value of the object in question", "rules are essentially an arbitrary standard against which a comparison is yet to be made" (Ouchi, 1979, p. 835). In order to use a rule (e.g. a cost standard) some actual performance must be observed, value must be assigned to it, and then a comparison between the assigned value and the rule must be done; this process aims to determine whether the actual performance

was satisfactory or not. Bureaucracies are very costly control mechanisms because of all the energy and attention they require (e.g. establishing the rule, establishing performances, measuring performances), and if rules are expressed qualitatively rather than quantitatively (i.e. setting a behaviour instead of a number of tasks that need to be performed) the costs of administrating this control mechanism are likely to rise (Ouchi, 1979). Traditionally, Bureaucracies have been a key mechanism in the public sector as the activities of control and evaluation used to be largely carried out through norms, rules, policies and procedures.

Finally, clans are the third possible type of control mechanism. They are related to socialization processes within the organization. The informal social system that characterizes organizations can foster control because of the value training that members are subject to when they become part of the clan, and also because of the continuous process of indoctrination and value sharing that happens within the system (Ouchi, 1979). People tend to keep certain behaviours because of the strength of the values underpinning the clan.

A link that can be made, at this point, between these three mechanisms and my research context is that, after the implementation of the New Public Management and Modernization reforms, the public sector extended its forms of control by adopting the market and the clan mechanisms (as section 4.4 of this chapter will illustrate). In fact, while bureaucracy has always been a traditional way of exerting coordination and control in the public sector, new aspects (e.g. contestability, commissioning of offender management) raised the issue of finding new ways of exerting coordination and control. An example that can show the use of the market mechanism in the public sector is the price that government bodies and institutions pay to private providers for the delivery of services they find too expensive or too difficult to provide (e.g. probation service areas paying a private company for the maintenance services). Instead, an example of the clan mechanism applied to the public sector is the emphasis that organizations put on corporate culture, mission, and vision in order to shape

individuals' behaviour around organizational objectives. In fact, imposing rules for granting the desired behaviours may go against regulations which protect workers' rights.

4.3 New Control Mechanisms

The literature that I referred to in the previous two sections (Ouchi and Maguire, 1975; Ouchi, 1979; Thompson, 1967; Perrow, 1965; Reeves and Woodward, 1970) aimed to frame the crucial concepts related to control that I look at in this thesis. Modes of control (e.g. personal and impersonal) and coordination mechanisms (e.g. markets, bureaucracies, and clans) are relevant as they informed New Public Management and Modernization choices with respect to the control dimension highlighted by Hood (1991; 1995) and Lawton (2005). From my analysis, apart from Ouchi and Maguire's (1975) and Ouchi's (1979) seminal work, also Gabriel's (1999) perspective on new control mechanisms emerges from New Public Management and Modernization policies. The latter brings forward Ouchi's points on personal and impersonal controls by highlighting how these evolved into more pervasive ways of controlling people at work. In this section, I will specifically illustrate new control mechanisms. Links to the public sector will be made in the following section.

According to Gabriel (1999), who developed key arguments with respect to control, the control mechanisms of today's organizations are seen as subtle and deep, reaching the core of each employee's sense of selfhood and identity. These forms of control parallel the traditional ones that never stopped existing. The main difference with the traditional control mechanisms is that for the latter it was possible to identify the source as external to the individual. Many researchers have looked at the impact of new forms of corporate control on individuals, aiming to understand their effectiveness, their costs, and their consequences at a business, psychological and at a social level. Gabriel (1999) suggests that the main streams of research that addressed this issue were

developed by the labour process theorists (Braveman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979; 1983; 1985; Edwards, 1979), who were concerned about the changing nature of capitalist controls and the types of resistance and opposition which they engender; by the post-structuralists (Knights, 1990, 1992; Knights & Vurdubakis, 1994; Marsden, 1993; Barker,1993) whose focus was that of understanding the construction of individuals' subjectivity in the workplace and the dynamics of resistance to organizational controls; by managerialists (Peters and Waterman, 1982) who described new control mechanisms as loose-tight in the sense that they "shun bureaucratic overregulation" but at the same time they "aim at self-regulation through the internalization of a strong culture" (Gabriel, 1999, p. 181); by the emotion theorists (Mumby and Putnam, 1992; Fineman, 1993) who explored the "ways in which organizational controls reach the individual's emotional life, colonizing his/her emotions in and out of work, and channeling these emotions toward the provision of customer service, quality, etc." (Gabriel, 1999, p. 182); and, finally, by the psychoanalytic researchers (Kets de Vries, 1988; Krantz, 1989; 1990; Oglensky, 1995) who have examined the ways in which organizations create dependencies among their workers and control their behaviour by becoming surrogates of parental authority figures. Central to the psychoanalytic tradition are the psychological costs of organizational controls and the coping strategies adopted by employees.

Gabriel argues that, the label "contemporary organizational controls" (Gabriel, 1999, p. 183) has become a "unifying umbrella" (Gabriel, 1999, p. 183) under which different theoretical perspectives are confused as well as different modes of control (e.g. personal vs. impersonal) at different levels (e.g. at the level of the customer-provider relationship; at the level of the manager-employee relationship). In his work, which is a fundamental part of the theoretical framework I am using in this thesis, Gabriel (1999) underlines the importance for researchers in the field to illustrate the nature of contemporary workplace controls, the relationship between organization and individual – both in terms of embracing and of resistance to organizational controls - and the attendant

modalities of employees' identity, rather than looking at the issue in a general sense. A key aspect arising in the literature is the relationship between traditional and more contemporary control mechanisms.

According to Gabriel (1999), some writers have found discontinuity between traditional control mechanisms (i.e. assembly lines, bureaucratic rules, hierarchies, timetables, collective bargaining) and the controls exercised by contemporary organizations (i.e. alignment of values and beliefs); other authors talk about the cohabitation of old and new controls or even about an intensification of old controls supported by the new ones. New controls seem to be characterized by a more pervasive impact on the employees' psychological and social life than traditional formal controls (Gabriel, 1999) and they fall into four interrelated categories (Gabriel, 1999), namely, (1) structural changes – associated with flatter hierarchies, flexible working practices, continuous benchmarking and measurement; (2) changes in manufacturing technologies – associated with lean production, TQM and JIT, however, also applicable to service organization if interpreted as changes in the way the services are delivered; (3) changes in surveillance technologies – associated with performance monitoring, and systems which can expose a single individual as the source of an operational failure; and, finally, (4) concerted attempts by management to promote new sets of values, attitudes and beliefs, through a symbolic manipulation of meanings, which privilege quality, service, excellence, teamwork, and loyalty.

While traditional forms of control, also addressed as normative controls (e.g. norms and rules related to Ouchi's Bureaucracies), are seen as controls in their own right, new controls can be seen as reinforcing them if they are applied in parallel to them. For example, values and cultural controls can be used to make surveillance practices acceptable or invisible (Gabriel, 1999). If values and beliefs are internalized by employees, ultimately this can lead to an intensification of workers' efforts and a slow and constant neutralization of dissent (Casey 1996, 1998; Grey 1994; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992), which in turn could lead to an

exclusion of trade unions and a long-term decline in collective resistance and opposition (Gabriel, 1999) (e.g. if one of the 'values' of the organization is that of having effective employees that do not bother about working late, once a person joins the organization and learns this as a value, he/she will hardly consider the possibility that working late can be against health and safety rules, and, therefore, he/she will hardly complain about the unfairness of this idea).

Gabriel implies that, once introduced, usually control mechanisms generate persisting insecurity and because of this insecurity people perform their job as they are told to. Collinson (2003) argues that "insecurity in organizations can take many different, sometimes overlapping forms. It may, for example, be existential, social, economic and/or psychological. These multiple insecurities can intersect and operate simultaneously, thus reinforcing their impact on the construction of workplace selves and the reproduction of organizational power relations" (Collinson, 2003, pp. 529-530).

Like traditional forms of control, new controls also generate insecurity in the workplace. However, while for normative controls insecurity has causes that are external to the individual (e.g. perceiving social injustice), contemporary insecurity is the outcome of employee's self-doubt and emotional instability (e.g. internal to the individual) (Gabriel, 1999). Some authors (Schwartz, 1987; 1990) consider new controls as totalizing because of their power in weakening overt displays of resistance and opposition.

The pervasiveness of new controls colonizes the individual from inside rather than from above or from outside, which makes these controls more insidious than the traditional ones. Gabriel (1999) argues that his belief is reminiscent of Foucault's (1977; 1980) idea of the Panopticon (which was originally suggested by philosopher Jeremy Bentham in 1785), a mechanism of surveillance where individuals policed themselves since. they could never be sure of when the disciplinary gaze was focused on them. With new controls the differences in skills, occupation, class, nation and gender tend to fade since all individuals tend to be subject to similar mechanisms of control (Gabriel, 1999).

From this perspective, rather than considering opposition and resistance as gradually eradicated from the workplace, it is likely that they have undergone a transformation in the sense that they will not be found in the form of trade unions and political parties' fights. New forms of control can give rise to new forms of resistance, which may go unnoticed if the traditional observational and conceptual resources are used (Gabriel, 1999). I interpret resistance according to Thomas and Davies's (2005) definition, namely the "constant process of adaptation, subversion and re-inscription of the dominant discourses" of the organization (Thomas and Davies, 2005, p. 687). Some possible examples of new resistance mechanisms can be sabotage, output restriction, whistle-blowing, bloody-mindedness, ritualism, refusal of discretion, failure to act when required, leaking information to the press, and rumor-mongering. Gabriel (1999) explains that, with the introduction of new controls, researchers should look for resistance at the margins of discourse and experience where there can be unmanaged and uncontrolled spaces and where resistance can take the form of established objects used in unorthodox ways (Gabriel 1999). Collinson (1994) categorized resistance into two main types, resistance through distance and resistance through persistence. In the first case, workers emotionally create their own spaces, physical, emotional, and symbolic where they can refuse to accept responsibility for the running of the company; in the second case, workers explicitly act against the organization (i.e. through legal action). Collinson (1994) argues that this second type of resistance is possible if actors are less involved and less concerned with the construction and protection of their identity and more committed to the issues on which their opposition is based (Collinson, 1994). Notably, Collinson (1994), and Fineman and Sturdy (1997) introduce the emotional dimension for understanding resistance, and for highlighting that active or passive resistance is triggered by emotions. Fineman and Sturdy (1997) develop Collinson's (1994) work by arguing that emotions can lead to acts of overt rebellion or, alternatively, to passive resistance as an "improvised departure from organizational scripts" (Gabriel, 1999, p. 193). Fineman and Sturdy (1997) point out that there is a lack in

the research on the emotions that trigger resistance, the extent to which they operate, and the rules and point to which these rules are challenged.

As Gabriel (1999) has underlined, control mechanisms should be looked at in depth focusing on the many aspects that influence and constitute them, as an appreciation of this complexity will facilitate the understanding of the new control dynamics and also of the possible alternatives of resistance. For this reason in the following section I will focus on the way new controls are implemented in the public sector. This will serve to widen the scenario drawn in the chapters on New Public Management and Modernization, and on the probation service helping to contextualize new control mechanisms.

4.4 New Control Mechanisms in the Public Sector

In relation to the changes in control mechanisms introduced in this sector, I will refer to Hoggett's (1996) work, which provides a complete overview and links to Gabriel's (1999), Ouchi and Maguire's (1975) and Ouchi's (1979) contributions on control. Hoggett (1996) makes two points. First, he argues that strong elements of self-control have been combined with new and old forms of external control; this view recalls Gabriel's (1999) concept of traditional control coupled with new control mechanisms (as mentioned in the previous section). Second, Hoggett (1996) suggests that market mechanisms have been introduced in the public sector and became meaningful if analysed together with the "development of centralized decentralization and extended forms of performance management" (Hoggett, 1996, p. 10); this perspective recalls Ouchi and Maguire's (1975) and Ouchi's (1975; 1979) studies of the market coordination mechanism and the personal and impersonal modes of control. Hogett's (1996) two points suggests that New Public Management and Modernization reforms generated hybridity by linking the Market mechanism with that of Bureaucracy, which is characterized by centralization and impersonal modes of control (e.g. performance measures). For the probation service this turned into the

introduction of contestability coupled with the increase in centralization.

The development of "quasi-markets" (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993) has blurred the distinction between the public and the private sector, creating a third *terrain* that is both public and private. Different sectors (e.g. Private, Public), at different moments can experience a different impact of new forms of organizational control (e.g. internal, external). From a government perspective, in the UK it seemed that the intention was to shift from a bureaucratic model to a post-bureaucratic one (more focused on the peculiarities of the contexts rather than on aspects as hierarchy, norms, and rules, for example), however, the result was a hybrid system (Hoggett, 1996) not as functional as the government hoped. Three distinct but interdependent strategies have been pursued by the government to move from bureaucracy to post-bureaucracy. These strategies were also mentioned in the second chapter while discussing New Public Management, namely: the introduction of competition to coordinate the activities of decentralized units; the decentralization of operations whilst centralizing strategic command; and, finally, the development of performance management techniques. I will briefly analyse each one of them to clarify their role in terms of new control mechanisms.

With regard to competition, three main areas of the public sector were involved: that of the producer markets – where units compete to supply goods and services to government which remains the main or sole direct purchaser (Hogett, 1996), an example that can explain this is the introduction of contestability in the probation service; that of the consumer market – where units compete to supply services to individual purchaser or their proxies (Hoggett, 1996); and that without markets – where units are engaged in competing for government's resources (Hoggett, 1996). The consequences of the introduction of markets and competition in the public sector are quite interesting. First of all, service units tend to resemble small and medium public enterprises which can assume a variety of different forms in relation to how they are constituted, structured, and in relation to how they work. Secondly, there has been a

fragmentation of the public service which has compromised the lateral relations between service users, between workers, and between professionals. Finally, there has been a split between the consciousness and practice of workers of the public sector. While the consciousness is anchored to public service values, the practice is tied to market and, therefore, competition values. Hoggett (1996) suggests that this split could be sustained only in the short term, afterwards either the new practices are abandoned or consciousness will align itself to the new forms of practice. The introduction of market logics affects the focus of control which is not any longer within the organization but within the field (market) in which the organization operates (Hoggett, 1996). This first point on competition links with the issue of the changes in manufacturing/service provision technologies, and values suggested by Gabriel (1999) as two of the four types of changes that represent new control mechanisms.

With regard to the paradox of simultaneous centralization and decentralization, there has been, in the public sector, a movement towards the creation of more devolved forms of management. Formally, managers may be given control over the resources necessary to do the job but in practice control is centralized over key strategic questions (e.g. allocation of resources to operational units, rules and performance targets). Ultimately, operational decentralization has served to reinforce centralization processes (Hogget, 1996). Some examples of these trends in the probation service were discussed in chapter III (e.g. introduction of guidelines and standardized services, introduction of national standards, decentralization of the operational decisions of the probation areas but within strict national standards). This second point suggested by Hoggett (1996) recalls the structural changes that Gabriel (1999) referred to with regard to new control mechanisms.

Finally, the new extended forms of performance management, that have been paralleling the process of operational decentralization, seemed to be designed to foster change and to monitor, and to shape organizational behaviour (Hoggett, 1996) with the result of increasing formalization. This aspect links to the work of

Duberley and others (2000) on the role of performance evaluation and control systems (PECS) in 'manufacturing' change. These authors suggest that, although PECS have been often conceptualized as "levers that can be used to unfreeze organizational cultures" (Duberley et al., 2000, p. 437), "some level of cultural unfreezing" (Duberley et al., 2000, p. 438) needs to take place before the introduction of new PECS in order to foster the change process. As Hoggett (1996) argues, in the public sector new forms of performance management have been introduced, however, rather than fostering change these new elements generated employees' criticisms. In the probation service the reactions of the NOMS (reported in chapter III) give an example of such dynamics. According to Hoggett (1996), in the public sector performance management is focusing more on the outputs rather than on the inputs since the behaviours are controlled by means of corporate culture, and, in general, commitment at all organizational levels to core organizational values (Hoggett, 1996). This recalls Ouchi's (1979) clan control mechanism. In fact, corporate culture reflects the process of indoctrination and value sharing that characterizes clans. In the probation service New Public Management and Modernization policies reinforced the concepts of mission, vision and organizational identity as it emerges from chapter III. In contrast, the performance management issue can be linked back to Gabriel's (1999) argument on the changes in surveillance technologies.

"Government's control at a distance has produced more centralization and more formalization than expected; the hand of central government has become so visible, at times, that it has been considered responsible for the failing of the public service in areas such the prison service, community care and education" (Hoggett, 1996, p. 27). The aspects illustrated in this section recall Gabriel's (1999) new control mechanisms in relation to the impact that New Public Management and Modernization policies had on structures, ways of delivering the service, ways of exerting surveillance, and corporate values. New Public Management and Modernization reforms have been interpreted by most researchers in the field (Hood, 1991; 1995; Christensen and Laegreid, 1999; Pollitt and Bouckaert,

2000) as change-oriented policies. In contrast, from my analysis of the literature thus far, control is more than just one of the dimensions of the public sector that changed. In fact, there are some studies (Hoggett, 1996; Lawton 2005) that show the great emphasis that New Public Management and Modernization policies put on control. The role of control within those policies offers scope for further research. The probation service represents an interesting context to investigate this aspect. In fact, control is a philosophical underpinning of the probation service as the imposition of a system of rules and the respect for those rules stands at the base of the relationship between officers and offenders (Pease, 1999). What makes the probation service peculiar with respect to this research is that the reform policies put the performance of the service and of its officers under constant scrutiny, rather than offenders' behaviour (Sparrow et al. 2002). The gap in the literature and the above contextual elements raised the question: "how can we theoretically account for probation service employees' lived experience of the New Public Management and Modernization policies"? This question will be addressed in the empirical chapters of the thesis.

4.5 Conclusion

As the literature on the public sector and on the probation service led me to take a closer look at the issue of control, in this chapter I illustrated some of the key theories (with respect to this research) in the field. I looked at the government choices as a consequence of the New Public Management and Modernization policies as illustrated by Hoggett (1996). I then contextualized his findings with those of Ouchi (1975; 1979) and Gabriel (1999) respectively on control modes and mechanisms, and new control mechanisms. In the last section, I presented the research question that emerged in light of my analysis of the literature, thus far. Gabriel's (1999) work suggested that new control mechanisms have a subtle impact on organizational identity and roles; this argument informs the next chapter as I will analyse the literature on identity and roles, and how

they emerge in the context of the public sector with regard to New Public Management and Modernization policies.

Chapter V

Organizational Identity and Organizational Roles

5.0 Introduction

Drawing on Gabriel's (1999) arguments, organizational identity and roles are two main aspects linked to the influence of new control mechanisms on organizational actors. The issue of new control mechanisms in organizations has a subtle and deep impact that reaches employees' sense of selfhood, affecting the way they interpret their roles in the organization and the way they construct their organizational identity (Gabriel, 1999).

In order to widen the picture on the new forms of organizational control in the public sector it is, therefore, crucial to consider the main theoretical insights on how individuals construct their organizational identity and how they define themselves through the roles they cover within the organization. In the following sections I will underline the main aspects of organizational identity and after that I will illustrate the key assumptions of role theory. This aims at showing, at a theoretical level, the relationship between the construction of identity, roles and control mechanisms.

Issues of identity and roles in the public sector will emerge as well as (at the end of this chapter) the fundamental problem with the New Public Management and Modernization policies that led researchers to consider whether, from the perspective of situated actors, the passage from a traditional administrative logic to a new managerial logic has actually happened.

5.1 Organizational Identity

Organizational identity has become an important theoretical concept to explain the relationship between actors and the organizations in which they work, and it has also been defined as the cognitive link between the definition of the organization and the definition of the self (Dutton et al., 1994). Organizational identity can be influenced by the negotiation between the ways the individual wishes to present himself or herself and the norms of the organization (McAuley et al., 2007). In general terms, organizational identity develops when the individual incorporates his/her perceptions of the values of the organization into his/her system of beliefs creating, thus, compatibility between personal ideals and organizational ones (Martin, Beaumont and Pate, 2003).

Academic literature clearly focuses on different aspects of organizational identity generally concerned with understanding its antecedents, consequences, and the elements that determine its constitution. In the next part of this section I will highlight the main views on organizational identity; those views constitute the bedrock of the studies in this field. I will highlight most specifically those perspectives which I feel are of greatest pertinence to my research.

Albert and Whetten (1985) are two key promoters of research on organizational identity. In their seminal work they define identity as that which is central, distinctive and embedded to the organization. Much that has been written on this topic started from this definition. Organizational identity is generally considered as the conceptual means through which actors interpret the characteristics that distinguish their organization from other organizations (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Drawing on this perspective, organizational identity is a collective vision that supports actors in interpreting and attributing meaning to the context in which they work (Weick, 1995). According to Gioia and others (2000), although identity is held at an objective level (as having an independent life from individuals), it is constructed subjectively (Gioia et al., 2000; Scott and Lane, 2000). It is generally thought that the fundamental elements that make

identity resistant to fads and attempts to change it are its ties with the history and the nature of the organization (Gioia et al., 2000).

In Organization Studies, identity is seen as distinct from image, which tends to be associated either with how actors think that their organization is perceived by the outsiders, or how management wish outsiders to view the organization, or, finally, to the general impression that the organization transmits externally (Scott and Lane, 2000). What links the different definitions of organizational image is their emphasis on the evaluations of outsiders. On the contrary, identity represents the interpretations of internal actors. Martin and others (2003) suggest that actors' individual identity is tied to organizational identity.

At the beginning of this section I argued that organizational identity plays a fundamental role in how individuals identify themselves through their relationship with the organization in which they work. According to Martin and others (2003), this identification process happens through the construction of social identity which, in turn, takes place through social comparisons between individuals and their reference groups (i.e. friends, family, colleagues). Subsequently, individuals develop an awareness of belonging to specific social groups (clans) characterized by emotions and values that acquire particular meaning for them and for the people that are part of the groups (Martin et al., 2003). This means that individuals define themselves as belonging to social groups that have meaning and importance for them. In the definition of social identity a second comparison process takes place, namely, between groups. Those belonging to the same social group view each others as similar, and as sharing a common system of norms and values. Consequently, differences between groups are amplified by distinguishing those internal from those external to the group (Pratt, 1998). Organizational identity is a particular manifestation of the above mentioned process of social identity. Sparrow and Cooper (2003) argue that the former emerges from sharing organizational values and beliefs rather than merely accepting them as given. An actor's organizational identity develops around the questions 'who am I and up to what point can I

define myself through the organization?'. According to Sparrow and Cooper (2003) this question highlights a very important difference between organizational identity and commitment towards the organization. They argue that in order for the former to take place it is necessary for the actor to define him/herself through his/her relationship with the organization; on the contrary, for the latter to occur it is necessary for the actor to decide to keep on working for the organization (Sparrow and Cooper, 2003).

According to Alvesson and Empson (2006) who extensively analyzed organizational identity, to date, studies on organizational identity have focused on two main themes: the antecedents of identity, and its consequences and implications. With regard to the first theme, research has found that there are specific factors which increase the sense of employees' organizational identity. Some examples of these factors are (1) working for organizations that have a high status (i.e. Nike, Versace) (Ellemers, 1993); (2) having colleagues that share one's preferences and deep values (Turner et al., 1987); (3) taking part in small groups (Brewer, 1991); (4) little conflict among the identities of the various groups within an organization (Dutton et al., 1994); (5) individuals' personality traits which suggest a high tendency to identify with the organization (Meal and Ashforth, 1995); and (6) organizational values that reflect individual values (Tajfel, 1982). Through these factors individuals' sense of organizational identity is nourished.

Alvesson and Empson (2006) argue that, in relation to the second theme, the implications of organizational identity, research has suggested that when people strongly identify with their organization they perform well, they are satisfied with their jobs, and they develop a deeper sense of belonging. Instead when people tend not to identify themselves with their organization there is potential and actual turnover (Abrams et al., 1998; Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Haslam, 2001). More recent studies on organizational identity, rather than specifically on its antecedents and/or consequences, suggest the presence of organizational identity types (Grote and Raeder, 2009), and frames (Dewulf et al., 2009) in the workplace; however, little attention is given to the aspects that affect organizational identity

construction.

Alvesson and Empson (2006) suggests that for organizational identity to have meaning for actors, individuals should be convinced that the organization actually has characteristics that distinguish it from the other ones operating in the market, and that will continue to define it independently from the possible situations, decisions, actions, and politics implemented across time (Alvesson and Empson, 2006). An example that can clarify the importance of this point in the public sector is the inter-agency work illustrated in chapter III. As explained by Nash (2000), the resistance to the collaboration between the probation service and the police, or the prison, was generated by the fact that probation staff perceived their traditional characteristics (e.g. rehabilitation) as being overwhelmed by those of the police, or the prison.

5.2 The Construction of Organizational Identity

According to the study conducted by Alvesson and Empson (2006), a fundamental problem of modern studies is that of taking for granted the existence of organizational identity, disregarding the context of the organization, and disregarding the interests of the individuals that work within it (Alvesson and Empson, 2006). Not all organizations are interpreted as highly distinct and different from the other ones, positive, and meaningful by all their employees. Likewise not all organizations are easily describable in terms of a few key characteristics. Moreover, in some cases organizations do not inspire their workers to positively interpret their characteristics at all, and, although some individuals may feel affiliated to their jobs, not everybody defines themselves by identifying with their organization. There is remarkable variance among individuals in relation to this theme and this variance cannot be ignored (Alvesson, 2003; Brown and Humphries, 2002).

Although research on organizational identity is very rich, little emerges in terms of the key dimensions through which identity is constructed. A large part

of the literature rooted in providing theoretical studies which aimed to generate structures for understanding identity and identification (Alvesson, 2003). These studies act by defining general and abstract categories and formulating hypotheses on models that tend to be prescriptive. In spite of the frequent reference to the constructed nature of organizational identity, the basis for these studies is the quantitative logic. Conceptualizations that look at identity as something clear, measurable, identifiable and in relation to which is possible to establish cause-effect relationships are widely diffused. The problem, however, is methodological as it is about examining the substance of identity, such as the attributes that intervene in the construction of the distinctiveness, coherence, and durability (substantial attributes in the definition of Albert and Whetten, 1985).

In order to deepen the discourse on organizational identity it is therefore necessary to take a close look at how individuals construct it. Alvesson and Empson (2006) tried to identify what underpins the question 'who are we as an organization?', highlighting the emergence of four main categories related to (1) the degree of knowledge possessed by individuals and how this is applied; (2) how the organization is managed and how actors refer to its management; (3) how actors frame themselves as individuals within the context of the organization; (4) and, finally, how actors think they are perceived by outsiders, and how they perceive others. The four dimensions to which these categories could be associated are respectively knowledge work, management and perception of management, sense of belonging, and personal orientation and interface with the external environment.

These four dimensions tend to represent the point of reference in relation to which actors compare their organization with the others operating in the same context, and define themselves compared to the workers of other organizations (Alvesson and Empson, 2006).

From Alvesson and Empson's (2006) perspective, in general individuals construct organizational identity in order to generate a positive concept of self, leveraging either on emotional aspects or on cognitive ones. The incentive is that

of giving a positive push to self-esteem, mobilizing enthusiasm and a spirit of community rather than really wondering 'who are we as an organization?' (a question that not necessarily leads to motivating responses for the individual). Actors' inclination to be more or less critical in self-evaluation and identity construction varies in relation to the context and the situation in which they work.

The objective of this part of the literature review is to critically look at organizational identity, thus neither denying its existence, nor taking for granted that it is always present, easily identifiable, measurable, and traceable back to cause-effect relations. The arguments of Alvesson and Empson (2006) showed that identity can be constructed by actors in different ways, on the basis of the context in which they operate or on the basis of everyone's will to cope with work related challenges. Organizations' management sometimes attempts to change organizational identity by changing the culture, the values, and the predominant discourses, and this can occur for a variety of reasons (e.g. to cope with the new stimuli of the external environment, or to foster a spirit of competitiveness). In the probation service some examples of the reasons that led to stimulate changes of the organizational identity of the service are offender management, commissioning, and contestability as illustrated in chapter III. When these changes occur, people's response can vary: from acceptance all the way to refusal of identifying with the new drivers of the organization. The following section focuses on the possible reasons why people would resist organizational identity change.

5.2.1 Explaining organizational identity change and resistance to it

The reasons that could lead management to try to change the traits of an organization's identity (Illia, 2005) can be diverse (e.g. linked to organizational change), however, in the literature they tend to be associated to the will to correct a difference between the perceived identity and the identity desired by management (Reger et al., 1994). Nevertheless, when change is perceived as a threat, an attitude of resistance tends to spread among actors. According to Reger and others (1994), in these cases individuals perceive that the traits on which they construct their organizational identity are in jeopardy. Thus, the prompt to organizational identity change that comes from management leads to the emergence of defence mechanisms. Among these there are re-interpretation of the new traits in a way that is coherent with the old ones (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996), negation and rationalization of the old organizational identity in order to reset and interpret the organization from a new perspective (Brown and Starkey, 2000), and idealization of the status quo (Brown and Starkey, 2000).

Since organizational identity is constructed subjectively (in spite of its independence from the individual), in situations of change the threat is interpreted by individuals as an attack to their own identity traits (Dutton et al., 1994; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). In the case of the probation service, NAPO resisted to the New Public Management and Modernization policies that fostered contestability as in the criminal justice sector the market principles cannot apply (e.g. there is no market, there are no consumers and no prospect of creating any). NAPO reinforced the identity of the probation service by arguing that only by retaining probation work as a public service can the government be confident of meeting its commitment to reduce re-offending (cfr. Chapter III).

Overall, after the perception of the threat, the subsequent possible reactions that individuals can enact, according to the literature, can be (1) anti-social behaviours (Aquino and Duglas, 2003) that affect performance and life within the organization; (2) psychological stress (Reger et al., 1994); and (3) anxiety in facing

identity change (Brown and Starkey, 2000). These general reactions imply the will to re-affirm and maintain the old identity (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996) in situations where it is difficult to oppose change.

5.3 Organizational Roles

After having examined the construction of organizational identity and the way it can be influenced by change the next part of the chapter will look at the way actors interpret their roles in the organization. Roles express the part that actors play in the set of interdependent behaviours that form the organization (Katz and Kahn, 1978) and organizations attain stability thanks to the recurrence of such acts (Katz and Kahn, 1978). This conceptualization indirectly puts forward the connection between roles and the enduring attributes of the organization. If control and new control mechanisms affect the construction and reconstruction of organizational identity it can be useful to illustrate what are the effects of such happenings on actors' roles and on the way they are interpreted.

According to Biddle (1979; 1986), whose comprehensive and critical review of role theory is highly valued by researchers in this discipline, there is a lack of explicit, explanatory and propositional theory for the role field. There are two main reasons that he claims are responsible for this: the first one is the confusion that exists in defining and conceptualizing the issue by researchers; the second one, instead, is the fact that much of role theory has been driven by assumptions about consensus, conformity, role conflict, and role taking. Moreover, there is a lack of integration between the efforts of theorists and researchers in the role field because much of the research has been generated by an interest in applying role concepts to solving human problems (Biddle, 1986). Role theory has also been hampered because there is disagreement over major issues that concern the stance and the scope of the field. Whether role theory's concern is to focus attention on the person as an individual, or the person as representative of a social position is crucial for the development of the perspective. While the former

approach addresses roles as evolving, coping strategies adopted by the individual, the latter looks at roles as patterns of behaviour that are typical of individuals whose structural positions are similar (Biddle, 1986). Other problems that constrain the formation of an agreed-upon approach are related to the assumptions that one makes about expectations, in particular, whether they are a component that should be considered in roles or not at all.

Notwithstanding this ongoing debate, my particular interest in organizational roles will be addressed by the perspective of Katz and Kahn (1978). Their work provides one possible framework for explaining the impact of roles in organizations. They propose the concept of role as the major means for linking individual and organizational levels of research theory. They look at roles as both the building block of the organization as a social system, and also the sum of the requirements with which such system confronts their members as individuals. Each person in the organization is linked to some set of other members by virtue of the functional requirement of the system which is heavily implemented through the expectations those members have of him/her; he/she is the focal system for that set. An organization can be seen as consisting of a number of such sets, one for each person in the organization (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

In defining the concept of organizational role, the two authors also highlight the role episode. They conceive it as the process by which the expectations of a member of a role set are linked to the behaviour of the focal person. Thus, the role episode consists of a sequence of events involving members of a role set and the focal person. The first step of the sequence is represented by the role expectations held by the members of the set for the focal person; these are activities which they require of him/her in order to perform their own roles or to maintain their own satisfaction. The following step of the process of the role episode is the transmission of these expectations from the members of the set (e.g. role senders) to the focal person, such as, the communication of role requirements in terms intended to influence his/her behaviour (Katz and Kahn, 1978). The first half of the role episode is completed with the communication of

the role expectations to the focal person. The second half relates to the perceptions and behaviour of the focal person. He/she receives, with greater or lesser distortion, the role expectations which can be seen as the received role. The latter is the immediate source of influence and motivation of his/her behaviour. The final step of the process is related to the focal person taking action; he/she behaves in role, showing some combinations of compliance and some non-compliance with the expectations of his/her set. The other actors observe and evaluate his/her behaviour in relation to their expectations and needs, and thus cycle moves into another role episode.

Some complications arise in connection with the treatment of organizational role in these terms. One role may involve many activities; multiple roles may be incorporated in a single office (intended for performance by a single individual). Moreover, one person may hold a number of offices. Each of these variations adds its own complications to the simple situation in which a single recurrent activity comprises a role, which in turn comprises an office occupied by a person without additional organizational commitments (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

In developing their framework, Katz and Kahn (1978) underline that organizational life is continuous rather than made up in discrete episodes; that members of a role set are often in disagreement among themselves with respect to what the focal person should do; and that the role episode occurs within and is shaped by organizational influence. By considering these elements the two authors identify four possible categories of role conflict, namely, intrasender conflict, when there are incompatible expectations held by a given member of a role set; intersender conflict, when there are incompatible expectations held by two or more members; interrole conflict, when there are incompatibilities between two or more roles held by the same focal person; and person-role conflict, when there are incompatibilities between the requirements of a role and the needs or values of the person holding it. Research has suggested that role conflict can influence the way actors live their relationship with the organization (i.e. their satisfaction in performing their job) (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Roles are linked to organizational identity and this link lies in the process of assessing each on the same dimension of meaning (Burke and Reitzes, 1981). In fact, through this process individuals monitor their own behaviour in terms of the implied meaning of that behaviour. The relevant dimensions of meaning are those on which individuals construct their organizational identity which, in turn, draws from the attribute that individuals believe characterize the organization. Meanings distinguish the individual's role/identity from their counter-role/identities (e.g. what they do not want to be or seem). Therefore, in order to construct a certain type of organizational identity and to define oneself in terms of a certain type of relation with the organization, one must act in a way that supports this identity and this relation (Burke and Reitzes, 1981). Since most role/identities exist within a context of multiple counter-role/identities, there are multiple dimensions of meaning that are relevant in distinguishing among them. The multiplicity of connections between organizational identity and roles, and the meanings that are incorporated in them are influenced by any event that alters the system of beliefs and understandings, defining a different role/identity relation for the actors involved. When novelty occurs (i.e. introduction of a new paradigm that implies new control mechanisms, and a new relationship between the actor and the organization), actors reconstruct their organizational identity and adjust the interpretation of their roles on the basis of the new stimuli. Sometimes this generates pressure and uncertainty among them especially in relation to the meanings to attribute to the new situation (Thomas and Davies, 2005).

5.4 Organizational Identity and Roles in the Public Sector

The review of the literature on organizational identity and on organizational roles illustrated in the previous sections provided a theoretical background for understanding the dynamics that characterize the context of my research. In the following section I will show how the reform policies implemented on the basis of New Public Management and Modernization influenced organizational identity and roles in the public sector.

With the implementation of New Public Management and Modernization policies, the government thought of evaluating the legitimacy of public sector's activities on the basis of outputs and efficiency (Hood, 1991; Kettl, 2000; Pollitt, 2003). The idea was that of introducing a new non-bureaucratic logic into the sector (Hood, 1991; Kettl, 2000; Pollitt, 2003). This inspired academics to consider whether the passage from a traditional administrative logic to a new managerial logic has actually happened. The fundamental organizational problem with such a change is the need to intervene on actors' organizational identity as well as their roles. One of the outcomes of the reform policies was the creation of strategic visioning roles that require strategic planning and management expertise (Ferlie, 1996). However, the creation of these new roles affected the relationships between colleagues (Ferlie, 1996). New and blurred roles appeared in the public sector (Ferlie, 1996) giving rise to people's need to re-interpret their role in the organization. These aspects of the implementation of New Public Management and Modernization policies led some authors (Du Gay, 1996; Meyer and Hammerschmid, 2006) to consider the reform policies as project for the construction of a new identity in public service.

Institutions tend to provide actors with a vocabulary from which they can draw to communicate their organizational identity to outsiders (Scott and Lyman, 1968; Meyer, 2004; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). With the introduction of new categories, new ideals, and new reference models the vocabulary used to define identity has also changed, even before the actual

change of all the other factors (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Rao et al., 2003).

In theory, identity change is necessary for changing institutional logic. Skålen (2004) argues that new forms, new structures, new rules, new procedures, new technologies, and new processes are not sufficient if they are not associated with a push to develop a new identity able to justify their existence (Skålen, 2004). Rao and others (2003) argue that rather than at the abstract level of 'new formal paradigms', or new vocabulary, transformation is possible only at the level of organizational identity. In fact, the latter induces actors to redefine their roles in order for them to positively perceive the new perspective of the organization (Rao et al., 2003). However, if the new institutional logic is in contradiction with the old view, actors will react by putting the new values beside some more traditional ones, creating a new hybrid set of values through which reconstruct organizational identity (Rao et al., 2003).

Studies that looked at the effects of managerial policies on organizational roles and on the construction of organizational identity in the public sector have produced diverse and sometimes contradictory findings. Some have concluded that New Public Management policies have colonized organizational routines and, therefore, have transformed organizational identity into a homogeneous business identity (Meyer, 1994; Power, 1997). Others have explained how the implementation of such policies has not affected identity at all (Brunsson and Hagg, 1992; Brunsson and Olsen, 1997). Still other studies have taken an intermediate position according to which New Public Management and Modernization reforms have only added new identity threats to the ones previously existing (Selander, 2001). According to this last perspective, thus, not only can organizational identity be enhanced with new traits, but it has also an adaptive nature (which changes in relation to the organizational environment). This means that the distinctive, central and enduring values (Albert and Whetten, 1995) to which identity is anchored are in continuous evolution and are re-negotiated and re-constructed by actors while living their work experience within the organization (Gioia et al., 2000). This flexibility can enable the

coexistence of more than one organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 2002). The multiplicity of identities originates from the interaction processes through which actors interpret the relations that tie them to the organization and through which, in turn, define themselves (Weick, 1995). In other words, the interaction between individuals contributes to generate different constructions of organizational identity from which they draw meanings to understand their role in the organization (Weick, 1995).

In order to integrate all this in the managerial policies' arena, the introduction of New Public Management and Modernization has created heterogeneous organizational identities, conflictual and dynamic rather than a new identity oriented to business. This has represented a limitation to the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness which are considered the main objective of the reforms (Skålen, 2004).

The restructuring of the public service has been defined, as mentioned, as a project of identity transformation (Du Gay, 1996). Substantially, the orientation and the ethics of public service needed to be replaced by a logic of public management 'equipped' with its own identity and ethical structure. However, changes have profoundly influenced actors in relation to their roles, to the type of job carried out, to the modes of control, and to relationships with the public. Putting forward a new paradigm and making a new vocabulary available to public sector employees was not enough to redefine their organizational identity as employees perceptions were still synchronized with the old views (Horton, 2006). The loss of specificity and the change of role and operating mode of the public sector have created the need for actors to adjust their organizational identity in relation to the new stimuli introduced by the new policies (Horton, 2006). All attempts to impose an identity structure in the public sector need to be considered with regard to actors' inclination to resist, mainly due to their experiences of pressure and uncertainty about the meanings to attribute to novelty (Thomas and Davies, 2005).

The conceptualization of reform policies as a project of identity transformation

is contradictory. Although organizational identity is conceptualized objectively (collectively) but constructed subjectively, its 'attribution' from the top is a conceptual contradiction. Actors base their will to accept, reject, or adapt what happens in their context on subjective judgements (Thomas and Davies, 2005), independently from what New Public Management and Modernization policies have tried (and still try) to impose on them. The processes of identity construction and the resistance generated by the tensions of paradigm change have given rise to different interpretations that could not have been easily predicted or addressed.

As noted in chapter III and in this chapter, some studies (Nash, 2000; Raine and Willson, 1997) highlighted that New Public Management and Modernization policies affected the identity of the probation service by blurring the distinctions between the criminal justice agencies (e.g. police, probation, and prison), and by promoting competition in the probation service. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to the effects of the reform policy imposition of punishment-oriented values over rehabilitation. Although Newman and Nutley (2003) argue that New Public Management and Modernization shook pre-existing professional and organizational identities in the probation service, nothing emerges on how this happened and what were the implications of it. This gap in the literature leads to specifically look at the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies on a) the organizational identity of probation service employees, and b) probation service employees' organizational roles.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the theoretical underpinnings of organizational identity and roles as these two aspects were identified by Gabriel (1999) as being linked to the implementation of new control mechanisms in organizations. The focus on the public sector attempted to pull together the abstractness of identity and explore it in this context. The chapter concluded by highlighting a gap in the existing literature with regard to the effects of New Public Management and Modernization policies on the organizational identity and roles of probation service employees.

Chapter VI

Methodology

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I provide first of all an overview of my qualitative perspective explaining the reasons that led me to choose it. I then outline the characteristics of the ethnographic study which I used for my research and I discuss the issues of validity and reliability. I focus on the role of the researcher in ethnography coupling it with my personal experience in the organization object of my field study, and the problems with access in ethnographic research. Throughout the chapter I refer to my personal experience as a researcher. I describe the research process following the stages suggested by LeCompte and Schensul (1999). I then highlight the research methods, the characteristics of the sample, and the way I analysed data. I conclude the chapter by revisiting the research questions which will set the scene for the discussion chapters. In the appendix to the thesis there will be examples of the interview guides, an interview transcript with the coding template for analysing data, emails I exchanged with staff in my field study organization, diary extracts from observations, and board meeting minutes.

6.1 The Qualitative Approach

The methodology developed for this study is driven largely by the objective of finding a way to account theoretically for National Probation Service employees' lived experiences of New Public Management and Modernization policies. My intention is not that of highlighting an objective truth but understanding the context and the people that act within it. The attention to the uniqueness of the experience and to the richness and detail of the data are central in my research.

Exploring these aspects requires a methodology to be flexible enough to

examine policies that affect organizational processes (i.e. setting targets, establishing guidelines, performing) and people's behaviours. Moreover in my case, methodology needs to be scenario-based to allow understanding of how the specific organizational setting affects the way people make sense of reality. Finally, my study objective also requires a methodology to be dynamic in order to capture impacts over a long term and adjust according to the evolution of the setting.

These considerations led me to choose a qualitative perspective. This way of doing research tends to emphasise an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research itself (e.g. observations and findings drive theory rather than the opposite, which instead characterizes a deductive approach). According to Bryman (2004), who has written extensively on social research methods, the qualitative perspective emphasizes the ways in which individuals interpret their social world, and embodies a view of social reality constantly interpreted by them. Creswell (2003) provided insights to illustrate the peculiarities of the qualitative approach in light of the different perspectives that have been put forward by researchers. He explains that qualitative research first of all takes place in natural settings and gives the researcher the opportunity to explore phenomena involved in the actual experience of participants. Secondly, he argues that qualitative research uses multiple methods that involve active participation by those who take part in the study and it requires sensitivity to their experiences. The methods of data collection, according to Creswell (2003) include a vast array of materials like "sounds, emails, and other emerging forms" (Creswell, 2003; p. 181). Thirdly, he continues by arguing that qualitative research is emergent, in the sense that a number of different aspects come out during a qualitative study. This leads the researcher to re-formulate or change the research questions and refine the way of proceeding as new situations evolve. Fourthly, qualitative research is interpretative in that the researcher interprets the data by developing descriptions of the settings, analysing data in search for themes or categories, and drawing conclusions about its meaning "personally

and theoretically" (Creswell, 2003; p.182). The two last elements that define qualitative research, according to Creswell (2003) are the fact that the researcher is sensitive to his/her personal background and to how this shapes and affects the study, and the fact that he/she uses multifaceted, iterative and simultaneous reasoning.

6.2 The Ethnographic Study

To understand the meaning and essence of National Probation Service employees' lived experiences of New Public Management and Modernization policies, I used an ethnographic study. The ethnographic study design was the most appropriate for my research because I sought to understand a phenomenon that requires qualitative research with particular attention to the context in which it takes place. In my research the context cannot be isolated from the people because I explicitly look at how people live their experience in their particular context. As Cassell and Simon (1995, p. 5) have argued "taking an explicitly contextual perspective recognizes the influence that the situation has on behaviour and that behaviour has on situations". The emphasis on study in context can be stressed by an ethnographic study design more than by any other type of design (Robson, 2002). My choice was also supported by Hartley (2004, p.324) who suggests that ethnographic studies are appropriate designs when "the phenomenon is not isolated from its context but is of interest precisely because it is in relation to its context". The research for my thesis meets this condition. Following, I will discuss the reliability and validity aspects in ethnographic studies.

The issue of how well the ethnographic study can meet the criteria of reliability, and validity has been considered by writers on ethnographic research, as LeCompte and Goetz (1982) who are considered as key contributors in the field. In general, one of the criticisms on qualitative based designs is that findings cannot be generalized.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) argue that the tenets of reliability and validity used in positivist research have been translated and applied to ethnographic and qualitative studies in general (e.g. case study research, field research, anthropological research) despite the fact that positivist and qualitative research do not share the same traditions. The scientific contribution of qualitative research lies in the differences from the positivist one in terms of formulation of problems, nature of goals, and application of results (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

Reliability is about two main issues (Hansen, 1979), namely the possibility for independent researchers to discover the same phenomena in the same or in similar settings (external reliability), and the extent to which other researchers can match, with their data, previously generated constructs (internal reliability). According to this point, if a researcher uses the same methods of those who previously studied a particular phenomenon, he/she should be able to obtain the same results as the ones obtained by his/her predecessors. Nevertheless, the nature of the data and the research process, but also the conventions in the presentation of findings and the traditional modes of training researchers make reliability complicated to obtain in qualitative studies. In particular, ethnographic research "occurs in natural settings and often is undertaken to record processes of change; because unique situations cannot be reconstructed precisely, even the most exact replication of research methods may fail to produce identical results" (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; p. 35).

With regard to validity, instead, the focus moves on the accuracy of the findings. The main concern of validity is the extent to which the findings effectively represent the empirical reality, and the constructs devised by the researcher represent the actual conditions of human experience that occur. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) explain that the full immersion and permanence in the research setting represent a point of strength for this type of research especially because they provide opportunities for continual data analysis and comparison. Both, in turn, enable the researcher "to refine constructs and to

ensure the match between scientific categories and participant reality" (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982; p. 43). However, when it comes to comparing and contrasting the research findings of a setting with other groups, qualitative designs, especially the ones based on ethnography, may not easily meet the comparing criteria. According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982) this could happen because some constructs are specific to a single group and cannot be compared across groups, or because constructs are valid only for the context under investigation rather than for the context only, or because of the unique historical experiences of groups and cultures, or finally because of the fact that definitions and meanings of terms and constructs can vary among researchers.

Keeping in mind my main objective - which was that of exploring the ways in which actors made sense of their lived experience at the time I was conducting the study - from the validity perspective, apart from continuously adjusting the constructs during the year I spent in the organization, I aimed to data accuracy by routinely asking for clarification during the interviews themselves. I aimed at focusing on the sense of what each respondent said. At the very beginning of the interview stage I realized that terms like 'efficiency' and 'contestability' had different meanings for the respondents, thus I needed to be particularly alert in asking every time what exactly words used in the workplace everydayness meant to them, also avoiding to attribute my own meaning to those words. Moreover, during the feedback sessions with my supervisors we spent time categorizing the data, although there was a limit to this since a PhD is an individual process by nature.

6.2.1 An ethnographic perspective

Ethnography aims to study people in their natural setting to capture the way they construct social meanings and the way they carry out their ordinary activities (Brewer, 2004). There are several underlying principles to ethnography as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain, and I will highlight them as follows according to these two authors' perspective.

First of all, ethnography is naturalistic which means that studies are conducted on real people (and their activities) operating in their natural environment. Secondly, ethnography is prolonged. The main reasons for prolongation are three, namely, ethnographers have no clear idea of what they will find; their focus may change in course of action, and the context may require time to be understood. A third principle of ethnography is that it fosters the understanding of the world from the point of view of those who inhabit it. This occurs because it draws attention on the detail of behaviour and on what this means to the people who undertake it. Finally, ethnographic data is eclectic, such as it resists formalization, it can include general descriptions of behaviours, close descriptions of conversations, thoughts and feelings, anecdotes. This data is also difficult to reduce to an essential form for analysis. Ethnography combines several methods of data collection, such as interviewing and observation (Fielding, 2001).

These principles guided me in the choice of the perspective I was going to give to my research. First of all, understanding meaning in the National Probation Service could not be done setting aside the natural environment in which National Probation Service actors operate, since the qualitative approach I took from the beginning suggests me that the context and the people that act within it are linked.

Secondly, I was not confident that a 'one-week-stay' in the Probation Service (which can be enough to carry out a reasonable number of interviews) would have given me the opportunity to grasp employees' experience of their working

life (Bryman, 2004). Thus, I chose an approach that enabled me to spend a prolonged period of time in the organization, and ethnography suited the case (upon obtaining the organization's consent) (Bryman, 2004).

Thirdly, having embraced the qualitative approach for my study - which emphasises the ways in which individuals interpret their social world, and embodies a view of social reality constantly interpreted by them (Bryman, 2004) - ethnography seemed to me appropriate to gather data in a way that considered the meaning that people attribute to their actions, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest.

Finally, the challenge represented by the objective of the research calls for variety of data and variety of collection methods to make sure that the essence and meaning of people's experience can be captured. This need, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain, can be satisfied by ethnography which provides eclectic data.

6.2.2 Access

One of the most difficult steps in ethnographic research, according to Bryman (2004), is gaining access to a social setting that is relevant to the research problem. In my case, access to the research setting was facilitated by timing – I was in the right place at the right time. In fact, I contacted the organization in a moment they needed research support for improving their internal communication flows. The condition that granted me access to the organization (from now on Region-X Probation Area or RPA, which I will detail extensively in the seventh chapter) was my collaboration in mapping the communication flows, detecting the problems that weakened the network, and putting forward some possible solutions to achieve a balanced trade off between internal communication efficiency and effectiveness. Although the organization had a communication team in charge of both internal and external communication, the work overload generated by the external communication issues (e.g. relationship with the

media) created the need for the communication team to have an 'extra asset' (this is the expression the team members often used when introducing me to staff) who could have exclusively focused on the internal communication. Carrying out the project was the condition I accepted in exchange for the access to the organization.

As Bryman (2004) suggests, the problem with access is not resolved once an organization has accepted the researcher; in fact, there is still the need to access to people. Bryman (2004) explains that people may have suspicions about the researcher. They may see him/her as an instrument of top management, therefore, they will worry that what they express may be reported to their managers, or to their colleagues. If this should happen, research may be sabotaged by misinformation, and deceptions (Bryman, 2004).

To overcome these difficulties I followed Bryman's suggestions on playing up my credentials, being non-judgemental, and working on the role I had in the organization. In particular, with regard to these three points, I highlighted my past work experience, my knowledge of the public sector and of the general problems it was facing since the implementation of the New Public Management policies. Secondly, I tried to be as neutral and non-judgemental as possible when things were said to me about informal activities or about the organization. Finally, I emphasised covering the role of problem-solver in conducting the internal communication project.

However, I realized that I had gained people's trust when I started being invited to the informal social gatherings by those belonging to the 'grapevine'. In particular, I am referring to the people whose names were mentioned frequently by the majority of the other actors (working in all the different offices of the RPA) as those that were the gatekeepers. The majority of employees sought to confide in me. This was helped by the fact that senior managers generally did not engage with the work I was doing and instead kept their distance from me. This seemed to contribute to a feeling amongst staff that I was not in management's pocket.

Access to people was initially favoured by the fact that I had two sponsors,

namely the people that put me in contact with the board of the organization when I was asking for the possibility to carry out ethnographic work in their setting. These sponsors became my key informants in the course of my subsequent fieldwork. Bryman (2004) suggests that key informants can be of crucial help to the ethnographer, although it is important not to develop an undue reliance on them. Being aware of this risk I always interacted with them and considered their information as impartially as possible.

Access to the RPA enabled me to collect data from all the offices present on the County's territory (which I will not disclose for anonymity reasons). Sometimes I encountered people who acted as informants without the need for me to solicit them. Such unsolicited sources of information are highly attractive for the researcher, Bryman (2004) explains. In the appendix of the thesis there is an example of the first email exchange I had with who was going to be one of my two contacts at the RPA.

6.2.3 The role of the researcher

In the first part of this sub-section I will illustrate what has been highlighted by researchers in relation to the various types of roles that can emerge when doing ethnography. This will be useful to introduce my personal experience in the second part.

Through ethnography the researcher directly participates in the setting to collect data systematically without the external imposition of meaning on them (Brewer, 2004). As Fielding (2001) suggests, the ethnographer needs to become part of the organizational setting and this requires learning the language in use. The language not only refers to the jargon in use but also to the meanings that can be unfamiliar for those who are not working in the organization. Fielding (2001) explains that the reflection in the field, guided by the understanding of this language, allows the researcher to identify first of all the rules that govern relationships in the setting, and consequently any patterns in actors' behaviour.

The most important trade-off for the researcher is deciding up to what point to engage in impression management, such as masking one's feelings. Fielding (2001) suggests that the researcher should neither get along too well with the actors of the setting, nor dislike them too much. In the first case the researcher may incur the risk of "going native" (Fielding, 2001; p. 149) which happens if he/she forgets to be a researcher and totally embraces organizational life (e.g. becoming a new member of the group). On the other hand, if the researcher really dislikes the actors up to a point that too much acting would be involved the risk is that of being too detached from the setting. In this case the approach can be too superficial (Fielding, 2001).

Bryman (2004) also argues about the role that the ethnographer adopts in relation to the social setting and its members and he underlines its importance. In light of Gold's (1958) classification, Bryman (2004) considers four possible roles that the researcher can cover while doing ethnographic research. These roles develop on the basis of researcher's degree of involvement in the organization and are: *the complete participant* – a fully functioning member of the social setting whose real identity is not known to other members (e.g. covert observer), *the participant as observer* – the difference with the first role is that in this case members of the organization are aware of the researcher's status (e.g. overt role), *the observer as participant* – in this case the researcher is mainly an interviewer, there is some observation but very little of it involves any participation "because of considerations of legality and interrupting operational policing" (Bryman, 2004, p. 301), and finally *the complete observer* – in this case the researcher does not interact with people and people do not have to take him/her into account. Bryman (2004) argues that most researchers do not consider complete observers to be ethnographers since ethnography entails immersion in a social setting and prolonged involvement.

All these roles carry advantages and disadvantages. Indeed, according to Bryman (2004) being a complete participant ensures no problems of access and of actors' behaviour adjustment (e.g. people are more likely to avoid adjusting their

behaviour because they ignore that the researcher is such); however, it makes it problematic to take notes and to use other research methods (e.g. interviews), it also keeps the researcher in a constant state of anxiety, and transgresses work ethics (e.g. participants do not have the opportunity for informed consent, and are deceived by their colleague/researcher). According to Gold (1958) the participant as observer role, instead, offers the opportunity to get close to people but is counterbalanced by the risk of over-identification and going native (e.g. the ethnographer loses his/her sense of being a researcher and is affected by the view of the people he/she is studying, as Fielding (2001) argued). Gold (1958) also highlights the risks of the observer-as-participant role. He argues that this role carries the risk of not understanding the setting and the people in it inducing the researcher to make incorrect inferences. Finally, with regard to the last role, such as the complete observer, Bryman (2004) argues that it carries a higher risk than the observer-as-participant in terms of failing to understand situations.

Gans (1968) offered a different classification of ethnographers' roles which continues to reflect the degree of involvement of the researcher highlighted by Gold, but deals only with overt observation, and recognizes that ethnographers adopt more than one role throughout their study. This last aspect permits the researcher to be more flexible and avoid excessive involvement or detachment. The roles that Gans (1968) illustrated are: *the total participant* – in which the ethnographer is completely involved in the situation and writes down notes once the situation is completely resolved; *the researcher-participant* – in which the ethnographer is only semi-involved in a situation so that he/she can act as a researcher in the course of the situation; *and the total researcher* – in which the ethnographer observes the situation without any involvement in it.

Although Gans' (1958) classification provides interesting suggestions for understanding my role within the organization that I studied, particularly with regard to role flexibility, Gummesson's (1991) work offers a more appropriate alternative. This author argues about role duality, in particular with regard to the roles of consultants and researchers. He explains that researchers can perform

these two roles simultaneously. Loan-Clarke and Preston (2002) suggest some of the limitations that holding a dual role such that of consultant and researcher may generate (e.g. "standing back from the operational requirements of the project in a 'neutral way for research purposes", Loan-Clarke and Preston, 2002, p. 177). This emphasizes the importance of rigour in research methods in carrying out a dual role (Loan-Clarke and Preston, 2002).

As a consultant

I operated in this role because of my involvement in the internal communication project of the RPA. I was keen to operating in the role of consultant as I thought that doing some work for the organization would enable me to uncover more of the actors' behavioural patterns (Bryman, 2004). What justifies my dual role is that while I was conducting interviews for the RPA project I was also gathering data for my research. This semi-involvement was sometimes difficult to coordinate because of the thin line between the two activities (research and participation in organizational issues). In fact, when interviewees discussed about their view on internal communication their opinions were connected to their understanding of the organization (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982) and this led me to think always half-and-half, where on one side I was operating for the company and on the other for my research. By operating as a consultant I periodically delivered the results of the internal communication project to the members of the Board. As I was gaining acquaintance with staff I also participated in the informal gatherings organized by some of the members of the organization.

As a researcher

Operating as a total researcher mainly happened when I collected data just by observation. The fact that I had a desk in a shared office at RPA's headquarter exposed me a lot to other people's interactions. These varied across a wide range of topics, from information exchange all the way to complaints about policies,

from personal stories all the way to expressing deep hate for other colleagues. Sitting at my desk in the shared office at headquarters, and joining the shared areas were the main situations in which I operated as a total researcher. I was sensitive to people's conversations and to the natural delivery of their stories.

Relevant data I collected while operating as a consultant were annotated only after meetings and presentations since the setting itself did not allow me to act as a researcher (Bryman, 2004). The same occurred for the data which emerged from the social gatherings. In fact showing too much involvement in the research during informal social gatherings could have jeopardized access to people. In these cases I just participated in the activities that were object of the gathering (e.g. being a team member for quiz nights' contests, taking active part in people's farewell parties). I looked at informal gatherings as organizational events tout court as actors' ways of making sense of their reality also emerged from those instances.

Overall, reflexivity was a challenge I constantly dealt with in carrying out my research in the RPA. Reflexivity is about self-scrutinizing the relationship between the researcher and the object of the research (Johnson and Duberley, 2003). In spite of the fact that different types of reflexivity have been identified (Johnson and Duberley, 2003), my way of dealing with this issue was to confront and question the taken-for-granted assumptions that inform my knowledge claims. Although I experienced some tensions in doing so, my role within the RPA reflected the flexibility that Gans (1968) mentions with regard to ethnographers. As Loan-Clarke and Preston (2002) highlight, there can still be problems of involvement or detachment from the setting, however, in my experience I was continuously adjusting to avoid excesses in both ways as well as responding to the needs which arose from the different situations that occurred (e.g. if I were accidentally passing by the kitchen overhearing two people discussing about issues pertinent to my research I would act as a researcher; while, if I were to meet a deadline for the communication project I would act as a consultant, taking notes about research matters only at the end of my work).

6.3 The research process

LeCompte and Schensul (1999) explain that ethnographic research has the following major steps:

1) Developing the research base, this occurs by framing the research questions, building guiding theory, identifying the population, and finding the research site;

2) Deciding on research methods, which include determining sampling procedures, developing a data collection plan, designing data collection methods, and scheduling data collection;

3) Deciding on field situations, this occurs by developing human subjects guidelines, determining staffing plans, defining training protocols, and determining field security;

4) Selecting data analysis procedures, which include mainly deciding on text coding system, and deciding on procedures for analysis of data.

Below, I will explain each one of these steps in relation to my research experience.

1) The research base

With regard to the identification of the research questions, my process was more iterative than linear. In fact, as the study progressed, I defined and re-defined them according to the evolution of the research. This also happened with my literature review that moved from initially providing a general framework to identifying the specific area on which I aimed to focus my attention.

The case study organization, the RPA was selected by recommendation. Shortly after contacting the organization, the Board gave ethics approval to carry out my research. In fact, before the research could begin the RPA Board consensus needed to be obtained. This involved supplying a description of the research project plus signing a statement in which I declared to keep anonymous the identity of the actors that were going to be involved in the research and to not

disclose information that could have permitted any type of tracking back to them.

As mentioned, I was able to carry out my research in the RPA because of networking, and because the organization was facing a problem with internal communication that required the activity of a researcher. Once I had access to the organization, I started working at the communication project but I also identified organizational actors in all hierarchical levels of the RPA as the population for my research.

2) Research methods

Research data was collected from multiple sources. Triangulation (Bryman, 2004) allowed comparisons among the different data sources to better understand answers to the research questions. In particular, I used participant and non-participant observation, gathering of official documents, and semi-structured interviews.

Identification of the sample - For the identification of the sample I took on board Bryman's (2004) suggestions. In his view, the sampling of informants in ethnographic research can often be a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling occurs when the researcher chooses his/her sample on the basis of accessibility. The main problem with this type of sampling is the difficulty in generalizing the findings because the characteristics of the population involved in the sample are not known (Bryman, 2004). Of course this represents a problem only if the researcher is concerned with generalizing his/her findings rather than with understanding the dynamics of a specific unique organizational setting. Snowball sampling, instead, is characterized by the researcher contacting an initial small group of people who are relevant to the research topic, and then using these to get in contact with others (Bryman, 2004). In this case, population representativeness can be an issue but, as well as for convenience sampling, in qualitative research the researcher

may not necessarily be worried about having a non-representative population; representativeness may not be the major object of interest of the researcher. Bryman (2004) explains that, although convenience and snowball sampling have limitations with regard to generalizability and representativeness, they can provide interesting data. For my study I used both types. I started with snowball sampling as I was particularly interested in the accounts of people occupying specific positions in the hierarchy of the RPA, namely the managerial level and the staff level. After spending some time in the organization, I started working in parallel on a convenience sample.

Observation – As I mentioned earlier in this chapter when describing my role in the organization, observation was an important, although not predominant, part of my data collection. Fetterman (1998) explains that the process of observation "in the beginning is somewhat uncontrolled and haphazard. [...] The ethnographer searches out experiences and events as they come to attention. [However then observation] becomes more refined as the fieldworker understands more and more about the culture". At the beginning of my stay in the RPA, observation was the tool I used to understand the context in which my research was going to take place (see examples of data in appendix). In its early stage, my observation activity materialized in watching and listening to people. I was always trying not to be perceived as invasive. This was coupled with taking notes on what people were talking about, how they were interacting, and in what physical space (e.g. openly in the corridor, or whispering in the kitchen while making some tea). I was particularly interested in the informal networks among people (e.g. who is friend with whom?), in the relationships of like and dislike (example taken from the data - who does not like Adolfo and why?), in the communication and power dynamics (example taken from the data - even if Vanna is just a secretary why does everyone look at her as an opinion leader?), and in understanding who were the gatekeepers (example taken from the data – why does everyone refer to Alfio when talking about the 'grapevine'), in the

sense highlighted by Davenport and Prusak (1998), namely those who make connections between people. In my notes I described the physical context in which people were talking, what they were doing while talking, what they were talking about, and with what spirit (e.g. anxiety, happiness, sarcasm). The purpose of considering all these elements was to underline issues that I thought significant but that might have not emerged from the interviews.

Observation more than interviews led me to make a shift in my research which resulted in the revision of my interview guide and definition of an observation strategy which matched better with the focus of my study. I will discuss the interview guide and its reiterations later in this chapter.

Official documents - For the purpose of data collection I also considered a wide range of documentary sources. Bryman (2004) suggests that generally there are four characteristics that distinguish documents used for research purposes, both quantitative and qualitative. First of all, these documents can be read; secondly, they have not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research; thirdly, they are preserved so that they become available for analysis; and finally, they are relevant to the concerns of the social researcher.

On the basis of Bryman's (2004) definition, I looked at both personal documents (e.g. emails), and official documents deriving from what Bryman (2004) defines as private sources (such as staff that gave them to me). Examples of those official documents are annual reports, mission statements, press releases, advertisements, public relation material in printed form, and on the World Wide Web, newsletters, organizational charts, and minutes of meetings. I looked at these documents to understand how the organization dealt with its image outside and inside the service, which were the targets at a local level and how the organization aimed to achieve them, and mainly to compare what was recorded officially with what I observed. In the appendix to this chapter there is an example of meeting minutes that can give an idea of some of the targets of the organization and the way it approached them.

Scott (1990), who has thoroughly looked at the role of documents in quantitative and qualitative research, argues that there are limitations in using these types of sources. In fact, he explains that there are four main issues that researchers should keep in mind when considering documentary sources. These issues are related to the authenticity of the document, to the credibility of what is stated in it, to its representativeness, and to its meaning. According to Scott (1990) these represent the criteria against which documents should be measured. The relevance of these criteria varies according to the kind of document being assessed. With regard to my study, some of the concerns raised by the criteria can be mitigated by the fact that the documents are authentic because their origin is genuine and unquestionable. In relation to representativeness, I was not particularly interested in looking at the extent to which the evidence was typical of that kind or atypical since my main priority was that of understanding what emerged from the documents. Therefore, I was not concerned about this criterion. In relation to meaningfulness, the documents that I have examined were meaningful with regard to the topic they dealt with which supports the interpretation according to Bryman (2004) and Scott (1990). With regard to credibility, instead, I have carefully considered the fact that people who write documents are likely to have a particular point of view that they want to get across. Although Scott (1990) looks at this as a limitation because it impedes the provision of objective accounts, I interpreted it as critical data since actors' (e.g. individuals, or the formal organization) subjectivity was what I was interested in, therefore, those documents were credible in representing situational actors' understandings and views.

The semi-structured interview - As Bryman (2004) suggests, ethnography usually involves a substantial amount of interviewing and this factor contributes to its widespread use by qualitative researchers (Bryman, 2004). I used interviews to collect data on actors' points of view and insights on what they interpreted as relevant and important within their setting. There are two major types of

qualitative interview, namely, the unstructured and the semi-structured interview. According to Bryman (2004), in the first type the researcher has only a brief set of promts to help him/her to deal with a certain range of topics. In general, the researcher starts by asking one question and then allows the interviewee to respond freely, following up only on points that are of particular interest and need to be looked at closer. Burgess (1984) argued that unstructured interviews tend to be similar to conversations. Instead, in the semi-structured interview, Bryman (2004) explains, the researcher has a list of specific questions or topics to be covered which are referred to as interview guide. In spite of the presence of this guide, the interviewee still has a great deal of flexibility in how to reply. In both types of interviews the emphasis is on understanding how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events and what he/she sees as important in explaining and understanding situations, patterns and forms of behaviour (Bryman, 2004).

I used the second type of interview in my study. Although in my interview guide I followed a formal set of questions derived from my interest in understanding the setting, the type of interactions that characterized it, and people's understanding of these elements, I kept an option for emergent topics and questions during the progress of the interview because both the research and the respondents were contextually based. A sample of the interview guide is shown in the appendix of the thesis.

Interview guide – The interview questions were approved by the organization without any changes. Following my initial thought which was to research communication aspects within the RPA, the questions in the initial interview guide aimed to enquire about activities, behaviours, beliefs, communication and interaction dynamics of RPA's actors. This initial guide was divided into three sections. The first one dealt with the person's background and formal role in the organization, the second one dealt with relationships between people, and within teams and departments, and finally the third one dealt with experiences and

perceptions of formal and informal interactions. While I had initially started by looking at communication and interaction dynamics, as the interviews and observations progressed, I moved into looking at employees' experiences and perceptions of the changes that had been introduced in the organization, central to which were new control mechanisms. Thus, there were two stages to my research. In the first stage, by using the initial interview guide, issues of the introduction of managerialism and new control mechanisms emerged. In the second stage I focused on the issues which were to become central to this thesis. There was not a clear distinction between the two stages of the study; the passage from the first one to the second one was progressive. This evolution was driven by actors' accounts.

The interview guide that I used in the second stage dealt with the changes in the National Probation Service, the way these changes were reflected on the local sphere, the way they affected actors' performance, and how people interpreted them. The second interview guide (see appendix 3, part 2) was more flexible than the first one. Although I followed a structure, I left respondents freer to express their views since once certain topics were brought up they used to become very passionate about them.

3) *Field situations and related decisions*

Recruitment of participants: a closer look – With regard to the interview sample, I initially thought of a medium-sized sample that could have reflected the diversity of the RPA in terms of age, positions, and ethnicity (Bryman, 2004). In addition, once I started 'operating', I identified key informants and moved on from there. The rationale of the sampling method was theoretically driven by the research questions. I considered it important to collect the accounts of interviewees at all hierarchical levels; I was not concerned about who exactly I was going to interview within a specific level of the hierarchy. In defining my sampling method my aim was to balance what is desirable from a research perspective with what was possible within the organization. In this respect,

Buchanan and others (1993) suggest that, in doing fieldwork, there is a constant conflict between what is desirable and what is possible. These authors explain that it is desirable to ensure representativeness of the sample, uniformity of interview procedures, and adequate data collection. Nevertheless, because of practical constraints (e.g. members of organizations blocking access to information, constrain of the time allocated for the interviews, etc.) sometimes the researcher has to adapt to what is possible (Buchanan et al., 1993). In arguing this point, Buchanan and others (1993) do not rule out "the need for controlled, systematic, morally justifiable methods and scientific rigour" (Buchanan et al., 1993, p. 67). Once I defined my sample, I carried out the first interviews with people from all hierarchical levels and asked them if they knew any other person who might have been willing to get involved. In some cases I did not had to ask, they were providing me with 'their lists'. In one case a respondent emailed me (after the interview) with her list of people that she thought would have been useful to interview. A copy of this email is in the appendix to the thesis. In another case a respondent came to me saying that he had heard about my research and he wanted to be interviewed.

My final sample was composed of forty-five respondents who occupied all the different hierarchical levels of the organization and who were based in all the locations in which the RPA operated. Their age varied from below 25 all the way to over 56. Although there was one person who came up to me to be interviewed and although different people suggested 'lists' of others they thought crucial for my research, I ended up screening these lists and interviewing only those that either recurred frequently in the majority of the suggestions, or that I thought appropriate (in relation to what I had observed, heard, and known) for the theoretically driven interview, trying to overcome bias in participants (e.g. supporters or critics).

Description of the sample – following I will highlight the main features of my sample as tables. Respondents are given pseudonyms and are numbered

according to the order in which they were interviewed (the rationale for this is also keeping anonymity).

Table 6.1 Pseudonym, role covered in the RPA, age range, and gender

No.	Pseudonyms	Role	Age range	Gender
1	Pervinca	Communication officer (line manager)	25-35	F
2	Olimpia	Communication officer	Over 56	F
3	Gemma	Finance officer	25-35	F
4	Irene	Business Development officer	36-45	F
5	Martina	Probation service officer	25-35	F
6	Giulia	Communication officer (middle manager)	Over 56	F
7	Adele	Accommodation officer	46-55	F
8	Stella	Housing officer (line manager)	Over 56	F
9	Pierluigi	Service officer (middle manager)	Over 56	M
10	Vincenza	Receptionist	Over 56	F
11	Vittoria	Personal assistant	Below 25	F
12	Artemide	IT officer	25-35	F
13	Rebecca	Personnel officer	25-35	F
14	Ester	HR officer (middle manager)	46-55	F
15	Samuele	Board member	Over 56	M
16	Antonia	Board member	Over 56	F
17	Piergiorgio	Board member	Over 56	M
18	Leone	Interventions officer (manager)	36-45	M
19	Giovanni	IT officer (line manager)	36-45	M
20	Alessandro	Service officer	25-35	M
21	Iacopo	IT officer (line manager)	36-45	M
22	Francesco	Finance officer	36-45	M
23	Enrica	Finance officer (ex-Personnel officer)	Over 56	F
24	Vanna	Personal Assistant	46-55	F
25	Dussolina	Offender Management officer (manager)	36-45	F
26	Katia	Chief executive	Over 56	F
27	Menica	Probation service officer	Over 56	F
28	Alfio	City branch officer (middle manager)	Over 56	M
29	Fausto	Probation officer	Below 25	M

30	Isabella	City branch officer (middle manager)	36-45	F
31	Eleonora	Probation service officer	25-35	F
32	Agata	County office manager	36-45	F
33	Adelaide	Probation officer	26-35	F
34	Evelina	Probation officer	46-55	F
35	Fabiana	Personal assistant	46-55	F
36	Letizia	Probation service officer	46-55	F
37	Dante	County office manager	Over 56	M
38	Wanda	Probation officer	36-45	F
39	Selvaggia	Probation service officer	25-35	F
40	Viviana	Personal assistant	46-55	F
41	Brigida	Communication officer (line manager)	25-35	F
42	Alice	County office manager	Over 56	F
43	Enea	Probation officer	36-45	M
44	Biancamaria	Probation service officer	36-45	F
45	Ludovico	Operations officer	46-55	M

All the respondents over 56 started working in the RPA as probation officers so they witnessed the changes that the service went through the years especially from 1997 onwards (year in which the Labour government took over and the Modernization process began and reinforced the issues of accountability and efficiency in the Public Sector. These policies were initially put forward by the Conservative governments in the 1980's under the name of New Public Management).

All respondents below 25 started working in the RPA after the local changes occurred (from 2005 onwards). I give an extensive explanation of these changes in chapter II.

Conduct of interviews – I carried out forty-five interviews with RPA actors (e.g. employees and managers) who worked across X-shire County, over a timescale of one year. The interviews lasted from between fifty minutes and one hour, and took place at the office where each respondent was based in (e.g. Headquarters or one of the other locations in the county). Interviews were taped

and transcribed verbatim. Through them I was able to take a close look into actors' lived experience at RPA, and into the way they made sense of it. The first ten interviews were an initial investigation to clarify issues and focus progressively, those interviews were more related to the internal communication issues. Although I had not thought of ten as the exact number of interviews that were going to be part of the initial investigation, that is when I started re-elaborating my interview guide.

All the interviews began with discussing the issue of confidentiality and the fact that the interview was going to be tape recorded. I invited respondents to read the confidentiality agreement, to ask clarifying questions if they had any doubts, and to feel free to withdraw from the interview at any point if they felt uncomfortable with it. In each interview I asked respondents to provide me with demographic information, namely age range (e.g. below 25; 25-35; 36-45; 46-56; over 56), and gender. After that I would turn on the tape recorder and start by asking information related to their job in the organization (e.g. "What is your Job"? "Who do you report to"?). These questions did not require a lot of effort to answer, represented a way to break the ice, and gave me important contextual insights.

I asked respondents to talk about their jobs, in what way they performed them, and for how long they had been working in the organization. This stage of the interview aimed to gain a first hint of how they interpreted their work through the way they were talking about it (e.g. with enthusiasm, boredom, pride). This start characterized both phases of data collection. It proved to be an effective way to start the interviews. In the first stage of the research, the way respondents approached these questions highlighted to me the inappropriateness of the interview guide and the need to consider emerging elements. In the second stage, when the focus was on managerialism and control mechanisms, some respondents kept on adding information, often without the need for prompts.

The way I asked the questions and the way people responded varied from case to case. In some situations respondents anticipated what I was going to ask

which led me only to ask for specific details; in other cases my questions introduced whole new topics. Before answering, some respondents just wanted to double check about who was going to listen to the tape or read the transcripts. I assured all interviewees of confidentiality at the outset. My questions aimed to ask either an objective response (e.g. "Who's your line manager"?) or a subjective one (e.g. "What do you think of the changes that occurred"?). The questions varied from respondent to respondent in relation to how they approached the interview, to the relationship they had established with me, and to the extent they wanted to reveal or confess something they had witnessed.

While I was carrying out the interviews I realized a couple of important issues from the methodological point of view. First of all, I realized how crucial flexibility was for the purpose of my study. I could not just keep on going with the questions I had in mind because respondents were providing illuminating issues that needed further questions, sometimes far from the original script. Secondly, sometimes contradictions emerged within the accounts and this was another element that led me to shift the focus of the research (from how actors' communication flows to how actors live and make sense of the new policies and especially of the control mechanisms) in order to explore what was beneath them (e.g. managers tended to say that reform policies enabled the organization to be on top of the league table, while employees said that the same policies ruined the essence of the service and could have been seen as a failure).

With regard to respondents' participation, almost all of them (except for three) thanked me for having interviewed them, and for the importance of my research for the people that worked in RPA (e.g. as Giulia said at the end of her interview "the content of what you're doing is a bomb").

4. Data Analysis

A difficulty of qualitative data, as Miles (1979) argues, is richness and the consequent struggle to find analytic paths through it. I was not exempt from the initial worry about the best way to unlock the patterns within my data. The

approach that I eventually chose is based on Fielding's (2001) summary of the stages of ethnographic data analysis which include:

1) Fieldnotes and transcripts
2) Search for categories and patterns (themes)
3) Mark up or cut up the data
4) Construct outline.

In what follows, I will describe each of these steps with regard to my research, underlying the fact that the process of data analysis was far from straightforward as it may seem from a quick look at these stages. I would like to point out also that, despite the fact that below I explain the data analysis process identifying separate stages, in truth there was a strong interaction among all phases, which sometimes occurred in parallel. For sure each phase influenced the definition or re-definition of the others. This leads me to define my data analysis as dynamic rather than strictly sequential.

Fieldnotes and transcripts – My fieldnotes express my impressions of the respondents as well as on what I observed. An example of fieldnotes is the document I appended at the end of the chapter. As I discussed earlier, fieldnotes were important to highlight aspects that otherwise may not have emerged (e.g. descriptions of behaviours, of situations, of opinions, of everyday patterns of interaction as well as unusual and exceptional occurrences).

With regard to the interview recordings, I fully transcribed all of them. Although this activity required a lot of commitment, I thought it useful for knowing my data better and also for starting to analyse it. In fact, my data analysis started while I was collecting accounts. Fielding (2001) explains that ethnographic data analysis is frequently carried out while one is still gathering data. Transcribing was very useful since it enabled me to start identifying the issues from which I then extracted themes.

<u>Searching for categories and patterns</u> – for analysing my data I chose thematic analysis which involved an iterative coding process. This is considered to be the starting point for most forms of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2004). Through coding I looked at the general categories the data seemed to express, at what data items represented, at the type of answers to questions data items implied, and at the events that were happening in the RPA setting.

I created a template with two columns. In the left column I had the interview transcript, while I used the one on the right to write down the codes for each chunk of interview. An example of this template is appended at the end of the thesis (appendix 6). All the codes were the basis for the definition of the categories. I did not use any software while coding. Although I researched the various packages on offer (e.g. NVIVO, NUDIST), I eventually decided that manual coding would enable me to to get to know my data more "deeply". This decision was also influenced by the discussions I had with some of my colleagues who likewise found that working manually facilitated greater understanding of, and a better ability to work with the data. With hindsight I would make the same choice.

Although I was aware of the risks of loosing both the context of what was said (Bryman, 2004) and the flow of the narrative (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996) - because of the systematic extraction of interview chunks that characterizes coding - I chose this method because it is widely accepted in the research community and because my research questions did not lend themselves to the elicitation of extensive, intact narratives.

<u>Marking up or cutting up the data</u> – According to Harvey (1990) and Fielding (2001) at this stage data are cut up and re-ordered in ways that reflect the key themes. As mentioned, I did not use any software that could have facilitated this process, I only used the 'cut and paste' function of the word processor. Once my data were re-ordered I had all the illustrative quotations from the transcripts available for each theme. However, the process of re-ordering was also useful to

look over each code and evaluate how it could explain respondents' accounts. As Miles (1994) explains "some codes do not work; others decay. No field material fits them, or the way they slice up the phenomenon is not the way the phenomenon appears empirically. This issue calls for doing away with the code or changing its level." (Miles, 1994; p. 61). In my experience I had to drop some codes while others emerged and appeared to be crucial as the research progressed. In this phase I greatly valued the discussions I had with my supervisors in considering whether some categories were too narrow, or too general. This helped me to address the reliability issue by achieving a more complete picture of actors' experience and ways to make sense of it. Once I had all my coding and I had cut up the data I was able to define categories in a more nuanced way.

Construction of the outline - This stage of data analysis involves what Miles and Huberman (1994) describe as the drawing of meaning from the data. The variety of categories, and the overall quantity of data made this phase in my study very complex. Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that "from the beginning of data collection, the qualitative analyst is beginning to draw conclusions, to decide what things mean, and to note regularities, patterns, explanations, and possible configurations" (Miles and Huberman, 1994; p. 26). This totally reflects my research experience although when the levels of variety and quantity of data are high, it takes time to find the right balance between the 'in-depth' attitude needed for categorization, and the 'holistic' view needed to keep an eye on category interaction. I knew that my links and conclusions were there all the time; at first they were very vague while then became increasingly explicit to me as I proceeded with my analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that conclusions need also to be verified and they suggest different methods for achieving this: from excursions back to the field notes all the way to "argumentation and reviewing among colleagues to develop intersubjective consensus" (Miles and Huberman, 1994; p. 26). In my

case, rich and frequent discussions with my supervisors coupled with, comparisons between my patterns and the existing data, and triangulation (Bryman, 2004) helped me in testing my conclusions with rigour.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter described the development and selection of a methodology and unit of analysis relevant to the thesis. Various research, data collection and data analysis strategies were discussed. I illustrated the issues of validity and reliability of the ethnographic approach in the collection and elaboration of data and in particular the appropriateness of the approach for the objective and nature of the study.

The research questions, suggested by the literature review and in light of the development and analysis of the data, emerge as follows: ·

- how can we theoretically account for probation service employees' lived experience of the New Public Management and Modernization policies?
- What are the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies on:
    - the organizational identity of probation service employees?
    - Probation service employees' organizational roles?

These questions frame both the empirical chapters and the discussion chapter in which I present the contributions of this research. In the following chapter, I will present the organization in which I carried out my field study as an appreciation of its contextual characteristics is important for making sense of the data. The latter will be illustrated in chapters VIII, IX and X.

Chapter VII

The Region-X Probation Area

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter I give an overview of the area of the probation service in which I carried out my research. The official name of the probation area, the county, and the cities in which offices are located will not be disclosed for anonymity reasons.

In the first section of the chapter I will illustrate the organization in a general way; in the second section I will show the fundamental aspects of its performance; in the third section, the policies and strategies implemented; in the fourth section, the people; and in the fifth section I will describe the partnerships that the organization has with other local agencies. This chapter is short but it aims to provide insights into the specific research context.

7.1 The Region-X Probation Area

The Region-X Probation Area (RPA) covers the entire administrative area of the county in which it operates. Work is organised by geographical areas within the latter. These geographical areas are co-terminus with the Courts' local justice areas (up to 2005 known as Petty Sessional Divisions).

The city with the administrative headquarters of the county accounts for some 60% of the work of the entire Probation Area, but the RPA also has bases around the county. Probation Officers may be located at any setting within the county as a whole, according to the needs of the area (probation training-X-lands consortium, 2007). Offices are located in four other different locations. The RPA has three probation hostels, and works with four prisons, in addition to the 'field based provision' in working with adults, young offenders and drug users.

The organization's central responsibility is to seek to secure protection of the public by the appropriate supervision of offenders within the community. Those offenders might be subject to statutory supervision under the terms of probation orders, or licences subsequent to release from custody. While aiming to minimise risk of harm to the public, by maintaining and seeking to manage issues of risk and dangerousness with offenders who have committed acts of harm in the past, the RPA is also concerned with reducing the risk of re-offending by focusing upon personal and societal needs that can increase the risk of a person re-offending (e.g. bad social environment).

7.2 RPA's Performance

The organization puts a great deal of emphasis on performance. The emphasis clearly emerges from how this aspect is described on its website (http://www.X-shire-probation.co.uk/):

"Focusing on performance, and exceeding many of our targets, has seen us rise to be amongst the best Probation Areas, moving us closer to our vision of being a top performing organisation, protecting the public and reducing crime. Current targets set by the National Probation Service relate to:

- Set timescales to complete specific offender assessments and plans for High Risk of Harm Offenders and Prolific and Priority Offenders
- Timely Court Reports
- Enforcement
- Appointments attended
- Compliance with orders and licences
- Completion of Unpaid Work
- Completion of Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRR)
- Specific programme completions
- Gaining and sustaining employment
- Recording accurate race and ethnic monitoring data."

According to the probation training X-lands Consortium document, one of the requirements for those working for Region-Xshire probation area is the need to demonstrate a clear desire and commitment to work alongside offenders, and also need, through a befriending process, to seek to influence and change life patterns and behaviours to reduce the risk of re-offending (probation training-X-lands consortium, 2007).

The most recent performance of the RPA is related to the years 2007-2008 and emerges from the Integrated Probation Performance Framework (IPPF) which highlights, at the end of each quarter, four main categories of performance monitored at a national level. The IPPF is drawn by the Performance Unit at the NOMS (National Offender Management Service which has extensively been explained in the second chapter of the thesis) and the four categories on which attention is focused are: public protection; offender management; interventions; and operational capability, resource use and strategy (the last three are all in one category). The overall achievement banding is expressed in terms of *stars*, from one star which means poor performance, all the way to four stars which mean outstanding performance. Two stars and three stars instead are respectively associated to passable performance, and good performance.

The 2006-2007 Integrated Probation Performance Framework showed that the RPA had achieved the highest rating of four stars. However, this changed for the first quarter of the 2007-2008 period (from April to June) and the second quarter, from July to September, which show that the organization has achieved the equivalent of a three star ranking. The organization produces a local Probation Monthly Report which includes information on performance against targets in relation to each period.

Before the introduction of the Integrated Probation Performance Framework (2006/2007), the performances of the areas of the National Probation Service were expressed on a national league table. In April 2005 the RPA was 37th (out of 42 areas) in the league table. This figure suggests that the performance of the

organization was really poor. The league table existed until the Integrated Probation Performance Framework started running (2006/2007).

The levels of performance of the organization significantly changed from 2005 on. The changes were based on three aspects, namely: the requirement of separating offender management and interventions; including contestability in the operative environment; and improving performance. The low levels of performance until 2005 had given rise to the need for a change to enable the organization to operate at a more competitive level (with respect to efficiency and compared to the other probation areas). The New Public Management and Modernization policies that affected the National Probation Service, as discussed in chapter III, needed to be reflected locally according to the NOMS. The RPA did so by implementing a new management structure. This was reviewed by external consultants during the year who found that it provided clearer lines of accountability (RPA Statement of Accounts 2004/2005). Three directors (that I will also refer to as top managers or Chief Officer team, since these were the labels used by RPA actors) were recruited and held responsible for the sections of Offender Management, Interventions, and Corporate Services and Business Development. They were all made accountable to the Chief Officer. Managers occupying the roles related to the three areas were located closer to the operational staff they managed. Three assistant directors were also appointed with responsibility for Corporate Services, External Relations, and Treasurer/Financial consultancy, all based at Headquarters. Other changes in "leadership processes", as defined in the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the RPA (p. 5), included a review and streamlining of meetings and introduction of accountability meetings within each directorate. An important aspect that also affected the changes that occurred in the RPA is that in January 2004 the government announced that, because of "significant internal control problems" (RPA Statement of Accounts 2004/05, p. 8), "the probation area and the Board would be wound up and the work transferred to a National Offender Management Service based on regional structures" (RPA Statement of Accounts

2004/05, p. 8). This measure was revised at the end of March 2005 when the new Chief Officer team was created to improve the performance. During the period in which the probation area was managed by the regional NOMS it was subject to regular inspections by Home Office officials. Although, technically, the Home Office did not place the RPA into special measures, the organization was subject to the type of inspections that usually occur in organizations in special measures. The management model adopted by the organization was the 'Living Leadership' model, which applied at a national level. It represents a framework for the development of management competences within the organisation. One of the main implications of this model is the substantial program of senior and middle management training. This program was drawn up for 2006–2007 to be undertaken by all managers. The organization aimed to equip existing managers with the knowledge and skills for facing a new more competitive context, and new more demanding performance targets. Prior to and during my fieldwork, individual senior managers participated in the national Living Leadership training program, and action learning sets were established for new and experienced middle managers (RPA Annual Report 2005-2006).

From the introduction of the new management structure to date, according to what emerges from the Annual Report 2006-2007, the performance of the RPA has improved. Following, I illustrate the full set of measures and results of the organization to give an idea of what they are and to what extent they have been achieved (RPA Annual Report 2006-2007).

Table 7.1 Measures and results achieved (adapted from the NPA Annual Report 2006-2007 part I).

Customer Results	Target	Actual in '07	Actual in '08
Victim contact: victim or victim's family to be contacted within National Standard of 8 weeks from sentence in 85% of cases involving serious sexual or other violent offence where offender is sentenced to 12 months or more	85%	96%	99%
Number of Skills for Life referrals achieved against target	1099	1135	1133
Number of unemployed offenders gaining employment against	344	556	517

Target			
Number of offenders placed in employment that is retained for four weeks against target	275	396	390
People Results	**Target**	**Actual in '07**	**Actual in '08**
Contribution to achieving regionally set employment targets for monitory ethnic staff	7% by 2009	17%	Target not reported in the '08 Annual Report
Proportion of race and ethnic monitoring data (a) on staff and (b) offenders which is returned on time and using the current (Consensus 2001) classifications.	95%	a)100% b) 97%	a) & b) 99%
Reduce sickness absence in the Nation Probation Service to an average of 9 days per member of staff per year	9 days	10.29 days	11 days
Performance Results	**Target**	**Actual in '07**	**Actual in '08**
Reduction of the rate of re-offending whilst under probation supervision	No target	Not reported	-0.2%
Risk assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans are on high risk offenders completed within 5 working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community	90%	97%	97%
Risk assessments and OASys sentence plans are completed on Prolific and Other Priority Offenders (PPOs) within 5 working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community	95%	99%	96%
Pre-Sentence Reports (PSR) completed within the required time, i.e. • on the day requested for fast delivery PSRs to magistrates courts; • within 15 working days for standard delivery PSRs to magistrates courts, except where the offender is remanded into custody in which case the timescale is 10 working days • by the date set by the commissioning court for Crown Courts	90%	91%	92%
PSRs for Magistrates Courts to be fast delivery (including oral reports)	40%	34%	Not reported
Number of successful Unpaid Work completions	1,316	1,487	1,364
Initiate breach proceedings in accordance with national Standards within 10 working days	90%	98%	96%
Overall level of offender compliance with orders and licences (incl. orders allowed to continue by the court following breach action)	70%	67%	68%
Compliance: proportion of arranged appointments attended in the first 26 weeks	85%	83%	86%

Compliance: proportion of cases that reach the six month stage without requiring breach action (no unacceptable failure to comply with an order, no third unacceptable failure to comply with a licence)	70%	67%	67%
Compliance: the average number of acceptable failures to attend appointments in orders and licences during the first 26 weeks	No target	2.4 per order	Not reported
Compliance: the proportion of orders and licences that terminate successfully	No target	57%	68%
Number of successful DTTO/DRR completions against target	144	158	Not reported
Number of successful DTTO/DRR commencements against target	366	362	Not reported
First contacts on DTTO arranged with (a) the probation service for within one working day and (b) the treatment provider for within two working days	90%	90%	Not reported
Number of accredited programme completions against target	341	456	343
Number of Sex Offender Programme completions	12	14	30
Number of Domestic Violence programme completions	10	13	40
% of Offenders starting accredited programme out of the total number of programme requirements	No target	74%	Not reported
% of Offenders completing an accredited programme out of the total who attend the first session	No target	61%	Not reported

7.3 RPA's Policies and Strategies

The RPA's new policies and strategies (from 2005 on) relate to the areas of Offender Management, Interventions, and Corporate Services and Business Development. In what follows I will discuss these policies in relation to each of the three sectors.

Offender Management

With regard to Offender Management, the main objectives that the RPA aimed to, after the advent of the new management structure, were the implementation of the Offender Management Model; the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; the development of work with high risk offenders and with victims, and the preparation for the introduction of the National Offender Management

Information System (NOMIS).

The implementation of the National Offender Management model required the creation of teams, Offender Management Units (OMUs), composed of probation officers, probation service officers, and case administrators. These three professional profiles have to work together and focus on specific cases assessed for level of seriousness of offence, and likelihood of re-offending. The OMUs support the "end to end" management of offenders (this process was explained in chapter II) so that an offender can be managed by the same offender manager throughout his/her time under supervision, regardless of the sentence or any re-sentence. In developing the Offender Management model, the RPA looked at how staff was deployed in order to meet the standards of other services within the National Probation Service.

The new Criminal Justice Act 2003, introduced to modernize many areas of the criminal justice system in England and Wales, required the RPA to work more closely with courts. All this aimed to improve the relationship with sentencers but also to reduce court delays. Because of the changes introduced by the new Criminal Justice Act 2003 the RPA experimented the "end to end" program across the criminal justice agencies in the county.

In relation to risk assessment and risk management, the new policies that the RPA implemented reduced the caseload of the most experienced officers so they could work with dangerous offenders to minimize and monitor risk to the public. RPA's work in the field is enhanced by multi-agency working through the MAPPA process (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements).

Finally, with regard to the implementation of the NOMIS, the RPA has devised an action plan which provides the framework for work by establishing teams, defining data migration, process review, and training delivery. Following, I will illustrate the policies and strategies for the area of Interventions.

Interventions

The specific improvement objectives related to the area of Interventions dealt with the implementation of the Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan; with the

development of the prolific and priority offenders' initiative; and with the achievement of drug rehabilitation requirement completion targets.

The Reducing Re-Offending Action Plan aimed at covering the pathways of accommodation and support, education, employment and training, health, drugs and alcohol, finance, benefits and debt, children and families, attitudes, thinking and behaviour, prolific and priority offenders, and public protection. The initial implementation of this plan was overseen by a group which included RPA Board members and senior managers.

With regard to prolific and priority offenders, the RPA carried out significant work to secure funding for the project, and extending the performance targets throughout the local area.

Finally, in relation to the achievement of the drug rehabilitation requirement completion targets the RPA increased the accountability of a Drug Rehabilitation Development Group especially in terms of problem solving and improving the rates of programme completions against an increased target.

Corporate Services

Corporate Services is the third main area in which the new policies and strategies have been introduced in the RPA. The major priorities for this area were related to the improvement of internal and external communications, the development of Information Technology systems, the development of contestability and partnerships, and to the improvement of efficiency.

For communications, a small communication team was established, and the strategy and action plan included the establishment of strong relations with other Criminal Justice Agencies and with sentencers particularly through the Area-wide Sentence Liaison Committee and Probation Liaison Committees. The format of the Probation Newsletter was revised to fit better the new operating reality of the service. According to the Annual Report (2005-2006) the main challenge of the new communication team was (is) that of combating the negative effects of high profile cases or issues which can often undermine the progress made through positive media attention.

Developments in the provision of Information Technology and Systems dealt with the appointment of a Management Information and System manager and team, the improvement of staffing of the IT helpdesk, the implementation of a texting system to remind offenders of supervision appointments, and the implementation of systems to support structural changes (Annual Report, 2005-2006).

In order to improve efficiency, budgets started being devolved to increase accountability for costs within the Directorates. Moreover, the RPA started to rationalize its estate and moved out of three premises (two offices in one county location and one in the city) to save on financial resources.

For contestability, a small Business Development team was established focusing on external relationships for the RPA to compete and collaborate with alternative providers of services. A new relationship was established between the RPA and the Regional Offender Manager (ROM) to work jointly on the context, strengths and areas for improvement in the work of the organization. Moreover, for the objectives of efficiency and contestability, all commissions and grants to partner agencies were reviewed to reduce the budget spend on services provided by voluntary, community and private sector suppliers (Annual Report, 2005-2006).

7.4 The People

The probation training-X-lands consortium (2007) highlights that the RPA employs over 650 staff on full time, part time and casual arrangements. There are 29 Senior Probation Officers, 140 Probation Officers and 22 Trainee Probation Officers. There is also a range of administrative and clerical staff undertaking support functions for the operational provision of the probation area, and a range of others employed as Probation Services Officers, as residential staff, as manual staff, or as specialists within the field of Community Punishment. The current management team consists of the Chief Officer, 3 directors, 7 deputy directors

and treasurer, with geographical line management and functional responsibilities across the probation area as a whole. According to the probation training-X-lands consortium (2007), the RPA serves a county with a diverse cultural and ethnic population; and, 16% of its staff is from ethnic minority groups.

When the new management structure became operative in 2005, a new job evaluation process started as well as revised supervision, appraisal and personal planning processes, and training programmes. All these were aimed to ensure effective performance.

7.5 Partnerships with other Agencies

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the RPA has many partnerships that help in the achievement of the objectives of reducing re-offending and protecting the public, of contestability and of good performance. Among these partnerships there are: the Multi-Agency Protection Arrangements (MAPPA); the Local Safeguarding Children Management Board; the Local Joint Commissioning for Supporting People Strategy; the X-shire County Local Area Agreement; the X-City Local Area Agreement; the Crime and Drugs Partnership; and, finally, the County and District Crime and Disorder Partnerships and Community Safety Forum.

The RPA Annual Report (2006-2007) states that the partnership portfolio is regularly reviewed to ensure it matches offender and community needs. In the period 2006-2007 a partnership reference group was established to advise RPA on the development of sub-contracting strategies on the implementation of 'best value' reviews. These reviews have to objective of ensuring the organization has the best range of contracts to meet its priorities.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overall picture of the Region-X Probation Area in order to frame the context in which the research took place.

New Public Management and Modernization Policies as New Control Mechanisms

8.0 Introduction

In this first empirical chapter I show how actors talked about the changes introduced in their organization. In the RPA the New Public Management and Modernization policies were experienced as new control mechanisms in Gabriel's (1999) terms. Therefore, I use Gabriel's (1999) concept of new control mechanisms as a framework for analysing the data. The chapter is divided into four sections: structural changes, changes in manufacturing technologies, changes in surveillance technologies, and concerted attempts by management to promote new sets of values, attitudes and beliefs. In some cases (e.g. surveillance technology section) actors' illustrations were intertwined with their perspectives on the impacts of the changes (e.g. on their jobs and on the organization).

8.1 Structural changes

Structural changes were introduced in the RPA as a result of the influence that national and local policies had on the organization. As noted in the context chapters, national policies aimed at reducing re-offending in society, making the Probation Service accountable, and introducing competition from private and voluntary providers to make the service more efficient and effective, and ultimately to establish a purchaser/provider split. Those policies did not only affect the Regional Probation Area, but also the other forty one probation areas in Britain and Wales. In contrast, local policies aimed at making the RPA more efficient and effective in dealing with local probation issues, thus they were exclusively applied to this organization. Among the local issues the policies

wanted to address efficiently and effectively are high profile offenders, relationships with the press, and relationships with courts (RPA Annual Report 2005/06).

Structural changes were implemented in the RPA to achieve these objectives. Formal documents suggest that the logic behind the changes was driven by the need to make the organization more efficient and accountable. These changes were not a requirement of the central government but a local decision. The restructuring happened first of all through the creation of a new hierarchical level between the Chief Executive and the middle management one. With the introduction of this new level there was a reduction in the decision-making responsibilities of all the middle managers. The overall outcome was having a layer of top managers who were in charge of all decisional responsibilities. All the intermediate steps that used to precede the implementation of a decision were eliminated (e.g. asking middle managers to adapt a particular measure to their area of responsibility). I learned about these structural changes – e.g. introduction of a new hierarchical level - first of all from the Board minutes and from the documents on the organization re-structuring (RPA Annual Report, 2005/06). The following fieldnotes illustrate this issue:

"Giulia gave me a lever arch file with the board meeting minutes. Minutes of each meeting are one page long. On the top they indicate the date in which the meeting took place, the names of those who participated, and the place where the meeting was held (all of the meetings were held at headquarters). The rest of the page is organized in bullet points (very concise), one for each agenda item point. Board meetings occurred every month. The five oldest minutes (chronologically, starting from April 2005) illustrate the restructuring. Particular attention is given to the target orientation, to pursuing the objectives of efficiency and effectiveness, to the three directorates, and to the Business Development team (in charge of the contestability matter). From the oldest minutes it emerges an issue that relates to the role of middle managers. Minutes show that the new top management team released middle managers from responsibilities that were not

considered to be part of middle managers' role any longer."

In addition, change was implemented through the re-structuring of the existing organizational departments (an example is given by the separation between the Offender Management area and the Interventions one), offices, and teams operating within them. All of the forty five interviewees noted that structural changes had occurred. In particular, they spoke of having a new Chief Executive, a new managerial level with three directors, and with changing the assortment of the teams. Following, Pervinca describes these structural changes: *"There was a new chief officer and a whole new team of directors so the structure at the top changed. There have been changes within teams as well, the structure of teams has changed, and there have been reasons put behind the changes but it is still challenging. People do their best, I know they do, everyone works hard but the pressure coming from the top keeps on increasing. Some people find it really hard to cope with"* [Pervinca – Communication Officer (line manager)]

Pervinca is a line manager within the communication team. She was one of the people I was most in contact with. Because of the internal communication project I was involved in (which granted me access to the organization) I was often working side by side with her. The close contacts she had with the people in her branch and with the people in all the other branches of the county, together with the up-to-date information (formal and informal) she always had, made her a good link while I was doing my fieldwork.

The words Pervinca used in this extract illustrate the type of structural changes that occurred in the organization, highlighting her view that they have resulted in increased pressure for employees. This point will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

Irene, instead, describes other structural changes: *"Emh, there have been changes in relation to offenders management and interventions, and there has been a split between internal and external corporate services. There might be a logic there, I think, and it probably works... but there are also some very important horizontal links back to the*

internal side and, emh... those links haven't been considered" [Irene – Business Development Officer]

In Irene's view, in creating the 3rd Directorate, some links between units and within units had not been considered. Similarly, Pervinca, in charge of internal and external communication, has difficulties in dealing with these two areas separately. As they see it, the split does not take into account that external communication is affected by internal communication (e.g. communication with media is affected by the information that Pervinca obtains from probation officers and probation service officers: obtaining fragmentary information from P.Os translates into giving fragmentary information to the Media).

Another example of the implementation of structural changes is given by Evelina. In her words: *"There has been a change in the entire system at a national level, but then we had some changes at a local level, too. The management has changed... ehm, and we have three new managers and a new Chief now... there is quite a negative talk, you know, some people don't welcome change at all and there is a certain amount of resistance too. There wasn't enough clarity coming from the top... I think openness is a big key, and also explaining things. Sometimes it's the simplest thing... and it can just make a big, big difference. Clarity and other small things are very important to people especially when roles are changing"* [Evelina – Probation Officer]

Here Evelina focuses on how people see the change that was introduced (lack of clarity), the implications for how it was received by employees, and the significance for people's role within the service. Like her colleagues, she acknowledges that changes were affecting the probation system as a whole, as well as the local service.

The quotes I have cited thus far are all from employees at operative level. In contrast, Dussolina, a top manager member of the Chief Officer team, presents a different view. Dussolina joined the organization as the new Interventions Management director. This is how she talks about the structural changes: *"Katia is the new chief officer. She brought us directors: me, Leone, and Adolfo. We hadn't been here before and... you know, that created something like a shake up. Katia and Leone*

worked together, but Adolfo and I didn't. The existing senior management team are clearly not happy about all this... members of staff are not be happy about it, and if you make changes in the way that people... if you try to make changes in the organizational culture and the way processes and systems operate, you create change in turn, and people will react against it. It couldn't be done in any other way, it was absolutely, utterly necessary" [Dussolina – Offender Management Officer (manager)]

By comparing what Evelina, Irene and Pervinca said with what Dussolina said about change, two positions emerge. On the one hand, changes not being well thought-through, needing more clarification and not being welcomed by staff. On the other hand, the need to implement changes exactly as it was done, in spite of people's negative reactions. Notably, the structural changes introduced were seen to have had a significant impact on patterns of staff-management relations.

When Dussolina talks about existing senior managers she refers to the middle managers of the organization (e.g. Giulia, Pierluigi, Alfio). The existing senior managers were not happy about the structural changes and this positioned them closer to staff rather than to the new management team. Isabella explained this in her interview: *"...before middle managers were seen closer to managers but now we all feel the same, we're in this together"* [Isabella – Middle Manager]

Emerging in respondents' accounts was a strong sense there was a lack of consistency in understanding between different levels of management and especially between top managers and staff (including middle managers). The former interpreted the change as a necessity because the RPA needed to climb the national league table at all costs; while the latter interpreted as imposed on them and unwanted. This point will be analysed in the next chapter.

As noted, in addition to the interviews, data on the introduction of structural changes included both board meeting minutes and formal reports (e.g. the Annual RPA report 2005/06), and observational data. The following example, on team restructuring, is taken from my fieldnotes:

This morning Giulia told me that Enrica worked for almost two decades in the HR

office and once the new managers arrived they decided to transfer her to finance for apparently no reason. According to Giulia, Enrica didn't have a clue of what was about to happen to her until one day while she was in the corridor she overheard people in the staff room talking about her situation. A lot of the middle mangers and some of her colleagues at headquarters knew that she was going to be transferred but no one had actually approached her because they thought it should have come from whoever had made the decision. Enrica went to Giulia, who, apart from being a middle manager, is also a good friend of hers, and asked if she knew anything about it. Giulia told her that the rumour was true since she heard it from the top manager who wanted the transfer to happen. Giulia told me that Enrica was desperate, she felt miserable and she felt that she was the victim of a plot. Giulia told me that Enrica doesn't know anything about finance and that she is also alienated by her six other finance colleagues. She also told me that Enrica cannot wait to retire because she feels uncomfortable in her new position.

This diary extract particularly focuses on people's re-allocation to teams. This was seen by Giulia and Enrica to happen not necessarily in relation to actors' expertise. This can be an interesting point with regard to the issue of increasing efficiency and effectiveness at an organizational level – which has been identified (e.g. in formal documents) as the main justification for the structural changes.

8.2 Changes in manufacturing (service provision) technologies

Before discussing this aspect I intend to clarify my perspective on the theoretical framework. The Probation Service provides a service to the community, therefore speaking of manufacturing may not sound pertinent to this area. Although Gabriel (1999) refers to changes in manufacturing technology (as the second element that can give rise to new control mechanisms), I believe that this concept can be interpreted more broadly as production technologies. In this case it would be possible to consider both manufacturing and provision of services. From my perspective what really counts is the fact of changing the way the core activity of an organization, or of an actor, is carried out (technology),

whether this relates to the production of goods or services. Given this broader interpretation of Gabriel's (1999) category, from interviewees' accounts and from observational data I found that the performance of both those who carried out probation work (e.g. direct interaction with offenders), and those who carried out support activities (e.g. administrative tasks) were affected[i].

As discussed in the context chapter, the definition of new targets that aimed to measure aspects which were not previously under analysis (e.g. the effectiveness of the meetings the probation officers have with the offenders under their responsibility), implied changes in the ways tasks were performed. For example, by introducing standard procedures which reduced people's professional discretion (e.g. to phone offenders to remind them about their meetings; to interact with partner agencies representatives before proceeding with decisions on a particular offender). In the first quote below Wanda, a probation officer, talks about how her work was affected by the new targets. *"With the new targets I need to spend more time writing reports rather than meeting individual offenders. I had to change the things that I used to do and, you know... emh, it's like, it's a continuous development and I have all those deadlines hanging over me. Now I'm also working between two offices and this makes things even more difficult"* [Wanda – Probation Officer]

Probation officers' views on changes in the way they carried out their work also emerged from observational data. An example of this comes from Mara's experience. Mara is a probation officer that I did not interview. I ran into her by chance one day at Headquarters. She was sitting in the waiting area because she had to take part in a meeting. I was passing by to go to Giulia's (communication middle manager's) office to discuss the internal communication project. When she saw me she immediately said *"you must be the researcher"* and once I introduced myself and she told me her name, she started telling me about her experience. We talked for 15 minutes and she was quite circumspect to avoid other people overhearing. From the diary extract it is apparent that in Mara's view, apart from the production of more documents, what changed in her job is

her decisional autonomy (Grandori, 2001). The outcome of Mara's increase in vertical specialization is that now she needs to phone other partners before deciding what approaches to use with an offender. This is how I narrated this episode in my field notes: *"I met Mara by chance, she's a probation officer. She came at headquarters for a meeting. She already knew who I was and that I was doing research in the RPA. I didn't have to ask any questions since she started whispering her complaints about the new managers and their targets to me right away. She said that nobody understands the difficulty of being a probation officer and the pressure of the job. She said that now with the new targets she has to lose time producing more written documents, and she has to make phone calls and talk to those that work at the prison before she decides any action on her offenders. Now she has to ask other people what they think before making any decision. She said that being independent in deciding how to deal with offenders was crucial for probation officers but the standardization that managers want has reduced this independence"*

While I was gathering data it emerged to me that in the eyes of RPA employees, the target of measuring officers' ability to successfully rehabilitate offenders affected their way of performing. I will briefly explain how this came to surface. Interviewees explained that before this target was imposed, officers used to arrange weekly meetings with offenders. If offenders did not attend, officers had to register the fact as offenders' non-compliance. Once compliance became a crucial target, when offenders did not attend meetings, officers started phoning them to re-arrange the meeting for that week. This way it did not look as if the offender did not comply; it looked as if the offender faced unexpected circumstances that kept him/her from attending the meeting. Those unexpected circumstances are not considered as cause of non-compliance by the service. The extract below illustrates this point from Agata's view. Agata is a county office manager who started as a probation officer. In the last part of her quote, she shows that top managers are being complicit in manipulating the system to achieve externally imposed targets: *"Compliance is really a fake thing you know...*

now probation officers and probation service officers have to call offenders when they
don't attend the meetings... you know... This way it looks like if offenders called-in to
reschedule the meeting. If an offender calls to do so he is complying. It's not true!
WWEEE CALL... so this way it looks that we're achieving the target. This is
manipulation... you know... officers have been told by managers to do this new thing. So
manipulation comes from the top... you know... it's just silly, why don't they just
eliminate the target?" [Agata – County Office Manager]

Agata's and Wanda's quotes and the extract on Mara's account provide vivid
examples of the process – in Gabriel's words (1999) the technology – of probation
work and how it has changed. Because of the influence that targets had (and
have) on it, there has been a decrease in autonomy and an addition of new tasks
(Grandori, 2001).

With regard to the support staff (not directly involved in probation work), the
changes in the way people perform their jobs relate to an increase in formal
requirements and greater accountability, such as providing more documents to
justify actions and decisions, participating in more meetings than usual to align
action. Irene's interview extract helps in giving an idea of the frequency of
meetings.

"I work in a team where we have to make sure that our service gets in the best position
to compete... you know, basically, we have to achieve the best results under
contestability... it's not easy, you know, we compete with all sorts of businesses. I spend
most of my time in meetings cause... emh... none of us really knows how we should move
forward, it's something new" [Irene – Business Development Officer]. Although a
large number of meetings may be required until a new team figures out what
their objective is, and how to coordinate actions for achieving it, in Irene's case
frequent meetings became part of her everyday job. A year-and-a-half after the
Business Development team began to operate, Irene was still attending at least
two meetings per day without counting the instances in which she was told to
stop immediately what she was doing to participate in extra-ordinary meetings

that, according to her, were disruptive for accomplishing her job. I was able to observe Irene's reactions in such cases because my desk was next to hers.

During my stay at the RPA I was often told by staff that meetings are also a way to control employees' level of target achievement, such as to what extent a person has achieved his/her target and, in this case, what it will take (in terms of time, money) to provide it. A list of targets and the performance results are illustrated in the chapter on the Regional Probation Area. However, some examples of these targets are (quoting the 2006/2007 Annual Report of the RPA): risk assessments and risk management plans on high risk offenders to be completed within five working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community; Pre-Sentence Reports for Magistrates Courts to be quickly delivered; and number of successful unpaid work completions. Zaira, an operations officer that I talked with but didn't interview, highlighted the issue of meetings as a way to control people's working achievements. The following fieldnotes show Zaira emphasising that meetings became frequent in her job and that now, having an average of two meetings per day, she has to combine her work so that tasks and meetings are framed together: *"Zaira told me that she could not get any work done today because she had to attend four different meetings. She told me that meetings became regular in her job and that she attends at least two a day. She also said that top managers use meetings to check on people and see up to what point they're achieving targets. She said that being in a meeting with them increases her pressure because they keep on stressing on targets, they want to know when things will get done even if those are matters in which external partners are involved and don't depend exclusively on her. Zaira also said that she had to re-organize her job so that meetings and usual tasks could fit together"*

This increase in meetings can be considered an aspect of surveillance but also a way for top managers to align people in target achievement (given the collusion between staff and top management on this point); these two aspects will be further developed in the discussion chapter.

As well as meetings, pace of work was an element which emerged in actors' accounts. The targets that require a quick response (e.g. Pre-Sentence Reports for Magistrates Courts) also require employees to speed up their work pace in the target achievement process. Therefore, if previously the quality of the output was the only aspect against which people's work was compared, now pace of work (which is standard and management-established) adds to that. This means that people need to be effective and at the same time quick in performing their job. I picked up a conversation between Pierluigi (Service middle manager) and Rebecca (Personnel officer) on this issue: "*I heard Pierluigi and Rebecca talking about work in the staff room. Pierluigi was saying that he talked to the people he's responsible for and that everyone in his team complained about being overloaded with work and being asked to finish things as soon as possible. He said that his employees were tired of the constant emergency atmosphere around tasks. He said that he told them that those were orders that came from the top and that he would have thought of something to loosen the time pressure. Rebecca replied saying that his employees were not the only ones in that situation. Some people had gone to her complaining about that too and wanting her to put this time pressure issue forward as a personnel matter.*"

Actors discussed with one another changes in the way people performed their jobs. As Eleonora explains: "*when I speak to my colleagues we tend to talk about our work and how it has changed after the new managers came, and how much this is impacting on us.*" [Eleonora – Probation Service Officer]

A frequent comment that I picked up (in corridors, kitchens, staff rooms) when talking with people (or overhearing them) about the changes in the ways in which work is carried out, was that actors were also asked by top management to perform on the basis of expertise they did not necessarily mastered. In the discussion of structural changes, this point was made in relation to Enrica's move to the finance team. Here Isabella, develops this theme: "*she said 'look, this is ridiculous, this is not part of my job, it's not my area of expertise, it's not how I do*

things' and they answered 'well, we don't care'" [Isabella – City Branch Officer (middle manager)]

In this case, Isabella was describing what happened to one of her colleagues whose job was changed. She told me how, despite the fact that the employee did not possess the expertise to perform as told, and was not used to perform as told, top managers did not consider that as an issue.

8.3 Changes in surveillance technologies

In this chapter targets have a twofold interpretation. On the one hand they influence people's way of doing their jobs. On the other had, they serve to reinforce surveillance within the organization. In this section I will present this second interpretation. According to Gabriel (1999) these particular changes occur when targets and performance are emphasised and when it becomes possible to clarify the responsibilities of each actor so that if damage is done, the person responsible for it is easily traceable. One of the problems that can occur if targets and performance become so central to the life of the organization is the displacement of the core objectives of the organization (Grandori, 1995). This means that targets and performance shift from being a means through which the organization could achieve its objectives, to becoming the objective of the organization itself. In my study, all of the interviewees discussed targets and performance, and the majority of them (forty) illustrated the negative impact that these exerted on people's approach to work. Only five interviewees emphasised the importance of the targets and performance standards in place. In what follows, I illustrate a cynical view on what targets are for.

As Dante, a County Office Manager, explained: *"All they [top managers] care about is performing and raising the performance level. I think it's because it's all money that will end in their pockets. If we improve as a service they will get the bonus, not the rest of us."* [Dante – County Office Manager]. And Brigida says: *"They're only bothered about performance and performing well. This doesn't show any consideration for*

the staff" [Brigida – Communication Officer (line manager)]

Brigida and Dante's accounts, apart from illustrating the focus on targets, also highlight respectively that this emphasis is driven by the fact that top managers will benefit from performance achievements, and that focusing on targets puts staff related issues in a subordinate position. Evelina, as follows, criticizes the excessive emphasis on targets as well. She highlights the displacement of the core objectives (Grandori, 1995): *"Targets are there to be met and it's good to recall that, but I think there's also the feeling that the emphasis on targets is overshadowing the time that actually needs to be spent with offenders"* [Evelina – Probation Officer]

An interesting aspect to underline is that all interviewees (top managers included) talked about targets without specifying exactly what is being measured (which I highlighted in the second context chapter - 2006/2007 RPA Annual Report). An overall aspect that I noticed while collecting the data was that people, not only the interviewees but also other employees who I met and talked with during the course of my fieldwork, interpreted the targets as an increment in their workload more than as a set of objectives achievable through standardized actions (e.g. the target of delivering fast the Pre-Sentence Reports for Magistrates Courts being interpreted by people as needing to fill out more paperwork per working hour). An example of this is given by Francesco in the following extract. *"The thing is that people who manage us should know what we're doing... it isn't professional to impose certain amounts of targets, and it's not going to lead to good work. But it seems to be that everything comes down to how ridiculous this is and that we have no choice in it, and if you don't do something, or if it turns that something goes wrong, you're responsible"* [Francesco – Finance Officer]

In contrast the following accounts depict a more positive response to the imposition of targets. This positive light may be explained by the fact that the interviewees are the Interventions manager, Leone, and the Chief Executive, Katia, who were directly involved in putting forward the targets: *Some people said "these targets mean nothing", well the targets actually do mean something because it*

means if you seen the offenders and you're getting them through accredited programmes, or teaching them literacy skills or getting them to work you are reducing their re-offending, but I think that staff were overly defensive, and some people honestly and cognitively couldn't understand what the problem was, which was amazing for me"

[Leone – Interventions Officer (manager)]

"It's important to me to try and read and understand and know how to respond to whatever happens and actually to do that is to focus on performance and efficiency"

[Katia – Chief Executive]

And finally, an extract that highlights the importance of targets also in tracking people's responsibilities:

"Things need to go down to individual supervision and performance objectives, so that people take responsibilities for what they do"

[Leone – Interventions Officer (manager)]

Leone interprets performance objectives as a way of making people more responsible for their actions. From his perspective it contributes to ensuring that the service is more accountable. It is interesting to notice how the concept of responsibility is seen in different ways by Leone and Francesco, the finance officer whose extract I showed in the previous page. The latter looks at the possibility of identifying responsibilities to punish people for their mistakes, while the former looks at the attribution of responsibility as a way of empowering them.

8.4 Concerted attempts by management to promote new sets of values, attitudes and beliefs

Interviewees' accounts of their top managers' attempts to promote new values, attitudes and beliefs vary. Although two thirds of the sample did not specify what their original values, attitudes and beliefs were, they (the two-thirds) talked at length about how top management aimed to change them. Nine people were particularly expansive on this issue. The common element that connected those actors was that of being all links in what they indicated metaphorically as a 'grapevine' (also called 'underground network' outside the work premises) along which informal communication occurs. Members of this 'grapevine' tended to share the same type of career background (everyone started as a probation officer and was then promoted to other roles), were over forty years of age, and joined the probation service between fifteen and twenty years ago. The following extract shows Ester's, the HR middle manager, association between what she interpreted as old traditional values and new promoted ones. Ester explains that the old values focused on sharing meaning and experiences, and participating in each others' professional life. Those values focused also on being able to trust and rely on colleagues, and overall on using these aspects as drivers to approach work. Ester highlights how for top managers those are not considered inspiring values but value for money is. Ester's words highlight the opposition between the old way of understanding values and the new one, subsequent to top managers' arrival: *"Managers have a different mentality... our most important value here was sharing, you know... sharing everything, sharing meanings, sharing understandings, sharing experiences... emh... knowing that we could have relied on each other, you know. Being relational and interested in people was a driver... emh, being diplomatic... but now those values don't inspire managers. Now our orientation is value for money. Even if we often work in teams each individual should always be thinking of achieving their own targets."* [Ester – HR Officer (middle manager)]

A link between values and attitudes seems to emerge from the accounts. In fact, for interviewees attitudes represent a way to re-enforce their original values. In the example below I quote an extract in which Giovanna, an IT line officer, discusses *chat*. She highlights it as something that used to take place regularly before the new management took over and describes it as a way employees kept updated on work and fostered relationships among them (the latter re-enforces the value of sharing, discussed in the above mentioned quote). Giovanna eventually highlights how this action together with the relational attitude is not allowed any longer: *"We used to chat more before, it was our way to spread information... emh, chatting is good because you get to know work related issues, to exchange ideas and you also keep that personal relationship with people. But this is not encouraged any more... you know we were told once or twice to stop chatting, it's hardly accepted... emh... the whole thing of relating to people. This made everyone very angry you know"* [Giovanna – IT Officer]

According to a large part of the sample (thirty-seven interviewees), the new management team attempted to promote new sets of values, attitudes, and beliefs driven by efficiency, targets and performance, however this occurred by challenging the old traditional ones (as in the two extracts illustrated above). According to these interviewees, the major means that top managers used to challenge old values, attitudes and beliefs is offered by symbolic behaviours, such as entering the office without replying to employees' greetings; eliminating the staff room; expressing denigrating sexual comments about staff members in front of other employees; and not paying attention when staff had suggestions to put forward on work matters. The transcripts below give examples of such behaviours. While the first one highlights what some respondents see as the management team's lack of care, the second impacts more directly on how people do their jobs.

"We've been told that tea and coffee making facilities, which staff at headquarters have enjoyed for years, will stop and there will be a machine now, and people will start and

play with the machine... well I don't think that people will have big fun with these machines, usually the coffee is not great... it's a very small change, emh, and I think the reasons have to do with costs, but I think it's kind of symbolic...emh, it's that personal touch of the service providing something to people, but now it can be more formalized. Little things like that, emh, I think that actually symbolize quite a lot, while change is going on, I think I have the right to feel that when people have challenging jobs those little things can make you feel good or bad" [Gemma – Finance Officer]

Although switching from traditional coffee facilities to a machine may not seem that traumatic for an outsider, for the RPA actors it represented an attempt to break and change their workplace tradition and signified a certain disregard for staff. Up to when the traditional facilities were in place, people that decided to have coffee or tea used to leave an offer which, from what I personally saw, varied between ten and fifty pence. When the new coffee machine was provided, the mechanisms was pretty similar, such as those who wanted coffee or tea had to contribute, but this time the contribution was not free, it was determined by a fixed price. The people that I spoke to in relation to this aspect felt that top management was punishing them, without any reason, by providing a lower quality service at a price (the price of the tea, or coffee). This generated two outcomes. First of all it formalized people's perception of the coffee break. In fact, they did not have the opportunity to indulge themselves in the kitchen with the excuse of making coffee. Secondly, they felt that it meant breaking with the tradition of chatting with colleagues in a common area, and more generally breaking with the established old value of collectively sharing working experiences with others – instigating in its place a more individualized approach.

In her interview Isabella illustrated a different type of symbolic behaviour which relates to top management's reactions to staff feedback and ideas. *"There was one person who has been told that she wasn't allowed to ask... it was related to a simple thing, just a simple thing, emh... it was about the digest. The telephone list on the digest wasn't up to date. So what happened was that somebody at headquarters complained to one of the directors saying "we ought to update the telephone list", and I*

know this woman, she's a professional and she said "I think that we should set an example, at least at headquarters the numbers should be right and they're not"…. So then she was told from one of the directors that if she would send another email like that she was going to be disciplined… her card was marked, he said it pointing his finger in her face" [Isabella – City Branch Officer (line manager)].

Although the two data extracts (e.g. the coffee facilities and the reaction of the top manager) relate to different top management's behaviours, the similarity between the two symbols is that they both represent a break with the old values, such as fostering people's sharing of ideas, or work experiences, and allowing people's participation in organizational issues, highlighting in their place a more individualized ethos and an apparent willingness to publicly humiliate staff where the management felt this would set a suitable example for others to follow.

While on the one hand management (according to staff) used everyday symbolic behaviours to challenge the old values, attitudes and beliefs, the introduction of new ones, such as the orientation to policing and enforcement – as noted in the chapter on the National Probation Service – was put forward through formal documents. On page 5 of the Annual Report 2005/06 of the RPA, among the aims of the probation area there is: *the proper punishment of offenders in the community.* This is also stated in the mission (http://www.X-shire-probation.co.uk): *We aim to protect the public of X-shire by punishing and rehabilitating offenders.* Thus the focus shifted from pure rehabilitation to punishment and rehabilitation. Both interviewees and employees (who I did not interview) pointed out that adding this in the mission represented a significant shift in the core values of the probation service and of the organization. This recalls the clan control mechanism (Ouchi, 1975; 1979) as it represents an attempt to control via value training. In my field notes I highlighted the shift in focus as follows:

"I found Gelmina in the Business Development office. She had to hand a report to Zita. When she passed by my desk she saw the probation circular and remarked that I

needed to know that not everyone in the organization gets to receive a copy of it and said that this proved that sharing information is not promoted any longer. She asked me if she could take a proper look at it and I agreed. Then she saw the mission stated on the circular and said that the word 'punishing' had totally changed the fundamental assumptions of the service because it pushed away once and for all the tradition of rehabilitating offenders through talk. She also said that punishment was not just something that concerned offenders, in fact, she thought that that was the bottom line of directors approach with employees. Zita agreed and said that directors and the Chief Executive want employees to be aware that punishment is now part of the organizational values because they want them to achieve targets keeping their heads down. She said that this way people will be 'inspired' to work with the 'right' attitude (she used the words sarcastically)"

I found that the issue of punishment was illustrated by actors also with regard to their descriptions of the effects of the prison-probation partnership (NOMS). As this links to the organizational identity aspect it will be illustrated in the next chapter.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented findings on how actors described the changes, which I have argued can be understood as new control mechanisms. Having used Gabriel's (1999) framework I looked at descriptions that actors provided in terms of the structural changes that took place, the changes in the way work was carried out, the changes in surveillance technologies, and of top management's attempts to change values, attitudes, and beliefs.

The major points that emerged were the following. With regard to structural changes, two positions emerged, one put forward by staff and the other one put forward by top managers. The former illustrates changes as not being carefully thought through, needing more clarification, and not being welcomed by people; while the latter shows that there was the need to carry out changes exactly the way they were implemented, in spite of people's reactions against them. With

regard to changes in manufacturing technologies, data highlighted that for staff involved in probation work these changes were expressed as a reduction in their decisional autonomy; for support staff, instead, these changes were expressed by an increase in formal requirements and greater accountability. In relation to the changes in surveillance technologies, the main point that emerged from the chapter was that of targets being a way to re-enforce surveillance in people's performance. Finally, with regard to the last section, concentrated attempts by management to promote new sets of values, attitudes, and beliefs, data illustrated that management challenged old values, attitudes and beliefs through the use of informal, symbolic behaviours, while promoted new ones through formal documents (e.g. RPA Annual Report, Probation Circular).

The fact that within the RPA the reforms have been experienced as new control mechanisms illuminates an aspect of New Public Management and Modernization that was not otherwise apparent. In the previous literature on the public sector emphasis was put on the change side of the policies and control was considered one of the seven dimensions (Hood, 1991; 1995) that were affected by those changes. Data from the RPA suggest that control is a pervading aspect of the policies rather than only one of the dimensions influenced by the reforms. My next chapter will investigate into the implications of this with regard to organizational identity and roles. Despite the fact that some studies (Nash, 2000; Raine and Willson, 1997) already highlighted that New Public Management and Modernization policies affected the identity of the probation service and shook up pre-existing roles (Newman and Nutley, 2003), little emerges on how these two aspects were influenced by the policies especially in light of the interpretation of the latter as being about control rather than just about change.

Chapter IX

Implications of New Control Mechanisms for Roles and Organizational Identity

9.0 Introduction

The literature review shows that with New Public Management and Modernization policies the government attempted to introduce a non-bureaucratic and more managerial logic into the public sector (Hood, 1991; 1995; Kettl, 2000; Pollitt, 2003). Consistent with this shift the reform policies created new roles (Ferlie, 1996), new categories, new ideals, and new reference models (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Rao et al., 2003). As Skålen (2004) argued, the new structures, rules, procedures, processes, and technologies put forward by New Public Management and Modernization policies needed to be supported by a change in organizational identity as this would justify their existence. In this chapter I will show how actors talked about roles and organizational identity linking back to the policy changes mediated by new control mechanisms.

In their accounts and in their daily interactions, RPA actors spoke extensively about the implications of the new control mechanisms, described in the previous chapter, for roles and organizational identity. Since data on actors' roles reflects the framework put forward by Katz and Kahn (1978), which highlights the concepts of role holders, role senders, and people involved in the role set, and data on organizational identity reveals a strong link between actors' descriptions and Alvesson and Empson's (2006) work, I will use these two frameworks to illustrate the respective data.

9.1 New control mechanisms and actors' perceptions of their roles within the RPA

In this section I will show how actors talked about and referred to professional roles drawing on Katz and Kahn (1978). I divided this part into two sub-sections; the first one is on role holders' expectations, while the second one is on the perceptions of the expectations created by the role senders. These concepts were introduced and explained in chapter four, of the literature review.

9.1.1 Role expectations

With regard to this aspect, the Chief Officer team emerged as the main actors involved in the role set who had expectations of role holders. In fact, staff other than top managers had only expectations created by role senders (e.g. top managers). The most significant accounts, at a Chief Officer team level, came from Dussolina, Katia, and Leone. Adolfo, the director of Corporate Services and Business Development, first re-scheduled and then cancelled the interview, thus, I was never able to hear his views. However, I was able to understand how others interpreted his perspective, and I described it in the diary extract further on in this section. Overall, the majority of top managers (three out of four) expect role holders to carry out their job meeting the targets, and to avoid "worrying" about intervening in the decisions that involve their organization, which is not part of their job description. For example, Katia, the Chief Executive, said:

"Really what they [employees] should do is to focus on the day job and not get too depressed with other things. They have to achieve their share of targets. It's my job to manage all the tensions coming from the centre and to try not to let it filter down too far and distract. There's a great opportunity for what's going on out there to be a great distraction and to jeopardize the achievement of our goals."

Dussolina made a similar comment, she said:

"People should carry out their work; they are expected to achieve the targets. It's not

for them to decide on organizational matters. Some people don't have this clear, some people don't feel comfortable with it but the truth is that... well, there is an operational level and then there is a managerial level. The operational level cannot be concerned with decision, direction, strategy... that's something we do... we need to specialize if we want to be a successful, efficient organization."

Leone was less direct in his account of what he expected from role holders; however, he highlighted the importance of doing what people "are supposed to be doing". In his words:

"If you meet league table's targets it does indicate that you are doing what you're supposed to be doing. It does indicate that you are impacting on offenders' lives and also you don't have inspectors coming in."

When the RPA was 32nd in the national league table (before the new structure was implemented and the new top managers arrived, and before the adoption of the Integrated Probation Performance Framework), there were frequent inspections from the Home Office. As explained in chapter seven, these inspections became regular on a monthly basis. In fact, the aim was to check work progression in the organization and to increase actors' responsibility and efficiency.

The following diary extract describes Adolfo's position in relation to expectations of role holders. Here I made these notes based on the views put forward by Giulia, Irene, Pervinca, and Pierluigi in their interviews:

"Giulia told me that Aldolfo expects his teams to achieve their targets but he also expects them to be ready to respond to extra-ordinary situations (e.g. take part in events which aim to signal the presence of the service on the territory; take part in meetings held in other locations representing the RPA). She is not the only one to say that. Irene from Business Development and Pervinca from Communication say the same as Giulia; moreover, they also say that dealing with extra-ordinary situations became part of the day to day activities which makes Adolfo's expectations very difficult to meet. This is what Pierluigi, in charge of Services, faces as well. He says that Adolfo wants his team to achieve the targets but he also wants them to deal with all the

emergency situations he puts forward, which are too frequent. Pierluigi told me that Adolfo expects them to work hard for the targets, to do as he says, and to leave all decisions to him." Adolfo's expectations are similar to those of the other top managers with regard to meeting targets and not being concerned with strategic decisions. However, in his employees' views, he also expects extraordinary situations to be dealt with promptly.

9.1.2 Perceptions of the expectations created by role senders

When talking about their professional role, actors (thirty four interviewees plus an additional forty staff members that were not part of my sample but who I had the opportunity to speak with) described how their role changed after the new structure was put in place. Their perceptions on the matter were largely extremely negative. Four role-related issues emerged: loss of autonomy, loss of decision-making power in carrying out the job, loss of involvement in the organization, and loss of professional status. Aspects such as autonomy and decision power were very important for carrying out the job in the probation service because of the complexity and ambiguity that characterize probation work (Cannings, 1997). Eleonora gave a good example of the loss of autonomy and of decision-making power: *"I'm a manager in this organization and I can't even decide if someone has to work for extra hours... I have to ask for permission. If a member of staff is on leave, I can't even decide to get a temp to carry out the job if I need one. I have to ask a director every time that there's anything. Or if I need somebody to cover a weekend because work has to be done, I can't even decide that, I need director's approval. The times that I enjoyed to work are gone."*

During this part of the interview, Eleonora's voice was shaky as she described how she had lost an important part of her job and found it extremely difficult to cope with the new reality. In the extract she implies that she does not enjoy her job any longer. Her role does not incorporate the autonomy there used to be before the new management settled in. Loss of autonomy is also what Ludovico

claims happened in his role. Ludovico is an operations officer; he works within the area of basic skills, training and employment. In the interview he underlined the loss of discretion in his job but also the difficulty of not being able to respond quickly in emergency situations. This is what he said: *"My work is about giving offenders the possibility to secure employment and take advantage of vocational opportunities... I've been in probation for more than fifteen years and I used to be trusted as a professional... emh... I had a good share of discretion in carrying out my job, but now it seems that all decisions, all actions, even the silliest ones... well... everything has to be agreed with them... This makes things difficult because sometimes, in my role I need to be able to decide quickly... I don't see why I need to ask for their permission... emh... I see myself as an expert."*

Instead Selvaggia, a probation service officer, talks about her role highlighting the loss of involvement. In her words: *"How it used to be it was that I felt very involved in the organization and in the things that happened, especially those related to my job. I felt free to give suggestions about how the community service could have improved, you know... I was consulted because of my role, I felt part of it. And now people like me are considered as non important."* The erosion of her professional status was illustrated by Adele, an officer in charge of accommodation services, as follows: *"People feel that they are told what to do rather than involved in decisions that concern their own jobs... we've been doing the same job year after year and then?... They come and tell us how to do it... they don't see us as professionals."*

Enea, a probation officer in one of the two city branches, offers his perspective on how top managers see staff roles, and where he thinks they are going wrong: *"In their view often we're seen as a sausage factory, they think that we are involved in making sausages... but we do professional work... you have to be trained to do this job... we are qualified people and that's why we have to be trusted, we have to be able to make decisions, and our feedback has to be taken in consideration."*

The pattern that emerges with regard to organizational roles reflects the fact that, as a consequence of the reforms, probation knowledge and experience are not seen as a source of professional legitimacy any longer in the probation service

(and, more broadly, within the criminal justice system) (Newman and Nutley, 2003). Actors' perceptions illustrate the effects that the "what works" agenda had on roles (Newman and Nutley, 2003). In terms of new control mechanisms, the way that RPA actors interpret their roles emphasizes a change in surveillance technologies (Gabriel, 1999) (e.g. *"People feel that they are told what to do"*).

9.2 Organizational identity

In my data corpus I found interesting threads that encouraged me to take a closer look at organizational identity elements. To illustrate these aspects I referred to Alvesson and Empson's (2006) framework (which I explained in the fifth chapter). Based on their analysis, I have, therefore, divided this section into four parts. The first one focuses on the knowledge possessed by individuals and how it is applied in the organization; the second one looks at actors' perceptions of management; the third one relates to how actors frame themselves as individuals within the organization; and, finally, the fourth sub-section focuses on how actors think they are perceived by outsiders.

9.2.1 Knowledge possessed by individuals and how this is applied

Knowledge was one of the central aspects of the "what works" agenda (Newman and Nutley, 2003). In fact reform policies affected the content of knowledge as well as the form of knowledge that is valued in the probation service (cft. Chapter III). Knowledge emerged as an important theme in the field notes and was discussed at length by six interviewees. In relation to this aspect three elements were put forward: the type of knowledge used in the organization; top managers' lack of probation knowledge; and the way knowledge is applied by the organization.

With regard to the first one, probation work knowledge is the prevalent type because the majority of the activities carried out by the organization are probation-based (e.g. offender management; court reports). Nevertheless, there

are some actors (e.g. HR unit, IT department) whose work is not linked to probation, thus, they refer to a different type of knowledge for performing their job. The fieldnotes show an example of these cases: *While I was waiting for Iacopo, I started chatting with Daniele. I asked him what were the main things their unit was involved with and he said that they take care of all the IT 'stuff'. He said that they make sure that the network that is shared by all branches works, they organize training courses for all probation officers (to teach them how to deal with the system since it's often updated), and they solve all the IT related problems like the ones with emails, with the intranet, and with the digest. He said that he likes what he does because his job is mainly about IT training so he's not as pressured, nor as stressed as the rest of those in the organization. He said that he doesn't really need to know anything about probation work and probation language to do his job."* The point that I make in this section is that, with regard to the type of knowledge present in the organization, apart from probation knowledge, the second relevant type is the one needed to carry out support services.

The second issue, top managers' lack of probation knowledge, was something I gleaned during my observations and was underlined by Francesco during his interview. He is a finance officer very close to probation staff and involved in the 'grapevine'. He said: *"The thing is that people who manage us should know what we're doing... it isn't professional to impose certain amounts of targets, and it's not going to lead to good work. They were never probation officers, they are just managers. They always end up working in places under special measures... eh eh eh... They're a crisis team... they don't have a probation background!"* In a meeting we had, Giulia made a similar point about top managers' lack of knowledge. The following diary extract clarifies it: *Giulia and I were in her office talking about the communication project. Despite the fact it wasn't related to our meeting, she told me that top managers don't have a probation background. She said that they never actually dealt with offenders and never had a direct role in their rehabilitation so they don't know anything about probation work. She said that this type of work is not just about knowing laws and regulations related to probation and court procedures (which, she repeated that they don't*

know), but it's also about knowing principles of psychology, of investigating, and of community organization, and it's about knowing how to observe, perceive, and analyze people and situations. She said that top managers know nothing about these aspects, and they don't know how difficult it is to deal face to face with an offender. She said that that's why they keep on asking people to do more and more: they have no idea of what it means to carry out that type of work. Top managers' lack of probation knowledge links back to the influence of the "what works" agenda which does not look at knowledge as a source of professional power in probation work, any longer. In fact, with regard to how the knowledge is applied, Pervinca gives a specific example referring to an advertising event on the role of the RPA that had taken place the week before I interviewed her. She said: *"the event we organized did work because we had a lot of staff there, and a lot of staff with knowledge. So the people attending got a lot from speaking to staff. All the knowledge of the service was presented in a way that was approachable."* Pervinca was telling me a situation that worked well in her job. She was in charge of organizing a one-day conference on the RPA so that people could have gotten closer to the organization to understand how it worked and what it stood for. The idea was put forward by the new top managers. In the extract she attributes the success of the event to the knowledgeable members of staff that were able to transfer all the knowledge of the service to those who took part in the event. The above quote recalls the objectives of the "what works" agenda as it shows how knowledge is used for activities that are collateral to the one-to-one supervision of probation officers on offenders, blurring the boundaries between qualified and unqualified staff (Newman and Nutley, 2003).

Moving on, the next subsection shows data on the organization management.

9.2.2 Perceptions of management

As discussed previously, New Public Management and Modernization initiatives were interpreted by actors as new control mechanisms mainly characterized by targets, efficiency and competition. Data emphasizes these aspects also with regard to how the organization is managed (e.g. in a way that prioritizes targets, efficiency - also labelled by actors as 'value for money' -, and 'contestability'). Interviewees tended to emphasise this by illustrating the shift in organizational drivers after the new top managers settled in. Ester, Adele, and Menica discussed this point during their interviews. Ester, the HR middle manager, said: *Being relational and interested in people was a driver... emh, being diplomatic... but now those values don't inspire managers. Now our orientation is value for money. Even if we often work in teams each one of us should always be thinking of achieving their own targets."*

In the previous chapter, targets emerged as having an effect on the way people are doing their jobs and on reinforcing surveillance technologies. In this section, targets become also significant for organizational identity because they influence people's understanding of their relationship with the organization (Martin et al., 2003). Ester shows the tension created by thinking individualistically (e.g. achieving one's own targets), which did not characterize actors' understanding of the values of the organization, and of the nature of the service, previous to the arrival of the new top managers (cfr. Ester's account in section 8.4). Adele, who deals with the accommodation service, explained how they (organization staff) were disoriented by top managers' orientation. In her view the emphasis on competition and value for money was in contradiction with the social nature of the service: *"They still don't understand that they're way of doing things is shocking us... it's affecting people. They expect us to welcome and do whatever they come up with as if we had no history. We are a community service, a social service, but we have to be competitive and of course... eh eh eh... there's value for money, too!... emh... Right... How can we do that? It's just not right. How can we be two*

different things? Are we the probation service or a business?"

Menica, a probation service officer, mentioned the target and contestability orientation as well. In her words: *"New managers were like a storm... they destroyed everything. The focus on targets and contestability jeopardizes our way of doing things and our way of seeing the organization. We are different now but I get quite confused... you know? Do we have to rehabilitate people? Do we have to punish people? Do we have to compete with our partner agencies? One thing that I know for sure is that they want a target-driven organization... emh... and that's not what we used to be."* When Menica said 'do we have to punish people?' she was referring to the impact of the NOMS (National Offenders Management Service) which puts together Prisons and Probation. NOMS also tries to make Prisons more rehabilitative, and Probation more punitive in relation to offenders management.

The majority of actors perceive that top management has changed the fundamental values and beliefs on which the RPA is grounded. Although they explained that this is achieved primarily through a focus on targets, some also highlighted a further, more surreptitious approach, namely managers' effort to keep people attached to 'old school' away from strategic positions (e.g. the holders of which are the real organization decision makers). Giulia's experience is a good example of this. She said to me: *"He told me that I couldn't apply for the higher position because he said 'you belong to the old school and we want to break with the old school'"* In this quote Giulia was telling me the story of when she had a conversation with Adolfo (the top manager in charge of her Directorate) during which she informally expressed her intention to apply for Leone's position who wanted to be transferred in a probation area closer to his home. As she saw it, her allegiance to the 'old' way of doing things precluded her from this promotion.

With reference to managers, a striking "us and them" attitude towards top management permeated accounts. In two thirds of the transcripts and from those employees I spoke with informally, top managers were referred to as a separate group in opposition to the rest of the people working in the organization. Rebecca, a personnel officer, explains this as follows: *"I think they [top managers]*

are not fitting well with people. People are talking about... well the word I hear is 'the us and them' situation." This situation was seen by Menica as the outcome of top mangers being not careful to people's issues and quite strict in their decisions. This is what she said: *"There is a divide: we are on one side, they are on the other... this is because we all find them quite insensitive, the directors and the chief. We find them quite insensitive and quite black and white, you know, if you're not achieving well you're going to get told off. And sometimes it's not that easy... sometimes it can be that you're not achieving very well because of some problem but then you get the blame for it anyway."* In this case Menica shows how this view is not just her own or idiosyncratic, but likewise is collective, shared by everyone else. This extract shows an aspect that also emerged in conversations with employees: the sense of community generated by seeing top managers as insensitive and not fitting well with people. Referring to the Chief Officer team in these terms appeared to bring staff close together in coping with the situation and making sense of it (e.g. things are bad for us because top managers are insensitive). I will further develop this issue in the next section. The data in this section links to new control mechanisms as it links to top management imposition of a new system of values over the organization.

9.2.3 How actors frame themselves as individuals within the context of the organization

This aspect relates to the sense of belonging that actors develop within their working context (Alvesson and Empson, 2006). Data show the presence of this sense of belonging among actors but highlight how it tends to be re-enforced outside the physical workplace. People frame themselves as being a community who face their work reality by sharing feelings and experiences. The 'grapevine' is an example of how these elements are fostered by employees.

The following two diary extracts narrate one of the 'grapevine' events I participated in. As noted earlier, the grapevine is a word used by interviewees

and organizational actors with whom I came in contact with. It connotes the people that spread information across the organization and the informal, unstoppable and almost continuous way in which this happens.

The first fieldnote extract data describes the way I was approached, informed about, and invited to the event. Notably, it also suggests that the grapevine consists of certain, 'core' people considered as such because they worked for keeping the old values alive. Thus, the grapevine not only served to spread information, but also worked as a window open on people values (e.g. sharing). I learned from people in the service (particularly close to the grapevine, like Pierluigi) that the old values were built around the sense of sharing and community that seemingly used to be openly supported by management, before the new top management took over.

Today I was invited by Vanna to participate in a 'grapevine' event. We will meet at the X Inn at 6-6.30 pm. I was told that all the 'good ones' will be there, the ones that 'are' the 'grapevine' and that 'keep the old values alive'. Earlier today Giulia called me in her office to discuss the communication project and after that she shut the door to tell me that I was going to be contacted by Vanna for the invitation. And that really happened!

In the following extract I clarify the setting and the type of atmosphere the 'grapevine' generated.

Eighteen people were at the 'grapevine' event tonight. Three of them from Headquarters, two from (city branch name) and the rest, the majority of them, were from (other city branch name). All of them were very welcoming and it looked like they had no problems in criticizing Adolfo, Leone, Dussolina, and Katia with me around. The main conversation topic was the closure of (city branch name) and how terrible that would have resulted for people working there. I noticed that the event was all about getting together and feeling good about telling personal stories. The majority of those stories were about interactions (with managers) that didn't turn out well, managers' decisions that 'ruin people's existence', and so on. People were clearly relieved and felt supported by the group after criticizing managers and gaining others' approval for that (e.g. 'yeah', 'good point', 'you're absolutely right'). They were very close to each other

and determined to walk that work road together. In fact, one expression that recurred frequently were 'we're all together in this' and 'they'll leave soon, they're ambitious, we just have to be patient'. By the end of the get together I was able to arrange two interviews with two key people in (city branch name).

This extract highlights two aspects. The first one is that, although to a person external to the organization the grapevine event is not too different from a get together with colleagues after work, for participants it was a moment of sharing understanding to re-charge energy by feeling bonded to one another. The second aspect of the quote to consider is that people do not feel alone in their opposition to top managers. On the contrary, there was a strong emphasis on collectivity, solidarity, and the sharing of experiences. The sense of belonging to the organization community was also shown by Isabella a middle manager: *"everybody feels the same but it's positive because it means that it's real and there is also this feeling that we're all in this together and that... before middle managers were seen closer to managers but now we all feel the same, we're in this together."* The quote illustrates how being together in opposition to the new top managers generates positive feelings and also gives people the sense that what is happening at an organizational level is real and it is neither imaginary, nor the experience of a single individual. As discussed previously, reform policies rebounded on the morale of employees as feelings of powerlessness, devaluation and deskilling have given rise to a general sense of demoralization (Ahmad and Broussine, 2003). The data in this section led me to think of the sense of community as a way for employees to cope with such aspects.

9.2.3.1 The probation identity

The way actors frame themselves in the organization does not show any reference to the concept of professional identity highlighted in chapter III. Rather than professional identity data show a shared identity that emphasizes the service as a whole. Accounts of both probation officers and support staff illustrate how this identity was challenged by the changes that occurred. The idea

of service identity rather than professional identity and of the changes jeopardizing the essence of the service and what it stands for emerges from Enea's account [probation officer]: *"I understand the need to make the service accountable because at the end of the day we spend public money... but the government doesn't seem to care about what we do, what we represent...you know... who we are in society. We are here to rehabilitate people. We're not the prison, we're not the private sector... our objective is reducing re-offending...ticking boxes doesn't get the job done. Value for money and contestability don't make any sense. Senior managers don't know anything about the service. They're good at telling us what to do. We all feel the same about them... you know we're different... emh... they don't know what our service is and stands for and their ideas jeopardize us, our work and what people think about us"*. Enea defines the identity of the service by underlying what the service is not. Evelina explains what type of people work in the service. She says: *"people that work in this service are here because they want to help others, they know that they can make a difference... managers should understand that we cannot turn into a profit organization and forget who we are"*.

It is interesting to observe how the presence of a service identity emerges also from support officers' accounts in a way that is as strong as that highlighted by probation officers. Adele [accommodation officer] highlights the mission of the probation service, the one that she learned in the course of her experience in this institution: *"Probation has a mission in society and this mission is about rehabilitating people. We don't punish them... that's what the prison does... I've been working here for many years and this is what we are... this is what we stand for. The government wants us to be flexible and ready for change, the government wants us to work according to the rule of value for money... and you know that's what senior managers are trying to do... but this goes against our principles. All the people that I know here believe in probation"*. Giovanni [IT line manager] expresses his concerns about the issue of contestability and links this concept to the identity of the service. In his words: *"contestability is not natural for our service. What we do and what we represent has nothing to do with competition. According to the government we should compete with*

other organizations for providing services that traditionally have always been provided by the probation service. It's important for us to keep on providing those services because doing so is our tradition; it shows our role in society; being close to people is what we're about. The government wants to change our nature but we won't easily forget who we are". Enea, Evelina, Adele and Giovanni make a point by showing how the government changes as well as the actions of their top managers challenge the essence of the service. Their accounts reflect the trend among the majority of interviewees (32 between staff and middle managers): whether or not one belonged to the group of probation officers did not make any difference in sharing the sense of service identity which emerged as widespread throughout the organization.

9.2.4 How actors think they are perceived by outsiders, and how they perceive others

This aspect refers to personal orientation and interface with the external environment (Alvesson and Empson, 2006). Although this was not a predominant issue in the data corpus, it was a theme that did recur in my field notes and which five interviewees discussed in a more detailed way. They mainly expressed their impression that public opinion had little knowledge about the service. Evelina, a probation officer, explained this as follows: *"I think that people that work within the probation... yeah, they know why we're here but I don't think the general public do, no, I don't really think they know. They think the Probation is the soft option to prison".* With regard to the point she put forward, the creation of NOMS attempted to change people's perceptions of both Prisons and Probation at a national level. The former have been characterized by punishing offenders for the crimes committed in society, while the latter has been characterized by the will to rehabilitate offenders without the need for detention. During the time that Prisons and Probation were separate, those were respectively the two approaches for managing offenders. With NOMS the

government wanted to make Prisons less punitive and more rehabilitative and Probation less rehabilitative and more punitive. The aim was to facilitate work integration between the two types of institutions, but also to send a message to public opinion who did not consider probation to be sufficiently tough, or viewed it as an ineffective service.

The idea of public opinion not knowing the real purpose of the probation service emerged also from Leone's view. This is what he told me during the interview: *"So we have a brand problem, people don't automatically... well they think that we are going to be liberal, that we don't take offending seriously and that we are friends with the offender. We are not calling just offenders to account. We also uniquely call society to account on how it treats offenders and how it deals with them. I don't know any other organization that does that..."*

Instead, Wanda, a probation officer, focused her attention on how people perceive probation rather than on how (and if) they understand what the service is about. She said that the opinion of the community is affected by the Press. In her words: *"you know we have to make sure that offenders don't re-offend. It's not easy. Working for the community identifies us... both in a good way and in a bad way...eh eh eh... you know when someone re-offends. Good press and bad press influence people's opinions on the probation service, on how we do our work... if we fail with an offender and his case ends up on the newspaper then everyone is against us, they don't appreciate our contribution to society."* In relation to the influence of media on public opinion, according to Pervinca, the communication officer most involved in keeping the relations with the Press, whenever an offender re-offends the press puts emphasis on the RPA failure much more than when the organization achieves a success. This affects the way the general public perceives the organization and the people that work in it.

9.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I looked at how actors described their roles and the constituting

elements of their organizational identity. With regard to the former, two main aspects emerged from actors' accounts and from observational data. First of all, top managers' expectations of role holders emphasized target achievement, focusing on the day job and not worrying about being involved into organizational decisions. Secondly, staff perceived changes in their roles, namely loss of autonomy, loss of decision power, loss of involvement in the organization, and, finally, loss of consideration as professionals.

With regard to organizational identity, a number of issues emerged. First, top managers' lack of probation knowledge which, according to actors, led to their failure to understand people's jobs, and to the imposition of targets which were seen as difficult to achieve. Second, organization management oriented to targets, and people referring to top managers as a separate group in opposition to the rest of the staff (e.g. us/them). Third, people framed themselves as a community who faces the work reality by sharing feelings and experiences. Fourth, according to interviewees, people outside the organization had little knowledge about the service. Knowledge, management, sense of belonging, and interface with the external environment are what underpins the question 'who are we as an organization?'. The imposition of new control mechanisms seems to have affected employees' relationship with the organization (Martin et al., 2003) with respect to their role and the use they make of probation knowledge, the perceptions of management, the way they fame themselves as employees, and the way they think the public perceives them. The reform policies were described (Du Gay, 1996; Meyer and Hammerschmid, 2006) as a project of construction of a new identity; however, for the RPA the policies, mediated by new control mechanisms, brought a loss of the distinctiveness of the service which also links to the implications of the inter-agency collaboration suggested by Nash (2000).

The type of accounts and the observational data suggest an erosion of the sense of identification between actors and the organization. This claim will be further clarified in the discussion chapter, in which the links to the literature will also be highlighted.

Chapter X

The Discourse of Fear in the RPA: A Pervasive Feature of RPA Employees'
Accounts

10.0 Introduction

A striking feature of the data is the view that New Public Management and Modernization policies (mediated by new control mechanisms) have created a pervasive sense of fear amongst RPA employees. Indeed, the issue of fear was raised by all interviewees except for two board members, the three top managers, and the Chief Executive. Fear was also a central topic of the informal conversations I had with people. The elements that emerged from the data and that I will illustrate in this section are: the presence of a culture and of a climate of fear within the organization; the fear of giving feedback; what people fear; how people react to fear; the discourse of fear as a way for newer recruits to 'join the club'; and finally actors' criticisms of managers' fear-based approach.

10.1 Actors' accounts on the presence of a culture or climate of fear in the organization

Regarding the presence of a culture and climate of fear, these issues were highlighted in particular by Vincenza, a receptionist, and Menica, a probation service officer. Because of her role Vincenza gets to know and talk to people. She was always up to date and gave me news on employees, top managers and on the organization in general. These are the words she used to illustrate the issue: *"With the change they introduced a culture of fear. People are afraid to talk, to tell them what they think, to suggest ideas... everybody feels the same."* Vincenza also mentioned people's fear of giving top managers their feedback, an aspect which I will consider further on in this section. Menica did not talk about culture of fear, she

used the word 'climate'. She said: *"You know... people feel that they can't say anything because they feel frightened... and I think they* [top managers] *know... I think that they do it on purpose, they want people to work in this climate of fear."* The sense that instigating fear was top managers' intention is hinted at both quotes.

The circulation of stories within the organization consolidated the feeling of fear among people. Rebecca's account suggests this. She is a personnel officer; she is very extrovert and likes to talk with people and this is how she gathers information about what is happening in the RPA. In her words: *"I've heard, I mean I've heard from people here that other people were getting emails from managers and those emails were quite aggressive and bullying... for no reason. You know all the target agenda has been done in a bullying and aggressive way and... you know... people are afraid of them... they established a climate of fear. They tell us what has to be done and... you know... they say 'do it!'... the way they say things scares people... you don't know what will happen to you if you don't stick to their rule."* Rebecca suggests that being aggressive with people and bullying them can be a practice that keeps RPA employees from putting forward their opinions since it eventually creates and maintains silence (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

10.2 Actors' fear of giving feedback

Fear of giving feedback is the second aspect that interviewees articulated. Alfio was clear on the issue. He is a middle manager who is well known and respected by many people across the service because of his commitment to the organization (he worked for more than twenty five years in the RPA). In his account he clearly wanted to avoid to be identified when speaking about top managers' resistance to feedback. For that reason he did not narrate his direct experience; instead, although he was reluctant to give actual examples, because he was concerned that this would lead to his identification, he explained how, in his view, people should not dare to voice their opinions – otherwise, he suggested, the risk can be serious. He said to me: *"They* [top managers] *don't*

particularly want it [feedback]... *I had direct experience with that. Sorry, I can't tell you cause I'll be identified. There is no explanation, no discussion... You could argue but when a decision is made there is nothing to do. There is a feeling that you shouldn't raise your head over the parapet too much... the consequences can be really serious."*

Giulia, from communication, spoke about this issue during her interview as well. She said to me: *"We are afraid... that's why everybody talks behind closed doors. We don't want them to hear what we think because we can be punished, they don't like us to express our opinions or give feedback."* Talking behind closed doors was something that I personally experienced. In fact, before Giulia informed me about the 'grapevine' event in which I was supposed to take part she closed the door to avoid others to hear. Giulia re-enforced the fact that people do not put forward suggestions also by saying: *"With the culture of fear that we have now people don't put forward suggestions."* Stella's account clarifies what top managers do not like which could lead to negative consequences for staff. In her words: *"If you take a position that is different from what managers want it could be that there will be negative consequences for you... emh... and that's why everyone is afraid"*. Stella works in the accommodation service. Through her quote she hints that people do not openly take positions that differ from those of managers. Giulia and Stella implied that the sense of fear is spread across the organization. They always referred to the collectivity, to everyone rather than to specific groups, units, or teams.

The fear that RPA actors illustrated in their accounts can be an implication of understanding the reform policies as new control mechanisms. The attempt to develop new and more sophisticated forms of organizational control in the public sector (Hoggett, 1996), as controlling behaviour by means of corporate culture and commitment to core organizational values (Hoggett, 1996), can generate different reactions (Gabriel, 1999). In the RPA fear emerged as the prevailing one.

10.3 What are people afraid of?

People appeared to be afraid of the possibility of being treated rudely and of being criticised by managers for giving feedback, the possibility of undergoing negative consequences on the job, and the fact that with the new structure people are much more accountable with serious consequences if they are seen to be under-performing. Alice, who manages one of the branches that are located outside the city, discussed this at length. Despite the fact that she is spatially far away from headquarters (thus away from the physical presence of top managers), this culture of fear was something that she was acutely aware of: *"People don't express their opinions any more because they're scared of the criticism that comes from managers and of the possible negative consequences for their jobs... they are rude, they hurt people's feelings, they just don't care... people are scared of the consequences of being critical... they don't know what can happen to them, to their job."*

In my data such example of 'rude behaviours' were reported. Here my first example comes from Stella. She said to me: *"People are scared of being hurt, offended... you know... they are rude and hurt people's feelings... some people have problems with Leone. Because he's homosexual he makes a lot of comments about being homosexual, being 'gay' and some people feel that this is rude... a person told me that he heard him saying that he was having an affair with Procopia... he was talking about having sex with her... how her husband could watch... you know, derogatory things."*
The second example of top managers' rudeness came from Vincenza, she also talked about Leone. This is what she said in her interview: *"Sometimes Leone works on weekends... a person from Finance told me that one day he was in and Leone arrived with his dog and apparently he was allowed to run around the whole building... nobody else was there... emh... and this guy from finance pointed out that leaving a dog in the building was very unhygienic because we got catering on site here, we got kitchens here, we got people with allergies... he told him all these things and then said 'you shouldn't allow your dog to run around' and his comment back was 'fuck you, I can do what I want, it's my dog and if you don't like it get out'... directors can do what they want but if*

somebody else does it out there they got to be reprimanded straight away... knowing this scares people". I was told of another example of top managers' rudeness by Norberto, an IT officer who I did not interview but with whom I talked frequently. This time the author of the rude behaviours was Adolfo. I took notes on what Norberto told me: *"I was in the kitchen and Norberto approached me asking me if I knew of the 'ultimate rude, inappropriate and disgusting behaviour of Adolfo'. I didn't, so I asked him to tell me. He said that Adolfo wrote a list of the ten female staff members at headquarters whom he planned to get intimate with. He said that they're all blonds because he likes blondes. He also said that everyone noticed that the new communication officer that he hired is blonde, too. Norberto continued saying that some of the girls on the list were worried because of what happened to Tania and to Pervinca. I asked him about it and he said that first Adolfo targeted Pervinca who one day ran out of his office and left the building and her job because she was sexually harassed; then he targeted Tania and he insisted so much with her that she ended up favouring him also because she didn't want to have a hard time at work. He said that they usually stay late in the building 'to have sex in the resource room, in his office, and in the restroom'."* Tania left her job few weeks after Norberto told me about her affair with Adolfo.

To return to the issue of what people fear, Viviana, a personal assistant, suggested that employees are scared of being pushed out from their jobs. In her words: *"The biggest fear people feel is to be pushed out of their jobs, therefore you don't want to be seen in a bad way... you know... in general."* For understanding what is one of the possible causes of being seen in a 'bad way', Biancamaria, a probation service officer, said: *"There are many things people shouldn't be seen doing. Chatting is one of these... and you know people are afraid to chat because they know that they have to be seen that they do their job... you know... because of the pressure on targets... otherwise managers look at us in a bad way."*

Finally, Alfio suggests a different cause of fear, namely the fact that everyone's job is monitored closely and people are held accountable for what they do. In his words: *"One of the major things people are scared of is that now our work is monitored closely, and we have to hand in reports... emh... we can be blamed in case something goes*

wrong. It wasn't like this before the new managers came here... now we can be blamed as professionals."

Interviewees' accounts on the causes of fear varied from those more related to people's feelings (e.g. Alice's extract) all the way to those more related to the fear of being blamed as professionals (e.g. Alfio's extract). These causes were represented equally; none seemed to prevail over the others.

10.4 How actors react to fear

Actors' reactions to fear were frequently expressed informally, in everyday conversation, and thus featured in my fieldnotes. They were also articulated strongly in two interviewees' accounts. In particular, high levels of sickness and a propensity to leave the service were seen as consequences of this increasing culture of fear in the RPA. The first interviewee to mention these issues is Rebecca. She was telling me about the people intentioned to leave their jobs:

"People are scared... they are scared about their jobs, they are worried, they don't know what will happen to them. With this climate of fear a lot of them want to leave their jobs... you know, this is how some people are reacting. I came in yesterday and someone told me that four people want to hand in their notice because they fear for the worse... so they just decided to look for something else... don't they [top managers] realize they're loosing good, knowledgeable° people? Can't they see that?"

Adelaide, a probation officer, also mentioned what she thought was a reaction of employees to fear. This is what she said: *"because of this culture of fear... you know... the sickness record was really, really bad... this is how people react, they go off with depression and stress. It happened to me too, I went off with depression for two months because of the workload... it got horrendous and they had this thing of not listening to me... I was doing admin for three people... I am angry, really angry but I can't say it, I don't know if I'll ever tell anyone. Now depression is on my record I won't be able to foster children... I always wanted to foster children but to do so you have to be in a healthy state of mind. They're just not listening and harming other people. I heard*

about other people that went off with depression... there is one, I can't tell you her name... she was about to cry in front of me... she wanted to talk with Ester who was on the phone... so she told me that she couldn't take it anymore... she said that she couldn't bare working in these conditions any longer!"

People's propensity to leave their jobs and high sickness records were two issues that emerged also from the discussions I had with staff members. For example Giovanna, from IT, put forward Ester's situation. She said to me: "It *wasn't that long ago that Ester, HR...emh... Personnel manager... was crying because of the stress of the workload that came with the new structure. Management came in, gave her all these targets to achieve, extra work to do. She wasn't coping, she was becoming very ill here, she wasn't eating, she lost lots of weight, because she was stressed. She really didn't have the courage to talk to managers, until one day she approached Adolfo, handed all the work and said to him 'look, I'm not coping with my workload' he wasn't very nice to her. He did mention something along the lines of 'fuck you' basically, and he did used the word 'fuck' to her... these are the things that scare people, being treated like that... Ester left. She worked here for ages, twenty five years."*

The aspects highlighted in the accounts of this section represent what actors thought were RPA employees' reactions to living in a climate of fear, and to the threat of being treated rudely or, in the worst case, pushed out of their jobs.

10.5 Mobilization of a discourse of fear as a way of 'joining the club'

Discussions I had with young recruits (e.g. employees that worked for the RPA for less than two years) gave me useful insights for understanding the issue of fear. In particular, the young recruits who I spoke to highlighted how they did not understand the reasons why their colleagues were afraid of speaking up; nevertheless, they joined them in spreading a discourse of fear as, in their opinion, this meant opposing managers and joining the views of the majority of the people in the RPA. Some examples emerge from the following fieldnotes.

"I was in the staff room at X-location when I started chatting with Petronilla. She was having her lunch. She said that she was happy to meet me as everyone was talking about 'this researcher'. I asked her about her experience at the RPA and she said that she had been working for the service for six months and that she liked the type of job she was doing (probation service officer) and the people she was working with. She said that, despite the fact that the people were nice, sometimes she couldn't understand why they were so scared of managers. She said that she really did not care about top managers as she saw them so distant from her little 'niche'. She told me that a couple of weeks before, in a staff-top managers meeting her senior colleagues had an issue with the managers' decision of closing X-street, however, nobody wanted to raise the matter. She said that in that meeting people were saying 'we have to say it all together...or one after the other, otherwise the complaint will have repercussions on our jobs'. Petronilla told me that she could not understand why people were so concerned about a simple opinion jeopardizing their jobs. She said that even if she cannot understand why people are so scared she 'goes with the flow' as that's what the majority of her colleagues do."

Petronilla's account suggests that sharing the discourse of fear may be just a way of doing as other people do, without really feeling scared. The next diary extract illustrates Gaspare's view on the discourse of fear. Gaspare is part of the operations unit and has been working in the RPA for a year-and-a-half.

"I ran into Gaspare at lunch break at the Sainsbury's near headquarters. We decided to have lunch together and sat at the tables at the entrance. I was particularly surprised

by all the things I had heard about fear that week so I asked him how he felt about the issue. He told me that he had conversations with a large majority of people, mainly those who had been working in the RPA for longer time. These colleagues were saying how top managers created a culture of fear. He said that he did not really feel scared. He said that he was often talking about fear with his colleagues but it was just a way to blend in and to stand on the employees' side rather than on the top manager's one. He said that he 'couldn't stand' top managers as they were 'full of crap'. He said that he could not stand the fact that they were telling them what to do without even understanding what the job was about. He also said that he did not like the fact that every day they came around with a new idea, totally different from the previous ones, that meant changing the way work was done and starting all over again."

Gaspare's view informed me that for young recruits engaging in a discourse of fear could have meant deciding to support one side rather than the other within the RPA. This aspect links back to the dichotomy "us and them" which I discussed in the previous chapter. Some actors talked about fear in order to join the "us" group or to reinforce their belonging to it.

10.6 Actors' criticisms of managers' fear-based approach.

Criticisms of top managers' fear-based approach were made by three interviewees. Pierluigi, in charge of Services, criticized what he described as the "stick-only" approach. He emphasized that this may produce a good outcome but only for the short term. He said to me: *"I mean if your belief is that using the carrot or the stick is the one way to obtain things then... you know... directors believe in stick only... and pretty bad. This can work... it does work but in the end if you use the stick technique, fear... it does work but up to a point, you know, it's not the way things should work in an organization. It's a philosophy I wouldn't engage in".* He continued explaining his view: *"I've done a new policy for mobile phones and I had to ask for Adolfo's 'permission' to put it in place and he said 'you're a fascist like me, good' and I said 'no, no I'm not'. I've got a fair policy because it's for the organization to have a fair*

policy to avoid mobile phone abuse and my policy was based on that... it wasn't 'you won't do this because I say so'... people are scared of him... and sometimes I fear the consequences of contradicting him" Pierluigi's view echoes the opinions highlighted earlier.

Ludovico, who is an operations officer, expressed a similar concern for the effectiveness of the management approach used by directors. He said: *"The approach they're using is not constructive... the people you violent sooner or later will be violent in return... look at Iraq! The logic is so obvious to me."*

Finally, a third criticism of top managers' approach was put forward by one of the Board members. Samuele has twenty years of experience in the public sector and has been in the Board of the probation for four years. He explains that threatening people can improve performance up to a certain level. However, to get beyond that level, engagement, communication, and team spirit are fundamental. Samuele used these words: *"You can improve performance to a certain point by using threaten techniques... you can keep on using fear but if you want to go passed that point then you need to engage with people, you need to communicate, you need to bring them in and work as a team, that's the way things work. Look at Olympics, even if there is only one performer they work as a team to achieve that, because they have to work together to get that individual to that level... it's a different approach from 'win the gold medal or you will be sorry'!"*

The edgy, dangerous and precarious feelings, that may be typical of the relationship between offenders and officers, led me to expect the emergence of fear from the data collected in the RPA. However, while I was expecting actors to link fear to offenders, it was striking to realize that this feeling was transferred to the relationship between employees and top management.

10.7 Conclusion

Fear emerged as an aspect permeating the data. The main issues related to it were: the presence of a culture and of a climate of fear; employees' fear of being treated rudely for giving feedback, of undergoing negative consequences on the job, and of being held accountable for their outcomes; increase in sick leaves and in people's resignations as a consequence of the climate of fear in the organization; difference between young recruits and longer-serving employees; and staff's criticisms of the fear-based management approach. Fear, in the terms described by actors, was an unexpected finding that emerged from the data. Considerations, purpose, and implications of its role will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter XI

Discussion

11.0 Introduction

In this chapter I illustrate the contributions of my research. I start by answering the research questions. The key points of the data chapters are summarized, and interpreted in light of the research questions. In doing so I refer back to the relevant theory and I highlight the contributions as they emerged from the data. I then illustrate the limitations of the research and the scope for further research that each contribution offers.

11.1 How can we theoretically account for probation service employees' lived experience of the New Public Management and Modernization policies?

In chapter VIII, I argued that New Public Management and Modernization policies were seen by RPA actors as new control mechanisms, in Gabriel's (1999) terms. Nellis (1999) suggested that, although the adoption of the management disciplines to criminal justice aimed to produce a more rational approach to policy-making, in the probation service those policies created disorientation. The reduction of the probation activities to a set of formalized actions within a set of prescriptive guidelines (Sparrow et al., 2002) was understood by RPA actors as a dramatic reduction in their decisional autonomy (cfr. Mara's episode in chapter VIII). Data from the RPA shows that actors did not interpret the reform policies as a way of reducing re-offending and improving effectiveness and efficiency, but as a way of increasing the control of top managers over people and their work. This perspective emerges from chapter VIII. That chapter focused on the changes that were adopted within the RPA after the end of March 2005, when the new Chief Officer team took over. The four types of changes that took place in

the organization are summarized as follows. First, structural changes: from staff and middle managers' descriptions, these changes have been imposed on people from the Chief Officer team, without asking for employees' feedback before the implementation. This perspective has been confirmed by the members of that team who, in their accounts, confirmed that the structural changes needed to be carried out exactly the way it happened, in spite of people's reactions against them (cfr. Chapter VIII – section 8.1, Dussolina).

Secondly, changes in manufacturing/service provision technology. With regard to this point, rather than a distinction between staff and middle managers on one side, and Chief Officer team members on the other, data highlighted a distinction according to the type of work actors carried out. In particular, probation staff perceived the changes in manufacturing/service provision technology as a reduction of their decisional autonomy in performing their jobs, while administrative staff associated these changes with an increase in formal requirements and accountability.

Thirdly, changes in surveillance technology. Actors acknowledged that there has been a re-enforcement of surveillance within their organization which occurred through the implementation of a target-orientation. The number and level of targets required by the Chief Officer team were not seen positively by staff and middle managers; however, the former perceived them as indispensable for ensuring successful outcomes.

Fourthly, concentrated attempts by management to promote new sets of values, attitudes and beliefs. In staff and middle managers' accounts, the Chief Officer team challenged old values, attitudes and beliefs by using symbolic behaviours (which discouraged people and put them in a state of anxiety), and promoted new ones by using formal documents, such as, the Annual Report or the Probation Circular.

The analysis of those data leads to my first empirical contribution: the concomitant implementation of the four types of changes suggests that RPA actors were facing more than mere organizational change. The fact that structure,

service provision technology, surveillance technology, and the system of values were enacted at the same time by the Chief Officer team's decisions is a finding consistent with Gabriel's (1999) argument about the adoption of new control mechanisms. As already illustrated in chapter IV, new control mechanisms control the individual from the inside as well as from the outside by increasing sense of guilt, discomfort, anxiety, insecurity, and pressure (Gabriel, 1999). A common pattern that I found in analysing actors' accounts of the four changes that occurred was characterized by those types of outcomes. Some examples can be traced in chapter VIII: Pervinca's illustrations are an example of the pressure generated by the structural changes; Irene's descriptions are an example of the anxiety generated by the changes in service provision technology; Eleonora's quotes are an example of the discomfort generated by the changes in surveillance technology; and Isabella's interview shows actors' anxiety in experiencing top management's attempts to change values, attitudes, and beliefs. The fact that the findings support Gabriel's (1999) argument as well as the fact that actors' reactions (e.g. anxiety, pressure, discomfort) have continued since the end of March 2005, when the Chief Officer team was created, is evidence of organizational dynamics that differ from the ones that tend to characterize change (Weick and Quinn, 1999).

As illustrated in the second chapter, one of the novelties associated with the New Public Management and Modernization reforms that affected the Public Sector, and, consequently, the Probation Service, is an increase in control, for accountability purposes, and the change in the type of controls traditionally used (Hood, 1991; 1995). Control has been defined in the literature as one of the New Public Management dimensions (Hood, 1991; 1995) (that emerge from table 2.1 in chapter II) that changed. Control over accountability, efficiency, and results is a crucial aspect of the reforms. However, the previous literature did not consider that control can be more than a mere dimension of the reform policies. The pervasiveness of control, as RPA data show, suggests that the New Public Management and Modernization policies are about control rather than just about

change. As anticipated in chapter IV, previous studies mainly focused on the change side of the reforms leaving a gap with regard to the possibility of analysing whether or not control was more than a dimension of the reforms. My first contribution implies that control and change are inextricably linked and mutually constitutive in relation to the reform policies. They are two sides of the same coin.

11.2 What are the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies for the organizational identity of probation service employees?

In this section I summarize the aspects that actors emphasized when describing their experience in the RPA, presented in chapter IX: roles, identity, and fear, and explain them in light of the theory. Subsequently, I will highlight the contributions that I developed by analysing these issues.

As highlighted, a key implication of the control aspect of New Public Management and Modernization policies is reflected in actors' views of the constituting elements of their organizational identity. In their accounts, actors made links to: knowledge, organization management, the way people frame themselves within their workplace, and the way they think they are perceived by others. These four areas have been suggested by Alvesson and Empson (2006) as the elements though which actors usually construct their organizational identity. The pattern that emerged from the data is that actors perceived the Chief Officer team members as different from the rest of the employees because they were seen as not being familiar with probation knowledge which, ultimately, leads them to set unrealistic targets (cfr. Chapter VIII - section 8.2.1 Francesco). In Alvesson's and Empson's (2006) interpretation, knowledge is an identity issue as the type of knowledge people possess and the way they use it defines their relationship with the organization. The Chief Officer team not being familiar with probation

knowledge meant to actors that top managers were interpreting their relationship with the organization in a different way than the rest of the employees, giving rise to a different understanding and construction of organizational identity, not in line with the traditional one. While actors were stuck with the idea that knowledge reinforces the boundaries between qualified and unqualified staff, top managers saw knowledge according to the "what works" agenda, namely not as a crucial aspect for carrying out probation work (Newman and Nutley, 2003).

Actors identified a separation between employees and the Chief Officer team (as members of two distinct entities), and interpreted the high expectations of the latter about target achievement as fostering the development of a sense of community among employees and middle managers to cope with the stress generated by managerial decisions - *a trouble shared is a trouble halved*. Some might argue that the perception of difference between employees and top managers in organizations is obvious due to the legitimate power they hold (French and Raven, 1959). Nevertheless, RPA actors' perceptions were driven by the observable behaviours of the Chief Officer team rather than only by their hierarchical position. The general public's failure to acknowledge the role of the probation service in society (cfr. Chapter IX – section 9.2.4, Leone) and their lack of clarity about what the probation service is (cfr. Chapter IX – section 9.2.4, Evelina) were also linked to targets. Nevertheless, while on staff and middle managers' side targets were to blame for jeopardizing the role of the service in society by reducing the relationship between officers and offenders to a set of standardized procedures, for top managers targets aimed to re-brand the service so that the public opinion would appreciate its role in society (cfr. Chapter IX – section 9.2.4, Leone). Data on identity shows actors' inclination to be deeply critical of the context and situation in which they work. Alvesson and Empson (2006) argue that individuals construct their organizational identity in order to generate a positive concept of the organization which ultimately affects their concept of self to enhance self-esteem, mobilize enthusiasm and a spirit of

community. RPA actors' critical approach in discussing the constituting elements of identity shows an erosion of the latter. A lack of self-esteem and enthusiasm emerges from the data, and the spirit of community that pervades the organization is due to actors' need to feel all together in facing what they desume to be a grim reality rather than to their positive identification with the orientation of the organization. Actors do not define themselves through their relationship with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994) as this relationship shows incompatibility between their views and the organization's ones. An aspect that should be considered as affecting actors' perceptions is the construction of their organizational identity is the inter-agency collaboration between prison and probation (Nellis, 1999). Nellis (1999) argues that the imposed shift in values between rehabilitation and punishment is stronger than any other shift that New Public Management and Modernization policies generated in other public sector organizations. From the data, RPA actors show how this shift has not actually occurred in their way of constructing and interpreting their organizational identity.

From the analysis of actors' identity construction, a second contribution emerges in this study: in spite of the government-led changes of the underpinning philosophies of the probation service, actors still interpret it as a socio-vocational institution, aimed at helping others and in which people want to help others. The implication of this contribution is that in the probation service managerial oriented policies promoted by New Public Management and Modernization waves have seriously eroded actors' processes of organizational identity construction and affected the compatibility between their interpretations and what the organization means and stands for.

11.3 What are the implications of New Public Management and Modernization policies on probation service employees' organizational roles?

As discussed in chapter IX, staff and middle managers expressed their views as role holders who lost their autonomy, their decision-making power, their feelings of involvement in the organization, and their status as professionals. This aspect could be linked to Katz and Khan's (1978) argument about person-role conflict which occurs when there are incompatibilities between the requirements of a role and the needs or values of the person holding it. Newman and Nutley (2003) argue that New Public Management and Modernization policies shook up pre-existing roles in the probation service by introducing new roles, and role requirements. The data gathered in the RPA supports this view, showing the presence of the person-role conflict among staff and middle managers. When speaking about their roles, these two groups of employees expressed only the expectations created by the role senders (e.g. the Chief Officer team) as opposed to the ones created by role owners (e.g. staff). In fact, their descriptions mainly focused on how the Chief Officer team stressed performance, expecting employees to achieve targets. Data did not show actors expressing what they expected from others whose work and roles were directly or indirectly affecting them. The person-role conflict experienced by staff and middle managers also emerges from the data on management's concerted attempts to promote new sets of values, attitudes and beliefs. Actors' accounts in chapter VIII, section 8.4 highlight the incompatibility between people's values and the new orientation of the organization (that is ultimately expressed by roles). On the contrary, the Chief Officer team illustrated only expectations as role holders. The presence of the person-role conflict in the RPA challenges the construction of actors' organizational identity as it shows incompatibility between the values of the actors and those of the organization. This echoes the issues noted in the previous section and analysed with regard to the effect of New Public Management and

Modernization policies on the construction of organizational identity. As Burke and Reitze's (1981) work shows, individuals construct their organizational identity by 'playing' their roles in a way that supports the principles of the organization. When the principles of the organization collide with actors' values the latter do not 'play' their roles in a way that supports the organization.

The data on roles supports the findings on the construction of actors' organizational identity being challenged, and leads to a third empirical contribution, namely: New Public Management and Modernization policies lead to an increase in role standardization coupled with a decrease in autonomy. The data on the RPA particularly highlights the standardization of those roles that require intuitive understanding and a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making. While before the changes actors could have chosen the best way to use their pool of knowledge for carrying out their job (adapting it to the type of situation they were facing), after the changes this type of autonomy diminished in favour of a 'finite number of alternatives' to choose from in order to carry out the job. Given that actors perceive the imposed standardization as the reason why there is no longer compatibility between their personal values and what their organizational roles express, the implication of this third contribution is that actors' person-role conflict negatively influences staff relationship with managers.

The second and the third contribution highlight the importance of probation identity which, based on my findings I would argue is different from the professional identity as explained in chapter 3. The sense of probation identity is not exclusive to probation officers as the 'prime donne' of the service (Burns and Stalker, 1961, p. 176). Rather in my data it was seen as involving everybody working in the service. In the RPA the dominant discourse related to identity was not emphasizing the role of professionals (cfr. chapter 3, section 3.6 Dent and Whitehead, 2002). Instead, actors emphasized their identification with and affiliation to the service as a whole. At the same time the presence of this type of identity elucidates their interpretation of the probation service as a socio-

vocational institution. Nevertheless, it also strengthens the person-role conflict as it underlines the difference between actors' interpretation of the service and what they believe their roles should be, and the actual organizational roles managers expect them to 'play' (cfr. chapter 8, Leone's view).

Based on my findings I would argue that the notion of service identity is something distinct from professional identity. Although this difference is highlighted in the RPA data, both the literature on identity and the one on the public sector tend to focus either on organizational identity or on professional identity as aspects that may influence actors' ways of making sense of their workplace dynamics. Considered both organizational identity and professional identity as concepts which could help me to 'unlock' the meaning of my data, service identity emerged as a stronger perspective from which actors' made sense of their experiences, together with the aspects of organizational identity highlighted by Alvesson and Empson (2006).

My answers to the research questions illustrate the key empirical findings of this study. These contributions are important for a number of reasons. First, I was able to observe actors' interpretation of the reform policies as new control mechanisms. Secondly, control emerges as a pervasive aspect of the reforms rather than only one of the dimensions that characterize New Public Management. Thirdly, the organizational identity of the probation service was eroded by the reform policies and this influenced actors' perception of compatibility between their interpretations and what the organization stands for. Finally, I was able to see that New Public Management and Modernization policies standardized roles that in the past used to be characterized by people's decisional autonomy. This reduced actors' use of intuition, based on experience, in decision-making situations.

11.4 Theoretical Contribution

The previous sections of this chapter illustrated the empirical findings. This

section will highlight the theoretical contribution by looking at the last element that actors used to portray their lived experience in the RPA: mobilization of a discourse of fear. When I initially started observing and recording actors talking about fear, the dynamics underpinning their discourse were not immediately clear to me. I had expected the issue of fear to emerge as this is what makes the probation service different from any other public sector organization. In fact, fear is a well known feeling in probation work. One may think that it results from a certain precariousness in the offender-officer relationship (because of the feelings of danger that officers may experience when interacting with criminals). However, in my case it does not. As I anticipated in the previous chapter, employees transferred the edgy, precarious, and feelings of danger to the relationship between themselves and managers. Actors whispering about the presence of a culture of fear, about the Chief Officer team creating and wanting to keep a climate of fear, about people leaving their jobs because of the fear that characterized their workplace, often led me back to the literature to make sense of what I was witnessing. The literature on new control mechanisms offered links to identity and to roles but nothing emerged in relation to fear. As I did not find any answers in the studies on control, identity, and roles, I started looking specifically into fear but little emerged from this point of view as well. In fact, the majority of the research on fear relates to psychology, psychiatry, and medicine (Roseman, 1984; Damasio et al., 2000). Only four studies mentioned fear from a perspective that could have been useful for understanding my particular research finding, namely Phillips (1995), Weick and Quinn (1999), Glassner (1999), and Morrison and Milliken (2000).

Weick and Quinn (1999) argue that the diffusion of a sense of fear among actors is one of the possible reactions to pressure and uncertainty generated by the transformation of the system of meanings that support the organizational identity and the interpretation of one's role in the organization. This means that when the organization faces a change that creates mismatching between the meaning that actors attribute to its values and the meaning that it is imposed by

the change, a sense of fear spreads among people. In general, fear is often looked at as an emotion that people employ in response to danger (Leventhal et al., 1967). Contrary to this interpretation, fear has been also seen as a construction to protect against other fears and, indeed, against fear itself (Glassner, 1999). According to this point of view people construct certain types of fear to protect themselves from other fears they have. The things that people do to protect themselves from fear and what they report and believe they are protecting themselves from, actually, do not express necessarily their real fears (Phillips, 1995; Glassner, 1999). Phillips (1995) looked at fear as a 'weapon' that media use in constructing fears that lead individuals to forget about the fears that are actually closer to their lives and their experiences (e.g. media that portray terrorism as the greatest world threat can lead people to forget about the fear of loosing their jobs, of being robbed, of loosing freedoms and rights in their own country). The view of constructing fear to protect oneself against other fears can also be applied to organizations, especially when it comes to understanding individuals' behaviours when facing new, challenging situations.

With regard to the link between control of employees and fear, studies (Morrison and Milliken, 2000) have looked at the forces that lead many organizations to foster structures and practices to impede the upward flow of information (i.e. managers' fear of negative feedback). Morrison and Milliken (2000) argue that, in these cases, employees feel that putting forward their opinions may be futile or in some cases dangerous. This form of control creates and maintains silence and tends to be hidden and also hard to break (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Situations like these foster the development of a shared sense of suppressed discomfort among employees.

When I went back to my data, initially I thought of fear as an implication of the implementation of the new controls in the RPA, particularly in relation to employees' fear of giving feedback (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). However, the data were not supported by the literature, as they showed a different pattern from the ones illustrated in those previous studies (Phillips, 1995; Glassner, 1999;

Weick and Quinn, 1999). My analysis of the data brought me to the conclusion that the discourse of fear in the RPA was not the expression of a physical state due to the perception of danger. Rather than that, it emerged as a common discussion topic among actors to re-enforce their sense of community and opposition to top managers. People were talking about feeling fear but they were not showing the most common behaviours that generally arise in situations of fear (e.g. Omertá – Gambetta, 2000).

By re-looking at the data altogether I found that the discourse of fear seemed to be a way of creating even stronger links between control, roles and identity. Actors' used it as a tool to re-frame their roles and organizational identity in response to new control mechanisms. Understanding the way actors used fear leads me to the theoretical contribution of this thesis: fear is a discursive resource to exert resistance in the organization.

Before discussing the value of this theoretical contribution, it is important to clarify two aspects. First of all, drawing on Watson (1994; 1995), I interpret a discursive resource as a word, or expression, or concept that people voluntarily use in order to start a discourse within one that is ongoing. For example, while describing their job responsibilities, some middle managers used the word 'fear' to start criticizing top management's approach oriented to efficiency and target achievement. In this case the discourse on job responsibilities was voluntarily interrupted to start the one about top managers.

Secondly, I interpret resistance as a "constant process of adaptation, subversion, and reinscription of dominant discourses" (Thomas and Davies, 2005, p. 687) within the organization, rather than a mere response to repressive power (Mc Nay, 2000). In my fieldwork, the dominant discourses imposed from the top were value for money, contestability, targets and performance and actors used the discourse of fear to oppose them.

Going back to the theoretical contribution, its novelty emerges from the analysis of the previous literature. As illustrated earlier in this section, to the best of my knowledge fear has never been understood in these terms. The relevance

of the finding will be explained in the following section, in light of the links with the previous research. There are three main implications of this contribution. First of all, the compartmentalization between actors' emotional and rational spheres should be reconsidered. Not only are emotions part of the process through which employees construct their shared work reality (Putnam, 1993), but actors can construct tools of rationality out of them, meaning that they can use emotions for achieving rational purposes (e.g. using fear to resist management). This implication leads to a transcendence of the binary opposition between emotions and rationality for explaining people's behaviour in the workplace. Traditionally, as Putnam (1993) suggests, there is a duality between rationality and emotions which generates a split between the values and beliefs that characterize a culture. Especially for Western cultures, those values and beliefs are categorized into two different 'compartments', one for rationality, and one for emotions, which tend to be considered binary opposites (Putnam, 1993). In the workplace, this perception becomes even worse since it positions emotions as an adjunct to work rather than as a "process through which members constitute their work environment by negotiating a shared reality" (Putnam, 1993, p. 1680). In this respect my contribution challenges the compartmentalization between emotions and rationality in the workplace highlighting how actors used an emotion, fear, as a discursive resource for pursuing the rational purpose of resistance.

The second implication of the contribution extends Collinson's (1994), and Fineman and Sturdy's (1997) views that emotions are triggers to resistance by suggesting that emotions can also be a way through which resistance is put into action by individuals. Finally, the third implication is that fear, for the reasons explained above, is not just the expression of actors' negative feelings as some researchers insinuate (Phillips, 1995; Glassner, 1999; Weick and Quinn, 1999). I will refer back to this finding in the next sub-section.

11.4.1 New forms of resistance

This sub-section evolves from the previous one, further illustrating the theoretical relevance of the pervasive discourse of fear; and also discusses scope for further research.

Gabriel (1999) acknowledges the existence of new controls which, he explains, are not merely an intensification of the traditional controls because they seek to control individuals from the inside and from the outside, rather than only from the outside. He suggests that, contrary to other scholars who examined the issue of control (Casey 1996, 1998; Grey 1994; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992), new control mechanisms do not reduce nor eliminate workers' dissent, recalcitrance, or resistance; in fact, these elements continue to exist but in different forms than the traditional ones (e.g. strike actions). Among the new forms of resistance, Gabriel identifies types highlighted by Jermier et al. (1994), namely sabotage, whistle-blowing, ritualism, bloody-mindedness, legal recourse, pilfering, output restriction, counter-ideologies, and refusal of discretion. Gabriel (1999) explains that, with the introduction of new controls, researchers should look for resistance at the margins of discourse and experience where there can be unmanaged and uncontrolled spaces and where resistance can take the form of established objects used in unorthodox ways (Gabriel 1999). This means that actors may use concepts or objects, whose meanings they widely share, for purposes they would not generally interpret as related to those particular concepts or objects (e.g. using a book as a wedge rather than as a source of knowledge). As a consequence, the new forms of resistance may go unnoticed if researchers do not use different observational and conceptual resources from those that were used in the past (Lupton, 1963; Beynon, 1975).

The above arguments, as well as the data analysis, further support my argument that the discourse of fear, mobilized in response to the implementation of new control mechanisms, worked as a new form of resistance. Up to now these new forms of resistance have only been raised as a theoretical possibility, put

forward by researchers as Gabriel's (1999), to reject the idea that in the context of new control mechanisms resistance has disappeared (e.g. neutralization of the traditional forms as strike). Very little if any empirical evidence has been presented to support the existence of new and non traditional forms of resistance. This thesis, thus, provides the missing link. In addition to the ones discussed in the previous section, two more implications emerge from this finding. One is that because of its invisibility, the lack of resistance is a claim that can be challenged by empirical analysis. The other implication is that the literatures on control and resistance offer scope for further research. As mentioned, Collinson (1994), and Fineman and Sturdy (1997) introduced the emotional dimension for understanding resistance, and highlighted that active or passive resistance is triggered by emotions. The difference between the two types is that the former is characterized by acts of overt rebellion such as whistle-blowing (Fineman and Sturdy, 1997), while the latter is characterized by, for example, psychological withdrawal or distance (Fineman and Sturdy, 1997). Although Fineman and Sturdy (1997) include fear among the emotions that can trigger resistance, such as hurt, affront, and anger, they do not consider it as a form of resistance *per se*. The contribution that I underlined earlier addresses the gap in the literature by showing that among the recognized forms of resistance (Lupton, 1963; Beynon, 1975) the discourse-based, passive one needs to be acknowledged as a powerful expression of actors' recalcitrance to the new forms of control (Gabriel, 1999). However, because it is difficult to spot, it often goes unrecognized (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Deetz, 1992; Willmott, 1993; Grey, 1994). It is a type of resistance that emerges by exploring and taking forward Gabriel's (1999) suggestion of searching for new forms of resistance at the margins of discourse and experience, in the unmanaged spaces of the organization. Those are part of "a terrain which is not and cannot be managed, in which people, both individually and in groups, can engage in unsupervised spontaneous activities" (Gabriel, 1995, p. 477). Overall, I relate the significance of the finding to the fact that it contributes to our understanding of how actors live, react, and resist to the evolution of

organizational controls (Anthony, 1965; Ouchi and Maguire, 1975; Ouchi, 1979; Ouchi and Johnson, 1978; Ouchi 1979; Daft and Weick, 2000; Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002), it shows new ways to resist and it also illustrates the role of new control mechanisms in triggering new forms of resistance.

11.5 Research challenges

There are three main challenges I faced in carrying out this study. The first one is associated with the difficulty of applying findings in this relatively small-scale study to beyond the study's participants. This is a frequently noted limitation of small scale qualitative research (Bryman, 2004). Exponents of case study research (Yin, 2003) suggest that it is not the purpose of this research design to generalize to other cases or to populations beyond the case (Bryman, 2008, p. 57). However, although this study focused on a failing organization, it is suspected that some elements of it are likely to be representative of the experiences of individuals within the practice of the organizations that compose the National Probation Service and other large public sector organizations. In particular, with regard to the effects of NPM and Modernization policies, it is possible that much of the findings are widely applicable to those contexts, but of course only further research could confirm this.

The second challenge relates to the relationship between the two phases of my study. The methodology section shows how, initially, I went into the RPA to examine one specific problem. However, the context led me to look deeper into a different problem that emerged. Although it could be seen as a benefit, my challenge was being able to shift from one framework to the other.

Finally, from a reflexivity point of view, a third challenge I faced is represented by the tensions that characterized the dual role I had in the organization (e.g. as a consultant and as a researcher) which required constant adjustments (discussed more fully in chapter VI). With regard to this aspect, an example of a problem I faced was participating in the grapevine events without

inadvertently taking employees' side and, thus, 'going native'. I was continuously adjusting to reach a reasonably balanced equilibrium between taking part in the social life of organizational actors (without giving the impression that I was in 'management's pockets') and not being emotionally involved in their vicissitudes.

11.6 Scope for further research

The contributions that I put forward offer scope for further research. In this short section I will refer back to each contribution and highlight the problems and issues that could be further addressed.

Empirical contribution 1: the concomitant implementation of the four types of changes, namely structural changes, changes in manufacturing/service provision technology, changes in surveillance technologies, and changes in values, attitudes and beliefs, suggests that control is inextricably linked to change for making sense of New Public Management and Modernization policies. One cannot exist without the other one and they are mutually dependent and constitutive. An issue that can be addressed by future research is that of understanding how control and change interact with one another and affect actors' interpretations of their work experience in terms of, for example, motivation, or coping strategies in the workplace.

Empirical contribution 2: in spite of the government-led changes of the underpinning philosophies of the probation service, actors still interpret it as a socio-vocational institution, aimed at helping others and in which people who want to help others work. The implication of this contribution is that, in the probation service, managerial oriented policies, promoted by New Public Management and Modernization waves, may seriously erode actors' processes of organizational identity construction by means of which they find compatibility between their interpretations and what the organization means and stands for. An issue that can be addressed by further research is to investigate to what extent

and in what specific ways those incompatibilities between actors' interpretations and organizational objectives can influence self-identities in the probation service.

Empirical contribution 3: New Public Management and Modernization policies lead to an increase of role standardization coupled with a decrease in autonomy. The standardization of roles that require intuitive understanding and a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making (e.g. the role of the probation officer) can generate a person-role conflict which, in turn, can reflect on actors' understanding of their relationship with the organization. A problem that can be considered in future research is analysing to what extent role standardization influences actors' person-role conflict.

Theoretical contribution: fear is a discursive resource to exert resistance in organizations. The main implications of this contribution (namely transcending the compartmentalization between actors' emotional and rational spheres, understanding emotions as a way through which resistance is put into action by individuals, understanding fear as more than a mere expression of actors' negative feelings, challenging the idea that there is a lack of resistance because of its invisibility) highlight a number of different problems which further research can investigate. For example, exploring in what other 'unorthodox' ways (Gabriel, 1999) actors interpret emotions in their organizations; understanding the elements that contribute to the construction of fear; looking more deeply into how the binary opposition between emotions and rationality is challenged by actors; understanding what other 'new' forms of resistance (Gabriel, 1999) can emerge by looking at the unmanaged spaces of the organization; and understanding how the new forms of resistance vary in relation to the types of controls used, or the type of sector (e.g. public, private).

Epilogue

My experience in the probation service:

To fully illustrate my experience in the probation service, the outcome of my role as a consultant needs to be discussed further. Although in chapter V this aspect received attention, especially with regard to the conflict that can arise when the researcher covers a dual role, no mention of the impact of my consultancy on the RPA has been made in that occasion. As I explained, the internal communication project I accepted to carry out in exchange for access to the organization often led me to present the results of my activity before the Board, whose members always expressed extreme interest in my findings and suggestions. The most remarkable moment in my experience as a consultant to the RPA was the last Board meeting, in which I presented the final outcome of my work. Apart from recalling the technical inefficiencies of the internal communication process (e.g. email overload) I mainly reported on actors' perceptions of the causes of the communication problems, and the issue of fear emerged as a primary one. When Board members heard the word *fear*, a general sense of astonishment pervaded the room. It was then that the Chair of the Board turned to the only two members of the Chief Officer team present at that time and said (I can still recall her words): "fear is not a word that we should come across in this organization". The silence in the room, the posture, the pace and tone of voice of the Chair contributed the impact of her words. Her attention was re-addressed to me and with a nod of her head she invited me to continue. As I was going through my presentation illustrating the issues of actors' complaints about their loss of involvement, and consideration as professionals, Board members' looks were moving from the screen to the two top managers who

received reproachful looks. While I was living this experience (and even now when I think back to it) I thought that that moment was *similar* to when in a family dinner a friend, that happens to stop by, inadvertently talks about aspects of a family member that are carefully concealed by the rest, causing a moment of embarrassment. My presentation ended with a sense that the Board had appreciated my insights, but also with an implicit feeling that the Chief Officer team was going to be held accountable for what had emerged during the presentation. This was confirmed when the RPA launched an internal campaign to foster employees' involvement and feedback on organization's work related initiatives. The presentation with the project findings was put on the intranet and employees' received an email which invited them to look at the results.

Some of the people I interacted with during my stay at the RPA called me showing enthusiasm for this turn of events. Nevertheless, I still wonder up to what point the Chief Officer team converted to a new equilibrium in the trade off between control and employees' participation. My doubts are generated by the fact that, in the last Integrated Probation Performance Framework, for the first quarter (April – June) and the second quarter (July – September) of 2007-2008 the performance of the organization dropped to a rating of three stars, registering a - 0.2 with regard to reduction of re-offending (as shown in table 7.1). Could it be that performance orientation has generated a displacement of the core objectives (Grandori, 1995), where conforming to rules became even more important than the ultimate purpose for which the RPA stands for (e.g. reducing re-offending)? Given that new control mechanisms are still in place as well as the same Chief Officer team, could this drop in performance be interpreted as the emergence of a stronger, more explicit form of resistance?

Appendix 1

Examples of correspondence

Exchange of initial contact emails (the two reply emails have been received in sequence)

In this part of the appendix the initial emails exchange is highlighted.

"Ofelia A. Palermo" <O.A.Palermo@lboro.ac.uk>
11/10/2005 09:15

> *To: @x-shire.probation.gsx.gov.uk*
> *Subject: information request*

Dear Ms.*(surname is not displayed for anonymity)*,
I am Ofelia Palermo and I am Laurie Cohen's PhD student. Laurie suggested me to contact you because she told me that the type of work you carry out could have been interesting for my research. My study aims at understanding the processes of interaction in organizational contexts. In analysing this issue I also pay attention to the role of gatekeepers, such as those people (or institutions) that mediate when knowledge is shared across the organization/s. I was wondering if we could meet from next week on to chat about the possibility to interview you in the future and to be able to consider your organization as a case study for my research.
If it's too difficult during working hours we could go for lunch together.
Thank you in advance!
All the best,
Ofelia

Quoting @x-shire.probation.gsx.gov.uk:

Hello Ofelia, I have contacted a colleague who may be of great use to you.
I shall be in touch soon to arrange a date to do this.
Quoting @x-shire.probation.gsx.gov.uk:
Can we meet Wednesday 9th November at 11.30?

Appendix 2

Examples of correspondence

In this part of the appendix there is an example of the emails respondents sent me to suggest me potential other respondents. The names on the list are not displayed for anonymity reasons

14/03/2006 15:59
Quoting @x-shire.probation.gsx.gov.uk:
Here is a list of people you need to interview in the field teams:

A.G.
A.H.
J.C.
M.N.
J.R.
C.B.
J.G.
J.D.
P.M.
H.O.D.
I.M.A.
S.W.
S.P.
(note: the email starts and ends just as it appears)

Appendix 3

Interview Guide

In this part of the appendix the first interview guide is highlighted. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this first guide was used for the pilot study which involved ten interviewees. Data that emerged from the pilot were used as highly important in highlighting contextual elements.

What is your Job?

Who do you report to?

Can you describe yesterday?

Was it a typical day?

Views on relationships between people, and within teams and departments were fostered, instead, through this other set of questions:

Who do you work with?

What is it like to work with them?

What do you talk about when you work with your colleagues?

Was there ever a time that you had difficulties in understanding what a colleague told you?

Do you ever work with people outside your team?

What is like to work with them?

Can you give me an example of a situation that did not work out well, and why?

Can you give me an example of a situation that instead worked out well? What did you do?

Is there anybody that facilitates contacts between teams, that makes things happen, or that greases the wheels?

Finally, respondents were stimulated to express their point of view and understanding on experiences and perceptions of formal and informal relations through the following questions:

How do people usually communicate here?

Can you describe the formal media of communication?

What type of information circulates on these media?

What do you think about that?

What do you think should be discussed on these media?

Usually, where do people chat?

What do you and your colleagues generally talk about in the staff room?

Do you use a notice board?

What gets put on the notice-board?

What do people usually moan about?

Second interview guide

What's your job?
What's the part of your job that you like the most?
For how long have you been working in the probation service?
What did you do before?
How did you end up in the probation service?
What was the situation like when you fist got in the probation service? How was it organized, were there any differences compared to now?
Questions that led to the emergence of the issue of the new control mechanisms and of how

people live their experience in the organization

I heard frequently talking about efficiency, effectiveness, contestability and

interagency partnership. What do all these things mean?I heard about changes that

occurred in the Probation Service, at a nation level, when did these changes occur?

How have the changes at a government level been implemented at a local level? How were they introduced?
What do you think about all this?
What was your level of involvement?
Did staff have voice in the implementation of the changes at a local level? Why and how?
How did staff react to this?
In your opinion, how do people feel, what's the organizational climate?
Questions from which the issue of organizational identity emerged
How did the changes affect the way the probation is understood by people that work here?
How did the changes affect the way the probation is perceived by the public?
What do you think was the purpose of these changes? What should be achieved through them?
Do you think that the purpose of the probation is understood by all that work here and by the public as well?
What changed in the philosophy of your service? How do you view this?
What do you think is the strategy that is used to promote the "brand" of X-shire Probation Service?
How is the mission of the service communicated to the people that work here?
Questions from which people's understanding of their roles in the organization emerged
How do people feel in relation to the work they carry out?
What's the difference between how your work was organized before the changes and how it is organized now?
Do you think that everybody understands their role and the effect of their contribution?
How were and how are performance rewarded?

Examples of Field Notes

Example of fieldnotes that I took. These are two diary extracts that were also used in chapter VII

"Giulia gave me a lever arch file with the board meeting minutes. Minutes of each meeting are one page long. On the top they indicate the date in which the meeting took place, the names of those who participated, and the place where the meeting was held (all of the meetings were held at headquarters). The rest of the page is organized in bullet points (very concise), one for each agenda item point. Board meetings occurred every month. The five oldest minutes (chronologically, starting from April 2005) illustrate the restructuring. Particular attention is given to the target orientation, to pursuing the objectives of efficiency and effectiveness, to the three directorates, and to the Business Development team (in charge of the contestability matter)"

This morning Giulia told me that Enrica worked for almost two decades in the HR office and once the new managers arrived they decided to transfer her to finance for apparently no reason. According to Giulia, Enrica didn't have a clue of what was about to happen to her until one day while she was in the corridor she overheard people in the staff room talking about her situation. A lot of the middle managers and some of her colleagues at headquarters knew that she was going to be transferred but no one had actually approached her because they thought it should have come from whoever had made the decision. Enrica went to Giulia, who, apart from being a middle manager, is also a good friend of hers, and asked if she knew anything about it. Giulia told her that the rumour was true since she heard it from the top manager who wanted the transfer to happen. Giulia told me that Enrica was desperate, she felt miserable and she felt that she was the victim of a plot. Giulia told me that Enrica doesn't know anything about finance and that she is also alienated by her six other finance colleagues. She also told me that Enrica cannot wait to retire because she feels uncomfortable in her new position.

Meeting Minutes

The following document is an example of meeting minutes. In this case I was also taking part in the meeting.

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

for England and Wales

X-shire

X-SHIRE PROBATION BOARD
COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Notes of meeting held at 10.00 am on Tuesday 2nd May 2006,
at X-shire Probation Headquarters.

Present:

K. B. (Chair)
J. K.
J. C.
R. M.
S. D. P.
G. F.
B. W.
Ofelia Palermo
J. G. (attended for Agenda Items 1-5)
F. D. (notes)

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from C. G. and E. K.

2. Minutes

GF had altered action points from LMc to EK (as EK was covering the post). The minutes were then agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

a) LCJB Post: cost and benefits

No cost and many benefits = good deal.

b) Board Members Visits / Links with Officers

RM stated that links with officers were on the agenda for discussion at the Change Management Meeting to be held this afternoon. P. P. will give an update at the next Board Meeting. Invitations to visit (location) and hostels have been received. Location 1 and Location 2 are visited when certificates are issued.

c) Business Plan

The Business Plan has been updated to incorporate reference to Sentencer Liaison and the Communications Strategy.

d) CDRP Linkage

CDRP linkage and external organisations will be discussed by GF with SF, B MH and Deputy Directors in a meeting on Monday 8th May 2006. The proposal for the Local Crime Community Sentence Project specifically recommends use with CDRPs. BM is heavily entrenched with the CDP and HD has been appointed to the post of Deputy Director which KML previously occupied. All CDRP and CDP relationships are in a state of flux due to local authority agreements in terms of accountability and funding. A definitive understanding of the Service's relationship and the Board's relationship with the CDRP is required. This may be difficult to obtain for the next meeting as GF stated that there is uncertainty at a national level. JG felt that there is no specific Board role within the Service's relationships with the CDRPs .

Action – GF to report as appropriate.

e) "Together Again"

Regarding future "Together Again" events, GF explained that there is to be a police event at which we will be sharing a stall. GF is also involved in multi-agency work on a Community Engagement Strategy, again driven by the

police. KB asked if communication was on the agenda and JG and GF confirmed that it is and that a lot of energy was going into it. GF is meeting the X Black Partnership next week.

4. Sentencer Liaison

a) L. Market Place

GF reported that each event was attended by some 50 magistrates, with some overlap at the 2 events. Subsequent discussion suggested that the event could have been covered in ½ day. Also, the chair of the Mansfield Bench expressed interest in having a more local event. GF and EK have spoken with A. W. and booked an event in November at (location) Training Centre for ½ day for this year's cohort of new Magistrates and for those of last year's cohort who did not attend the L. Events.

JC said how good the event was and that it was well received and praised by all who attended and that it gave a good impression of the probation service.

KB also conveyed very positive feedback and that the profile of the service had been raised with the Magistrates.

Action – KB to circulate e-mail to all who were involved informing them of the positive comments that the event received and to congratulate them for their efforts.

b) Annual Sentencers Conference

GF met H. C. and is due to attend the Sentencer Liaison Committee on 5th June 2006 with a recommendation to hold another event in January 2007.

KB suggested holding the event at an alternative location to encourage others to attend.

c) Sentencer Liaison Committee (5th June)

Action - a pre-meeting to review the agenda for the SLC (on 5th June) is

to be arranged. JG to invite CG, KB, SF and GF.

Action – EK to follow up with BMc.

d) Local Crime Community Sentence Project

GF referred to a Handout which is an extract of the package, developed by the Probation Boards Association and piloted in 3 areas. The programme requires considerable staff time and its implementation will therefore need to be appropriately prioritised. W. S. and J. L. of the Local Criminal Justice Board are keen and might provide funding/co-ordination costs from the LCJB. GF stated that it was an agenda item at the forthcoming LCJB on 20th May. RM suggested this project could be a responsibility for the new Diversity Manager.

Action - GF to check the "total cost" on the handout as it does not tally with the figures above. JK and JG agreed that we should determine in the light of the Communications Strategy, who the target audience are.

Action - GF to raise with the LCJB and if viable, with the Sentencer Liaison Committee.

e) IDAP Consultation

EK wrote to the Chairs of Benches regarding training. However HC had identified that there was a problem regarding training and Magistrates expenses, if it is not accredited training. KB confirmed that all matters regarding training should be directed to Graham Hooper.

Action – this item to be put on Sentencer Liaison Committee agenda. KB explained that a small panel of specially trained magistrates will comprise the new domestic violence bench.

5. Internal Communication – Presentation of Research progress by Ofelia Palermo.

After the presentation, OP explained that those interviewed were a representative sample of the workforce at HQ in terms of age, sex, race, grade of

staff and length of service and that 20-25 people took part in the first the interviews to date. Seventy percent of staff returned the questionnaire. OP will give a final presentation to the Board once research results have been gathered from the rest of the Area. JK said that it would be interesting to compare perceptions across different locations to see if there were any common views.

6. Rebuttal Policy

It was felt that the tone of the letter put to the Board was confrontational and that this needs to be changed. Also, the letter needs to be more explanatory, have the Communications Officer's phone number as a contact for further information, and should also be signed by the Communications Officer. It was important for the service to develop a close and productive relationship with the media.

Action - GF to take these points forward with the new Communications Officer. RM to feedback this discussion to the Chief and Chair.

7. Communications Officer Post

LN will start on 15th May 2006.

a) Newsletter - Victim support have a good example/model of an internal newsletter.

Action – GF/LN to follow up.

b) Web Page - This point is in the action plan and it was stressed how important an accurate and up to date web site is.

Action – RM to report at the next meeting on strategy and time scale for Web Site update.

8. Communications Action Plan

a) High Profile Cases - The process for informing Board Members if a high profile case is in the pipeline was discussed. It was mentioned that the process

was agreed at the last Board Meeting.

Action - RM/GF to inform the new Communications Officer of the process.

b) 2007 Centenary - It was suggested that this could be a local event at the Galleries of Justice or that it could tie in with a Together Again event – ideas would be welcomed.

Action – RM to consider longest serving staff members to be incorporated into the event.

c) Job Advertisements - RM issued some examples of Job Advertisements which were discussed. All felt that "join us" was not ideal and it was agreed that an advertisement should be appropriate to the job(s) advertised, eg, more information for senior roles, etc. It was discussed whether the equal opportunities phrase should remain or be altered.

Action – RM to review and incorporate comments made.

9. Communications Calendar

The Board were positive about the calendar and it will continue to be included in Board papers.

Action – EK to note that the Board visit to Ranby is in May rather than April.

10. Any Other Business

It was confirmed that it is good practice to do double-sided photocopying to reduce paper consumption and that this should be adopted by all. Regarding new staff meeting the Board, it was suggested that a similar invitation be made available to long serving staff as this could be seen as a "reward".

Action – RM to consider.

11. Date of next Meeting - Thursday 27th July 2006 at 10.00 am.

Interview Transcript

Name: Leone
Gender: Male
Age: 35-45
Time in the service: 14 years

Transcript	Codes
Ofelia: what's your job?	
Leone: emh, I'm the director of interventions and I'm responsible for all levels of interventions in the Nottinghamshire probation area. If you imagine that offender managers are general practitioners, doctors, I like to see that the interventions are the specialists. So if you went to see your general practitioner and he said that you have a cataract on your eye he's not able to carry out that operation and he will refer you to a specialist. It's a bit like that, and I'm responsible for all unpaid work, for prisons, for group-work programs, for education training, employment, emh, and all kinds of partnership work which relates to the probation service and how we interact with emh other organizations.	Job title. Metaphor to describe the job. Job responsibilities.
Ofelia: what's the part of your job that you like the most?	
Leone: emh, the part of my job that I like the most is being able to influence other organizations and to promote the work of the probation service because I don't really believe that many people understand what the probation service does.	"Influencing" as preferred part of the job. Belief that people don't understand what the agency does.
Ofelia: for how long have you been working in the probation service?	
Leone: in total I might worked for 14 years	Time in the service.
Ofelia: wow, what did you use to do before?	
Leone: emh, I taught at school, I was a teacher, and before that academic life so I used to work in universities, eh eh a number of them.	Previous jobs.
Ofelia: how did you end up in the probation service?	
Leone: almost by accident really, emh, I became involved when I came back from, emh, when I finished a postgraduate course and I've gone back home to Newcastle, and I got to do some voluntary work in the day centre for homeless people, and they had a probation office attached to them, and I got involved in that and from there I became interested and I was sponsored by the Home Office in those days they sponsored you to go to the University again and qualify for the probation officer.	Account of how the respondent entered the probation service.
Ofelia: and what was the situation when you fist got in the probation service? How was it organized, were there any differences compared to now?	
Leone: yeah, it was very much based on the idea of advising, assisting and be friend with offenders, there was less emphasis in those days on the monitoring of punishment and surveillance of offenders, emh, obviously today's regime is very much about protecting the public and reducing re-offending it's less focused on looking at necessarily the	Philosophy underpinning the service when the respondent started working within it. Nowadays underpinning philosophy.

Transcript	Notes
needs of offenders, that became secondary so there has been a shift with that. There was also emh, certainly in relation to the first unit I worked in, nowadays that wouldn't happen because that was much more of a preventive work, and many people would say, well why would you have a day centre to do preventive work so we don't really do that much today as we used to... so working with homeless people in my mind, in those days, was very much about keeping people off the streets, it would reduce anti-social behaviour and whatever but nowadays a person with a pure idea of what probation service should be about would say "but they're not offenders, are they? So why should we be working with them if they're not offenders?" and I think that's a bit of a loss.	Shift in the way day centres preventive work was seen
Ofelia: at a nation level, when did the change occur?	
Leone: certainly I think under the Thatcher period, and I think within... and Major... I think she actually started the change, Thatcher, in terms of making the probation service quite rightly more accountable because I think there has always been the view that the probation service has just got on with his job and it did what it was doing and it was largely unaccountable... emh, there were no real requirements in terms of national standards or targets, they were very much at discretion of the local probation boards, and of course now we have a national probation service where we have national standards and a whole view of what's happening. You don't have local areas doing one thing which is different from the other areas.	Period when change started to occur in the probation service. Main change that occurred. Reason why the change was required (unaccountability). Other elements that made the change indispensable. Results of the change.
Ofelia: right, so you have some kind of homogeneity across the country	
Leone: some people would say beaurocratization and overcentralization, some people may say that it is a homogeneous and consistent delivery of the service, it all depends how you view it.	Different adjectives that people use to describe the Probation nowadays.
Ofelia: and what do you think about it?	
Leone: I think that what the probation service needed to be done was to be made accountable after all we spend taxpayers money, don't we? As a taxpayer I would like to think that police for example spend my money wisely and do the work that they're supposed to do. I think that the probation service should be made to account and to evidence the work that it does by recording, I think that recording was pretty poor in the old days, and I think it was almost by luck that things didn't go wrong. So I think that the service needed someone like the Tory government to make it accountable. I suppose, on the other hand, it has become, I think, overbeaurocratized from the centre, and that the Home Office particularly, and the National probation directorate was seconded, had people seconded to it who actually I don't really think new what the job was, which caused a lot of confusion and then we were given tasks which really didn't relate to local needs or given tasks which we don't really understand what the rationale behind it was. So yes in principle, the overarching impetuous was good but the actual structures I think were very poor, and continue to be poor in terms of directing the service.	Need for the Probation to be made accountable. Examples that justify the need for accountability. Need to record. Opinion on how recording was in the old days. Conception of overbeaurocratization as the negative effect that change has generated. Centralization as cause of confusion on what the job is. Difficulty in understanding the rationale behind the task that the centre asks to carry out. Inadequacy of the structures that direct the service.
Ofelia: were there any other changes after the conservative governments?	
Leone: I think it's interesting to know that the Labour government who followed that government didn't change legislation which I think says a lot. I think that we have poor structures as I say the general principles of accountability, measurement and evidence based practice is great but I truly feel that the centre, the National Probation directorate that we have, continues to be poor, I think that that actually let's the service down. I think that locally there are some issues that need to be clarified but certainly the centre doesn't inspire me with	Keeping of the conservative legislation. Appreciation of the principles that lead probation nowadays. Inadequacy of the central structures. Need to clarify some issues locally. Distrust in the centre.

confidence.

Ofelia: what is it that you would change in the philosophy of the centre?

Leone: I would get rid of the centre, eh eh and I would have a more regional approach, I would have a local Home Office rather than a centralized one. There is this obsession of having everything London based but in actual facts I think there should be a Home Office maybe developing from Government office where you have a regional Home Office which we're accountable to.

Ofelia: I heard about Nottinghamshire Probation Service being under special measures, what does it mean?

Leone: it's no longer under special measures, it hasn't been under special measure for nine months. When I first came here as a director this was a failing service, there was no doubt about it, the performance was poor, people weren't meeting the targets, offenders weren't properly supervised, there were high profile cases in the news where the probation service had clearly not done the job properly. People under probation committed crimes and newspapers got on to it, though investigations we found out that probation wasn't doing what it was supposed to do, which is protecting the public. Of course we're in a complete situation now, and we haven't been under special measures for nine months now. Some people call it special measures but if you say that to the Home Office it would be very reluctant to agree that those were special measures, but we certainly were being scrutinized more heavily... emh, and my view is that for the last nine months because we have climbed from number 37 to number 11 in the performance tables, and that means a lot to people, their attention isn't on us any more, and they're satisfied, we're performing well.

Ofelia: what used to happen when you were under special measures?

Leone: they would come in, the Home Office would send representatives to come in and to speak to senior managers like me and the chief, to ask us about targets, trends, how staff were being supervised and what we were going to do as a new directorate.

Ofelia: and was that a tough period?

Leone: no, because I'm used to it, I worked in another service in Humberside which was a failing service when I first went there, when I left Humberside it was second in the country so I'm used to that kind of pressure. I think that the problem with Nottinghamshire was that it adopted the siege mentality, it was almost repelling everybody and of course it was everyone else's fault. The best thing to do with these kind of inspections measures is to actually see them as learning opportunities. It gave us enough to convince the Home Office that we have the right measures in place, that we were working hard to rectify the situation and to build their confidence in us as an area.

Ofelia: but is this just the second time that you were in a situation like this or were you previously involved in other similar cases?

Leone: I was also in a Northumbria service, where I'm originally from, where we were used to inspections, although that was a reasonably performing service they still had special attention.

Ofelia: what was the effect of the special measures on the staff? Did they realize the particular situation they were in?

Leone: No I think because a large number of people just saw it again as "why are we being blamed, it's not our fault, it's everybody else's fault, why is the Home Office asking us these questions? These targets mean nothing", well the targets actually do mean something because it means if you seen the offenders and you're getting them through accredited programs, or teaching them literacy skills or getting them to work you are reducing their re-offending, but I think that staff were

Strategy that the respondent would implement in order to adapt the service to the local needs. Regional Home Office to be accountable to.	
Special measures not affecting Nottinghamshire probation since nine months ago. Failing service and reasons that made it so.	
Difference in the situation compared to when the respondent entered the Nottinghamshire Probation. Inappropriateness of the expression "special measures". Heavy scrutiny during the crisis. New balance that satisfies and shifts the attention of the centre. Good performance.	
Things that happened when "special measures" were in place.	
Calm of the respondent during the period of scrutiny from the centre. Reasons for the calm in facing the situation. Opinion on what the problem of Nottinghamshire Probation was. Capability to convince the Home Office on the effectiveness of the work done.	
Previous failing services in which the respondent worked.	
Cognitive dissonance of staff when special measures where in place. Meaning of the targets that are in place. Over-defensiveness of the staff.	

overly defensive, and some people honestly and cognitively couldn't understand what the problem was, which was amazing for me. So I think the problem is as well if you are in one area for all of your career you almost become, emh it becomes your domain and "how dare these people come in asking these questions?"

Ofelia: even if Nottinghamshire was number 37 in the list?

Leone: well some people would say, and this cuts right across the whole spectrum of the organization middle and senior managers as well, they would say "oh these tables mean nothing" well these tables actually do mean something because when you're number 1 they're very important because you say "we're number 1", when you're number 37 then people say "well these tables don't actually mean anything"... those are cognitive distortions in people's head, almost corporate cognitive distortions, it was almost like that kind of grouping people together that convince themselves that all of this is the wrong measure. It was interesting how one person in this building said "well, they're measuring the wrong thing"... it would be like you sitting in an exam or taking your driver's license saying "oh, you're asking me the wrong question". It's not for us to actually say what they should be measuring, I think they do get some of the measures wrong but at the end of the day they pay us our wages, the government, and at the end of the day it's up to the government and presumably they have their methodologies and they have researchers who research the type of interventions and who will say to us "you know if you do this, in this way it will have an impact". But I think there was a certain arrogance in Nottinghamshire where they had thought that we had been lost in these lead tables. Of course that's not true because if you meet lead tables' targets it does indicate that you are doing what you're supposed to be doing. It does indicate that you are impacting on offenders' lives and also you don't have inspectors coming in, so that's a good indicator. It also means that within the local community they have confidence in you as a service. If you're number 11 or you're in the top ten, which it looks like what we're heading for, emh they will have more confidence rather than if you were languishing at the bottom of the table saying well it's not our fault it's everybody else's fault. So I don't think there was real accountability in Nottinghamshire.

Ofelia: I've also read some articles about the collaboration between the probation service and the prison service, what can you tell me about that? What's your opinion?

Leone: I think it's collaboration in name only, I don't think there's any collaboration between the two services. Emh and again this is only my personal opinion, my story, my narrative... emh, in my experience of working with prisons is that the prisons have always seen probation as the small fry, they're very large institutions, they have a completely different commanding control structure, so whatever the governor says goes. In the probation service to a larger extent we have some consensual work with people, unions, whatever... I was never convinced that the synergy between the probation service and the prison service was taken seriously by the prison service. I do believe that the government saw that the probation service could some how be used as a mechanism to take money out of the prison service but that hasn't actually happened and I think the prisons have stood very firm and said "this is what we do". They see themselves as the lead players.

Ofelia: but was the reason of this synergy just to move the funding from the prison to the probation?

Leone: oh no, I believe there's a real sense that is: there shouldn't be an end to offender management so offenders that go into prison, and then come out of prison and who are seen afterwards on licence or

Margin annotations:

The problem with working in one area for an entire career.

Corporate cognitive dissonance of staff in interpreting the tables.

The appropriateness of the measures that come from the centre.

Arrogance in the Nottinghamshire probation service.
What meeting the targets of the tables indicates.

Absence of accountability in Nottinghamshire.

Actual absence of collaboration between probation and prison.
Probation considered as the small fry by the prison.
Prisons as large and autonomous institutions.
The consensual work of probation with stakeholders.
Respondent's skepticism prison's seriousness in their synergy with probation.
Synergy as a way to redirect money.
Failure in redirecting money because of the firmness of prisons.

Belief that theoretically the synergy makes sense.

parole, I think there is a genuine concern that a prisoner should be seen all the way through the process by the National Offender Management Service which involves the prisons, the courts, the probation service under it's organization. I actually think that that dream or that vision couldn't occur because the prison service saw itself somehow apart or special and somehow felt that it was threatened by the probation service.

Ofelia: what was the impact of this synergy both on the organization of the probation service and on people?

Leone: I think it was viewed like yet more work, I think that many people said "well, this is just another idea", and I think that the probation service works hard to achieve an end to end offender management profile or journey for the offender, but I think it's sporadic and it all depends on what prisons you have because again, prisons are very autonomous so you could have a very good work relationship with one governor and down the road you could have a very poor one where the governor and his staff aren't really on board on what it is... emh, I'm not sure whether we got the right structures in place.

Ofelia: what do you mean by "right structures"?

Leone: well, I think if I was an offender and I went to prison I would be surprised that I would have to be reassessed, that they would have to ask my name, address, home details, when in actual fact the probation service or court already have that. And if I was moved from one prison to another prison, I would have to be reassessed they would ask me my name, they would ask me my address, they would ask me my date of birth, and I don't think there's any real consistency, and when offenders come out of prison to the probation service, they're asked their name, their address, I know that is very simplistic but it doesn't seem very joined up to me. And in terms of management of risk, for example, if you have that dis-jointed and it almost become a paperwork exercise, if people don't understand why we've got this process, workers don't understand why we've got this process, I think there's a danger that you miss on risk and offenders' needs.

Ofelia: where there any impacts on the philosophy of the probation service?

Leone: no, the probation service has a history of being able to adapt and to adopt new ways of working, and I think that for everyone in the probation service it makes eminent sense to want to work closely and closer to prisons. Emh, of course there is the issue that again that the probation service is given yet another duty without extra resources. Now I haven't mentioned resources so far because I don't think that's always the solution. What I hear all the time is "oh, we need more money"... no, that's not always true. It's about how we work, if we work smarter and better. But surely I'm not sure whether it's being well thought out, whether, as I said before, the money for this collaboration was actually expected to be drawn down from the prison estate, but that's again only my view and I suspect that that went wrong and of course what that does now, it means that the probation officers who are working from the outside the prisons probably feel under more pressure because there's more work to carry out in the community with more work to be carried on in the prisons. Probation officers in prisons, I still struggle to see why we have them in there and again my personal view would be that we need to assess whether probation-prison-located teams give us real value for money and whether they facilitate... I'm not convinced that they do what they say they do.

Ofelia: could that be due to an organizational culture struggle?

Leone: no, I think that what happens is an internal issue where you

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Difficulty in the occurrence of the vision of synergy because of the prison feeling apart from the rest, and because of the prison feeling threatened by probation.

Synergy perceived as increment of work.

Impact of the autonomy of prisons on the synergy.

Doubts on the appropriateness of the structures.

Explanation of what indicates that there aren't any appropriate structures.

Need for people to understand the rationale behind the processes that are in place.

History of the probation in adaptation and adoption of new policies.
New duty (the synergy) with no extra resources.
Opinion that resources aren't always the solution.
Opinion that what counts is whether the work is done smarter and better.
Aim of the synergy (to drawn money down from the prison to probation).
Pressure of the outsider probation officers.
Wonder about the role and the efficiency of the probation officers that are based inside the prisons.
Distrust in what the insider P.O. say they do.

Insider P.O.s' perception of separation from the institutions (probation and prison).

would get groups of people in the probation service who go to prisons and almost see themselves separate from the organization that they actually belong to, or from the organizations that are hosting them. They seem to forget, and this is a generalization, but many seem to forget why they're there and whenever I visit a prison I often wonder what our probation staff are doing in there.

Ofelia: what are the main problems that you perceive from the collaboration between probation and prisons?

Leone: I think that there is an inconsistent approach to it, so you'll get one area that will work differently from another area, you'll have different governors who take different approaches to probation, you know, for example, I've got a prison governor who thinks that they could do without probation in prisons because he thinks we're expensive and he would like to bring other people in, emh, I've got another prison where they think that probation is really good and that recruited a lot more probation officers into the prisons, so I don't think there is actual... emh, there is more guidance for the probation service in how to do things, but for the prisons, politically is much more difficult for the Home Office to deal with them as a National grouping because so many of them have a different culture whereby the governor and what the governor says goes.

Ofelia: I've always seen different philosophies that respectively underpin the probation service and the prison service.

Leone: yes, I'm sure there are and I don't think that would be unusual but it also depends, for example, in the prison service it depends who you speak to. Some people say they just lock people up, they contain people, they keep people off the streets. Some people would say that they're job is to rehabilitate offenders and that's where the probation service will meet with the prison service. However, many of the rehabilitative aspects in the prisons are very poorly funded as is the education department, or the psychology department in prisons. These are not massively funded or well funded and I think that causes a lot of problems in terms of that rehabilitative side of it. Because at the end of the day, and that's common to many governors, they say "all of that good work goes out of the window if a prisoner escapes, so all of my effort, all of my money is lost". And I can quite agree with that, and unless your the governor, sitting in his seat, in her seat, you possibly don't understand that, but the impact of an escape undermines just everything you do in there. Probation service yes, I think we are skilled, now, in terms of work with orders and commands, if you want, from the centre, and I think we're also really good at persuading offenders, and certainly that's what we should be doing, changing people's attitude and behaviour.

Ofelia: so, overall, what do you think about the collaboration between prisons and probation?

Leone: I don't think it was well thought out about what the repercussions may be for both organizations, I think what eventually happened was that the prisons thought that they would take over, if you want, the probation service but that's not what happened.

Ofelia: and the probation is struggling with prisons?

Leone: yes, and I think that we continue to try to work as best as we can, 'cause I think the probation service has one strength, it works very well under difficult situations if it's properly managed of course because I think that there could be like for Nottinghamshire that people think they're doing their best and it's everybody else's fault, well I don't think they were doing their best, and if they were it wasn't very well focused. So I think the relationship between the two organization was politically driven by ministers and certainly I think we have more

	Forgetfulness of the purpose that brings insider P.O.'s to work in prisons.
	Inconsistency of the approach to the synergy prison-probation.
	Prison governor's discretion.
	Difficult to provide a central guidance for prisons.
	Prison governor's discretion.
	Philosophy underpinning the prison · service and different perspectives to it.
	Poor funding of the rehabilitative aspects of the prisons and consequent problems.
	Prison Governors' fear of escapes.
	Impact of an escape.
	Probation philosophy and skills in putting in act orders from the centre.
	Synergy prison-probation not well thought out.
	Prison "illusion" of taking over probation.
	Commitment of the probation to work as best as possible.
	Accustomedness of probation in dealing with difficult situations.
	Belief that staff weren't doing their best in the old days.
	Prison-probation synergy politically driven by ministers.

ministers who interfere... maybe the Prime Minister wakes up one morning and says "I've got a good idea" ... I think we're operating a lot more in that sphere where for example I was called to see the Home secretary about what's happening in Nottinghamshire. Now, there would be a time where that would never happen and that's all right for the Home secretary but you think "oh, right, OK so where I'm going now? OK you've got that idea but where the planning and where's the structure around that?" there is very little consultation with senior managers, never mind with people in the field, we are working in a very reactive way at the moment and I never felt so close to ministers as I ever have done. You know, normally it would be that there would be a policy thought out that people would say that we're going, for example, to have closer relationships with prison... we would understand what it was... but in many ways what happened was that ministers would have their own ideas and additions added on to that which would distract you from the main purpose of any policy.	Lack of planning and discussion, at a central level, for the decisions that involve the probation service.

Ministers' political influence on the strategies and mission of probation. |
| **Ofelia:** how is the probation service protecting itself from the prisons taking over? | Prisons' struggle to understand what probation does. |
| **Leone:** I don't think we have much to worry about, I don't think the prisons really want to emh get involved in what we do, I still think they struggle to see what we do but I think that the probation service again is notoriously skilled at operating in very different arenas and I think that, you know, we can operate well in lots of different arenas, because I think that actually we are trusted, when we're doing our work, our job... we often are seen as an ethical service underpinning commitment to diversity and to social justice and whatever. Actually, it does go a long way with the public, and with the judiciary, and with the prisons to a large extent, despite what the newspapers say, I think that we very much can set boundaries ourselves and I've always been amazed at how much influence the probation service has on other organizations and on the community. Because when you actually get people to sit down and talk about the probation service people, the community, don't actually want to send offenders to prison, they want them to change their behaviours, to be punished, yes, but also to have an investment in the community and I'm not sure if the prison service offers that. I think that the probation service offers that in some degree, and I think that we manage that by actually working in a very skilful way. | Probation's versatility.

Trustworthiness in the probation as an ethical service.

Capability of the probation to set its own boundaries.
Influence of the probation on other organizations.

What the community wants for offenders.
Capability of the probation to satisfy the community. |
| **Ofelia:** how is it that you communicate your mission to the external environment? | Lack of a vision for Nottinghamshire Probation Service in the old days. |
| **Leone:** first thing is about having a mission, and about having a vision... Nottinghamshire didn't have one when I came here. They had this very long list of things to do but I thought "well that is not a mission". If it's about protecting the public, if it's about reducing re-offending, if it's about promoting public confidence that's a vision. This is where we want to be, this is how we want people to view us, I want people to see that we protect the public and that we have a valuable role in changing people's attitudes towards crime, whether it's offenders, community or whatever and victims as well. Part of that is about evidencing your work so I would say "well that chart up there shows that we are hitting our targets, it's a great indicator that what we're saying we're doing is evidence", because I could say "yes, we're doing a very good job" but you, the researcher, would say "well, how you're doing it? Can you show me some figures... yes, I believe you Leone, but we need some evidence"... and I think that's what we've always been short of. Well now we have the evidence to do it. One of the most important things for me is that we actually meet people, that we meet them eye to eye. The email system is great but I rarely use it, I | Public image that NPS wants to vehicle to people.

Importance of evidencing the work done.
Lack of evidence in the past.

Presence of evidence nowadays.
Importance of face to face meetings.
Example of a situation solved via phone.
Meeting with people. |

pick up the telephone. I had a problem with a Nottingham prison governor, I rang him up. And about making these personal contacts, I am out a lot meeting people and being round the table to influence the agenda but also represent the probation service, because again I think that my mission, if you want, if I got a personal one, is to get people to understand how valuable the probation service is, because I do believe that we're undervalued, not fully understood. And it (the probation service) will only be understood and valued, unfortunately, under two ways: one if we promote it well, but also if we disappear. That would be too late. They may not think that they would... might miss us because they don't actually understand and we probably haven't been that good in telling people what we do because, there's an example, someone said to me "what work do you do", and I said "I protect the public, I reduce re-offending" then he looked at me and said "oh no, what do you do? Nothing?" and I said "I reduce re-offending and I protect the public" and he said "yeah, but what..." and I said "I actually work for the probation service" and he said "oh right!". So we have a brand problem, people don't automatically... well they think that we are going to be liberal, that we don't take offending seriously and that we are friends with the offender. We are not calling just offenders to account, we also uniquely call society to account on how it treats offenders and how it deals with them. I don't know any other organization that does that... it's actually part of our mission to try to change offenders but also to try and change society in a non-political way. That's what we should be about, and that's the end of my political party broadcast, eh eh eh!

Ofelia: eh eh eh... what's the strategy that you count to use to promote the "brand" of Nottinghamshire Probation Service?

Leone: First of all, we've got to have a firm business plan, one that's linked... there's nothing worse than just having a document it needs to be... cause I'm responsible for the reducing re-offending action plan strategy, it needs to be linked to that. It also needs to be linked well into people's team plans, so the teams need to know what is our business, so I'm happy when I go to teams and ask "what's the business that we're doing" well they can share the mission, they can share the vision but they also know what the key performance are, they also know what the other issues are you know in terms of what we need to do locally. Then that needs to go down to individual supervision and performance objectives, so people take responsibilities for that, and then it's got to be done on the one-to-one basis as well. I've got no problems with PR (Public Relations), it's absolutely great, I've got something this afternoon, but does PR get the message across properly? And I think that what we have to do is to make sure that we know what our business is, we know how that ties with the job that I do, that you do, that the cleaner does even, does the cleaner of this building know what the probation service does? I suspect not, but what I'd like to think is that somewhere we can actually impact and give people some insights so when they're sitting out in the pub, or at home with their family and friends they will say "well actually the probation service does look after offenders, it calls them to account and it makes them carry out reparation on behalf of the communities, and it does make a difference". I think that's what our main task is and certainly for Nottinghamshire I think we're getting there, but it needs very brave people and I also think it needs more confidence in our organization, instead of apologizing for being a probation service because there's nobody else that does what we do, as far as I'm concerned.

Ofelia: how do you communicate the mission to the people that work here? Do you think that everybody understands the role of their

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Margin annotations:

- Getting people to understand the value of the probation service.
- Conditions under which the probation service will be understood and valued.
- Example of people's ignorance on what the probation does.
- The probation "brand problem".
- Misconception of what the probation is.
- Clarification on what the probation is.
- Mission of the probation.
- How to promote Nottinghamshire Probation brand.
- Sharing the mission with staff.
- Transmitting the mission to everyone.
- Doubts on the effectiveness of Public Relations.
- Importance of knowing the business of the organization and the ties that link everyone within it.
- Importance of knowing one's own contribution to the mission.
- Being able to tell people what the probation does and that it makes a difference.
- Need to have more confidence in the organization.
- Doubts about the appropriateness

contribution?

Leone: I don't think we... well, have we got the right structures in place, I think, to communicate that message and to convince even our own staff about the probation service, never mind the man who works at McDonald's... because we all would like to think that everybody in the probation service understands and agrees with our philosophy, but we've got to accept that quite often people come and work just for the money. Certainly, in terms of understanding the mission, well some will, some won't, some will want to, some won't want to... but how we do it is that at least I can put my hand on my heart and say "everybody knows what the business plan is about, everybody is kept well informed through supervision, team meetings, you know through accountability of what is required of them and that's the best we can do, to be quite honest. Alongside all of that, is about promoting the work that we do, I say showing off what we do, cause I'm a great show off, I really believe that there's nothing like the probation service, as much as a friend of mine who works for Mars believes that there is nothing, there is no better brand than Mars... Galaxy's rubbish! And I think that we have to adopt that, it doesn't have to be all of that hype where we through all our hands in the air, but it's about having that confidence in what we do and being able to explain what we do, tying it in with what business plan there is and what other objectives are and being able to kind of convince other people and gain the confidence of other people that what we do is right.

Ofelia: and what you think are the main difficulties in communicating this internally?

Leone: in this organization, well... certainly for me as director of interventions, I actually invite the other directors into my interventions meetings with my managers. They haven't always been taken up, so I can't force people to come in and see what the interventions are doing. So for example I have Gill Francis who comes in and sees me regularly about shared and common pieces of work, which is great, it benefits her and it benefits me. I think that some senior managers don't like to get their hands dirty and I'm not one of them...

Ofelia: in what sense?

Leone: I think there can be some directors who think "well actually... just get on with it" and I don't believe that you can convince people and get the message across if you are somehow so far removed from it that you become disinterested in what it is... you'll manage it but there is a difference in managing something and actually believing in it. People will... you know it's very interesting... quite often when I have a conversation with somebody and then I walk away I may not actually remember everything they said to me but what I will do is remember how they made me feel. That is my approach to all other staff. If they feel that I'm interested they may not remember everything I've said but they actually think "well, he came and saw us, didn't he? And I remember that he did a court duty one day, or that one day he did this..." or "I can't remember exactly what he did but yes, I think that he's a leader and that he's not just a manager"... cause there's a difference between being a leader and a manager, so some people manage, some people lead and manage and I think that's what I would like to think that we should be doing, and I think that's the problem... I think that your staff will mirror your approach to work which is why I'm delighted to say that the whole of the directorate of interventions is in the green already, we're hitting our targets... and that's not an accident, it's not just luck... cause again someone said to me "do you know Leone, you're really lucky with your staff" and I said a very

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Marginal annotations (right column):

- of the communication structures to transmit the vision to the staff.
- Interest in the money rather than in the mission of the organization.
- Understanding of the mission related to the will of people.
- Efforts in trying the best to inform staff on the mission of probation.
- Actions through which information happens.
- Promotion of the work outside.
- Need to show off the work that is carried out, within limits.
- Convince people and gain their confidence.
- Inviting other directors to the meetings.
- Non participation of directors to the meetings.
- Benefits of meeting regularly.
- Dislike of senior managers to get their hands dirty.
- Doubts about convincing people without interest in what happens.
- Difference between managing something and believing in it.
- Memory of what feelings people left in the respondent.
- Importance of showing interest in people in order to be remembered.
- Difference between leader and manager.
- Staff's mirroring of the director's approach to work.
- Successes of the directorate of interventions.
- Comments on the successes.

famous thing that Jack Nicholas said "you know, the more I practice, the luckier I become" eh eh eh. It's not luck, right? It's about how hard you work and how close you are to what's happening... it's about staff knowing that I know what's going on and I do. Staff are quite convince that I know about things. I know how to access the CRAMS records, I know how to put my hands on the documents that are relevant to certain units and whatever. It would be interesting experiment to see whether many of the other directors could access CRAMS records or indeed even be interested in knowing what we're doing. Because I think that directorates may feel that working with the offenders isn't really part of their job. Our finance department should be as interested in the work we do with offenders as my staff are... emh you know corporate services should be interested in our aims and objectives as everybody else... emh they're not just functionaries, you know, they should really be interested in reducing re-offending and protecting the public. I wonder how many people actually go out and actually talk about the probation service or do they just say "I work in the finance department" which would be an interesting thing to do, while I know that my staff would be proud to say "do you know we're 11th in the country? We've made great progress and what we do is we work with offenders on their thinking skills, we enhance their employment skills, we have a broad focus on rehabilitating offenders"... and I think the public would feel happier about that cause the public don't want revenge, nor the victims, they just want to know that offenders are made to do what they're supposed to do, and that also they won't do it again and how they don't do it again is about getting them to work, getting them to understand victim issues, getting them to understand the damage they did to people's lives and to their own lives. So I'm reasonably confident, the message may not be 100% out there but what I would say to you as evidence is that everybody out there knows who I am, in this organization I mean not just in my directorate and I was saying at a national conference that part of that is that people know who you are. I walk around this building at least once a day to say "hello" to people, now I could say "well actually personnel has nothing to do with me"... it has, "finance has nothing to do with me"... but it's not about that, it's actually is about people thinking "oh, he's interested in what we're doing and why we're doing it" and there's a pragmatic reason... if they're doing their job well it really does support the work that I'm doing in interventions. And I go out to meet all the teams very regularly and some people like it and at least people know what I stand for whereas I'm not totally sure that all of our managers actually give that example of knowing what we stand for.

Ofelia: and how do you think that a good performance should be rewarded?

Leone: that's an interesting one... emh, I'm very adventurous. Sometimes people say "oh we shouldn't be competitive"... it's not about being competitive it's about rewarding people, it's not the competition. Emh, my view is that we should be giving financial rewards to people, other organizations do, I would like to have ceremonies where people are awarded like "the person who keeps the best records" or "the person who keeps the office happy" you know it could be very small things as well "the person who has made the best contribution to partnership working". It's about recognizing that some people are doing some very good work. Interestingly enough we've had some criminal justice award, you may have seen it when you came in this morning, the big banner downstairs at reception, I've already nominated three teams for that award. To my mind I don't think that anybody else has done that and that disappoints me, cause we should

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Margin annotations:

- Knowing what goes on in the group.
- Ability to access the CRAMS records.
- Doubts about other director's knowledge of CRAMS or about what the probation does.
- Need for all departments to be interested in the mission.
- Examples of behaviours related to the knowledge of the mission of the organization.
- Public's reactions to knowing well what the mission of the probation is.
- Importance of others knowing who you are.
- Examples of making others aware of who the respondent is.
- Making others feel that someone is interested in what they do and benefits that derive from this.
- Meeting people regularly.
- Observation on other managers' behaviour.
- Rewarding people.
- Financial rewards.
- Ceremonies.
- Recognition of the work that people carry out.
- Example of this recognition.
- Disappointment for other managers' not rewarding policy.
- Example of one of the people appointed for awards.

be doing this. One of the people is actually the man who does all the deliveries, who moves the furniture around and moves filing cabinets, without his input our job wouldn't be as easy as it is. So it's about recognizing that, but I don't think that we reward people enough, we need to balance if we're expecting great things from people than we should offer people rewards. It's about showing that we've got confidence in people. If the Home secretary would come I would ask someone "would you like to come with me and meet the Home secretary?" It's a way to say "we've got real confidence in you". I send regular emails out to people. I have an example of a guy who was really entrenched he was saying "I don't like this new set up that you've got, I disagree with it..." and I had a very interesting discussion with him about his future in the probation service, and now this guy has really understood what we're there for. I emailed him the other week to say I was really pleased to see that he'd carried out a good piece of work with an offender and I heard about it and he was really pleased with that and he said "when you come around come and see me and I'll tell you more about it"... so I will, I will put it in my diary that when I'll go to Mansfield next week I will go an have a word with this person and say "tell me a little bit more". Now that might not add any great thing to my knowledge base, but what it's done it's given him some recognition for what we do. Some people may cynically say "well people get paid to do their job, don't they?" I actually heard someone say that, a senior manager, and I said "yes, but we all come to work for different reasons and part of that is actually about being able to also value people, because people come to work for the money, yes, but they also come to work to get some gratification, and if we don't recognize that people can become demoralized. So for me I would send bunches of flowers to people, man and women. It's about rewarding people with boxes of chocolate, you know, with small things, and sometimes it can be the very small things that... in this office for example, if somebody carries out a piece of work for me which I've pushed, sometimes I just bring some cake and say "let's all have a treat", or when I go to an office I often carry a box of chocolate with me that's a reward, it says "I value you" the chocolate may cost 5 pounds let's say but people think "oh yeah, he thought about us". It's about how people feel. So I'm very much for it... so the debate still is whether we should be rewarding people or not rewarding people, some people say "well, that's what they get paid for" the unions would say "oh that's too competitive" but I would like to think that we could pursue some kind of formalized rewarding-recognition mechanism.

Ofelia: in your opinion, how do people feel, what's the organizational climate?

Leone: in my opinion, I think that there is sense of achievement now, cause people do like it "well, actually we're doing well and we're hearing from other areas that we're doing well" so there's a sense of achievement. I think that people are under a lot of pressure, I'll never take that away, I think people are very busy. There are some words that I won't allow, that I don't want to hear, it's when people say "oh, we're overwhelmed" or "we have a crisis". We have problems. I don't know what the opposite of crisis is, I know the what the opposite of problem is: solution. Right, so when people come with problems that we can work for a solution but when people come and say "oh we have a crisis" it normally indicates that no matter what you're going to say it won't help. Emh there is some real confusion and I think justifiably around the expectations of the Home Office and the National Probation Directorate, they're not consistent, they're politically driven by whatever the minister wants this morning, so I think that possibly

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Margin codes:

- Belief that people aren't rewarded enough.
- Showing confidence in people.
- Example of showing confidence in people.
- Respondent's reminders of his confidence in staff.
- Discussion on a disagreement and consequences.
- Showing interest in people.
- Result of showing interest in people.
- Other managers' opinion on rewards and recognition.
- Valuing people.
- Reasons why people go to work.
- Examples of gratifications that would come from the respondent to his staff.
- Keeping into account people's feelings.
- Ongoing debate on whether NPS should reward people or not.
- Sense of achievement among staff.
- Staff feeling the pressure.
- Words that the respondent does not allow people to say.
- Reasons why he does not allow them.
- Confusion around the expectations of the Home Office and the National Probation Directorate.
- Political drive.
- Change in the Nottinghamshire Probation Service.
- People's perceptions on the change.

people are feeling under pressure there. People have gone through an overload of change here in Nottinghamshire but many people are seeing it as it changed for the better because what it has done is giving recognition to the hard work that Nottinghamshire has always done it was just a matter of evidencing it.

Ofelia: how do you think the situation will evolve?

Leone: I think that in terms of the future of Nottinghamshire there's has to be more attention paid to planning, we can't rely on individuals to carry the service. And interestingly I noticed that in Humberside where when I left they were at number 2, they are now in the red and they're failing seriously. Which would indicate to me that you can't rely on individuals to do the job. But we can't rely on the good old days, we can't keep looking back saying "oh there was a golden age for probation"... there never was! The future of the probation service is in our own hands I think, if we continue to perform as well as we did and we demonstrate our strengths then I think that Nottinghamshire probation has a good future, but if we fall back into adversarial tussling with the Home Office over targets and stuff like that they'll just come in and privatize us, and they're going to do that in some areas...

Ofelia: what do you think about contestability?

Leone: I think it's a good idea! We already do it. People don't understand it, it's like breathing, we do it naturally. The probation service already operates well within a partnership arrangement whereby we have NACRO for example, the National Association of Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders, running one of our hostels for us. We have already... and I'm not saying they're all great partnerships but we are operating already in a business world if you want, so within the drugs field for example, which I'm responsible for we have other people who do our work for us, with us. So for me I struggle to see why people panic, because I think we already operate in the market place. I don't think it is necessarily that people are going to come in and take over everything that we do, I'm quite pleased that people want to come and look cause I was one of the first people, and people looked at me really in an armed manner, I brought someone who came and I said to them tell me how you would do this piece of work, and they put a great plan forward and I said "that's very interesting but really we already do that quite well, so you're not adding any value to us". But if we're scared of it, if we try to repel them or if we bury our heads in the sand it will be done to us, I would much prefer to chose the partners who we're getting to work with rather than have people thrown upon us. So the probation service is already doing it, it will probably happen that we'll need to do it a bit more, and a bit better, but at least if we continue to do what we do we can chose what the value will be for this organization. Is that OK?

Ofelia: yes, thank you very much.

Leone: OK, I will see what my PA wants that he's been phoning me continuously!

Ofelia: OK.

Giving recognition to NPS hard work.

Future of NPS.
Attention to planning.
Not reliance on individuals to carry out the service.
Example of negative consequences of relying on individuals.
Not reliance on the past.
Possible scenarios for the NPS.

Privatization.

Contestability.
Partnership arrangements.

Operating in business world.

Wonder about people's panic.

Negative consequences of being scared of partnerships and contestability.

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i   For the purpose of clarity, those involved in probation work meet with offenders, meet with victims, and make sure that offenders attend skill qualifications programmes, gain and maintain employment. Instead those who carry out support activities are involved in dealing with court sentences, and monitoring the relationships with external agencies (e.g. County Council).