POLICING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:
INFLUENCES THAT SHAPE THE DEVELOPMENT
OF RESPONSE BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

Police officer responses to incidents of domestic violence have received widespread criticism in recent years, but the focus of most studies on this topic has been on the experiences of victims and the work of police units established specifically to deal with domestic violence. As a consequence, the responses of front-line officers have received less attention. In particular, the ways in which they perceive and respond to domestic violence as they develop their careers within the police service are almost entirely unresearched. With this in mind, the aim of this research was precisely to map the shifts and changes (if any) in police officers' reactions and responses to domestic violence incidents during their first three years in service.

Where previous researchers have examined officers' response to domestic violence in one temporal dimension and others have considered issues of acculturation and socialisation, the uniqueness of this research is in the way in which it has synthesised both these elements in the production of a more complex longitudinal study. Thus the research is informed by the experiences and perceptions of seven officers from their first day as a member of a Constabulary, through to their completion of three years' service. Observation of their probationer training and of the officers on duty, the design and completion of semi-structured interviews and the use of hypothetical scenarios comprise the primary research tools, with additional insights being gained through semi-structured interviews with the officers' tutor constables. The rich and deep insights that emerged from the fieldwork were made possible because of the development and maintenance of a relationship with a small number of officers over the period of three years. My status as a full-time employee of the Constabulary benefited me enormously in this regard.

Through the development of this work, I have drawn from a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches but have been mostly persuaded by theories focused on aspects of feminism and symbolic interactionism. Using theories of power and gender in the context of domestic violence and applying these to observations made of the masculine organisational sub-culture of the police service, enables a picture to emerge of officers' explicit and implicit absorption of sub-cultural values, how they learn from their own experiences, how they learn to deal with domestic violence incidents from peers and colleagues, and influences of the training orientation and content.

More specifically, I argue that as an organisation, the police service (through its staff) does little to extend officers' understanding of domestic violence either theoretically or actually. There was (and continued to be) a clear lack of recognition by the study's participants of the gendered power relations inherent in most incidents of domestic violence. The study considered the content and form of probationer domestic violence training in this regard and concludes by drawing attention to the importance of officers' tacit knowledge, or in other words, their understanding of domestic violence as a result of their societal socialisation. Crucially, the primary manifestation of this 'lack' of understanding was in officers' confusion over their precise (police) role when confronted with what they perceived to be domestic 'disputes' as opposed to domestic 'violence', where the latter were more easily recognised as requiring a law-and-order response, but where the former were considered as much less straightforward to deal with. Consequently, in most circumstances, officers tended to rely on their personal experiences and understandings as human beings rather than police officers, to guide their response. A contributory factor to the lack of clarity were the many parallels between the gendered power dynamic to be found in situations of domestic violence and the form and content of banter and behaviour in the workplace.

The research is not simply an end in itself in terms of answering a particular set of research questions relating to police responses to domestic violence, but could also act as a vehicle for change.

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed   Date   2nd March 2006

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

This study explores the shifts and changes in seven police officers' reactions and responses to domestic violence during their first three years in service. The individuality of this research is in the way in which it has synthesised occupational socialisation with officers' response to domestic violence in the production of a longitudinal study of officers' domestic violence training, experiences and perceptions. The research is based in one police force, in which I am an 'insider'. This is central to the research. Westmarland (2000) refers to her research as the first ethnography with full and extensive access to police activities and culture focusing on gender to be conducted by a woman researcher in Britain. In contrast, whilst I have also been afforded full and extensive access, this has been from the perspective of a full-time employee (not a sworn officer) of the police force, and part-time researcher. The resultant challenges have shaped the research design and enabled relationships to develop with the officers. In turn, this has led to a unique understanding of officers' responses to domestic violence in the context of their socialisation experiences. A detailed description of each chapter is contained later in the Introduction.

Partially as a consequence of being a part-time student, the research and thesis have taken eight years to complete. One of the drawbacks of taking this long is that the context in which the police service operates generally, and specifically in relation to domestic violence, has changed since the start of the study. Furthermore, the Constabulary involved in the research has introduced new policies and procedures, and had a change of senior management. Nevertheless, the findings of the research still stand. Little or nothing has been done by the end of 2005 to address those issues shown in this thesis to have a fundamental and often detrimental impact upon officers' perceptions and responses to domestic violence.

My journey to the police service and the research

My interest in policing began while I was an undergraduate student, undertaking an 'Applied Community Studies' degree. A compulsory element of the degree was the completion of three placements, two of which I did with the local police force. At the time, I was motivated to join the police service as a police officer. However, my focus shifted largely as a result of two inspirational individuals. The first was my college tutor who had a close research relationship with the police force. His confidence in my ability as a researcher meant that at the end of my undergraduate degree he nominated me to undertake a small paid research project for this police force – my first employment. The second was a police officer, an Inspector. Although he was a dedicated officer with many years service, his passion was for research. He felt it was his privilege to guide me through the stages of my undergraduate dissertation. In my view, his passion was contagious and the privilege was mine.

Eighteen months later, in 1995, I began my employment in the police force in which this research is based – Gloucestershire Constabulary. I was employed as a social science researcher. Since then I have been promoted, and currently have strategic responsibility for organisational research, and manage a team of researchers. Early in my career I undertook an evaluation of some of the working practices of the Child Protection Unit. Through my involvement with this Unit it became apparent to me that child abuse and domestic violence were linked inextricably. A significant body of literature details and explores these links (for example, see Stark and Flitcraft, 1988; Mullender et al., 2002). Although the evaluation I was tasked with had a very specific remit, it was enough to generate my interest in the subject of child abuse and domestic violence, to the extent that I took the opportunity to explore the possibility of a PhD. By coincidence, the then chief constable of Gloucestershire was the national police lead on child abuse issues and a keen researcher and, as such, I was given an indication that anything I chose to do would be supported by him. The access and support that I was afforded throughout the eight years is discussed in Chapter 5.

Stanley and Wise (1993) are critical of how the realities of conducting social research are often omitted from the presentation of research and, more specifically, how researcher involvement is excluded or left invisible. To counter this I have felt it important throughout the thesis, and particularly in Chapter 5, to acknowledge my own situation – an action encouraged by Smith (1987). Being involved with the police service for several years has had an impact on me, although the precise nature of this impact has only been revealed to me through undertaking this research. Essentially, I now appreciate the influence of the socialisation processes and the culture of the organisation, albeit that the literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 primarily is focused on police officers. I would suggest that the overall experience of the police service is not *so* different for police staff.

Gaps in and personal views about the literature

According to some feminist researchers, the criminal justice system has little real understanding of domestic violence and struggles to make appropriate responses to it (Mullender and Burton, 2001: Barron, 2002). Since 1990 (when Home Office Circular 60/1990 was published), most police forces have introduced specialist Domestic Violence Units or officers in one form or another. Their role covers a wide spectrum of activities, including victim liaison and support, training delivery with the force and externally, liaison with external agencies, and involvement with investigations. Since their inception, many of the debates and much of the research into policing and domestic violence have concentrated on the impact of these units and officers (see, for example, Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998). Consequently, the role of front-line police officers has been neglected in research terms, despite the fact that it is these officers, *not* the specialist officers or units, which provide the 24 hour emergency response, and thus have an immediate impact upon the victim.

In reading much of the domestic violence literature (mainly dated pre-1990s) that does focus upon front-line officers, it became apparent to me that police officers were criticised consistently for the ways in which they responded to domestic violence incidents. Researchers who worked with victims suggested that most women were dissatisfied with the police response (Pahl, 1985) and that women often experienced officers as prejudiced, responding to stereotypes based upon the nature of the incident, the characteristics of the abusers and the characteristics of the victims (Walker and McNicol, 1994). Furthermore, women not only perceived a lack of sympathy for their situation, but detected sympathy and a degree of support for the perpetrator (Walker and McNicol, 1994). Those who researched the views of individual officers reported similarly critical findings. At the very least, officers expressed a dislike for dealing with domestic violence (Edwards, 1986; Southgate, 1986). More serious was their reported lack of motivation to arrest (Faragher, 1985), often explained by their perception of domestic violence as a private matter and therefore beyond their remit (Parnas, 1967; Walter, 1981; Edwards, 1989; Walker and McNicol, 1994), and a belief that the victim had provoked the violence and was therefore deserving of the abuse (Lennon and Blanchard, 1980). In other words, the moral perspective of the officer was deemed to be of primary influence (Chatterton, 1983; Smith and Gray, 1983; Chambers and Millar, 1983).

As I have already alluded to, the acculturation that I had experienced (albeit unconsciously) prior to and on becoming a member of the police force, led me initially to feel defensive on behalf of the officers. In her research, Hoyle (1998) attempted to move away from the purely feminist theories that root police behaviour and culture in misogynist assumptions. Perhaps like her, I found it difficult to reconcile the criticisms of policing with the fact that the front-line officers that I knew were hard-working, conscientious individuals who strived to do their best most of the time. However, the robustness of the feminist research and subsequent criticisms meant that I was not of the view that the research findings could be dismissed or discounted. Rather, if officers' responses were that bad, surely it was not enough to just identify the problems, but there was a need to explore in more depth the reasons for the problems. Hoyle (1998) suggested that questions needed to be asked about the extent to which the principles of domestic violence training guide officers once they are working with more experienced officers. I wondered how it was that training did not seem to be addressing the problems, and how the culture of a predominantly male organisation impacted upon officers' response to an issue characterised by gendered power relations.

In particular, the latter question – about the influence of the organisational culture – led me to explore the socialisation literature. When any person begins a career it is inevitable that the organisation they join will have an impact upon their attitudes, values, beliefs and perceptions. In many ways the characteristics of 'total institutions' (Goffman, 1961) can be translated into a police environment. The uniform and the number which is assigned to each

officer; the verbal deference instilled in the recruits at training school; the need for officers to curtail their behaviour to ensure their actions are confined within the law; shift-work which often serves as a barrier to social interaction; and the new barriers individuals often face when members of society learn of their occupation, are all diminishing of the self. Arguably, in the police, these processes could have a lasting influence on an individual's behaviour and relationship with society and lead to homogenisation.

Researchers have reported that *all* police officers entering the organisation undergo a process of socialisation (Wilson, 1968; and Butler, 1979). Fielding (1988) considered the direct connection between probationers' impressions and experiences and their growing conception of what constitutes 'good policing', and found that formal and informal socialisation processes were a crucial influence. However, this research was not specific to the policing of domestic violence. Furthermore, the police socialisation literature is based largely upon research about male police officers, or at least the male pronoun is used and so the voice of female officers is not heard. As a consequence, in most of the previous research, the masculine culture of the police service has not been taken into account when considering the socialisation processes at work.

Thus, the study was started in direct response to the gaps in the literature. Where previous researchers had examined officers' response to domestic violence in one temporal dimension and others had considered issues of acculturation and socialisation, no researchers had synthesised these two elements in the production of a more complex longitudinal study. According to Griffiths and Hanmer (2005), the study of organisations is relatively new to the work on violence against women, but is essential if influences on performance are to be identified. As an 'insider', I recognised that I was in a rare position from which I could gain access over an extended time period, and thus gain an understanding of the processes that came to determine officers' decision-making and behaviour at domestic violence incidents.

The extent of domestic violence

An analysis by the Council of Europe of ten separate domestic violence prevalence studies found consistently that one in four women experience domestic violence over their lifetimes, and between six and ten percent of women suffer domestic violence in a given year (Council of Europe, 2002). The 2001 British Crime Survey included a detailed self-completion questionnaire designed to ascertain accurate estimates of the nature and extent of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking for England and Wales. Over 22,000 women and men aged 16-59 were asked about their experiences of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking during their lifetime, and during the preceding twelve months. The findings show that there were an estimated 12.9 million incidents of domestic violence acts against women and 2.5 million against men in England and Wales in the year prior to interview. Four

percent of women and two percent of men had been subject to domestic violence during the last year. Extending the definition to include financial and emotional abuse, the figures increase to six and five percent respectively (Walby and Allen, 2004). Using the 2001 data Walby (2004) has undertaken the most up-to-date and wide-ranging analysis of the cost of domestic violence. She estimates the cost of domestic violence in England and Wales in one year totals £23 million. However, accurate data about the extent of domestic violence are notoriously difficult to achieve (Crisp and Stanko, 2000; Walby and Myhill, 2000). Kelly (1999) suggests that only a small proportion of assaults are reported. Therefore, it is likely that these figures represent an underestimation of the extent, and therefore the cost, of domestic violence.

In Gloucestershire, between April 2004 and March 2005, 6187 incidents of domestic violence were reported[1].

Definitions and boundaries of the research
There are numerous advantages of using terms such as 'violence against women' and 'gender violence', not least the assertion that the violence is in some way influenced by or influences gender relations (Skinner et al. 2005). However, such terms are very broad, encapsulating domestic violence, rape, prostitution and trafficking. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the usefulness and advantages of the terms, the focus of this thesis is domestic violence.

The term 'domestic violence' has been the subject of much debate. It is a frequently used term because, as Mooney (2000) notes, there is an assumed understanding associated with it and it covers all types of domestic relationships. Similarly, Pryke and Thomas recognise that the term 'domestic violence' is used as 'quick and easily understood shorthand' (1998: 35). However, what is *actually* understood by the term is what has generated debate. Edwards (1986a) suggests that domestic violence ranges from arguments to murder, and that violent assault is not merely a state of family disequilibrium or a normal family 'going over the top' but is a situation that may have disastrous consequences. Harwin and Barron describe it as an 'ongoing pattern of controlling behaviour' (2000: 206). However, as Mullender notes, the word 'domestic' has been challenged for its links with trivialisation of abuse when, for example, 'the police would not respond on the same level to an assault if it was 'just a domestic' as they would to an assault in a public place' (1996: 8). As such, it does not reflect the power and control present and the fact that it is usually men that are violent towards women. Additionally, the word 'violence' has been highlighted as problematic because, as Mooney (2000) questions, what constitutes violence? Such problems with the definitions have led authors such as Pryke and Thomas to use the terms

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[1] This does not include incidents where a family member was involved. Incidents involving family members were not counted during 2004/5, but are included in the counting for 2005/6.

'relationship abuse' or 'interpersonal abuse'. Others might argue that the word 'abuse' down plays violence.

Pryke and Thomas (1998) studied definitions of 'domestic violence' and found that most seemed to address three points: the nature of the relationship between the people involved; the kinds of violence or coercion used; and the places where the violence occurred. They observed that the way the issue of domestic violence is defined is crucial to give it meaning and predispose us to think of the issue in a particular way. It may even shape behaviour towards the issue. What is more, Mullender suggests that 'we should be aware of working within male definitions which outlaw only the grossest and most public forms of abuse' (1996: 9). It has already been noted that many authors use the term 'domestic violence' because it is believed to be an easily understood term. As such, Mullender used the term 'domestic violence' in the title of her book because 'it is in common everyday and professional use and was judged most likely to alert readers to the book's content' (1996: 8). For this reason alone, whilst acknowledging the debates and problems, the term 'domestic violence' is used throughout this thesis.

It is also important to understand the context in which police officers work. The definition of domestic violence adopted by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in November 2004, and by the Constabulary involved in the research in April 2005, is:

> Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.

The Women's Aid Federation define domestic violence as:

> Domestic violence is physical, psychological, sexual or financial violence that takes place within an intimate or family-type relationship and forms a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour. Crime statistics and research both show that domestic violence is gender specific – usually the perpetrator of a pattern of repeated assaults is a man.
>
> Women experience the most serious physical and repeated assaults.
>
> Any woman can experience domestic violence regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, sexuality, disability or lifestyle.
>
> **Domestic violence destroys both women's and children's lives.** [Their emphasis]. (2004, www.womensaid.org.uk/about/whatisdv.htm)

The differences between the two definitions lie in the gendered emphasis and the reference to 'coercive and controlling behaviour' in the latter. Whilst acknowledging the importance of these elements, I believe that it is important in the context of the research to work within and acknowledge the definition recognised by ACPO and the Constabulary. This is particularly

the case in view of the fact that I did *not* ask officers to report only on those incidents where the victim was a woman.

An often-quoted statistic is that, on average, a woman is likely to be a victim of domestic violence on 35 occasions before she calls the police (McGibbon et al., 1989; Yearnshire, 1997). Of course, every incident is different and it is not always the case that it is the victim who requests police assistance, but research that has at its centre the views of victims is likely to reveal a different, perhaps more complete picture of domestic violence. In contrast, the understanding of domestic violence generated through this thesis is based upon the experiences and perceptions of police officers attending an incident. It must be borne in mind that, in the main, their assistance will have been requested as a last resort and out of desperation. As such, these incidents may reflect only narrow points in the cycle of violent relationships.

Domestic violence and the Law

Domestic violence is *not* a statutory offence. Rather, it is recorded under formal crime categories under which the charge is laid. For example, according to a local specialist domestic violence officer and trainer, one of the most common situations is strangulation, but this is treated as common assault (if not by the arresting officers, it is often reduced to this by the Crown Prosecution Service). The incidents are often complicated situations involving offences such as criminal damage, child neglect, theft, fraud, grievous bodily harm, wounding and sexual offences such as rape. In 1998, Pryke and Thomas found that the charges most commonly brought against perpetrators of domestic violence related to the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, now incorporated into the Public Order Act 1986. In the past, 'breach of the peace' was often used by police officers but this is used less often now that police forces have specific domestic violence policies. Such policies encourage officers to arrest for substantive offences. Custody staff are also encouraged to keep prisoners in custody and put them before court to be bound over, rather than releasing them with no further action if there are no full offences (Constabulary Policy, 2001).

Harwin and Barron (2000) suggest that domestic violence cannot be dealt with effectively by using *only* the criminal law. The Harassment Act 1997 offers criminal *and* civil remedies for harassment with no violence and fear of violence by providing criminal conviction, restraining orders, and a further criminal offence when a breach of a restraining order occurs. Thus, there are many offences available for officers to choose from if they believe they have the evidence available to them, albeit that they are not bound under the heading 'domestic violence'.

Contents of the thesis

Following the introductory chapter, the thesis begins with three chapters in which relevant literature is explored. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature about gender and organisations. Fundamental to its inclusion is the premise that it is not possible to understand organisations and how they are experienced unless the informal dynamics are taken into account. In the police service, gender, or more specifically heterosexual masculinity, is a defining characteristic of the organisation. As such, it is argued that an exploration of the impact of gender on the organisational culture is essential to understanding the behaviour of its members. In particular, barriers to the police service being an inclusive organisation are explored against the historical context of women in policing. Central to the chapter are the 'myths of policing' which serve to perpetuate the gendered language and (sometimes violent) behaviour of (male) officers. Overall, this chapter establishes the importance of gender as a key theme and analytical tool throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 3 focuses on the nature and consequences of occupational socialisation processes. It is argued that the police service has an ethos based on discipline and conformity and therefore has a strong emphasis on the socialisation of new recruits. The chapter is structured around three types of socialisation: anticipatory, formal and informal. These discussions are complemented by an exploration of symbolic interactionism, which is found to be a useful framework by which to understand the impact of the socialisation processes experienced by police officers.

Having considered gender issues in organisations and the socialisation experienced by police officers on entering the organisation, attention is turned in Chapter 4 to domestic violence and observations about the State, and specifically the police response. Second wave feminism in Britain and the engagement of feminists with the state about domestic violence are explored as contextual information. Following this examination of domestic violence responses at the state and organisational level, the Chapter then considers research that has examined officers' responses to domestic violence. In particular, the determinants of officers' use of discretion are explored. Through this it is apparent that gender issues and socialisation processes in the police service are inextricably linked, combining to shape officers' responses to domestic violence.

Having reviewed the literature, I turn in Chapter 5 to the methodology and research design. Whilst it might be deemed more conventional to have separated the methodology from the research design, I explain that integrating the two reflects more closely my experience of undertaking the study. Furthermore, although a more conventional place for a reflexive chapter might be towards the end of the thesis, my reflections are incorporated throughout this chapter. In doing this, I hope to give the reader a better insight into my decision-making

throughout the study, and my journey as a researcher and as an organisational member during the period of the research. In this chapter I also explain my rationale for drawing from two frameworks, namely standpoint epistemology and the principles of symbolic interactionism. Central to this rationale is that fact that I am an 'insider' and a part-time researcher, the positive and negative implications of which are considered. The uniqueness of the research lies partially in the depth and intensity of the fieldwork, made possible by developing and maintaining a relationship with the officers over a three year period. Taking an entirely qualitative approach suited to a small depth study, I used semi-structured interviews, hypothetical case studies and observation methods as the primary research tools, with additional insights being gained through semi-structured interviews with the officers' tutor constables. Chapter 5 contains the detail of and rationale for these methods.

Chapters 6 to 9 detail the findings of the research. Each chapter is supported by quotations attributed to individual officers and marked to show the point during the three years when the comment was made. In this way, the longitudinal nature of the fieldwork is represented in these chapters. In Chapter 6 I introduce the seven officers who participated in the study. Of particular interest are the issues that emerged when I asked the officers about their reasons for becoming police officers. The notion of anticipatory socialisation is especially relevant to the discussions in this chapter.

The officers' feelings and emotions about joining the police service, and being faced with responding to domestic violence incidents changed during their first three years of service. Chapter 7 maps these changes. Officers' self-confidence, feelings of excitement and feelings about personal and colleague safety are central features of the chapter. The notion of 'common-sense' features similarly, thus demonstrating the importance for officers of being able to draw upon their own life experiences. The problems and challenges associated with this are explored.

In order to understand how officers' feelings and emotions associated with domestic violence emerge, Chapter 8 explores officers' experiences of attending the incidents and the impact that this has upon their developing views about domestic violence. An exploration of the language used by officers in relation to domestic violence is fundamental to understanding officers' perceptions of what was happening at incidents, their own understanding and attitudes towards domestic violence, and the impact upon their use of discretion in implementing the law. Also of importance are the behaviours demonstrated between colleagues (but not the seven officers in the study). Examples of sexualised behaviour and joking are reported, and their links with attitudes that trivialise domestic violence are considered.

Chapter 9 focuses upon two primary issues: the domestic violence training received by officers during their probationary period, and their views about their role at domestic violence incidents. It might be argued that this chapter could have been included earlier, but it has been included here because, specifically, the chapter discusses how the officers experience the training, and then feel able (or not) to put this into practice. To understand this, it is important to understand *why* the officers feel able (or not) to put it into practice; an indication to the answers are explored in Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 9 also considers how officers' views about domestic violence develop, change or are challenged during the training process. In the context of these views, the chapter then reflects on the roles officers believe they will fulfil at the scene of incidents. Changes in these perceived roles during the three years are noted, together with the implications for the likely outcome of their involvement.

Finally, Chapter 10 draws together the literature and research findings, and explores their meaning and implications. The original contributions that this research makes, as well as opportunities for future research, are also highlighted. I close with a reflection on my research journey.

Chapter 2: Gender and Organisations

Introduction

Research on organisations historically has paid little attention to the importance of gender (Silvestri, 2003). Weber described bureaucracies as being characterised by: a specialised division of labour; a hierarchy of authority with a clearly demarcated system of command and responsibilities; a formal set of rules and procedures in a predictable, uniform and impersonal manner; and a body of full-time, permanent employees, trained in specialised tasks and paid according to rank (Weber's discussion of these characteristics can be found in Gerth and Wright Mills, 1946). Whilst this is a good description of the characteristics of the police service, it does not take account of the informal dynamics that exist. It is these dynamics that largely shape organisational members' attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the organisation. Therefore, we cannot understand how organisations work without considering the informal dynamics.

Of particular interest in this chapter are gender and, to a lesser extent, sexuality in organisations. As Gherardi (1995) comments, on entering any organisation it is impossible to ignore our senses which convey to us the degree of acceptance of the values of either gender. It is almost a cliché to argue that policing is a 'macho' occupation and even the few who would disagree that policing is imbued with values of masculinity would find utterly improbable the argument that policing is imbued with the values of femininity (Fielding, 1994). According to Witz and Savage (1992), organisational forms embody and reinforce the social and power relations in them. So, if gender is an organising principle and an organisational outcome, it is the organisation that creates the dynamics to allow this to occur (Gherardi, 1995). In writing about the police service then, gender is not only one of the keys to analysis but also a distinguishing feature of the organisation (Silvestri, 2003).

The chapter is focused specifically on the experiences of women working in an organisation that traditionally has been perceived as 'men's work'. In other words, consideration is given to the issues that are barriers to the police service being an inclusive organisation. Following an exploration of the gendered nature of organisational literature, a précis of the history of women in the police service is provided as contextual information. Central to the chapter is the notion of the 'myths' of policing. Fundamentally, it is the perception of policing as a dangerous and unpredictable occupation that forms the core of views about, and experiences of, women and other minority groups in the police service. How these 'myths' provide justification for sex-orientated joking and humour is also deliberated. It is apparent that there is a fine and subjective line between such joking and humour, and sexual harassment. The police service is an organisation with an explicit and implicit orientation to violence. Accordingly, the links between the masculinity of the police service and issues of sexual harassment are explored. Finally, and without undermining the negative impact on

organisational members of the gendered nature of the police organisation, consideration is given to gender, agency and the pleasures of working in an organisation

Definitions

'Organisational culture' is a term that it is difficult to define. Wells (1973) suggests that when women enter an established 'male' organisation, the structure and ways in which power is expressed are already based on male values, so this is how women experience the organisation. Gherardi's (1995) description of how our senses convey the gender of an organisation is qualified by her recognition of the difficulty of decoding this phenomenon that she calls 'culture', expressing it in words, and 'scientifically' measuring the set of sensations evoked within us. There are many definitions of organisational culture. Some are as straightforward as 'culture is 'how things are done round here'' (Drennan, 1992: 3). Similarly, according to Shwartz and Davis:

> Culture ... is a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members. These beliefs and expectations produce norms that powerfully shape the behaviour of individuals and groups in the organization. (1981: 33)

Drennan's definition is useful because of its simplicity. The emphasis placed upon how powerful culture can be in shaping behaviour by Shwartz and Davis is also relevant, particularly in the context of Gherardi's suggestion (1995) that a cultural approach to understanding gender (and power) issues is likely to yield considerable insights.

According to Brown (1998), organisations contain many sub-cultures, the values, beliefs and assumptions of which *may* contradict the dominant culture. In literature about policing, reference is made to 'canteen culture'. Whilst this might be described as a sub-culture, I suggest that it does not contradict the dominant organisational culture. Indeed, it might be said to be integral to the identity of organisational members and therefore that it determines the organisational identity. The notion of identity is explored later in this chapter.

A distinction is made in the literature between 'gender' and 'sexuality'. Sexuality is often explained biologically, although Mills (1989) suggests that this definition is often criticised for being too narrow in its focus on the physical. Instead, Hearn and Parkin define sexuality as:

> ... the social expression of physical, bodily desires, real or imagined, by or for others or for oneself, together with the related bodily states and experiences. (1987: 55)

Whilst not dismissing the importance and impact of sexuality in organisations, this chapter is concerned primarily with gender issues in organisations, and specifically the police service. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), gender is a social dynamic and activity in the sense that individuals act in accordance with the normative attitudes and activities appropriate to one's sex. It is therefore something we choose to become. It is a socially

produced learned behaviour and 'way of being' which is developed over the life of an individual. The gendering process is one in which organisations play an important role. West and Zimmerman (1987) discuss the 'doing' of gender as something that has to be undertaken by women and men for them to be perceived and accepted as 'competent' members of society. It is a situated 'doing' carried out in the presence of people who are perceived to also be oriented to its production and maintenance. Any individual failure to meet normative expectations may be called to account. It follows therefore, that the 'doing' of gender to be perceived as competent in organisations also occurs but its form will be partially dependent on the organisational culture. West and Zimmerman's definition of 'gender' – a social dynamic and activity in the sense that individuals act in accordance with the normative attitudes and activities appropriate to one's sex – will be used throughout this chapter because it can appropriately be translated into an organisational context.

Organisational literature and gender

Polarisation has occurred in the organisational and feminist literature as a consequence of organisation theorists often not being interested in gender and feminist theorists often not being interested in organisations. Witz and Savage recognise this has been due partly to the different research cultures of the two disciplines:

> The former a well funded subject largely staffed by male academics servicing male managers and geared to thinking about specific organizational problems; the latter a critical, anti-establishment discipline which appeals specifically to women and helps expose the embedded nature of patriarchal relations throughout the entire social fabric. (1992: 4)

Burrell and Morgan (1979) claim that organisational theories have maintained the gender-blind status quo, and are based on male views and male-focused research masquerading as 'human'. Hearn and Parkin (1987) concur with this view, having reviewed key organisational theories in their discussion of gender and found that gender has been largely excluded from organisation theories and analysis. Similarly, Witz and Savage believe organisational theories illustrate that:

> Men dominate organizational structures and are in positions of power which enable them to pursue strategies in their own interests and at the expense of women. In other words, organizations are patriarchal in a nominal sense, of being literally 'manned' and in the substantive sense of routinely representing men's interests over and above women's. (1992: 42)

O'Brien (1981) refers to this as the 'male-stream' literature which fundamentally excludes the experiences of women, the relationships between men and women and the experiences of lesbian and gay members within organisations. There is no recognition that the experiences of men and women in organisations are different. According to Unger and Crawford (1992), even when research about women's experiences has been conducted it is often through the eyes of a male researcher. Hearn and Parkin (1987) suggest gender has been: ignored;

treated implicitly as male; considered as a 'variable'; reduced to stereotypes; or analysed in a blatantly sexist way. The fact that organisations are a reproduction or reflection of social relations within society, is frequently not acknowledged.

This is not to say that gender and sexuality remain entirely outside of the organisational literature. Hearn (1994) reviewed how the empirical focus on *sexuality* in organisations has developed initially through empirical work focusing on sexual harassment, secondly through studies of heterosexual relationships and sexual liaisons in organisations and thirdly, through studies focusing on experiences of gay and lesbian workers in organisations. He suggests that there has been a shift from agendered approaches, to approaches that incorporate gender and sexuality in implicit ways, then to approaches that recognise social divisions (gender is an example), then to a more explicit recognition of gender relations and sexuality; and finally, to violence and relations of violence between women and men.

The history of women in the police service

The occupational world has long been sex segregated, and occupations that require great strength and courage in the face of danger have traditionally been reserved for men (Martin, 1980). As a result, women who enter these domains face obstacles and interactional dilemmas:

> They must cope with organizational policies and practices that put them at a disadvantage; isolation by and hostility from supervisors and coworkers who resent their presence; inappropriate behavior on the part of clients; an informal occupational social system that excludes them from networks of communication and sponsorship; and interaction rituals that press them into stereotypically feminine behavior which is inappropriate on the job. (Martin, 1980: xi)

Many roles are already gender marked, which means that qualifiers must be added to exceptions to the rule, for example, 'male nurse', 'female doctor' and 'WPC' (woman police constable). According to Young (1991) the police service can be defined primarily as a masculine domain, where metaphors of hunting and warfare predominate. As such, priority and prestige have been attached to male categories and symbols. It was not until the end of the First World War that women were officially recognised as police officers, although they did not have the same powers as policemen because of a clause in the existing Police Acts which stated that only 'fit men' could be sworn in (Jones, 1986). It was at this time that women's caring, nurturing and feminine role within the service was established. In 1930 the Home Secretary standardised the pay and conditions of service for policewomen and specified that their main duties were to include: patrolling; duties in connection with women and children found missing, ill, destitute or homeless, or in immoral surroundings; dealing with women prisoners and taking statements from women and children. This definition of their role stood for the next 45 years. The separate policewomen's departments had their own rank and promotion structure and, until 1974, were paid only nine-tenths the salary of

policemen, although they did not work night shifts like their men colleagues. Jones (1986) believes that women's acceptance of this role demonstrated acceptance of gendered division of labour. Nevertheless, it was likely this was an unconscious rather than conscious acceptance, since the gendered division of labour was not a prominent issue in the 1930s.

According to Jones (1986), the idea of women entering the police service was met with hostility by members of the public, existing male officers and, in particular, by the Police Federation (the trade union for police officers up to and including the rank of chief inspector). Concerns centred mainly on the perception of women as the weaker sex who needed special protection and guidance. The idea that the police service enforces laws for the protection and control of society gave added impetus to the belief that it was the strong, protecting man who should enforce these laws. Any notion that women might be able to perform the same functions as policemen challenged this assumption and threatened to undermine the masculine 'controlling' role.

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 resulted in one of the biggest changes in the structuring of the police service when it challenged the notion that policing should be a mainly masculine occupation and heralded the removal of the well-established gendered division of labour. As a consequence, most policewomen's departments were disbanded.

Views about women in the police service

Extensive media debate followed the Sex Discrimination Act, focussing on fears for policewomen's safety and the need for supervisors to be careful in allowing policewomen to patrol alone (Jones, 1986). Chief constables, the Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation fought for the police service to be exempt from the Act (Young, 1991). Reservations were based on: the 'morality' of exposing women to unpleasant situations and violence; women's ability to deal with violence and, in particular, to break up violent disturbances or to arrest violent prisoners; their ability to defend themselves; and the extra risk they posed to police*men* as a result of the 'natural' male instinct to protect women rather than concentrate on defending themselves. The 'emotional' nature of women was often used as a reason for needing to protect them. However, Jones (1986) and Borrowdale (1993) suggest that underlying this protective attitude was the belief that police work was unfeminine. Indeed, the Police Federation pronounced that 'the very nature of the duties of a police constable is contrary to all that is finest and best in women' (Whittaker, 1979: 122). Secondary arguments were based on the practical implications of integration of the sexes and the difficulties inherent for policewomen in combining child-rearing with working the same shift pattern as policemen. Consequently, women were: commonly employed on general station duties rather than being sent out on patrol; allocated to quieter 'beats'; paired-up with policemen for patrol duties, and deployed to the jobs that had previously been women's departments jobs (Jones, 1986). This was most apparent where an incident was

likely to involve violence and to be 'unpleasant', for example, a bad road traffic collision, some domestic disputes or where jobs involved searching through rubbish tips. In contrast, and more recently, Westmarland has suggested that domestic violence incidents are considered to be 'masculine work because they give male officers 'the chance to be heroes triumphing over bullying partners to protect 'weaker' women' (2000: 33). This interpretation is aligned with the view of Hearn and Parkin (1994) that men in an organisation place themselves in semi-sexual counter roles to their women colleagues (such as the helpless maiden and chivalrous knight). This is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Exploring attitudes towards the inclusion of women into general policing, Martin (1980) found two 'categories' of policemen. First were those who were less hostile to the presence of policewomen, felt little need to prove their masculinity through 'heroic feats', were sensitive to the needs of individuals and the community, and regarded aggressiveness in many policing situations as unnecessary. The second category of policemen comprised two groups: one that accepted, in principle, women's rights to equal opportunities in policing but was uncomfortable with policewomen performing patrol duties, and the other who openly expressed dislike of policewomen but willingly accepted some women who they supported under certain circumstances. A substantial number of women were also opposed to integration, primarily because of concerns about the long-term effects of losing their specialist skills, and the effect this might have on their career prospects. Others supported integration because of the challenge it posed to masculine interpretations of the 'proper' role of women in policing (Bryant et al. 1985) that had been associated with the former women's departments.

Despite the 'vulnerability' argument, policemen also expressed fears about women's predatory nature, and in particular, their 'rampant sexuality' and sexual provocation (Young, 1991). A quote from one of the police officers interviewed in Jones' study illustrates how relationships are perceived as being potentially dangerous:

> Relationships grow, problems grow and it causes problems. Especially, say, with a girl whose (sic) single and the married men. The old machoism comes out and 'Have I still got it', touch, and you know. It happens. Everybody's normal and nine times out of ten someone gets moved and there's a reason for the move. A lot of policemen's wives tend not to like policewomen working shifts because there's that threat. (1986: 146)

Borrowdale (1993) asserts that many men feel uncomfortable opening up traditional 'male' jobs to women. Consequently, as women enter the police service 'so the remaining male bastions fight hard to retain their exclusivity by overt or subtle means' (1993: 78). Young (1991) observed policemen being overtly and consistently hostile towards policewomen. Martin (1980) claims that the occupation of police officer allows men to assert their masculinity. Kanter (1977) suggests that the presence of women makes men perceive two

main threats. First, women may see the organisational culture for what it is and challenge it accordingly. Second, men may be found to have an easy working life. Consequently, men develop strategies that reinforce their occupational and personal masculinity. These frame women as sexual objects and deviant. They are women in a man's world, 'inappropriately' aspiring to the same things as men.

'Sex-role spillover': experiences of women in the police service

Conflict between work and the expectations placed upon women is not unique to the police service. Rather, it is typical of women entering male-dominated organisations, hence women engineers also experience similar conflict (Bryant et al., 1985). In relation to policing, Martin (1980) suggests that, through their interactions at work, policemen cast policewomen in stereotypical roles and place themselves in counter roles which have a 'semi-sexual' basis. This has harmful consequences to policewomen's work performance. These role pairs include for example, the seductress and the 'macho', and the helpless maiden and chivalrous knight. Collinson and Hearn (1994) have identified five discourses and practices of masculinity that are pervasive and dominant in organisations and which are related to managerial styles. Two of these are pertinent to women who enter the police service and who experience the masculine culture. The first discourse is paternalism, described as a specific masculine discourse of control that draws on the 'father' metaphor as authoritative, self-disciplined and wise. This discourse justifies itself in the sense that paternalism is a power exercised in positive ways to benefit and protect 'victims' who are too delicate and vulnerable to be part of the masculine world. Secondly, informalism is a discourse describing the informal relationships men engage in with (men and women) colleagues in order to reinforce their male identity. This serves to exclude women or to reduce them to 'victims' or sex objects. For example, Martin (1980) believes that although most policemen work with policewomen where there is no sexual attraction or romantic ties, they nevertheless often approach interactions sexually and flirtatiously. Thus, women either accept one of these, or similar roles, or be labelled as 'lesbian' because of their failure to accept and acknowledge men's superiority. A quotation from an article about a sex discrimination case taken out against Merseyside Police by Assistant Chief Constable Alison Halford demonstrates this:

> A woman can be damned either way... if she behaves in accord with expectations -
> that is regarded as weak and unsuitable. If she doesn't - and will drink heavily with the
> lads on occasion or will use strong language on occasion - then the result is one of
> surprise and hostility because she has stepped outside the accepted framework. (The
> Guardian, 13/5/92)

The 'myths' of policing

According to Fielding (1994), the stereotyped cultural values of the police canteen are exemplary forms of hegemonic masculinity, highlighting: aggressive physical action; a strong sense of competitiveness and preoccupation with the imagery of conflict; exaggerated

heterosexual orientations often articulated in terms of patriarchal, misogynistic attitudes towards women; and the operation of in-group or out-group distinctions where there is a strong case of loyalty and affinity (in-group) and exclusion (out-group). Physical strength and prowess are valued as prized attributes (Jones, 1986). Constant references to 'we' as a collective group, and the continual reference to 'the job' as an entity, imply that the organisation has whole intentions and collective characteristics (Fielding, 1994), albeit male characteristics. Excitement and status attached to physical danger are crucial to policemen's self-image. Exaggerated stories of violence, conflict and sexual conquest fuel this.

Waddington (1999) suggests that police officers are probably influenced by the patriarchal beliefs embedded in wider society that are shared by many other professional groups. Westmarland (2001) also draws links between the culture of general society in which men have the right to 'use' physical expressions of aggression because of the belief that this is a 'normal' masculine attribute, but suggests that this 'right' has become further internalised through police cultural values. Thus, as Silvestri argues:

> Police work continues to be presented in its mythological form where masculine identities continue to be construed, negotiated, and reconstructed in routine social interactions. The police organisation continues to encourage the imagery and mythology of 'street cop' masculinity to pervade organisational processes. The cult of the masculinity offers an opportunity within which a core aspect of the police role – the willingness and ability to use force – can be celebrated. The glorification of violence and a crime-fighting mission provide the ideological justifications for the authority that is exercised against citizens. (2003: 33)

This has an interesting implication for officers' response to domestic violence, highlighted by Westmarland (2001). In direct contrast to the research reported in Chapter 4 that suggests that police officers see domestic violence as 'rubbish work', which is more about social service than law enforcement, Westmarland reports that:

> ... although police officers genuinely seem to dislike calls to violent incidents in the home, there are situations in which force and strength are seen as the main skills necessary and these situations would be regarded as physically tough and demanding. Common examples of this include drunken husbands or partners refusing to leave the house, or trying to gain entry to premises with force. This problem of trying either to eject, or to keep out, violent men is not one that officers view as a 'softer' aspect of policing. Indeed, many of the calls are attended using blue lights and sirens and are regarded as high-adrenalin cases. (2001: 26)

Rather than considering the issue of violence and danger as a 'myth', Muir (1977) found it to be of vital importance to officers in ensuring their safety and survival. At the extremes, he argued that police officers could be either suspicious or trusting, and that members of the public could be either governable or rebellious. The consequence of a suspicious police officer dealing with a governable member of the public was that the officer would remain alive but unhappy that their suspicions had been misplaced. At the other extreme, a trusting

police officer faced with a rebellious member of the public could result in the officer's death. Thus, for the purpose of self-preservation, it is better for officers to expect the worst.

More recent research about the 'myths' of policing seem to have by-passed Muir's work, and instead focuses on the fact that being faced with violence is actually quite a rare occurrence for most police officers. Rather than considering the practical reasons for approaching incidents in the way Muir described, recent work has focused on the (cultural) reasons why officers have an interest in focusing on the rare occurrences. Waddington (1999) has argued that analysis of the police sub-culture would be easy if it reflected the 'reality' of policing. What actually occurs is what Fielding refers to as 'exaggerated war stories', through which the 'myth' of policing as dangerous and unpredictable is sustained and the process of coming together to reinforce masculinity is masked: According to Smith and Gray (1983), fighting and violence are not a regular occurrence in the working lives of most police officers; in fact for many they are really quite rare events. However, they argue that in contrast to these realities, the idea of violence is often central to the conceptions that police officers have about their work. This is partly because the central meaning of the job for most police officers is the exercise of authority and force (rather than knowledge or understanding). They also suggest that many police officers see violence as a source of excitement and glamour, commenting that stories of fighting and violence are combined with talk of sexual conquests and feats of drinking to form a cult of masculinity.

It is this myth that is used to rationalise the need for a strong bond between officers, providing reassurance that others will defend and assist when confronted with external threats (Chan, 1996). Therefore, the notion of camaraderie (discussed in more detail later in this chapter) is essentially a male excuse for the maintenance of the canteen culture. Notably, however, the interpretation of external threats might also include the threats posed by women. Earlier in the chapter, it was postulated that the integration of women into the police service is a threat to men being able to assert their masculinity. Kanter (1977) suggested that women may challenge the organisational culture. Martin (1989) advocates that women could do this by exposing the *lack* of danger and excitement in every day policing.

Accordingly, the maintenance of the sub-culture becomes important in itself. However, the more 'acceptable' focus for achieving this is external threats (rather than threats posed by women in the organisation). Beliefs about the traits required to be able to deal with the occasional 'dangerous' situation are so powerful that this is the image the organisation chooses to portray. Waddington says of this:

> There is little doubt that the occupational self-image of the police is that of 'crime-fighters' and this is not just a distortion of what they do, it is virtually a collective *delusion* (his emphasis) ... [but] the very fact that police devote so much rhetorical

effort to affirming what their daily experience denies should alert us to its ideological importance. (1999: 299)

Stanko (1994) believes that what is missing from dominant criminological discourse is a discussion of institutional violence and the State's sanctioned violence. Hearn (1994) goes some way to addressing this by considering how organisations with a responsibility for responding to violence, are themselves 'violent'. Sexual harassment in organisations is a form of violence, and is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The police service is an organisation that also has an explicit organisational orientation to violence. According to Martin (1980), violence can link different police work together. Whether pursuing a burglar or dealing with a domestic dispute there is the potential for violence and officers have the legal right to use coercive means to enforce their definition of the situation. Then again, Skolnick (1994) observes that because police work is occupied with the *threat* of violence, officers come to see 'symbolic assailants'. In other words, gestures, language and dress give them an indication of the likelihood of violence. He also argues that officers' assessments are not necessarily accurate. Nonetheless, because of the explicit orientation to violence Hearn argues that violence is reduced to 'ordinary' work and thus reduced to a 'file' or 'case'. Consequently, 'it can be processed, reconstructed, ignored, joked about, like any other organizational currency' (1994: 749).

Coping strategies

A number of researchers of the police service have found that women officers need to be 'better' than their male counterparts if they are to be accepted (Martin, 1979; Young, 1991). Martin (1979) offers a continuum indicating that, at the extremes, women officers can either be a *police*woman which means being better at their job than most of their male counterparts and achieving acceptance as a result. Alternatively, they can be a police*woman*. This is less threatening to male officers, requires less change or compromise from the woman, but often leads to comments by male colleagues that they are not capable of undertaking all aspects of police work. According to Borrowdale (1993), this means that women are not treated equally but serve to reinforce the masculine identity. *Police*women are resigned to the knowledge that to be accepted, they have to try harder than men; while a man is assumed to be competent until proven otherwise, a woman is assumed to be inept and faces constant tests of her competence and ability to withstand harassment, tormenting and teasing (Martin, 1980). Police*women* on the other hand, are content to attain personal acceptance and willing to assume the stereotypical roles into which they are put by men. The former are often as critical of other police*women* as the men. On the other hand, the latter act as a back-up for front-line officers and are criticised for doing so by the men despite being perceived as less of a threat. According to Young (1991), it is these women officers who receive a begrudging acceptance because they accept a place of dependency and inferiority. Women officers in Martin's study believed that men often prefer to work with an 'incompetent' woman because:

> ... men don't know how to deal with you when you're doing your job competently. They expect nothing from you... but if you do something, they don't know how to deal with or evaluate you. (1980: 124)

Martin (1979) recognises that most women officers fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum. However, Young believes that women probationer constables may be the exception:

> I found that most of the young female probationers have neither the experience nor the strength of purpose to take on the rigours of dealing with drunks and the disagreeable, except by following the well-established male precedents of confrontation. (1991: 235)

Hart (1993) believes that there is widespread recognition amongst men and women that women have to work harder than men to reach the same level of career development. Women often find they must behave like men to succeed (Witz and Savage, 1992). Nieva and Gutek advocate that 'in the workplace ... male characteristics set the norms for 'goodness' from which deviance becomes defined as deficit' (1981: 118). It is only through conforming to this etiquette, that women gain acceptance and have their work valued. But when a woman gains acceptance, Gherardi (1995) suggests that often the forms of compliments and communication used between men are extended to women: she receives a symbolic 'slap on the back' and so is accepted as a person, but devalued as a woman. Women become honorary men and this goes unnoticed or is taken for granted. Gherardi considers the consequences of how women react to this 'slap on the back' and draws the conclusion that if they only respond to one of the messages, they automatically ignore the other. Put another way, women either accept the honorary 'male' role and ignore their gender, or honour their gender but show poor communicative skill by ignoring the content of the message.

There are significant implications for lesbian and gay members of organisations who may be uncomfortable acting in accordance with behaviour deemed as 'normal' and 'acceptable' for men and women. Hall (1989) believes that the sexuality of organisations could, in most instances, be referred to as the 'heterosexuality' of organisations, because the informal dynamics serve to reinforce men's male heterosexuality. However, when a woman is lesbian, she does not provide this definition for men. Rather, as Nieva and Gutek have suggested, she is likely to be seen as deviant, and as a 'challenge' for men, and available for 'conversion' to heterosexuality. Because lesbians and gay men do not always conform to expected sex-roles, they are sometimes alleged to be unsuitable for the police service. According to McKenzie (1993), public opinion is used to denigrate the role of women, lesbians and gay men in policing, for example, 'the public will not like it'. Resistance to the notion of openly 'out' officers is based on ignorant stereotypical views of a gay man as a 'limp-wristed' child abuser who has the ability to 'convert' heterosexual men into homosexual

men (McKenzie, 1993). Knowing or suspecting that this would be the consequence of disclosure of sexual orientiation leads to anxieties that managers will want to 'get rid of them' and that disadvantages will be experienced (Hall, 1989) if they 'come out'. The heterosexuality of organisations, and the police service specifically, is often addressed through joking, horseplay, gossip, humour and daily conversation. All of these contain messages on the theme of sexuality, provide guidance to new officers about the gender codes of the organisational culture (Gherardi, 1995), and how to act in accordance with gender and to respond when this is offended. Regardless of sexual orientation, the conflicting choice for all officers is therefore obvious - to represent their gender, or to be deviant and 'offend' others by not subscribing to these norms.

Sex-orientated joking and humour at work

Sex-orientated joking and humour is commonplace in organisations, including the police service. According to Wilson, joking usually centres around three rules of sexuality: 'the ideal, typical, real man; definitions of males as not-female; and the normalcy of heterosexuality' (1995: 210). Heterosexual joking and humour is a reminder to men of their heterosexual power, and a way of them hiding from the 'intimacies' they share at work, although many men do not recognise their actions as expressions of power and male identity (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). For women, such humour can be very oppressive and is exacerbated by men colleagues who absolutely refuse to recognise that there is a need for any change in their behaviour or in the organisation as a whole (Hearn and Parkin, 1987). Hearn (1985) discusses 'horseplay', which he describes as a 'macho' expression of male power in front of other men, which often happens in heterosexual, male-dominated organisations. Gheradi (1995) refers to 'organizational flirting'. She describes this as a cultural system developed by a group in which individuals are free to take part. However, all these terms – horseplay, flirting, joking and humour – have positive connotations. They have associations with fun and sexual desire, which disregards the often negative experiences of those on the receiving end and who risk being alienated if they do not take part.

Research about the significance of organisation as subjective experience concludes that, through interaction, a sense of the organisation is created and maintained, and common interpretations of situations are achieved so that a co-ordinated team response is possible (Mills, 1992). Thus, sexualised joking and humour within the police service are often excused because of the perceived need for support in dealing with the difficult situations (and specifically the dangerous and unpredictable situations discussed earlier in the section about 'the myths of policing'), and the emotional impact these can have on officers. It is this understanding of what constitutes 'camaraderie' in the police service that enables it to continue; it is accepted as something important for the organisation to function and to enable support amongst colleagues to be maintained, and as a natural consequence of shift-work.

One respondent in Gutek's study of sexual harassment made a statement that could be translated into a police environment:

> The situation at work is like one little family. It's just part of the game. Everybody does it. When you work the hours we do, early A.M., late P.M., you're tired and you joke around. We practically live together. (1985: 83)

Borrowdale (1993) suggests that the idea of 'camaraderie' is essentially a male excuse for the maintenance of relationships based on sexual expression, and is a constant reminder of heterosexuality and excludes gay men and lesbians. Yet, it is these expectations and understandings that guide people in appropriate behaviour, what is expected of them and how to achieve things. The police service, along with other occupations like social work (Pithouse, 1994), is concerned with the 'burn-out' of their employees and with helping staff to cope with stressful experiences. Regarding the public as hostile and the source of potential danger, officers are highly dependent on each other for mutual support. According to Gherardi (1995), it is in these kinds of organisations that members' professional and private lives tend to merge; they are often also friends outside work and their private lives are nurtured by each other. This sense of isolation from others and dependence on each other spills over into their off-duty activities, so that friendships and socialising focus on other police officers (Martin, 1980). Consequently, co-operation and solidarity are perceived as essential. It is this perception that enables the joking and humour to be constructed, maintained and perceived as 'normal' behaviour.

The nature of joking and humour is based largely on gender and sexuality issues and 'sexual conquest, as one facet of their shared masculinity, has long united policemen' (Martin, 1980: 208). Young (1991) explored the control that men have over women in the police service and, in particular, the control of policewomen's bodies which they often subject to verbal abuse:

> ... the body of the woman is discussed, measured, and laughed at. It is ogled and lusted over, sneered at, ridiculed, drooled over, and constrained into a suppressed form. (1991: 206)

Inside the organisation, small policewomen are at risk both of being defined as too weak to be effective and as a sexual temptation and provocation to policemen, while larger women suffer from jokes about their size and their unfeminine form. Young (1991) also suggests that the police uniform allows women to become surrogate men by denying their feminine form.

Sexual harassment

It is unlikely that any police officer (including women) would deny the importance of camaraderie but it could be argued that the organisation cannot have it both ways: it cannot encourage joking and humour without also acknowledging that there are times when this oversteps the mark and needs to be challenged. Because there is no clear boundary, however, this is a difficult situation to manage. There is a fine and subjective line between joking and humour excused as camaraderie, and behaviour that could be described as sexual harassment. Nevertheless, a definitive understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment is more problematic. Gutek's research (1989) found that the recipient often perceived behaviours that could be described as 'harassment' by observers as positive. Sexual encounters re-affirm an individual's sexual desirability and might therefore be perceived as flattering.

According to Gutek (1989), almost two-thirds of the literature on sexuality in organisations is devoted to the subject of sexual harassment, although the debate is most commonly about the nature and extent of harassment as opposed to looking at reasons why it occurs and is able to persist. Wilson describes most sexual harassment as 'small, mundane, and accumulating, permeating women's lives' (1995: 214). It can take the form of emotional, physical or psychological abuse. A useful definition, incorporating these, is 'invasion without consent' (Brackenridge, 2001: 32).

There is little recognition that sexual harassment is a product of the organisational culture or norms. Rather, the behaviour is usually ascribed to individuals. Hearn and Parkin (1987) criticise studies of sexuality as being too tolerant of heterosexual norms, and ignorant of the harassment that often accompanies sexual relationships in organisations. Burrell (1992) identifies that organisations, whatever their nature, are sites of sexual harassment in which patriarchy and the control it gives men over women is reflected in, and enhanced by, sexual harassment. According to Erlich-Martin (1981) one of the reasons why men perpetrate harassment is to ensure the control of women. Sexual joking, humour, camaraderie and the needs of men to reinforce their own sexuality can all be perceived as forms of sexual harassment, and studies of sexual harassment have clearly highlighted the link with the power differentials in organisational sexuality. Further, there is a recognition that sexual harassment is more likely to occur in traditional 'male' occupations as men feel that women are intruding on their territory (Borrowdale, 1993).

In 2000, Brown and Heidensohn concluded that in the police service, women officers were still subjected to sexual harassment. Therefore, little had changed since research by Sampson et al. (1991) intended to look into inter-agency working relationships between police, probation and social services. The authors found that sexual harassment was so prominent, particularly within the police service and by police officers, that the focus of the

study had to shift to encompass gender and harassment as the fundamental points of analysis. Not only did harassment affect relationships within the police service, it also affected relationships between policemen and women working in probation and social services. Their research uncovered a significant number of sexual harassment 'stories' from policewomen in comparison with women in probation or social services. This provides a challenge to any police officer who suggests that sexual harassment is not a problem, or that it is a 'normal' organisational dynamic.

Gutek and Morasch (1982) believe that women in roles that have traditionally been seen as 'men's work' may be treated differently from other men in the organisation. It is in these organisations where women are most likely to be the victims of sexual harassment, to a far greater degree than in more gender-balanced organisations. Even within the police service, policewomen are significantly more likely than civilian women (non-sworn women) to experience sexual harassment from policemen (Brown, 1998), suggesting links with the perceived need for camaraderie, and men's need to reinforce masculinity and their own heterosexuality amongst their close-working colleagues. Research conducted by Anderson et al. (1993) found that nearly all policewomen had experienced some form of sexual harassment from policemen, and at a significantly greater rate than other women working within the police service. Three in ten women had been subjected to unwanted touching and six percent reported having been seriously sexually assaulted. An inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabularies (HMIC) (1992) found blatant breaches of equal opportunities policies and a serious problem of sexual harassment. A follow-up study by HMIC (1996), which looked at progress in the implementation of equal opportunities policies since 1992, found that, although there were some good examples, there were continuing high levels of sexist and racist banter, albeit more subtle and covert than had been found before.

Questions also need to be asked about the extent to which women police officers have higher tolerances for inappropriate sexual behaviour than women in other organisations, because of the perceived importance of camaraderie. This might mean they would not report sexual harassment to anyone in the organisation, or indeed to researchers. Wilson (1995) indicates that the behaviour an individual defines as sexual harassment depends on their gender, with women consistently defining more experiences as harassing than men. However, this ignores factors such as occupation, expectations and the perceived importance of camaraderie.

Organisational members often express disbelief that certain behaviour and language are unacceptable. They make these feelings known by criticising 'political correctness', often behaving inappropriately or making inappropriate remarks but following these by a comment about political correctness. Language is often seen as the key issue in the debate about

political correctness, but the label has become a 'broad brush applied to any effort to reflect our changing society that goes against the status quo' (Doyle, 1998: 152). Political correctness or 'PC' is a 'dirty' phrase and is less a description than an insult, carrying with it accusations of having no sense of humour (Dunant, 1994). It has become widely used to ridicule an alternative point of view and Cameron describes its use in this sense as a 'smear-term' (1998: 158). It is also hailed as a movement that has the potential to curtail free speech, making any kind of useful debate around the pros and cons of it and what it stands for, almost impossible. Cameron (1994) believes that our capacity to reflect on language, and our tendency to make value judgements about it, leads to the phenomenon of 'verbal hygiene' - a set of practices whose aim is to 'clean up' language. As Dunant argues:

> What price racial and sexual equality if it can only be achieved by the imposition of another set of rules, in some cases amounting to what may be seen as a direct censorship of speech or behaviour? You don't achieve freedom by being frightened of what you can and can't say. That way lies intolerance, rather than the opposite. (1994: xii)

Nevertheless, as Cameron (1994) observes, there is nothing trivial about trying to institutionalise a norm of respect and one of the most important ways in which respect is made manifest publicly is through linguistic choices. Accordingly, 'freedom of speech' can only mean 'freedom within certain limits'. But those limits need to be set in such a way that dominant groups do not notice them. Equally, there is little point in outlawing some terms and replacing them with others if no other attempts are made to address underlying attitudes. It is perhaps only through these two means that Gherardi's (1995) optimism, that things labelled as 'politically correct' which in the past went unnoticed and will disappear because they have become incorporated into the ethics of society, will be rewarded.

Gender, agency and the pleasures of working in organisations

The literature about gender and organisations, including that specifically related to the police service, suggests men's conscious maltreatment of women. There is also a need, however, to focus on the common humanity which men and women share, which means insisting that men are not evil by nature, any more than women are. The crucial difference is that men have power in society and in the police service, and it is inevitable that any group in power will perpetuate their own interests, consciously or unconsciously (Borrowdale, 1993). Women are not always victims in this. Policewomen have the ability to express agency, to take control over their organisational lives. For example, the police women in Westmarland's research (2001) demonstrated agency by using their femininity to achieve control over their careers. Giddens (1991) suggests that agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently.

In the main, literature on gender and sexuality in organisations, either explicitly or implicitly suggests that women are the 'victims' of organisational dynamics. But the term 'victim' has negative connotations that are neither helpful nor realistic (Brackenridge, 2000). Rather, many women express agency, which allows them to impact on their situations and to have some control over their organisational lives. The concept of women 'adapting' to their organisational environment was explored by Kanter (1977), who found that some women used the same language, and developed similar interests to those of the men. Thus, it might be said that policewomen hold similar opinions to policemen. Indeed, Jones (1986) reported that women officers valued the same aspects of policing as the men they worked with. Other researchers make reference to the values of women officers converging with those of the dominant male occupational culture (Fielding and Fielding, 1992; Brewer, 1991). The emphasis on gender and sex within the male police culture inevitably impacts on women officers. This has led Martin (1980) to speculate that:

> ... as women become assimilated into the police world and adopt 'liberated' sexual attitudes, they will adopt patterns of sexual behaviour similar to those of men. (1980: 209)

Sexualised behaviour in organisations is not always about gender and power; it is also about pleasure and gratification (Witz and Savage, 1992). Brackenridge (2000) believes there is a need to acknowledge the place of desire in non-exploitative sexual relations. Some forms of sexual intimacy may be acceptable if they are not extreme, have no adverse effects on productivity and are mutual (Powell, 1988). Much of the flirting, touching and joking that goes on between people in organisations is not necessarily sexual harassment because it is mutual (Borrowdale, 1993) and part of the pleasure of sexual encounters is having personal desirability reinforced. Feminists' focus on the coercive elements of sexuality has obscured an acknowledgement that some women also get pleasure out of their interactions with male colleagues (Adkins, 1992). As Gherardi comments:

> I feel uneasy when I read articles by colleagues who seek to show 'the ugly face of organizations', because although in many respects the destructiveness of the organization is its dominant characteristic, in several others organizations are places in which people undergo significant life-experiences: they feel joy, exaltation, enjoyment, play, friendship, and so on. (1995: 158)

Summary

The main focus of this chapter has been the gendered behaviours associated with male-dominated organisations. Specifically, the police service is defined as a masculine, heterosexual organisation. Thus, the problems faced by women entering the service derive from two main sources: organisational factors such as power and numbers, and culturally established sex norms and behaviour patterns.

The powerful delusion that policing is always a dangerous and unpredictable occupation is a denial of the reality, but the practical importance of this is highlighted through the work of Muir (1977). Nonetheless, feminist researchers contend that significant energy is put in to maintaining and reinforcing this myth by (male) officers, because the alternative poses a threat to male identity (Jones, 1986). Therefore, whilst gendered (male controlling) behaviour defines the daily experiences of all members of the organisation, such behaviours are part of a wider patriarchal agenda. In spite of this, it is important to recognise that women and other minority groups are not always victims of the dynamics, and neither is working in an organisation always a negative experience. Indeed, women often demonstrate agency to ensure that, for the most part, their experiences within an organisation are positive.

The important question must therefore be whether the masculinity of the culture, characterised by its gendered power and controlling dynamics, spills over into how officers deal with incidents of domestic violence, itself an issue of gendered power relations. This is explored in Chapter 4 and in the concluding chapter (Chapter 10).

Chapter 3: The Socialisation of Police Officers

Introduction

Work is a set of social relationships and, as it takes up a large proportion of people's lives, it follows that it is of major importance in terms of understanding behaviour. It is useful to consider organisations as social systems that have a hierarchy of status and roles, a culture of myths and values and an established set of expected behaviours (Maghan, 1988). From this perspective, work roles are both social roles and a source of personal identity (Pavalko, 1971). The police service is an organisation with an ethos based on discipline and conformity at the individual and group level. Therefore, particular emphasis is placed on the socialisation of new recruits (Hvingtoft-Foster, 1993). All new police officers have to undergo a two-year probationary period, during which time they receive training and mentoring and have the opportunity to perform patrol independently. During this time they must become proficient in a large and complex body of knowledge (law and procedures), and adopt and internalise a range of organisational values.

Within the literature about the police service there are two contending hypotheses about the existence of a 'police personality'. The first, which might be labelled the 'personality explanation', argues that the personality traits of individual officers are different from the rest of society prior to them entering the occupation (Bennett, 1984). The second hypothesis is that attitudinal and value differences between police officers and other members of society arise as a result of the unique demands of the occupation and that, on entry, police recruits have broadly the same range of values and attitudes as the general population. The latter view, named the 'socialisation explanation', is more persuasive. Researchers have tended to begin with the assumption that police officers are 'very unusual people' but, overwhelming evidence now suggests that police officers are ordinary people (Maghan, 1988) and, however loosely the term 'police personality' is defined, little evidence has been found to support this. Instead, many authors agree that police officers have certain personality traits in more abundance than the rest of the population (see Lefkowitz, 1971 for a review of the work of Black, 1968; and Wilson, 1968) but, like Butler (1979), they argue that the expression of particular values and behaviours arises from occupational socialisation.

This chapter explores and discusses the literature about the socialisation of police officers. First, the definitions of occupational, organisational and professional socialisation are considered. This leads to a consideration of the relevance of symbolic interactionism as a framework for understanding the three stages of occupational socialisation: anticipatory, formal and informal. What is clear in this chapter is the reliance of previous police socialisation research on quantitative approaches to explore these three stages. The exception is the work of Fielding (1988b), whose research had a greater qualitative

emphasis and brought into question the value of quantitative studies of police attitudinal change. For this reason, the work of Fielding is drawn upon extensively here.

Definitions

Before reviewing the literature, the definitions of professional, occupational and organisational socialisation need to be considered. Several authors of the sociology of occupations and professions literature make reference to the occupation-profession continuum (for a good example see Pavalko, 1971). Whilst a debate about where the police service sits on this continuum is not the purpose of this chapter, there are elements of the continuum that are useful to identify the relative importance of the different literatures.

According to Pavalko (1971) professions are characterised by the extent to which they: are associated with theory or intellectual technique; have relevance to basic social values; have an extensive training period; have a high degree of altruism, autonomy, and sense of commitment; have a strong sense of community; and have a developed code of ethics. Furthermore, 'professionals' undergo a process of socialisation *prior to* entering an organisation. For example, doctors at medical school and solicitors at law school have lengthy training periods during which time they are introduced to a professional culture. This experience is termed 'professional socialisation'. But when these individuals begin working within a medical or legal organisation proper, they may have to renegotiate their norms and roles in order to be accepted. At this time, professional culture and organisational culture may conflict, and so to survive, the individual needs to go through a second process, this time of 'organisational socialisation'. Whilst this is paralleled to a degree in the police service, the training period is not lengthy in comparison to such traditional professions. There is a much greater emphasis on learning through experience and less on theory and / or intellectual technique. For this reason, *professional socialisation* is not explored in detail in this chapter.

Less clear is the distinction between the occupational and organisational socialisation literature. Indeed, these terms are used interchangeably. Therefore, to avoid confusion, *occupational socialisation* will be referred to throughout this chapter. Coffey et al. (1994) describe the study of occupational socialisation as being about how knowledge and culture are transmitted to new recruits in an occupational setting. Thus, the study of occupational socialisation involves considering the learning of both roles and norms as a routine aspect of preparing for and being part of an occupation. This is a clear and useful definition. van Maanen (1977) describes occupational socialisation as a process by which an individual learns firstly, the appropriate values, norms and required behaviour to be accepted within an organisation, secondly, to be accepted within an organisation having previously been an outsider, and thirdly, to be accepted as an insider in the organisation. The difference between the latter two needs exploring. Perhaps he is suggesting that there is a need to be

accepted by an organisation before being trusted as an 'insider' to uphold the organisation's norms and values against threats from outsiders? Within organisations such as the police service, which are often considered to be a way of life and not just an occupation, this is an important phase to consider. Thus, together, the definitions of Coffey et al. and van Maanen provide a comprehensive and valuable explanation of occupational socialisation.

Socialisation and symbolic interactionism

The concept of socialisation is central to the field of sociology. Definitions of socialisation differ in the extent to which the individual and social contexts are emphasised but typically, sociologists focus upon social contexts, the content of socialisation and the nature of the processes at work (Hewitt, 2000). Most *adult* socialisation takes place in an organisational setting. On entering, individuals may hold values and attitudes that conflict with those of an organisation, so socialisation is essential to ensure the functioning of an organisation (Little, 1990). Through socialisation processes, individuals take on the characteristic values, beliefs, assumptions of their social environments and learn what is and is not an appropriate way of behaving. Accordingly, the socialisation of adults not only involves new learning but also requires old norms and roles to be relinquished. Ardts et al. (2001) summarise socialisation within organisations in the following way:

> The newcomer gains knowledge about the structure, goals, history, traditions, rituals, myths, language and politics of the organisation; the group or work unit, such as, the personalities, interests, attitudes and behaviours, and the way to deal with colleagues, superiors and subordinates; the way in which the tasks and functions have to be fulfilled, the required knowledge and skills, priorities, the use of resources, and finally personal change relating to identity, self-image and motivation. (2001: 159-160)

Pavalko (1971) suggests that individuals 'allow' themselves to be socialised. This implies that the individual exerts some control (or agency) over whether and how they become socialised, but it might be argued that the degree of control retained by the individual is dependent upon the strength of the occupational culture. van Maanen (1975: 215) argues that 'the police culture can be viewed as moulding the attitudes – with numbing regularity – of virtually all who enter'. In contrast, whilst Fielding (1988a) acknowledges that police culture is undoubtedly powerful and encourages conformity, he also suggests that, because individuals have different backgrounds and divergent experiences prior to joining the occupation, different elements of the culture may be salient to different individuals. In other words, although socialisation and conformity to the values of the organisation are necessary to its functioning, individuals do not experience and take on the culture like robots.

Bennett (1984) maintains that socialisation is not only beneficial to the organisation but also to those new to the organisation, particularly in terms of meeting the needs of individuals to feel group cohesion. Although it is usually a process that is unconscious and an unintended result of human interaction, it is a process in which individuals in an organisation negotiate

with one another to learn and ultimately to demonstrate what is and is not acceptable. The theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism is a useful tool with which to understand the concept of socialisation as it emphasises human behaviour as a product of the ways by which individuals take account of the expectations of others in their social environment (Pavalko, 1971). Symbolic interactionism seeks to explain action and interaction as the outcome of the meanings that we, as actors, attach to things and social action, including ourselves (Jary and Jary, 1995). As human beings we learn constantly about, and adapt to, our environments. Just as Fielding (1988a) suggests that individuals do not take on culture like robots, symbolic interactionists describes socialisation as the dynamic inter-play of self and experiences, viewing the self as a social force in its own right:

> Socialization endows the individual with the capacity to cooperate in social acts with others, but it does not create an automaton who unfailingly reproduces the meanings and actions he or she has been taught... To have a self, therefore, is not merely to be a thoroughly programmed agent of society, but also, just as importantly, to be one who chooses, who decides, who exerts control over his or her own conduct and that of others. (Hewitt, 2000: 261)

The basic assumption of symbolic interactionism is that the individual takes the role of the other, that is, the individual is able to assess how their behaviour affects and is perceived by others (Mead, 1967). The symbolic interactionist perspective has its roots in pragmatism. For pragmatists, knowing and acting are inter-linked as people probe and test their environment and make adjustments to their surroundings (Hewitt, 2000). The emphasis is on the importance of communication as the mechanism by which individuals receive and internalise the expectations of others, which leads to a continual modification of behaviour and the development of self-concepts (Pavalko, 1971). The framework of symbolic interactionism, therefore, is useful for considering how police officers experience being socialised into their role and into the police organisation. In his influential work, Sterling (1972) concluded that:

> ... if we view the on-the-job conduct of officers as being directed wholly by the formal do's and don't's related to the job, then we are accepting a view of behaviour which is both mechanistic and simplistic. Realistically, the rules and regulations of a department and the orders of supervisors are not the only determinants of the way in which the man does his job; many other factors influence job performance. Role theory stresses the more conscious aspects of human behaviour. It assumes that job performance is affected considerably by the process in which a person shapes and controls his role behavior through the influence of the behavioral expectations of others with whom he interacts. (1972: 105)

More recently, Hoyle (1998) drew from the interactionist framework in her work on police officers' response to domestic violence in Thames Valley Police:

> Police officers who find themselves as actors in complex domestic situations must try to decipher what has happened and what response the various actors expect, or indeed will accept, from them. In order to do this they do not blindly follow the criminal

law or force policy, but, rather, interpret the information provided for them and try to make sense of it. (1998: 18)

In their comments, Sterling and Hoyle are rejecting functionalist assumptions, which emphasise the power of formal rules and procedures (Colomy, 1990). Instead, they note the importance of taking negotiated meanings into account. The informal phase of socialisation is discussed later in this chapter, where attention is paid to the fact that recruits are instructed how to 'bend' the rules, break the rules and avoid getting involved in some types of work. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the challenge for officers is how they use this information in relation to their view of the self, considering issues such as integrity and honesty. It is such questions that symbolic interactionists aim to answer. As symbolic interactionist studies generally use participant observation they provide a rich platform on which to study socialisation. However, while there are several studies of police socialisation based on participant observation (Little, 1990; Fielding, 1988a), most of the research about police socialisation is based on quantitative research. Typically, such research has considered changes in officers' role concepts over a period of time (for example, see Butler, 1979) and does not make any reference to symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework, other than through references to role theory and reference groups.

The police service and processes of socialisation

Much of the research about police occupational socialisation has been focussed on the three different stages: anticipatory socialisation, the formal encounter, and the informal acquisition stages (Bennett, 1984; Maghan, 1988; Ardts et al., 2001). But, in practice, socialisation is a mechanism that exerts continuous control over the behaviour of individuals rather than being three discrete processes. Here again, Fielding's work (1988) is useful. He argues that the socialisation process is not linear but that, historically, there has been a tendency to assume that it develops in a linear fashion: first, the recruits are exposed to the formal influences and persuaded by them, that is, they learn about the structural systems, procedures and rules. Later, they are exposed to informal influences and learn to be sceptical about the organisation, that is, the cultural systems, its senior officers, and the 'official line' (Fielding, 1988a). Furthermore, he argues that any study of socialisation should include a recruit's attempts to make sense of her/his experiences. In other words, any model of socialisation that does not take account of these two points limits itself in its scope. Nevertheless, for ease of distinguishing between the literature, Fielding himself used the three stages of socialisation. As alluded to in the introduction to this chapter, the same practice is followed here.

Anticipatory Socialisation

So far reference has been made to the socialisation that individuals undergo prior to joining an organisation. Whilst this thesis focuses on police officers from the point at which they join the organisation until they have completed three years service, it is useful to review briefly the literature about anticipatory socialisation, not least because it looks at how individuals

joining an organisation often expect to have to undergo some form of socialisation. Furthermore, some of the valuable qualitative police socialisation research conducted in the United States refers to the training that recruits receive in the Police Academy (the equivalent of Regional Training Centres) as anticipatory socialisation (for example, see Little, 1990).

As already discussed, the three socialisation phases do not have beginnings and ends, but, rather, socialisation forces continue to exert control and shape throughout a person's life. Individuals have a tendency to imagine and anticipate what it will be like to be a member of a particular group and to undertake a particular role. Anticipatory socialisation therefore involves an individual beginning to identify with a group to which they do not yet belong (Little, 1990). It is a process of acquiring attitudes, expectations and perceptions associated with a role, before ever assuming that role (Maghan, 1998) and begins before the entry of an individual into an organisation. Individuals become socialised based on their assumptions about a group or a role and, therefore, do not have to be a member of a particular group or role for the socialisation process to begin.

The expectations and assumptions often derive from many sources. Bennett (1984) puts these into two categories. The first category consists of groups which transmit impressions of the occupation, but are not directly associated with the police themselves. This includes the media, and friends and family who hold beliefs about the police role. The second category includes actual police-related groups, such as friends and family who are members of the police service. Fielding (1988a) and van Maanen (1974) report that the extent of police-relevant experience, or police acquaintances, is high amongst police recruits. Whilst Bennett does not refer to personal encounters with the police within either category, it might be assumed that such experiences are also an influence. Through these sources potential police officers gain a portrayal of the police organisation and culture, the type of work undertaken by officers, future role expectations and status. The time when a person makes their occupational choice marks the beginning of occupational socialisation: it is at this time that conceptions and perceptions begin to modify in anticipation of actual entry into the occupation. The importance of anticipatory socialisation in terms of helping new recruits to adjust to the organisation is highlighted by Maghan:

> If individuals readily, realistically and accurately acquire the role-related attitudes, expectations and perceptions, their transitions to the new role will be eased. On the other hand, if individuals' perceptions and anticipatory expectations are inaccurate or differ significantly from the accepted, authoritatively outlined role of a police officer, they are likely to encounter great difficulty in adjusting to the new position. (1998: 28)

A parallel can be drawn with Goffman's description of total institutions (1961). He suggests that when an individual becomes a member of an institution there is a time when their behaviour is moulded to the expectations of the staff. Where anticipatory socialisation has

occurred, individuals are more easily manipulated by the staff. He describes this process eloquently:

> ... the recruit has already partially withdrawn from his home world; what is cleanly severed by the institution is something that had already started to decay. (1961: 25)

In Sterling's study of police officers, the majority of the officers had considered joining the police service within the previous four years. This means that considerable time had been spent gathering a host of perceptions, some realistic, others not. The longer a person considers joining an occupation, the greater the opportunity to imagine what work in that occupation will be like. But the point at which they enter the occupation as a recruit reflects the end of their anticipatory socialisation, and a more intellectualised and conscious view of the role emerges.

Fielding (1988a) and White (1989) found that recruits had a highly idealistic motivation and view of the police occupation as a form of social service. Fielding's analysis of police applications highlighted the importance that they attached to joining an occupation in which they could work with and help people. Interestingly, this conflicts with the image portrayed by the police service and the media about the 'violent' nature of police work as already discussed in Chapter 2. As van Maanen (1974) reported, there is an irony in policing that recruits are attracted to the police service by the unrealistic expectation that it would be exciting and dramatic. Arguably questions need to be asked about the real motivations which individuals have to join the police service, and the extent to which they believe it is not socially desirable to express interest in dealing with potentially dangerous, exciting and violent situations. Carefully formulated research could be utilised to expose motivations beyond that which are seen as socially desirable.

Such a question leads us on to consider the importance of organisations' recruitment and selection procedures. In Gloucestershire, for example, the recruitment process involves the use of exercises which are scored against competency-based criteria and, by using these criteria, those responsible for recruitment 'weed out' the people who do not 'fit the mould'. The competencies used are: communication; interpersonal skills; problem-solving and planning; drive and determination; flexibility and creativity; ability to cope with pressure; and ability to represent the organisation. Each of these competencies has sub-headings, for example: 'readiness to accept responsibility'; 'thinks before speaking'; 'sound judgement and reasoning'; and 'thinks about broader consequences of actions'. Whilst this is the framework which is used, it is existing organisational members who actually assess applicants' abilities during a group discussion, a presentation and a written problem-solving exercise. Therefore, the views of the assessors are likely to be influenced by personal experiences of being part of the organisation and, in the case of police officers, their own operational experiences. Inevitably, 'gut feeling' about an applicant's ability to make a good police officer is used

(comment made by Recruitment Inspector during conversation on 8th March 2003). As Pavalko states:

> While the function of occupational socialisation is to change persons – to instil in them skills, knowledge, attitudes, values peculiar to their future occupation and work group – each occupation may have a readily distinguishable if not entirely unique idea of what its future members ought to be moving toward and what the end product of the training process ought to look, think, and feel like. (1971: 93)

Formal socialisation

Reference was made earlier to three stages of socialisation: anticipatory; formal; and informal. Some organisations provide no formal training: instead, socialisation is expected to occur through the informal, 'on-the-job' experiences. This is not the case in the police service. Rather, formal and informal socialisation occur, primarily through training at a Regional Training Centre (RTC) and the 'on the job' training that officers receive in the field after attending the RTC. Fielding (1988a) suggests that formal socialisation concerns the efforts of an organisation to transform its new members into novices. The fact that the formal training in the police service takes place in a residential setting suggests that one of the unwritten aims of this period is to socialise recruits by saturating them in a police environment and culture. As Sterling (1972) argues, the formal training programme is intended to bring about various changes. Fundamentally, the RTC is a change-inducing institution.

There is a parallel between police training schools and the 'total institutions' studied by Goffman (1961) where recruits are cut off from society for a length of time, and together lead a highly structured and regulated life. Goffman characterises 'total institutions' as restricting freedom of movement and as confining people to a given space. Whilst this is too restrictive to translate literally into the police environment, at training school officers do experience social isolation and depersonalisation by the organisation. Recruits are provided with a uniform and a 'collar number' is assigned to each individual. Drill, although performed less during contemporary probationer training than in the past, stands for obedience, uniformity, submission and regimentation (Fielding, 1988a). All are intended to diminish the self, as are: the verbal deference instilled in the recruits at training school; the need for individuals to curtail their behaviour to ensure that their actions are confined within the acceptable norms of the organisation; shift-work which often serves as a barrier to socialising; and the new barriers faced by recruits when members of society learn of their occupation. Goffman describes this process as one of 'mortification'.

Fielding (1988a) describes the formal socialisation phase in a similar way – as a process through which a 'batch' of recruits undergoes a process of 'stripping away the old' and developing a new status. Identification and competition with other recruits is forced when recruits are put through a series of difficult, sometimes unpleasant tasks. The similarity with

Goffman's work in asylums lies in the fact that such processes have a lasting influence and effect on an individual's relationship with society. Ardts et al. (2001) consider the effectiveness of different socialisation tactics used by organisations to influence the type of person who emerges. They indicate that:

> When one wants conformist newcomers that have little intention to leave the company, that are loyal and emotionally committed to the organisation, then one should deploy institutionalised tactics ... will result in an introduction program that is aimed at a group of newcomers ... who are separated from regular organisation members ... and are passed through the program together. (2001: 163)

According to the symbolic interactionist framework, individuals do not pass through the training process like robots. Rather, individuals have the ability to reflect on their own experience and can evaluate their experiences according to what they believe to be relevant. Recruits can choose to take on parts of the culture and reject other parts. It is in this way that Fielding's work (1988a) is crucial in drawing attention to the occupational culture as something which is *not* all consuming. Fielding (1988b) found that although attitudinal shifts amongst probationers appear to take place over a period of months, there are still substantial variations in their views, even at the end of the probationary period. This raises questions about the extent to which a recruit's desire to become a police officer, together with the strength of the police culture, combine to produce a 'knowing' conformity. In other words, conformity is achieved through conscious consent as opposed to force or hegemony.

In the police service, arguably the greatest amount of cognitive learning occurs within the formal probationer training programme and, during this stage learning goals are communicated very clearly to the officers. Through training, knowledge about all kinds of organisational subjects can be imparted, and through this, alignment between individuals and the organisational culture is refined (Ardts et al., 2001). This stage involves the full immersion of the recruit into the organisation, but in a trainee capacity. Bennett (1984), in his quantitative study over a seven month period, found that there was no link between pre-employment conceptions of the occupation (anticipatory socialisation) and an individual's ability to become immersed in the occupation. This led him to conclude that either the messages received by recruits prior to joining were misleading, or that the messages lost relevance and significance when the recruit was faced with the demands of the organisation and the role.

Police training is not only classroom-based but also involves role-play exercises. Little (1990) discussed exercises as 'academic' and 'practical', where the former were practice sessions in which intellectual skills were shaped, for example, interviewing techniques and report writing, and the latter were those which were more physical, such as self-defence tactics and vehicle stops. He found that the practical exercises were the more exciting and more popular amongst the students, and ultimately moulded specific attitudes and

behaviours. Although practical exercises should represent what officers are likely to be confronted with, Fielding (1988a) found that training staff would often exaggerate situations to represent the 'worst case scenario' to make the situations more exciting than officers would generally find. Nevertheless, training staff are realistic about the fact that they are only teaching some of the law and regulations that officers will be required to know during encounters with the public. However, having been through the process themselves, they also know that there are some situations where no regulations exist. In this sense, training can never cover every eventuality:

> Teachers are taught how to educate, clerics how to minister to spiritual needs, social workers how to assist troubled people. All of them are expected to use the learned principles, to exercise judgement in putting them to use, and to gain further skills through practice. Police officers, however, are trained to follow instructions and this is done even though it is known that they will be required to do things for which no instructions exist. (Bittner, 1983: 6)

It is interesting that recruits themselves sense that much of the information they absorb is surplus knowledge (Maghan, 1988). It is unlikely that they will ever need to recite the law verbatim, other than in training school, yet emphasis is placed upon learning by memory and being able to pass tests successfully. The distinction between this approach and that of other professions outlined in Bittner's comment is autonomy. In other words, the 'hallmark' of professionals is to exercise principled autonomous judgement where no two situations are the same. The theory of professions identifies theoretical knowledge as a requirement for autonomous decision-making. Thus, the contradiction within police training is the use of rule bound rote learning rather than deductive reasoning, despite the considerable need and freedom to exercise autonomous judgement.

As established, practising members of the organisation, the training staff provide the recruits with a reference group which demonstrates examples of normative ways of behaving as a comparator against which recruits can evaluate their own progress (Shibutani, 1962) and as encouragement (Bennett, 1984). Ardts et al. (2001) describe different types of socialisation behaviour, including: seeking information and feedback; openly asking questions; approaching people as information sources; testing borders; reading written materials; and creating situations where others have to respond with the aim of observing the reaction. Using symbolic interactionist theory, the training staff, or in other words the reference group, are the 'others' or the 'generalised other': they provide the imagined perspective of the community of police officers (Hewitt, 2000). Bennett (1984) hypothesised that affiliation with and influence of the reference group would increase over time. However, his findings proved this only to a certain point: the values of recruits became increasingly similar to those of the training staff reference group during training school, but decreased in similarity when officers began to go out on patrol. In the context of these findings, interactionist perspectives are

more persuasive than the functionalist perspectives; what happens after training – 'on the job' – is a more powerful influence than formal training.

Despite the values of recruits becoming more like those of the training staff during this period, the *aspirations* of few recruits are affected by this reference group (Sterling, 1972). Recruits tend to have aspirations towards an investigative role. This is contradictory to the social service preference many referred to in their applications in Fielding's study (1988a). Perhaps, as was hypothesised earlier in the chapter, applicants refer to the social service element of policing on the basis that is a more socially desirable emphasis for their application. But Little (1990) found that the recruits' socialisation experience was influenced by the anecdotes relayed to them from instructors. These anecdotes were related to the types of incidents that police officers deal with and the types of people with whom they come into contact. The anecdotes were not based on the training environment so it seems that the training staff do not encourage recruits to aspire to become trainers. Instead, they reinforce the perceptions of policing initially developed during the anticipatory socialisation phase, that is the role of police officers dealing with exciting and often dangerous work. In doing so, the occupational culture is transmitted informally. In fact, in Little's study, recruits were keen to develop the perception they had developed during their anticipatory phase:

> Recruits seemed hungry for them [anecdotes] and regarded the best story tellers as valuable sources of information about 'real' police work and held these individuals in relatively high esteem. (1990: 165)

Little (1990) also found that recruits 'tested out' their own anecdotes on the training staff, seeking verification that they were entering the occupation they thought they were entering:

> Statements, stories and comments about police work which were verified by instructors seemed to reinforce and solidify students' specific opinions about the nature of the job. (1990: 166)

Recruits are one another's peer group during the formal training and, inevitably, also tell anecdotes to each other. Little (1990) found these stories to be about police work and the worst type of people encountered in police work. These are often perceptions and stories based on the information gathered about policing during the anticipatory socialisation phase and, again, serve to reinforce the image of the police service that the recruits wish to believe. What the recruits appear to be doing is engaging in mutual myth-making and, perhaps inadvertently, reinforcing and recycling police 'culture'.

Little (1990) also found that the formal objectives and associated learning were one of the most important ingredients of the recruits' socialisation experience but that fear often motivated learning. Instructors intensified fear, particularly in relation to the exams that had to be passed. But the threats are not just about learning: during the formal training period

the recruit is tasked with learning appropriate roles, values and attitudes and, in order to achieve this, turns to the occupational reference group – the more experienced officers and training staff (Bennett, 1984). Sterling (1972) found that strict conformity to rules was commonly expressed by the trainers in threatening terms. But what threatens conformity? The 'real' threat is from the recruits who, if they fail to conform to the discipline that characterises the service, become an 'unknown quantity' (Butler, 1979: 7) and are seen as a potential danger to their peers. This 'threat' is controlled by exercising sanctions against recruits to modify their behaviour. Cain (1973) found that recruits who resisted socialisation were negatively sanctioned. Therefore, in the police service, socialisation is a requirement within the time-frame set by the organisation. Control of this is exercised through the ability of the training staff to withhold from the recruit acceptance from organisational membership (Harris, 1973) and to support their alienation from the social element of the formal training period. Butler (1979) uses the word 'survive' to describe the importance of conforming:

> To survive as a police officer, an individual must radically alter his outlook on the world, and reinforce his personality with a strong sense of personal worth. (1979: 38)

It has already been noted that academic training is not perceived by police recruits to be of much value because policing is about 'commonsense'. Consequently, much of the training does not have a theoretical underpinning. A deviation from this was seen in 1971 when a social studies input to recruit training was authorised by the Metropolitan Police Service training school. For this, recruits received social studies-based training during the first two weeks of their course in an uninterrupted block of study period. The content of the input was drawn primarily from sociology and social psychology, and social and public administration. This training underwent many changes in format and title over the following years, with much of the impetus for change arising from the recommendations made by Lord Scarman after the Brixton (London), St. Paul's (Bristol) and Toxteth (Liverpool) riots in the 1980s.

It is useful to note that training for dealing with domestic violence incidents was not addressed separately during these reviews of training. Rather, it was subsumed within the wider remit of general training or probationer training. For example, in 1971 a Home Office Working Party on Probationer Training included an observation that training for dealing with domestic disputes (and not specifically domestic violence) was not included within the probationer training curriculum, despite the fact that 'it [domestic disputes] proved a major difficulty to constables once out on the beat' (1971: 7). Indeed, probationer constables interviewed stated that they felt ill-prepared to give advice when confronted with 'marital problems'. The recommendation of the Working Party was that two 'periods', out of 333, should be allocated to the subject of domestic disputes and that it was to be included in the case studies presented during social skills training. The objective of this training was deemed to be that 'the constable should be able to restore an atmosphere of calm, if possible without recourse to the Law' (1971: 19). In 1980, Dobash and Dobash observed

that very little time was devoted to domestic violence training in the police service and that, even when it was addressed, new recruits were taught, directly and indirectly, that a man who assaults his wife is not committing a real crime unless he exceeds certain limits. In 1988, Southgate et al. researched and wrote about police training for handling domestic disputes. However, the term 'disputes' was used to encompass anything which involved a dispute in a domestic setting, whether or not violence was used. The purpose of the study was to consider some of the problems faced by officers responding to domestic disputes and to suggest ways in which trainers might want to think about them. They considered the issues under four headings: the safety and self-preservation of the officer; legal and procedural issues; organisational factors; and police-public relations.

None of these training elements included any reference to the use of social theory in understanding the context in which domestic violence occurs. Instead, emphasis was placed on the needs of the officers and not those of the victim. For example, a recognition that officers needed to learn skills to enable them to effectively negotiate disputes (in terms of both the legal and human aspects) reflected concerns for the self-preservation of the officers rather than the needs of victims. Recommendations also pandered to the needs of the occupational culture. For example, one way of making officers take the issue of domestic violence more seriously was to emphasise the crime control nature of dealing with the incident. In other words, even if there was no physical assault, an officer was told to be aware of the benefits of dealing with the incident from a future crime prevention perspective.

One useful recommendation made by Southgate et al. was that the police service should consider what the purpose of training should be: should it be specialist and train officers to give effective counselling and think about longer term solutions? Or should it be generalist and require officers to concentrate on the legal, short-term legal and practical solutions? Here, again, the authors missed the point about the relevance of theory to support either types of training. Indeed, the skills required to police domestic disputes were perceived by them to be the same as those required to deal with any type of incident.

Informal socialisation

Probationers play two specific roles during the training period: the role of the trainee and the role of the apprentice officer. These are two different roles requiring different behaviour, attributes and perceptions:

> Each has different role reciprocals and each has different expectations. One role is passive, the other active. One involves primarily thinking; the other requires doing. The orientation of one is idealistic; the other is realistic. (Sterling, 1972: 18)

Training staff are concerned with the elements of socialisation which they can affect: the informal elements are largely outside their control (Fielding, 1988a). During the formal

training period, training staff and fellow new recruits have served as reference groups for recruits. This changes when recruits are separated and dispersed throughout the organisation on completion of training school. Informal socialisation involves the learning of appropriate behaviour, values and attitudes to function successfully within the working environment of the occupation (Bennett, 1984). However, while there is no doubt that probationers learn a great deal of technical and legal knowledge, there is significant empirical evidence to suggest that the way in which officers apply their skills after training school does not reflect the standards imparted to them by the training staff (Maghan, 1988). Potentially, there could be several reasons for this but, according to White (1989), there has been a realisation that the traditional, military-style model for training police is not the most appropriate to equip and prepare officers for a role in which they must use their discretion when applying their powers. For example, Reiser (1986) suggested that military-style training results in police officers with authoritarian attitudes, instead of officers who are capable of crisis intervention and able to keep the peace with the support of the community. Nonetheless, these views appear to be held by academics, and not by those with responsibility for directing the police training programme.

In summary, where police training traditionally has attempted to produce uniform answers to complex and diverse questions which actually require thinking and problem-solving skills, it is of limited use as soon as a probationer is faced with his or her first policing situation involving real people. The phrase 'reality shock' is used throughout the police socialisation literature to describe this experience (see for example, Butler, 1979). There are advantages and disadvantages to having a formal training programme. On the one hand it is a safe learning environment where skills are often developed through role-play. On the other hand, formal training can be easily controlled and artificial, and therefore remote from the 'real' world (Hvingtoft-Foster, 1993). After his or her formal training, a police officer is out on the streets with the same duties and responsibilities as officers with more experience. There is nothing about their physical appearance which enables members of society to distinguish between experienced and inexperienced officers. The only difference is that, as soon as recruits have completed training school, they accompany a 'tutor' constable, a more experienced officer who has received training in the process of mentoring new recruits who have just completed their formal training period. The only influence that local training staff have over this period is in the training that they have provided to the 'tutors'. During this period the development of the recruit is the responsibility of the tutor, who will use their judgement to identify at which point the recruit begins to take increased responsibility. The only restriction is the ten-week time-scale in which tutor constables function.

The relationship a probationer has with her/his tutor is an important socialisation instrument. For new recruits there is much that is unknown about their future role and ability to perform the role, but training does not alleviate anxiety about this. Sterling (1972) found that only six

percent of his respondents indicated a belief that formal classroom training would provide them with the essentials of police work. Rather, the tendency was to believe that police work would be learned through direct experience. In fact, the first enforcement-encounter increases the salience that the established police, rather than the trainers, have for new officers (van Maanen, 1975). After experience in the field, officers in Sterling's study were more troubled about how they were going to learn the essentials of police work than they were immediately after their recruit training. What they experience is:

> ... the 'reality shock', the realisation that there is a difference between his expectations based on what the recruiting literature and the media say police work is about and what it is about in reality. (Butler, 1979: 2)

Here, Fielding (1988b) raises a thought-provoking question about the tensions between the emphasis placed on 'commonsense', and that placed on 'experience':

> The police culture is pragmatic and puts great emphasis on 'commonsense' and 'experience'. But police seem unaware that, logically, these two qualities contradict each other. If policing is 'all about commonsense', why do people have to experience police work before they can understand it? Police work is a great deal more than 'commonsense'. This, and the brevity of the period when formal training can have peak impact on probationers, bear implications which police trainers should take to heart. (1988b: 72)

Fielding (1998b) also discusses the movement from idealism to instrumentalism. Idealism refers to the philosophical underpinnings of the work, for example, notions of duty and service, and instrumentalism refers to an orientation towards pragmatic aspects such as pay and job security, and how best to get the job done. In Fielding's study, this shift was visible within one year of service. A study which resulted in similar findings had been conducted much earlier by Neiderhoffer (1967), and he argued that a discussion about the 'reality shock' experienced by police officers would not be complete without reference to police officers and cynicism, which is as much about their experience of the occupational culture and the devaluing of training as their experience of policing society. Neiderhoffer conducted one of the most influential studies of police cynicism. Using a questionnaire he found that the majority of recruits started their career without a trace of cynicism but, after a short time, they began to realise that the 'professional atmosphere' around them was a sham. This was reinforced by more experienced officers telling them that if they wanted to become good officers they would have to forget everything they had learned at training school. Further, their own experience led them to become cynical as, even though they entered the service with a strong sense of idealism, they inevitably encountered situations where failure and frustration overwhelmed them.

In the police service probationers spend ten weeks with a 'tutor constable' immediately after completing fifteen weeks training at a regional training school. The 'tutor constable' acts as a mentor and guide for the probationer during this time which, according to Fielding (1988a)

is the most critical stage of a recruit's career. With the emphasis on 'real policing' the tutor constable occupies an important role both in terms of teaching the recruit how to deal with incidents, and in providing an insight into the occupational culture and accepted practices of the profession. Interpretations of incidents, acceptable working practices, the importance of being able to justify actions and how to deviate from approved procedures (Fielding, 1988a) are all part of the 'unspoken' role of the tutor. Bittner observed that tutor constables and other more experienced officers are deemed to be competent and, as such, at times are 'expected to act contrary to formulated regulation on the basis of what is colloquially referred to as 'knowing better'. (1983: 3). Brown (1981) also found that the socialisation of new officers is shaped by more experienced officers. As Fielding indicates, the tutorship is a part of the socialisation process which is destined to succeed as, 'surrounded by those who are adept at handling matters, the recruit would have to be confident indeed, if not suicidal, to reject the model at hand' (1988a: 92).

However, some studies challenge the strength of this influence, at least in the longer term. Sterling (1972), for example, found that over time his recruits perceived experienced patrol officers as less informed and active than they did when they first entered their training; their colleagues began to be seen as less co-operative and strong than they had at the start of the training; the perceptions of police trainers as highly important, informed, co-operative, fair and good decreased over time; and police supervisors gradually were seen as less important after field experience. From this, it appears that the significance of groups of 'others' as reference groups, although important during the early socialisation experiences, reduces as recruits increase in confidence.

Nevertheless, during this initial period, informal socialisation also occurs through the folklore and 'war' stories told by experienced officers (Punch, 1979). Probationers learn about the accepted ways of dealing with practical situations by listening to tales of 'effective behaviour' (White, 1989). In fact, the recruits in White's study reported that occupational competence in colleagues is about being able to use interpersonal skills in a calm and confident manner, being able to minimise conflict and disorder, and being able to reduce distress without resorting to the use of law or force. Whilst organisational goals provide little guidance as to the day-to-day activity of an organisation's members, members agree on certain interpretations and exceptions to rules (Hewitt, 2000). Thus, one of the main roles of the tutor constable is to provide guidance and to be an example to officers in the use of discretion (see Stradling and Harper, 1988). In their work, Stradling and Harper found that inspectors and traffic officers ranked the tutor constable attachment as the period during which the skilful use of discretion is acquired. However, this raises questions about the abilities of tutor constables to impart this knowledge to recruits. The same authors reported that some of the descriptions of tutors, as recited by probationers, made 'horrific reading' (Stradling and Harper 1988: 200). Furthermore, corroborating the findings in White's study

(1989), they found that the description of discretion given to recruits by tutor constables was always about allowing someone to go without being arrested, rather than a description of discretion as a decision-making process.

The importance of the role of the tutor constable brings into question the training and selection of officers for this role. In Gloucestershire, at the time of the fieldwork for this study there had been a shortage of officers volunteering for the role of tutor constable. Consequently, officers were often allocated this role reluctantly, and some of them had scarcely completed their own two-year probationary period. During the fieldwork phase of the research, a new tutor constable course began with the aim of making the tutoring that recruits received more consistent and of a higher standard. However, little monitoring of the tutors took place in an operational setting and so management within the organisation could only influence this process to a limited extent. According to Ardts et al. (2001) in many organisations those involved in informal socialisation have not been selected or taught by the organisation how to guide newcomers. A somewhat ambiguous understanding of the meaning of discretion in all its forms, the short length of time in which tutor constables have to impart the knowledge, and the lack of any theoretical underpinning to the training means that probationers are entrusted with discretionary powers which they are rarely properly equipped to discharge. Discretion is routinely equated with commonsense and little else.

Formal feedback from the tutors regarding the functioning of recruits, given as a requirement of the Probationer Development Review, is also an important socialisation instrument and an indication of the success of socialisation processes. Ardts et al. (2001) indicate that the better someone does in their appraisal, the better socialised they have been. In the case of the police service, tutors – officers who have been socialised successfully and accepted within the organisation – are assessing recruits. It is likely, therefore, that they are judging the recruits against their own values, which are the values of established occupational members - the 'insiders' described by van Maanen (1977). Those recruits who have been socialised into accepting these values are likely to be rewarded.

Another important part of the socialisation process during this stage is the development of friendships. Occupational groups represent distinct sub-cultures with their own norms and values. Receiving approval from these groups is often used as a definitive measure of success of being 'socialised', particularly where there is a strong sense of community within an organisation (Pavalko, 1971). In 1983, Taylor concluded that the police sub-culture consisted of strong peer pressure and a high regard for what fellow officers think. According to Manning (1977) police work is team work and Maghan (1988) reinforces this by suggesting that the peer group is so strong within the police subculture that it often acts as a surrogate family. In fact, he suggests that metaphors such as 'the job' and 'the police family'

reflect 'a subcultural mystique and form a sort of rite of passage for successful survival in the occupation of policing' (1988: 56).

Within the police service emphasis is placed on solidarity, cohesiveness and mutual support (Manning, 1977) but, as already discussed, the perception of the police role as being dangerous is one of the main reasons for the need for this cohesiveness. Also, the fact that officers suffer hostility from the public means they are drawn together as a cohesive group and become dependent upon one another to help, deal with and cope with this hostility and the potential of violence associated with it:

> Set apart from the conventional world, the police officer experiences an exceptionally strong tendency to find a social identity within the occupational milieu. (Skolnick, 1966: 52)

Even when a recruit does not take this stance, relationships with their colleagues are crucial when they experience negative reactions from their friends outside the police service when they join. As Fielding (1988a) states, police officers virtually 'represent the state on the street corner' (1988a: 3) and so perceptions of them, and their own perceptions of themselves, are forced to adapt.

Summary

In summary, this chapter has explored both the nature and importance of police occupational socialisation. Attention has been drawn to the relevance of symbolic interactionism in understanding why new recruits do not take on the occupational sub-cultures like 'robots', as suggested by van Maanen (1975). Instead, the three stages of socialisation – anticipatory, formal and informal – are offered as an explanation for changes in individuals that are necessary to them becoming fully functioning and accepted members of the police service. No explicit reference is made to the importance of socialisation in the two year probationary training period. Yet, the structure and nature of the residential training (which is similar in nature to the 'total institutions' described by Goffman, 1961), and the emphasis placed upon assessments made by tutor constables, implies great importance. Fundamentally, socialisation processes result in officers who conform to the police sub-cultures, so there is a reproduction of like-minded people. In other words, 'if you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got'.

Chapter 4: Domestic Violence – Understanding the Police Response

Introduction

Domestic violence is a serious crime that causes health and social problems, and emotional and psychological damage. Yet, it is only within the past thirty years that it has emerged as an issue of public concern, and increasing demands have been made of the police service to protect victims of domestic violence (Walker and McNicol, 1994). The police service is the gatekeeper to the criminal justice system and provides a 24-hour service to individuals in distress. Thus, the failure of the police service to respond effectively can result in the death of women (Hanmer and Stanko, 1985).

This chapter will describe the development of the police response to domestic violence. This will include a discussion about the role of the state, second wave feminism in Britain and different feminist approaches to engaging with the state and raising awareness about domestic violence. Following this there will be a discussion, in chronological order, of the different examinations of the police response to domestic violence. Details of the relevant legislation are provided as contextual information. The response of different Governments and the Home Office will also be discussed to demonstrate the increasing attention being paid to domestic violence. The chapter also contains an examination of the cultural, structural and situational determinants of police use of discretion at the scene of domestic violence incidents.

The State

The state has broadly been defined in terms of its authority to make decisions about both general arrangements for society and its right to intervene in certain areas, and to develop mechanisms to ensure compliance and punish deviance (Hall, 1984). The state exercises its power by administering and policing society, but the state is not a body in itself. Rather, it is a collective of key agencies and office holders that have power over society, such as chief constables in the police service or directors of housing (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). Mann provides a similar and more comprehensive definition of the state as:

> ... a differentiated set of institutions and personnel, embodying centrality in the sense that political relations radiate to and from the centre to cover a territorial demarcated area over which it exercises some degree of authoritative, binding rule-making, backed up by some degree of organised physical force (1993: 55)

Marx considered the state to be an embodiment of class power (Sayer, 1989). For Weber, on the other hand, the state is centrally about power and domination but this can only be understood in terms of the means used by the state, one of which is the right to use physical force (Weber, 1970). In addition, Radford (1987) claims that the state defines what an 'acceptable' level of violence is. The role of the police is to enforce this. Garland (1990) argues that failure to punish undermines social morality, while punishment is a sign that the

authorities are in control. Therefore, provided they take victims of domestic violence seriously, police officers can demonstrate that violence will not be tolerated. Conversely, the failure to enforce the criminal law in respect of domestic violence sends a message to society that domestic violence is acceptable and tolerated (Cretney and Davis, 1995).

Walby (1986) argues that, through policies and the make-up of the key agencies, the state represents the interests of the white male dominant group over and above other interested groups. As such, Hanmer and Stanko contend that 'to accept as criminal behaviour the everyday occurrence of attack by known men is to threaten the hierarchical relationship between men' (1985: 368). Consequently, gender is an issue that has been neglected or marginalised. The resulting patriarchal policies and mechanisms that have arisen and been embedded into working practices provide a basis from which to consider how the state response to domestic violence, and the response of the criminal justice system in particular, have developed. In other words, the state's response to domestic violence is set and controlled by men, with male assumptions and beliefs forming the basis of policies. Indeed, radical feminists argue that the state is run by men, for men, with the primary aim of controlling, by violence or other means, women's reproductive power (Crowley and Hummelweit, 1992). Socialist feminists also consider that the state embodies repressive class and gender relations (Walby, 1990). In contrast, liberal feminists view the state as gender neutral and open to influence (Walby, 1990). Accordingly, Charles (2000) contends that central to the feminist social movements of the early 1970s was the argument that the state supported the social relations that oppress women, while at the same time it was the key to changing policies that could improve the societal situation of women.

Feminism and Society

Domestic violence can be found in almost every culture throughout history. According to Schneider (2000), in early Roman law a man could beat, divorce, or murder his wife for offences committed by her that affected his honour or property rights. In the fifteenth century, the Catholic Church endorsed the Rules of Marriage, which allowed a husband to beat his wife with a stick if she committed an offence. Similarly, until 1891 in English Common Law, husbands had legal rights over their wives in terms of their control over her property and right to chastise. The Law outlined the rights that a man had over his wife, which included the complete control over her daily affairs and property.

The issue of gender relationships and domestic violence came to the fore internationally with the growth of the women's movement in the 1960s (Pryke and Thomas, 1998). In this way, the women's movement put male violence against women on the political agenda: the personal became political. Tarrow (1994) defines social movements as 'collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with

elites, opponents and authorities' (1994: 3-4). The women's movement was a 'collective challenge' that developed from second wave feminism.

Feminist arguments about gender violence developed from insights about the way heterosexual intimate violence is part of a wider system of coercive control and subordination. They redefined male violence against women as something that benefited all men and of which all men were capable, rather than as an act of deviance by probably mentally unstable individuals (Charles, 2000). Furthermore, they argued that physical and sexual abuse of women stemmed from the notion that a woman was a man's property (Jones et al., 1994; Mullender, 1996; Pryke and Thomas, 1998). In other words, domestic violence was seen as a part of the larger problem of patriarchy:

> The battered women's movement defined battering within the larger framework of gender subordination. Domestic violence was linked to women's inferior position within the family, discrimination within the workplace, wage inequity, lack of educational opportunities, the absence of social supports for mothering, and the lack of child care (Schneider, 2000: 23)

The public / private divide

One of the most important challenges by the women's movement was to the dichotomy of the public and private spheres. Highlighting that the 'public' is what is owned or administered by the State and the 'private' is that which is left up to the patriarchal control in the family (Hall, 1984; Dobash and Dobash, 1992) was fundamental to the exposure of the State as supporting and developing policies that were oppressive to women. As Williams (1994) observes, before the women's movement there had been little debate about how policies supported and reinforced dependency and power between men and women, and the negative effects of these for women. Schneider articulates the consequences of the dichotomy:

> ... the concept of privacy has encouraged, reinforced, and supported violence against women ... Privacy says that what goes on in the violent relationship should not be the subject of state or community intervention. Privacy says that battering is an individual problem, not a systemic one. Privacy operates as a mask for inequality, protecting male violence against women (2000: 91)

Hanmer and Stanko (1985) maintain that the most dangerous place for a woman is in her own home. Yet, prior to the early 1970s when violence occurred against women in the home, couples generally were left alone to resolve their own problems (Hoyle, 1998), hence the accepted veracity of phrases like 'a man's home is his castle', 'a woman's place is in the home', and 'you shouldn't come between a man and his wife' (Pryke and Thomas, 1998). In effect, by labelling an incident as 'domestic', it is defined as 'one of those private and intractable problems which should not enter the public domain' (Kemp et al., 1992: 107). Women seeking help to deal with abusive partners were perceived to be asking for state intervention in their 'private' family life. For example, Elshtain (1981) is critical of feminists

for seeking changes that would increase state intervention in families, concerned that this would be interfering with the notion of the 'traditional' family and the public-private divide. The women's movement sought changes in legislation to ensure that this intervention took place. Feminists argued that 'privacy' was a myth and that sexual relations and marriage are regulated by the state, and that this regulation includes a tolerance of men's violence towards women (Charles, 2000). Thus, the movement created a new discourse that constructed a vision of intolerance, rather than tolerance of male violence. Fundamentally, men's violence and the notion of the public-private divide were exposed:

> The movement has given us an alternative conception of the private sphere of the family and hope for its transformation. The myth of family unity and bliss has been exploded as the movement made public the unacceptable face of the private by exposing to scrutiny the world of conflict, power and violence which can never again be ignored or denied (Dobash and Dobash, 1992: 212)

Hanmer and Stanko (1985) suggest that until the women's movement, the abuse of women was believed to be infrequent and, when it did occur, blame was levelled at women for provoking the violence; views that now fall within the individualistic theories about domestic violence. Individualistic explanations focus on the characteristics of perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. They attribute domestic violence to the biological make-up of the perpetrators (hormonal differences make men more aggressive than women, or the behaviour is somehow flawed, abnormal or exceptional). The violence is also attributed to women's inherent sexual and biological problems or masochism (Schneider, 2000; Pryke and Thomas, 1998). Mullender (1996) suggests that this view leads to comments such as: she deserves / provokes it; she needs / enjoys / is addicted to the violence; she learns to live with it; it can't be that bad or she would leave / not have the man back; and, in the case of women from minority ethnic groups, she puts up with it – it's part of her culture. For example, the views of Erin Pizzey, who set up the first women's refuge in Chiswick in 1972, caused a split between Chiswick Women's Aid and other Women's Aid because of her dominant personality and reductionist, sometimes racist, ideas about domestic violence. She focused on individual characteristics of women who she viewed as pathetic, immature, inadequate and provocative, claiming that battered women were violence prone and obtained sexual excitement from being abused (Pizzey and Shapiro, 1982). In her eyes, the problem was a psychiatric one (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

In contrast, social-structural theories of domestic violence tend to rest on the premise that social structures affect people and their behaviour. These theorists focus on sources of stress such as bad housing, poverty and lack of job opportunities, locating the reason for domestic violence in the fact that men are not, or are finding it difficult to fulfil the role expectations shaped by these factors (Smith, 1989). Family violence researchers perceive violence as being a consequence of family dysfunction and, as such, often approach domestic violence from a gender-neutral perspective (Dobash et al., 1992). Proponents of

this view believe that the problem is one of 'spouse abuse' and 'violent couples' and not one of violence by men against women. According to them, men are equally as likely to be victims of domestic violence as they are to be the aggressors. Statistically, this is (almost) borne out in the results of the 2001 British Crime Survey, with six percent of women and five percent of men having been subjected to domestic violence during the previous year. Yet what the statistic alone fails to illustrate is that women were the overwhelming majority of the most heavily abused group. Among people subject to four or more incidents of domestic violence from the perpetrator of the worst incident (since age 16), 89% were women (Walby and Allen, 2004). The positivist approach of family violence theorists means that they fail to recognise this (Dobash et al., 1992).

How feminists have engaged with the State

According to Dobash and Dobash (1992), the fact that men are now being confronted about their violence towards women is almost entirely as a result of the women's movement and its efforts to raise public awareness and organise a response based on wider feminist inspired change over the past 30 years. Similarly, Harwin and Barron (2000) argue that it is largely in response to direct feminist action and campaigning that changes have taken place in the practices of agencies and the legislation relevant to domestic violence. In particular, the women's movement paid considerable attention to the ways in which the police responded to domestic violence incidents, and made increasing demands that women victims of violence should have rights like any other victim of crime. The criminal justice system was seen to define domestic violence as one of the dysfunctional family and individual pathology, while the women's movement defined it as an issue of gendered power relations (Charles, 2000). Police reluctance to intervene in the 'private' arena was identified through their policies (or lack of them) and working practices – while public violence was policed proactively, private violence was responded to reactively (Edwards, 1989), if at all, despite the fact that the criminal law does not differentiate between violence taking place in or outside the home, or between an assault taking place between a partner or a stranger (Pahl, 1985).

Inevitably, the different perspectives within feminism have influenced how feminists have engaged with the state to tackle these issues. The fact that activists entered into negotiations with state agencies, made a fundamental statement – that the state could and should be part of the solution (Dobash and Dobash, 2000). The approach of radical feminists has been to engage with the state but remain outside state organisations. Their setting up of alternative provisions, such as rape crisis centres and women's refuges, was in recognition of the need to provide women with an escape route from violent men. In other words, these mechanisms are seen as a means of empowerment for women who may or may not engage with the state. Using the platform that these alternative provisions provide, radical feminists have engaged with the state to influence state policy. For example, the Reclaim the Night marches organised by radical feminists, were intended to raise awareness

about men's use of physical power over women and, in particular, called for increased policing of communities.

Such an approach was particularly problematic for black feminists who reject the notion of 'women's oppression' as a whole experience. They argue instead that class, race and sexuality are crucial to women's experiences. For them, increased policing of communities threatened to amplify the over-policing already experienced by many minority communities. They argued that increased policing risked placing them in triple jeopardy: women who are victims of domestic violence could also be the victims of over-policing (and often racist policing), and where a woman's immigration status is dependent upon her husband, she could also face deportation (Brandwein, 1999; Hague, 1999). Therefore, co-operation with the justice system may mean support for racist state oppression, leaving women to choose between continued violence or the risk of racist treatment to themselves and their partners by the police and the courts (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). As a consequence of the issues raised in the MacPherson Report (1999) about racism in the police service, the Government has taken the stance that such practices should be eradicated if police forces are to become more representative of their local communities.

This approach to tackling racism suggests that the state holds a view similar to that of socialist feminists; that change to policy and service delivery are likely to occur when groups are represented *within* state organisations. Similar to black feminists, socialist feminists recognise the importance of understanding differences between men and women's behaviour as socially constructed, and recognise that not all women share the same experience of oppression. Their approach to tackling the issue has been characterised by their attempts to work inside the local state and to persuade organisations to recognise women's welfare as being of importance (Williams, 1994). They recognise that the state cannot (or will not) accommodate women's interests if these conflict with the dominant representatives of patriarchy, and they therefore work within state organisations rather than outside them to ensure that their voices are heard. As Dobash and Dobash (1992) ask, how can state institutions that condone the interests of men be changed by women who are largely outside the power structure?

The response of the state and reviews of the police service response
According to Jones et al. (1994), examples of activists from the women's movement engaging with local police forces were limited. In their view, the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) were the key players in bringing about changes in policing policy and practice. However, an overview of the numerous investigations into the police service response to domestic violence suggests that these two organisations initially were resistant to change and that, even when change did occur, it did so slowly.

In 1975, the Home Office Select Committee on Violence in Marriage was the first major inquiry into an issue that had been raised by the women's movement. However, there was little recognition by the Select Committee of the need for change in police service policy and practice, and intervention was only perceived as necessary in cases of domestic violence where serious injury occurred. The Police Superintendents' Association and ACPO were unanimous in their belief that sufficient use was made of legal provisions for dealing with domestic violence. Instead, ACPO called for 'wife battering' to be kept in its 'correct' perspective. The maintenance of patriarchal practices, specifically the public/private divide, was deemed to be an important guiding principle in the police service response to domestic violence.

In June 1984, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) set up a multi-agency working party to examine their response to domestic violence (it reported in 1986). This was the first time the police service had chosen proactively to examine its working practices. Criticism was levelled at the police response in many regards, including: policy; training; officers' response; the value placed upon domestic violence in terms of promotion; and knowledge about alternative services available to women. As a result, new guidelines were issued to officers in the MPS, and a number of domestic violence units, usually staffed by women, were set up (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). As such, this Working Party has probably been the most influential in changes to domestic violence policy in policing.

At around the same time, 1984, a working group of the Women's National Commission was set up. This group reported in 1988 and criticisms of the police response included: abrogation of responsibility; their reluctance to intervene and, in particular, to remove the perpetrator; showing more concern for keeping the peace and reconciliation; a tendency to take the man's side as he is often calmer; refusing to attend incidents; and being unaware of injunctions. The reluctance of the police to intervene was explained as being as a result of: police resources being stretched in keeping the peace in public areas and in criminal investigations which are regarded as 'proper' police work; a perception that domestic violence is the responsibility of other agencies; and of police officers having experience of victims withdrawing their complaints. Fundamentally, patriarchal working practices were again exposed and formed the basis of the criticism.

In direct response to the recommendations made by the Women's National Commission, the Home Office became more active in its attempts to consider and improve the police response to domestic violence. Home Office Circular 60/1990 provided guidance for the police service, and according to Harwin and Barron, this was the 'first major breakthrough' (2000: 205) in changing the police response. In particular, it contained a recommendation for the introduction of dedicated Domestic Violence Units (DVUs). The Circular also emphasised the fact that the term 'domestic violence' incorporates all aspects of physical,

sexual and emotional abuse, that police assistance is usually requested by the victim as a last resort, and that domestic violence is a crime in which police officers need to take an active and positive role in protecting the victim. Consequently, there is widespread agreement that the Circular provided the encouragement and advice necessary for the police to develop an effective and sensitive response (Home Affairs Committee, 1992-1993; Morley and Mullender, 1994; Hoyle, 1998).

In 1995, Home Office research was commissioned to identify how far the recommendations made in the Circular were reflected in police policy and practice (Grace, 1995). In terms of policy the research found that all but three forces had produced a force policy on domestic violence; just over half had specialist units with some responsibility for dealing with domestic violence; most forces believed they had adequate systems for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic violence; and all but two said they co-operated with other agencies in dealing with domestic violence. In a similar positive vein, the results of interviews from five forces suggested that most officers felt that the policing of domestic violence had improved and that domestic violence was being taken more seriously than ever before. This was despite the fact that only two-thirds of officers had heard of Circular 60/1990. Most other agencies who participated in the research also indicated that their local police service had developed good policies for dealing with domestic violence, but were critical that this was not often demonstrated in practice. This finding was echoed by Walker and McNicol (1994), who found that supervisory officers were 'well versed' in the policy on domestic violence, but that among operational staff the views and attitudes about the policy and about the police role at domestic violence incidents was varied. An exploration of officers' responses can be found later in the chapter.

According to Hague (1999), at central government level there have been some contradictory attitudes towards domestic violence primarily because the responsibility for dealing with it has fallen between the Home Office, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health. Between 1979 to 1997, the Conservative party adopted a strong line in favour of the nuclear family and domestic violence presented a contradiction to the belief that this 'traditional' family structure was the best social environment for everyone (Hague, 1999). The current Labour government now see domestic violence, in theory anyway, as being on a par with other violent crime.

A Women's Unit was established and Ministers for Women appointed in 1997, both of which, according to Diamond (2001), have been instrumental in thinking around domestic violence and violence against women. In 1998 the Prime Minister announced a Crime Reduction Programme, one area of which was the 'Violence Against Women' initiative. The following year 'Living Without Fear' (1999) was launched. This was a joint Home Office and Women's Unit initiative, backed by £6 million made available to front-line agencies tackling domestic

violence, rape and sexual assault. It pulled together practical examples of good work from all over the country and set out a strategic framework for the future. It was structured around three areas: provision to women; justice to women experiencing domestic violence and support to help women through the justice system; and prevention, through creating a culture where violence against women is totally unacceptable and always seen as a crime. In support of this, a public awareness campaign, 'Break the Chain' was launched. Further, to co-ordinate the activities of government departments, and to combat the difficulties of co-ordination in the past, the Interdepartmental Group on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence was established in 1999. This is chaired by the Home Office and is responsible for ensuring that recommendations about violence against women and domestic violence are implemented.

In the context of this new thinking about domestic violence, Home Office Circular 60/1990 was replaced with Circular 19/2000. As such, it is multi-agency guidance. Notably however, the contents do not contain much more than was being demanded by the battered women's movement in the early 1970s. Importantly, the terms 'power' and 'control' are used to describe the dynamics of abusive relationships and so, for the first time, the guidance moves towards a recognition of gendered power relations. Chief officers are asked to ensure that all members of the organisation are aware of the dynamics of violent relationships and the reason why they differ from other violent offences. The Circular states that 'there is no single structure that can be cited as being the best way of facilitating the policing of domestic violence' (2000: 4). Despite this, it is very prescriptive about what should be included in force policies.

As a further commitment, in July 2000 the Home Office awarded £6.3 million as part of the £250 million Crime Reduction Programme to fund 34 pilot projects that aimed to develop and implement local strategies to reduce domestic violence, rape and sexual assault. Of these, 27 focused on domestic violence (Hester and Westmarland, 2005). Then, in July 2003 'Safety and Justice: The Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence' was published, which was followed by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, the funding of a new 24-hour national help line for victims and survivors of domestic violence, and a help line for domestic violence perpetrators.

Determinants of police use of discretion

Police officers exercise discretion in many aspects of their work, but most frequently when they are dealing with incidents. The many determinants of officers' use of discretion are inter-related. Technology, resources, policy and training are influential in their own right, but are inter-related with cultural factors (Hoyle, 1998). Research by Butler (1979) found that the majority of police officers felt that they were individually responsible for their actions, that such responsibility was the tradition of the police service, and that the more freedom of

action an officer had the better able they were to perform tasks. Whether to arrest, prosecute or 'turn a blind eye' are all decisions where the officer's use of discretion influences the outcome. Therefore, whether an incident is criminalised is the decision of individual officers (Bourlet, 1990), making them the most powerful definers of what does and does not become formally recognised as a crime (Kemp et al., 1992; McConville et al., 1991). According to Chatterton (1983), arrests are the product of complex social structures, leading to an over-enforcement of laws, for example where suspects are black or powerless. Edwards maintains that the law is *under*-enforced in relation to domestic violence:

> When an officer is called upon to use discretion in marital violence cases, his or her perceptions of seriousness, culpability, motivation and intent vary in accordance with the particular prevailing conceptions of likely suspects and credible victims. Policing in the absence of policy (or a policy of maximum discretion) facilitates the making of individual judgements, often based on erroneous stereotypes. (1989: 87)

Domestic violence has been reported as highest on the list of incidents that result in non-enforcement of the law (Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1969). Edward's research (1989) showed that there were four main outcomes when officers attended domestic violence incidents: non-arrest (especially if the incident was over when the officers arrived (Edwards, 1986a)); deferring police recording, that is, allowing a 'cooling-off' period to test the victim's commitment by delaying; 'criming-down' by using other options such as breach of the peace; or recommending a civil remedy.

Researchers have shown repeatedly that police officers prefer to emphasise the law enforcement nature of their role and see domestic violence as a social service part of their role. Consequently, they often perceive it as being not 'real' police work, unattractive and unlikely to attract either prestige or excitement (Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1969; Dobash and Dobash, 1980; Bourlet, 1990; Victim Support, 1992). Furthermore, officers involved in working with domestic violence victims are often accused of not being real police officers (Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998). In summary, police work is often 'gendered' into:

'Hard' masculine work (seen as productive)	'Soft' feminine work (seen as pastoral)
• Exciting	• Dull
• Risky	• Routine
• Highly visible	• Invisible
• Highly rewarded	• Not rewarded

A review of the literature suggests that the consequences of this fall into three categories, albeit they are not discrete. First, domestic violence work is not rewarded by the organisation. Victim Support said of the police service:

> The police tend to be a male-dominated, action-orientated organisation who like decisions to be clear cut and problems to have a solution. Constables or investigating officers tend to see dealing with domestic violence as a low-grade activity unlikely to attract either prestige or excitement, and all too likely to raise insoluble problems. (1992: 11)

This means that domestic violence work is not rewarded through either promotion or being associated with prestige. Kemp et al. suggest that organisational practices do not support either of these:

> At the level of deployment practice, police officers are encouraged by the way in which police work is organised and rewarded to focus their criteria of effectiveness on the immediate rather than long term perspective. Although police are aware that 'real' solutions require time, time becomes a commodity rationed by their deployment system. (1992: 8)

Consequently, according to Sheptycki, it is this culture of masculinity that means domestic violence incidents rarely receive proper or sufficient attention:

> ... the 'cult of masculinity' ... can be seen to reinforce and perhaps enhance, but not create, the tendency for these calls for assistance to be exited from the police system. (1993: 61)

In accordance with this, a study conducted by the Roehampton Institute (1996) found that officers were providing victims with information at the scene of the incident based on the fact they did not view their intervention as 'proper' police work.

Second, because officers do not experience domestic violence incidents as exciting or risky ('hard' and masculine), and it does not reap organisational rewards, it is not 'satisfying' work for officers. Instead, Cretney and Davis suggest that:

> So long as successful policing is seen in terms of achieving conviction or, alternatively, of maintaining public order, policing 'domestics' offers only limited satisfaction. There is in effect a mismatch between the needs and expectations of those women who report domestic assault and the working assumptions of police officers who respond to their calls for help. (1995: 83)

Dobash and Dobash (1980) found that officers prefer to emphasise the crime control and detection nature of police work, while domestic violence represents the public service nature of their work. It is not seen as 'real' police work (Bourlet, 1990) and so is a role that officers only accept reluctantly. Chatterton (1983) maintained that an officer's understanding and conception about their role, what they considered themselves to be in the job to do, and what satisfactions they get from their role as a police officers, influences what they want to achieve at an incident. In turn, this informs an officer's approach to and assessment of an incident.

Third, officers receive negative responses from their colleagues for demonstrating a positive attitude to issues around domestic violence. An officer involved in the research of Walker and McNicol reported:

> You see, there was a prevalent culture, you could not live in the canteen if you kept saying things, and I objected to racist jokes... Very quickly you start becoming a bit of an outcast. Similarly with sexist jokes and attitudes towards domestic violence. A lot of the time it is just bravado. (1994: 112)

Home Office research (Grace, 1995) found that changes had begun to occur in the police culture. Where officers previously had experienced ridicule from their colleagues, they now reported that this happened less frequently, and as such, it was easier to take domestic violence seriously. Nonetheless, whilst this might be the perception of some officers, more recent research suggests that negative experiences are still prevalent:

> I talk at divisional meetings to inspector rank and below to raise awareness of domestic violence. I still get comments like 'didn't you used to be a policeman?' (Quotation reported in Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998: 12)

Hoyle (1998) contends that 'canteen culture' refers to the ways in which officers communicate with each other: interactions 'characterised by expressions of solidarity and cohesiveness' (1998: 74). Consequently, officers rarely disagree with the ways in which they each respond to domestic violence incidents. However, although Hoyle also believes that while the language of canteen culture is often racist, homophobic and sexist, this does *not* necessarily spill over into how officers deal with incidents. In this, she concurs with the view held by Kemp et al.:

> ... when discussing how police negotiate resolutions, it should be noted that first, there is an important distinction to be drawn between what an officer says about an incident on the basis of his or her private feelings ('rubbish', 'a load of crap') and the way s/he actually handles it (more often than not, conscientiously). (1992: 51)

Before police officers can implement a resolution they have to impose structure and meaning on the events. Chatterton (1983) considered influences on officers' decision-making, defining the 'good bobby' or 'the practical copper' as:

> ... a policeman who tried to put wrongs to right. He should be concerned with fair play, with ensuring that those who deserve to be arrested 'had their collars felt' and that those who were not to blame did not suffer the indignity of being arrested, charged, and put before the court. (1983: 210)

He calls this the 'negotiator style', and what is distinctive about this approach is the officer's concern for doing justice. Chatterton argues that this concern for doing justice is governed primarily by the moral perspective of the officer, and not the legal perspective. Accordingly, 'negotiators' recognise four types of incidents. Type 1 includes incidents in which the evidence against the suspect is enough on legal grounds to arrest and which the suspect is

also morally blameworthy. Type 2 incidents include those where a suspect is proved to be innocent on legal grounds and is morally blameless. Type 3 incidents are those in which the suspect could be arrested on legal grounds, but does not deserve to be arrested, and consequently, arrest does not often occur. Type 4 are those incidents where culpability of the accused is established but the legal requirements are not satisfied. Type 3 incidents are those most often talked about in the literature about police use of discretion and are the main focus of feminist criticisms of the police response to domestic violence.

Figure 1: The potential outcomes of the 'negotiator' approach to policing

		From a legal perspective	
		Should be arrested	*Should not be arrested*
From a 'moral'	Should be arrested	Type 1	Type 4
perspective	Should not be arrested	Type 3	Type 2

(Taken from Chatterton, 1983)

Although Chatterton's work was not specifically about domestic violence, he used domestic violence to help explain this model. He described an incident attended by a 'negotiator', where a man had come home from work and suspected his wife to be having an affair and, in doing so, 'neglecting' her responsibilities to the family and the home. Despite the woman having a swollen lip, the officer perceived the husband to be the innocent party, even though in law the husband legally was in the wrong. The officer had used other contextual factors to inform the decision about what would be done: the officer specifically mentioned dirty crockery and the filthy state of the house, and contrasted this with the husband working to earn money to support the family. The victim status of the woman had been negated by her perceived behaviour. Therefore, in this situation, the moral perspective of the officer made him sympathetic to the plight of the man, and this was a more important consideration than the legal perspective.

Earlier research demonstrated clearly that decisions of police officers at domestic violence incidents were influenced by their moral perspective:

> Public morality is one factor, and policemen share this morality. For example, people think it is wrong for a wife and children to pay twice for the husband's drunkenness; it is bad enough, many people reason, that the husband has squandered their meager livelihood and perhaps abused them, why compound the harm by arresting him and depriving them of all support? (Bayley and Mendelsohn, 1969: 71)

Indeed, where officers' morality and the law do not coincide, it is often morality that prevails (Banton, 1964; Smith and Gray, 1983; Bourlet, 1990). Police officers have been found to assume that women have driven their husbands to drink and therefore deserve to be assaulted (Walter, 1981). Some officers also believe that violence in marriage is justifiable

or acceptable, while others express discomfort at entering the privacy of a home, or draw upon their own experience of life and marriage to inform their response (Bourlet, 1990).

As was considered in Chapter 3, socialisation into policing are important factors in gender empathy. Therefore, whilst it might be assumed that women are more sympathetic to the plight of abused women than male officers, Berg and Budrick (1986) did not find this to be the case. This is not to say that some women in organisations have feminist orientations, which results in considerable empathy for abused women (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

It has often been assumed that the level of harm inflicted will over-ride the moral perspective of officers. Some research has found officers adhering to the 'stitch' rule. In other words, where an injury requires medical treatment, officers usually take positive action (Dobash and Dobash, 1980). More recent research has contested this, finding an almost entirely random relationship between harm inflicted and conviction and punishment:

> Grave physical injury *does* influence the police, but apart from the very top and bottom of the seriousness scale the degree of harm inflicted is more of less incidental to the police decision to investigate an incident, to arrest and to charge. (Cretney and Davis, 1995: 92)

This is problematic on the basis of research which suggests that women are assaulted an average of 35 times before they call the police (McGibbon et al., 1989; Yearnshire, 1997). Therefore, it is unlikely that the occasion on which the police are called is the most serious. Rather, serious injuries in the past, to which the police have not been called, mean women reach a 'breaking point'.

Research has established that the likelihood of a complaint being made, or of a complaint being withdrawn, influences the action taken by officers at domestic violence incidents. Officers have been found to split cases into 'good' and 'bad' categories based on the nature of the victim and their likelihood of progressing a complaint (Chambers and Millar, 1983; Faragher, 1985). Bourlet (1990) found that 50% of officers stated that the possible retraction of charges influenced the way they dealt with domestic violence. In particular, officers expressed frustration at being called to attend the same address time and time again. Cretney and Davis (1995) have made a useful distinction between a 'report' and a 'complaint' made to the police. This is an operational distinction used by police officers in which 'reporting' is literally just reporting the incident to the police and having the police attend, whereas a victim making a 'complaint' means they are prepared to take their case all the way to court and, if necessary, give evidence. It is unlikely that officers will arrest and prepare a file if they believe the victim will not make a complaint. However, there has been some debate about whether women dropping their charges is a misperception on the part of the officers (Sanders, 1988). Officers have been found to persuade women to *not* make a complaint (Bourlet, 1990), or to ask victims if they wish to continue, and in doing so test their

resolve (Cretney and Davis, 1995) or make assumptions that women do not really want to make a complaint (Edwards, 1986). The notion of cynicism was explored in Chapter 3. In research by Sheptycki (1993), an officer asserted that it is difficult not to become cynical when victims withdraw their charge.

More recent research contradicts the view of police and prosecutors that it is decisions made by the victims that are the main point of attrition, or in other words, the reason why a case does not progress. According to Hoyle (1998) the relationship between evidence and the decision to arrest needs to be qualified. She describes two types of evidence: that which is legally relevant, such as a black eye, and information that can be gathered and constructed to serve as evidence. In Hoyle's view, 'in cases of domestic violence when other factors point against arrest as the preferable outcome, less obvious evidence is 'missed'' (1998: 108). Similarly, Hester et al. (2003) found that it was the willingness and thoroughness with which the police are prepared to pursue a case, including the level of evidence collected, which is crucial. Likewise, Griffiths and Hanmer (2005) found that the largest attrition rate was as a result of (a lack of) police action.

While much of the research has highlighted only a number of the factors influencing officers' use of discretion, Kemp et al. (1992) and Hoyle (1998) have developed useful models for understanding the action taken by officers at domestic violence incidents. Kemp et al. have produced a 'response model', which addresses the *actions* taken by officers:

Figure 2: 'Response model'

Stage 1	*Arrival*	➤ Confirm or reject preconceptions ➤ Make sense of the situation
Stage 2	*Contact*	➤ Assert police presence ➤ Establish control
Stage 3	*Information gathering*	➤ What actually happened? ➤ Assess degree of danger ➤ Apportion blame
Stage 4	*Decision-making*	➤ Is it a police matter? ➤ What legal powers could be used? ➤ Decide police role ➤ Choose option
Stage 5	*Implementation*	➤ Present options ➤ Negotiate police role in incident
Stage 6	*Conclusion*	➤ Quiet enough for police to leave? ➤ Likelihood of recurrence? ➤ How and when to leave?
Stage 7	*Aftermath*	➤ Organise further police action if required ➤ Paperwork

(Adaptation of Response Model (Kemp et al. 1992: 22-23))

The model generated by Hoyle is focused more on officers' decision-making influences or, in other words, factors that influence officers' use of discretion. Although she acknowledges that cultural and structural factors are influential, she suggests that interaction at the scene forms a large part of officers' decisions. She draws from the interactionist perspective and finds that the situational context of each domestic violence incident results in officers making working assumptions. In turn, these inform the working rules used. Working assumptions are reached according to information provided and gathered at the scene of the incident and these assumptions are derived from a process of interaction. According to Hoyle there are five main working rules that guide officers' decisions. These relate to the risk of further violence (arrest if there is serious risk of immediate further violence); the perceived seriousness of the offence (arrest if the offence is serious); the victim's demeanour (arrest if the victim is very distressed); the suspect's demeanour (arrest if the suspect is confrontational and aggressive); and the victim's preference (arrest only if this is what the victim wants). This model highlights the complicated nature of domestic violence incidents and the extent to which different officers, with their differing moral values, might have disparate responses.

Through the model Hoyle acknowledges the influence the victim has on the outcome. Although she recognises that socio-structural factors influence victims' decisions, she is suggesting that, in the main, what the victim wants prevails. This means that officers are taking the victim's views into account, even though the dynamics of the incident, or the history of the relationship, may be having an impact upon the views held and / or expressed. Cretney and Davis (1995) have highlighted a further complication – an ambiguity about physical assault. Their research found that women victims of assault acknowledged that they had contributed a certain degree of violence to their relationship, describing the violence as being the result of 'the chemistry' between two individuals. Similarly, Kemp et al. observed a police response to an incident:

> ... the police officers tap into the underlying expectations and assumptions of the couple who are playing their own 'private game'. When they arrive, it feels as though the protagonists have been waiting for the police intervention to break the stalemate and move 'the game' on and into a new phase. (1992: 62)

According to Hoyle's model, under these circumstances it is unlikely that the attending officers would take action. As has already been seen in this chapter, officers favour some interpretations more than others. Thus, where a victim expresses partial responsibility for the violence or indicates that they want no further action to be taken, this is likely to be in line with the preference of many officers:

> Without doubt, peacekeeping is the favoured police role in dispute handling, not least because it fits most readily with the overriding situational goal to negotiate nothing beyond the immediate and short term resolution. (Kemp et al., 1992: 60)

Summary

This chapter has explored the historical and contextual background to both the police organisation and individual police officers' response to domestic violence. From the literature, there is no doubt that improvements have been made at Government and organisational policy level. However, it is also clear that regardless of what senior members of the police service believe, the difficulty lies in changing the response of front-line officers (Kemp et al., 1992). Recommendations about the need for improved policies and communication between managers and operational staff do not take into consideration police officers' use of discretion.

The notion of discretion is essential to understanding how officers respond to domestic violence incidents, particularly as the largest amount of discretion is bestowed upon the most public-facing officers. The complexity of the use of discretion is apparent. The influences are wide-ranging. Interactionists are criticised by Kemp et al. (1992) for not taking account of the role the law plays in police decision-making. Many of the models and previous research focus primarily on the individual officers and what they bring to the situation, rather than on the impact of the law. This includes the work of people who do not favour interactionist perspectives. Furthermore, the importance of colleagueship and how officers learn from their peers, tutor constables and more experienced colleagues was considered in Chapter 3. Despite Hoyle's model taking account of interactions with the victim and perpetrator at the scene, her model does not take into account the influence of officers' colleagues on their decision-making, even though, according to Butler:

> ... it is beyond doubt that the major determinant of a police officer's actions are his personal experiences and his observations of other police officers. (1979: 56)

Consequently, a review of the literature has highlighted that there are so many influencing factors on police response behaviour that no one author or model encompasses everything.

Chapter 5: Methodology, Methods, Approach and Design ... and me

Introduction

In the autumn of 1998 I began three years of fieldwork, involving seven of the eleven officers who joined the Constabulary at that time. This chapter details both the methodological approach and the methods used to generate and analyse the data[2], and is written in much the same way that I approached the study, namely that I did what 'felt right'. Rather than following the 'conventional trajectory' (Silverman, 1997: 2) of PhD students, of reviewing the literature, reading about different methodologies, methods available and data analysis techniques, and then employing the methods to collect data, I began with the data collection: the 'get out and do it' perspective referred to by Punch (1994: 84). This is not to say that I did not think about how I would 'get out and do it' beforehand. For this reason it has not made sense to write discrete methodological and research design chapters as, until the end of the data collection, this has been an iterative process. Furthermore, whilst it might be deemed more conventional to include a separate reflective chapter towards the end of the thesis, reflections upon my fieldwork experience and, in particular, examples of how it felt to be 'doing' the fieldwork, problems encountered and solutions found, are integrated throughout this chapter as a means of supporting the decisions I have taken and comparing my experiences with those of other published researchers.

Part of the reason for my methodological approach and research design has been circumstantial. As Punch (1994) observes, there are a number of features that impact upon the approach to the research and the fieldwork in particular. Amongst others, these include gatekeepers, geographical proximity and the status of the researcher. Whilst this chapter addresses these issues, it is notable that under the latter point Punch is referring to whether the researcher is working alone or as part of a team. Yet, my status as a part time student and full time member of Constabulary staff was also influential in determining the methods of data generation and analysis that I employed. Throughout this work, I have drawn from two methodological frameworks, or in the terms of Miles and Huberman, used 'hybrid vigour' (2002: 396), specifically standpoint epistemologies and the methodological approach associated with symbolic interactionism, and this has had implications for the methods employed.

Another feature of this chapter and of the research as a whole was my current and continuing status as an 'insider' in the broadest sense of the term. This impacted upon the research process in a number of mainly positive, but occasionally negative ways. Westmarland describes her research as the first British study of its type in terms of its use of

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[2] I refer to 'data generation' throughout the chapter in recognition that the data were not out there waiting to be 'collected' but, rather, that my actions produced or generated the data (see for example Dey, 1996 and Mason, 1996).

participant observation, analysis of police culture and its central focus on gender (2001). However, as an academic researcher she acknowledges that she was an 'outside insider' (2001: 9). Perhaps then, it is reasonable for me to make the claim to be first 'quasi-inside, insider' to have undertaken a three year longitudinal study in a British police force. However, just as Westmarland experienced, being a woman, albeit an 'inside' woman, did have implications for how I was perceived and accepted. Given this context, I now move on to the aim and objectives of the study, followed by a detailed explanation of the methodological stance and methods employed.

Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the study was to map the shifts and changes (if any) in police officers' reactions and responses to domestic violence incidents during their first three years in service. This was to be achieved through the following objectives: -

1. To explore links between responses to domestic violence and the experiences and impressions of officers in their first three years of service.

2. To determine how the explicit and implicit absorption of sub-cultural values, learning from their own experience and learning how to deal with domestic violence incidents from peers and colleagues influenced officers' responses to domestic violence incidents over the three-year monitoring period.

3. To theorise the relationship between training and responses to domestic violence incidents as mediated by experiential learning, peer observation and changes in response styles and attitudes during the first three years of probationers' police career.

4. To identify gaps in probationer training in relation to domestic violence incidents.

The time-frame of three years was chosen for two primary reasons: first, many of the socialisation studies conducted with police officers have focused only upon the first *two* years when the officers are considered to be probationers: second, and related to this, one of the Constabulary's Domestic Violence Officers had commented to me that probationary officers' response to domestic violence appeared to her to be 'okay' but that, as soon as the officers were outside of their probationary period and were no longer closely monitored, their responses became increasingly 'worse'. This propensity, albeit anecdotal, seemed to be an interesting and important aspect of police culture and worth exploring in more depth.

Competing epistemologies and 'whose side am I on?'

Although it might be more appropriate to situate this section towards the end of the chapter and to treat it as a reflective section, I discuss it here because the discussions raised shaped significantly my thinking about the methodology and research design. According to Fielding (1993), policing is not an activity that can be studied through 'regulation' but, rather, the researcher requires cultural knowledge to appreciate what they are observing. This is

perhaps because, as McCabe and Sutcliffe (1978) suggest, the language used within the organisation is often deliberately constructed to exclude the outsider. Therefore, I felt that the privileged position I was in as an 'insider' lent itself to the body of methodological approaches known as standpoint epistemologies (a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider are discussed later in the chapter). Moreover, as a woman experiencing the masculine sub-culture of the organisation on a daily basis, I felt that I occupied a space which provided me with a privileged position from which to view how a male-dominated organisation impacted upon its staff's response to an issue of gender and power relations (Williams and May, 2000; Mason, 1996). In other words, as a woman working in a male-dominated organisation I believe I bring particular insights of what it is to belong to such an organisation, and experience first-hand issues of organisational sexuality, gender and power relations that are crucial to understanding the specificity of police culture. Thus, feminist standpoint epistemology was particularly relevant in as much as I was embodying on a daily basis my own theoretical position.

Nonetheless, I believed that to embrace fully the idea of standpoint epistemologies was problematic. Standpoint epistemologies are based on the premise that a person occupies a social position that allows them a unique insight (Hartsock, 1983), yet my focus is on the experiences of police officers and I am *not* a police officer. My work also considers the impact that police officers' responses have for victims of domestic violence, and yet I have never experienced domestic violence. Therefore, I was very clear that my position in the organisation and my being female provided me with only the *potential* to access knowledge in a way that would not be available otherwise. Nonetheless, I did recognise that, as an 'insider' of the Constabulary, I *was* in a position from which I could gain a unique insight.

I also had reservations about any conclusions that might be drawn from my work if I was to claim a strong affiliation with feminist standpoint epistemology, both from the perspective of victims of domestic violence, and from the perspective of (female) police officers. The false consciousness that women experience (see Williams and May's discussion of ideology and values in Marxism (2000:118)), coupled with concerns about the validity of 'truth' as being no more than what passes for knowledge in a particular community, or what an individual decides is true for him or herself (Hammersley, 2000), could mean that my research is in danger of falling into a void. Considering the issue of domestic violence from a gender and power relations perspective, and exploring the culture of the police service from an organisational sexuality perspective, could mean that those officers whose beliefs fall within the dominant ideology might reject my perspectives and results. They may feel that they do not reflect their own experience or, that they recognise the validity of my findings all too clearly. Equally problematic was the fact that police officers' and not victims' experiences were the focus of the research, which could mean that victims of domestic violence might not

identify closely with the work and / or suspect my motives for undertaking the research. According to Williams and May:

> ... if meanings are to be inter-subjectively held, a coherent view of truth must operate whereby the agents sharing the meanings agree on the 'truth' of the matter (2000: 68)

Or in the words of Mason:

> ... standpoint positions cannot be unequivocally regarded as granting epistemological privilege to such an extent that the researcher has no need to demonstrate the validity of their interpretations in any other way ... [another way] involves arguing that others – not you yourself as researcher – have epistemological privilege ... The idea that this can be used to support validity is based on the notion that research subjects are in a position to judge and confirm (or otherwise) the validity of the interpretations the researcher has made. (1996: 151-2)

Nonetheless, in line with the last point made by Mason, Dey (1996) comments that researchers often produce data inconsistent with how subjects perceive or explain events, so the researcher must take responsibility for the analysis and base such analysis on his or her own conceptual ideas about the data. It was this view that I adopted.

Throughout the research my aim was to understand if and how officers' response to domestic violence changed over time, and like Hoyle whose aim was to move away from the largely feminist approach of 'police blaming', I wanted to understand the context in which police officers make decisions (2000: 397). This meant taking different elements from several theories rather than embracing them wholeheartedly, making real the politics of pragmatism as they apply in the research domain. Nonetheless, I was persuaded by aspects of symbolic interactionist theory because of its approach to exploring socialisation. Spradley (1980) summarises the three premises of symbolic interactionism as being that: people interact on the basis of the meanings things have for them; culture, as a shared system of meanings, is learned, refined, maintained and defined in the context of people interacting; and that people use their cultural knowledge to interpret and evaluate the situation. In other words, the symbolic interactionist believes that careful attention needs to be paid to the overt behaviours and settings of actors and their interaction. Therefore, the researcher must enter the world of the actors to see the situation as it is seen by them, looking at what the actor takes into account, and how this is interpreted (Bulmer, 1969). Hence, there are strong connections with participant observation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Adler and Adler, 1994). However, being a part-time student does not lend itself to participant observation, or at least not to the degree that many symbolic interactionists might suggest is necessary. Therefore, following Bryman (2000), I drew from the theory and its associated methodological approaches in a way that reflected my own theoretical and ideological persuasions.

I began, and have continued with, an internal battle with myself about my 'way of being' within the organisation - my ontological perspective. There have been an increasing number of claims amongst social scientists, and particularly amongst qualitative researchers, that research is always partial and partisan, and that researchers should acknowledge that this is so. Indeed, claims from social scientists that their research is value neutral or 'objective' are often met with scepticism (Williams and May, 1996; Hammersley, 2000). However, for those who accept the post-Enlightenment view, the debate does not have to only be about value-neutral versus value-committed research since there are many ways of knowing from different perspectives. Rather, does research make its value commitments and role explicit or not? And does it make explicit its political cause? (Hammersley, 2000). In the very early stages of my research I was given a strong steer to begin considering and recognising this issue when I was asked the question 'Whose side are you on?' by one my supervisors (which I now recognise as Becker's question (1967)). My initial reaction was that the 'right' answer to the question was 'on the side of victims of domestic violence, of course'. However, I was less certain than I might have sounded. This was a very clear reflection of my experience of working in the police service and having to 'defend' this position to acquaintances outside work. It is common for police officers to report difficulties in their relationships with people outside the service as a result of the public perception of their role (see discussion in Chapter 3), but there is less certainty about those of us who choose to work for the service in a police staff[3] capacity. However, as I have suggested elsewhere, my experience has been that I have, on occasion, had problems with police officers about my role, and often disclosure of my role has resulted in a challenge or a frown. Nonetheless, my (internal) reaction to my supervisor's question shaped my thinking about the research. Because of my 'insider' status and the various trust issues implied therein both for myself and for the police officers who took part in the study, I have remained mindful of the issue of partisanship and the extent to which I could honestly have approached the work from a feminist standpoint epistemological perspective, which did not take account of my implicit role within the very organisation I was studying.

This issue also highlighted whether the research was to benefit victims of domestic violence or the police service, or both. Becker (1967) advocates research that serves the purpose of the 'underdog', yet placing the police service as the 'baddies' against victims of domestic violence as the 'goodies', seemed too stark a juxtaposition. Consequently, my continued reflection on this point has resulted in my being very clear that, although I am a part of the organisation and therefore inevitably experience (and am a part of) the culture, my approach to the research and the focus on police officers is crucial to understanding *why* police officers respond to domestic violence in the way that they do and are so often criticised for. Ultimately it will be beneficial to victims of domestic violence if aspects of that response can

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[3] 'Police staff' is now the nationally recognised term for police employees who were otherwise known as 'support staff', 'civilians' (or 'civvies') or 'non-sworn staff'.

be explained and changed, and to police officers who might gain a better understanding of their role in relation to domestic violence.

So as not to lose sight of this, during the course of the research I became a management board member of the county's Domestic Violence Intervention Project, through which I gained constant reminders of the impact that domestic violence can have on women's lives and of the devastating effects that a poor response from agencies can have. Nevertheless, I recognise that there are still some people, including police officers and victims of domestic violence, who will not accept my position. Indeed, Hoyle experienced extreme criticism of her theoretical and political position by academics and columnists when she published her research into the policing of domestic violence in the Thames Valley (1998) because of her failure to 'condemn all men involved in domestic disputes as beyond, or unworthy of, rehabilitation' (2000: 396). In reflecting upon this criticism she comments:

> I learnt from the negative publicity around my book that to challenge any political orthodoxy can bring erroneous criticism of the motives and methods of the researcher. This is something that any student embarking on research in a 'sensitive' or 'political' area – however these may be defined – should bear in mind when designing research tools. Perhaps people assume that those who research subjects such as domestic violence are peddling a specific doctrine. However, in choosing this subject, I pursued no political ideology. As a social scientist, I sought to explain a very interesting fact: that there are relatively few prosecutions in cases of domestic violence. One critic of my work, who was clearly disappointed by my findings, argued that I had 'asked the wrong question of the wrong people' (Bindel 1998[4]). Her protest urges consideration of just who are 'the right people' to talk to, and what are 'the right questions' to ask in order to understand fully the criminal justice response to domestic violence? (2000: 396)

As a consequence of my own sensitivities and of the experience of researchers such as Hoyle, it took some time before I felt comfortable enough to be honest with people in the organisation about my theoretical perspectives. Prior to the fieldwork, whenever I discussed the research with colleagues in the organisation, questions such as 'why domestic violence?' were asked of me. I was very aware that my belief that domestic violence is an issue of gender and power relations, and therefore my interest in exploring whether the masculine sub-culture of the police service permeates officers' introduction to the organisation and ultimately their response to domestic violence, potentially would alienate me from those people with whom I worked. In some ways, I was reluctant to 'come out' of the feminist closet. My concern was that I would be labelled negatively as a result of my beliefs, and at the start of the study I was not ready for this. I was frightened of the implications of a feminist label. I was comfortable with the role that I performed in the organisation and the basis on which I had developed relationships with my colleagues. Being very aware of the experience of others in the organisation who had 'dared' to reject the culture I felt that to acknowledge my theoretical framework as being about gender and power relations would

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[4] Bindel, J. (1998). 'On a Hiding to Nothing'. *The Guardian*, 8 September.

have been to outwardly redefine myself. I feared that such a move might damage my relationships with colleagues and my credibility. The experience of other researchers compounded my fears. For example, as a female researcher of the police organisation Silvestri (2003) found that to be labelled as a 'feminist' happened as a consequence of simply challenging the notion of the male pronoun. More importantly, she found that, 'feminism' and 'feminists' have no place in the police organisation (2003: 10). Reflecting my own concerns, her research found that:

> Few of the senior policewomen associated themselves with feminism; indeed, many of them were hostile to the concept and actively disassociated themselves from it, avidly demonstrating a distaste for feminist aims, strategies, and actions in challenging gender inequalities ... a strong consensus of the meaning emerged from their narratives. Using their own definitions, feminism is something equated with radicalism. (2003: 149)

Lee-Treweek and Linkogle consider the professional danger faced by fieldworkers, referring to personal or political ideologies that may negatively affect employability or result in the researcher being labelled as a trouble-maker:

> Professional danger is therefore one of the most insidious dangers in the research process because it can constrain what social science researchers feel able to study, to say or to challenge. (2000: 23)

For this reason, during the very early stages of the study I was content to rely upon my 'tried and tested' formula which meant *not* declaring any interest or sympathies with feminist perspectives but, instead, 'blending' in with the rest of the organisation. This is not to say that I misled people but, rather, that I chose not to make explicit that which could remain hidden for as long as I deemed it appropriate.

Being an 'insider' (or at least a 'quasi-insider')

As might be evident so far, particularly in relation to the discussion about standpoint epistemologies, throughout the research I have felt it has been impossible to disentangle my methodological approach (and my own sensitivities) from the fact that I was an 'insider'. On the basis that I am not a police officer, some might argue that I was a 'quasi-insider'. However, as Lee observes, being an insider can be a 'mixed blessing' (1995: 24) and indeed, on occasions when police officers recognised me, questions were asked about what a 'headquarters spy' was doing in an operational setting, and there were also occasions when officers introduced me this way to their colleagues. This is similar to the observations made by Young (1991) that being known as an 'academic' in the police service is a derogatory label, by Lee (1995) that researchers are frequently accused of spying and by Brown (1998) that even 'inside insiders' find it difficult to make colleagues forget that they might be recording incidents and conversations.

Nonetheless, I was given access to officers in a way that others outside the service would not have been. But, while the advantages in terms of access were significant, there were other aspects that were much more challenging. Young reported that material gained by 'insider' researchers contains the seeds of a special inside knowledge but that this often comes at a price 'for it is almost inevitable that his [sic] revelations will not only create some discomfort for himself, but will almost certainly be unwelcome' (1991: 25). He suggests that police *officers*[5] are in a position to think of and pose questions that in normal circumstances would go unasked. However, I was not only an 'insider' but a 'funded insider' as the Constabulary made a significant contribution towards my PhD fees, which raises a further question about whether some loyalty was expected back in the reporting of the findings. In fact, throughout the research and since I have never felt such pressure.

For me, part of the difficulty lay in the fact that I had been a member of the organisation for several years and had worked in another police force intermittently throughout my undergraduate degree, and yet I was researching the experience of officers joining the organisation. I was clear that I was unable to utilise participant observation as the primary means of data generation as I could not be a 'participant' in any meaningful way. Yet, if I was to gain any understanding of how the officers felt, I would have to acknowledge that I was heavily reliant on the officers explaining to me the impact of symbols such as the large portrait of the Queen hanging on the wall or the 'top table' arrangement of the dining hall at the training school where I had stayed on numerous occasions prior to the research. Clearly, and using van Maanen's phrase, these symbols had become so 'unremarkable' to me that I no longer even noticed them. Indeed, in the early stages of the research I taped the following poem to the inside of my fieldwork notes as a reminder: -

> Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings
> and some are treasured for their markings –
>
> they cause the eyes to melt
> or the body to shriek without pain.
>
> I have never seen one fly, but
> sometimes they perch on the hand.
>
> Mist is when the sky is tired of flight
> and rests its soft machine on the ground:
>
> Then the world is dim and bookish
> like engraving under tissue paper.
>
> Rain is when the earth is television.
> It has the property of making colours darker.
>
> Model T is a room with the lock inside –
> a key is turned to free the world

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[5] Not only is much of the literature about researching the police andro-centric, but there is also no recognition that police staff might become 'insider' researchers.

For movement, so quick there is a film
to watch for anything missed.

But time is tied to the wrist
or kept in a box, ticking with impatience.

In homes, a haunted apparatus sleeps,
that snores when you pick it up.

If the ghost cries, they carry it
to their lips and soothe it to sleep

With sounds. And yet, they wake it up
deliberately, by tickling with a finger.

Only the adults are allowed to suffer
Openly. Adults go to a punishment room

With water but nothing to eat.
They lock the door and suffer the noises

Alone. No one is exempt
and everyone's pain has a different smell.

At night, when all the colours die,
they hide in pairs

And read about themselves –
in colour, with their eyelids shut.

'A Martian Sends a Postcard Home' by Craig Raine

My 'insider' status also resulted in challenges to do with boundaries, namely that the training staff, the recruits or indeed myself, would draw (not always appropriately) on my existing role within the organisation. Prior to the research, and as part of my role within the organisation, I had developed good working relationships with the local probationer trainers. During the early stages of the fieldwork when I participated in the local probationer training there were times when the boundaries became blurred. Whilst I had requested that the training staff treat me in the same way as the new recruits, there were occasions when reference was made to my organisational role. For example, I was asked by one of the trainers to explain a Home Office initiative to the recruits. To refuse felt inappropriate and, following my explanation, the trainer laughed and commented that I was 'one of those headquarters' types who know more about what's going on than officers on the ground' and made a joke about how the recruits might want to get me drunk later in the evening so that I would disclose more useful information (extract from field diary 30th September 1998). However, there were occasions when I was given a sharp reminder that the training staff were doing as I had requested: when woken early in the morning by a deliberate fire alarm ringing to wake us up for an early morning and unexpected bout of exercise, I laughed as I passed the training staff and commented that they could have given me some warning that this was going to happen.

Understandably, their response was that the recruits had not known about it so why should they have told me?

There were also occasions at the regional training school when the issue of boundaries caused me some discomfort. On the first, I was participating in one of the classes when the discussion turned to officers having to make sure they kept a record of their actions in their pocket notebooks. The trainer asked us why we thought this might be important. In addition to several responses given by the recruits, I offered the answer 'because it is important to demonstrate accountability'. A recruit from another Constabulary turned to the person to her left and said, loud enough for me and several others to hear, 'fucking know-all'. On the second occasion, I had been told that I was unable to attend a swimming session with the officers so during this time I sat in the bar writing up some of my notes, but was 'spotted' by some of the training staff who came to join me. Shortly afterwards, one of the recruits came into the bar to buy some cigarettes and saw me sitting with the training staff. Immediately, I felt like a 'traitor' fraternising with the 'enemy', and the sense of guilt I felt meant that I sought out the recruits later on to explain the circumstances to them. One further example occurred during and soon after a visit I made to the regional training school to see the recruits. It began when I shared a lift with the local probationer trainers and they talked in the car about some of the feedback they had been getting from the regional probationer trainers about the progress of the recruits. My sense was that my own discomfort at hearing this was matched by the trainers' discomfort at having the conversation in front of me but they had little other opportunity to talk in this way. Furthermore, shortly after arriving back at the Constabulary following this visit, one of the recruits telephoned me to find out whether I could arrange for her to have her hat replaced. I agreed to find out what I could do, by which I had meant that I would pass the request onto the training staff, but the training staff could barely hide their irritation that I had been asked to do this, *and* that I had not explained clearly to the recruit that her request for my assistance was inappropriate.

The 'gatekeeper'
According to Creswell (1998), access to the field typically begins with a 'gatekeeper': an individual who is a member of, or who has inside access to, a cultural group. Lee refers to 'access careers' (1993: 121) in reference to the fact that issues of access are ongoing and to be continually negotiated, although this may be more explicit at certain times during the research process. In my case, the gatekeeper was the Chief Constable of the Constabulary (hereon in just referred to as the Chief Constable) and the majority of the negotiations took place prior to the fieldwork. In terms of physical access to the field, his support was invaluable. Firstly, he agreed that I could have access to an intake of probationers and approved my working alongside them during their training, and specifically during their tutorship. In the early stages of the research he asked that I write the text of a letter to the divisional commanders, outlining the research and my needs in terms of access, which he

then signed and sent to them. As a reminder to the divisional commanders, this process was repeated prior to my actually spending time with the officers and their tutor constables. Secondly, he ensured that I had access to the officers at the Regional Training Centre (in the case of this research, this was Bramshill). Initially, to gain this access, I made contact with the Head of Probationer Training – a Chief Inspector – who asked that I submit a business case about why I should be given access. However, from his tone during our conversation I was not feeling optimistic. By chance, that afternoon I was called to see the Chief Constable about a work-related matter and he also asked how I was getting on with my PhD. I relayed to him the telephone conversation I had had earlier in the day and immediately he telephoned through to his secretary and asked that she get the Chief Inspector on the 'phone for him. During their conversation, the Chief Inspector explained that he was concerned about the added pressure my presence would bring to the probationers during what would be a very full fifteen weeks of training. The Chief Constable's response was, 'you *will* allow Claire to stay with the officers at Bramshill, and if any problems do arise while she's there, we will review her stay then, but only then' (extract from field diary 24th September 1998). Thus access was granted, and I never did submit a business case. This event outlines again the importance of gatekeepers, especially in a rigidly hierarchical structure such as the police service, and how having a senior 'champion' can open doors which would otherwise remain closed. The strict lines of command worked very much in my favour on this occasion, since the Chief Constable's decision invariably takes precedence and will rarely be challenged by a lower ranking officer.

Lee (1993) also believes that gatekeepers can have preconceived ideas about the way in which research should be carried out, and that this is most often the case when the research proposed is qualitative. Earlier in this chapter I explored the tendency for the police service to rely heavily on quantitative data, and the nature of the negotiations between the Chief Constable and myself reflected this. I made numerous entries in my diary expressing concern about the extent to which I felt I was 'being pulled down a quantitative route', and about whether the Chief Constable's support might diminish and / or that he may withhold access (as Spradley (1980) suggests can be the case) if I did not take his suggestions on board. It is likely that the Chief Constable's suggestions were based on a lack of familiarity with the nature of qualitative research, particularly because his background is in psychology and his own PhD, completed in 1979, was a quantitative study of police socialisation. Indeed, in 1991 Young had referred to him as an example of a senior-ranking police officer, researcher and author resistant to the consequences of sociological research, and pro 'concrete' data to explain operational aspects of policing. In contrast, however, I found him to be open to alternative approaches and passionate about research generally. Following a meeting between the Chief Constable, my supervisors and myself to address his concerns, he became fully supportive of the approach and agreed formally to become recognised as an

'expert advisor' on the supervisory team, thus transforming his role from gatekeeper into supporter[6].

In his discussion about being an 'insider', Young described the experience of one 'insider' academic being served a notice under the 1911 Official Secrets Act when he proposed to publish his PhD in the late 1970s, and comments more generally on the difficulties that insider researchers in the police service face: -

> It should come as no surprise, therefore, to find that most insider participant observation of policing is almost always confined to discussion on management techniques and to the implementation of new systems. Philosophical reflexivity is not high on the agenda and in an organization which makes much of the concept of loyalty but really means subservience, the insider can find it hard to bite the hand that feeds and reveal any unhealthy aspect in the agenda. (1991: 10)

As I have already indicated, I have never felt under any pressure to avoid presenting findings that might be 'difficult to swallow'. However, during early negotiations with the Chief Constable it became clear that I would only be given access on the basis that the Constabulary could take editorial control over any publications associated with the doctoral work. Essentially, he was keen to ensure that the unrestricted access I would have to officers and to their working lives, would not cause difficulties for the Constabulary in the future. Lee (1993) suggests that, whilst gatekeepers often allow researchers into a setting, they also use formal agreements and procedures to control the activities of the researcher. In my case, the following agreement was reached about publication:

> An agreement has been reached with the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire that access to the thesis will be restricted for two years after completion, and that any subsequent publications will require approval from the Chief Constable. (Extract from Working Ethical Guidelines, see Appendix 1)

Moreover, additional conditions were made explicit in the form of the Working Ethical Guidelines. These included reference to anonymity, confidentiality, access to the field notes and the commitments required by me and the officers involved in the study. Significant discussion took place with the Chief Constable about how my presence might jeopardise or compromise any police operations, hence the inclusion of the following statement:

> The researcher can observe individuals involved in the study when on duty at any time, providing that notice of the researcher's intention to observe has been given and agreed with the individual concerned, and that the researcher's presence will not compromise any police operations. (Extract from Working Ethical Guidelines)

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[6] With his familiarity of the police socialisation literature, his experience of policing, assessing police-related academic dissertations for a university, and of being on the review board for a number of police-related research journals, it was felt that he could make a significant contribution to the research and the supervisory team.

In addition to his own views, the Chief Constable was keen that I also ask the Police Federation (police officers' union) representative for views about the Guidelines. The only observation to emerge from this process was that I needed to consider what I would do if I was to witness something whilst working with the officers which later resulted in a complaint being made about an officer's actions. With hindsight I am unsure how such a consideration remained omitted from the Guidelines, particularly as the Chief Constable's comment was that if I saw officers commit a criminal offence or demonstrate serious misconduct I would have no choice but to report it as I was 'not beyond the law'. As Norris (1993) comments, the sociological literature on policing includes clear evidence of police deviance and I should therefore have given this issue more consideration, particularly in relation to the commitment I gave to anonymity which would have meant I had no right to change my mind if confronted with deviance.

Ethics and 'danger in the field'

The omission from the Working Ethical Guidelines described in the previous paragraph is in line with the advice imparted to police researchers by van Maanen (1977) simply to keep quiet about virtually everything heard and seen in the field. While Norris (1993) discusses his difficulties with the legal argument for adherence to a professional code of conduct, Punch (1994) takes the more pragmatic approach of recognising that a professional code of ethics is beneficial as a guideline only and May says:

> Overall, rigid and inflexible sets of ethical rules for social research could leave us with undesirable consequences … On the other hand, a loose and flexible system involving 'anything goes' so easily opens the research door to the unscrupulous. (1997: 56)

The fact that my document contained the word 'guidelines' in the title was a deliberate attempt at thinking through the issues that might arise, whilst recognising that I was unlikely to think of every eventuality. In the spirit of honesty urged by Hoyle (2000) that researchers not only record what they intended to do, but also what they actually did, I feel it is appropriate to share an example that I had not anticipated. The situation was an interview with a probationer in the evening while at training school. A short time into the interview it became apparent to me that she was drunk. However, I took the decision to continue with the interview primarily because I was concerned that I would not get another opportunity to interview her. We had arranged that I would interview her at that time and the fact that she did not try to change the arrangement, nor acknowledge that she was drunk, meant that I also chose to ignore the fact. Some may criticise this decision on the basis that I took advantage of the fact she may have talked more freely than she would have done otherwise; indeed, the interview lasted considerably longer than interviews with any of the other officers. Nonetheless, I took the view advocated by Punch that 'ideally, every field-worker should be his or her own moralist' (1986: 73) and accepted the view of Holdaway that:

... in the end it is the individual researcher who will make the decision, accepting the risks involved ... they will have to live with the decision – and continue to do so. (1983: 79)

Janesick (1994) recognises that making spontaneous decisions about ethical considerations is part of life in the field, and I was happy to accept that I would have to make such decisions. Nonetheless, the Working Ethical Guidelines were a product of negotiations with the Chief Constable and did contain some firm commitments in relation to following the University's ethical guidelines (www.glos.ac.uk/currentstudents/research/ethics/index.cfm), and to issues such as anonymity and access to the field notes. In relation to anonymity, researchers such as Spradley (1980) and Lee (1993) suggest that the individual's identities should be protected in the field notes but I was clear that I was likely to come into contact with so many people during the three year period that this would have caused me confusion. I therefore made explicit reference to the fact that field notes would contain individual's names but that these would be changed at the time of publication. The fact that I had done this, however, did cause me to panic on one occasion when I realised that I had left my field diary in a communal area whilst eating my meal with the officers one evening. This was made worse by the fact that, at this stage, none of the officers had come forward and volunteered to take part in the study and so they had not yet given their informed consent for me to write up my observations of them.

Mindful of the fact that I would have to anonymise the data at some stage, when I began my data analysis I contacted the officers to find out whether they had any preference in terms of a pseudonym. Apart from one officer who requested that he be referred to as Cornelius, no officer had a preference. Ironically, this one request has caused me some consternation: I certainly did not expect any officer to come back with a pseudonym that was anything other than 'ordinary'. Fortunately, the officer gave me the option to use this or not, so I have chosen not to do so. My rationale for this is nothing other than that I felt that use of such a name would set him apart from the other officers, who have been given relatively bland pseudonyms.

Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000) refer to four types of danger faced by fieldworkers: physical, including sexual harassment; emotional, that is, when the researcher's emotional stability and sense of self are placed in danger; ethical, particularly for those researchers undertaking covert observation; and professional, in which the researcher's employability may be affected negatively. Professional danger was discussed in an earlier part of this chapter, but the other type which was of particular relevance to me was physical danger. Lee refers to danger that 'arises when the fieldworker is exposed to otherwise avoidable dangers simply from having to be in a dangerous setting for the research to be carried out' (1993: 10). While Westmarland (2000) accepts that this is the case and argues that it is only by experiencing the danger that the researcher is able to gain the insight required to

understand. In her words "Where the action is' is where the insight lies' (2000: 26). I experienced fear on several occasions, including when I was a passenger with one officer in a police car responding to emergency calls. Despite the officer's obvious determination to drive as fast as he could to get there, his apparent inability to control the vehicle at high speeds led me to panic on numerous occasions. A second example was when we attended a house with the intention of arresting one of the occupants and, while in the house, another occupant attempted to set his large dogs onto us.

Being a female researcher in a male-dominated organisation also meant that, on occasions, I was subjected to inappropriate and sometimes sexual remarks by the tutor constables and other colleagues of the officers, although notably not by the officers participating in the study themselves. The likelihood of this occurring is discussed by Lee (1995). On one occasion which is also referred to in Chapter 8, I was alone in a locker room with an officer who began to make remarks about my perfume and my appearance, commenting specifically on how he was looking forward to working a shift with an attractive woman. This was an officer I had previously come across in my role within the organisation: I knew of situations in which he had sent suggestive letters to a close colleague of mine about how he appreciated the relatively short skirts that she wore occasionally. My nervousness and feelings of intimidation that resulted from his comments were therefore informed by my previous knowledge of and contact with this individual. Nonetheless, Silverman (1997) suggests that being female may sometimes accord privileged access. Hunt (1984) showed in her work on the police how being female can also facilitate the development of rapport. I used this situation to ask more questions of this particular tutor than I did with some of the others who demonstrated nothing other than a neutral professional attitude towards me. Similarly, in his study on policing in Northern Ireland, Brewer (1993) noted that his female research assistant was often treated as a form of entertainment and, as such, provided (male) officers with light relief from the boredom of the job. However, in attempting to use the situation to my advantage, I also chose to 'ignore' the sexual comments. As Lee suggests, there is often 'a trade-off for female researchers between being treated in a demeaning or sexually predatory way and gathering the data they require from the setting' (1995: 58). Furthermore, Punch (1994) comments that female researchers may have to adopt tactics and strategies for dealing with sexual innuendo and unwelcome advances so as not to jeopardise the research, but that such compromises might enrage feminists. In my case, just as Westmarland (2000) suggested that the researcher needs to experience 'action' to gain a full understanding, I was happy to accept that my experience as a female researcher in the organisation was relevant to understanding how such views and comments might impact upon officers' response to domestic violence, which is itself gendered.

Research design: generation and analysis of data

As has already been reported, the study was longitudinal; a broad term (Ruspini, 2000) which, in this context, enabled comparison between the officers' responses over time. This was deemed essential as a means to understand how officers' responses and reactions developed. Furthermore, instead of concluding the fieldwork at the same time as the two-year probationary training period ended, I was interested in whether the officers' responses changed and continued to develop when they were no longer closely monitored (as probationers) or known as probationers amongst their colleagues. In this way I took advantage of my 'insider' status to gain access over a longer time period.

Seven of the eleven officers in the probationer group were involved. Because of the level of commitment required by the officers over three years, rather than asking specific officers to be a part of the study I provided them with as much information as I could about the research over the period of their first two weeks in force, at which point I asked for volunteers. During this time I went through some of their initial training and fitness assessments with them, partially to demonstrate my own commitment to the research but also as a means of developing relationships with them. At the start of the research I knew very little about the officers. In fact, some of the officers were only willing to take part if I provided them with assurances that I would not ask too much about their lives and experiences prior to joining the Constabulary. As a consequence, although I gained *some* insight to their lives and experiences through getting to know them over the period of three years, I actually gathered little information about their lives generally. A brief summary of what I do know of them can be found at Appendix 2.

During the three years a number of reasons for volunteering emerged, but in the main these were about the officers identifying an opportunity for constructive feedback about their development, albeit related to their response to a specific type of incident. The enthusiasm of one female officer waned early in the research and it became increasingly difficult to contact her or engage her in the fieldwork. Although I can only speculate about the reasons for this, it is possible that feedback from a researcher became less important to her than feedback from her peers, and as such, she felt she was not gaining anything from the research. On the other hand, I believe that the relationship I developed with the officers also meant that they felt some loyalty towards me (and not necessarily the research), which may be one factor in explaining why the other officers remained committed.

The seven officers consisted of four women and three men. Whilst it was not my intention to undertake a comprehensive gender analysis of the data because of the small number of officers involved, having a mixture of men and women in the study does mean that some comparisons have been possible.

Three methods were used to generate data during the three years I worked with the officers, namely, (participant) observation (which ranged across the participant-observation continuum at different times during the tracking period), semi-structured interviews and scenarios[7]. These will be discussed in turn. Qualitative methods were chosen on the basis that qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings from rich, contextual and detailed data, is more fluid and exploratory then quantitative methods allow and is flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are generated (Mason, 1996). In this way, the approach is much more suited to the interactionist tradition.

The three methods did not occur discretely and neither did they occur chronologically but, rather, the success and timing of each was inextricably linked. For example, much of the interviewing took place when I was participating in the training programme with the officers, and was only successful because of the relationship I developed with them through such shared experiences. Furthermore, although there were many months between the interviews, the fact that I had contact with the officers in between interviews when I was working with them on the scenarios, meant that my communication and relationship with them was maintained.

In this way the methods were chosen to provide a coherent methodological approach. For example, at the start of the research I was conscious that whilst observing the officers on shift, there was no guarantee that I would attend a domestic violence incident with many, or any, of the officers. Thus, the scenarios enabled me to present the officers with realistic domestic violence situations and to gain an insight to their thinking and potential reactions. On the basis that the officers did attend domestic violence incidents, albeit when I was not with them, the scenarios also presented an opportunity to ask the officers to reflect upon the similarities between the scenario and the 'real' incident, and for them to think about the answers to my questions in both contexts. The methods were also inter-related in the sense that each approach enabled me to probe in depth the issues that emerged through different methods. For example, observations of the officers' training sessions and shifts often raised a number of questions for me, so interviews with both the tutor constables and the probationers provided the opportunity for me to pose these questions.

Using three methods has also allowed for triangulation, or in other words, the comparison of different kinds of data to see whether they corroborated one another (Silverman, 1995). The three methods have worked effectively in this way, demonstrated in that the resulting data are presented alongside each other and in support of each other, in the findings chapters. Thus, one of the main strengths of the study is its coherent, comprehensive and combined

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[7] To assist the reader with putting these methods into the context of the probationer training programme, Appendix 3 shows the structure of the training alongside the timing of each method.

approach, resulting in rich insights to the officers' developing responses to domestic violence.

Varying degrees of observation (or 'quasi-ethnography')

There were two primary reasons for observing: the development of relationships with the officers (explored later in this section) and to experience first-hand the officers' working environment. In part, the study was an exploration of police culture in which the behaviour, language and interactions of the group were crucial to an understanding of how this impacted upon officers' response to domestic violence. I would describe the study as being based broadly within the ethnographic tradition (see for example Baszanger and Dodier (1997) and Creswell (1998) for definitions of ethnography), since observation was a central method in the study. The links between ethnographic research and the use of (participant) observation are demonstrated through the comments of Mason (1998) that participant observation involves the researcher immersing fully in a research setting and observing dimensions of that setting, and of May that:

> Participant observation is about engaging in a social scene, experiencing it and seeking to understand and explain it. The researcher is the medium through which this takes place. (1997: 155)

Mason (1996) suggests that the researcher should consider whether they intend to be a participant, an observer, or a participant observer before entering the field. Whilst acknowledging that the decision might have to be taken more than once, asking the question implies that the researcher has some control over this and that the decision *can* be made prior to entering the field. There is also an implication here that the researcher performs one or another of these roles. In contrast, I found that I often had little control over the role that I performed: rather, that this was dictated by the setting, the trainers or the officers. For example, on one occasion I intended to be, in Gold's terms, a *participant as observer*, participating in the physical activities with the officers but, because of last minute concerns amongst the training staff about insurance liabilities, I was forced into a position of *complete observer*. On another occasion, two of the officers negotiated with the training staff that they could invite me to the 'dining in' night at the end of their fifteen weeks at training school. Whilst I was excited about this opportunity, and anticipated participating to a greater degree than observing, when I actually arrived I felt out of place and in the way. This was a time for them to be celebrating having completed the training programme and to enjoy an evening with their colleagues from other forces, and I felt that I was intruding because the evening was about neither of these things for me. Whilst I was not completely removed from interacting with the officers, although emotionally it felt this way, *observer as participant* was a more relevant description.

The primary reason that I chose to use a participant observation approach was to develop relationships with the officers that would last for at least the three years of the study. As Renzetti and Lee (1993) comment, participant observation allows intensive interactions with those studied and, as such, is a way of establishing trusting relations. Whilst the majority of my time was spent as *participant as observer* or *observer as participant* and the interactions were therefore often less intensive than if I was a full participant, relationship and trust-building was still evident. This was not only crucial to enhance the quality of the data I would gain for the study but also because, once the officers became operational after the fifteen weeks at training school, I would only have the opportunity to meet with them on an ad hoc and intermittent basis thereafter. Indeed, it was likely that I would only meet with them when I needed something from them, for example to complete a scenario or to de-brief the domestic violence incidents they had attended during their tutorship period. Therefore, I was to be heavily reliant upon the relationship I developed with them in the early stages of their training.

As a means of gaining acceptance amongst the officers, I believe that my participation in the early stages of their training was successful. This was demonstrated to me explicitly on two occasions within the first two weeks. The first was during a conversation that I had with one of the officers at the end of the three days in a scout hut[8]. Prior to joining the police service she had been a swimming instructor and she explained to me that she often had people from a swimming organisation visit to ask her questions. She described them as 'outsiders' who did not fully understand what she was doing and, as a consequence, she explained that she 'made things up rather than telling them the truth' because she had no respect for them. In contrast, she explained that she felt what I was doing was very different, and that she could trust me because she 'knew where I was coming from'. The second reassurance I received was on the last day of the first two weeks. I spent ten minutes with the officers before any of the training staff arrived and I asked them how they had found the visit the day before to the stations where they would be posted for their tutorship. All of the officers were critical of the day, commenting that it had been a waste of time and that no-one seemed to have been prepared for them so the day had not been very structured. Within five minutes of this conversation, the training staff arrived and asked the recruits the same question. Their response was very different to that which they had just given to me: they commented that they had enjoyed the time and that it had been useful to see where they would be going after regional training school. Witnessing this contradictory set of responses made me feel that I really had been accepted by the probationers, since it was clear that that they felt they could be honest with me and trust me not to repeat their honest opinions to the training staff. There was no indication that this had been a 'test' of my loyalty to the officers but I used it as such, choosing not to comment to the recruits about the position they had just put me in, but

[8] Unlike many Constabularies there was no residential facility in the Training Department, so the recruits spent three residential days at a local scout facility. In some police forces the entire first two weeks of training were residential.

just accepting it silently. My experience reflects that of Norris (1993) who undertook observation with police officers. Whilst he was describing trust in the context of possibly observing misconduct, the relevance is in his description of trust as an action which takes the form of 'not doing', rather than 'doing':

> ... the manufacture of trust requires getting one's hands dirty, since it is not something that can be promised with declarations of confidentiality and anonymity. These are distant and far-off concepts. Trust in the police world is more commonplace and mundane. Trust is about keeping your mouth shut when others are being called to account. It is about not letting slip in front of senior officers that you were not where you were supposed to be. Trust is an action, often marked by absence rather than presence. As such, it involves 'not doing' rather than 'doing'. It is gained and earned, shown in the day-to-day realities of the police world and, as such, it cannot be promised. It has to be displayed and, only after it has been seen to exist, will it be assumed. Until then, all promises are empty. (1993: 132-133)

During the first two weeks, my first opportunity to meet the officers was on the 'family day', which was the day before they officially joined the organisation and began their probationer training. I was allocated a 'slot' on the programme to provide an overview of my research and to explain that I would be spending time with the officers during their first two weeks, after which time I would ask for volunteers to take part in the study. The formality of this day took me by surprise: had I realised that the Deputy Chief Constable would be there in his full uniform and that PowerPoint presentations would be given, I might have given more thought to what I had planned to say and how I would present the study. As it was, I felt uncomfortable, too casually dressed and my presentation was not as 'slick' as it could have been. However, Morse's experience suggests that this is not unusual:

> The researcher may find that practising explaining the study (in the form of role play) will help him or her overcome this barrier somewhat. Still, the new researcher can expect to feel awkward, useless, uncomfortable, in the way, and a nuisance to the research setting. (Morse, 1994: 228)

As a part-time student and full-time employee of the Constabulary, I had negotiated time off in the form of annual leave, time off in lieu of additional hours worked, and had been given a half day study period each week. This meant that I was unable to spend the whole of the first two weeks with the officers and so was guided by the training staff as to the sessions it would be most valuable for me to be involved in. Their suggestion that I undergo the fitness test with the officers on their first day was perhaps the most valuable as I shared with the probationers a sense of anxiety. Furthermore, it demonstrated my commitment to develop a relationship with them, enabled bonding, and provided us with a shared experience that we referred to (and laughed about) on many occasions afterwards. If any of us failed the test we would be required to undertake intensive coaching from the Physical Training Instructor to enable us to achieve the necessary standard before going to the Police Training Centre, and none of us relished this thought. Despite their own nervousness, however, the recruits demonstrated concern for me and during the warm-up checked regularly that I was alright

and offered words of reassurance that I would be fine. The primary concern for everyone was the 'bleep test'[9], undertaken after the press-ups and sit-ups. We all passed the test, although as the following extract from my fieldwork diary demonstrates, how I managed this is still a mystery to me (indeed, even several years afterwards I can still remember the sensation I felt at continuing despite feeling unable to breathe) and probably to the training staff and recruits who had to carry me out at the end when I collapsed. As Adler and Adler (1994) comment, every sense is involved in observation! However, the sense of achievement that we all felt and the congratulatory remarks being shared truly made it feel worthwhile:

> By the time I got to five minutes my legs were still going but I had no control over them. I just felt like I was floating, which was a really strange sensation, but I was determined that I wasn't going to be the only one to fail. (Extract from field notes; 28th September, 1998)

Aside from the fitness test, the only other opportunity I had to spend a significant amount of time with the officers during the remainder of the two weeks was when they stayed at a local scout hut. Here I participated in everything with them, sharing rooms with them, being part of the group exercises and role-plays and the fitness sessions. Then, following on from these two weeks, I also spent the first week at the Police Training Centre with the officers where the degree to which I was able to be included was dependent upon the trainers' views about, for example, the insurance implications of me taking part in fitness tests and the sense that I had of being 'different' because I was the only person in the classroom not wearing uniform.

Until the ninth week (the week containing domestic violence training) of the fifteen weeks at residential training school I was only able to make very short visits to the officers at times when the local trainers were attending. These times often involved nothing more than sitting in the bar with the officers for a short time before it was then time to leave. But this time was invaluable for me to 'catch up' with how the officers were getting on. On these occasions the officers were keen to bring me up to date on what they described as 'gossip', which was often about relationships that the officers from other forces were having with one another despite them already being married or in a relationship with someone outside the police service. They also 'saved things up' to tell me about the training. Although Spradley comments specifically from an ethnographic perspective, I have already described how the study was based broadly within the ethnographic tradition. That the officers demonstrated such willingness to update me reinforces my view:

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[9] Two pairs of cones, each one metre apart, were laid out 20 metres apart. A tape sounding bleeps was played and our running had to be timed so that at each bleep, we were between a pair of cones. Gradually the bleeps sounded closer together, necessitating that we run faster. The minimum standard for women was six minutes, and for men was eight minutes. Two warnings for not being between a pair of cones were permitted. More than this and you failed the test.

> ... a new dimension is added to the relationship, one in which the informant recognizes and accepts the role of teaching the ethnographer. When this happens there is a heightened sense of cooperation and full participation in the research. Informants begin to take a more assertive role. They bring new information to the attention of the ethnographer and help in discovering patterns in their culture. (1979: 83)

I stayed at the regional training school for the whole of the ninth week during which time I was with the officers for the classroom-based training. Although on previous occasions I had spent time with the officers largely to develop and maintain my relationship with them, during this week I was also interested in the content of the domestic violence training input. By this time, despite having a good understanding of domestic violence issues and thus being able to understand the content of the trainers' input, I found the legal terminology difficult to follow. I found it necessary to ask the officers regularly for explanations outside of the classroom environment. In some ways this enhanced the feeling I had of being 'the odd one out', although there were times when the trainers used this to their advantage. For example, I was asked to take part in a role-play, performing the role of a member of the public who had been involved in a minor road accident that resulted in the drivers arguing. Apart from the fact that I was not in uniform, which helped the officers to think of me as a member of the public, it gave the trainers the opportunity to ask how I, as someone who did not know whether the officers had followed procedure or the law correctly, had felt about the way the officers involved in the role play had treated me.

The final phase of the observation was when I worked one shift with each of the officers and their tutor constables during their ten week tutorship period. As I was to undertake a semi-structured interview with each of the tutors shortly after this time, my intention again was to use the opportunity to meet the tutors and, as much as possible within the time-constraints of an eight-hour shift, develop some rapport with them. Being mindful of the comment by Fontana and Frey (1994) that trust is essential to an interviewer's success and that even after it is gained it can be fragile, I also saw this as an opportunity to spend more time with the officers and to have informal conversations with them about how they were finding operational policing, in comparison with their expectations and what they had learned at training school. Spradley (1980) refers to these 'conversations' as informal ethnographic interviews, or in other words, asking questions during participant observation as opposed to formal ethnographic interviews that occur at a specific time and as a result of a specific request to conduct an interview. However, in the same way that I had made notes previously, I also undertook to record my observations of the interactions between the officers and their tutors and to describe the incidents attended and the officers' responses to these.

The nature of these shifts varied considerably in terms of the types and number of incidents attended, largely depending on whether the officers were based in a town centre or a rural

area. For example, one officer was based in a city centre on foot patrol, while some of the officers were allocated to incident response vehicles and others to general patrol vehicles[10]. During the shifts, the incidents I attended included, amongst others, reports of silent 999 calls being made from telephone boxes (always treated as an emergency just in case there is a reason why the caller has become silent or hung-up), road traffic collisions, burglaries in progress, shed-breaks, harassment of restaurant staff, and attendance at the house of someone caught on a supermarket closed circuit television system as having shop-lifted pounds worth of food and drink. Although other officers on the same shifts as I was working did attend reports of domestic violence and domestic disputes, the officers I was with were not asked to attend.

Similarly to Westmarland's experience (2000), there were hours of tedious and boring police work to endure. Even taking statements from people who had had their sheds broken into seemed to involve at least an hour of taking a statement, followed by all the paperwork to be completed back at the station. Furthermore, during one shift the female probationer I was working with was required to attend a local hospital to be present during a drugs search of a female prisoner. There was no suggestion that I could go with her, so I had to wait for a couple of hours in the briefing room for her to return. Similarly, while working with one of the male officers and his tutor, following an arrest of a woman caught shop-lifting, I was asked to remain in the briefing room while the officers interviewed her in the cells. I was left there for just over four hours with no way of contacting the officers to find out how much longer they would be and whether it was worth me staying or going home.

Semi-structured interviews

The primary aim of the interviews was to explore in depth with the officers their experiences during training and operational duty. In other words, the interviews were an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences. Throughout the study I was interested in the officers' experiences of different phases of the three years, namely the training, the tutorship period and the time after this up to the completion of three year's service. May (1997) describes such an approach as the chronological method of interviewing, which originated in the Chicago School of social research and is associated with the idea of a person's 'career' or, in other words, the transformations people undergo in adopting particular roles as a result of new experiences. Of particular interest were the officers' experiences of the training, attending domestic violence incidents, their experiences of being a member of the organisation and their perceptions of their colleagues. On the basis that I was reliant upon the officers to recount their experiences and perceptions, interviews seemed to be the most appropriate means of collecting this information (Mason, 1996). Further, the nature of semi-structured or semi-standardised interviews, which enable the interviewer to specify questions

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[10] Incident response vehicles are responsible solely for responding to emergency calls, while ordinary response vehicles are used for more general patrol matters, such as responding to non-emergency calls that have been marked for attendance when officers are available.

but probe beyond the answers to yield rich insights into experiences, opinions, attitudes and feelings (May, 1997; Fielding, 1993), led me to adopt this method. Apart from the informal and often unplanned conversations that I had with the officers through the three years, I arranged and completed three semi-structured interviews with each of them during this time. Each interview was tape-recorded with the permission of the officers and later transcribed (see Appendices 4a to 4c for interview schedules).

The first interview was undertaken during the first week of the residential training period and focused primarily upon the officers' experiences of the training to date. It also explored the officers' thoughts about the study and, in particular, its focus on domestic violence, their aspirations and their feelings about and reasons for becoming a police officer. These interviews were conducted mainly in a quiet corner of the bar and always in the evening, according to the availability of the officers.

The second interview was undertaken shortly after the officers had completed their tutorship, after around thirty weeks from the beginning of the fieldwork. It was focused specifically upon the domestic violence incidents they had attended during this time but also included more general questions about the impact of the training, their perception and experiences of their tutor constable and other colleagues and perceptions of their own development. As Hoyle observed (2000), I believed that asking the officers about specific incidents rather than about their general response to domestic violence, would yield a better picture of their response. In other words, I thought that asking them to focus on specific experiences would result in greater detail. The locations of the interviews varied, with some being held in my office at police headquarters and others in any room that the officers could find in their place of work. To minimise the chance of interruptions during this time most of the officers contacted the Control Room[11] to let them know that they were unavailable to be deployed to incidents, but others continued to listen to their radios throughout the interview just in case they were required to attend an incident. This caused some distraction but was not impossible, and did not result in any of the officers having to cut short the interview. The only distractions to cause some difficulty were when the officers suggested that we meet in a room used for socialising or taking meal-breaks. In these circumstances we were interrupted on numerous occasions by the officers' colleagues enquiring as to what we were doing and, in particular, asking questions about why I was tape-recording what appeared to them to be a 'conversation' with the officer.

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[11] The control room is where the 999 calls are received and the staff there are responsible for deploying operational officers to the incidents. They record all details of the incident, including the information given by the caller, the address of the incident, the time(s) the officer(s) arrived, action(s) taken, and how the incident is left (for example, advice given, no action taken etc.).

To assist the officers with the interviews, I had provided them with a pocket-sized notebook so that they could make a short record of all the domestic violence incidents they attended, and then use this as a reminder in the interview. None of the officers used this and instead drew upon the notes in the 'regular' pocket notebooks which they are provided with and legally required to complete. This seemed to be an effective way of them reminding themselves of the detail of the incidents, although it slowed down the interview as they had to trawl through their notes to find the incidents amongst everything else recorded.

The third and final interviews were held with the officers when they had completed between 19 and 24 months service. Although between nine and 15 months had elapsed since the second interview, I had maintained contact with the officers during this time both informally and when communicating with them about the scenarios described in detail in the next section of this chapter. Reflecting the fact that some time had passed between this and the previous interview, the areas of questioning were broader, encompassing: general questions about how the officers felt they were developing as officers; feelings and thoughts about domestic violence and the incidents they had attended; what they drew upon when providing advice to those involved in domestic violence; the types of information they received over the radio; a reflection upon the training; perceptions and experiences of colleagues and a reflection upon the tutorship; and a reflection upon their own response to domestic violence. Whilst I had not analysed the data collected previously to inform the questions asked in this interview in the way in which a Grounded Theory approach would have required (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967 and Strauss and Corbin (eds), 1997), from having transcribed the earlier interviews I had an initial sense of some of the issues emerging and used these to generate the question guide.

Again, the location of these interviews varied between my office and the officer's place of work, although for the officer's convenience and at her invitation, I did visit one officer at her home. Interestingly, the nature of this interview was different from the others. The first distinct difference was the extent to which we talked about subjects beyond domestic violence and indeed, beyond anything work-related. At the time of the interview I was engaged to be married and at the stage of identifying a venue for the wedding. Similarly, she was engaged and due to be married two months earlier than me the following year. On realising this, we engaged in lengthy conversation about our experiences of arranging various elements of the wedding, before we began the interview. The second notable difference was the extent to which the officer appeared to relax, which was important in the context that she had been having some difficulties at work and specifically had been monitored closely by her supervisor who was concerned about her competence as a police officer. She was very frank in the way in which she talked about this, and in a way that may not have felt comfortable had she been in a work environment. My sense was that the conversation about our respective weddings, coupled with the fact that the officer was in her

own home and an environment in which she was comfortable, had an impact on the extent to which she felt relaxed and willing to be candid. This supports the view of feminist researchers such as Oakley (1981) about the importance of openness, emotional engagement and the development of a potentially long-term and trusting relationship between the interviewer and interviewee.

Scenarios

During the three years of tracking the officers, six of the seven completed four scenarios[12] (see Appendices 5a to 5e). The primary purpose of the scenarios was to explore the officers' developing thoughts and perceptions about their role at domestic violence incidents as they worked through their first years in the police service. The scenarios were an essential means by which to capture an insight to individual officer's reactions and responses to domestic violence. They were also a mechanism through which change over time was evident, particularly because the format and questions asked in the scenarios remained largely similar throughout the three years. However, perhaps most importantly, they were an invaluable means by which I could assess officers' responses at incidents, especially because there was no guarantee that I would attend domestic violence incidents with any or each of them.

The approach was characterised by officers completing tasks remotely, that is, they completed them alone and recorded their responses on a dictation machine. The way in which I delivered to and then collected the scenarios from the officers differed according to where they were during the training programme, my availability to visit them at Bramshill, and later, where they were located in Gloucestershire. I was able to hand-deliver the first scenario to the officers and also collect it from them in person. I also hand-delivered the second scenario, but when they had completed it, had to rely upon the officers giving it to the local training staff who were visiting them at Bramshill. On this occasion I provided them with an envelope in which they could seal their tapes. The third and fourth scenarios were completed when the officers were operational. My proximity to where they were based determined whether I sent the scenarios to them via the internal mail system, or whether I hand-delivered them, and similarly in the way that I received the tapes once the scenarios had been completed.

The content of each scenario was fictitious but they were influenced heavily by the details of tens of domestic violence incidents provided to me by the Constabulary's Control Room at the time I developed each scenario. Following initial drafting, I consulted and sought feedback from a number of the Constabulary's dedicated Domestic Violence Officers to ensure that the scenarios were realistic.

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[12] One of the female officers completed only the first scenario. Despite numerous attempts to contact her about completion of the subsequent scenarios she did not complete them. In fact, she was so difficult to contact that I have never been able to retrieve a dictation machine from her.

Each scenario was based on a similar format: the officers were given a page of instructions, one of which was that they should treat the exercise as they would an examination, or more specifically, they were directed when to turn over the page and were asked not to read ahead. Following the instructions the officers were provided with the first part of the scenario: they were asked to imagine that they were being deployed to an incident and given details of the information provided over the radio. This information was followed by several questions which the officers were asked to use as a guide to give a 'running commentary' of what they would be thinking, feeling and doing. At the end of this first section, they were then presented with a dilemma that required them to prioritise and express and explain a preference between the domestic violence incident they were attending and another incident that was occurring at the same time or en route. In the second part of the scenario they were asked then to imagine that they had chosen to attend the domestic violence incident and were presented with details of the scene, including a description of the house and what had happened and what they could see when they entered the house. Again, this was followed by a series of questions about what they would be thinking, feeling and doing.

The first two scenarios followed exactly the format described above. The first was completed by the officers prior to any domestic violence training (week nine) during the fifteen week residential training period, and the second was completed after week nine but before the officers began their tutorship. The third scenario was given to the officers shortly after they had completed their tutorship and, in acknowledgement of this, additional questions were added to the end of the exercise asking them to reflect on whether any incidents they had attended during their tutorship had resembled that given in the scenario. If they were able to answer this in the affirmative, they were asked to describe the incident and the action they had taken.

Shortly after the officers completed their tutorship, at around 30 weeks, I made contact with each of the tutors and arranged a time to interview them. This interview was based on the third scenario I had used with the officers. With the tutors, I presented them with the scenario but instead of asking them to complete it alone as the officers had done, I used it as the basis of a semi-structured interview.

The fourth scenario differed in as much as it was presented to the officers in two parts. The first part was undertaken when the officers had completed between 31 and 34 months service and followed the same format as the first two scenarios. However, on receipt of their response I sent them an additional section which detailed what had been happening between the two people before the police had been called and, specifically, the abuse being suffered by the woman. The officers were then asked to describe: how they felt and what they thought about the additional information; how they felt about their response to the first

part of the scenario in light of the additional information; the extent to which they think about what has happened before they are called to an incident; the role they believe they have at such incidents; and whether, by having the additional information available, they would have involved the Domestic Violence Unit.

The reason for the additional section was based on my initial reactions from having transcribed responses to earlier scenarios and interviews, that the officers failed to include *any* reference to what may have occurred between two people before they arrived at the scene. I took the opportunity to talk through my thoughts with one of my supervisors and in doing this it became apparent to me that the officers' responses had always suggested that their action was informed only by what they were able to see at the time, and so I was keen to explore their reaction when presented with details of the history of a relationship. Therefore, although my intention at the start of the research was to use four scenarios based upon similar formats, I recognised the need to adapt the method to take account of emerging findings.

Most of the officers completed this second part within several days of returning to me their response to the first part of the scenario. However, despite my doggedness in reminding two of the officers, one completed the second part three months after the first, and the other completed it five months after the first part. The consequence was that they had difficulty recollecting their responses to the first part of the scenario, but their answers still provided an insight into whether the history of a relationship occurred to them and / or featured in their decision-making at the scene of incidents. This said, the general commitment of all the officers to the research was exemplified by the scenario element, since this was the part over which I had no control and was completely dependant on them doing what I asked without me actually being there.

Data analysis
The primary issue with which I was faced was the overwhelming amount of data I had generated over the period of three years, namely, field diaries from the officers' training period and from working a shift with each of them and their tutor constables, 19 transcripts of interviews with the officers, six transcripts of interviews with the tutor constables, and 32 transcripts of the officers' responses to the scenarios. For this reason, and following the advice of several researchers (see for example Creswell, 1998; Mason, 1996; Dey, 1993; and Silverman, 1995), I decided to use the qualitative software 'WinMAX', to store and manage the data.

Even so, faced with such a mass of data, the approach I took to the analysis is supported by Tesch (1990) in that I remained flexible and not bound by rules. This view is supported by Coffey and Atkinson who state that 'analysis is not about adhering to any one correct

approach or set of right procedures; it is imaginative, artful, flexible, and reflexive' (1996: 10). The first decision I made, which I alluded to earlier in the chapter, was that the observation notes, whilst extensive, would be used only to support the issues that emerged through analysis of the interview and scenario transcripts. The rationale for this was that the overriding reason for my methodological approach had been to develop and maintain relationships with the officers in the first instance, and later to familiarise myself with the tutor constables. On the other hand, I did not want to rule out using these notes completely because they did provide an added level of understanding and richness to the data.

Having made this decision, I then proceeded to immerse myself in the interview and scenario transcripts. From having already undertaken the transcription, I had a sense of some of the emerging issues, but on completion of the field work I took the approach suggested by Creswell (1998) and Ritchie and Spencer (2002), immersing myself fully in these transcripts to re-familiarise myself with their content. This was particularly relevant considering that some of the interviews and scenarios had been conducted and transcribed much earlier in the study. Following this, there are a number of models to guide researchers through the analysis (see for example Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Hollway and Jefferson, 2001; Dey, 1993; Huberman and Miles, 1994; Richards and Richards, 1994), all of which include the deconstruction of transcripts into meaningful units of analysis by identifying themes and giving them labels or categories. Using this approach, I was able to make full use of WinMAX's capabilities to highlight extracts from the transcripts and assign them to the categories I was beginning to generate. At this stage, these categories did not take account of the times at which the data were generated and were nothing other than individual words or phrases that were easily recognisable to me: I deemed this approach to be essential to assist me when, as a part-time student, I did not have the luxury of extensive periods of time to analyse the data, but rather often only had time to review a maximum of one transcript at one go. For this reason, it was the writing of the results chapters that formed the most dynamic and creative process of the analysis. As Richardson comments:

> I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn't know before I wrote it. I was taught, however, as perhaps you were, too, not to write until I knew what I wanted to say, until my points were organized and outlined. No surprise, this static writing model coheres with mechanistic scientism and quantitative research. (1994: 516)

It was during this writing phase that I began working with the 'easily recognisable' categories and making the connections that Dey (1993) describes as crucial to ensure that the data do not remain fragmented but, rather, that the constituent parts reveal characteristic elements which lead to further analysis. Whilst in the early parts of this stage I reported only on the categories, themes and patterns that emerged (Janesick, 1994), as I began to make links between the categories and identify relevant high-level themes for the chapters, I used theory and research findings (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996) and my own growing authority to

direct these themes and, ultimately, the conclusions that I have drawn. I wanted to ensure that my data analysis and interpretations were properly grounded conceptually and empirically (Dey, 1993). However, the longitudinal nature of the study increased the complexity of this process and it was only by laying out the categories, with reference to the point at which the officers had voiced a particular comment, that I was able to order the comments chronologically and identify changes in the categories over time.

Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodological approaches and research design, and the often pragmatic rationale for the choices adopted throughout the three years of fieldwork. The fact that I adopted the 'get out and do it' perspective advocated by Punch (1994) has meant that I have been able to integrate examples of my own experience. In doing so my intention has been to bring to life the fieldwork, thus allowing the reader an insight into the intensity and enjoyment of my fieldwork experience and making more real and honest the pragmatism of fieldwork. Where a more clinical slant to the chapter would have hidden much of what has proved to be valuable learning, I feel that the approach I have adopted does greater justice to the three years of my time and to the officers' commitment to the research.

Over three years of data generation utilising a variety of approaches, a rounded picture of officers' developing response to domestic violence has been achieved. The following four chapters detail the outcome of my analysis of the data.

Chapter 6: The Officers

Introduction

During the three years of fieldwork the officers who volunteered to be a part of the study gave up time and energy to provide me with the insights that have made this study so rich with views and experience. Some of this was constabulary time, but some was the officers' own time which was particularly precious when they were undertaking the intensive and very busy period during the residential training, or when they had returned home to their families late at night after a busy shift. Although I suspect that there must have been occasions after a training day which started at 8.30am and finished at past 9pm (when the officers completed their preparation for the following day's lessons), when they just wanted to relax in the bar or head straight to bed and not be plagued by a barrage of questions and faced with a tape-recorder, at no time did they give me any indication that I was unwelcome or that they were too tired to answer any of my questions. In many ways I believe that this was an indication of the officers' enthusiasm for becoming police officers and embracing all that this meant, but this chapter explores in more depth the issues that emerged when I asked them about becoming police officers. First, it discusses the length of time the officers had thought about joining the service, their motivations and ambitions and the concept of being part of a 'police family'. It then moves on to consider the officers' concerns about how they might change and their anxieties about training. This chapter reflects the longitudinal nature of the study to a lesser degree than the other results chapters because it is more about officers' initial views. Thus, while the findings do concur largely with the socialisation literature, the anticipatory socialisation literature is particularly relevant.

Anticipatory socialisation

Sterling (1972) found that the majority of police officers in his study had considered joining the police service for four years prior to actually joining. In contrast, the seven officers in this study had been considering joining for varying lengths of time. Indeed, both Julie and Ellie seemed to 'stumble across' the idea of joining. Julie initially had offered her brother some moral support in his application by offering to take part in a 'practice' fitness test with him, whilst a careers advisor had guided Ellie.

> He was thinking of applying and I said 'if you want I'll come with you'. So we went along to the one [practice fitness test] at the leisure centre and that night I thought 'well, I'll apply, I might as well have a go', and I hadn't really thought about it at all at that stage. And then the application form came through and I thought 'Oh well, I might as well fill it in'. And we like both filled our application forms in together, then we went to [name of town] and did a practice fitness test as well, and then the date came through for the fitness test and that was the first time I thought 'shit, I've actually applied for this' ... it didn't really sink in then until after the assessment and 'we want you to come for an interview', you know. I was like 'shit, I'm actually getting somewhere'. (Julie; Week 3)

> I think it was about November, almost a year. It was quite funny because I went to one of those career advice things ... they did this huge personality test ... and it came up with all these careers and one of them was police officer. I kind of dismissed it and kind of laughed, but then went for a meeting with a careers person and a lot of careers that they'd told me I could do, I had to do a Masters for and I wasn't really ... so she said well look into some of the things that are suggested and I looked into it and just the more I read the more I liked and nothing put me off. (Ellie; Week 3)

Rob also indicated that he had thought about joining the service for a year and, similarly to Ellie and Julie, this was an idea that he 'came round to'.

> I thought about the police, I can't remember what made me think about it first, but gradually over time I just became more comfortable with the idea ... and then I applied. (Rob; Week 3)

In contrast, Becky, Alison, Keith and Adrian had been thinking of joining for several years. In Becky's case this had been nine years; her enthusiasm evident from the fact that she had worked part-time at her local police station since the age of fifteen. Keith had been considering joining for seven years, from the time he left school at the age of seventeen, but had delayed the decision by going to university, and then because his girlfriend was applying for jobs all across the country and he was keen to wait until they were settled. Adrian had made the decision to join eight years earlier, but during that time was keen to 'see the world' (Week 3) and so joined the Navy on an eight year commission before returning and applying to join the police service. Alison had thought about joining for a while, but was keen to find an area in the country where she was comfortable enough to join. Therefore, while van Maanen (1974) reported that anticipatory socialisation begins at the time that a person makes their occupational choice, this study suggests that this socialisation might take place at different paces as some of these officers joined without giving much conscious thought to the consequences while others, like Keith, were distracted by other issues in their lives. Nevertheless, all the officers in the study were told within the first two months of 1998 that they had been accepted into the Constabulary and would be starting in September 1998 so, at a minimum, the effects of anticipatory socialisation might have seen during these few months.

Regardless of whether the officers had spent considerable time thinking about the police service before applying, they described the first couple of weeks as being crucial for them to identify whether the role was one that they felt they were going to enjoy. This is interesting because the officers would have actually experienced very little in terms of 'real' policing on which to make such an important judgment. (They had had an introduction to the training and just one day at the police station that they were to be allocated to after the training.) However, their comments indicate that different issues were important to different people. For example, Julie's comment implies that her impression of the organisation was based

upon whether she was comfortable with her colleagues, while Alison and Ellie seemed to be more concerned about the role of police officer and the organisation.

> And then Monday morning and like, everyone was like chatting and everything and I just thought, no, I like this. I mean, I know obviously you're not learning the job and you're not doing what you'd normally be doing, but I didn't have that feeling I don't like this, you know, and I think that makes a difference, like what you think in the first few hours. (Julie; Week 3)

> It was just a feeling at the time that I really wanted to do it, but it wasn't until I was actually in my first two weeks and going through the different structures and areas that we have to cover that I thought 'yeah, it's something that I'm going to enjoy doing and I'm going to put everything that I have into it'. (Alison; Week 3)

> I think the first few days I was just ... I was a bit kind of nervous. You know, obviously I was thinking 'is this the job for me?' and I was a bit worried about it. (Ellie; Week 3)

This distinction between the importance that Julie placed upon the people around her and the importance of the organisation to Alison and Ellie might be a function of their backgrounds. Both Alison and Ellie had graduated from university with the intention of finding a long-term career in which they would be happy. It is likely, therefore, that the nature of the organisation would be important to them. In contrast, Julie appeared to be less career-minded: she had come from a job in a supermarket that she had enjoyed because of her colleagues and customers. This is not to say that the nature of the organisation would not become important to Julie but in the short-term she needed to know that she was going to be surrounded by people she liked if she was to enjoy her new role as much as her old one.

> And I like working with people, I mean I loved working in the supermarket with people, you know what I mean, you know, like some of my customers, I really knew them well, I mean they used to bring me chocolates and things, and I've always liked being with people. (Julie; Week 3)

Police 'family'

There were several factors in play when considering a career in the police service, including whether they joined at all but also *which* Constabulary they joined. For Keith this was dictated by where his girlfriend worked, but for Alison and Becky the reason was primarily about being close to family, although Alison did comment that there was the added bonus that the Constabulary had 'got diversity in the communities and they've got different areas, different people' (Week 3). Although they did not comment about the issue explicitly, as Rob, Ellie and Adrian had immediate family in the area, it is possible that this also influenced their choice of Constabulary.

Despite the fact that none of the officers had chosen the area because of a particular affiliation with the Constabulary, but rather because they had close family links in the area, during their time at residential training school an affiliation with the Constabulary was formed through the relationships the officers had with one another and their colleagues in other constabularies[13]. From my fieldwork observations it was evident that the concept of a police 'family' was introduced to the officers on their very first day – the family day – when the officers and their chosen family members attended an introduction to the Constabulary. The then-Deputy Chief Constable welcomed the officers to the Constabulary and his introduction reinforced the concepts of collegiality and camaraderie as being of crucial importance to the officers' success in the organisation: he told the officers that they were now a part of the 'police family' where 'loyalty to colleagues, to big ideals and to the Crown' were important. He also told them that they should be proud to join the 'national service where we all speak the same language' and that the training 'is the best to allow you to do your job', although the importance of building camaraderie during training was reiterated as crucial. And so the seeds of the importance of formal and informal socialisation were sown. Whilst Maghan (1988) refers to metaphors such as 'the police family' reflecting a sub-cultural mystique that forms a rite of passage for successful survival in the policing occupation, it is perhaps surprising how specifically, overtly and early in their careers this was presented to the officers. Despite the emphasis placed upon the national police family, however, the fieldwork observations revealed that, once in the residential phase of training school, the officers became 'territorial' about their own constabulary as a result of conflict between officers from different constabularies.

> At the end of the day we're the British police force, I haven't got a problem getting to know anyone from Wiltshire or Avon and Somerset. [But] it's been blasted at us from the Wiltshire force 'you are the poor force'. I don't see us as the poor force. At the end of the day we have had everything that they have had. We've had the same training, if not better training. And I just, you know, we haven't actually said to their faces 'your force is this because of this, that and the other'. I mean, at the end of the day, we're the Gloucestershire force and we are... and I'm proud to be in Gloucestershire police force. (Alison; Week 3)

Certainly the officers in this study expressed satisfaction at having chosen to join Gloucestershire, seemingly as a challenge to the fact that colleagues from the other constabularies were insistent that it was a 'poor' constabulary with fewer resources and less up-to-date technology than their own constabularies. The fieldwork therefore highlighted an important difference between rhetoric and reality: whilst the officers had been introduced to the concept of a generalised 'national police family' the training environment promoted specific competitiveness between constabularies. For example, during physical training sessions the officers would 'cheer on' colleagues from their own constabulary in a

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[13] It has already seen in Chapter 5 that probationers from three Constabularies were trained together.

competitive manner. Furthermore, this appeared to spill over into the classrooms and social settings such as the bar. For example, the officers sat in separate Constabulary groups in the bar. Although it is not possible to be sure whether the officers had internalised the concept of the national police family, it seems that their early experiences might have led them to reject this notion, and to look instead to the importance of their own Constabulary family. It might be said that this contradiction can be seen in Alison's comment when she makes reference to the rhetoric but ends by referring to the reality of her experience. It is also possible then, that the concept of a 'reality shock' (used in the socialisation literature primarily to describe the experience of officers when they become operational and find that they cannot apply the training as it has been taught to them) could also be used in this context to describe the surprise the officers might experience at facing such territorial attitudes and associated verbal hostility.

In the recorded observation notes there are examples of occasions when one of the officers (who did not volunteer to take part in the study) made efforts to bridge some of the differences between constabularies. But she was ostracised by her own colleagues for doing this and although this hostility became less obvious over the period of the residential training, her relationship with some of her colleagues never fully recovered. The strength of some of the hostility, combined with some of the ease at which the officers appeared to be 'sucked into' the 'bitching' within their constabulary in-group, meant that efforts to bridge the differences were unsuccessful overall. Perhaps this was because the officers were able to use this as a focus around which they could build a relationship with their constabulary and constabulary colleagues. Rob was a good example of this.

> I find it quite difficult to stop myself going along with the kind of bitching about the other constabularies 'cause I don't really like doing that but it's very easy to do and I do it. (Rob; Week 3)

Rob's behaviour might be explained using the work of Taylor (1983) who concluded that the police sub-culture consists of strong peer pressure, a high regard for what fellow officers think and a very strong desire to be accepted. Pavalko (1971) argued that approval is often used as a definitive measure of success of being 'socialised', particularly where there is a strong sense of community. However, as my fieldwork only dealt with one group of officers and one residential training period it is hard to know whether this kind of exclusivity and territoriality is a routine part of all training programmes in which officers from more than one constabulary participate. Certainly I saw no evidence of the training staff addressing it, but then it was unclear whether they were unaware of it, whether they simply accepted it as 'normal' or, in line with Pavalko's view, whether they were happy to accept it because it was evidence of success that socialisation was occurring. In relation to developing collegiality and camaraderie *within* constabularies, this process had a positive effect as the officers in Gloucestershire developed close relationships, strengthened by the fact that such bonds

were necessary to help them get through the training period. In this way, the peer group acted more like the 'surrogate family' in the police sub-culture described by Maghan (1988). This was evident on the penultimate evening of the first week of the residential training when I sat with Keith in the bar. He looked unhappy and when I questioned him about this he explained that he had been unhappy with the people around him from other constabularies (one person in particular had consistently been impolite to him), but that he was now 'fed up of hiding the fact' that he was unhappy. From this point on he spent increasing amounts of time with Rob. Fundamentally, the fieldwork demonstrated that the formal socialisation environment supported and encouraged the development of camaraderie, albeit within constabularies rather than across them. Julie's comments demonstrate the importance of these relationships to her both within and outside the formal training sessions.

> ...to start off with we [same Constabulary officers] didn't really know each other but as it went on, you know, like we had [name of another officer] missing her little boy, you know, and you're like 'come on, it's alright', you know, and you could like talk to each other and you all knew that you were in the same boat, and it's the same thing here [training school]. You just knock on someone's door, you go in, you sit there, chat for an hour, and like come back out again. I think maybe if we didn't all get on then it might be different, you know, perhaps I wouldn't like it so much... You know, like [name of another officer] will come in, she'll knock on the door 'do you want a cup of tea?' or she like sits there polishing her shoes and it's nice because otherwise I think if we weren't so closely knit I mean I think half of us would have wanted to go home by now. (Julie; Week 3)

> [CR: Is there anything you're particularly worried about?] Yeah, I don't normally do those press-ups. I mean, they were a bit of a strange fashion going down like that, and I've got a sore chest this morning, but when I... and like Becky said to me yesterday, she said 'if you don't get to level 7' [on the running ('bleep') test] she said 'I'll be ashamed of you' and I was doing it and I was like I've got to get to level 7, I've got to get to level 7 and it went to level 7 and I thought 'thank God for that'. (Julie; Week 3)

It seems that it was the feelings of collegiality, coupled with the officers' desire to become a police officer, which meant that they continued in difficult circumstances at training school. However, what was not acknowledged by any of the officers was that the *type* of relationships developed with their colleagues during the residential training period could only be temporary: after completing training school the officers were all allocated to different areas of the Constabulary or to different shifts. Whilst they could have developed lasting friendships the maintenance of these was not going to be made easy for them by the nature of shift work and differences in location. Therefore, the collegiality developed at training school was convenient and place-specific. Some of the officers did develop friendships that were strong enough to mean that they met up socially afterwards, for example, Rob and Keith used to meet up to go drinking after their shifts, but this was not common.

It became apparent that the officers' expressions of strong affiliation to the Constabulary reflected the feelings they had towards the two training officers responsible for the first two weeks of training in this Constabulary. In other words, at this time the training staff of the Constabulary were the officers' only real link with the Constabulary and because this was such a positive relationship, this was reflected in their feelings about the organisation itself. The next section explains that the officers' positive perceptions of the police service were influenced by knowing police officers whom they considered to be 'nice' people. The two training officers were described using this type of positive language. For this reason, the officers believed that their experience of the first two weeks of training were of a better quality than that in other constabularies (despite the fact that most officers from other constabularies believed *their* own first two weeks were better because it had been a residential time). The bond the officers developed with the two training officers resulted in them looking for support from the trainers when the conflict between officers from the different constabularies became particularly bad.

> All jokes set aside we were going to send them a postcard saying '10/9'[14] [name of two training staff], come and get us. Because... people, it's not just one, it's everyone in the whole group, and we've all got them [the same feelings] but we don't want to alarm them. (Alison; Week 3)

For Rob, it was the two-week period prior to the 15 weeks' residential training, which he had felt was so good in Gloucestershire in comparison with officers from other constabularies.

> I think I was quite surprised by the extent to which Stage 1 has affected people's viewpoints because I was amazed by how similar the blokes from the other constabularies are. They just all seem so similar, the kind of, I was particularly talking to them on the corridors and stuff, and they've all got the same haircuts and they're macho, stereotypical, 'what are the birds like in your constabulary?' That sort of thing. (Rob; Week 3)

Here, Rob seems to be rejecting the hetero-normative masculine sub-culture demonstrated by his male counterparts from the other constabularies and, in doing so, implies that he is different to (and better than) them. Interestingly, Keith also rejects the sub-culture. However, this is not a blanket rejection since there is also some indication of acceptance of the violent element of the masculine sub-culture:

> ... my dad was in the fire service, and all his family are mostly in the police or fire service. And a lot of them are arseholes. No seriously. I've got a mate in the police. He's a brilliant guy. A really, really good guy but he kind of said as well that it's full of arseholes and he kind of hates them more than criminals. *[CR: So why did you join then if you were expecting to work with people like that?]* Because I knew they weren't all like that. Because I had a mate in the police and I knew ... he said as well. He said his shift's fine, and it was really

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[14] 10/9 was the call used on the radio system when help or urgent assistance was required. A new system has since replaced this.

training college. He hated training college and he said 'I really thought I'd make a mistake. This isn't for me'. He said there was so many of them, you know, they must apply for arseholes just to fill up the quota. *[CR: So what makes someone an arsehole then?]* I was going to say lack of tolerance but that's what I'm showing! No, it's just a couple of them I've spoken to out of class and I don't like them. They're like my perceptions of what police officers are, kind of racist, misogynist'. (Keith; Week 3)

Whilst it is less clear what characteristics Rob anticipated amongst his new colleagues, Keith chose to join despite holding clearly negative views. Adrian also held a negative view before joining, but this was more about the 'quality' of police officers than about the culture, although it might be argued that the two are associated.

... personally I had thought the bobby was going to be, I don't know, a bit more, it's very difficult to be polite about it, you know, just think maybe not overly bright, come from a certain background. (Adrian; Week 3)

This raises an issue for exploration: why did the officers choose to join when they held negative perceptions of likely colleagues? It is possible that the 'third-person effect' is evident, that is, there was a belief that others would be more influenced by what went on around them than individuals would be themselves. This is supported by the third-person effect seen in some of the literature about the media where individuals believe that other people are much more affected by mass media than they are themselves. In particular, perceived 'weak' groups such as women, youths and children are pointed out as being the most easily influenced (see for example Hoijer, 1999). In this way it might be assumed that the self-belief of Keith, Rob and Adrian was such that they thought themselves to be better than those they anticipated they would be working with and, by implication, felt that they as individuals could be the ones to make a difference to the organisation.

Bennett (1984) argues that potential police officers develop a sense of police organisation and culture through their police acquaintances. Fielding (1988a) and van Maanen (1974) also suggest that the extent of police-relevant experience or police acquaintances is high amongst police recruits. In this study, of the seven officers, five met this criterion: Becky had experience of working in a police environment; Julie's eldest brother was an experienced police officer as an Inspector; Alison's aunt had been a police officer and was a part of Alison's inspiration for joining; Rob had a family friend who was a police officer and several of Keith's family and friends were police officers. But, for the officers in this study, their informed (and largely negative) knowledge about the service did nothing to dissuade them from joining the Constabulary themselves.

The importance of 'nice' officers
What seemed to be important for the officers in their decision to join the service was that they all knew at least one 'nice' officer. Even Keith disregarded his negative comments

about family members and referred to his 'mate' who is 'a brilliant guy'. The fact that Keith chose to ignore closer family experiences is perhaps an indication of the strength of his desire to become a police officer (and we have already seen that his self-belief was such that he may have felt that he could make a difference). Rob and Ellie made similar comments about 'nice' people, and for Rob, this also influenced his views about what he might like to specialise in later on.

> ...when I went through the interview process the people I met were just, you know, really nice and normal and I just... nothing put me off, so I kept sort of going through the process. (Ellie, Interview 1; Week 3)

> The one policeman that I do know, he was in CID up near Manchester. But it's more down to the fact that he's a really nice bloke who I like, more than the CID aspect of it. (Rob, Interview 1; Week 3)

Interestingly, whilst Julie did not comment explicitly that she knew a 'nice' officer, we might assume that she thought of her brother in this way (Julie had a close relationship with her brother, who was already an officer, and he was one of the family members she invited as her guest to her 'dining in' night and 'passing out parade'). Julie provided an added insight to this issue when she talked about the need to change, to 'harden up', if she was to be able to deal with some of the situations she anticipated that she would face in her role as a police officer. Her concern about this was the impact that this might have on other people around her, particularly her partner. Her comment might be interpreted that she was keen to continue to be a 'nice' person, and not someone perceived as 'bolshy' by her friends and family outside of work. In fact, some of this pressure seemed to come from her partner.

> I don't really want to change as a person, if you see what I mean. I mean, I understand that you've got to change, you know, your views and the way you look at thing. *[CR: Why have you got to change?]* I think basically in the way you deal with things. Like I'm as soppy as anything, you know if there was a rabbit run over in the road I'd probably cry for two days, and I think you know, if a child was murdered or something, or you had to go and tell someone, for me that would be really difficult, so I think you have to, in some ways harden up, or learn how to deal with things like this, because personally I've got no experience of that and I think unless I do learn how to deal with that, then when it comes to it I'll be a wreck. But then I think, well, you will be trained you know, in how to deal with these things. It's not going to make it go away but it will make it easier... *[CR: So how do you think changing is going to affect you and your life?]* I think as long as you don't let it take over, it'll be ok. Because then I can see it causing problems, you know, 'cause when I applied, [name of partner] was like 'you know, and I don't want ...' He didn't want me to change as a person in the way that 'no you can't do that' or driving down the motorway 'slow down', you know, because that's wrong, which I can't really see me doing anyway, but I think he realises and I realise, that you do have to change some amount in the way ... you know basically like whereas before you might like, if your MOT was a bit out of date, or something and you think 'oh it doesn't matter', whereas now you've got to be more responsible, so it's fine to change in that way, but it's when you're bolshy or for instance, or

you're saying 'oh your tax is running out, now do something about it'. Because you can't live like that then. So I think that's one worry about changing. (Julie; Week 3).

Interesting here is Julie's assumption that keeping within the law (that is, not speeding and having an up-to-date MOT) is not that important for the 'ordinary' person. While she shows an understanding for the new responsibilities she has, she does show a lack of awareness of the fact that very soon she could be taking legal action against people (like herself) for not doing such things. It might also be argued that this is evidence of a tension that Julie and the officers need to resolve: whilst Julie demonstrates a belief that she needs to change and that this will affect her persona at work for the better and allow her to function in her role as a police officer, she is concerned that this change might not be what is perceived as 'nice' or appropriate by her family and friends (although becoming a police officer is something that she wants to do, even to the detriment of her personal relationships, so we might question the extent of her concern). Therefore, Julie does demonstrate some awareness of the need to change and 'be socialised'. This supports Fielding's argument (1988a) that any study of socialisation should include a recruit's attempt to make sense of their experiences. It also concurs with Pavalko's suggestion (1971) that individuals 'allow' themselves to be socialised. In other words, officers express individual agency.

Anxieties about training

It was common for the officers who had been out of formal education for a long time to feel anxious about their ability to cope with the residential training period. Alison and Julie in particular felt anxious.

It is hard work, I mean, I've been out of education for a few years and the classroom material is difficult initially but I think it will take a few weeks to get into study practice and just really go for it. (Alison, Week 3)

I mean, we haven't really tackled laws and acts and remembering things for exams, so... I mean it's a long time since, well it's not that long, I mean but, well six years since I was studying for exams. (Julie, Week 3)

All the officers acknowledged that they had to complete the residential training period successfully. For Adrian, this was important in order to make a good impression on his colleagues when he became operational.

If I come out with a report saying I didn't really do well on the academic side, that will need an awful lot of harder work from me on the streets later on a couple of years down the line to convince people actually on the streets I will be useful. (Adrian; Week 3)

Although the officers had to complete the training period successfully in order to move on to the next phase of their training, the 'tutorship period', Adrian's comment is interesting in the

context of what I heard from the officers during the two weeks prior to the residential training period. The day after the officers had spent the day at the division that they would be allocated to I met with them in the classroom early in the morning before the training staff arrived. I asked the officers how they had got on at their divisions and the response was that 'It was really boring – just about the only thing we learnt was about the 'ways and means' act', an ironic reference to the operational difference between rhetoric and reality. Their comments were interesting for two reasons: first, because as soon as the training staff entered the classroom and asked them the same question, the officers' response was that they had had a 'great day'. As already noted, this demonstrated to me that I had won their trust and they were being honest with me, and also that the officers had an understanding of the need to say the right thing at the right time if they were to be accepted within the organisation and by the training staff. Second, and perhaps more importantly, all the officers seemed to believe that what they were going to learn at training school would be influenced or mitigated by the 'ways and means act' of working that they would learn about when they were operational. They therefore showed a degree of understanding that they would face a 'reality shock' (see for example Sterling, 1972; Butler, 1979 and Salisbury, 1994) when they had completed their training, supporting the findings of Fielding (1988a). Nevertheless, the degree to which Adrian believed this, or was prepared to accept it, is evident in his determination to make a good academic impression because of his belief that this would influence his colleagues' future perceptions of him.

Motivations and ambitions

So far, we have seen that even though some of the officers held negative perceptions of other police officers of their acquaintance, and acknowledged and were concerned about their need to change in some way, they decided to join the service anyway. This raises questions about why they chose to join and suggests that their motivation(s) (and the self-belief already discussed) were a stronger driver than their concerns. Without exception, the officers explained their reason for wanting to join the police service as being associated with the desire to 'do something worthwhile'. Whilst some of the officers coupled this with other reasons, public service seemed to be the primary motive with the officers indicating a link between this and job satisfaction. Julie had seen this job satisfaction in her brother and commented that '[he is] the only person I know who whistles when he goes to work.' (Week 3).

> The main reason was just something that I wasn't going to be stuck in an office, or I wasn't … it's really pathetic but it's the kind of idea of doing something that's worthwhile as well. I kind of grew up with that. (Keith; Week 3)

> I think the main difference was that even though the jobs I thought about doing beforehand, sports journalism and teaching, really appealed in themselves, I think I can isolate it now that they wouldn't have given me the greatest satisfaction doing them. Because I've got quite a large sense of community responsibility and having … wanting to do something useful, and I

couldn't quite work it out at the time why sports journalism, which on paper would appear to be a perfect job, something I would love doing, why I didn't feel I would be entirely satisfied with that. And when I started thinking about the police even though I might not enjoy it as much as I would enjoy watching a football match, I gradually realised that I would be entirely satisfied by my own standards of contributing to society and all that sort of thing with my job. And that's the most important criteria to me. I don't want to do a job just to earn money. I never really looked at it like that. (Rob; Week 3)

I like getting out and meeting people, you know, and just trying to help people, which I mean I know it's probably a bit of an idealistic view of the police, but I think that's what it is mainly. You know, and I just wanted to do something worthwhile and the police has like got good opportunities. Yeah, the pay's good as well, I mean if you want to get on you can, if you want to stay as a PC you can, if you want to go and specialise you can. (Julie; Week 3)

Both Julie and Keith almost apologised for wanting to do something 'worthwhile', intimating awareness that their view may be idealistic. Both Fielding (1988a) and White (1989) found that recruits had an idealistic motivation and view of the occupation as a form of social service. However, it might also be argued that, through information the officers gained from their anticipatory socialisation, they might not have been entirely ignorant that this was idealistic. In Keith's case he may have had a good sense of what it would mean to be a police officer and already knew of officers who might not have been pursuing an idealistic agenda. Alternatively, there may have been other reasons which the officers deemed inappropriate to disclose either during the recruitment process or to the researcher. van Maanen (1974) suggested that officers are attracted by the expectation that the role is exciting and dramatic. Indeed, this might be the case as it was only when my relationship with the officers developed that some of the officers began making reference to feeling excited about attending potentially violent and dangerous incidents (see Chapter 7 for a full exploration of this).

The officers' early ambitions also suggest that 'doing something worthwhile' is more about working in an organisation which is about the greater public good than about the specific roles they might fulfil or types of incidents they might attend. Domestic violence is only one of a number of incidents in which officers can help people generally, and in which the victims might be described as 'vulnerable', but no roles or types of incidents were specified. What is more, the officers might be described as apathetic in their feelings about domestic violence incidents (I have underlined parts of the quotations for emphasis). Only Keith made it explicit that he had volunteered to take part in the research as he saw it as an opportunity to learn and gather feedback about the quality of his response.

> [CR: So when I said to the group that I was looking at your experiences of the first three years of service how that affected your response to domestic violence, what was your initial reaction?] I wasn't ... it's not one of the areas that I was interested in before, domestic violence, it's not an experience I've had apart from with a few sailors who may have been a bit aggressive at home,

their personalities being aggressive, and that's the environment they're in. It's probably perpetuated by the background they're in. Really a bit sit on the wall sort of thing, you know, not interested one way or the other, but just interested in why you were there. (Adrian; Week 3)

[CR: So when I said to the group, I sort of introduced myself and explained what I was doing, and I said that I was interested in domestic violence and stuff, what was your initial reaction?] I just thought, I don't really know anything about domestic violence. I didn't really have an opinion to be honest, you know I mean, when you said about domestic violence I just, it seemed such a long way off anyway, actually learning things like that, but it doesn't bother me, you know. (Julie; Week 3)

For me, looking at it now, domestic violence is one of the many things I'm going to come across, and for me personally it holds no kind of particular importance or otherwise, so I didn't really react – yeah, that's something that I can, I'm really interested in or ... it was just an area. (Rob; Week 3)

I said I was interested because I though that could actually be really helpful. You can talk it over with someone, how you react because this is something you will see, my reaction as well. (Keith; Week 3)

Rather, the common aspirations of officers were to join the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), become dog-handlers and / or to achieve promotion[15].

[CR: Why CID?] It just seems really interesting. Kind of the piecing things together I like. I like puzzles, I like using my brain, I like drawing things together. (Keith; Week 3)

I've taken advice from a number of people from the Constabulary, one chief inspector who said that really, if you want to progress, keep in the middle grounds so I'm looking at that, while doing sergeant exams, maybe doing a stint in CID, the classical trying to get some experience across the board ... Dog handler because I like being out and about. I'm more of an out and about sort of person as you've probably worked out by now, rather than a desk sergeant type person, or a desk PC type. I'd absolutely loathe that and it would kill me. (Adrian; Week 3)

He [officer from Career Development] said 'Before you're a sergeant, if you want to do anything like dog handling then go and do it straight away because you can't do that when you're a sergeant. If you want to go into CID or something.' So then I'd like to look at placements and just ... I'm not really sure what area I would like to do. Well, apparently after two years you can start thinking about doing your sergeants' exams, so I'll probably look into doing that. (Ellie; Week 3)

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[15] As an 'insider' I was particularly surprised by the desire of some of the officers to become a dog-handler as my own experience suggested that this is not a role held in high regard by other members of the organisation. Indeed, quite the opposite. For example, I had heard jokes being made about the dogs being more intelligent than their handlers. However, I did enquire with other members of the Constabulary and it seems that for every vacancy for a dog-handler, there are around 25 applicants. It is believed that this is because the role can be occupied for several years and is one of the most autonomous roles in the police service, with most handlers spending time patrolling alone with their dogs.

Depending on how it goes, and this largely depends on what I think of kind of how far I've got in terms of experience by the end of it, and how much the kind of constable role appeals to me, and if I do a CID attachment or anything like that but basically when I was talking to [name of local trainers] a week ago probably, they'd like me to take my sergeant's exam, part 1, in March 2000, so six months before I finish my probation, and then the final part of the sergeant's exam in the November, so a month after I finish my probation. (Rob; Week 3)

I mean I will do it [foot patrol] for several years until I feel ready to try something else. I mean I will try my attachments quite early on I think, just to get a feel for it. But if I'm still on the beat for ten years than fair play. If I'm not, I don't care. *[CR: So where do you see yourself then, in 12 months time?]* Out and about, you know, on the beat, doing the bizz. (Becky; Week 3)

Working in CID or achieving promotion generally (especially above the rank of sergeant) means having less contact with the public than a patrol officer. Again, this supports the notion that it is being part of the organisation and not specific roles that involve contact with the public which is deemed worthwhile. For example, CID is much more about detective work (which requires additional intensive training), with an emphasis on dealing with crimes rather than having regular contact with the public.

At the time of publication, two of the officers have achieved promotion, but as far as I am aware, the other officers have not fulfilled the roles they referred to when they first joined.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter it was apparent that most of the officers had thought about joining the police service for a while and so, in accordance with the literature about anticipatory socialisation, they will all have had some view about the role they were taking on and the organisation they were joining. Maghan (1998) believes that acquiring inaccurate perceptions is likely to lead to officers encountering difficulty in adjusting to the role, but it has been clear from this chapter that both positive and negative views were held. Furthermore, the officers clearly had an understanding that what they learned at training school would be replaced to a degree by the 'ways and means' act of working. As every role and organisation is likely to have positive and negative aspects to it, we might conclude that the officers' perceptions about their new profession were as accurate as other new staff in other professions.

Several of the officers were critical of the behaviour of their colleagues from other constabularies, but in particular, Rob and Keith appeared to reject the hetero-normative masculine sub-culture. It seems that the male officers had some expectations about the culture and about their colleagues. In contrast, the women officers made no specific reference to either of these. It is possible that this was related to the officers' exposure to police officers or similar types of organisations prior to joining (during the anticipatory

socialisation phase), but then this might be questioned because Julie's brother's experience of being a police officer obviously did not have the same impact upon her. It is also possible that male officers feel more sensitive about criticisms of the masculinity of police culture and for this reason are more likely to have raised it as an issue. However, whilst gender *might* be a factor, it might also be concluded that the findings are such that it is difficult to draw conclusions about differences in this regard.

It took Keith very little time to determine that some officers from other constabularies were exactly the kind of people he imagined (and disliked) he would find. It is this latter finding that demonstrates perhaps the most striking paradox in this chapter: some of the officers held strong negative perceptions about their future colleagues, and yet still joined. Their self-belief was such that they felt they would be able to make a difference to the organisation by not replicating the behaviour and values of stereotypical officers, despite knowing of people they may not like or who might hold different values from their own. Yet the police-relevant experiences or acquaintances encountered before joining meant that the officers all held at least one officer in high regard. Furthermore, the collegiality developed between the officers implies that they did not hold their own Constabulary colleagues in low regard. Quite the opposite was the case: although in the main the relationships were not sustained after training school, the officers developed a tight network of friends during the residential training period. What is evident is the way in which officers developed relationships with their Constabulary colleagues to help them, at the very least, adjust to being in a new environment and for some, to being away from their families. The formal training environment was conducive to and encouraged the development of collegiality.

Without exception, all the officers stated a desire to be doing something 'worthwhile' by working as part of an organisation with an overt public service ethic – to be working for the greater public good. The officers might also describe this as 'making a difference', but in this case the difference is not to the organisation, but to members of the public. However, there are other public sector occupations who also work for the greater public good, such as Social Work, so it seems likely that there were other reasons that the officers were either unable to articulate or felt were inappropriate responses to a question about their reason for joining the police service. Nevertheless, whatever the officers' reasons for joining, by volunteering to be a part of the research they demonstrated a motivation and commitment to their new role. On the basis that it was made clear to them that they would remain anonymous throughout the study there cannot be a suggestion that they wanted to make a good impression to the training staff (and there was no reason to make a good impression to the researcher). Rather that their motive for cooperating must have been a personal one. As has already been discussed, a sense of belonging was important to the officers. Perhaps being a member of the study provided them with this during the early stages of their career.

Chapter 7: Feelings and Emotions Associated with Domestic Violence

Introduction

Throughout this study the officers have explored and described their feelings about joining the police service, their experiences of training school, being tutored and becoming operational. The qualitative nature of this exploration has not only given rise to insights into the officers' experiences of responding to domestic violence incidents, but also to how the feelings and emotions associated with becoming a police officer, and being faced with domestic violence, changed and developed during the first three years.

One of the notions central to this chapter is that of self-confidence, whereby the officers become more confident in their role as police officers attending domestic violence incidents at a rate dependent upon their actual experience of dealing with incidents. Yet, despite this increase in confidence in knowing what to do when attending incidents, at no time did this extend to confidence about the advice and options that officers should and could give to the victims of domestic violence. Instead, they reverted to drawing upon their own 'common sense'. This is particularly problematic as, throughout the three years, all the officers in the study describe their own inability to relate to and understand domestic violence. In addition, there are also some fairly dramatic shifts in their feelings associated with violence and officer safety. Initially, officers give little thought to the fact that they might be faced with violence and, consequently, that safety is an important consideration but this soon changes when some of them spend time 'in action' with their colleagues and are faced with violent and potentially life-threatening situations. By the end of their three years in the police service, personal and colleague safety has become an integral part of the officers' decision-making. Nonetheless, while the potential of violence leads to considerations about safety, it results in the officers (primarily male officers) feeling excitement. Indeed, dealing with most incidents that require an emergency response leads to some excitement, until other factors associated with their response begin to temper this.

The findings here concur broadly with previous research into police socialisation which suggests that officers' attitudes and behaviour change over time, although in the literature the change is frequently based upon quantitative research during the officers' first two years. See, for example, Fielding (1998b); Butler (1979); van Maanen (1977); Sterling (1972); and White (1989). Yet, these authors focused very little on the emotional elements of socialisation and did not comment specifically on feelings associated with responding to domestic violence incidents. Indeed, what follows below crosses the socialisation literature into observations linked to organisational culture associated with authors such as Fielding (1994), Martin (1989) and Waddington (1999). This suggests that police officers' shifting attitudes towards and experiences of domestic violence work cannot be explained through socialisation literature alone.

Confidence: from novice to three years' experience

During the different data collection phases of the study the officers were asked to comment specifically on their feelings of confidence in dealing with domestic violence incidents. Assuming that confidence is based upon an increase in knowledge and skills gained through training and operational experience, it might have been expected that there would be an increase in confidence over time. Indeed, the findings *do* demonstrate this but, notably, the officers did not describe the increase in confidence as being a linear process. Rather, they discussed confidence as differentiated by different elements of domestic violence work. Whilst they might have been confident in one element (such as talking to the victim), this did not mean that they were confident in another (such as providing advice). There is conspicuously little to draw on from the policing literature that relates to the development of confidence, and specifically to confidence in dealing with domestic violence work.

Communication and interpersonal skills

Initially, the confidence of officers was based upon their communication and interpersonal skills, and not their ability to respond to incidents as police officers. In the early stages of their training, before they had received any preparation to deal with domestic violence or had attended any type of incident, Rob and Ellie in particular indicated that that they believed they could have an impact on domestic violence incidents simply through drawing on their communication skills.

> I think I'd be pretty confident going to an incident like this. I mean, I wouldn't know what I could actually do, I wouldn't know the best advice to give them, but just talking it through might help. (Ellie; Week 11)

> I think in terms of dealing with the boyfriend, in terms of whatever state he's in physically and mentally, I wouldn't have any problems with that I don't think. Also I'd be quite confident in terms of communicating with the woman ... I'm quite confident in communicating with people in most situations. (Rob; Week 11)

It might be expected that *all* probationary officers would be confident about their communication skills because they all have to score well on this part of their recruitment assessment. This begs the question of what causes them to be confident about dealing with domestic violence (through their communication ability) when observations during the fieldwork suggest that they do not feel this way about attending many other kinds of violent incidents? Perhaps both officers quoted above were referring to the approach they would take if dealing with friends. Indeed, this could well be the case because, at the very early stages of being a police officer, officers' main frame of reference must be their own prior experience of life and relationships. In one sense the quotations reflect the naivety of the officers at the very early stages of their training: they also demonstrate that, after nine weeks of being a police officer, they were not yet *thinking* like police officers. In other words, if put back into a situation that they could relate to they drew upon their general skills as human

beings rather than their new skills associated with their emerging roles as police officers. In doing this, they were filled with a (probably false) sense of confidence. At the very early stages of their probationary period then, Rob and Ellie as human beings were more prominent than Rob and Ellie in their role as police officers. However, it is important to note that they were not about to operate as police officers at this time. Indeed, there was some acknowledgement from Rob and Ellie, as there was from other officers, that they needed training about how to respond to domestic violence in their capacity as a police officer. Nonetheless, although the officers' development continues to be monitored, once they have completed the fifteen-week training programme and ten weeks with their tutor constable, they are deemed ready to operate as police officers. This is particularly problematic if the training is not perceived to be helpful, and / or that the officers get little opportunity to deal with domestic violence incidents during their tutorship (a point raised in Chapter 9).

Training

The probationer training programme has been revised and restructured many times since its inception and so, not unreasonably, the officers described a reliance on the training to provide them with what they believed they needed to respond well to domestic violence in their capacity as police officers. Implicit in their responses on this issue was an assumption that the training would provide this.

> I obviously wouldn't be confident at all about set procedure or best practice, or whatever it is because I've had no input on either assault or domestic violence. (Rob; Week 11)

> At the moment I wouldn't really be confident handling the situation like that because obviously I don't ... we haven't been taught the skills to do it, so I wouldn't be confident. (Keith; Week 11)

However, in Rob's comment there is a contradiction with his earlier comment that he would feel confident about using his communication skills to have an impact upon a domestic violence incident. Perhaps this is the first indication from Rob of the transition from generic citizen with life experience, to Rob in his specific role as a police officer. This may go some way to explaining why his comments are contradictory, particularly if at this stage the shift is tentative and in its early stages.

Officers' views about their training will be commented on in more detail in Chapter 9. In terms of their confidence, it seems appropriate to comment here that, for some officers, the training did not provide them with the information they needed to reach a sufficient level of confidence. In Ellie's case, there was an evident desire throughout the training to feel competent. Even after training, some officers claimed that they were unsure about what they could and should do at domestic violence incidents. In summary, the officers' views at the start of their probationary training were that the training would provide them with appropriate

skills and / or know-how but their comments immediately after the fifteen weeks of residential training and after their tutorship demonstrated that this was not the case:

> I'd like to be more sure of what our powers would be and then what could happen if offences were identified and say he was arrested. You know, I'd like to feel more sure in ... if I was explaining to her what would happen, I'd like to feel sure that I wasn't just sort of making it up, that I was giving her a clear picture and not misleading her and sort of laying out the real options available. I'd feel a lot more confident in dealing with it if I knew sort of exactly what the possibilities were. (Ellie; 5 months)

> [*CR: Right OK, and did your training help with that?*] I can't think of anything. No. I don't think so. (Adrian; 10 months)

The whole of the ninth week at Bramshill was dedicated to assaults and domestic violence so it seems remarkable that Adrian could not think of anything from the training that had helped him in his learning during his tutorship about appropriate responses to domestic violence. In Chapter 8 it becomes evident that the officers find it difficult to identify legal remedies to use at most domestic violence incidents they attend. This might explain why Adrian did not deem training about legal remedies as useful or worth remembering. Furthermore, Ellie, who prior to the assaults and domestic violence training was initially confident about her communication skills, was less confident when she was referring to her response as a police officer and appeared to be seeking knowledge in a belief that this would be the answer to her lack of confidence. Therefore, while Rob *started* to make this transition to thinking like a police officer before week nine, Ellie had completed the entire residential training period before this began to happen. Certainly, neither Ellie nor Adrian were confident even after fifteen weeks of training input and this lack seems to indicate a problem in training which is addressed in much more detail in Chapter 9. Understandably, both officers demonstrated less confidence when they judged that the training had not provided them with what they felt they needed to increase their confidence. This raises two questions: if the training does not provide the officers with increased confidence then where does this confidence come from? And what implications does this have for victims of domestic violence? The answers to both questions will be explored later in the chapter.

Experience

During the early part of their patrol experience, after the residential training, the officers assigned to highly populated residential areas were more likely to attend domestic violence incidents than those assigned to very rural or town centre areas. The speed at which officers described feeling confident about attending incidents reflected this. For example, Keith attended a large number of domestic violence incidents and, because of this, he described feeling confident, and specifically about knowing the options available to him, after his tutorship period. In fact, he even stopped thinking about his confidence being an issue. This was very different from the way he presented after ten weeks when he referred to a lack

of confidence about the options available to him. In contrast, Rob, who was based in a much quieter area, did not display this level of confidence about knowing his options until later in his second year. The officers' confidence thus increased gradually and at different paces dependent on their practical exposure to domestic violence. Noticeably, as their experience increased the officers referred less in their accounts to their own interpersonal abilities and more to their roles as police officers, albeit tentatively in Adrian's case.

> [*CR: Now that you've been to a few, how confident do you feel about going to them...?*] Fine, yeah. I mean I know... yeah, fine. I mean I don't really think too much. But then you kind of know there's a certain circumstance you might make an arrest, and what circumstances you're not going to be making arrests, and how you're going to deal with people in whatever situation you find, 'cause you know the options really most of the time, unless it's something really serious. You know the options so you know what you're going to do. So you don't really have to think about it very much. (Keith; 10 months)

> [*CR: How confident do you feel when they come over the radio?*] OK. I wouldn't like to go in by myself. But it is recognised that I'm still quite young in my service so I would, you know, somebody would normally take the lead over me, but there are occasions where I'm in the van with [name of another officer] who's roughly the same as me, sort of few weeks more senior than me but not much more, and so there are occasions now where I'd probably take the lead. And a lot better. (Adrian; 10 months)

Interestingly, Julie's confidence also took time to develop. However while Adrian and Keith made reference to becoming more confident about the options available to them in responding to domestic violence, from Julie's comment it is evident that she emphasised the emotional impact of domestic violence and her confidence in handling 'frightening' and alien situations. This was also evident in Becky's responses when she made reference to being able to 'handle' the situations now that she had 'seen a few domestics'. Both of them made these kinds of comments after ten to twelve months - a slightly later time during their probationary period than Adrian and Keith. Nevertheless, as a result of the limitations of a study that focused on only a few officers, I can draw merely tentative conclusions about the female probationers paying more attention to the dynamics of domestic violence and about how the more familiar this became the more confident they became. For the male officers, confidence was derived more from knowing about procedure and what actions they could take at incidents.

> I'm getting more confident at handling things like this now as I say 'cause I've dealt with more of them, but at the beginning it was quite frightening because, you know, I just wasn't used to it, so it was quite strange. But I'm better now. I wouldn't say I'm overly confident but I've got like sort of an idea of what I'm going to do before I get there. (Julie; 10 months)

Officers' confidence further increased and after between 30 and 36 months, instead of making reference to domestic violence, the officers began referring to their confidence at

'jobs' that had become routine and 'normal' to them. So after almost three years the officers' confidence was such that they stopped distinguishing between procedure and their feelings about domestic violence and, instead, just made reference to their ability to deal with the incidents generally. This shift was seen in both the male and female officers, as the following quotes by Julie and Rob demonstrate:

> I'd feel fairly confident I think going to this incident because it's fairly normal and we do go to quite a few. (Julie; 31 months)

> [CR: How confident would you feel going to this incident now?] Totally confident. It's very rarely now that you come across a job that you haven't really got a clue. (Rob; 35 months)

It might be argued from this that training had little or no impact upon the officers' confidence in dealing with domestic violence and instead, that this sense of competence came from their experience. For example, it was evident from Adrian and Keith's comments that their confidence increased as they gained more experience of attending domestic violence incidents. However, Adrian's comment about becoming 'a lot better' raises questions about what 'better' actually means, and for whom? We have already seen that the training he received did not help him, so presumably the only benchmark against which he can assess his confidence is his colleagues' behaviour. Against them, not only can he compare his own responses, but also the results of his actions. But, if the training did not provide Adrian with any useful guidance about how to respond at domestic violence incidents, then this might also apply to his colleagues. So, do the officers measure their own response against that of their colleagues rather than against standards established in training? If so, then this concurs with Bennett (1984) who suggested that informal socialisation involves the learning of appropriate behaviour, attitudes and values in order for someone to function successfully. Clearly, when the officers felt able to demonstrate these behaviours, attitudes and values, they also felt confident about their ability to deal with domestic violence within their police role. In short, then, the more closely their own behaviour modelled that of their colleagues, the more confident the officers felt about their ability to cope with domestic violence incidents.

Dealing with violence
Perhaps surprisingly considering the term 'domestic *violence*', during the first few months of training the officers separated their emotions when dealing with incidents from their knowledge that they might find violence there. Keith was the first to make reference to how he felt about dealing with violence at the end of the fifteen weeks at training school. For Julie and Ellie this did not feature in their comments until after they had completed their ten week tutorship and been sent to domestic violence incidents.

I don't know if you could ever really be confident handling a situation like that. You know, when it involves violence. (Keith; 5 months)

On the way there you do think 'Oh what are they going to be doing, are they going to be trying to kill each other?' (Julie; 10 months)

I was probably a bit nervous because he was saying, you know, that he'd been violent, but as soon as we spoke to the man he seemed alright so ... (Ellie; 10 months)

These quotes show nervousness about violence in different ways: where Julie, and perhaps Keith, refer to violence between the parties in the incident, Ellie appears to refer to violence against *her* as an officer. Nevertheless, this echoes the work of Smith *et al.* (1983) who reported that violence is often central to the conceptions police officers have about their work. Although the officers did eventually make reference to violence, the findings of this study raise questions about how much they had actually thought about violence (and domestic violence) before joining the service. The officers were very explicit about their own lack of experience of violence, however, so it seems reasonable to assume that they had given very little thought to it in advance. This provides an interesting area for further exploration. From the anticipatory socialisation work of authors such as Maghan (1998), it seems unlikely that the officers had been immune to the image portrayed by the police service and the media of policing as being a violent, dangerous and unpredictable occupation. Yet their confidence was low in dealing with what, through their anticipatory socialisation, they might have expected to be a large part of their role. However, whilst their confidence was low, later in this chapter there is a discussion about the officers feeling 'excited' about attending incidents.

Not able to help

Despite the fact the officers had little or no experience of domestic violence before joining the police service, by the end of their tutorship they were expressing pessimism about the extent of the impact they could have on this issue. On many occasions the officers indicated that they were not confident that their interventions could make a difference, particularly in the long term. Notwithstanding the fact they work mainly dealing with the after effects of domestic violence, and not in prevention work, maybe they simply see domestic violence as an intractable part of society. Or as the findings suggest, perhaps their first hand experience of dealing with domestic violence and the messages and attitudes imparted by their tutors generated this lack of confidence. For example, while I was observing a shift and conversing about domestic violence with the probationers and their tutors, all the tutors described incidents they had attended where they had taken action but the victim had then withdrawn her (they were all women) complaint. Both Rob and Ellie expressed their lack of confidence when they reflected on the incidents they had attended during their tutorship but from Rob's comment it was clear that, before attending incidents during his tutorship, he had thought he

might be able to achieve a positive resolution (although he was not explicit about what he means by this).

> I'm confident that I'll be able to deal with it, sort of, as best you can in the circumstances, but I'm not confident about sort of resolving anything long term. I'm confident that I could sort of, don't know, resolve the situation how they want it resolving. But I think, I wouldn't be confident say I could resolve it how I would resolve it, because I don't think you can all the time, which I thought I probably would be able to before. (Rob; 10 months)

This finding supports Neiderhoffer's work (1967) in which he identified that officers entered the service with a strong sense of idealism but encountered situations where failure overwhelmed them. Although Rob was not demonstrating a *strong* belief in his ability to resolve incidents when he entered the service, he obviously expected the law to be a successful mechanism by which to resolve domestic violence issues but found this not to be the case in practice. Instead, within nine months, he found that the impact he hoped he could have was compromised by the reality of the situation, reflecting more what the victims indicated that they wanted than his own standards and expectations.

Advice / options

It may seem more appropriate to include a section about the advice and options given by officers to those involved in domestic violence in the chapter about the officers' on-site responses (Chapter 8). However, it has been included here because of its inextricable link with officers' confidence. In spite of the fact that the officers were confident about their ability to communicate at a general level with those involved in the incidents they were called to, they were less confident about being able to provide advice. This raises concerns in light of the fact that this anxiety was first recognised over three decades ago by the 1971 Home Office Working Party on Probationer Training. Their report found that probationer constables felt ill-prepared to give advice when confronted by 'marital problems'. Thirty years on, this appears to still be the case. Furthermore, this study shows that 'better' training has not equipped the officers even in preparing them for the need to give advice: the officers did not raise the issue until after the tutorship period, suggesting that it had not occurred to them before that this might be a part of their role. Fieldwork observations during the domestic violence training input showed that the emphasis was clearly on the legal remedies available to the officers. Therefore, in response to Southgate's question (1988) about whether domestic dispute training should be specialist and train officers to give effective counselling and think about longer term solutions, or generalist and train officers to concentrate on the legal, short term practical solutions, it might be said that the officers were trained to deal with a domestic violence situation in the short term according to the law but that they were not equipped to give advice. So, while the 1990 Home Office Circular recommended the introduction of Domestic Violence Units with specialist trained officers, training about the shorter-term practical solutions delivered by front-line officers seems to have focused on law

enforcement. This is despite the 1971 Working Party report and Hadar's research (1976) which found that officers found 'family disputes' to be uncomfortable and stressful and to be more about crisis intervention than law enforcement. Maybe the question that needs to be asked is: how many more research studies need to be conducted which demonstrate the need to equip operational officers with advice-giving skills before those responsible for the probationary training modules take account of this?

Common sense

Throughout the three years of the study, there were times when the officers were unclear about the advice they could and should give to those involved in the domestic violence incidents they were called to. If pushed, they would draw upon their own experience and 'common sense', often by trying to put themselves in the position of those with whom they were dealing. In other words, they drew on their tacit knowledge rather than formal knowledge conveyed during training. Not only does this finding return us to issues around confidence to handle domestic violence using previously acquired personal skills rather than policing skills, but it also adds weight to the tentative conclusion explored later in Chapter 9 about the effectiveness of and impact of training on the officers. Reiser (1986) suggested that the military style of police training produces officers who are incapable of crisis intervention: training attempts to produce uniform answers to complex situations, he argued, so that as soon as officers are faced with a situation which requires thinking and problem solving skills, they find their training to be of little use. Dealing with human relationships is more 'messy' and complex than statute and it could be argued that dealing with situations such as robberies or a stabbing *is* crisis intervention. The difference here, though, is that in these instances there is often little interplay between the victim and perpetrator at the scene of the incident. In contrast, at domestic violence incidents the situation might well require an officer to negotiate with both the perpetrator and the victim to arrive at a satisfactory outcome.

When reflecting upon their tutorship, officers drew from three distinct sources of advice: their own experience of relationships, common-sense, and experience gained from observing colleagues. With reference to the first two sources, the officers often described themselves as nervous that this did not 'qualify' them as advice-givers or whether their advice would ultimately be of any use.

> [*CR: How confident do you feel about the kind of advice that you're expected to give at these kind of incidents?*] Not very to be honest, because it's just, it's just sort of, with advice you're giving is generally the sort of the advice you would give yourself if you were in that situation, so, if I was having problems in a relationship, what would I say? (Rob; 10 months)

> I suppose there's one other occasion actually which was in the last week of my tutorship. Somebody came into reception, a woman, to report that her husband, her boyfriend had been hitting her around and he'd gone in and

slapped her, grabbed some money off the side and then disappeared and so she wanted us to call around to get the money off him, and I then sat down and told her what I thought she ought to do. And I was really woolly about what I was thinking that she ought to do, and I knew about the DVU but didn't really recommend that, so I just, you know think like 'keep the door closed' and all those like 'tell us if it happens again, make sure you call the police, we'll come around' and all that sort of stuff. (Adrian; 10 months)

Whereas Rob and Adrian refer to what they did, Julie (below) gives us an insight into her immediate reaction when she arrives at an incident feeling ill-equipped about what she must do in her role as an officer. One of her initial reactions is in response to her own experience of relationships in which violence has not been a feature, which appeared to exacerbate her feelings of uncertainty about what to do.

And I just remember going in there and thinking 'my God, a bloke's done this to her', and I just didn't know, I froze for a minute, I thought 'shit', you know, 'what are we going to do?' (Julie; 10 months)

Crucially, whilst the officers developed confidence in dealing procedurally with incidents, providing advice was one skill in which such development was not evident. This was particularly so for the female officers, who continued to refer to their feelings of uncertainty about giving advice.

I mean, we're not counsellors and I'm no expert on relationships. [*CR: Where do you get that sort of advice from?*] I think you get if from yourself. I mean, it was quite easy to talk to the woman who was getting divorced because it's, well not similar to my situation, but I know where she's coming from. You know, I've felt the same way sort of thing. But other things if you've got no knowledge of, you just think 'well what does common sense say?' you know ... I mean you don't really get any, you don't get any training on what to tell people. (Julie; 21 months)

This finding has important consequences which are also evident in the broader findings of the study, namely that by drawing upon their own experience of relationships, the officers constantly made reference to marriage and relationship counselling. It is possible that they assumed that this was what was required because that was all their experience enabled them to draw upon. This is evidence of a problem with 'common sense': just because an officer applies common sense, this does not necessarily mean they are intuitively using 'good' or 'appropriate' sense. This also raises questions about the nature of the domestic violence incidents attended by the officers. It might be reasonable to assume that had they attended an incident where there was clear evidence of an assault, then they would have used the legal remedies available to them. A comment by Keith provides a basis on which to explore this idea:

About giving advice, I'm not always convinced I know enough to do that ... oh, that was the creepy guy – this is a classic. When we got there you know I'd

said 'Well has he ever been violent towards you?' and she said 'No', and I said 'There is a domestic violence officer, but that's really for cases of domestic violence and what you need to do is get in touch with a solicitor, that's really what you need to and try and sort out the house, because this is your house and if you want him out you can get your locks changed, get that done, get in touch with a solicitor'. (Keith; 10 months)

Here Keith demonstrates that he *chooses* to provide 'common sense' advice rather than using his legal knowledge, apparently because there has never been violence in the relationship. There is no acknowledgement or reflection of this decision in his comment, only an observation that he was uncertain about giving advice. This raises questions about Keith's understanding of what constitutes domestic violence and the role of the Domestic Violence Unit, both of which should be important components of training around the issue. In the light of what he has been taught, it is almost as though he had no choice but to use 'common sense' because he did not know what else to do when faced with a type of incident that did not feature in his training programme. Perhaps, then, Fielding's reference (1988b) to police culture putting great emphasis on 'common sense' and 'experience' but not recognising the contradiction in this, also relates to the lack of theoretical principles in training, leading to officers coming to rely very heavily on their own common sense. When they begin to describe the need for experience, this is because they applied common sense in many different ways and environments so that they can now refer to 'experienced common sense'. Certainly, from this section of findings, it seems that the officers found that a 'common sense' approach *felt* very different to what they imagined an 'experienced' approach might feel like.

Safety

Personal safety

In previous research about police socialisation, authors such as Little (1990) found that anecdotes are passed between trainers and trainees during training school, and that these serve to reinforce perceptions of policing as exciting and dangerous. If this manifests itself in the officers becoming aware of their own safety, then this study is in accord with Little's finding; even before attending any domestic violence incidents Ellie and Adrian made reference to their own safety:

> Feeling generally ... what I'd find at the house, whether the husband would still be there which is what would be in the forefront of my mind, you know, how I could get in there safely. (Adrian; 5 months)

> Other things to think about would be concern for our safety. I mean, if he was violent towards us. (Ellie; 5 months)

However, the biggest shift in the attention officers paid to their personal safety in relation to domestic violence was seen when they had spent time with their tutors and colleagues, after training school. For most of the officers it almost seemed that they only came to believe that

there was a safety issue when they found their colleagues talking about the need to have back-up available every time they attended a domestic violence incident. Ellie, in particular, made reference to safety but, with no experience of attending violent domestic incidents, her comments suggest that she was unsure of the importance of back-up[16] and reliant upon what she was told by others. One of the noteworthy differences in her comments, compared to her response after five months where there was no understanding of how this might be addressed, was her reference to strategies for dealing with the potential safety issues. These included reference to back-up.

> Well they were just there for back-up, so if he kicked off and we needed help they would be there. So... but we didn't... I mean I don't think you're supposed to go to domestics yourself, just one person. (Ellie; 10 months)

> Usually, if there's a fight outside a pub you don't want to be going there on your own, but also you don't want to get there too quick because people, I've been told, turn on you, so... or can do. (Ellie; 10 months)

The officers developed at different rates in terms of their feelings about personal safety. Whilst Ellie, even after 10 months was clearly still tentative about the importance of back-up, other officers considered the importance of personal safety at an earlier stage in their career. As should be clear from the findings so far, the officers believed that the domestic violence incidents they had attended warranted them using 'common sense' and advice rather than legal remedies primarily because they had not found violence to be a part of the incident. This might explain why, initially, they were relatively passive about safety: they seemed to be aware that it was an issue but had not actually experienced anything that would lead them to be concerned. Yet, Hadar (1976) observed that family disputes in particular pose serious dangers to the lives of police officers. With more operational experience some of the officers did encounter serious danger to their safety. I met with Alison by chance after she had been an officer for 18 months and she told me that she had attended a domestic violence incident in bed and breakfast accommodation: when she arrived, the male perpetrator had pointed a gun at her. Although less extreme, Adrian had also experienced violence being directed at him and his colleagues at one incident and this was used as a reason to arrest the male.

> Yeah, the only reason we arrested him was not through the violence to his estranged wife. It was the violence he was potentially going to show, or showing to the other [local area] officer there. And it was just really we had to arrest him to put handcuffs on him to be able to restrain him really. You've got to arrest him for something. (Adrian; 10 months)

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[16] It is generally accepted that officers attend a domestic violence incident with a colleague, but 'back-up' refers to having at least one further officer attending at the same time. Consequently, it is common-place that more than one response car would attend the scene.

Both experiences show the extent to which the officers are vulnerable when attending different types of incident. Alison's experience, perhaps better than any of the other officers, supports Hadar's observation that serious danger can be posed to their lives. Ironically, in these extreme circumstances, questions might be asked about what initial (non-firearms trained) back-up would have achieved. This vulnerability was also evidenced by Keith's experience:

> We went to one in the middle of, it was out in the middle of nowhere, but it came over the radio that this guy had a firearms marker. I'm thinking 'shit'. And we all got lost 'cause it was just in the middle of the pitch black and I ended up kind of like getting out the car and running along this lane, and I found it first and I'm on foot and this guy's got a firearms marker and I'm going to get shot. (Keith; 10 months)

It was thus through experience that the transition occurred from not being sure about why back-up was important to consciously making decisions about safety before attending. After Adrian's experience of violence, later in the same interview, he said that the potential of violence had become 'apparent' to him, although interestingly, despite his experience not being life-threatening or particularly harmful, he used extreme language (I have used underlining in the quotation to emphasise this):-

> I think the problem with a lot of domestic violence things, it's become more apparent, is that the scene is potentially extremely violent because obviously going into somebody's home and the view, obviously, if you're going into somebody's home that they feel that that's theirs and you're invading their property straight, as soon as you come through the door, and because of that there's a lot of violence that normally happens towards the police. You therefore go up, normally pitch up mob-handed at least two, inevitably a lot more than that, two or three cars with six or more police. (Adrian; 10 months)

Becky and Julie were also interesting cases in point. Despite no personal experience of attending an incident where they were subjected to violence[17], both demonstrated an assertive and pessimistic view (in terms of the likelihood of violence towards officers) during their tutorship about not attending incidents without back-up during the de-brief of the incidents they attended. It is possible that concern about personal safety had been transmitted by Alison or other officers to them; Julie was present when Alison told the story about having a gun pointed at her, and Becky worked in the same location. In addition, Becky's tutor, in his response to the Scenario, also made reference to personal safety being a priority – 'More than anything you'd be thinking about your own safety' – and we might speculate that this had an impact upon Becky.

> It's just ... until you're actually there, until the adrenalin's going and you're having to think on your feet as quickly as possible and look after your own

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[17] Or not that was recorded to the researcher anyway.

safety and whatever else, it's ... you can't put it all into perspective at training college ... If I know I've got someone with me, it doesn't bother me at all. Going on my own's a different story, 'cause we had to go, I had to go back to the place a couple of weeks ago and I know what he's like and it's like, 'well I'm not going on my own, I'm sorry, you send me and someone else', which they did ... [CR: So do you have any expectations of what you'll find now when you get there?] You can find all sorts. Anytime you get sent to domestics, you think 'God, you're going to find someone lying on the floor' or whether they're going to be waiting for you with a bloody pick-axe or something at the door. But like I say, when you know you've got someone else with you it makes it a bit easier. For your safety really. (Becky; 10 months)

Because I think, sometimes I think the more people that go, as well, not that you should like crowd the house or anything, but the more control you've got then the more comfortable you are with dealing with it. Whereas if you go on your own, you're like 'oh God, he's huge, he's going to hit me, I'm on my own'. You know, and then the situation changes a bit because you've got to be very careful what you say, because you think 'Well, if he does fly off the handle now I'm buggered, you know, and I'm just going to go down like a sack of spuds'. (Julie; 21 months)

It was also apparent that once Adrian had been faced with violence, although initially this heightened his sense of personal safety when attending any domestic violence incident, eventually it just became a routine part of his decision-making:

I don't tend to think about it too much. I think a little bit about logistics of it, the safety side of it, you know, who's going with me if I'm just by myself. (Adrian; 19 months)

This discourse about violence occurred despite the fact that at the majority of domestic violence incidents, officers saw no evidence of violence. Indeed, on most occasions the incidents were over by the time the officers arrived (discussed in more detail in Chapter 8). Perhaps what is seen here, then, is what Fielding (1994) refers to as 'exaggerated war stories' which drives the masculine sub-culture of the organisation and, as Chan (1996) observed, requires a bond between officers to reassure that they will defend and assist one another when confronted by external threats. On the other hand, the findings also reinforce the claims of Muir (1977) that, for reasons of safety and survival, it is better to assume the worst but be alive following the incident than it is to be trusting and be faced with a 'rebellious' member of the public. It seems that the discourse of violence acts in this way, preparing and raising the officers' readiness to respond and defend themselves. It might be argued that this places violence in a positive light, as a benefit to the officers. Equally however, negative interpretation might be that it makes the officers respond in ways that do not help to calm a situation down (possibly 'trigger happy' and 'jumpy'). This is important in the context of the training, particularly because during the fieldwork, there was no evidence of the officers being taught to balance justified concerns for their own safety and survival with the need to calm down domestic violence situations.

The safety of colleagues

Through the process of becoming more aware of their own safety, the officers also became conscious of the safety of their colleagues, although this was not mentioned until between ten and twelve months into their operational work. This concern for colleagues corresponds with what Pithouse (1994) observed in relation to the importance of learning to be a 'good colleague', and the emphasis on solidarity, cohesiveness and mutual support described by Manning (1977).

> Questions relating to the priority to the domestic violence or the fight outside the pub, and on the scale – they're both a high priority. The only way one would take priority over another, as far as I'm concerned, is if a colleague, another colleague is in difficulty, i.e. a fight outside a pub, twenty people against five, five officers, that to me would take priority. Make sure that the officers are safe. (Becky; 10 months)

> I would hate to think that we sped past the pub and there was a fight, went to the domestic that turned out to be nothing and on the way back we found out that fellow officers had been assaulted or hurt as a result of our leaving them to it. (Keith; 11 months)

Becky and Keith's response at this time demonstrated their commitment to colleagues' safety yet there was no reference to structural factors associated with safety such as staffing levels. After around two years technological factors, such as the effectiveness of radio equipment also became more common reasons for being concerned about safety. For example, Becky was transferred to a rural area after two years where her feelings about safety were exacerbated, particularly after being used to relying on colleagues for support. Even for Julie, posted in an urban area, the issues of resources affected her feelings of safety.

> ... you're out on your own most of the time. Radio communication is absolutely atrocious. If you get yourself into a bit of a scrape there ain't no-one to help you because you're on your own and the nearest back-up will be [next town]. It's frightening. (Becky; 25 months)

> With regards to another double-crewed IRV [Incident Response Vehicle] going to the shoplifter, in my opinion I'd still carry on to the domestic. At the end of the day they could get to the shoplifter and he's stopped playing up, plus they've got security people from the store there as well. So there's no need for two cars to go there initially ... It happens a lot when you're short-staffed and you've got Grade Ones coming in all the time and you've just got to go and hope that you don't need any back-up. (Julie; 31 months)

In summary, the officers went from a time when they did not think about safety, to knowing that it was an issue but not being sure why, to experiencing a threat to personal safety, to it becoming a normal part of their thinking in responding to incidents, to them becoming concerned about the safety of their colleagues, to being concerned about the structural and technological issues facing them in terms of safety. Gender differences were not clearly

evident in this transformation so it is not possible to concur with or reject the views on this in previous literature. Much of the gender and policing literature suggests that the cultural environment perceives women as the weaker sex, needing special protection and guidance (for an example, see Jones (1986)). The officers in this study talked about their own safety and, where they did refer to ensuring their colleagues were safe, there was little difference between, for example, the views of Becky and Keith. Perhaps this is a reflection on the fact that, as Alison's experience suggests, violent aggressors do not make any discernible choices between their targets and so both women and men officers were keen to be part of the 'in-group' (as opposed to the excluded 'out-group') (Fielding 1994), by showing loyalty and affinity to one another. In other words, their police identity overrode their gender identity.

General views on domestic violence incidents

The officers' journeys in terms of their feelings on safety did not end when safety became a conscious consideration in their decision-making. Rather, as the male officers in particular progressed, they began to describe feelings of excitement at the thought of being faced with unpredictable and potentially volatile incidents. This supports the views of Fielding (1994) that excitement and physical danger are accorded a status in police culture and that this status is crucial to the self-image of police*men.* It also supports the findings reported by Westmarland (2001) that contradict the view of domestic violence always being perceived as not 'real' or 'proper' police work by officers (for example, see Dobash and Dobash, 1980; Bourlet, 1990; Roehampton Institute, 1996). In contrast, she found that officers regarded as high-adrenalin domestic incidents in the home when there was the potential of violence and the need to use force and strength. In this study, excitement was evident particularly in relation to Grade One (immediate response) incidents but the potential violence to be found at domestic violence incidents was a specific driver of excitement for *male* officers from the time when they had around ten months service.

> [*CR: As that one was the first one you went to, when it came over the radio what did you think?*] I was still kind of at the stage where anything that came over the radio was 'great, this could be good'. I'm trying to think … because we didn't know what kind of domestic, what exactly had been going on, but you do kind of imagine you'll be going into something that may be quite sort of volatile. You think 'excellent, there could be a fight'. (Keith; 10 months)

> She smashed all the windows in on his car and he punched her in the face and all sorts of things, so you get called to that and you think, 'Oh brilliant, because invariably they'll sort of fight with you as well, and that's good fun really. I mean, I like that sort of thing. (Rob; 24 months)

Particularly evident here was Rob's excitement at the thought that he might be involved personally in violent action. This raises questions about whether this is something specific to domestic violence incidents, when any violence towards him is likely to be in the fall-out of

an attack aimed at the partner or other member of the household (second-hand violence). It is unclear whether he would feel the same about incidents where any violence might be aimed directly at him, for example, at the scene of a riot. Alternatively, it might be associated with the fact that back-up is available for violent incidents and so he would usually have the support of at least two other officers.

The distinction between the male and female officers was clear in Ellie's comment which, although addressing the issue of excitement, did not have the same focus on violence as Keith and Rob. Rather, the comparatively measured expression of excitement was about the unpredictable nature of what she would find at domestic violence incidents in general and not about being caught up in violence.

> Well this kind of incident, if you go to it, could be unpredictable – you don't really know what you're going into and so I suppose in a way it's quite exciting. (Ellie; 10 months)

During my shift with Becky and her tutor constable, I observed occasions when Becky's excitement at attending incidents was curtailed by her tutor. For example, Becky had some urgent paperwork to complete but was keen to persuade her tutor that they should identify themselves to the control room as a deployable resource and that she would complete the paperwork another time, perhaps during a night shift when there were fewer incidents to attend. Eventually her tutor gave in, although only after considerable 'badgering' by Becky. She also referred to a plain clothes operation in which she would be taking part later in the week and said that she was excited about some 'rufty-tufty action'. In contrast, there were times when Keith experienced some criticism from his tutor for showing a lack of excitement. In addition, during my observation shift with him and his tutor, while taking a statement from a woman who had had a bag stolen from her in the Help the Aged shop, Keith's tutor interrupted to say that they had been called to a Grade 1 incident at Sainsbury's and would Keith be OK to continue with the statement. The woman said 'Oh, it is like on the telly then', to which Keith responded by saying 'No, most of it's really quite boring'. These examples put a different emphasis on the observations of Martin (1989) that, if excitement and status attached to physical danger are crucial to the self-image of police*men* and the maintenance of a masculine culture, and if this is fuelled by stories of violence and conflict, then women officers who do not acquiesce threaten to expose the lack of excitement in everyday policing. However, Keith's readiness to discuss his lack of excitement suggests that this potential is perhaps not limited to female officers. Rather, probationary officers who have not yet become acculturated and therefore 'bought into' the desire to maintain this masculine culture, or have even recognised the culture for what it is, might also have the potential to expose the lack of excitement in everyday policing – a point that reflects gendered interpretations of everyday policing.

[CR: Were you still at the stage then, when anything that came over the radio, you were quite excited about?] Yeah, yeah, although I got pulled up by Steve a couple of times – he said sometimes the radio would go on and he'd look at me and I just didn't look that excited. I used to think 'Well, so?' You know, you can't jump up and down in the seat every time you get a job. And I'm not really that kind of person anyway. (Keith; 10 months)

It was after only ten months into their operational duties that the excitement for the officers started to become tempered by other factors, such as how busy they were or the stage they were at in their shift when they received the call to attend an incident. Whilst this adds a 'feeling' element to Hoyle's findings (1998) that organisational factors, such as technology and resources, are influential in officers' responses to incidents, there was no evidence at this stage that officers' actions were influenced by their feelings. Indeed, Becky referred to ignoring these feelings as 'at the end of the day I've got a professional job to do and that has to come first' (10 months). Keith and Julie made reference to their feelings to an incident towards the end of their shift. Both articulated this feeling shortly after their tutorship.

Just start thinking of things more just in terms of, instead of an opportunity to learn something, you tend to just like 'I'm off at 10', you know. (Keith; 10 months)

My initial reaction obviously, it depends what time it is on the Sunday to be honest with you. Mainly for us the late shift on a Sunday is quick change-over so if a call like that came in at half past nine you'd be pretty cheesed off because you'd know that you wouldn't be going home on time. (Julie; 10 months)

What the officers seem to be saying here is that, although they enjoy the excitement of being an active police officer doing a professional job, given the choice they might disregard the purpose of policing – to protect the public – or even abandon the prospect of an exciting job, if it meant they could finish work on time. In fact, Julie reported that she was often encouraged by her tutor to leave her shift early, and Becky commented that her tutor often left his shift early. In both these cases 'early' meant about ten minutes before the shift was due to be completed. The exception was Adrian who did not mind working longer than his allocated hours because of the resulting overtime payment. Nonetheless, the financial reward and not his desire to protect the public appeared to be his primary motive. The 1975 Select Committee reported that officers did not have an empathy for, or commitment to dealing with domestic violence. However, whilst we might hope to be able to say that officers' commitment to domestic violence has increased since this time, it is not possible to refute the finding based upon the comments made by officers in this study. However, it is important to add that the officers did not specifically disregard the importance of domestic violence incidents. Rather, going home promptly at the end of a shift over-rode *all* responsibilities for serving the public.

Whilst the feeling of excitement dissipated for most officers, the more negative feelings associated with being sent to an incident either at the beginning or close to the end of a shift stayed with the officers for the duration of the study. Even Rob, who had shown a greater degree of excitement than some of his colleagues, became more concerned about 'finishing his cup of tea' than attending an incident.

> Generally how would I feel? If it's quarter past two I'd very unlikely be in the IRV – I'd probably be in the office finishing my cup of tea so I'd probably be a bit cheesed off for having to go out straight away. (Rob; 35 months)

> ... it depends how you're feeling, how many people you've arrested, how much paperwork you've done and pushed through as to how positive you're going to deal with an incident that's happening. If you're fresh and quite happy to take somebody in, it's early in the shift and you don't mind, then yeah, great, no problem at all, you just deal with it as you would deal with any other incident. However, if it's later on in the shift, as it tends to be, you know 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock in the morning when somebody's drunk enough, then again, like the one yesterday, I think the incident happened about 9 o'clock, or 8 o'clock and officers were still there gone 9 before we took the female away. And due to finish at 10, so there's obviously that in the back of your head, thinking, somebody's going to have to be arrested and I'm going to have to deal with them. So that, I think, is always playing on your mind as well. Personally I don't mind because I'm a bit of a money grabber so I go for any overtime possible, but not everybody's like me. (Adrian; 19 months)

As this study only focused on the officers during their first three years of service there is no way of knowing whether the seven officers in the study moved on from these feelings. However, it is possible to get an insight by exploring the feelings of the tutor constables, some of whom had a considerable length of service. Their views were very similar to those articulated by the seven officers. During my observation of a shift in Becky's tutorship, her tutor remarked that 'There's nothing more annoying than having to arrest someone at a domestic, spend four or five hours taking a statement, and then a week later the woman withdraws [her complaint]. Police officers will do anything to get out of paperwork'. Adrian's tutor, in particular, was very clear about how the impact of being busy affected his feelings about all incidents and not just domestic violence, so we might assume that the feelings of the officers after three years are the ones that are likely to stay with them. The structural factors seemingly continue to have an impact but there was not enough evidence from the fieldwork to suggest that this prevented the officers from fulfilling their role at incidents. The only exception was Alison, who referred to the fact that her tutor kept 'cuffing' jobs[18] and he confessed himself that 'Perhaps I didn't take the right action on a number of occasions when I've been to domestics, you know, because we're all under pressure work-wise'.

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[18] 'Cuffing' means not progressing incidents in the way in which they should and therefore, reducing the amount of work involved.

Feelings about domestic violence

As should be clear from the chapter so far, prior to joining the police service the officers held a view of domestic violence but all were keen to emphasise their own lack of experience of violent relationships. Chapter 6 has already provided an introduction to the officers which touches on the anticipatory socialisation of each officer. It was observed that this socialisation phase was about policing at a very general, superficial level. In other words, there was little consideration given to specific types of incidents. Whilst this supports Bennett's proposition (1984) that officers' expectations before joining have no relevance to what they subsequently experience, it also meant that the first insight gained into officers' feelings about domestic violence was when they completed the research scenarios.

Inability to relate to and understand domestic violence

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as they had stressed their own lack of experience of violence in relationships, many officers described a lack of understanding and inability to relate to domestic violence or even dysfunctional relationships. This corroborates the 1975 Select Committee report that officers had a lack of understanding of violence in the home. Comments revealing a lack of understanding were more prominent, although not exclusively so, *after* the officers had completed their tutorship when they often reflected on the incidents they had attended. From this, it is possible to draw another parallel with Goffman's work (1961) which suggested that the processes people experience in total institutions such as asylums (and perhaps the police service), have a lasting influence and effect on an individual's relationship with society. Through being in the police service, officers are faced with situations that many people will never be confronted with. For many of them during their early operational experience, these incidents were the first violent relationships they had ever witnessed.

> ... blokes assaulting their girlfriends or wives is something that seems completely foreign. (Rob; Week 11)

> Not expectations as in, I probably couldn't picture it, I don't know. I mean I'm not used to people fighting or, you know, especially hurting each other. You know, I'm not used to families arguing. I mean, I've never really seen anything like that happen, so I suppose I didn't really know what to expect. (Ellie; 10 months)

This inability to relate to domestic violence, whilst a blessing from the personal perspective of the officers, means it is ironic that it is in these circumstances that they feel they have to draw upon their own experience to be able to provide the advice and support discussed earlier. This raises questions about the officers' training on domestic violence. It seems that domestic violence incidents might be unique in the way in which officers approach them; it is unlikely that the officers could relate to other types of incidents such as robbery before joining the service and yet, throughout the study and even during periods of the researcher's observations, there was little mention of any other types of incidents in the same way.

Perhaps then, domestic violence is different because the officers can empathise with one element of the situation, that is, being in an intimate relationship with someone else. They draw upon their own experience of relationships but cannot take the imaginative leap to consider how that relationship could degenerate into violence. This was clear in the comments of Julie:

> ... and I just remember going in and thinking 'Bloody hell, a bloke's done this to you' ... I remember going home and saying [partner's name], you know, how the hell can you stay with someone when they do that, they beat you to a pulp? (Julie; 10 months)

From anger to sadness, and the effect of children

At the start of the study some of the officers described feeling anger about domestic violence and specifically towards to the perpetrators of violence. For example, Adrian commented that 'The thing that comes straight into your mind is that of anger and why's he done something like that'. (Week 11). Yet, by the time the officers had been in the service for two years, many began to make references to feeling sad. For Julie and Ellie this sadness was about the state of the relationships they saw:

> And you see the way the parents are with some of them [children] and you think it's just a completely different world, you know, to how I grew up. And then you get like the husband and wife or like the boyfriend and girlfriend, and you'd, I mean, you just think it's so sad when it gets to the situation where you have to get the police in to sort your marriage out, you know. (Julie; 21 months)

> It just makes you feel more, you know, appreciate the security that you've got or the fact that you're not in a situation like that. You know, you don't go out with somebody who beats you up ... I just feel sorry, or feel bad about that person's situation rather than being that upset by it. (Ellie; 21 months)

For all the officers the sadness was also associated with how children were affected by domestic violence. Again, just as we have seen that they did with relationships, the officers often related the situations to their own childhood environments. Whilst their observations were about domestic violence incidents primarily, they also referred to other incidents.

> I can't remember what the circumstances were ... but we took her to her mother's house after it had finished because she didn't feel safe being at the house, so I loaded the kids into the back of the car and stuff. You just feel so sorry for the kids because they're ... I think the oldest is about seven and the youngest is about two ... so you load them into the back of the car and it's like, I remember the oldest one said 'Oh, put your seatbelt on' to the little one and it's like 'It's a policeman, it's a policeman, can you put the sirens on?', all this sort of stuff. And like, at that age they're the same as any other kids, I mean what they turn out like, they probably haven't got a chance, but they were, I mean they were all like 'Put your sirens on' and I was just like 'What chance have they got' type of thing. That was the first time, that was the first one I'd been to where there were kids involved, kids there. (Rob; 10 months)

But you know, you come across things that you haven't ever thought would go on before, and you see kids who've had to grow up in homes that are disgustingly messy or, you know, their parents just stay drinking all the time, or arguing, and just, situations that make you feel quite, sometimes sad for the kids, you know, but you feel grateful for your upbringing. (Ellie; 21 months)

[CR: Is there any particular incident, domestic violence or domestic, that you've been to, that's really had a lasting effect on you?] I think it was the one with the children. It was at [local area] and it was a woman and a bloke, and he'd just gone berserk and he was still going berserk when we got there, you know, kicking and screaming and I just looked through the door and there's this little boy, I mean he must have been about three, just sat up in his bunk bed, just completely bewildered and just looking at everything that was going on, and no, there wasn't a door on the bedroom – there were no doors in this flat, no carpet – and he was sat there and you just thought 'My God, what's going through his head?', you know. And I think, you know, that sticks in your mind 'cause you do worry about these kids. (Julie; 21 months)

For Adrian in particular – the only officer in the study with children at the time of joining the Constabulary – the incidents in which children were involved had a lasting effect on him. The following comment from Adrian demonstrated his empathy for the children in the situation he described and yet, ironically considering that the officers relied upon drawing from their own experience in dealing with domestic violence, when Adrian found himself in a situation when he could truly empathise he expressed caution in doing this because he perceived it as a weakness. Furthermore, his reference to his wife's lack of understanding again supports the theory of Goffman (1961) that experiencing a 'total' institution can have a lasting effect upon an individual's relationship with society, and in this instance, possibly Adrian's relationship with his wife.

The only thing that has made me, that has affected me, significantly, was when I had a report of a shoplifter had gone into a property in the town centre and he'd stolen from Tescos I think it was, so we knocked on the door, wasn't obviously answering, but the landlord just literally came back as we were there so he went up to see whether he was there, and yes, he was there, he was sat there with his two year old son and his three year old son. He was a heroin addict. The little boys were like my children, you know I've got a three year old and a fourteen month old, and yeah, he admitted 'I nicked it, fair enough, can I drop the kids somewhere, granny's or somewhere', and the little kids, I think the three year old was taking me around the flat so that he could show me his toys, and his toys were freebie toys you get from MacDonalds and he had a drawer of those, and in the other drawers there were hypodermic needles and a big bag, dustbin liner full of used hypodermics and ... And that affected me for ages 'cause that was about a week, week and a half before Christmas, and that affected me, certainly all over the Christmas period, if not afterwards. Because obviously for my children, you know, half the room was filled with presents and it suddenly just dawns on you the reality of it all, and that actually it's quite obscene that that goes on. And of course, your wife doesn't know about it. You tell her about it but she doesn't really understand because you've got to have been there to have actually seen that, because really, whilst it's ... unless you're there, it's very difficult. And I think that's the only thing I've find hard, found

it difficult to cope with for quite a while, and I think that's the thing I would have to watch in future, where children are involved. Not domestic violence so much but it may be involved if children are involved. That seems to be the thing which is, would be my Achilles heel I think. So I'd have to really carefully watch that. (Adrian; 19 months)

This comment from Adrian provides some important insights. The first is about the fact that Adrian finds his feelings about children involved in domestic violence settings to be problematic. Although he does not explain precisely why he believes this to be a problem, clearly he is demonstrating empathy because he is a father and he seems worried that this might be an inappropriate response, or have the effect of impacting upon his response. Second is the issue about why an incident involving children has such an impact upon Adrian and the other officers who described such incidents. It is possible that this has to do with the level of control children have to change their circumstances, or to remove themselves from situations for their own benefit. Interestingly, this might also be said to reflect the experience of victims of domestic violence. Third is Adrian's observation about his wife not understanding the impact of the situation for him, which demonstrates the power of experiencing such situations. This also reinforces the importance of collegiality in an occupation such as policing, where it is only colleagues (and in this case colleagues with children) who truly understand the impact of such situations.

Although the officers initially expressed a lack of understanding about domestic violence, and then moved from feeling angry to feeling sad, there was no evidence throughout the three years that this spurred them to action. Rather, the sadness seemed to be based upon a resignation or acceptance that nothing could be done to improve the situation of adults and children in violent relationships. Neiderhoffer (1967) and Black (1968) considered police cynicism to be a loss of faith in people and it was perhaps this that we can see amongst the officers in the study. Yet, the culture of the organisation did nothing to combat this: the officers saw their more experienced colleagues and tutors resigned to being unable to make a difference to violent relationships. But this leads to a vicious cycle: if new recruits ultimately resign themselves in the same way because they do not believe they can make a difference, then no officers are ever going to believe that they can make a difference. Those officers who *do* break this mould are likely to apply to work in the Domestic Violence Units, again leaving a dearth of officers determined to make a difference at the front-line. There are a number of possible explanations for this: the first is that the masculine culture of the police service still does not recognise domestic violence as being a serious incident which requires comprehensive action to address the issue of gendered power relations (see Chapter 9). However, this requires a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence, and what has been evidenced so far is that the officers did not have such an understanding. Maybe the question that needs to be asked then is how an organisation with a strong masculine culture is ever going to develop a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence as being about gendered power relations when it is police officers who provide the

training? However, the impact of structural factors such as a lack of resources and time to deal with incidents thoroughly has also been evident in this chapter, so perhaps officers' resignation or cynicism about the fact they cannot make a difference is based partly upon the knowledge that they do not have the time to invest in this, or choose not to prioritise this.

Conclusion

Through exploring qualitatively the feelings and emotions of the officers, it has been possible to see the importance of these in understanding the officers' experience of socialisation generally, and particularly in relation to responding to domestic violence. Paradoxically, whilst at the formal socialisation stage the officers' confidence as autonomous individuals was suppressed through their experience of being referred to by 'collar' numbers and being expected to live and socialise together (Goffman, 1961), the feelings that the officers expressed throughout the study demonstrated the importance of being able to access their confidence and experiences as autonomous individuals. However, we might conclude that it was the inadequacy of the training (which failed to identify precisely the power and gender dimensions to domestic violence and thus failed to provide probationers with the intellectual tools or language with which to understand some of the causes of domestic violence and develop some workable responses – discussed in more detail in Chapter 9) that exacerbated the feelings associated with confidence and required the officers to draw upon their life experiences, which they could then check against the actions of their colleagues and draw conclusions about the extent to which their confidence was warranted. During a shift with Ellie and her tutor, two weeks into her tutorship, I observed an example of this when three girls ran across the road in front of a car that we were behind. Ellie's tutor asked her to wind down the window and tell them to be more careful next time. Ellie did as she was instructed, wound down her window, and in such a quiet voice that even I could not hear her from the back of the car said 'Can you be more careful next time'. Her tutor's response was that 'Sometimes you have to shout at them and tell them you don't want to have to see them in the mortuary'. Ellie's nervousness at having to shout at the girls, and her embarrassment following her tutor's comment about her 'performance', was palpable from my position in the back of the car. Whilst this is an example of a relatively straightforward and commonplace interaction for a police officer, in relation to domestic violence the crucial point is the failure of training to impact positively upon the officers' confidence. If they do not become more confident as a consequence of what they learn in training school, and if the officers who turn up at the scene have no real understanding of what they are witnessing, then there are consequences both for the officers and also for the victims of domestic violence. After three years officers *were* more confident, but this was as likely to be as a consequence of aligning their often common sense response with that of their colleagues and tutors who had been through the same process during their early career, as because their understanding had developed.

The longitudinal nature of the study has also enabled access to an understanding about how male officers' feelings about violence shifted from anxiety to high excitement to a more tempered excitement. We might conclude that these feelings emerged as a consequence of factors such as not having (m)any incidents to attend and, later, to factors such as the extent of paperwork generated by incidents. Yet the comparison with the shift amongst female officers' from anxiety to a more circumspect excitement in relation to violence, suggests that a further exploration of gender differences in relation to the impact of structural and environmental factors on excitement might be worthwhile. Regardless of any gender differences it is ironic that violence features as an important part of the police culture and image, and yet the training seemingly failed to prepare officers emotionally for being confronted with violent, dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations. Indeed, it might be said that the issues of personal safety and dealing with violence appeared to 'creep up' unexpectedly on all the officers. In some ways this chapter has shown violence to be a minor feature of the officers' daily lives, lending support to authors who refer to 'exaggerated war stories' (Fielding, 1994) and the lack of danger in everyday policing (Martin, 1989). Yet the direct and indirect experiences that Alison and Keith had of being faced with a firearm demonstrate the importance of violence being a part of the police consciousness and therefore of officers' decision-making, and are thus in line with the views of Muir (1977).

In summary, this chapter has highlighted some of the emotional changes experienced by officers when being faced with domestic violence and other incidents. Further, it has suggested that there may be a link between inappropriate or inadequate training about domestic violence, and a lack of understanding at early domestic violence incidents which meant that officers' experiences were not grounded in anything other than their own and other's 'common-sense' reactions. In pursuit of the effectiveness of the training on officers' attitudes, the next chapter addresses officers' changing attitudes and the impact of experience, after they complete the residential period at training school.

Chapter 8: The Impact of Experience on Developing Response

Introduction

In the last chapter, police officers' feelings and emotions associated with domestic violence and their responses to incidents were explored. In order to understand fully how these feelings and emotions emerged, their experience of attending domestic violence incidents and the impact this had upon their developing views about and response to domestic violence, are considered in this chapter.

It is the *language* used by the officers to describe the incidents they attended during their first three years that weaves together the themes in this chapter. For reasons of clarity and consistency I have used the term 'domestic violence' to describe the incidents, unless I am reflecting directly upon the officers' use of language. In contrast, the terms used by officers to describe the incidents ranged from the *serious* 'domestic violence' to the *trivial* 'argument'. An exploration of these terms is used to disentangle what the officers perceived was happening at the incidents they attended, their developing 'understanding' and attitudes towards domestic violence incidents, and the consequences for their response. However, at a fundamental level, the officers' language mostly demonstrated a lack of understanding about the realities of domestic violence and the *implications* of this lack are much wider. Indeed, it can be seen that there is an important impact on the officers' perception of the incidents which results in confusion about what action they *should* take at incidents, and consequently, what action they *actually* take. The discretion that officers use in determining whether legal action is necessary is in accordance with the work of authors such as Hoyle (1998), Ardts et al. (2001) and White (1989) but this chapter shows how the officers' experience informs their use of discretion. Furthermore, an exploration of how the gendered organisational culture is played out in the workplace provides insights into how the masculine sub-culture of the organisation is inextricably linked with officers' perceptions about what domestic violence actually *is*.

The chapter begins by looking at the way in which officers describe domestic violence incidents. Following this, the notion of 'domestics' is explored, and its relationship with officers' (lack of) understanding of power and control dynamics at incidents. Finally, the implications of these on the officers' response are described, particularly in relation to the use of discretion.

Descriptions of incidents

Whilst little was asked by the researcher about the officers' expectations of what they would find at domestic violence incidents, their perception of what was likely to be happening was reflected in their descriptions of incidents. This was evident through the observational fieldwork, responses to the scenarios and the retrospective accounts of officers' experiences. Most notable was the absence of the phrase 'domestic violence' and its

replacement with the term 'argument'. Invariably the incidents the officers were referring to had involved two or more people shouting at one another and, in all cases, they had *not* seen any evidence of physical injury. The term 'argument' was first used by all officers when they reflected on the incidents they had attended during their tutorship. Prior to this they had referred to 'domestic violence', perhaps because they were mirroring the term that I used during interviews and in the scenarios. Alternatively, this may have been because the term made sense to them at a time when they believed that they would see evidence of violence at every incident they attended.

> And so we turned up and talked to her and <u>basically they'd had an argument</u>. He was fed up with her, she was a bit, well, she was always having arguments with him and he just wanted to go down and play darts or something like that. (Ellie, 10 months)

> ...quite often it's <u>just people having an argument</u>. (Keith, 10 months)

Although only two quotations have been used here, all officers referred to 'arguments'. Perhaps most striking about the description of the incidents as 'arguments' is that this term was always prefaced with 'just', and it seems clear that the officers were using this word in a way which meant that it could have been replaced with 'simply' or 'merely, that is 'not important or a waste of police time'. Crucially, their language reflected the fact that they did not believe the incidents they had attended warranted police action or that there was any need for concern about the safety of either of the parties involved. With this in mind it is perhaps even more worrying that 'just' was used to preface different levels of 'arguments'. For example, in the above quotations Keith and Ellie seemed to be referring to incidents where people were shouting at one another, yet Rob and Ellie used it in their description of 'arguments' that had 'got out of hand'.

> I mean as far as I'm concerned they're sort of dysfunctional relationships, I mean if you end up <u>wrestling in your bedroom</u> like not for pleasure but for some sort of bizarre scrap, or if you like, what were the other ones, oh yeah, the one where the bloke was leaving, I mean they were just leaving his car there was just two fairly weird people who just sort of had <u>massive arguments</u>. (Rob, 10 months)

> Well, I haven't been called back since, and she, she wasn't actually hurt, you know there wasn't any injury. I think it was <u>just an argument</u> that got a bit out of hand. <u>It wasn't anything serious.</u> (Ellie, 10 months)

The officers' description of the majority of incidents as 'arguments' continued to the conclusion of the study. The officers' tutors also used the same terminology, suggesting that perceptions of the incidents were formed early in their operational experience, and did not change from this.

Recently, again, about a week ago I went to a young engaged couple, and I think all that happened, you never know, but I think what had happened, <u>they'd just had a really loud argument.</u> They were in flats and people around them had heard the really loud argument going on and called the police and there were other friends on both sides, just sleeping there and were still asleep, so <u>it wasn't an outrageous domestic.</u> (Adrian, 19 months)

I try and be sympathetic, but if it's <u>just tit-for-tat and they're just arguing</u>, you know, they're <u>just trying to score points with you</u> in the middle or whatever, you're not so interested. (Ellie, 21 months)

[CR: So you say you didn't go to many domestics when you were in [name of place]. Did you go to any?] A handful in the whole two years probably. *[CR: Can you tell me about some of them].* They weren't really anything to be honest. <u>They weren't what I would consider a violent domestic – they were just sort of arguing, shouting, screaming</u> – you know, nobody was ever arrested from any that I attended. They weren't anything at all. (Becky, 25 months)

They probably have had an argument which has <u>got out of hand and gone a bit stupid</u> and now they're probably regretting it. (Ellie's tutor)

This coincides with the view of Edwards (1986) that officers perceive domestic disputes (sic) as 'normal' occurrences and where a dispute is more serious, it is just a normal occurrence that has 'gone over the top'. Her plea is that domestic violence is recognised as ranging from arguments to murder and that it is recognised as a situation that may have disastrous consequences and is not just a state of family disequilibrium (1986a). Clearly the officers in the study did not hold this understanding. Equally, some of the incidents they referred to could have just been arguments, where power and control were not a characteristic of the behaviours being displayed. However, the point here is that the officers would never know this if they did not ask the right questions or probe into what had been occurring (see a discussion of this point later in the chapter).

Towards the end of their third year of service, it was apparent that the officers were only dealing with what they saw at a domestic violence incident, and if there was no sign of injury, as was often the case, they believed that no action on their part was required. In effect, they believed that what they saw at the incidents was a true reflection of what had actually occurred. For this reason, I decided to split the fourth scenario into two parts[19]: the first was in the same format as previous scenarios but, shortly after completing this, a second part was given to the officers explaining what had actually occurred before they arrived. The way they treated the second part of the exercise provided a useful insight into the officers' perceptions when they realised the disparity between what they had seen (and their hypothetical reactions to the situation) and what had 'actually' happened. Keith in particular, said he was angry with me for having deliberately withheld information from the first part of

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[19] As discussed in Chapter 5, I used the method of scenarios to elicit responses from the officers about what they would do if faced with certain situations, which were based on real incidents.

the scenario, although he later acknowledged that the information initially available to him in the scenario was realistic (see appendices 4d and 4e).

> As far as our role goes, we are the police so we are there to investigate any crimes that may have occurred. The scenario states that there's no sign of a disturbance. Obviously you'd be checking both of them really to see if there's any injuries, any sign of a struggle at all, any, you know, broken cups, that sort of thing. From the scenario as outlined, there's nothing there really. There doesn't appear to be any offences, no allegations of any offences. (Keith, Scenario 4; Part 1, 32 months)

> I've just read the final part of scenario four. My first reaction, I suppose I'm a bit defensive about really. Just in terms of the format, because what we're given is really just a sketch of an incident with details deliberately missed out. You know, none of this is, no sign of this is in the first scenario, and I know obviously you're trying to draw parallels in that we don't see what goes on in a relationship when we're not there, and we need to be thinking about these things, but as a police officer I have to deal with what I can see and what I can justify. I need evidence. In terms of the questions that we would have asked the woman, you'd be looking for those signs and some evidence but if she's not talking to you and you're given a consistent reason for that, then really, without anything else, you have to accept what you can see. (Keith, Scenario 4; Part 1, 32 months)

Keith was very clear about the link between evidence and the justification of his actions and indeed, officers have no powers to intervene when called out to resolve a 'dispute'. In law, a dispute can only become subsumed under a legal category in two circumstances: first, if the content of the dispute involves an allegation of an infraction of the law (civil or criminal), and secondly if the means through which the dispute is pursued results in an infraction of the law, for example, if an offence constitutes an offence against public order such as breach of the peace (Kemp et al., 1992). Crucially for Keith, however, evidence is about what he can see and what he is told and his actions could not be based on any assumptions. Here, Hoyle's (1998) description of two types of evidence is helpful – legally relevant evidence such as a physical injury, and information that can be gathered and constructed to serve as evidence. It seems whilst Keith may use his investigative skills in a way that means he could gather information to be used as evidence, his response would be driven primarily by evidence that was more either more obvious or more readily available.

Keith's response was based upon how he justifies his actions at the scene of incidents, but there was a more worrying response from some of the other officers. Unlike Keith, the reaction of the other officers was not defensive. Rather, there was an indication from their comments that they did not think about anything other than what they were faced with at the time: the history of the relationship did not occur to them. Indeed, from Becky's and Ellie's comments, it might be assumed that not only did the history of relationships not occur to them but, by the time they had almost three year's service, it had not occurred to them that

the level of abuse described in the scenario can occur or exist within a relationship. Again then, they were reliant upon obvious and readily available evidence.

> Now that more information has come to light with regards to what's going on in this household it's quite horrific to know that this still goes on in this day and age. I feel quite sick that people could actually still bully and treat people like this – a bit like a peasant would be treated in the olden days. (Becky, Scenario 4; Part 2, 37[20] months)

> I think it's very sad that this could happen to somebody. I can't imagine that ever happening to myself, that it would be something that would happen over quite a few years to somebody, cutting off their friends and members of their family would be a very lonely existence and she sounds like a very vulnerable person ... Obviously the woman is being emotionally abused and she hasn't enough courage or enough self-belief to challenge that. I think it's a terrible situation. The part about her sleeping in the cupboard shocked me because I can imagine some people being cut off from their friends and not being out much and being told not to go out, but actually sleeping under the stairs in a cupboard is pretty appalling. (Ellie, Scenario 4; Part 2, 32 months)

After almost three years, the fact that Becky and Ellie were so horrified implies several things: that the training about domestic violence had failed to impart the nature and extent of the level and variety of domestic violence that exists in society; that they had never attended a domestic violence incident which had led them to think that such behaviour occurred; but that even if they had attended such an incident, they would not have had the insight to necessarily ask the relevant questions and make the relevant enquiries to uncover such 'hidden' abuse. In fact, believing that she had never been faced with this situation before, Ellie was so unsure about what to do that she talked about having to refer to a book or speak to a supervisor for guidance. Once Adrian had the additional information available to him, the action he felt he should take became much clearer. In other words, once there was evidence of a crime, legal intervention became legitimate. Yet there was no indication in Adrian's, Becky's or Ellie's responses to the first part of the scenario that they ever would have uncovered the abuse, because they simply had no notion of what questions to ask. Indeed, they were happy to accept what they saw at face value, and from the information available in the first part of the scenario Keith had even gone as far as saying that his attendance at the incident would have been a waste of time: 'what I would dislike about dealing with it is that it's time that could be spent, you know, turning people over, pulling cars, actually preventing and detecting crime'. Yet the strength of the officers' reaction to the second part of the scenario is indicative of their human response to abuse of any type and were this always to be present, they may be spurred to take action.

> As a response officer you don't always see this and it's quite enlightening to have read it ... This is quite clear cut, harassment, from what's given now and

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[20] Unlike the other officers Becky did not complete the second part of the fourth scenario until after the end of the three years of fieldwork.

there's clear problems which need to be addressed immediately ... certainly the arrest route to start with on this. (Adrian, Scenario 4; Part 2, 33 months)

If I'd had all the information, I mean the woman's obviously being emotionally abused by her husband. Obviously a very ongoing situation. I think probably the best thing to do would be to speak to a supervisor. I'm not sure what actual crime he is committing. There's obviously some action needs to be taken but I'm not sure whether there's an actual crime being committed. I'd probably have to get my books out and I'd have a look. (Ellie, Scenario 4; Part 2, 32 months)

Additionally, with the extra information available all the officers said they would refer the case to the Domestic Violence Unit for follow-up action; they were concerned about the lack of time they would have, as immediate response officers, to deal with the incident in as much depth as it warranted. Nonetheless, the officers were very clear that their responses to the first part of the scenario still stood, and that with the same information available to them, they would respond in the same way again. Importantly, most (but not all) of the officers *had* said that they would refer the incident to the Domestic Violence Unit in answer to the first part of the scenario, primarily because this was in line with force policy.

As far as the responses with regard to the earlier incident [first part of scenario four] I, in light of the information I was given and the questions and answers that came to light, I don't think there's anything else I could have done at the time. (Becky, Scenario 4; Part 2, 37 months)

I feel quite justified in the responses I gave before. When we go to these domestics, yeah you think 'Is there a history to it? but you're thinking 'Is there a power of arrest? That's what you're thinking, and if you're going back into the past then you're really struggling. You've got to deal with what's in front of you. (Keith, Scenario 4; Part 2, 32 months)

As Keith makes clear, officers must always be able to justify their actions in law and it is important to acknowledge this when considering their responses. Yet these findings demonstrate that, with a better understanding of the nature, extent and dynamics of domestic violence, the officers might question and make enquiries in such a way that they can ultimately take justifiable legal action if they recognise that a crime is being committed. For Ellie, even with this additional information available to her, there was still uncertainty about whether a crime had occurred. Nonetheless, this uncertainty seems to have been around what infraction of the law she would arrest for, and not about her interpretation of the seriousness of the situation. Just how many incidents officers accept on face value as 'arguments' which might have resulted in action had they had the understanding to make these enquiries is not possible to estimate but, on the basis that the majority of incidents are described as 'arguments', the proportion could be quite high.

The common feature of the 'arguments' was that the officers had seen no evidence of physical injury. It may be, therefore, that as the officers drew upon their own experience of

relationships to help them understand the dynamics of the incident (as seen in Chapter 7), they were also making a judgement that the incidents were not serious based upon their own experience of arguments within relationships. It was Ellie's inability to relate to what was described in the second part of scenario four that led her be so appalled by what was described. The fact that they were drawing upon their own experience and feelings about arguments in relationships was also reinforced in comments made by some of the officers about their feelings of going into the homes of 'arguing' people. Such comments were constant for the duration of the study from the time when the officers began attending incidents.

> I'm aware of their potential feeling and how I would feel if I got six police officers pitching through the door when I'm a bit stressed out because I've had a barney with the missus and the neighbours have said they're shouting and screaming at each other, I think he's going to kill her. (Adrian, 10 months)

> ... I think I felt, probably, 'cause you know I'm young, I'm not married and you're meddling *[CR: In what?]* In people's private life, and their home life. (Keith, 10 months)

> ... well, I mean, people row and that's ... and sometimes they do it by choice, but ... In a way it's not very nice to have to go into someone's home and sort of interrupt their private life for something like this, so I'd think they might feel a bit ashamed about it. (Ellie, 10 months)

This finding is in accord with Bourlet's research (1990) which found officers demonstrating discomfort at entering the privacy of someone's home and that their own experience of relationships influenced the officers' discretion in using their powers. It is clear that Adrian, Keith and Ellie were drawing upon how they felt at the incident, based upon their own experience of arguing, to influence their judgement that there was nothing 'serious' going on. Such a finding questions the view of the Metropolitan Police Working Party that officers demonstrate a lack of empathy, commitment to and understanding of domestic violence, since there *is* a form of empathy being displayed but not in a way which is conducive to the officers responding with the necessary commitment and understanding of 'arguments' as something serious. Equally, the Working Party's suggestion that violence against women in the home was generally thought of as a private matter (1970) can no longer be accepted in its entirety. Rather, the officers in this study are less tolerant of 'real' violence than those officers described in the 1970s, but they still believe that most domestic violence incidents are simply 'arguments', which *are* generally still regarded as private matters.

Fundamentally what is missing from the officers' descriptions of what they see at incidents is gendered power and control. We have already seen that their lack of understanding of domestic violence meant that they did not enquire enough so, while it may be that they *did* attend incidents where power and control were not a part of the 'argument', it does seem unlikely that this was the case at every incident. In fact, the officers made no distinction

between 'arguments' they attended as a result of a neighbour calling or one of the people involved in the 'argument' calling them out, despite the fact that in the case of the latter, research has found that women are victims of violence on average 35 times before they call the police (McGibbon et al., 1989; Yearnshire, 1997) and therefore it is likely that the person has reached a point where they do not believe they can deal with the situation themselves, or they are frightened to the point that they need the police to intervene. The only person to demonstrate any understanding of this was Keith.

> I mean, the only other thing I would say is that obviously when you go to these things and maybe we're the last, it's out of desperation if the woman's called. (Keith, Scenario 4; Part 2, 32 months)

It seems that the majority of officers rely so heavily on their own experience to assist their understanding of the dynamics of the incident that they are unable to consider that those involved might be experiencing something which they have not. There is no recognition that while they may have arguments with their partners, they *never* call the police. Instead, the officers, including Keith, described frustration at people 'wasting their time' and this view persisted, from when they began responding to incidents through to the conclusion of the study. Furthermore, while the following quotations are from the officers, the comments made by tutor constables are broadly the same. For example, Becky's tutor described feeling frustration at incidents where he believed the police had been called to help a couple decide which of them was to baby-sit while the other went out.

> And they said that basically she just phoned because he was in a bit of a mood with her ... You know, if your partner's in a bit of mood with you because you didn't do the dishes then you tend to think 'mmm ... do you really want to be 'phoning the police about this'. And sometimes you do get quite frustrated and think well 'I don't phone the police'. (Keith, 10 months)

> It was a Grade One domestic we got it as, and he was refusing to leave and becoming aggressive but when we got there she was like really apologetic. She was 'Oh, he's calmed down, I just don't really want him to be here, and I said I would 'phone the police and he said he was going to go', and that was it really. And I think, I got the impression from what she said she was going to 'phone us to make him calm down a bit. (Rob, 10 months)

This is an interesting finding in relation to the literature about the 'myth' that policing is a violent and dangerous occupation (Fielding, 1994; Waddington, 1999) because in the case of domestic violence, the officers often used the dullest examples to describe the incidents. In these instances, the officers highlighted a complete lack of aggressive physical action, excitement or physical danger, the characteristics of incidents that Fielding (1988) describe as being crucial to the maintenance of a policeman's (sic) self-image. That officers choose to describe the dullest incidents when referring to domestic violence is perhaps the ultimate criticism and the way in which they are best able to reject domestic violence from their own

notion of 'proper' policing. Interestingly though, the fieldwork did highlight some (internal) conflict for officers as they made continual attempts to attach *status* to domestic violence by calling for back-up whenever they attend an incident. Perhaps, with much of their time being spent attending domestic violence incidents, the call for back-up is a way in which they can reconcile the requirement to attend with their feeling that it is a waste of time and is not 'real' policing.

The concept of a 'domestic' and its association with gendered power relations

Whilst in the main officers described specific incidents as 'arguments', the generic phrase used for domestic violence was 'a domestic'. From an early stage, this became an all-encompassing term used to describe incidents, regardless of whether violence was a part of the incident or whether it was a dispute between neighbours, family members or partners. It is possible that, in doing this, they were mirroring the terminology used by their colleagues, shortening the phrase for ease of reference or reverting back to the language that they would have used in social settings prior to joining the police service. In fact, the term 'a domestic' was used on a number of occasions by the tutor constables and some of the probationers' colleagues when they were describing their own relationships with others and there were many examples from the fieldwork of trivialising language being used, and any domestic-related incident being referred to as a 'domestic', including those where violence was a factor. While working a shift with Ellie during her tutorship, I engaged in a conversation with one of Ellie's colleagues who had just over three years' service. This officer felt that ten weeks was too long to spend with only one tutor, to which Ellie's tutor replied 'Yeah, by week nine we'll be having domestics all the time [referring to the relationship between himself and Ellie]'. Furthermore, within ten minutes of this exchange, an officer from another station said to Ellie's tutor that she had seen him the previous day and that he had not looked very happy. Ellie's tutor's reply was 'I'd probably had a domestic with the wife'.

Similar examples were found in the fieldwork when Keith's tutor explained to me that, although I had not had yet had the opportunity to attend a 'domestic', 'I could probably create one for you, with wedding plans and all that'. He was joking about his personal circumstances in this instance. Also, a sergeant on Alison's shift overheard some banter between two officers and commented to me 'There you go Claire, your first domestic of the evening'. The references by these tutor constables and the officers' colleagues demonstrate not only their view that many domestic violence incidents that they get called to are 'just arguments' but also that the term 'domestic' is used as a catch-all phrase for anything which involves a disagreement between people in any kind of relationship, and in partnerships between men and women in particular. Perhaps most startling, however, was the officers' apparent lack of consciousness that they were using such examples whilst knowing that their response to domestic violence and the dynamics between them and their colleagues was being observed. Whether they passed this view onto their probationers, whether the

probationers already held this view and / or whether this was reinforced for the probationers from their experience of attending incidents where no violence or injury was evident, is not clear but might be reasonably assumed.

Importantly, during the fieldwork there was no evidence of the officers challenging the language that was used, nor the context in which it was used. What is more, from the observer's perspective, they showed no reaction when their tutor constables used the term 'domestic' in the context of their personal relationships. Indeed, when I asked Ellie about whether she would and did challenge her colleagues during her tutorship her response was:

> ... it depends how, you know if I thought 'oh that was quite bad' then I probably would have winced a bit at the time and then said something. Yeah, I wouldn't have any problems saying anything. (Ellie, 10 months)

Yet Ellie did not challenge her tutor about any of the comments that he made about 'domestics' during my presence suggesting, in accordance with her comment, that she did not 'wince' at what he said. Her intentions at this time were to challenge anything inappropriate, but after another twelve months this changed again and she was able to articulate more precisely what she would and would not react to. At this later stage it became clear that she was tolerant of comments that she perceived as jokes but, where this was not the case, her response was not to challenge but to gently chastise. In contrast, at the same stage during the study, Keith expressed concern to me about how an officer he had been working with had clearly 'sided with' a male perpetrator of domestic violence by commenting that he understood why the man had been violent. While Hoyle (1998) reported that officers rarely disagree with how their colleagues respond to incidents because of the importance of solidarity and cohesiveness, in this instance Keith did challenge his colleague but was resigned to his inability to change the officer's views. Rob also demonstrated similar cynicism based upon his early experience of challenging his colleagues, albeit in this instance his challenge had not arisen because of anything related to domestic violence. Therefore, while Rob and Keith's sense of what was inappropriate did not change during the time of the study, they did become cynical about any impact they could have on their colleagues' views.

> I don't know. If somebody said something and I just thought 'that's a bit out of order' I'd probably just say. I mean, some things are said and it's kind of, just sort of a bit of a laugh, and you think you can tell the people that really mean it, that's just a bit, you know, something you say to cope with stuff or just an empty comment, but if somebody said something that I think is out of order, I'll just say. I'd just say 'That's not a very nice thing to say' or whatever. (Ellie, 21 months)

> I went to one the other night with an officer and I was actually about to walk out 'cause I was so embarrassed at the things he was saying. *[CR: At the things that the officer was saying? Like what?]* It was almost like a caricature. It

was a couple and she was an alcoholic and they'd had a fight about him refusing to take her to the off-licence and they'd got physical and in the end he pushed her ... and the other officer came back with the bloke and said 'You've got to try pull yourself together'... *[CR: To the woman?]* Yeah. He said, 'You know, he's not told me that, you know it's just from speaking to you, I can tell you smell of alcohol. You've got a drink problem', it was like trying to justify what he'd done by saying the most ridiculous thing. 'Yeah, I know he's assaulted you tonight, but you know, maybe you said something you shouldn't have said, you know and he's come home and his house is a mess and you know there's nothing for your tea'. *[CR: What do you do in situations like that?]* Well I just waited for him to finish and then I said 'You know, no matter what your problems are, you know, it's not acceptable for you to hit her' and she just went 'Oh, you know, thank you'. He was kind of siding with the bloke rather than with the person who was actually the victim in this situation because of his own attitudes. I think he said something else about his wife being well-trained. *[CR: Can you challenge? I mean, how easy is it to challenge people about things afterwards or at the time?]* You kind of feel this is the same as dealing or speaking or arguing with a criminal who says 'Well I haven't done anything wrong', or you know 'We're all men of the world aren't we'. It's kind of the same thing. You just feel that you're not going to change anyone's attitude. (Keith, 22 months)

I said things to them sort of the first time, but they both just got arsey with me, and it's just the way they were and I wasn't going to change them, I wasn't going to make them more motivated to do their job. I mean, it's far more fundamental than me just saying so. (Rob, 24 months)

The officers' use of the term 'a domestic' raises a number of issues already explored in the literature, first of which is the way in which the interplay between officers in the organisation mirrors what occurs in society. In my own experience it is not uncommon to hear the term 'domestic' used by people to describe very minor, public disagreements between men and women in a relationship. For example, comments such as 'Oh you two aren't having a domestic are you?' is a phrase that can be heard in many different social environments, usually when people in a relationship are having a minor disagreement in public. The officers that I observed during the fieldwork used this same language without any apparent understanding or consciousness that, as implementers of the law, they may be required to hold and demonstrate a more sensitive understanding of domestic violence. Pryke et al. (1998) suggested that the way in which the issue of domestic violence is defined is crucial to give it meaning and to predispose us to think of it in a certain way. However, while they were concerned about the term 'domestic violence' (preferring 'interpersonal violence') specifically because it was used as easily understood shorthand, my study suggests that the fact that it is easily shortened to 'a domestic' should also be of concern. Furthermore, the fact that the officers joked about 'domestics' reflects Mullender's concern (1996) that the term can be used to trivialise abuse.

There were also other instances during the fieldwork that demonstrated the framing of women in the organisation as sexual objects, concurring with the work of Gherardi (1995), Wilson (1995) and Collinson and Hearn (1994). For example, an interaction between

Alison's (male) tutor and a female colleague resulted in him commenting that hitting her on the bottom would 'Give him the collywobbles all over' followed by a reference to her cellulite. Whilst the officers appeared to be 'joking', this could be perceived as a form of sexual harassment and certainly it supports the view of Young (1991) that male officers often subject police women to verbal abuse about their bodies. However, neither of the female officers involved challenged the comment. Indeed, the female officer laughed at the tutor's comment. Furthermore, when I asked Julie a question about her experience of being a female in a male-dominated organisation, she showed some frustration at the question.

> I think political correctness has gone berserk. I mean, you know, I shouldn't say this, but it's just got pathetic and people are frightened to talk to you, they're frightened to joke and it's just ridiculous. And you know, as a shift you get to know people, you know what's acceptable, you know what's found funny and you know what isn't. I mean like, my hair, every day people just take the mickey out of my hair because it just looks a mess, like 'Oh, bird's nest', and you're like 'Oh thanks'. But you get used to it. I mean if I had a problem with it I'd turn round and say 'look, you know, I'm getting really upset about this, you know. I thought my hair looked ok'. But you know, you like, you think if the wrong person was listening they'd say 'You can't say that to her'. (Julie, 21 months)

The responses of Alison's tutor and Julie apparently support the view that women's values will converge with those of the dominant culture (see Fielding and Fielding, 1992 and Brewer, 1991). However, from Julie's comment in particular, she seems to hold a view about the implications of challenging such behaviour. Following the probationers' tutorship period, the tutors were allocated to new probationers. This gave rise to Adrian's tutor, who worked on the same shift as Julie, commenting to me that the new female probationer that he was to be tutoring after Adrian had a reputation for not tolerating any form of joking, sexual or otherwise, and so she was 'bound to be a trouble-maker'. Several of the male *and* female officers on the shift she was allocated to had already made up their mind that they were not going to enjoy working with her, or like her very much. Chan's view (1996) was that the bond between officers is a reassurance that they will defend and assist one another when confronted by external threats. Whilst this view was in relation to potential violence faced by officers during their operational duty, here was evidence that the bond between officers was strengthened when their ability to engage female colleagues in sexual joking and banter was threatened. In other words, they closed ranks amongst themselves in order to exclude people who might threaten their existing modus operandi.

In addition to this, my own experience of working with Adrian's tutor was intimidating: at the start of the shift that I worked with him and Adrian, he asked if I wished to put my bags into his locker for safe-keeping during the shift. I agreed to do this, but found that while I was in the locker room with him, which was some distance away from the other officers and felt enclosed, that I was subjected to sexual remarks about my appearance and the perfume that

I was wearing. My own reaction to his comments was to laugh and to lie about the fact that I was wearing perfume. I was concerned not to jeopardise his trust in me which, if this had been the case, could have affected his behaviour around and towards me for the remainder of the shift. However, it was also the easiest way of responding, avoiding any need to challenge, confront or vocalise the way he made me feel. Yet I have to wonder whether the fact that I did not challenge him led him to believe that some of the conversations he initiated later in the shift were acceptable. For example, he described to me how earlier in the week he had been taking details from a sixteen year old girl about an assault she had experienced. He explained that 'She was wearing a really short nightie and she was stunning. She was really naïve and we were asking her about what had happened and she touched her breasts and stuff'. Another example occurred later in the shift when we were driving through the town centre and he decided to repeat his route because he said to Adrian 'I thought you might want another look at the ladies'.

Whilst a study of the gender relations between colleagues warrants further discussion and consideration, it has been discussed here merely to illustrate the lack of understanding that all the officers seemed to have about gender and power relations, whether in relation to their relationships with one another or in terms of domestic violence. Nonetheless, it is worth drawing on the work of Hoyle (1998) who acknowledged that, while the culture of the police organisation was often sexist, this does not always spill over into how the officers deal with incidents. The findings of this study make it difficult to categorically refute this finding. Rather, there are hints that there is *some* spill over. For example, most of the descriptions of sexist behaviour in the study came from observing and talking to Adrian's tutor. He described his response at some incidents in detail.

> I was out with another probationer whose tutor was off sick and we went to a domestic and I actually had to say to him before we went it 'This is not how to deal with a domestic, but this is how I'm going to deal with it'. I went into the address and said 'Right, what's going on?' and I got 'Oh he's effing doing this and she's effing doing that' and so I pretended I'd lost my temper and said 'Right, you sit down and shut up'. There were a few swear words in there as well. 'You sit down and shut up. Right, I'm telling you now, you're not making a complaint, you're not making a complaint. If I come back to this address today, or any time this week, I'm arresting you both'. [They said] 'Oh, you've got nothing'. I said 'I'll make something up, I'm arresting you both, you'll both come in just because you're pathetic. You have a drink, wind each other up, then you call the police and you starting fighting with one another and then ten minutes later you've made up again, and we're sick of coming here. If I have to come here again you're both getting arrested and if I have to make something up to arrest you on it, I will'. And as I said there were a few swear words in amongst it, and we walked out and the probationer's like 'Oh my God, oh my God' and you could see him, and we walked round the corner and I said 'Right, now let me explain. I've been there three times this week. They're thick, there's no two ways about it, they're thick as pig poo. Nothing works, so the only thing I could think of doing was appearing extremely violent, extremely arrogant and extremely obnoxious in the hope that they'll be scared to do it,

start fighting again'. Now I was never called back there again ... it was almost like they were scared of the police. (Adrian's tutor)

This officer did say that it was the only time he had ever 'had to' respond in this way but, in the same way that he demonstrated inappropriate gendered power in his behaviour in the workplace, equally this same type of inappropriateness was evident in his response to this domestic violence situation. The difference in his description of his response at the incident was an acknowledgement that his behaviour was inappropriate, but he justified this by explaining that it was for the good of the people in the relationship (to stop them fighting). However, his lack of understanding of the effect that gendered power relations can have meant that he was prepared to make the people feel 'scared' of him and the actions he could take.

Implications for response: complications and confusion in the use of discretion

So far, this chapter has contained an analysis of the language used by officers but it is also clear that, whether the officers defined the incidents as 'arguments' or 'domestics', they were unclear about what action they should take. The primary, but not the only reason for this seemed to be the officers' inability to identify a perpetrator and a victim or, in other words, that a *crime* had been committed. Rather, they often felt that both people were contributing to and therefore responsible for the situation in some way. This appeared to be a general problem when dealing with people in a relationship but was particularly the case when there was no visible sign of one person having suffered an injury at the hands of the other. In this way, the findings concur with the research of Cretney and Davis (1995) who found that officers experienced ambiguity over the notion of 'crime' because victims often said that they had brought a certain amount of violence to the relationship and described the violence as being the result of 'chemistry' between two individuals.

> You're hitting your head against a brick wall. The last one I went to, it was like, there were no marks on her. She'd put in a 999 and the place had been clearly smashed up but there was nothing on her. And it's like 'Well one of you has got to leave tonight and go and find somewhere else to stay, otherwise you'll be arrested.' And it was like 'Well I'm not going' and 'Well I'm not going'. It's like, who do you nick? You know, she's made the complaint so technically you've got to nick him, but for what? *[CR: Is there anything good about dealing with them?]* No. Nothing whatsoever. *[Nothing whatsoever?]* Nothing whatsoever. They're just so messy. Domestics. Like, his word against hers, or hers against his, and it's just so messy. (Becky, 10 months)

Perhaps most worrying were the early comments made by both Alison and Ellie that they were prepared to accept that some violence may have occurred, yet their response was still informed by the fact that there was no obvious evidence of injury: it seemed that anything less than 'hitting' a partner was acceptable.

It was just they were having a go at each other for a good half hour before we were called, and I think that's probably what caused the problem, more so than him being aggressive. I mean he just pulled her arm. Which ... he didn't hit her or anything. Alison, 10 months)

I don't think she said he'd hit her, he'd pulled her hair or something but, you know, it wasn't anything, it didn't seem like anything major. She didn't have any injuries. (Ellie, 10 months)

To an extent, this finding reflects the 'stitch' rule described by Dobash and Dobash (1980), that is, officers only took positive action when an injury warranted medical treatment. This study suggests that perhaps this might now be revised as essentially, officers' tolerance of 'actual' violence was seen to be very strict and they used their legal powers at the first sign of any injury, as opposed to only taking action when an injury required medical attention. Nonetheless, when the officers reflected on the incidents they attended during their tutorship, they described a lack of clarity about action to be taken at incidents where they saw no evidence of injury. The only officer to articulate that this was different to what he had anticipated was Rob, who seemed to be expecting that physical violence would be a feature of all domestic violence incidents he was called to attend. Similarly, he was the only one who demonstrated any understanding that 'arguments' might be a precursor to serious physical violence and assault (Edwards, 1986a):

The difficult part was just realising that this wasn't like a clear cut problem that I could sort out. I couldn't like sort of give her advice as such. It was just that kind of she was going to have him back as far as I'm concerned. He was just becoming aggressive, it wasn't sort of, I think I couldn't compartmentalise domestic violence into sort of someone being beaten up, when this was just a domestic and a big argument and the police were called to sort of stop it getting out of hand. That's how I understand and I think that's probably, probably not just in my tutorship, going to others, it's generally more often than not what happens is that before any violence starts, the police are called as part of the argument. (Rob, 10 months)

However, from their later comments it seemed that the officers' experiences, coupled with their own views that 'arguments' are a normal part of relationships led them to make the decision not to take any action other than, on occasion, removing one person from the house temporarily until both had calmed down. This was similarly the case for Rob, despite his intuition that the argument might lead to violence, again reinforcing the fact that the officers did not have ideas about what they might do to respond more comprehensively to an argument. Comments made by the tutor constables suggested that this would become a standard response for the officers.

[Rob reading out question asked in scenario 3: What would you think about just giving advice again? Why?] That would largely depend on what they both said. If there had been some form of assault then ... I think, I mean generally if the evidence is there that someone has committed an offence then

I'm always reluctant to just give advice anyway 'cause I've got an over-developed sense of justice, but it often just boils down to that because people aren't prepared to make a complaint. Not even that, they just don't want you to take the other party away, so I'd be reluctant to give advice but quite often your hands are tied. (Rob, 12 months)

I suppose it tends to be you try and respond to them. But you are a police officer and I don't get involved in what it was about, I don't think that's relevant. If you get in and there's no crime that's been committed, there's no assault, you know, I just want to leave. 'If you're going to argue, just keep it down'. (Keith, 22 months)

I dealt with a domestic not that long ago where I spoke to the female, and it was a silly thing. I mean you could see both sides of the argument, and basically they'd come back from a wedding reception and the woman had been flirting with another bloke and what have you, and I spoke to the female and I actually ... this was about six o'clock in the morning, I was just finishing off nights and I actually persuaded the male to get in the car with me and I drove up to [name of tourist attraction] and I said 'Come on, you're going to go for a long walk, have a sit down and have a long think and sober up a bit' and you know, he had a smoke and I left him up there and it was going to take him an hour to get back from there and he was going to sit and watch the sun come up. (Ellie's tutor)

So far, this section of the chapter has been about how the officers used their discretion in exercising the powers assigned to them as police officers. The concerns expressed by authors such as Ardts et al. (2001) and White (1989) that the use of discretion reflects the lack of any theoretical underpinning in the training, and consequently the description of officers' actions demonstrates that discretion is about allowing someone to go without being arrested, are borne out by this study. Both Chatterton (1983) and Banton (1964) have suggested that primarily the moral perspective of the officers rather than the legal perspective governs the use of discretion. However, the example used by Chatterton to support his point was one in which there was clear evidence of a male having been violent to his partner, resulting in injury. Officers in this study did use their moral judgements, namely that arguments are a normal part of relationships. This, compounded by their inability to identify how to make use of the law when there was no obvious violence or injury, led them to observe and learn from their colleagues. The result was no action.

Hoyle (1998) suggests that police officers often have to make sense of competing and conflicting descriptions of what has happened. The officers' understanding of these social interactions, together with the context in which they are taking place, leads officers to make 'working assumptions' about what has occurred, what is occurring and what is likely to occur. It is only when these 'working assumptions' have been made that officers know which 'working rule' to apply. Hoyle suggests that there are five main 'working rules' guiding officers' decisions, relating to: the risk of further violence; the perceived seriousness of the offence; the victim's demeanour; the suspect's demeanour; and the victims' preference. The first two have already been addressed in the chapter through the fact that, at the majority of

domestic violence incidents, the officers saw no evidence of injury and therefore assumed no violence had occurred. Similarly, the victims' and suspects' demeanour has been explored in the sense that officers often were unable to determine who the perpetrator was and who the victim was. In the 'victim preference' working rule, Hoyle recognises the importance of the victim in deciding the outcome, and this was evident through the officers' responses to the extent that it overrode some or all of the other rules. This was most clearly illustrated through the officers' answers to the second part of scenario four when they were presented with evidence of abuse. Yet, despite this, several of the officers felt they could not give a resounding response to the question about what action they would take because, ultimately, this depended upon what the victim wanted. In the main, they were suggesting that the victim would *not* want them to take action. Therefore, this study concurs with Hoyle's 'victim preference' working rule. But this is not without its problems, and in particular when it is considered in the context of the lack of theoretical knowledge of domestic violence being about gender and power relations, and the implications it can have on those who are victims of it.

> I would rather refer it to someone else, but it would depend on the woman and what she wanted. (Keith, Scenario 4; Part 2, 32 months)

> When it says 'Is there evidence of a crime here?', it all depends what the lady finds acceptable. (Julie, Scenario 4; Part 2, 36 months)

> Clearly the evidence shows that the male at this household is committing offences in the way he's treating his wife, but at the end of the day we also have to respect her wishes and if she's not happy that we take anything forward for her sake then we have to respect that. (Becky, Scenario 4; Part 2, 37 months)

The longitudinal nature of this study has enabled an appreciation of how the officers' experiences fit into Hoyle's 'working rules' framework and how officers' responses may develop in the future. Conversations with Domestic Violence Officers prior to the fieldwork demonstrated a belief on their part that most operational officers were inclined to articulate their feelings about being called to domestic violence incidents by using the phrase 'Oh no, not another domestic'. By the conclusion of the study, the only officers to have expressed this view were the tutor constables, although the officers under study had begun to express frustration about some characteristics of domestic violence incidents. This frustration invariably resulted if an officer had taken action, whether that be removing one person from the house temporarily or arresting the perpetrator, and the victim then retracted their complaint and / or allowed the perpetrator back into the house. This was deemed by the officers to have 'voided' their actions. Notably, during the training period and prior to any operational experience, some officers anticipated that they might experience this frustration because the training staff had told them that this would be the case.

It's been mentioned today in class about sometimes the victim doesn't always press charges. That might be a bit frustrating. (Keith, 11 weeks)

So what would be a concern is that there'd be another disturbance, you get another call from the same place and you'd feel a bit of a failure for not having sorted it out. (Ellie, 11 weeks)

The training staff did not make a comprehensive attempt to help the officers understand why a victim of domestic violence may behave or respond to police action in this way. What does seem apparent from Ellie's comment, however, is that, prior to any operational experience, she believes that she will be responsible for failing to 'sort out' the problem. Following their operational experience the officers begin to place responsibility with the victim who they believe they have tried to help. The belief that the domestic violence cannot be that bad because the victim does not leave or allows the perpetrator back into their house (Mullender, 1996) prevailed and was seen by the officers to be continually reinforced by their experience. Becky articulated her frustration particularly well.

I dislike most things about dealing with domestics. I find them hard work, very often you're hitting your head against a brick wall. In some cases you do all the work, the IP [injured party] decides they don't want to take it any further, retracts the statement and that's the end of it. At the end of the day, it's a waste of my time and others, so that's probably the main thing I dislike about domestics. (Becky, 10 months)

It seemed only to take a small number of incidents before the officers began expressing this frustration and before their feelings about attending domestic violence incidents were informed by the likelihood of the victim progressing a complaint. This is in line with the findings of Chambers and Millar (1983) and Faragher (1985) but was soon seen in the extreme through the comments made by the tutor constables.

[CR: So how would you be feeling if you were on your way there?] Oh God, not another domestic, I think. We're probably both saying 'Oh Christ, not another domestic' and if it's someone we know it's 'Oh Christ, not another domestic there', or 'they're not at it again'. A job like this you'd just go to it really. You'd probably be thinking 'Oh here we go again'. (Becky's tutor)

The sense given was that the tutors' frustrations had begun in much the same vein as those of the probationers but the sheer number of occasions on which they had experienced frustration had led them to the comment 'Oh no, not another domestic'. From the findings, it is difficult to predict how much more experience the officers in the study would gain before they began thinking in this way. Nonetheless, the first signs of the frustration were apparent by the third year.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which officers experienced the domestic violence incidents they attended and how this had a crucial impact on their use of discretion in implementing the law. As such, four primary discourses emerge: the 'normalisation' discourse, the 'minimisation' discourse, the 'visual evidence discourse' and the 'immediacy' discourse.

Most striking has been the officers' lack of understanding about the realities of domestic violence and the consequential absence of the terms 'gender' and 'power' from all officers' vocabulary. In itself, this is only symptomatic of the lack of understanding but the implications for the form of their responses are much wider. Similarly to the earlier findings about the officers' feelings and emotions when responding to domestic violence, what was clear was the officers' reliance on their own experience of relationships to help them formulate an understanding of what they were dealing with at a domestic violence incident (the 'normalisation' discourse). Invariably this meant that they accepted, largely without question, what they saw and what they were told, without probing for historical information about the relationship (the 'immediacy' discourse). When working through the case studies, it was only when they were presented with what might have occurred *before they had arrived* that they demonstrated horror in some cases, and were spurred into action. This finding goes some way to explaining why there is such a gulf between what victims' say they want officers to do in response to domestic violence, and what officers *actually* do. What makes this even more complicated is that victims do not appear to be making their needs clear to officers at the time the officers attend. Rather, that dissonance between expectation and action is often only reported in *research* about victims' experiences. This is not to say that the responsibility for deciding outcomes should lie solely with the victim, indeed quite the opposite: because of the nature of the power and control being exerted over those subjected to domestic violence, officers should be *more* proactive in their enquiries. But, without the requisite understanding of domestic violence, they do not have the ability to do this effectively.

Officers are bound within the confines of 'evidence', and only where this evidence is clear do they have justifiable recourse to legal remedies. The officers held strong views about this (the 'visual evidence' discourse). However, evidence is often muddied by the dynamics of relationships, so the 'working rules' described by Hoyle (1998) are also key to determining how officers use their discretion. This means that, even where evidence is present, the officers often bow to the preference of the victim and 'miss' the less obvious evidence that can only be gathered through the officers making use of their investigative skills. While this might be deemed contradictory to the finding that women are often not making their needs clear to officers, what this actually suggests is that women often indicate that they do not want action to be taken that would result in a long-term resolution for them, when in fact this

is not what they 'need' to happen. Indeed, they may not know or be able to articulate what 'needs' to happen because they are caught up in the power dynamics of domestic violence and are suffering the consequences of this. Therefore, while the officers seem genuinely to be taking what they believe to be the best and most appropriate action (based upon what the victim tells them they want), their lack of understanding of power and control within the domestic violence scenario means that, ultimately, their actions can compound victims' experiences of abuse through their lack of action.

The behaviour (by the officers' colleagues, but *not* the seven officers in the study) reported in the chapter, arising from the masculine sub-culture of the organisation, has been shown to be inextricably linked with attitudes that trivialise domestic violence. The language used by the officers in the study and banter used by their colleagues trivialise domestic violence (the 'minimisation' discourse). Their colleagues' use of the terms 'domestic' and 'argument', the content of their jokes, their inability to reflect upon their own behaviour as sexualised, and their lack of awareness around sexual harassment and banter as forms of abuse, suggest that they are still some significant distance away from holding a real understanding of domestic violence, the impact it can have on victims and what actions they should be taking as police officers. Yet, importantly, in contrast to the literature which suggests that inexperienced officers do not challenge their colleagues, there was evidence of the officers in the study challenging more experienced officers. However, there was no sign of this being robust or effective and, over time, the officers became resigned to their inability to change the views of their colleagues. Then again, it did *not* appear that it was the views of their colleagues that informed the officers' feelings about domestic violence. Rather, two issues led to their frustration at and dislike for dealing with domestic violence. First, it was their own experience of attending domestic violence incidents where there was no evidence of anything other than an 'argument' having taken place. Second, it was their sense that people were wasting their time either through calling them in the first place, later withdrawing their complaint or allowing their partner back into the home.

A model outlining the four discourses and their consequences is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Discourses associated with domestic violence and the consequences for action
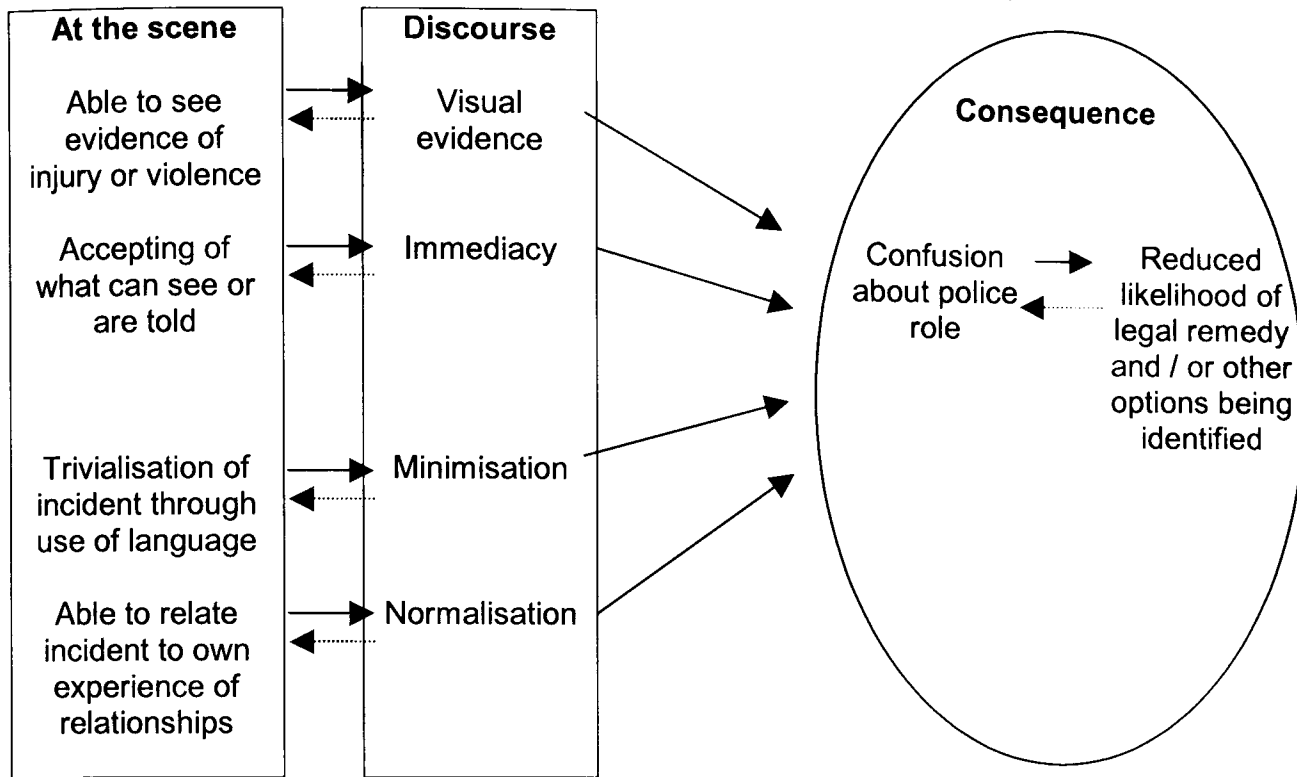
The model includes directional arrows to demonstrate the cyclical nature of the relationship between an officer's behaviour at the scene and the discourses used by officers. In other words, it is not enough to suggest that what the officers see at the scene leads to a certain discourse, but it is important to acknowledge that the discourses used between officers can be reflected in the way in which officers also perceive incidents. Similarly, although officers' confusion often means that the likelihood of a legal remedy or other police action being identified is reduced, this in turn seems to exacerbate officers' confusion about the police role in such cases of domestic violence.

Chapter 9: Role Expectations and the Training Experience

Introduction

This chapter focuses on three aspects of the officers' role and training, namely how officers' perceptions of their role at domestic violence incidents changed over time, how they experienced the domestic violence training, and their reflections on their ten-week tutorship period.

During the two-year probationary period, it is expected that officers will become proficient in a large and complex body of legal and procedural knowledge. Whilst a significant proportion of the fieldwork on which this chapter is based concerned the legal input officers received at residential training school, the main emphasis of the chapter is on how the officers experienced the training and then felt able (or not) to put this into practice. This is not intended as a comprehensive evaluation of the training (which might use, for example, Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model (1967)) but, rather, an indication of the messages about domestic violence training imparted to the officers during this period.

Fundamentally, the chapter considers how the officers' perception of their role was based upon their own socialisation in relation to domestic violence. It also demonstrates how, and if at all, their views developed, changed or were challenged through the training and tutorship periods. The literature on the formal and informal socialisation of police officers provides a useful backdrop against which to explore the officers' development. In particular, the work of Fielding (1988a) is useful in its considerations of the general impact of police training. This chapter adds to his work by looking at the impact made by the training staff, and tutor constables' understanding of domestic violence. The understanding held by these two primary reference groups had consequences for the officers' perceptions of their role. This chapter adds to the literature in this area by considering the nature and impact of these consequences. Indeed, and as will be seen throughout the chapter, there is a marked lack of literature to draw upon in relation to officers' perceptions of their role at domestic violence incidents, with much of the previous research being grounded in either the victims' or researchers' views about what functions officers do or do not perform (see for example: Chambers and Millar, 1983; Faragher, 1985; Edwards, 1989; and Victim Support, 1992).

This chapter begins by considering officers' perceptions of their role at domestic violence incidents. This is followed by an exploration of officers' experiences of the training programme, and their ten-week tutorship.

Perceptions of police role at domestic violence incidents

What emerged through the findings was how the officers' perceptions of their role at incidents reflected the experience of and beliefs about domestic violence incidents (explored in Chapters 7 and 8). Particularly in the early stages of their training, and prior to receiving

any specific training on domestic violence, the officers' presupposition that the incidents would involve a clear distinction between perpetrator and victim, and that there would be an obvious offence (evident through injury), influenced the responses they gave about their anticipated role at incidents.

> My role at the incident would be as a police officer to establish had any offence been committed. What I would hope to achieve would just be to investigate any offences that had occurred, to the natural conclusion which would be an arrest. (Keith, Week 11)

Based upon these early presuppositions, in the very early stages of their training the officers anticipated a number of primary roles: as 'investigator', gathering information to establish whether an offence had been committed, as 'arrestor' of the perpetrator and / or as 'peacemaker', usually by removing the perpetrator from the scene, and as 'separator' of the people involved:

> I think my role would be to get information firstly, as to what had happened. So if an assault had occurred, to arrest the male. (Rob, Week 11)

> Looking at peacemaker or problem-solver I think are the two key phrases. Peace, because of the people around, not just in the room at the time, problem-solver so that this doesn't escalate any further. (Adrian, Week 11)

> ... obviously to calm it down, at least that night and leave them in a peaceful state. Yeah, hopefully you could come up with some solution that seemed to pacify both of them. (Ellie, Week 11)

It is evident later in this chapter that some of the officers removed (usually) the male from the situation to restore peace despite, at this stage, having had no training and no contact with experienced officers such as the tutor constables. Furthermore, the emphasis on peace making in the officers' responses occurred despite reference in the scenario to the female reporting having been assaulted (see Appendix 5a – Scenario 1). It seems that the officers' priority was about 'making things ok' for people and, while they saw this as the resolution, they were happy that it took the form of leaving the situation 'all quiet'. Although this is likely to have been a reflection on their lack of understanding of what role they could take, it provides early evidence of the acceptability to them of walking away from a domestic violence situation without having taken any legal action. Only Keith made reference to arrest but, as will be discussed later, this soon disappeared from the officers' vocabulary in relation to their role. The superficial nature of their response to the question about what role they might take is understandable in light of the fact that they had not received any training about domestic violence or form of assaults at this stage. However, the lack of training does not explain the acceptability of resolution through leaving the situation 'peaceful'. Rather, this must be accounted for by the views about and lack of understanding that the officers had about domestic violence prior to joining the organisation. Nonetheless, the content of the

domestic violence training is considered later in the chapter and in this, restoring the peace *is* described as a role of police officers.

It seems that the officers intended to perform the role of peacemaker by using facilitation or negotiation skills, although there was no explanation as to what this might involve other than talking with the people at the scene. However, it was clear at this early stage that the officers believed their facilitation would enable the people involved to arrive at a resolution themselves. Therefore, although the officers saw themselves as having a role in this, the ownership of and responsibility for the resolution was put upon the people involved. While officers saw their role as instrumental in progressing the situation, the role they ascribed to themselves was relatively passive. In other words, any action they proposed was designed to encourage people into a position that did not warrant (in their view) the use of legal powers, and it seems they were able to justify this by having played *some* role to get to this position.

Perhaps also relevant was the nervousness demonstrated by some officers early in their career that their presence might inflame the situation. On the basis that officers often believe domestic violence incidents, particularly where there is no evidence of injury, are normal arguments that have 'gone over the top', their passivity and nervousness may be a consequence of them projecting how *they* would feel if a police officer was to perform a role in an argument they had with their own partner. Notably, however, while the officers continued to assign themselves the role of 'investigator' and 'peacemaker' throughout the study, with their description of these roles changing very little, any sign of nervousness about inflaming the situation disappeared after their operational experience. Therefore, while it is possible that their feelings of legitimacy at intervening increased (if only slightly) as they became more confident about their role as a police officer, passivity in the form of facilitating peace-making continued. Where numerous quotations from the same officers are used, this is to show consistency over time.

> *Inflaming the situation*
> You wouldn't want to cause any further hassle between them. It would cause a rift between them, make things worse, you'd be worried about stirring them up, making things worse. (Ellie, Week 11)

> I don't think you're going to achieve absolute harmony for anyone. Half the time, well sometimes, you make things worse just by being there. (Julie, 5 months)

> *Facilitating*
> Obviously negotiate with them to sort out the problem between them. Give myself time to try and talk to them, speak to them, try and calm the situation down ... Hopefully I can help them sort the problem out. (Alison, Week 11)

> Just negotiate between them ... Just have to get there and sort it out by talking to them. She's probably upset. (Ellie, Week 11)

Investigating
I think my role would be to, yeah, to find out what offences there had been. (Ellie, 5 months)

I think my role would be to find out if there had been any offences committed. (Ellie, Scenario four; Part one, 31 months)

My role at the incident would be as a police officer, just trying to find out if an offence has been committed and to act accordingly. (Keith, 5 months)

As our role goes, we are the police so we are there to investigate any crimes that may have occurred. (Keith, Scenario four; Part one, 32 months)

Peacemaker
I think basically we'd just be there to try and keep the peace in all of it. (Julie, 5 months)

Basically playing the peacemaker I think. (Julie, Scenario four; Part one, 31 months)

Although arrest was mentioned in response to the first scenario, it was largely absent from the officers' responses about their role from the point at which they had operational experience. This raises questions about whether the officers experienced conflict between the roles they ascribed to themselves early on. That is, did they perceive some association between arrest and inflaming the situation especially as, in their own minds, restoring peace to the situation was the preferred resolution? The roles officers ascscribed to themselves suggest that this was the case: the fact that the role of peacemaker persisted throughout the study meant that comments about arrest and inflaming the situation were likely to diminish at a similar time. This is not to say that arrest dropped off the agenda completely. As was seen in Chapter 8, the officers were *not* tolerant of perpetrators when violence was evident, and to determine whether this was the case, the officers had to perform an investigative role.

The fact that arrest largely disappeared from the officers' comments was particularly striking in light of the fact that, over the duration of the study, their tendency was to add to their perceived roles. It was perhaps less surprising in light of the non-event attitude the officers had about domestic violence. For example, after receiving the training and following operational experience, reference was made to giving advice, checking the domestic violence register and involving other agencies in supporting those involved in the incident. Interestingly, these were all relatively passive roles: although performing these roles might have resulted in more work for the officers, for example in terms of the paperwork involved and the follow-up action required, this again was not necessarily about their role as implementers of the law. Rather, they again were taking action which reduced the likelihood of them needing to implement the law. This is not to say that referral to other agencies and 'specialists' is a bad thing but, rather, that the response would be more comprehensive if the

officers recognised domestic disputes as being part of the domestic violence continuum and so took legal action *and* made these referrals.

> ... give her some encouragement, tell her the options and, you know, hopefully she'd be listening and ... she decides that she's had enough and that's it, obviously I would like that to happen. (Ellie, 5 months)

> ... check the DVU register to see if there's been any previous incidents there, and if so, if anything's been done about it. (Becky, 10 months)

> I'd get their details, ask the control room to do a check on their address and anything else previously reported there. Also a check on him. (Rob, Scenario four; Part one, 35 months)

> My role in this incident would be to bring all the relevant agencies together. To be supportive and take advice to make sure they're [the other agencies] are in agreement with what, my line of thought. (Adrian, Scenario four; Part one, 32 months)

Regardless of what outcome the officers were hoping to achieve, all referred to the fact that one of the first roles to perform would be separating the people involved and talking to them individually. This was evident in their responses at a very early stage and for the duration of the study, and prior to any domestic violence training seems to have been an entirely spontaneous and practical response.

> The key thing is to separate them so you can talk to them without fear of intimidation between the two parties. (Adrian, Week 11)

> I think what I'd do, er ... would probably be to separate the two people. No, before separating them I'd ooohhh ... Yeah, I think I probably would separate them in case, if I said in front of both of them that the woman had phoned the police, the bloke was to fly off the handle. (Rob, Week 11)

> Separate both of them for long enough so that hopefully, my colleague who I was with could get the confidence of the lady to finally tell him what she really wanted, without being frightened, you know, and without thinking 'no, I can't say anything'. (Julie, 10 months)

> Hopefully either myself or my colleague would then be able to speak to his wife alone and see exactly what had been happening. (Rob, Scenario four; Part one, 35 months)

In taking this action it might be argued that the officers were demonstrating some understanding of the dynamics of power and control in domestic violence situations. Nonetheless, this was not a comprehensive understanding because all officers believed (and continued to believe for the duration of the study) that by separating the parties, the victim would then talk openly about their experience. There was no acknowledgement of how power and control could still have an influence over the victim if they were only in the next-door room or even outside of the house. Moreover, whereas some of the officers made

reference to doing this so that the victim did not feel intimidated, for others it was justified as enabling them to perform a better investigative role. Whilst there can be no criticism of officers wanting to improve their ability to investigate, lack of understanding of power dynamics in these situations may lead to a restricted, purely practical, response such as separating the people involved. In these circumstances, the use of discretion to arrest or take any other appropriate legal action might be overlooked.

Prior to any operational experience and problematising of the 'victim/perpetrator' divide, every officer expressed a preference for talking to the woman when the parties had been separated. In the first instance Julie, Ellie and Adrian were concerned that they would not be able to remain impartial if they had to deal with the male.

> I wouldn't mind dealing with it, you know, but if there's two female officers there and I had to speak to the man I don't think I'd be able to treat them fairly. I'd be a bit biased. (Julie, Week 11)

> I also would probably find it harder to take, well, not to take his side, but to talk to the husband. The chances are he'd be saying she's nagged him or something like that. But if we're looking at offences then it's difficult to sympathise at the same time. (Ellie, Week 11)

> Definitely the victim ... I think I would have more empathy with the victim and therefore more like to be in the situation with her rather than him where the feelings of anger etcetera would take over a little bit more. (Adrian, Week 11)

However, over time, although they were still mindful of the need to remain impartial to minimise their own emotional response to the incident, Adrian and Julie began to comment on the need to counteract their assumptions that the female would be the victim. In so doing, they inferred either that both parties had contributed to the situation, and / or that the female was equally as likely to have been the perpetrator.

> I'd probably make sure that I didn't start jumping to conclusions. I'd want to actually ask them a few questions before I did so. Could be equal, you know, could be that she's been bashed about, but again, the drinks involvement, you don't know until you start talking about who's done what, you know, maybe it's the bloke that's been hit first and just retaliating, just defending himself. (Adrian, 5 months)

> ... you know, there's two sides to both stories, I mean the female might be the one that's majorly in the wrong here as opposed to the man, or neither of them. You know, you don't know. (Julie, 10 months)

Keith also initially expressed a preference for speaking with the female but he later indicated that he would also want a role in talking with the alleged perpetrator. This was based upon a belief that he could not rely upon his colleagues to ask the right questions: he felt it was only through having a conversation with the female that he would know which questions should

be asked of the male. Over time this view became more widespread and, on the basis that the officers came to be less certain about the victim/perpetrator divide, it is perhaps unsurprising that the emphasis for all officers shifted to improving the quality of the investigative element of their response and away from concerns about remaining impartial and emotionally detached. The fact that Keith demonstrated this view so early on perhaps reflects that he did not expect to hold many of his colleagues in high regard: indeed, he expected them to be 'arseholes' (already explored in Chapter 6). This seems likely, especially because Adrian and Ellie's rationale seemed more about gathering a fuller picture of what had been occurring to improve their ability to investigate, rather than because they did not trust their colleagues.

> Having interviewed the victim I wouldn't be happy just to leave it there, I'd probably want to speak to the boyfriend after that. I don't think that's maybe wanting to confront him but that's the way I'd probably do it. I don't know whether I'd be happy handing onto my colleague after I'd interviewed the victim because, you know, I've got all the information from the victim and I would want to have that available when interviewing the suspect. I can't rely on a colleague to ask the questions that I would want answered. (Keith, Week 11)

> Personally I like to talk to, I was going to say the wife because I normally do, but on this occasion I may well have ended up talking to the wife but taking a step back, thinking about it, I'd probably like to talk to the husband. In this situation we may swap over half way through and have a, see if I could talk to the wife to reflect on what the husband has already said to me. (Adrian, Scenario four; Part one, 32 months)

> It's usually easier if you speak to both, otherwise you have to be updated by your colleague. (Ellie, Scenario four; Part one, 31 months)

Some might argue that separation of the people involved in an incident demonstrates an understanding of the dynamics of power and control in relationships where domestic violence is a feature. However, so far there are grounds to suggest that this was not the reason for officers doing this, and Rob's responses to the later scenarios also help to reject this argument. Despite the comments he made (reported in Chapter 7) that his strengths were his communication skills and ability to empathise with people, he agreed that he had a part to play in separating the people involved but also described using his masculinity as a tactic for encouraging the male to talk openly with him. Whilst this is evidence of him believing that he is doing his best in an investigative sense, it also reflects a lack of understanding of domestic violence.

> I'd probably be quite sort of apologetic about it [to the male] so I could make some excuse about [having to ask questions] just so that we can satisfy our sergeant or satisfy our requirements, or something like that, generally just to keep him on side. (Rob, 11 months)

Questions I'd ask, is just chit-chat to start off with. Just general things to get his trust and get him on side so that I can get more information out of him. Just have a chat with both of them really, and try and get the wife by herself. To do that I'd probably say something to the husband 'oh sorry to hear that', play on his confidence really by accepting what he said about the psychological problems and say that I wanted to speak to him by himself. Really use that as an excuse to get him away from his wife. Hopefully either myself or my colleague would then be able to speak to the wife alone and see exactly what had been happening. (Rob, Scenario four; Part one, 35 months)

Rob believes his intentions are sound and that such tactics will encourage the male to talk openly. On the other hand, he shows a complete lack of consciousness about how the woman might perceive this and that it might have exactly the opposite effect on her. That is, she is less likely to open up and talk honestly if she believes Rob has 'sided with' her partner. Indeed, overall there is a clear lack of understanding of domestic violence as a gender (and gendered) and power relations issue. Rob seems to have given no thought to the consequences of using his masculinity as a tactic. This raises questions about an experience described by Keith in chapter 8 when he had been with a colleague who had behaved in the same way that Rob refers to. Perhaps, while some officers genuinely respond to incidents in this way because they hold similar value systems to perpetrators of domestic violence, there may be others who do 'side with' the perpetrators as a tactic for 'catching them out'.

So far in this chapter we have seen that the officers perceived that they had a number of roles, and over a relatively short period of time they added to these. However, before moving on to consider how the training impacted on the officers, some of the insights provided by Adrian are also useful. He was the exception in the group in terms of the stage during his career when he recognised and articulated additional roles he might perform at domestic violence incidents. He demonstrated earlier than other officers the need to involve other agencies and also referred to the importance of referring incidents to the DVU. According to him, the rate of his development was a direct consequence of preparing for his promotion exam.

I've done my sergeant's exam recently, or had a go at them anyway. So a lot of the knowledge that I picked up there has had a great influence because that's helped an immense amount, because with some jobs you feel you're going into a dead end aren't necessarily the case if you've got the legal knowledge. You only get a fraction at training school and the training department here of what you actually need out on the streets. It's still a huge amount and that's probably enough to deal with, but a lot of people stop there and they just use that and that's all they have. And that probably peters away a little bit as you go on, as you forget bits and just adapt, and obviously bits you pick up by dealing with other people. But after doing the work for that, that's extended my knowledge. Certainly working knowledge, an awful lot. Probably enough to ring an alarm bell, think 'oh I know something about that'. I'll go and dig

the books out again and go and look at the right page and go from there. (Adrian, 19 months)

The implication of his comment is that roles performed by officers are limited by the officers' legal knowledge. Indeed, he suggests that, over time, this becomes even more limited as the officers discard or forget about some of the legal remedies available to them because of their infrequent use (the reasons for this are explored in Chapter 8). It is also ironic that Adrian only gained an insight to the additional options available to him through preparing for promotion, as in an organisation where the greatest amount of discretion is bestowed upon the lowest ranking staff, with promotion comes the decreased likelihood of attending incidents.

Training to deal with domestic violence incidents

Training school was the principal introduction that the officers had to the organisation. The first two weeks were spent in the Constabulary where the officers received training from dedicated probationer trainers. The next fifteen weeks were spent at regional training school where the officers were in residence and, again, trained by dedicated probationer trainers. Training about domestic violence took place during during the ninth week of the fifteen weeks at regional training school. The style of training at the regional training school was primarily didactic, with an emphasis on legal knowledge tested regularly through knowledge checks, role-play, and the officers' own reading about subjects on at least a weekly basis. Although the primary purpose of me spending time with the officers during the early part of their training was to develop a relationship with them, and not to make observation notes, the opportunity did allow me an insight to the officers' initial thoughts about the training. Overall, they were not complimentary about the content or style of training; their comments demonstrating an inextricable link between the two. In Adrian's view, the delivery style of the training made the content seem worse.

> This afternoon, again, back into the classroom, feeling right as rain, not having drunk the night before or anything. I sat down and the same style, but just because he just projected what he was saying, for, well it was three quarters of an hour solidly. After about fifteen minutes I was nodding off again ... What I'm saying is that it so depends on the instructor or the instructors. The course could be structured brilliantly and it could be a very easy thing to teach but if you've got two people who just teach you monotone, it's still going to be boring, it's still going to make you drop off and not allow you to concentrate. I think it's a very structured, large amount of information they're trying to get through to you and they're also very monotone, so it's just the worst of both worlds if you like. (Adrian, Week 3)

The exception in terms of the training style and content, and the way in which the trainers perceived the input, was week nine - the domestic violence week. Indeed, without any prompting, several of the officers approached me with their observations. First, during the week there was some confusion amongst all the probationers about what they should have

read: in contrast to previous weeks there was one large document for the officers to read rather than sections to be read throughout the week. Keith had read the whole document but expressed concern about its content. To illustrate his point he read a paragraph to me, placing an emphasis on 'some people say ...'. He felt that the police service was not 'owning' the domestic dispute input, but rather they were 'passing it off as other people's thoughts'. Furthermore, he described all the earlier notes as being very 'black and white' in terms of what is right and wrong in law but that the 'domestic dispute stuff is as grey as you can get', drawing upon academic research and not being as specific as other parts of the training about what legal actions officers should take. The following extract is from the August 1998 pre-read:

	Dealing with disputes
Domestic disputes	A domestic dispute is generally a breakdown or problem within the home and as a result the police are asked to attend.
	Domestic disputes have historically been considered as different from other types of dispute. They have been dealt with in a way which sought to minimise conflict and reconcile the parties involved. Research has shown that this strategy, while providing a short-term solution, is unsatisfactory in the longer term. Often what has started as an argument escalates over time into physical violence. A domestic dispute may also be a symptom of some underlying problem within a relationship such as debt, alcohol or abuse, which could be helped by support from other agencies.
	If you think about the comments made about sexism in our society it is not long since a wife was regarded as her husband's property and had no rights of her own. Some argue that our approach to domestic disputes is a legacy of such attitudes and many still think that what happens in someone's home is private and should remain so.
Police role in disputes	The role of the police at the scene of a dispute ranges from arresting one or more of the parties to restore the peace, to giving advice.
Conclusion	As an operational officer, you will frequently be called upon to deal with disputes. A considered response may help to bring an incident to a satisfactory conclusion, minimising its impact, protecting those involved and preventing a repetition.
	Whatever role you choose to adopt, it is important to avoid becoming involved in the dispute and trying to solve problems which are beyond your responsibility and capability. Many agencies exist which are able to provide expert advice or longer term support or counselling. Referral to such an agency may be the most useful contribution you can make.
	Domestic violence
Introduction	Domestic violence is not simply a challenge for the criminal

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justice system. Victims will often need assistance which is beyond the capacity of the police to provide, requiring close co-operation with medical, social work and housing authorities and with victim support groups.

Domestic violence is, however, a crime and it is important that the police should play an active and positive role in protecting the victim and that their responses to calls for help are speedy and effective. Previous reluctance to become involved in domestic disputes[21] has caused considerable criticism of judgemental police attitudes and lack of action.

The nature of domestic violence	A wide range of abuse is covered by the term 'domestic violence'. It encompasses all aspects of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, ranging from threatening behaviour and minor assaults, which lead to cuts and bruises, to rape, serious injury and sometimes even death. It may be accompanied by other kinds of intimidation such as degradation, mental and verbal abuse, humiliation, deprivation, systematic criticism and belittling.
Role of the police and other agencies	It is the immediate duty of police officers who are called to a domestic violence incident to secure the protection of the victim and any children from further abuse and then to consider what action should be taken against the offender.

While Keith made observations about the domestic violence pre-course reading, Rob and Adrian commented on the domestic violence training content as being 'not psychology or sociology, but more of a chat'. Here again, there were inextricable links between content and delivery style as their comment was borne out in the way in which the training was delivered. As an example, during one of the exercises the officers were split into four groups. The group I was allocated to was asked to consider the causes of domestic violence and, in particular why relationships form and break down, and external pressures faced by people in relationships. I undertook this same exercise with both classes (one completed it in the morning, and the other in the afternoon). In the first group, at the start of the exercise one officer from another force commented 'this is shit isn't it'. Similarly, in the second group the officers were given twenty minutes to complete the task, but finished after five and spent the remaining time talking about matters unrelated to domestic violence or police training. An officer from another force commented about the task, 'I can't believe we're paid for doing this. It's such a doss'. As far as my observations went this was the first and only time officers were asked to think about the causes of a crime and, seemingly, it was this difference that prompted Keith, Rob and Adrian to make comment. Interestingly, it seemed to be those officers with an academic background who demonstrated a greater insight into domestic violence than some of their colleagues and the training staff, perhaps because they had been exposed to theoretical frameworks and/or critical analysis skills during their time at

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[21] The fact that 'domestic disputes' are mentioned in the domestic violence section is explored later.

university. However, their comments were only made to me in the context of the study and none of them made any attempt to raise or address these issues with the training staff.

The fact that Rob and Adrian felt it appropriate to mention sociology and psychology suggested that this was the first time any kind of theoretical underpinning had occurred to them. Previously it seems that the emphasis had always been on the legal remedies available to officers, providing them with the legal 'tools' to perform their role as police officers. In contrast, whilst week nine did include training about the law, there also seemed to be an attempt to begin getting the officers thinking about domestic violence for themselves. However, this shift caused confusion because it 'felt' different to the rest of the training. If the training was going to be successful in providing officers with an understanding of domestic violence, it might be argued that it needed to emphasise the legal responses, as was done in other areas of the training, or it needed to have a much stronger theoretical underpinning. However, the results of this study have already demonstrated that the officers perceived domestic violence differently from other types of crimes or incidents they attend. The problem seems to be that domestic violence training firstly is premised only on the 'extreme' and incontrovertibly criminal actions, that is, obvious assault, and secondly there is no wider discussion about women's place in society (patriarchy) and the social consequences of the devaluing of women. Therefore, to provide the officers with an understanding that enables better use of legal remedies perhaps what is required is a discussion of women's lives, the reality of the spectrum of 'violence' contained within the broad definition of domestic violence, and a discussion of attitudes towards women and personal relationships, as well as a consideration of the ambiguities of personal domestic relationships.

To enable the delivery of such training the trainers would have needed this level of understanding themselves but all the observations pointed to the fact that this was not the case. Fundamentally, those delivering the training had little or no involvement or discretion in either the course content or the way in which it was delivered. Rather, they were required to follow the curriculum very closely, ensuring that all officers received the same training and to a similar standard. Inevitably, there was some variation in the information given to the officers. For example, in one of the groups the trainer recounted an incident in which a woman had suffered brain damage as a result of domestic violence. The same group were also shown a short video about domestic violence, which included interviews with victims of domestic violence and photographs of the injuries they had sustained. It was possible to see that the officers were appalled by what they saw from the expression on their faces and afterwards they described the photographs of victims that they had seen as 'horrendous'. The trainer provided evidence to the officers of the more extreme and more obvious forms of domestic violence they were likely to encounter. Despite the fact that they will have had their own experiences of responding to domestic violence, they provided no explanation or

clarification that officers would *not* always see evidence of injury or experience confusion about the actions they might take when faced with no obvious injuries. It might be argued that few officers have this level of insight (indeed, the officers in the study had not unravelled this confusion by the end of the three years) but this also concurs with the findings of Fielding (1988a) that trainers often exaggerate stories to make situations seem more exciting. It seemed then, that the trainers' *own* lack of theoretical understanding of domestic violence meant that they did *not* feel hindered by the curriculum. In other words, they were unaware of its shortcomings.

It is possible that the trainers also compounded confusion about domestic violence through their use of terminology: the pre-course reading contained separate sections about domestic disputes and domestic violence. Yet, just as the officers came to do, the trainers used the term 'domestic' as an abbreviation for both. What is more, the officers had to complete a 'knowledge check' on the third day of week nine and, at the start, the trainer in one class made it clear that it was a domestic *dispute* knowledge check and *not* domestic violence. However, one of the questions was 'What other agencies can help in the resolution of domestic disputes?' and one of the answers the officers were expected to give was 'women's refuges'. My impression was that this was one of the answers on the list provided to the trainer as part of the training package. However, there was no exploration of the circumstances in which a women's refuge might be an option, how (or if at all) a women's refuge might be involved in 'resolving' a domestic dispute, or any information about the history or philosophies of refuges. Dobash and Dobash (1992) found that the terminology used in domestic violence training trivialised abuse rather than treated it as an allegation of crime. However, through this study it can be seen that one of the issues now is about *confusing* use of terminology. In making a distinction between domestic disputes and domestic violence there was no acknowledgement that they may form part of the same continuum and no attempt was made to clarify the distinction between the two. Another example could be found in the introductory paragraph about domestic *violence* in the pre-course reading (shown earlier) which refers to domestic *disputes*. Therefore, the message given is inconsistent.

The trainers' lack of theoretical understanding was also demonstrated through their response, or lack of response, to the answers given to the questions and language used by the groups. When considering the causes of domestic violence a male officer from another force offered the answers, 'laziness [of the female in the relationship] – I wouldn't expect to go home after a day at work and have to start doing things', and 'when her standard of cooking isn't up to scratch'. Others gave the answers 'nagging', 'laziness' and 'poor map reading'. The reaction of most of the group, and of the training staff, was to laugh. No one was challenged. Indeed, one of the trainers made a comment that suggested that violence

might be the fault of the woman, without giving any consideration to the consequences of his comment, and without any apparent consciousness of how inappropriate his views were: -

> It is often difficult to remain neutral when you go into a domestic violence situation when the reason for the violence having occurred is because the woman has been nagging the man. As a male officer you might have experienced that from your partner earlier in the day and as a result can sympathise with the male.

Such reactions and comments by the training staff demonstrate clearly their values in relation to domestic violence and domestic disputes. This was reinforced further when, during Tuesday lunchtime, one of the trainers sought out the probationers in his class to tell them to be in their sports kit in the gym after lunch because the Police Support Unit students needed people to throw missiles at them. The time they spent doing this was time-tabled to be about responding to disputes. Ironically, during the very early stages of training it was made clear to the officers that they were expected to cover a large amount of work during the fifteen weeks. In fact, my attendance at the regional training school initially was refused on a welfare basis, that is, there was concern that I would be adding extra pressure to the officers by wanting to interview them or spend time with them in the evenings. Nevertheless, during week nine the training staff seemed to struggle to fill the classroom time, despite having a fully time-tabled week. Therefore, whilst the time-table suggested that Dobash and Dobash's view (1980) that very little time was devoted to domestic violence training might now be challenged, in reality, the time-table was not a true reflection of the *actual* amount of time spent, nor of the quality of the training.

It feels harsh to be critical of the training because of the attempts that have been made to improve the domestic violence input, and to take account of the research into the police response. Nevertheless, there is still need for improvement. The fieldwork and officers' observations demonstrated clearly that the main outcome from the training was confusion, arising from a shift in emphasis from legal remedies to an attempt to consider these alongside a more theoretical understanding, which the trainers were not equipped to deliver. Crucially, if an essential socialisation role of training school is to transmit the values of the organisation, the message given to the officers about domestic violence is a cause for concern. It is difficult to be critical of the training staff for their lack of understanding of domestic violence because this is a wider organisational issue: while they receive training to be trainers, the fact that the organisation has not provided them with a theoretical understanding of the issues (indeed, not even recognised the need for a theoretical understanding) is part of the problem. Nonetheless, according to Hewitt (2000) and Shibutani (1962), and drawing upon the symbolic interactionist framework, the training staff provide the officers with a reference group against which they can test how their future colleagues might respond to them. Therefore, in addition to the fact the officers were given no indication that domestic violence is a complex issue and that physical violence might not

always be evident, the training staff will have given the message that their inappropriate language and behaviour would pass unchallenged, and that domestic violence might be prioritised lower than throwing missiles at PSU trainees. In accordance with the findings of Bennett (1984), it might be argued that the values of the recruits initially become increasingly similar to those of the training staff reference group, but then decrease in similarity when the officers begin patrol alongside other officers. In this way the 'damage' caused by the values of the training staff would be short term. However, this study suggests that values of operational and training officers are similar. Consequently, the nature of the values exposed to the officers during training remains largely similar throughout their career.

Role-plays were a feature of the fifteen week training programme and I observed two during the week of domestic dispute and domestic violence training. In the first, Becky played the role of a woman who had called the police because her boyfriend had turned up wanting a change of clothes, despite the fact that she had an injunction against him. The second took place in the area of the training school known as the 'practical suite'. Here we were taken into the observation room from where we could see the two officer role-players in a 'flat' setting and two male officers from another force that were responsible for responding to the situation. A woman had called the police because her partner had hit her and she was showing some facial bruising. During both role-plays, the officers' response was one of disinterest. In the first, the officers dealing with the situation felt unable to take any action. During the de-brief the trainer explained to them that this was because they had not asked the relevant questions; according to the trainer the officers needed to determine whether Becky feared violence from her boyfriend for them to decide whether they could use their breach of the peace powers. In response to the second role-play one officer remarked to the victim, 'I get 'filled in' all the time when I play rugby so I know how you feel'. When de-briefing he did explain that as soon as he had said this he knew it had been the wrong thing to say. Both examples demonstrate the importance of officers having the opportunity to practice their skills during training. Then again, these were the only two role-plays about domestic violence or domestic disputes before the officers responded to real incidents during their tutorship, and this study suggests that they officers were *not* able to respond appropriately or effectively to the incidents before they completed their training. Little (1990) found that role-plays moulded specific attitudes and behaviours but it is difficult to see how this would have been the case when there was so little opportunity for the officers to practise responding. Indeed, the majority of officers only observed their colleagues taking part in the role-plays.

Although the tutorship period will be addressed later in the chapter, it is worth noting here that the officers' first experiences of dealing with 'real' incidents was in their tutorship, so they did receive guidance from their tutors about how to deal with incidents. However, unless the tutor constable explains to members of the public that their colleague is a

probationer, the public have no means of discerning how much experience an attending officer has. Whilst there were occasions when I observed tutor constables introducing their tutee in this way to a member of the public, when the person at the scene is distressed (which is usually the case at the scene of domestic violence incidents), this is not always appropriate or possible. Therefore, the officers' lack of experience about what they should do or say to those involved *will* impact upon the quality of response they are able to provide. Improved training is therefore essential if officers are to be able to respond appropriately to incidents they are sent to during the early part of their operational experience.

Intermittently throughout the three years that I monitored the probationers, I asked the officers to reflect on the domestic violence and domestic dispute role-plays. In contrast to the findings of Little (1990), that students described role-plays as the more exciting and popular part of the training programme, the views of the probationers were largely negative. Early on Julie expressed reservations about the value of the role-plays, concerned that nothing could prepare her for dealing with 'real' situations.

> I mean, no matter how many times you practice something in a role-play, actually doing it is completely different isn't it. I mean, that's about it really, just I mean, I think you get so secure in your own little group you know, and then it's like 'you've got to go and deal with them now, and you don't know, but off you go'. (Julie, Week 3)

The view of Fielding (1988a), that extreme examples are used in training, has already been referred to. Similarly, the main concern for Alison and Rob was the way in which the role-plays portrayed more extreme examples of domestic violence, either in terms of the content of the scenario, or the way in which the officers responded. However, the officers seemed to arrive at this view as a consequence of their perception of the tutorship-based incidents being what they described as 'arguments' as opposed to 'domestic violence' (for a fuller discussion of this point see Chapter 8). Because the role-plays reinforced rather than challenged or clarified the 'myth' that injury and / or a clear distinction between the perpetrator and victim exists at domestic violence incidents, the officers rejected the role-plays, emphasising that they were unhelpful in guiding them about what action they should take.

> The training that we got at Bramshill was for domestic incidents where, generally where one party was fairly aggressive when we got there and sort of dealing with conflict, so it was separate the two, one talk to one, one talk to the other, don't let them sort of interact with each other, generalising that it was normally the bloke who was aggressive. Sort of in the role-plays I think all the probationers, it just makes it more interesting if you all kind of act up a bit. So the role-plays always become sort of fairly extreme examples of what might happen, when in reality this was, it was just a dispute about nothing. And it was, it was just a normal dispute but in a domestic setting, so it wasn't actually sort of, the domestic violence, the specific incidents we'd been trained for as such. (Rob, 10 months)

> I think some of the role plays, they came across as if they were very aggressive role-plays, whereas these I think are more words are exchanged ... I think what we did down at Bramshill, it over-emphasised what could happen. (Alison, 10 months)

The rejection of the role-plays by Rob and Alison on the basis that they did not reflect their perception of reality, together with this comment by Julie, suggests that the officers did not use the skills that they might have gained through the role-play because they did not recognise that 'real' incidents warranted the same response. Again, this challenges Little's view (1990) that role-plays mould attitudes and behaviour but the implication is that it was the officers' perception of most domestic violence incidents as 'arguments' that meant they did not use the skills they gained through role-play or in training more generally. This is not to say that the role-plays *were* not helpful and it was the officers' framing of the incidents that was at fault. Rather, it suggests a gap in the training: by not addressing the confusion that officers may feel at incidents the officers not only flounder in terms of the action that they should take, but they also reject the training because they do not understand its relevance. As a consequence, the officers relied upon their own prior experience of relationships and used their 'common-sense' to inform their responses (see Chapters 7 and 8). Arguably, although training the officers received about their legal powers might have been helpful, the domestic violence input and role-plays were less so and, indeed, did not address what the officers might find or feel at incidents. Only Rob, after his tutorship, commented that the training had been helpful at one of the incidents he had attended, but this was on the basis that the incident *had* matched the more extreme example of domestic violence covered in the training and role-plays and also his own expectations of domestic violence.

> [CR: You've talked to me about four incidents so far when your training hadn't been useful, but was any of the training useful at this particular incident?] Yeah, I mean it was more at this one because she had been the victim of domestic violence, fairly sort of plain and simple, it was quite clear cut ... yeah, this was more sort of domestic violence thing. It was more sort of what I'd expected. (Rob, 10 months)

Where experience did not match the training or role-play content not only did the officers reject the training but they also had difficulty recalling the content of the training, even shortly after their tutorship. By the time they had completed almost three years service they were unable to recall almost all of the training.

> I can't really remember the input on domestic violence to be honest. I can't remember a lot of the stuff we did at all. (Keith, 10 months)

> [CR: How much of the training that you got when you were at Bramshill about domestic violence can you remember?] None. Nothing springs to mind at the moment. The trouble is you take in so much law when you're down

there, and I think things haven't, that don't really stick out a lot, or you don't tend to use very much, you do tend to forget. (Julie, 21 months)

Julie's observation provides some insight into why she was unable to remember the training, but this raises concerns in light of other findings of this study. If officers can only remember the legal remedies they use frequently, and we already know that they rarely use legal remedies at domestic violence incidents because they do not recognise many of the incidents as warranting action, this might mean that the extent of the legal remedies they think about using diminishes over time. Whether this is as a result of them being unable to recall the remedies available to them, a lack of confidence in using them because they draw upon them so infrequently, or that they simply come to rely upon methods such as peace-making because they are regularly 'tried and tested', is unclear but worthy of future exploration.

Despite their comments, it seems doubtful that the officers rejected the training in its entirety, or that they could not remember anything they were taught. Indeed, from their own account when reflecting upon their tutorship, there was evidence that some of the training had been remembered by them. For example, they were almost always clear about the offences for which they had a power of arrest, although were sometimes less clear about what offence had actually occurred. Fundamentally, the officers *did* function as police officers as soon as they became operational, albeit with a lot of support from their tutor constables, and there must have been some parts of the training that enabled them to do this. With this in mind, the next focus of this chapter is on the tutorship period.

Domestic violence and the tutorship

After the fifteen residential weeks at training school, the officers were assigned to a tutor constable for ten weeks. One of the benefits of the residential training period and the socialisation it exposes officers to is that it meets the needs of individuals to feel group salience (Bennett, 1984). When the officers left residential training school and were allocated to different shifts and police stations, some anxiety was expressed about the need to build relationships with new colleagues and their tutor constables. Despite this, it was a period that all officers looked forward to. Without exception, the officers believed that they would learn more about how to perform the role of a police officer during their ten week tutorship period than they had during the fifteen weeks at training school. Becky articulated this particularly well.

... I know that at the end of the day, once I'm out and with someone else I can learn a hell of a lot more and I'll take it in better than I will sat in a classroom. You're going to learn more outside. (Becky, 10 months)

This is in accord with the work of Sterling (1972) that only a very small percentage of officers believe that formal classroom training will provide them with the essentials of police work: in

their view this can only be gained through direct experience. What was striking was that all the officers held this view during the first week of the fifteen week residential training period, reflecting Fielding's (1988a) assertion that, whilst officers recognise the importance of having an understanding of the law, they are keen to experience 'real' policing and the mystery that surrounds it. Therefore, although the 'vocabulary of realism' found in other roles such as teaching, whereby the academic approach to training is devalued and the experiential approach commended is found here to an extent, the officers *did* recognise the need to learn about the law. Nonetheless, while the law provided them with the 'tools' to perform their role as officers, just as with their views on role-plays, the officers did not believe that the training could provide them with an insight into the nature of policing. Some, including Keith, thought that the training could not provide a sense of the dynamics, adrenalin and emotions present at incidents: but Becky also believed that the trainers were not operational officers (and in some cases had not been for some time) and were therefore 'out of touch'.

> *[CR: How different do you expect it to be compared to what they tell you?]* Like night and day. *[CR: You reckon. Why?]* I mean, I understand it's not really something you can train someone in, just because of the nature of the job. (Keith, 3 weeks)

> *[CR: Are you expecting it to be much different from what they're telling you it's going to be like?]* Yes, because they haven't been out for a couple of years themselves have they. The trainers here. They're more class-room based. They have been for a few years. So things obviously will have changed. But at the end of the day you've got to listen to what they say because they've been there for the last twenty odd years haven't they. (Becky, 3 weeks)

The importance of the trainers as a reference group is clear in Becky's comment. But while she was happy for this to be the case during training school it was not so acceptable during operational policing because of the limitations of the training staff as individuals. In the latter case her reference group would become her tutor and colleagues. In other words, Becky's view of the trainers as a reference group seemed to be influenced by her perception of their operational experience being 'out of date', rather than because of the content of the training.

This also lends weight to the idea of a 'reality shock' being a misnomer. Clearly, the fact that the officers' held an expectation that operational policing would be different to what they learnt at training school meant that it was not going to be that much of a 'shock'. However, the comments made by Keith, together with those made by the officers when they rejected the role-plays as useful, suggests that they had an understanding of the legal remedies available to them yet also understood that the way they applied these would be influenced by the particular dynamics of the incident itself. In other words, while the officers did not believe they would discard what they had learned at training school, they recognised a need to learn how to use their discretion in applying the law once in an operational environment. Therefore, whilst White's view (1989) that training does not equip officers to use their

discretion is contested in this study, the officers did not expect the residential training period to do this. Rather, they expected to learn this from their tutorship onwards. The role of the tutor constables in guiding the officers in using their discretion is therefore crucial.

> Generally my tutorship was great because I got on really well with my tutor and I think that's the crux of it really. (Adrian, 10 months)

> I was quite impressed with [name of tutor] throughout, the way he dealt with people and people seemed to like respond dead positively to him. It was quite obvious that he does take it all seriously and he does actually, you know, bother. Whereas a lot of people just don't care, you know, I've seen people who just do not care. *[CR: About anything, or about domestic incidents?]* About most things, and about domestics in particular. *[CR: So when you say that you were quite impressed with him, is that in what he says, how he says things, you know, that kind of thing?]* Just in the thoroughness really. That he doesn't try and shirk it because it may be a bit too difficult to get involved. You know, he'll get involved, he'll see things through which is good. (Keith, 10 months)

> Generally, I mean I couldn't have wished for a better tutor, but his sort of attitude to domestics was that generally speaking they were a pain. There was sort of very little you can do when you get there. *[CR: When you say you couldn't have asked for a better one, why was he so good?]* Oh he was just, I mean, just mad keen in all aspects of the job really. Just tied up all loose ends, keen to stop anything that moves. (Rob, 10 months)

Despite Rob's appreciation of his tutor being 'mad keen' to respond to incidents and be proactive in generating work, he recognised that the exception to this was domestic violence incidents. In spite of this, Rob was keen to defend his tutor by stressing that the tutor had been conscious of not allowing his own feelings about domestic violence incidents to influence Rob's views. Indeed, during the tutorship period Rob described his tutor as consciously shielding him from these feelings until their relationship changed from one of tutor and tutee, to one of colleagues. Seemingly, Rob was happy to overlook his tutor's feelings about (and response to) domestic violence because of his enthusiastic response to all other types of incidents. Alternatively, it is possible that the tutor's feelings were deemed 'normal' so there was nothing to overlook. In either case, what was missing was any recognition from Rob that the insight he gained into how to respond to domestic violence incidents *might* have been limited by his tutor's lack of enthusiasm for the incidents. Although arguably this may not have been the case, it seems unlikely that the tutor's response would not have been affected by the views he held. Indeed, in Chapters 7 and 8 it has already been shown that attitude, or more specifically a lack of understanding of domestic violence issues, did impact upon response. Nonetheless, it was also concluded in Chapter 8 that the officers' experience of attending domestic violence incidents that they perceived as 'arguments' was influential in shaping their response, and it was this experience and not his tutor's influence that Rob believed had shaped his own response to domestic violence.

But I mean you generally sort of learn to appreciate sort of that your perceptions of domestic violence are not really accurate, about you think you're going to get there and see one person beating up another, you know, stuff we've already spoken about. And to be fair to [name of tutor], he was pretty good when... I mean because he didn't really let on sort of, if we were going somewhere that he'd been to a hundred times before, that it was probably just going to be absolutely nonsense, 'cause he was anxious to like let me sort of go into everything with an open mind really. And he might say, I mean I'm generalising now, but the sort of thing we'd get called somewhere where he'd been lots of times before, he'd say 'oh, this is such and such. I've been there before and this happened' but he wouldn't say 'this is a load of crap', which he might say to me now – I'm not denying that – but at the time everything was new and everything was sort of an open book, which was good. (Rob, 24 months)

Bennett (1984) described the tutorship phase of the officers' training as the 'informal' socialisation period when the officers learn about appropriate behaviour, values and attitudes to function successfully amongst their colleagues. Building on this, it might be argued that the fact Rob's tutor had more enthusiasm for making vehicle stops ('keen to stop anything that moves') than responding to domestic violence incidents was a demonstration to Rob of his values. Similarly, at the start of the shift I spent with Adrian and his tutor, the tutor contacted the control room to let them know that I was with them but also asked that they send us to any 'domestics' that arose. During the shift, although it was difficult for me to hear all the incidents transmitted over the radio, I did hear a call for officers to attend a domestic violence incident in which a woman had called because her husband was trying to get into the house by breaking the door down. I heard Adrian ask his tutor if we were going to attend, but the tutor said 'no'. The whole conversation took place very quietly (possibly so that I could not hear) while we were making our way back to the station for a meal-break, so it was unclear whether the tutor's reluctance was related to the fact that it was a domestic violence incident, or whether his preference was to have his meal-break. If the latter, this suggests that the tutor prioritised a meal-break over responding to a domestic violence incident but, in either case, he demonstrated his values by choosing not to attend the incident; that is, it was not deemed to be serious. Alternatively, he may have taken a pragmatic decision based upon the fact that other officers were already attending to provide 'back-up' but this must be seen in the context that the tutor had offered a commitment to me at the start of the shift to attend any domestic violence incident that arose. The values demonstrated by the tutor constables were not very different from those displayed by the training staff at training school. Therefore, although Maghan (1988) suggests that the way in which officers apply their skills after training school does not reflect the standards imparted to them by the training staff, this is perhaps not the case in relation to domestic violence incidents.

During the shifts that I worked with the officers and their tutor constables we did not attend any domestic violence incidents but in attending other types of incidents and observing the officers completing paperwork, I did gain some insight to the approach tutors used to guide the officers. For example, it was common for me to observe tutors dictating to their officers the content of paperwork and particularly files. How effective this was as a means of increasing officers' feelings of confidence and competence is unclear, although shortly after her tutorship and later, when she had had more time to reflect, Ellie did indicate that it was not always the most helpful approach.

> [CR: Now that you can reflect back on your tutorship, how was it?] It was good. I don't think I really knew what I was doing. I didn't know what, you know, what ... I mean obviously I knew I was supposed to be learning the ropes but there wasn't any real structure to it – it was just go in and do a day's policing, or whatever. But I don't think I necessarily built up ... you know, some things like taking statements, you know, I took a simple statement – I watched my tutor take one and then he sort of basically told me what to write and then, you know, I took a simple one and then I ended up building that up so, but then some other things like file work, you know, I don't really ... I suppose you get more familiar with the forms but it would have been good to actually have some notes to write down some notes on how you're doing things, and if you have to do this for a certain file or a certain thing, just have notes on it because I'm that kind of person – I take ... I need to do something a few times before I get to grips with it, and if it's done inconsistently then I just get totally confused. (Ellie, 21 months)

The use of this approach diminished at different rates during the ten weeks. According to Alison's tutor, after six weeks they were putting files together between them, rather than the tutor dictating their content, although this had resulted in files being sent back to Alison because they were not of an acceptable standard. Similarly, by the time I observed Adrian and his tutor, Adrian was being left to complete *some* forms himself, although under close supervision by his tutor who made comments such as, 'I wouldn't put that, I'd put this because ...'. Likewise, when I attended incidents with the officers and their tutors, I observed the tutors de-briefing incidents with the officers and asking them about alternative forms of action that might have been taken. Tutors also took the opportunity to provide feedback to the officers about how well they had handled a situation but it might be argued that, in the case of domestic violence incidents, this will have been in the context of the tutors' own views. The officers described having attended only a few domestic violence incidents during their tutorship. This was apparent in the answers given by the officers when they reflected upon the impact their tutorship had had on their developing response to domestic violence.

> [CR: So now that you're able to reflect back on your tutorship, how was it?] Ok. Very good for general crime stuff be we didn't seem to go to hardly any domestic violence incidents. (Adrian, 19 months)

There may have been several reasons why the officers did not attend many domestic violence incidents. First, if based in a non-residential area it was not common for them to be asked to attend incidents of this type. Second, whilst officers are required to respond to the incidents they are sent to by the control room, they appeared to have more choice if they were only attending as additional support for other officers. For example, in the case of the incident that Adrian's tutor decided not to attend, three other response vehicles were already on their way, so his attendance was not crucial to the outcome. Where this choice was present for tutors, it may have been that they prioritised something else (including going home or taking their meal-break) if their feelings about responding to domestic violence incidents were negative. Third, it might have been that the officers were already using their re-defined understanding of the term 'domestic violence' when reflecting upon how useful their training and tutorship were, particularly as I used the term 'domestic violence' in my questions to them. If this was the case they may have excluded from their answers incidents that did not involve overt violence.

What was striking about the ten-week tutorship period was how short a time it was for the officers to put into practice the learning they had gained at training school before they were then considered as 'independent' officers, that is, the point at which they were no longer under the close supervision of a tutor constable but considered as a resource in the same way as more experienced officers. Although during the tutorship the officers *did* attend many different types of incidents, the range of these was limited by what they were sent to by the control room. It was only during the officers' third year, when they had been 'independent' for some time and were better able to make a judgement about what they had needed from their tutorship, that they were able to reflect on its usefulness. It was apparent that, whilst the officers expected that the tutorship period would equip them better for dealing with incidents than the residential training had, they did *not* feel equipped at the end of the ten weeks to cope 'independently'. After ten weeks of being with their tutor the officers were allocated to different shifts so that they were no longer working on the same shift as their tutors. Consequently, the tutors were not available to answer questions in real-time. Rather, the officers had to rely upon their memory of what the tutors had done, or make an effort to see them at the time that the shift changed over, if this was possible.

> My biggest gripe with the sort of training procedure at the moment, sort of once you get back from Bramshill, is that once you've finished tutorship then you're just independent and that's it ... all of a sudden from being given special treatment and totally supervised eight hours of a shift, you're totally on your own ... you don't necessarily know how to do things yourself other than how your tutor's done them ... I think certainly for my first sort of three or four months afterwards, I was totally reliant on how [name of tutor] had done things, and if I didn't know how to do something then I'd generally like go and speak to him at change-over time. Because I could rely on him more than I could my crew-men. So yeah. A big influence. (Rob, 24 months)

At the point at which they became 'independent' several of the officers described how they found their own ways of responding to incidents, largely by observing others and then picking out elements of their different colleagues' responses that they liked. Whilst this concurs with the findings of Butler (1979), that officers' actions are based upon personal experience and the observations of colleagues, in line with the views of Fielding (1988a) and Hewitt (2000) it also shows officers to be autonomous individuals who make choices and exert control over their own conduct. However, this is not to say that their actions and ways of dealing with incidents were not influenced by what their colleagues thought. Indeed, the interactionist framework suggests that individuals take the role of the 'other' (their colleague(s) in this case) and consider how their behaviour affects and is perceived by others. There was evidence of Julie doing this (see Chapter 8) when she tolerated what might have been deemed by others to be inappropriate behaviour because she was concerned about her relationships with her colleagues if she was to challenge. Similarly, she expressed concerned about appearing competent to others even prior to her tutorship. Therefore, whilst there was no evidence of Julie behaving *exactly* as she believes her colleagues expect her to, she does suggest that she will be mindful of this in her behaviour and the actions she takes. Although still consistent with the interactionist perspective, the views of Keith and Ellie were more typical.

> ... when I went independent I started to feel more my own way of doing things ... I think you just realise that everyone has their own way of dealing with things and you start to find your own. (Keith, 22 months)

> Like I said, if you go to a domestic, you know, at first you don't really know what to say ... it's from hearing other people, you know, it's like working with different people on the shift, you think 'ah, that's a good idea', you know. You hear people say something and you think 'oh I like that', or 'I don't think much of that'. (Ellie, 21 months)

While in the short-term some of the officers found they had to rely on how their tutors had responded to guide their own response – and as Fielding (1988a) comments, officers would have to be very confident to reject the models presented to them – in the longer term they formulated their own responses by accepting or rejecting examples of their colleagues' responses in accordance with their own values and attitudes. Thus, while White (1989) found that probationers learnt about the accepted ways of dealing with incidents by listening to tales of 'effective behaviour', the officers in this study appeared to exert more control over their response than just complying with 'accepted' ways of dealing with incidents.

Conclusion

The socialisation literature refers to the residential training and tutorship periods as the 'formal' and 'informal' socialisation phases respectively. In this chapter the impact of these two periods on the officers has been explored in conjunction with the officers' perception of their role at domestic violence incidents. The residential training period was concerned with

imparting to the officers the legal remedies available to them and it was only through the role-plays that the officers had the opportunity to put these into practice before they responded to 'real' incidents, albeit this was together with their tutor constables. Yet, while the officers recognised and commented on the importance of having an understanding of the law, they also acknowledged that training could not provide them with an insight to the dynamics present at incidents. The implication of this is that, without experiencing the dynamics officers are unable to learn how to use their discretion in implementing the law. During the monitoring period, officers did not attend many domestic violence incidents with their tutor constables so were left to formulate their *own* response once they were working 'independently'.

An exploration of how the officers learned to use their discretion at domestic violence incidents has not been possible without also considering the values transmitted to the officers by significant others. Fundamentally, the values displayed by the training staff and tutor constables were similar and problematic because they lacked an understanding of the wider social context in which domestic violence often occurs and, crucially, did not acknowledge or appreciate that domestic disputes and domestic violence lie along the same continuum. The result was training staff who made inappropriate comments, who were unable to challenge effectively (or even recognise the need to challenge), officers who behaved or spoke inappropriately in the classroom, and probationers whose understanding of domestic violence was not strengthened or extended beyond their own personal views prior to joining the police service. At the time of the residential training, the training staff were the only reference group the officers had against which they could gauge how future colleagues might respond to them. Clearly, from the examples provided in the main body of the chapter, many of the messages given about domestic violence incidents were inappropriate.

Questions might be asked about why officers should be asked to work with a socially informed understanding about domestic violence and not with this perspective on other types of crime. The answer lies in the fact that domestic violence makes up a significant proportion of the incidents attended by front-line officers[22]. Furthermore, domestic violence incidents require a particular level of understanding and sensitivity because the crime, or potential crime, is not always obvious so there is a requirement for officers to exercise discretion that takes account of this. Without a theoretical understanding to underpin their discretion at domestic violence incidents, the officers were reliant upon observing their tutor constables whose own use of discretion seemed primarily to be about restoring peace and avoiding taking legal action. However, the officers did not join the police service as a blank sheet. Rather, their own pre-existing socialisation and beliefs about domestic violence meant that,

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[22] Although this was not borne out by my experience when working shifts with the officers, domestic violence does account for a large proportion of the incidents attended by front-line officers, particularly in residential areas.

even before receiving any training from the training staff or their tutors, they assumed that their primary roles would include peace-making and separating those involved. Arresting one or more of those involved was the exception in terms of the roles officers believed they would have. Although initially the officers believed there would be evidence of injury or assault at the incidents they attended, and that they would therefore be responsible for arresting the person(s) involved, their experience was that this was often not the case. Furthermore, their concerns about inflaming the situation, and their belief (based upon their own experience of relationships) that restoring the peace was the best resolution, meant that arrest was rarely an outcome considered when resolving a domestic violence incident.

The officers did not always accept without question the values expressed about and responses to domestic violence communicated by their tutors and colleagues. Indeed, without a more informed understanding of domestic violence, their acceptance or rejection of responses to domestic violence was based largely upon the values and understanding they held prior to joining the police service. In other words, there was *not* a blanket acceptance of the values transmitted by training staff, tutor constables or colleagues. Nonetheless, the residential training and tutorship periods seemed to have a minimal *positive* impact on the officers' eventual use of discretion.

There seems no doubt that this chapter has highlighted a circular problem: if the trainers do not have a socially informed understanding of domestic violence, they will be unable to work through such an understanding with probationers during their training. Consequently, officers do not then have an informed understanding that enables them to use their discretion effectively or appropriately when confronted with situations, and are reliant on observing the behaviour and responses of their tutors and colleagues. Some of these officers will then go on to become trainers. In any case, these officers eventually will be observed by colleagues with less experience, and so the circle repeats. What new recruits observe are officers who believe that their primary role at incidents is to separate the people involved and restore the peace. The police service, as implementers of the law, has a responsibility to break this cycle and instil in its staff an informed understanding of domestic violence, thereby providing a context within which all officers can use their discretion wisely and appropriately.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Introduction

Having come to the end of the discussion of the results it is now necessary for me to make some concluding comments and final observations. In some ways this is the most exciting part of having undertaken the study, but also the most daunting as I attempt to pull together and make sense of the work I have undertaken over several years.

The ultimate aim of the study has been to map the shifts and changes in officers' response to domestic violence during their first three years of service. I would argue that my unique approach of synthesising the gender of organisations and police socialisation literature, with the gender and power relations understanding of domestic violence has been successful in achieving this. Certainly, over three years of tracking a group of police officers and through qualitative enquiry, the complexities of the officers' observed and articulated attitudes, emotions and behaviour has highlighted the importance of aligning these two bodies of literature to explore in depth how officers' response to domestic violence develops. The methodological approach and design of the research has been unique, which in itself constitutes a contribution to the field of research into the police response to domestic violence. The detail of this contribution is contained in this chapter.

Before beginning the fieldwork, the phrase that I heard repeatedly in relation to police reactions to being sent to a domestic violence incident was 'oh no, not another bloody domestic'. Indeed, it might be said that this has become a clichéd observation. Notably, by the end of the three years of monitoring, the officers had *not* reached the stage where this was a phrase that they used (at least on a regular basis). In contrast, there was still some excitement and adrenaline generated from being called to an incident requiring an immediate response and at which there was the potential for violence (in accord with the finding reported by Westmarland (2001)). Nonetheless, over the three years and amongst other emotions, the officers *did* demonstrate frustration, and the research has uncovered many of the reasons for these. The developments and explanations are drawn together in this chapter. Collectively, the officers' experiences provide insights to the parallels between the dynamics of domestic violence, the culture of the police service as a gendered (masculine) organisation and wider society. The manifestations of this in the probationer training on domestic violence and in the officers' early experiences of the organisation are shown to have implications for officer socialisation. In turn, these have unacceptable consequences for victims of domestic violence. The notion of 'police-blaming' is also revealed as inadequate, and instead a more complex picture emerges which highlights the need for attention to be paid to enhancing officers' understanding of domestic violence beyond a law and order response and moving them beyond the views generally held in society.

Contributions to the field: methodological approach and research design

My status as an 'insider' means that my methodological approach contains a number of unique elements. Having largely unrestricted access to the officers over a three-year period presented me with many opportunities and distinct challenges. Whilst the 'gatekeeper' was instrumental in securing many of these opportunities, the way in which I have chosen to respond to them has been a sign of my growing confidence as a researcher, my 'way of being' in the organisation and of the specific perspectives I have selected to inform the research. Spontaneity was the key to seizing many of the opportunities. For example, the particular form of my involvement in the officers' training (including the unforgettable fitness assessments!) was a large reflection on my status as an 'insider'. The fact that I was able to 'dip in and out' of the training when opportunities arose, in addition to the planned time I spent with the officers during their training reaped benefits both in terms of the relationships I developed and maintained with the officers, and in the data that was generated. The consequence was that I was deemed to have credibility amongst the officers in the study.

Links that I have in my daily role with other organisations such as the Home Office and Centrex (previously National Police Training) meant I was always aware of and had timely and sometimes early access to consultation about proposed legislation and changes to domestic violence policy and practice. The specific combination of the mixed-method approach adopted over the three years was a reflection on the resources available to me because of the largely unrestricted access I had. In particular, the scenarios were unique in terms of the way in which they were completed remotely, their format, content and the way in which they guided the officers through a 'running commentary' of their response and reactions. The methods, and specifically the contents of the scenarios and interview schedules, were also shaped by the spontaneous communication that I was able to have with Domestic Violence Unit and other staff across the Constabulary. Many of these people were either friends or good colleagues, so I benefited from (very) honest opinions and being given access to their time sometimes over and above their working hours. Again, the consequences of their advice were scenarios and interviews that were credible in the view of the officers.

Contributions to the field: insights gained from the officers

Power, control and dependency: parallels between domestic violence and cultural dynamics in the police service

Characteristic of the officers' responses to domestic violence throughout the three years was a lack of understanding of domestic violence as both a gender issue and one of power and control. Whilst this was evident in *all* front-line officers' responses, the insights gained from the seven officers demonstrated the over-arching significance of this for understanding their responses. Put another way, their lack of understanding of the dynamics of violent relationships shaped almost every aspect of their response. It impacted upon actions taken,

questions asked (or not), perceptions of what had occurred and what was likely to occur, and feelings and emotions associated with the incidents. It also meant that the officers were unable to understand why, for example, victims of domestic violence did not want them to take action, withdrew their complaints and why they stayed in violent relationships. Fundamentally, the officers were not able to see how power and control featured at incidents, or the dependency behaviours that victims demonstrated that they had towards their violent partners. Thus, the officers did not understand the needs that victims had for police intervention. It is perhaps in this lack of understanding that the biggest paradox lies since, throughout the study, there were examples of gendered power and control behaviour in the workplace, and the officers demonstrated their own dependency on their colleagues. Indeed, they managed their working lives according to precisely such a culture of (inter)dependency.

Dependency and its links with safety

In Chapter 6 it was seen that officers were introduced to the notion of dependency on their very first day, when it was explained to them by a chief officer that they were a part of the 'police family' where the importance of camaraderie and loyalty to colleagues were crucial to success. Soon afterwards, this was reinforced when they experienced divisions between the Constabularies being trained together, and the importance of peer approval (Pavalko, 1971; Taylor, 1983; and Maghan, 1988) became apparent when an officer tried to bridge the 'divide' and was consequently ostracised by her own Constabulary colleagues. However, at no time was the issue of dependency clearer than in relation to personal safety and the safety of colleagues. Specifically, the emphasis on solidarity, cohesiveness and mutual support between officers provided reassurance that officers would defend and assist one another when confronted with external threats (Manning, 1977; Pithouse, 1994; and Chan, 1996). The masculine sub-culture of the organisation and in particular its emphasis on violence and danger, was not understood by the officers during their very early operational experience, but over time they did begin to refer to the need for back-up at domestic violence incidents. Ironically, this did not stimulate them to identify the victim's need in terms of potential danger and violence. However, to be assured of peer acceptance and therefore feel secure that they could rely on colleagues, there was evidence (in Chapter 8) of female officers tolerating sexual harassment and banter. This was paralleled in my experience as a researcher when I chose (overtly) to ignore the inappropriate remarks made to me by a tutor constable, since to have done otherwise would have been to jeopardise my relationship with him and consequently, the research. Even though Julie rejected the idea that gender relations characterised the culture, she had seen a female officer being criticised even before joining the shift because of her reputation for not tolerating sexist banter. Understandably then, as Hoyle (1998) found, the officers *rarely* challenged their colleagues *robustly*. To do so would be to undermine the confidence officers could have in depending

upon their colleagues, yet at no time were they able to make the conceptual leap and draw parallels with victims of domestic violence.

Moving on from 'police-blaming'

Previous research into the police response to domestic violence (see for example, Edwards, 1986a; Victim Support, 1992) has usually resulted in 'police-blaming'. Hoyle (1998) describes this as unhelpful, but the current research suggests that it is also inadequate. Whilst there is a need for the police front-line response to domestic violence to improve, there is little to be gained from criticising officers' responses if no attempt is made identify why officers respond in the way that they do, and how these responses might be addressed and changed. Therefore, before I go on to discuss whether the behaviours and attitudes demonstrated in the workplace were replicated in the officers' responses at domestic violence incidents, it is necessary to consider other elements of the officers' responses.

The importance of societal socialisation

The relevance of socialisation to the debate about how officers' response to domestic violence develops lies primarily in its attempt to suppress individuality (Goffman, 1961; van Maanen, 1975; Fielding, 1994). This is in stark contrast to the importance that officers placed upon their experiences and understandings as autonomous individuals to guide their response. Thus, societal socialisation and the resulting perceptions and understanding of domestic violence held by officers prior to entering the police service were influential in shaping their responses. A clear example of the strength of these perceptions was in the officers' views that their central role at incidents would be peacekeeping, and in particular, the fact that this was expressed *before* they had received any domestic violence training (see Chapter 9).

The responsibility of the police service

In saying this, however, I am *not* suggesting that it can be used as an excuse for poor police performance. Indeed, as an organisation responsible for providing a 24-hour service to victims of domestic violence, the police service has a responsibility to respond properly and appropriately. Instead, I am suggesting that the influence of societal socialisation on officers must be acknowledged by the police service, and then addressed. Whilst perhaps the most obvious means of addressing this is through training, the acknowledgement of this tacit knowledge held by officers must be crucial in shaping the approach to training if it is to be effective.

It has been clear throughout the research that with gender and power relations replicated in their own work culture, the police service, as an organisation, did nothing to change officers' views or lack of understanding of domestic violence. Furthermore, throughout the thesis, I have referred to 'domestic violence' in recognition of the range of behaviours that this

includes, but the officers did not demonstrate such inclusivity. Instead, as seen in Chapter 8, their preconceptions about and understanding of domestic violence led to confusion when they were unable to see clear evidence of a crime, and particularly an injury. In addition to physical abuse, the Home Office and Constabulary definitions of domestic violence include emotional, psychological and financial abuse, but very often the officers do not perceive these aspects to be presented in a way that meets their own criteria for taking justifiable action, bound within the confines of 'observable' and readily available evidence. Indeed, very often they do not even identify that a crime has occurred. Yet, their responses to the second part of the final scenario (when they were presented with information about what had occurred before they had arrived – reported in Chapter 8,) were useful in exposing the fact that even after almost three years, the officers could still be shocked by the fact that people could abuse their partners in such a way. Their responses also showed the impact such information could have in changing their thinking about and response to incidents, suggesting the need for more nuanced scenes and materials to be provided in training. There are, in any case, national and local precedents for using the legal framework in cases such as emotional abuse, but at no time were the officers told about these. Neither were they told how to investigate whether such offences had occurred. Consequently, as seen in Chapters 8 and 9, the actions taken were limited by the officers' lack of investigative questioning so that peace making and negotiation became regular aspects of their response.

The management and daily supervision of officers is another means by which the organisation has a responsibility to monitor and improve officers' responses to domestic violence. This is particularly important in light of the fact that training cannot provide them with everything that they need. In fact, it was clear in Chapter 9 that the officers placed great importance on their tutorship period to develop their response, but that the number of domestic violence incidents attended by the officers during this time was limited (if they attended any at all), so when the officers became 'independent' they were still unclear about how to respond. The importance of daily supervision and management is therefore apparent, but throughout the three years there was very little evidence of the officers being supervised or receiving management guidance. In Chapter 9 it was clear that Adrian's understanding of the options available to him at domestic violence incidents was enhanced through preparation for his sergeant's exam. Thus, as a sergeant he *would* be in a position to provide useful guidance to those that he supervised. However, what is also clear from the research findings and the conclusion so far, is that the effectiveness of any improvements in the daily supervision and management of front-line officers is inter-dependent upon other influencing factors – societal socialisation, officers' tacit knowledge and training – also being addressed. Without this, for example, the feedback officers receive from other colleagues such as their tutor constables, will continue to have limited effectiveness if it is based upon only their inadequate understanding of domestic violence.

Implications for the police response to domestic violence

All this said, it might be argued that the important question is whether the behaviours and attitudes demonstrated in the workplace were replicated in the officers' responses at domestic violence incidents. What is clear from the research findings and conclusion so far is that it is very difficult to separate officers' attitudes, manifested in their behaviours in the workplace, from their response to domestic violence. Nevertheless, this is not a simple statement to make.

In Chapter 8 I made reference to four discourses used by the officers. The 'normalisation' discourse was a reflection on the officers' reliance on their own experience of relationship to help them formulate an understanding of what they were dealing with. Invariably, this meant that the officers accepted without question what they saw and what they were told and thus accepted the information that was immediately apparent, rather than probing for further (historical) information - the 'immediacy' discourse. Officers also held strong views about the importance of visual evidence - the 'visual evidence' discourse - to provide them with justifiable recourse to legal remedies. Finally, the 'minimisation' discourse was evident in the language used by officers in their banter with the colleagues, which resulted in the trivialisation of domestic violence.

These discourses are inter-related and *were* reflected in officers' responses to domestic violence. For example, in line with the 'normalisation' discourse, the advice given to victims of domestic violence by the officers in the study invariably was based upon their own experience of relationships. Very little mention is made in their training about courses of action available to victims, or specifically the role of agencies such as advocacy support networks and refuges, in supporting victims. Consequently, officers lacked knowledge and certainty about talking to victims about what their options were. Yet this role for police officers is of great importance; the fact that police officers are unlikely to have been requested to attend unless the situation is desperate means officers *must* know what these options are if they are to provide information and reassurance to victims, that is, to provide the public service for which they are paid. Research that has found officers to be influenced by the wishes of the victim (for example, see Kemp et al., 1992; Hoyle, 1998) is problematic in the context of findings from this research: the quality of the advice that the officers are able to provide means that victims may not have the information available to them to make crucial decisions about, for example, pursuing a prosecution.

Similarly, officers' use of the term 'a domestic' as opposed to 'domestic violence' to describe the incidents they attended was in accordance with the 'minimisation' discourse. Whilst this might be a reflection on their experience that most incidents were over by the time they arrived and / or there was no evidence of physical violence, their use of the term in banter with their colleagues trivialised it further, down-grading it from violent relationships to the

very minor and 'normal' disagreements that occur between colleagues, friends or partners. Indeed, the linguistic strategies used to describe domestic violence gave the officers a frame of reference that the incidents did not warrant legal action and, crucially, were not perhaps even 'real' crimes. Hence, the discourses used by officers in the workplace arguably were reflected in their response at incidents and vice versa. Furthermore, what was clear was that regardless of how many of these discourses were relevant to each incident, the impact was the same. In other words, whether one or all four of these discourses were apparent or relevant, the consequence for the officers was confusion, which usually resulted in a lack of (legal) action being taken.

Hoyle (1998) asserts that 'canteen culture' is not helpful conceptually or empirically in understanding police decisions, but does acknowledge that it provides a 'crude barometer' (1998: 81) of attitudes, which do have some impact on behaviour. The current research supports the view that workplace attitudes are a 'barometer' for response behaviour, but this is not to say that the attitudes and behaviour demonstrated in the workplace have a *causal link* with officers' responses. Rather, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour in the workplace and the officers' response to domestic violence was cyclical. Moreover, I found no evidence that would lead me to dispute the fact that the masculine culture of the police service provides a fertile environment for such attitudes, behaviour and language that trivialise domestic violence to thrive.

Notwithstanding these arguments, I believe it is essential to recognise that the officers in the current study performed their duties to the best of their ability (within the limits of their knowledge) almost all of the time. In other words, they did what they thought was 'right' in given circumstances. In fact, some officers in the research *did* want to take action even outside the legal framework, hence the example described in Chapter 8, when a tutor constable had taken one of the parties involved in an incident to a remote location and insisted that they walk home to give them time to calm down. Whilst not necessarily effective in the longer term for the victim, such behaviours do demonstrate some well-meaning lateral thinking, albeit in the context of having almost no other understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence. During the course of the research I often asked myself what I would have done if faced with the incidents the officers attended. I would hope that having an insight to the dynamics of domestic violence would influence my actions, yet listening to the officers recall incidents I was often left feeling confused and uncertain, and sometimes convinced that they had done all that they could. Certainly, given their lack of understanding and the descriptions of what they witnessed, it was 'understandable' that they decided to do nothing if they could not identify a law and order response to the incident. Yet the findings from the second part of the fourth scenario (reported in Chapter 8) demonstrate that it is not enough to accept this. Although some of the incidents attended by officers may have been 'arguments' and thus not fallen within the domestic violence continuum, the officers will

never know this if they do not ask the right, probing questions. What the findings of this research have highlighted is that police officers must have a better understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence if their response is to improve. Taking account of these findings, I have made a number of recommendations about training, policy and organisational and cultural issues (Appendix 6).

The relevance of the officers' gender

In Chapter 2 gender was acknowledged to be a key to analysis when researching the police service, and a distinguishing feature of the organisation (Silvestri, 2003). In accordance with this, throughout the thesis the dynamics of gendered power and control have been apparent, and the relevance of these dynamics have been discussed in the earlier parts of this conclusion. In contrast, I have made little or no differentiation between the gender of the officers and the type and form of their response behaviour at the scene of incidents. In part, this is because the number of officers involved in the research has been too small to make any generalisations. However, it is also a reflection on there being few apparent differences in behaviour at the scene of incidents. The notable exception was described in Chapter 7, where male officers experienced more and a different type of excitement to the female officers at the thought of being faced with violent behaviour, supporting in part Westmarland's (2001) observation that officers regarded domestic incidents as high-adrenalin. Whilst this does not necessarily affect the way in which the officers use their discretion it suggests some difference in how men and women feel about violence towards them and / or as a characteristic of the incident.

On the other hand, what the research does demonstrate is the importance of socialisation in mitigating gender differences. In terms of the officers' perceptions and understanding of domestic violence there was no noticeable difference, suggesting that socialisation in society about domestic violence crosses gender boundaries. Furthermore, the ways in which officers expressed themselves in the workplace through their behaviours and language was a reflection on the insistence and importance of collegiality. In this way then, organisational socialisation also mitigated gender distinctiveness. Expressed differently, socialisation norms and conformity were more influential than gender specificities.

Opportunities for future research

The obvious limitation of the research is the number of officers involved, although the fieldwork would have been unmanageable with larger numbers. I would argue that it was precisely the small numbers involved that have meant that the insights yielded are so rich, and that this was necessary in the first instance to move on from 'police-blaming' research into something more comprehensive and helpful. However, there are benefits to larger samples, and I would encourage others to undertake research into the police response to domestic violence, involving more officers in the process. In recent years the emphasis of

such research has been on the impact of specific domestic violence units (for example, Plotnikoff and Woolfson, 1998), and research into the front-line response has been neglected, despite the role of these officers to intervene at a time of crisis. I would hope that any future research might address this imbalance.

Personal reflection

At a personal level, undertaking every part of the research study has had a profound and lasting impact on me in terms of my experiences of and within the Constabulary, and in my relationships outside the organisation. In relation to the former I believe that the concept of professional danger explored in Chapter 5 still exists for me, and that this has been demonstrated on a number of occasions. On one of these occasions, during an internal training course addressing race and community relations, I voiced a view about discrimination and was accused by a male police officer of 'not being on the same fucking planet as the rest of us'. Even though the training staff were very quick to address this with the officer and I was approached by a chief officer shortly after the course to find out if I was alright, the comment has had a lasting impact in that I sometimes feel reluctant to air my views in such situations. Therefore, in the same way that I wrestled with understanding the theories now present in the study, the challenge is to continue the journey, accepting the knock-backs and criticisms along the way and learn to understand and use them to address such cultural change issues most effectively.

On the other hand my role in the Constabulary, as head of the research team, has been considerably enhanced by the skills I have gained as a researcher. Again, although I feel I have just begun the journey of methodological exploration, the enthusiasm I have for this enterprise has reinvigorated the feelings I have for my role. Feedback I have received suggests that this in turn energises members of my team. Perhaps in this way I will be able to convince others, senior and chief officers in particular, of the merits of qualitative research.

At a more personal level, through the research I have gained insights into domestic violence and the experiences of victims of domestic violence that will stay with me for a very long time. My involvement with the local domestic violence project means that I have been privileged to work alongside survivors of domestic violence, whose stories fill me with horror but also admiration at the resilience and courage they demonstrate. It has been such people, together with my own awakening about and experiences of the police culture, which have driven me to complete this research when at times I found working full time and studying part time to be almost impossible.

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Working Ethical Guidelines

Principal question study aims to answer

What are the main lines of influence that serve to shape probationer constables' responses to domestic violence incidents?

Anonymity

No police officer will be identified by name in the thesis or subsequent publications.

Fieldnotes made during the study may contain names and other references that identify individuals. However, any extracts from fieldnotes included in the thesis or subsequent publications will be anonymised or excluded.

The fieldnotes will be kept in a safe place.

Names and other references that may identify individuals will not be disclosed to members of the researcher's supervisory team.

Confidentiality

No information will be disclosed to any other member of the Constabulary, including senior officers, about individual officers in the study.

Details regarding the researcher's observations will not be disclosed to other members of the Constabulary.

If serious misconduct or criminal activity is committed by one of the participants in the presence of the researcher, disclosure of this information may take place.

Findings

An agreement has been reached with the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire that access to the thesis will be restricted for two years after completion, and that any subsequent publications will require approval from the Chief Constable.

Access to fieldnotes

An individual involved in the study can have access to those fieldnotes which constitute an informal or formal 'interview' with that individual by the researcher.

An individual involved in the study can have access to fieldnotes of the researcher's observations of that individual, providing that the confidentiality guidelines are not compromised.

Individuals involved in the study must not discuss or disclose anything that they learn through reading the fieldnotes.

Commitment

It is essential that the researcher and the individuals involved in the study maintain regular contact. This may be on a formal (eg. interviews) or an informal basis (eg. a 'chat' to discuss concerns, good experiences etc). All such material collected must be acknowledged by the research participants to be legitimate 'data' and therefore capable of being included in the thesis or subsequent publications.

Honesty and mutual trust is developed and maintained.

Individuals have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, providing prior notice is given.

The researcher will fit in with the working hours of the individuals involved in the study, unless agreement is reached otherwise.

The researcher can observe individuals involved in the study when on duty at any time, providing that notice of the researcher's intention to observe has been given and agreed with the individual concerned, and that the researcher's presence will not compromise any police operations.

Individuals involved in the study will maintain a 'log' of all domestic violence incidents attended and the researcher can have access to this at any time, provided reasonable notice is given.

Additional ethical guidelines

The ethical guidelines of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education will be followed.

NB. All of the working ethical guidelines will be adhered to by the researcher and individuals involved in the study. However, as the study evolves it may be appropriate to add further guidelines. This can be done at any time during the study after negotiation between the researcher and individuals involved.

Thumbnail Portraits of the Officers

Alison

At the start of the research Alison was in her mid-20s. Although fluent in English at the time of the research, it was not her first language. She described herself as being comfortable speaking English by the age of 14. Prior to joining the Constabulary she had spent time working in the fitness and leisure industry, most recently as a swimming instructor. She had been inspired to join the police service by her aunt, who was a police officer. After spending time living in different cities, Alison finally decided that Gloucestershire was a place she would like to settle in. In part, this was because she had family in the area.

Adrian

Adrian was in his early 30s - the oldest of the officers involved in the research. He was also the only officer to be married and have children. Before joining the police service he completed a Batchelor of Education in Science, with a view to becoming a teacher. However, instead of teaching he joined the Navy on an eight year commission. Having completed this he then applied to join Gloucestershire Constabulary.

Becky

Becky was in her early 20s at the start of the research. At the age of 15 she began working part-time in her local police station. Following this she spent over two years working in the fitness and leisure industry in Gloucestershire prior to joining the police service.

Ellie

At the start of the research Ellie was in her early 20s. Before joining the Constabulary she had completed an under-graduate degree and became interested in joining the police service following a conversation with a careers advisor. During the course of the research, Ellie got married. Since the completion of the fieldwork, she has transferred to another Constabulary.

Julie

Julie was in her early mid-20s at the start of the research. Before joining the police service she worked in a supermarket. Her older brother is also a police officer in Gloucestershire. When she joined the Constabulary she was in a long-term relationship, but this relationship has since broken down and Julie is now married to a police officer. They have both transferred to another Constabulary.

Keith

At the start of the research Keith was in his mid-20s. He had completed a degree, but knowing that he was interested in joining the police service he deferred his application until he knew where in the country his girlfriend would locate for her job. This meant that there was about a three year gap between completing his degree and joining the Constabulary. During the course of the research, Keith and his girlfriend got married. Since then, they have moved away from Gloucestershire and Keith has transferred to another Constabulary.

Rob

Rob was in his early 20s at the start of the research. He was the youngest officer involved in the research, having recently completed his under-graduate degree in history when he joined the Constabulary. His ambition had been to be a sports journalist or a teacher, but he decided that being a police officer would be more rewarding and satisfying. Although he had been at a University in the North East, he applied to Gloucestershire Constabulary and was living with his parents at the time of the research.

Methods in Context of the Training Programme

Week / Month	Duration	Training Activity	Status of Probationers	Method
Weeks 1-2	2 weeks	In-force induction	• Probationer • Non-operational	• (Participant) observation • Family day – the day before start of Week 1 • Provided officers with information about the research • Spent time at Scout Hut • Asked for volunteers at end of Week 2
Weeks 3-18	15 weeks	Residential training at Regional Training Centre (Bramshill)	• Probationer • Non-operational	• (Participant) observation – Week 3 • Week 3 – Interview 1 • Evening visit – Week 9 – to give officers Scenario 1 • Scenario 1 completed before domestic violence training • Observation during 'domestic violence' training week (Week 11, also reported in Chapter 5 as Week 9 of the 15 week residential) • Evening visit – Week 14 – to give officers Scenario 2 • Scenario 2 completed before end of residential training • Week 18 - attended 'dining in' night and 'passing out parade' as a guest
Weeks 19-21	2 weeks	In-force learning about local procedures	• Probationer • Non-operational	
			Probationers given time off	
Month 6	10 weeks	Tutorship	• Probationer • Supervised patrol with a dedicated tutor constable	• (Participant) observation – 1 shift with each officer
Months 9-10			• Probationer • Operational (independent)	• Interview 2
Months 10-12			• Probationer • Operational (independent)	• Scenario 3
Months 10-12				• Interview with tutor constables (based on Scenario 3)

Week/month	Duration	Training Activity	Status of Probationers	Method
Months 19-24			• Probationer • Operational (independent)	• Interview 3
Months 31-35			• Passed probation • Operational	• Scenario 4 (part 1)
Months 32-37			• Passed probation • Operational	• Scenario 4 (part 2)

NB: Between the end of the tutorship period and the end of the probationary period, the officers received a further two weeks in force to extend their knowledge of local procedures, and a further 20 days spread out over a period of months before being confirmed in their rank (passing their probation).

Interview 1

Training school

General training questions

- So how was today?
- Was it what you expected?
- Is this what you expected here?
- What about the last two weeks – was that what you expected?

Before joining

- So how long ago did you start thinking about joining?
- So why the police then, what was the appeal?

Motivations and expectations

- So where do you see yourself then, when you've finished your probationary period in two years time?
- Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to?
- Is there anything that you're a bit nervous about?
- When you finish the 15 weeks and you go out, you've got 2 weeks in force, you go out with your tutor constable, what do you expect that to be like?

The research

- When I explained that that I was doing this research and that I was interested in domestic violence, what was your initial reaction?
- Have you got any concerns about what I'm doing?

Interview 2
De-brief of domestic violence incidents during tutorship

Domestic violence incidents - general

- Can you tell me about each domestic violence incident you went to during your ten weeks with your tutor.

Feelings

- How did you feel when it came over the radio?
- How did you feel when you got there?
- Was that what you expected to feel?

The incident

- What was the outcome of the incident? How did this make you feel?
- What was the best part of dealing with the incident?
- What was the worst part?
- What was the most difficult part of dealing with it?
- How did you feel when the incident was over?

Training

- Did your training prepare you for dealing with the incident?
- Did any of the role plays prepare you for dealing with the incident?

Tutor constables

- How did your tutor respond when the incident came over the radio?
- How did your tutor respond when you got to the incident?
- Was this how you thought he should respond?
- Was this how you expected him to respond? Why?
- What do you think his motives were?
- Was there anything that surprised you about his response?
- Do you feel that you could have challenged him about his response?
- Did you challenge him?
- What was / would have been the reaction to the challenge?
- What do you think your tutor expected of you?

Other officers

- Were there any other officers at the incident?
- How did they respond?

The future

- How confident do you feel about dealing with other domestic violence incidents now?
- Do you have any expectations about what you'll find at domestic incidents / what it'll be like?
- On reflection, do you think your response to domestic violence incidents is changing? Why? Was there a specific turning point? Over what time period?

The research

- How comfortable do you feel telling me this? (guilty, pleased with yourself, proud of how you've responded, changing relationship with me?)
- What difference has being part of this study made to your feelings about domestic violence incidents?
- How accurate are the scenarios in view of the incidents you've been to? Have they affected what you think and do at the incident?

Interview 3

Interview about experiences – general and domestic violence

Last time we met was [date] and I asked you questions about the domestic violence incidents you had been to during your tutorship. I was particularly interested in the nature of the incidents, your perception of the response of your tutor and other colleagues, and whether you thought the training had been useful in helping you deal with the incidents.

This time, I would like to catch up with you generally, but also ask you some specific questions about domestic violence.

General

- How has it been?
- Has the time passed quickly?
- Do you feel like a probationer? Does this stop when 'newer' probationers join the shift?
- Do you feel 'competent'?
- Do you feel confident?
- Are there any types of incidents you don't feel confident dealing with?

Domestic violence incidents

Tell me about some of the domestic violence incidents you have been to...

Feelings and thoughts

- How do you feel when they come over the radio?
- What do you think when they come over the radio? Is it possible to answer these questions or does it depend on the information you're given?
- Is this different to what you used to feel? When did your feelings change?
- Are there any other incidents that make you feel like that?
- Why is it that you feel like that?
- The fact that you feel like this, does it affect what you do when you get there?
- What's the difference between domestic disputes and domestic violence? Which do you prefer dealing with?
- What do you enjoy about them?
- What do you dislike about them?
- What gives you a sense of satisfaction?
- Is there a particular domestic violence incident that has had a lasting effect on you? Why? Any particular part of it? How (if at all) has your response / attitude changed as a result of it?

- How often do you get called back to the same addresses? What do you think when you receive calls like this? Does it influence how you feel about the people? Does it affect what advice you give? Does it influence the way you behave towards people?
- What do you generally do when you get to domestic violence incidents?
- What role do you have as a police officer? Are you comfortable with this? When did you identify that this was the role you were playing?
- Is this different to the role you play at other incidents?
- What impact do you feel you have on people? Do people want you there?

Advice given

- Where do you draw your advice from? How much do you draw from your own life experience?
- Do you feel confident in providing advice?
- Has anyone provided you with guidance about advice to give?
- Could anyone provide you with guidance?
- Do you have to provide advice like this at any other type of incident?

Information over the radio

- What kinds of things come over the radio?
- Do you always know exactly what you're going to? How accurate is what they tell you?
- Do control room provide you with enough information?
- Do they make distinctions between domestic disputes and domestic violence?
- Does what they tell you influence the way you think about what you're going to?
- How much does the information depend on the operator?

Training

- How useful has your training on domestic disputes and violence been?
- Have you had any additional training?
- How useful has it been generally?
- Is it possible to provide training for what you deal with as a police officer?
- Is there any way you could be trained to 'cope' with incidents you go to?

Your shift

- How do you like working on your shift?
- Is it the same shift you did your tutorship on?
- Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
- How do other people respond at domestic violence incidents?
- How important is a good working relationship with your colleagues?
- How easy it is to challenge what another colleague does? What would be the consequence of this?

Tutor constables

- Now that you can reflect back on your tutorship, how was it?
- ...and how was it in terms of helping you / guiding you in dealing with domestic violence incidents?
- How much influence does your tutor have over the way you develop as an officer?

Overall

- What is it that makes domestic violence different to other incidents?
- Are they what you expected?
- Do you think your attitude towards domestic violence has changed?
- Do you think your response has changed?
- Has it changed in a way that you expected?
- Has it changed to be better or worse? Do you like the way it's changed?
- What could the Constabulary be doing to improve things?
- What are your expectations about domestic violence?
- Does the lack of distinction between domestic disputes and domestic violence cause any difficulties? Had you noticed that there was a lack of distinction?
- What do you think has been the greatest influence on you so far?
- If you had a choice, would you go to domestic violence incidents, or would you leave them for other people?

Domestic Violence Scenario 1 (Week 11)

On the following pages there is a description of a domestic violence incident. After reading about the incident I would like you to answer some questions. Please follow the instructions carefully. You may feel that there is not much information to work from. Nevertheless, the information you have is a realistic scenario.

Instructions

- Please go through this exercise in the order in which it has been written, answering any questions you come across. **DO NOT READ AHEAD.**

- I am interested in what you think and feel *now*. For this reason, **DO NOT READ AHEAD IN YOUR STUDENT NOTES.**

- This exercise should not take you more than 30 minutes, but take as much or as little time as you need. It may only take you 5 minutes - if so, that's fine.

- Please do this exercise on your own. Do not speak to other members of the group about the exercise before you complete it.

- Please do not discuss any of your answers with other members of the group after completing it. They may not have completed their own.

- Please complete this exercise by 4 December, and indicate on the tape the date on which you are doing the exercise. I will collect it from you on 7 December.

- Try to be as honest as possible. It is important that I get your true feelings and initial reactions. I realise it is often difficult to speak into a tape-recorder; feel free to switch it off at any time and come back to it later. It is up to you how and when you complete the exercise.

- Try *not* to answer the questions as though you are answering a questionnaire. Instead, use the questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of your thoughts, feelings and actions during the incident.

- Try to give as full a response as possible, including reasons for your response. Imagine I am with you asking 'why?' after every response!

- If you have any questions you can contact me at work on [telephone number], or at home on [telephone number].

- **THIS IS NOT A TEST OR KNOWLEDGE CHECK!**

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

First part of scenario

You are working with a male colleague in a patrol car on a Friday evening. You receive a call at 2135 hours asking you to attend a report of a domestic incident at 21, Calder Street. The message is as follows:-

"Caller in tears. Says ex-boyfriend has assaulted her. He is still there."

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

1. What do you think your initial reaction would be if this came over the radio?
2. What would be going through your mind?
3. How would you feel generally?
4. How confident do you think you would be handling this incident now?
5. What do you think the reaction of your colleague would be? Obviously, it depends! But on what? And how might different colleagues react?
6. While you are on your way to 21, Calder Street you hear a request for a fellow officer to attend a report of a burglary in progress. The address given is on the route to 21, Calder Street. You are approximately 1 minute away from the address that has been given. The officer who has been asked to attend is approximately 5 minutes away.

(a) What would you do?

(b) Please use the numbers 1 to 7 to indicate which call you believe to be the priority, therefore indicating what you would do in this situation. This is how the question would look in a questionnaire. *I would like you to indicate your choices on the tape, and give an explanation for your choices.*

	Low priority			Medium priority			High priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Domestic assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Burglary in progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Second part of scenario

You decide to attend the domestic incident.

When you arrive at 21, Calder Street you see that it is a small house which appears to be well looked after. It is part of a new housing estate which, so far, has suffered little crime. You are let into the house by a male, who looks about 35 years of age. He appears to be calm and asks you what you have called round for. There is a strong smell of alcohol on his breath and he has a can of lager in his hand.

He lets you into the house without any resistance. You walk through the front door into a clean and tidy hall-way. To your right is the lounge. There is a woman, aged about 30, looking out of the window. When she turns round you can see that she's been crying. There is no evidence of any injuries.

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

6. What do you think is the most likely explanation of what has happened between the male and female? How confident are you in saying this?
7. What would you do?
8. What questions would you ask?
9. Do you think it's likely this female has been assaulted by this male before? How confident are you in saying this?
10. What do you think your role would be at this incident?
11. What role would you want your colleague to take at this incident?
12. What would you hope to achieve at this incident?
13. Suppose you decide that you will talk to one person, and your colleague will talk to the other. Who would you rather talk to - the victim or the ex-boyfriend? Why?
14. What do you think you would like about handling an incident like this?
15. What do you think you would dislike about handling an incident like this?

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Thank you for completing this.

If this exercise raises any issues you want to discuss, either contact me on the telephone numbers shown in the 'instructions'. Alternatively I will be spending [date] with you and will be happy to talk then.

Claire.

Domestic Violence Scenario 2 (Between Months 4 and 5)

On the following pages there is a description of a domestic violence incident. *The incident is different to the one you had before Christmas.* After reading about the incident I would like you to answer some questions. Some of the instructions are slightly different to the first scenario you did; please follow them carefully. Again, you may feel that there is not much information to work from. Nevertheless, the information you have is based on a real incident.

Instructions

- Please go through the exercise in the order in which is has been written, answering any questions you come across. DO NOT READ AHEAD.

- I am interested in what you think and feel *now*. The questions are the same as the first scenario, but TRY NOT TO THINK BACK TO WHAT YOU SAID IN THE FIRST EXERCISE.

- The exercise should not take you more than 30 minutes, but take as much or as little time as you need. It may only take you 5 minutes - if so, that's fine.

- Please do this exercise on your own. Do not speak to other members of the group about the exercise before you complete it.

- I have asked some of you to share tape-recorders this time. For this reason, please do not discuss any of your answers with other members of the group after completing the exercise. They may not have completed their own.

- Please complete this exercise by Friday 19 February, and indicate on the tape the date on which you are doing the exercise. I will be on annual leave until 22 February, so please put your tape and tape-recorder into the envelope provided, seal it, and give it to either [name of officers]. I will collect it from them.

- Try not to answer the questions as though you are answering a questionnaire. Instead, use the questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of your thoughts, feelings and actions during the incident.

- Try to give as full a response as possible, including reasons for your response. Imagine I am with you asking 'why?' after every answer!

- Try to be as honest as possible. DO NOT READ BACK OVER YOUR NOTES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. If you weren't involved in this study you probably wouldn't be reading over your notes this week. I don't want the fact that you are involved in this study to influence the amount of knowledge you have on domestic violence.

- THIS IS NOT A TEST!

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

First part of scenario

You are working with a male colleague on a Sunday afternoon when you receive a call over the radio to attend a domestic incident at 24, Park Hall Drive. You are told:-

> *"Female stated she was in her bedroom. Has been beaten up by her husband. Husband downstairs and not aware of her calling. Line then cut off. Caller was whispering and said she couldn't get out."*

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

1. What do you think your initial reaction would be if this came over the radio?
2. What would be going through your mind?
3. How would you feel generally?
4. How confident do you think you would be handling this incident now?
5. What do you think the reaction of your colleague might be? Obviously, it depends! But on what? And how might different colleagues react?
6. While you are on your way to 24, Park Hall Drive you see a road traffic accident that has just occurred at a T-junction. No-one appears to be hurt but there is a lot of debris on the road.

(a) What would you do?

(b) Please use the numbers 1 to 7 to indicate which incident you believe to be the priority, therefore indicating what you would do in this situation. This is how the question would look in a questionnaire. *I would like you to indicate your choices on the tape, and give an explanation for your choices.*

	Low priority			Medium priority			High priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Domestic incident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Road traffic accident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Second part of scenario

After doing whatever, if anything, you decided to do, you continue to the domestic incident.

The house is part of a local authority housing estate where there have been a number of recent burglaries. Although you have been to the area before to attend a domestic incident, it was not at this address.

As you approach the door you can hear a male and female shouting. You have to knock a couple of times before anyone hears and answers the door. It is answered by the male who has a cut on his neck. He challenges you about why you are there and says that they don't need the police. Throughout this they continue to shout at each other.

On entering you see that the female has a bruise on her chin. She appears very drunk. She says she wants her husband out of the house.

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

6. What do you think is the most likely explanation of what has happened between the male and female? How confident are you in saying this?
7. What would you do?
8. What questions would you ask?
9. Do you think it's likely this female has been assaulted by this male before? How confident are you in saying this?
10. What do you think your role would be at this incident?
11. What role would you want your colleague to take at this incident?
12. What would you hope to achieve at this incident?
13. Suppose you decide that you will talk to one person, and your colleague will talk to the other. Who would you rather talk to - the victim or the ex-boyfriend? Why?
14. What do you think you would like about handling an incident like this?
15. What do you think you would dislike about handling an incident like this?

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Thank you for completing this.

There will be a few more of these scenarios that I ask you to do, but they won't often be so close together!

Thank you.

Claire.

Domestic Violence Scenario 3 (Between Months 10 and 12)

On the following pages there is a description of a domestic violence incident. *The incident is different to the ones you've had before.* After reading about the incident I would like you to answer some questions. There are some extra questions this time. **Please follow the instructions carefully; they're important because some of them are different to the ones you've had previously.**

Instructions

- Please go through the exercise in the order in which it is has been written, answering any questions you come across. DO NOT READ AHEAD.

- I would like you to imagine that the colleague in the scenario is your tutor constable. Your tutor will also be doing this exercise.

- I am interested in what you think and feel *now*. The questions are the same as the first two scenarios, but TRY NOT TO THINK BACK TO WHAT YOU'VE SAID BEFORE.

- The exercise should not take you more than 30 minutes, but take as much or as little time as you need. It may only take you 5 minutes - if so, that's fine.

- Please do this exercise on your own. **Do not speak to other members of your shift, or the person who was your tutor constable**, about the exercise before you complete it.

- Try **not** to answer the questions as though you are answering a questionnaire. Instead, use the questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of your thoughts, feelings and actions during the incident.

- Try to give as full a response as possible, including reasons for your response. Imagine I am with you asking 'why?' after every answer!

- Try to be as honest as possible. DO NOT READ BACK OVER YOUR NOTES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. If you weren't involved in this study you probably wouldn't be reading over your notes.

- Please complete this exercise by 26th July, and indicate on the tape the date on which you are doing the exercise. I will collect it from you the week ending the 30th July.

- THIS IS NOT A TEST!

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

First part of scenario

You are working a late shift on a Sunday. You are in the IRV with your tutor who is driving. You are asked by the Control Room to attend a report of a domestic incident at 97, Collins Drive. You are told:

Neighbour has reported some shouting and screaming coming from 97, Collins Drive. There's some stuff being chucked out of the first floor window. Neighbour doesn't want to be involved.

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

1. What would your initial reaction be if this came over the radio?
2. What would be going through your mind?
3. How would you feel generally?
4. How confident would be handling this incident now?
5. What do you think the reaction of your tutor would be? It might depend... but on what?
6. While you are on your way to 97, Collins Drive a double-crewed patrol vehicle being driven by some of your shift colleagues, is asked to attend a fight between three males which is happening outside a pub. You are going to be driving past the pub on your way to the domestic incident.

Imagine you had the choice about which incident you attended.

(a) What would you do?

(b) Please use the numbers 1 to 7 to indicate which incident you believe to be the priority, therefore indicating what you would do in this situation, if you had a choice. This is how the question would look in a questionnaire. *I would like you to indicate your choices on the tape, and give an explanation for your choices.*

	Low priority			Medium priority			High priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Domestic incident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fight outside pub	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Second part of scenario

There is no right or wrong answer, but for now, imagine you decided to attend the domestic incident.

When you arrive at the house you can see that some clothes and a pair of shoes have been thrown out onto the front garden. You recognise the house, which you attended about 2 months ago, after another report from a neighbour that there was a lot of shouting going on. On that occasion it was all quiet when you arrived and you gave 'suitable' advice.

The front door is open and you can see a woman, aged about 50, sitting on the stairs. She's crying. As you approach, a male, about the same age, comes to greet you. He apologises and explains that they've just had a small argument, but that they're fine now. He says that they don't need your help and that they can sort it out between them. You look to the woman and she nods her head in agreement with him. He apologises for wasting your time.

Neither of them appear to have any injuries.

QUESTIONS

Remember - use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling and doing. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

7. What do you think is the most likely explanation of what has happened between them? How confident are you in saying this?
8. What would you do?
9. What questions would you ask?
10. Would you think about just giving advice again? Why?
11. What do you think your role would be at this incident?
12. What role would you want your tutor to take at this incident?
13. What would you hope to achieve at this incident?
14. Suppose you decide that you will talk to one person, and your tutor will talk to the other. Who would you rather talk to? Why?
15. What do you think you would like about dealing with this incident?
16. What do you think you would dislike about dealing with this incident?

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

EXTRA QUESTIONS

17. As you were reading through it, was there anything about the incident that surprised you?

18. Have you been to an incident like this? *(If your answer to this is 'no', please go to the next page)*

19. How many?

Please think back to the last incident you attended that was like this scenario.

20. What did you do?

21. What role did you play? What role did your colleague play? *(Please indicate whether this was your tutor)*

22. What was the outcome?

23. Was this what you hoped for?

24. Was this what you expected?

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW

Thank you for completing this.

There probably won't be another one of these for several months!

Thank you.

Claire.

Domestic Violence Scenario 4 (part 1) (Between Months 31 and 35)

On the following pages there is a description of an incident you are called to. After reading the scenario I would like you to answer some questions.

Instructions

- **PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY!**

- Please go through the scenario in the order in which it is written, answering any questions you come across. **PLEASE DO NOT READ AHEAD – THIS IS IMPORTANT.**

- **I AM INTERESTED IN WHAT YOU *REALLY* THINK AND FEEL.** I have set a scene, but this doesn't necessarily mean you have to assume that anything has happened. Rather, I am curious about what you think might have happened and how you would deal with the situation. You might think nothing has happened – if so, that is ok because there is no right or wrong answer.

- Try not to answer the questions as though you are answering a questionnaire. Instead, use the questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling, doing and asking during the incident.

- The scenario is split into two parts. *I also have a third part for you*, but I will give this to you when you have completed the first two parts.

- You may have been to an incident like this before. If so, and your answers are influenced by what happened at that incident, please indicate this on the tape.

- Try to give as full a response as possible, including reasons for your response. Imagine I am with you asking 'why?' after every answer you give!

- The exercise should take you no more than 30 minutes, but take as much or as little time as you need. It may only take you 5 minutes – if so, that's fine.

- Please complete the exercise by [date]. *As soon as* you have completed it, please let me know and I will arrange to collect the tape-recorder from you. It is crucial that you call me as soon as you have completed it as I only have a few tape-recorders to share between you. I've also borrowed some of them and people need them back as quickly as possible!

- **THIS IS NOT A TEST, BUT REMEMBER – PLEASE DO NOT READ AHEAD.**

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW...

FIRST PART OF SCENARIO

You are double-crewed with a male colleague in the IRV on a Wednesday afternoon. You receive a call at 1415 hours asking you to attend a report of an incident at 14, The Avenue. You are told: -

> Neighbour has reported shouting coming from 14, The Avenue. She is very concerned about the welfare of the woman in the house.

The call-taker has treated the call as a grade 1.

QUESTIONS

Remember – use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling, doing and asking. Don't forget to give reasons for your responses.

1. What would your initial reaction be if this came over the radio?
2. What would be going through your mind?
3. Generally, how would you feel?
4. How confident would you feel going to this incident?
5. What do you think the reaction of your colleague would be? It might depend... but on what?
6. While you are on your way to The Avenue a double-crewed IRV, being driven by other members of your shift, is asked to attend a shoplifter who is being detained by two staff members of the local supermarket. It is reported that the shoplifter is demonstrating violent and abusive behaviour to the staff. You are still a few minutes away from the domestic incident, but will be passing the supermarket in the next few seconds.

Imagine you had a choice about which incident you attended.

(a) What would you do? Why?
(b) Please use the numbers 1 to 7 to indicate which incident you believe to be the priority, therefore indicating what you would do in this situation if you had a choice. There is no right or wrong answer.

This is how the question would look in a questionnaire. *I would like you to indicate your choices on the tape, and give an explanation for your choices.*

	Low priority			Medium priority			High priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14, The Avenue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supermarket	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW...

SECOND PART OF SCENARIO

There is no right or wrong answer, but for now imagine you decided to attend 14, The Avenue.

The Avenue is a desirable and expensive road to live in. The only time you have been called to the road before was when someone reported having their car stolen from their drive-way. This was three months ago. You have not been called to number 14 before.

When you arrive at 14, The Avenue you see that the house is well-maintained, with a neat garden at the front. There is a Vauxhall Cavalier parked in the drive-way. It is about fifteen years old but in excellent condition. You ring the doorbell and a man answers. He is about 40 years of age and is wearing a suit. You explain that there has been a report of shouting coming from the house, and ask if you can go in to check that everything is alright. He is happy to let you in and offers you a cup of tea. You decline. You are stood in the lounge and can see that it is spotlessly clean. There is an upright piano in the corner and, on a bureau next to the fireplace, you see a pile of parish magazines.

From where you are standing you can see a woman stood in front of the sink in the kitchen, so you go through to see her. She is washing up. She is wearing a skirt, a high neck blouse, rubber gloves, tights and slippers. She does not hear you enter the kitchen. You can see that she is shaking and can hear that she is talking to herself. Although you cannot hear what she is saying, it sounds as though she is repeating something over and over again. You ask her if she is alright and if you can talk to her, but she continues to shake and what she says does not make any sense. The man follows you into the kitchen and explains that the woman, his wife of 17 years, has psychological problems. He says that she is frightened of going out of the house and that he has just shouted at her and told her to 'pull herself together' because he wants to take her to their local parish meeting that evening and she won't go. He tells you not to worry and that it's all under control. He says that he loves her very much and confides that ten years ago they found out that they could not have children and that since then she has had panic attacks at the thought of going out. He concludes by saying 'you know what women are like about these things'.

You indicate to your colleague that you would like to talk to him outside. While discussing what you might do, a woman, aged about 60, approaches you. She explains that she is the neighbour who called for the police. She says she is very concerned about the welfare of the woman who she has seen going out occasionally, but arriving back at the house in a state of panic. She explains that the last time she saw the woman in this state she approached her and asked her if she was alright. The woman told her that she doesn't like going out of the house. After this, the neighbour says she spoke to the husband when he got home from work one day, and told him that she was worried about the state of his wife when she has seen her out. Since then, she has occasionally seen the husband coming home from work at lunchtimes to see if his wife is alright. She says she has heard the man shouting at his wife before, and is worried about the effect this may be having on his wife. She says this is why she called the police.

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW...

QUESTIONS

Remember – use these questions as a guide to help you give a 'running commentary' of what you would be thinking, feeling, doing and asking.

1. What do you think is the most likely explanation of what has happened between them? How confident are you in saying this? Like I said in the 'instructions', there are no right or wrong answers, so if you think nothing has happened, that is fine. Whatever you think, please explain why.
2. What would you do?
3. What questions would you ask?
4. What details would you take?
5. What do you think your role would be at this incident?
6. What role would you want your colleague to take at this incident?
7. What would you hope to achieve at this incident?
8. Suppose you decide that you will talk to one person, and your colleague will talk to the other. Who would you rather talk to?
9. What would you like about dealing with this incident?
10. What would you dislike about dealing with this incident?
11. If you have been to an incident like this before, please describe the outcome of that incident. Can you imagine the same outcome here?

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONS – THANK YOU.

PLEASE PHONE ME NOW ON [telephone number], REGARDLESS OF WHAT TIME IT IS, TO LET ME KNOW THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE SCENARIO.

Domestic Violence Scenario 4 (part 2) (Between Months 32 and 37)

In the instructions you had with Scenario 4 I indicated that I had another part for you. This looks at what had been happening between the man and woman before you were called by the neighbour. This is explained and then I have some questions for you. This is all in a similar format to the earlier part of the scenario.

In the earlier part of the scenario I also explained that there were no right or wrong answers about what you thought had happened, what you would ask, the details you would take, and generally what you would do. Even with the extra information I am giving to you, there are still no right or wrong ways of dealing with the situation.

Obviously, before giving you this part, I don't know what responses you gave to the earlier questions. In giving you this part, I am not suggesting there was anything wrong with those answers. Rather, I am interested in your reaction to the additional information.

This part of the scenario has been developed in conjunction with some Domestic Violence Officers. The details on the next page are fairly typical of what they deal with on a regular basis.

If I haven't collected your tape from the earlier part of scenario (4) by the time you do this part, please don't go back and change the earlier part. Thank you.

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW...

THE SCENARIO

As the man explained to you, he and the woman have been married for 17 years and ten years ago they found out they could not have children. Since this time, for whatever reason, the man has attempted to control the woman's life. She does not work because he will not allow her to. He does the shopping for them as he says she spends too much money. He gives her no money for herself. He will not allow her to go out of the house and regularly phones her from work to check up on her. He has told her that the neighbours tell him if she goes out. He also drives past the front of the house during his breaks from work, although she doesn't know this. Sometimes he will stop at the house and she is expected to make him a drink and something to eat, but the times at which he does this are inconsistent.

When the woman disobeys the man, he punishes her by making her sleep in the cupboard under the stairs. Sometimes, he makes her choose her punishment.

This has been going on for seven years. The woman has no friends, and the man has insisted that she cut off all links with her family. Although she still occasionally sees members of her family when her husband is at work, she has not told them about any of this. She has not spoken to anyone about it, including her doctor.

YOU MAY TURN THE PAGE NOW...

QUESTIONS

Remember – I am not suggesting that your responses to the earlier questions were wrong. Rather, I am interested in your reaction to the additional information.

1. How do you feel about what I've just told you? Describe to me what you were thinking as you were reading it.

2. Was there anything in particular that surprised you?

3. How do you feel about the responses you gave to the earlier part of the scenario?

4. When you get called to domestic incidents, do you think about what might have happened before you got there? How far back do you think - I mean, do you think about why you were called at that particular time or do you think about what might have been going on during the last few weeks, months or years? This might depend, but on what?

5. You wouldn't have been expected to gather all of this information when (hypothetically) you attended the 999 call at 14, The Avenue. However, do you think you asked enough questions? Do you think you asked the right questions?

6. With the information you had from the earlier part of the scenario, would you have referred the incident to the DVU? Would you refer the incident knowing what you do now?

7. What information do you think the DVU would want from you if you referred this incident to them?

8. If all of this information had been available at the time you attended, what would you have done? Is there evidence of a crime here?

9. In dealing with an incident like this, what do you think your role is?

10. Is there anything I haven't asked you a question about that you would like to comment on?

THANK YOU – THAT <u>REALLY IS</u> THE END OF THE QUESTIONS NOW !

PLEASE GIVE ME A CALL ON [telephone number] AND I'LL ARRANGE TO COLLECT THE TAPE-RECORDER AND YOUR TAPE FROM YOU.

Recommendations

Through the research it is possible to identify the reasons that officers respond to domestic violence in the way that they do. Naturally, I feel strongly that this information be used to improve officers' response, so this section contains recommendations regarding training, policy and addressing organisational and cultural issues. Because of the complicated nature of the organisational and cultural issues revealed in the study, I recognise that the individual recommendations cannot stand alone. Rather, the successful implementation of each is reliant upon the others if improvements are to be realised. With this in mind, the recommendations made err towards the more tangible and realisable in the short-term.

Probationer training

One of the primary issues to have emerged from the research is the importance of officers' understanding of domestic violence in shaping their response. Thus, there is a need to acknowledge the impact of officers' tacit knowledge on their response to domestic violence. In other words, education and training given to the officers will only be effective if officers' underlying assumptions and views of the world are explored and addressed, as it is these that ultimately have been found to shape officers' interactions in the workplace and their use of discretion at the scene of domestic violence.

Furthermore, the training was found to provide officers only with information about legal remedies. Attempts were made through role-plays to place incidents into context but these dealt only with incidents that would sit squarely at the 'violent' end of the domestic violence continuum. Thus, there is no acknowledgement of the confusion officers feel when faced with an incident that appears to be over by the time they arrive and / or there is no apparent violence or injury. If offices are to develop more informed ways of responding, future training must therefore move beyond a law enforcement framework for dealing with incidents at the 'violent' end of the continuum.

One of the primary functions of the tutorship period is to guide officers in their use of discretion, but several of the officers reported having had little or no opportunity to attend domestic violence incidents during this time. Therefore, when they *did* attend they were reliant upon their experiences as autonomous individuals, their understanding of domestic violence prior to joining the organisation, and the alignment of their response in the first instance to that of their colleagues. Only through this did they find their own direction, which unsurprisingly reflected that of many of their colleagues who would have been through a similar process. Although it will never be possible for officers to experience all types of incidents during their tutorship, domestic violence incidents are such a core feature of front-line officers' role that some experience should be gained during this time.

Recommendation   That specialist domestic violence trainers deliver training alongside police trainers. These may be external to the police service. In support of this, police officers responsible for delivering the residential probationer training should receive training themselves about the importance of raising awareness of and challenging appropriately and effectively societal views of domestic violence.

Recommendation   That the notions of gender and power relations and dependency, and its replication in the police service in relationships between colleagues be acknowledged and explored.

Recommendation   That probationer training about domestic violence is revised to include an exploration of the domestic violence continuum, advice-giving skills, and investigative skills specifically in dealing with those incidents where physical injury is not evident. The confusion officers may feel about their role when attending incidents that are over by the time they arrive, and / or where there is no evidence of injury must also be acknowledged.

Recommendation   That probationers are given the opportunity to attend domestic violence incidents under the guidance and supervision of more experienced officers, before they are considered to be 'independent'.

Policy

Home Office Circular 19/2000 and the Constabulary domestic violence policy *do* provide specific guidance to officers. In doing so, both documents tackle the need to improve officers' response by being quite prescriptive about the actions officers should take. In other words, they aim to minimise the extent to which officers use their discretion. The effectiveness of this approach is brought into question by the current study, which suggests that only the enhancement of officers' understanding of domestic violence is likely to secure improvements in response. Thus, rather than being curtailed, the officers should maintain full use of their discretion but within the context of a better understanding of the situations they encounter.

Recommendation   That any revision of the Circular and Constabulary policy must acknowledge this, focussing instead on providing a framework in which officers might use their discretion at all types of incidents along the domestic violence continuum.

Organisational and cultural issues

During the three years of fieldwork there was little evidence of the officers experiencing strong or directive supervision. Yet based on Adrian's experience, it might be assumed that officers in the rank of sergeant are well placed to guide and enhance front-line officers' response to domestic violence.

Recommendation   That the importance of sergeants' role in the supervision of front-line officers' response to domestic violence is emphasised. This may be through Performance Development Reviews or other means.

All police forces are required to deliver diversity training to their staff. Centrex has developed a national training package, but delivery will take place locally and there is an opportunity to add to the training content according to local requirements. Some of the training addresses organisational cultural issues.

Recommendation   That Constabulary training about issues of diversity incorporates and reinforces the messages given to probationers about gender and power relations and dependency. In particular, the debate there is a need to consider the continuing imbalance of power that women experience in society and in the ways in which this is manifested in the police service.