

1. Reflexivity in police ethnography [SLIDE 1]
 - Getting good quality data during policing ethnographies requires the reflexive navigation of ethical questions of trust/acceptance.
 - What police say and do can be controversial & of dubious legality and therefore...
 - Important to reflect on our positionality within the research field and the extent to which our presence may be modifying police behaviour/attitudes & thus impacting on the quality of data we might access.

2. Perceptions of us [SLIDE 3]
 - This, reflexivity has long involved consideration of personal biography (e.g., age, gender, class, ethnicity).
 - My argument in the book is that it should *also* include awareness of how police officers understand and experience their role within the police organisation.

3. Conceptions of them [SLIDE 4]
 - Already a complex picture of how police functions are understood and experienced by officers
 - Structural divides of 'them' and 'Us' – i.e., (managers) vs (street cops)
 - Status of policing activities
 - Roles for women (DV etc...)
 - 'Thief takers' (Young 1991: 65))
 - 'Scum cuddlers' (Nash 2016).
 - "Real police work" vs "rubbish"

4. Reflexivity during an ethnographic study of IOM [SLIDE 5]
 - This meant I needed to understand how police in my own study of IOM, understood and experienced their role.
 - I observed two sets of police officers – each group carrying out very different policing roles:
 1. Police offender managers – intelligence / rehabilitative support – the 'carrot'.
 2. Uniformed police officers – enforcement – the 'stick'.

Offender manager role – double deviance

1. Deviates from traditional police culture and practice; also
 2. Some OMs deviated from the role, by not carrying it out properly, largely due to pessimism.
- Made them hesitant research participants because they:
 - did not feel comfortable in their role; and
 - were reluctant for me to observe/document how they departed from it in practice.
 - led to exclusionary practices.
 - However, other groups of IOM police responded much more positively to my presence/research
 1. Patrol officers – Cooperative / enthusiastic, participants
 2. Offender managers, but those who had embraced the rehabilitative elements of IOM policing

- Both were comfortable with their role, carried it out properly and were willing to open up themselves to scrutiny.

So what?

- Common to get a mix of enthusiasm and cooperation, alongside caution and reluctance, from police participants.
- However, this is typically, when just encountering one type of police officer – within which group there may be varying levels of cooperation
- I observed two quite different groups of officers, albeit all working in the same area of policing: IOM.
- Although, I was also able to cultivate relaxed and friendly field relations with some police officers, working cooperation was much more easily achieved with officers that were both comfortable with their role and kept within its parameters

Why?

- Cultural differences?
- Previous exposure to researchers?
- Variations in supervisory tones?
 - Issues which would be more relevant if I found a disparity in levels of acceptance between the two groups of participants; I did not. Instead, police officers from both sub-groups (uniformed and OMs) were open to being studied.
 - It was simply that a majority of those that perceived their work as 'deviant', within the sub-group of OMs, were avoidant / uncooperative, whereas other OMs (in the same sub-group) who had embraced the IOM way of working, were not.
- And this was despite the fact, both groups:
 - had been exposed to a series of researchers,
 - were managed in similar ways,
 - had the same allotted tasks to complete; and
 - were aware that senior management was supportive of my study.

What was the difference?

- One group of police OMs largely accepted and valued their assigned role, whilst the other group, largely did not.

5. Importance of police role conception [SLIDE 6]

- Role-conception therefore offers both a plausible explanation for the varying levels of acceptance and trust cultivated within the IOM unit; and
- Useful lens through which to understand participant-research field relations that as ethnographers we should adopt and use more systematically in the field.