

Police Leadership: An Exploratory Study of the Perceptions of Police Officers

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Abstract

Studies of police leadership have focused on the identification of good practice and effectiveness in leadership which has involved the application of existing frameworks to the understanding of leadership. The perspective of police officers, and importantly their understandings of leadership, is left unexamined. Similarly, current research and policy typically conceptualises leadership in the police as rank-free, with leadership and rank discussed as separate constructs.

Within a social constructionist theoretical framework, this thesis provides a critical analysis of senior police officers' understandings of leadership in the police. Based on 38 semi-structured interviews from chief constable to inspector rank in one UK police constabulary, this thesis presents a framework of ideas about the meanings of leadership in the police and considers the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in these meanings.

Informed by grounded theory, the analysis shows that the authority of rank is central to the understanding of police leadership; the assumptions attached to rank reflect assumptions about the nature of leadership. The concepts of 'doing' and 'undoing' of rank describe the different ways rank is used in police leadership. The doing of rank refers to ways in which the authority of rank is prioritised, emphasised and reinforced, compared with the undoing of rank, which describes the downplaying of rank as an authority in leadership. The findings show the ways in which rank acts as a barrier to alternative leadership practices in the police. This thesis argues therefore that an understanding of the influence of rank in police leadership, or 'rank awareness', is essential precursor to the development and acceptance of participatory or collaborative leadership in the police.

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Chapter One

An Introduction to the Problem of Police Leadership

Leadership has an institutionalised and celebrated social status, simultaneously the source and solution to all organisational problems (Crevani et al.,2010; Tourish,2013). This research responds to a call for further research on leadership in the police. van Dijk et al (2016:34) set out a clear case for police leadership as a central feature of a new research agenda.

“One area that should be high on the research agenda is leadership. Yet it is one of the most neglected topics in policing. It is of crucial significance with regard to the quality and culture of top officers in relation to the positioning of policing in a dynamic environment with strategic clarity and adherence to a collectively espoused and widely carried set of values. It is also of the utmost importance at all levels in operational policing”.

Despite extensive studies on leadership in a range of different organisational settings, leadership remains a largely uncertain and contested concept (Burns,1978; Grint,2005a). Academic and policy understanding of police leadership is largely informed by traditional leadership theories as the ‘received wisdom’ about the nature of leadership (Alimo-Metcalf and Alban-Metcalf,2005). Yet, whether it is servant leadership (Greenleaf,1970), charismatic leadership (Conger,1989), transformational leadership (Bass,1985) or covert leadership (Mintzberg,1998), the focus is typically leadership effectiveness rather than the meaning of leadership; action rather than understanding. Gardner (1990:xvii) confirms: “The first step is not action; the first step is understanding. The first question is how to think about leadership”. The significance of meanings has therefore been overshadowed by a focus on practice, a preoccupation to prescribe rather than describe. In the context of leadership in the police, academics and policymakers appear to be racing ahead, championing particular styles without full understanding of the meaning of leadership to those in leadership positions.

The purpose of this chapter is to situate this research in the context of current academic and policy understanding of police leadership and the broader developments in policing. In doing

this, the originality, significance and timeliness of this research will be demonstrated. The first part of this chapter sets out the background to the research. The research problem is introduced in the context of the gap in current understanding of police leadership, followed by an explanation of the research aims and theoretical framework. The second part of this chapter considers the broader developments in police leadership in relation to the professionalisation agenda and highlights the development of a 'new type' of managerial police leader. The contribution to knowledge of this research will then be described. This chapter ends with an overview of the structure of this thesis.

The Research Context: The Problem of Police Leadership

Leadership scholars have long struggled to agree a common definition of the phenomena, providing numerous, often competing, accounts (Kort,2008; Washbush,2005; Yukl,1989); Is leadership, for example, about individuals or groups, people or processes, formal or informal? (Fleming,2015a). The term is “a semantic sponge, leading to different meanings for different people in different contexts” (van Dijk et al.,2015:19). Leadership can, for example, be substituted for 'culture', 'strategy' or 'organisational structure' (Alvesson,2011). Scholars therefore typically define the concept in general terms, often as a process of influence, to ensure its relevance across different settings (Alvesson and Svenningsson,2003). Despite a long history of empirical and theoretical work, academic understanding of leadership is incomplete; we are still not clear about what leadership is and there is inconsistent evidence about what effectiveness means in leadership (Alvesson and Svenningsson,2003; Wright et al.,2008). This is reminiscent of Burns' (1978:2) early argument that leadership is “one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth”.

Typically, academic and policy discussions oversimplify the nature of police leadership. First, there is an overemphasis on leadership typologies. In mainstream leadership studies, which informs much of the current understanding of police leadership, the difference between leadership styles is emphasised in numerous typologies, dichotomies, dimensions and classifications (Bennis,1959; Reddin,1977); the most popular models of leadership are based predominately on US studies (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe,2005). Leaders are divided into categories, such as transformational or transactional (Burns,1978; Bass,1985),

task-oriented or relations-oriented (Reddin,1977), Theory X or Theory Y (McGregor,1989). Reiner (1992) considered police leadership in Britain in terms of chief constable typologies; the baron, the bobby, the boss and bureaucrat. Similarly, Krimmell and Lindenmuth's (2001) American study of police leadership identified styles of police chiefs as sad, upset, calm, sharing, Boy Scout and James Bond. Likewise, Engel's (2001) study, also based in an American police department, arranged supervisory styles into traditional, innovative, supportive and active, and more recently, Dean and Gottschalk (2013) study of two police districts in Norway compared the 'personnel leader' with the 'resource allocator'. The focus on leadership typologies oversimplifies police leadership and constructs artificial asymmetries within leadership categories (Collinson,2014). Most importantly, this approach neglects to consider leadership as a dynamic, socially constructed process (Bolden and Gosling,2006).

Second, current understanding of police leadership places emphasis on leader behaviours. Leadership behaviours such as trustworthiness (Murphy and Drodge,2004), integrity and honesty (Vito and Vito,2015); decision making (Andreescu and Vito,2010) and innovation (Schafer,2013) are endorsed. Desirable leadership behaviours become abstract, unattainable 'wish lists' reflecting what 'ought to be' (Rost,1993). The meanings and understandings of police leadership are neglected, the 'reality' of leadership to police leaders is overlooked. Grint (2005a:34) concludes:

“The most interesting aspect of list making is that by the time the list is complete the only plausible description of the owner of such a skill base is ‘God’”.

Third, there is a preoccupation in policy with effectiveness and 'what works' in police leadership. The College of Policing Leadership Review (2015a:6) confirms the centrality of effective leadership behaviours in the formal discourse of police leadership:

“To build a fit-for-purpose police leadership in an evidenced-based, ethical profession serving diverse, democratic society, we must first identify desirable traits in an ideal police leader”.

This universalises effectiveness in police leadership. Leadership becomes, as Murphy and Drodge (2004:1) explain, a “commodity that, once identified, can be bottled and distributed to hungry organisations”. This approach fails to capture the complexity of leadership, when leadership behaviours are ‘effective’ and ‘ineffective’, why and indeed, for whom. The approach, as Wright et al. (2008:66) argue, neglects to consider the “myriad of contexts within which police leaders must operate”.

Finally, leadership in the police is presented as ‘rank free’. Celebrated behaviours, such as ‘challenge’ ‘vision’ or ‘innovation’, currently promoted by the College of Policing (2015a), are discussed as rank-less leadership capabilities. The relationship between the authority of rank and leadership is unexplored. Where rank does feature in empirical work, it typically focuses on perceptions of effective leadership by rank. Rank is viewed in leadership as a ‘social grouping’, not dissimilar to the way leadership styles of men and women have been evaluated by leadership scholars in the past (for example, Alimo-Metcalf, 2004; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Grant, 1988; Rosener, 1990). Wigfield (1996), for example, considered the leadership competencies of superintendents in Sussex Police and noted the rank-specific leadership requirements of “greater level of sophistication and skill” in the leadership of superintendents compared with sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors. Likewise, Densten’s (2003) survey of 480 senior police officers in Australia sought to identify effective leadership behaviours in senior rank. The focus is on the competencies, knowledge and skills required of police officers as they rise through the police hierarchy (Casey and Mitchell, 2007). The authority of rank in police leadership is neglected. Wright et al. (2008), for example, describe the different influencing behaviours of ‘hard’ ‘soft’ and ‘rational’ but consider this in terms of effectiveness in influencing attitudes and behaviours; the use of rank authority in terms of ‘influencing behaviours’ is entirely absent. In contrast, this thesis conceptualises police leadership as socially constructed and will demonstrate that leadership in the police is rank-centric; the understanding of police leadership is shaped by understandings and assumptions about the nature of rank as an authority.

Overall therefore, police leadership is more complex and nuanced than captured in policy and academic conceptualisations. The focus on typologies, behaviours and effectiveness reduces police leadership to particular categorisations or universally desirable behaviours and

consequently the taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of leadership are unexamined. Bolden and Gosling (2006:150) explain:

“This expansion of the concept of competencies raises further concerns because its tendency to disguise and embed rather than expose and challenge certain assumptions about the nature and work of leadership”.

How leadership is defined within organisations shapes the identification and development of leaders (Grint,2005a). The reductionist depiction of police leadership offers police organisations a mechanism to give structure and predictability to leadership, thus simplifying the selection and development of leaders (Bolden and Gosling,2006). The police now ‘know’ effective leadership as leaders who fit within the particular framework and exhibit particular behaviours. This approach however risks the perpetuation of a particular presentation of leadership, in other words, more of the same (Grint,2005a), and acts as a barrier to the creation of difference in police leadership.

Instead, we are better placed to consider police leadership, as critical leadership scholars conceptualise it, as socially constructed (Collinson,2011; Fairhurst and Grant,2010; Grint,2005b). Conventional understanding of police leadership is underpinned with established knowledge about the nature of power and authorities, social hierarchies and command structures (Barker,2001). Definitions of police leadership expose the learned assumptions of what it means to be a leader or a follower in the police, central to which is the understanding of power and authority (Collinson,2014; Kort,2008; Washbush,2005). If leadership is understood as socially constructed, then perceptions of effectiveness are similarly socially constructed. Leadership is a construct with multiple meanings, rather than a static and universal experience (Smirich and Morgan,1982, van Dijk et al.,2015). Conceptualising police leadership as socially constructed therefore allows for the exploration of the different understandings and experiences of leadership, and the factors that shape these understandings, central to which is an understanding of the authority of rank. This thesis presents a framework of ideas about the meanings of leadership in the police and considers the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in these meanings.

The Research

In studying leadership, Grint and Jackson (2010) call for academics to work with, rather than against, those holding leadership roles. Research and policy discussions on police leadership to date have typically focused on ‘what works’ in police leadership. The understanding of leadership to police officers is overshadowed by the emphasis on leadership practice; prescription over description. The meaning of police leadership to police officers, it appears, seems irrelevant, reminding us of the argument from symbolic interactionists that meaning is taken for granted and considered unimportant (Blumer,1969:2). The social construction of police leadership, or the ‘common-sense’ of leadership (Holdaway,1983) is unexamined. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to provide an analysis of the taken-for-granted meanings of police leadership to police officers. The focus here is on description rather than prescription, and the meanings and understandings of leadership rather than the effectiveness of different approaches.

Research Aims and Questions

This research is a qualitative study based on 38 semi-structured interviews with police officers in one UK police constabulary. The principle aim of this research is an exploration of police officers’ understanding of leadership within their constabulary. There was one primary research question for this study:

- What are police officers’ understandings of leadership within their constabulary?

The research is also interested in the factors that shape understandings of leadership in the police. As such, there were three sub-questions that contributed to the overarching research question:

- a) What are the understandings of leadership amongst officers of different ranks?
- b) How has this understanding of leadership developed?
- c) What are the implications of these understandings for leadership in police constabularies?

Theoretical Framework

It is pertinent to position this research in the context of the theoretical understanding of knowledge and reality. In order to analyse the social world, it is important to first articulate our understanding of the social world. Berger and Luckmann (1967:33) confirm:

“If the reality of everyday life is to be understood, account must be taken of its intrinsic character before we can proceed with sociological analysis proper”.

This research is informed by social constructionism and Goffman’s (1990) theoretical concepts in the presentation of self. Both theoretical contributions consider the subjectivity and expressivity of social interactions. Social constructionism sets out the definition of knowledge and reality as socially constructed. Goffman’s (1990) work captures the process by which this occurs; how we form our understandings and beliefs about the world through social interaction. Goffman (1990) illustrates the socially constructed nature of social reality in his impression management thesis; a central feature is an understanding of the expressions that convey information about the person and the situation.

The theoretical principles of social constructionism and Goffman’s (1990) presentation of self are particularly relevant to the study of leadership as a social relationship. These perspectives allow for studying the dynamic and situated nature of leadership. If leadership is conceived, as this thesis will argue, as “in the eyes of the beholder” (Meindl,1997;331), then the interpretations, expressions and navigations within social interaction, which shape the meanings and understandings of leadership, are a crucial area of study. Biggart and Hamilton (1987:439) confirm:

“Leadership is a relationship among persons embedded in a social setting at a given historical moment. Strategies of leadership must consider the normative basis of the relationship and the setting, and the distinctive performance abilities of the actors involved”.

Social Construction

Leadership in the police is commonly understood in terms of typologies, behaviours and effectiveness. The National Police Improvement Agency's review 'What Makes Great Police Leadership' (Campbell and Kodz,2011), for example, focuses predominantly on the effectiveness of leadership styles, competencies and behaviours.

This research conceptualises police leadership as socially constructed and is therefore underpinned by social constructionism and Berger and Luckmann's (1967) 'The Social Construction of Reality'. In contrast to a positivist standpoint which considers social reality in terms of objectivity and essentialism, the basic premise of this theory is that perceptions, experiences, understandings and values, are viewed as social constructs; individuals, as social actors, participate in the construction of social reality. The central concern of social constructionism, therefore, is the way in which social phenomena are socially produced; how human interaction can influence our understandings and attitudes of social processes (Peck and Dickinson,2009). Therefore, social constructionism as the theoretical framework for this research allows for consideration of leadership in the police as a relational, constructed and negotiated social process.

Goffman's Dramaturgy Framework

Whilst there is recognition in leadership studies that leadership is usefully understood as performative, this is not reflected in the current understanding of leadership in the police. Since this research is also interested in the presentation of leadership authority, Goffman's (1990) 'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' is used to further theorise the findings. Goffman uses dramaturgy as a conceptual framework for understanding how individuals manage the impressions formed within social interaction. Social interaction is understood in terms of performances, teams and regions; interactions are treated as performances to an audience requiring team work. Performances are presented in different regions; the formal 'front region' or back region where performances can be prepared. In performances, Goffman pays close attention to scripting, setting and staging, and it is through this process, the process of the management of appearance, that participants produce a definition of the situation. Goffman challenges the concept of the essential self and this can usefully be applied to an exploration of leadership as an interactional, social experience rather than positioned solely

within the traits and capabilities of individual leaders. The focus of this research therefore is the ‘appearance’ of leadership, that is the construction and presentation of leadership within the police, and its influence on the wider understandings of police leadership.

The Problematisation and Professionalisation of Police Leadership

Sklansky (2014) defines professionalisation in terms of standards, self-regulation, expertise and norms. Within the context of revitalised discussions of professionalism in the police service, police leadership is currently under heightened political scrutiny. Leadership is problematised and professionalisation it appears, is the solution. The Home Office commissioned review of leadership training by Neyroud in 2011, the Home Affairs Select Committee on leadership standards in 2013 and the Leadership Review by the College of Policing in 2015 and guiding principles in 2017, firmly situated police leadership as the source, and the solution, to police organisational and cultural problems (Cockcroft,2014).

The following part of this chapter positions this research in the broader context of the key events of most significance to police leadership. First, the trend towards police professionalisation and the reforms to police accountability, partly in response to a series of high profile police failings, will be discussed. The changing nature of contemporary police leadership will be then considered. The timeliness and significance of empirical research on the understandings of police leadership will be explained in the final section.

Leadership Failings

Political, practitioner and academic interest in police leadership has been heightened in recent years following a series of high profile leadership failings, the most significant of which surrounds the deaths of 96 people at Hillsborough football stadium. The Hillsborough Independent Panel, which was set up in 2009 and published its report in 2012, was highly critical of South Yorkshire Police, revealing evidence of a systematic cover up, authorised by chief officers, of investigative failings (Hillsborough Independent Panel,2012). The inquest that followed, which heard evidence for two years, concluded in April 2016 that the 96 victims were unlawfully killed. The police were held directly responsible; the jury finding that the police commander in charge was responsible for manslaughter by gross misconduct

(BBC News 2016a). The 96 deaths were deemed avoidable and preventable; the police held culpable. This signalled the most significant exposure of the systematic failings of the police system for a generation. In the immediate aftermath of the Hillsborough inquest findings, South Yorkshire's Chief Constable was suspended (BBC News 2016b), the Acting Chief Constable stepped down a day later over criticism over her conduct in another force (BBC News 2016c). Very recently, it was announced that the chief superintendent in charge of the Hillsborough match, and other senior figures, are facing manslaughter charges (BBC News,2017). Consequently, this sparked unprecedented scrutiny of the standards and integrity of leadership at the operational and institutional levels in the police (van Dijk et al.,2015).

Other high-profile examples have also raised questions of police leadership. The police investigation of the murder Stephen Lawrence in 1993, which signalled a turning point in the policing of minority communities (Bowling and Phillips,2002) and prompted an Independent Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson (1999), became the source of parliamentary scrutiny once again following new allegations of corruption amongst undercover police officers (Ellison,2014). Among the other serious revelations include the dismissal of the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police in 2012, the first chief constable to be dismissed in 35 years (BBC,2012a). Around the same time, the Deputy Chief Constable of Cleveland Police was also dismissed for gross misconduct (BBC News,2013a). Similarly, the failure of the police to adequately investigate child sexual abuse allegations in Rotherham and Oxford raises questions about leadership priorities and decision-making (BBC News,2014; BBC News,2015). As a result of these cases, the leadership and integrity of police leaders has been questioned (Holdaway,2017). The Home Affairs Select Committee responded to these matters by establishing an inquiry into leadership standards in the police in 2013. At the time of the Inquiry, there were 10 chief officers under investigation. This "litany of police organisational failures, malpractice and scandal" (Independent Police Commission, 2013:27) have contributed to "a potential perfect storm of challenges to legitimacy" (Rogers,2014:1) and affected public confidence in the police service (HMIC,2017). In response to this series of high profile police failings, police leaders are being held to account to ensure ethical standards are central to policing practice. Professionalism, ethics and integrity in the police have been positioned as a leadership problem.

Professionalisation and Ethics

In the context of the leadership failings, increasing political and policy emphasis has been placed on the ‘professionalisation’ of the police service in England and Wales. The history of the police service has been characterised as “an occupation striving for professional status” (Holdaway,1977:121). Contrary to the shift towards professionalisation is the longstanding view that policing is a craft (Muir,1977) whereby learning comes from ‘on the job’ experience rather than academic training traditionally associated with the professions (Bayley and Bittner,1984). The call to professionalise however, appears to be getting louder, and was a central feature of Peter Neyroud’s (2011a) influential review of police leadership and training.

The establishment of the College of Policing has been a central feature of the professionalisation agenda (Holdaway,2017; Fleming,2014). The College of Policing replaced the National Police Improvement Agency in 2012, following the recommendations made in Neyroud’s (2011a) review. The College aims to set the standards of professional practice in the police service; professionalisation is central in its statement of purpose:

“To be a world-class professional body, equipping our members with skills and knowledge to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.” (College of Policing,2014:8).

The College of Policing has made several significant steps to progress its professionalisation remit, including the development of the Code of Ethics to communicate the expected standards of professional behaviour (College of Policing,2014) and the first non-police chair as a demonstration of greater public accountability (Holdaway,2017). The most significant move towards professionalisation however has been the reforms to police education and training. In 2016, the College published the initial proposals for the Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) to address the lack of consistency in the educational requirements for policing roles across England and Wales. The PEQF sets out minimum educational standard for entry and promotion in the police service. An entry level qualification, according to the College of Policing (2017a), was “commensurate with that of a profession.” A clear expectation was set that new police officers joining the service would have, or be working towards, a degree-level qualification. The College are also currently

developing the national expectations for qualifications for senior and specialist roles in the police. The PEQF therefore has formalised education in the entry requirements and promotion processes in the police service, and firmly positions education as fundamental to the professional status of the police (Bryant et al.,2014).

Evidence based policing is another pronounced feature of the professionalisation of the police service, as Fleming et al. (2015:237) confirm, “A profession’s research base is its foundation”. Evidence based policing represents an attempt to embed research-informed practice into policing. The College of Policing (2017b) explain:

“In an evidence-based policing approach, police officers and staff create, review and use the best available evidence to inform and challenge policies, practices and decisions.”

The dissemination of research to police practice is not a new phenomenon; the Police Research Group in the Home Office, for example, developed a programme of research with the aim to influence police policy and practice in the 1990s (Fleming et al.,2015a). However, under the College of Policing’s professionalisation remit, the contemporary evidence-based movement has a renewed drive. In September 2013, the College, in collaboration with academic partners, launched the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, the aim of which was to support the development, dissemination and use of research evidence in policing; the key driver being that police practices are informed by the ‘best available evidence’ (Hunter et al.,2016). Illustrative of the evidence-based trend, there has also been an expansion in regional academic/police collaborations, which further formalises the relationship between research and practice as part of the professional development of the police service (Bryant et al.,2014; Kilgallon et al.,2015). There is increasing emphasis on police leadership therefore to demonstrate their commitment to evidence-based practices; indeed, evidence based principles are being incorporated into the leadership promotions and assessment processes (Lum et al.,2010). Despite the lack of understanding of evidence-based policing amongst frontline officers (Telep and Somers,2017), and organisational and cultural barriers to collaboration between police and academia (Goode and Lumsden,2016), the principles of evidence based policing are firmly entrenched in the policy discourse of professionalisation and leadership.

Legitimacy in police leadership, it seems, is increasingly framed in research and educational terms.

In 2015, the College published the Leadership Review, which confirms “a powerful need for change” in relation to the nature and practice of leadership in the police (College of Policing,2015a:5). The Leadership Review further confirmed the relationship between leadership and professionalisation; the importance of developing ‘the professional practitioner’ was emphasised, alongside reforms to leadership, illustrative of Niederhoffer’s (1967:17) early argument that “professionalism appeals to the ‘thinking policeman’”. The Review made ten recommendations to improve leadership standards, including a review of the rank structure, leadership training being accessible to all officers and staff, and to allow career flexibility by offering entry, exit and re-entry points. The Guiding Principles of Organisational Leadership, which developed the findings of the Leadership Review, were published in 2017 to inform police leadership practice and development. The Leadership Review therefore situates leadership as fundamental in the trend towards professionalisation. The recommendations in the Leadership Review and other activities of the College of Policing therefore represent increasing emphasis on professionalisation of the police service. Waddington (1999:234) explains:

“The professional model seeks to abandon the hierarchical structure of command and control in favour of treating all officers as quasi-professional practitioners exercising their discretion within a framework that acknowledges their skills and emphasises self-regulation through a code of ethics”.

The changes in the regulatory authority and structure of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) further illustrate the move towards the professionalisation of the service. The Home Office (2010:10), in an effort to create greater public accountability, recommended a more independent HMIC and consequently the first civilian was appointed Chief Inspector of HMIC in 2012. As a significant regulatory body, the increasing role of civilians in HMIC signalled a new independent climate of police governance and accountability (Holdaway,2017). There have also been changes to the powers of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). ACPO has typically been understood as an elite police voice enabling the interests of the most senior officers in the country to be

promoted on the national stage (Loader and Mulcahy,2001; Savage et al.,2000). However, as a governance and accountability model, the organisation appeared to be lacking (Parker,2013); indeed, the College of Policing has absorbed responsibility for national policy-making which signalled a downgrade of ACPO influence (Brain,2013). ACPO has since been replaced by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), the objectives of the NPCC are intended to align with the standards of the College, a further move to establish greater independence of police governance (Holdaway,2017).

The professionalisation of the police service in England and Wales, illustrative in the work of the College of Policing and the newly configured HMIC and IPCC has significant implications for police leadership. The current arrangements offer, as the first Chair of the NPCC argues, “an opportunity to reset the way in which chief officers work together” (Thornton,2015).

Accountability

In 2012, in the most fundamental constitutional reform of police governance since the Police Act 1964 (Independent Police Commission,2013), locally-elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) replaced police authorities in 41 police force areas in England and Wales under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act. This ended the traditional tripartite governance arrangement shared between the chief constable, the Home Office and the police authority (Loveday,2013a). The significance of the introduction of PCCs to police leadership cannot be overestimated. Caless and Owens (2016:4) confirm:

“For the very first time in policing history, a person elected by the people and representing their views and concerns has formal oversight of policing, with wide ranging powers vested in statute.”

Voter turnout in the 2012 PCC elections was poor; 14.7 percent of registered voters, the lowest recorded level of voter participation in a UK local election during peacetime (The Electoral Commission,2013). The opposition branded the elections “a shambles” (BBC News,2012b), there was considerable unease amongst chief officers (Caless and Tong,2013) and the low voter turnout and spoilt ballot papers was considered an indication of public

resentment to the concept of PCCs (Loader,2014). The election process itself therefore raised questions about the legitimacy of the initiative (Mawby and Smith,2017). In May 2016, PCC candidates stood for re-election, in a less contentious atmosphere, with an improved voter turnout (BBC News,2016d).

The introduction of PCCs aimed to establish greater local electoral accountability in policing and increased visibility of police governance (Caless and Owens,2016; Mawby and Smith,2017; Jones et al.,2012). The introduction however sparked debate about the ‘politicisation’ or ‘Americanisation’ of police governance in England and Wales (Newburn,2012; Sampson,2012); most PCC candidates are sponsored by the main political parties (Stenson and Silverstone,2015). The politics of PCCs is particularly relevant, considering the statutory authorities assigned to the PCC to determine the police force’s budget, set the strategic direction and priorities of a force area, and crucially, assess the police force’s performance against the local Police and Crime Plan. Would PCCs interfere with local policing to secure ‘vote-winning’ support from the public? (Lister,2013). Would decisions be made based primarily on financial considerations rather than public interest? (Barton and Johns,2014). Would future appointments of chief constables be reflective of political allegiance? (Brain,2013). The politics of PCCs has therefore been a recurring concern.

The powers afforded to PCCs are a further area of contention. Powers previously held by a group of people under local police authorities have shifted to a single individual creating, as Lister (2013:243) argues, “too powerful an office holder”. The authority of PCCs to ‘hire and fire’ chief constables is an especially contentious issue (Newburn,2012). Unlike police authorities, PCCs have the power to appoint and if necessary dismiss chief constables. There have been well publicised examples of turbulent relationships between chief constables and PCCs; the dismissal of the chief constable of Gwent amidst allegations of bullying (BBC News,2013b) caused particular concern and was the subject of a Home Affairs Select Committee launched that same year. A number of chief constable posts became vacant in the run up and aftermath of the PCC elections in November 2012. Twenty-Two chief constable appointments were made between the elections and July 2013; the highest chief officer

turnover since the 1974 amalgamations, which Brain (2013) attributes entirely to the introduction of PCCs. Consequently, the Stevens Review confirmed:

“The Commission has deep concerns about the dismissal of chief officers and the (uneven and lightly scrutinized) processes that have been used to appoint new ones...the Commission believes that the new powers of dismissal risk exerting a damaging chilling effect over the leadership of the police service” (Independent Police Commission,2013:82).

There is a tension, it seems, between the notion of constabulary independence, which is deeply entrenched in the sentiment of British policing (Newburn,2012), and the statutory duties of PCCs. PCCs are said to define the ‘what’ of policing, chief constables the ‘how’, but in practice the boundaries of responsibilities are unclear (Lister,2013). The influence of the Mayor of London in the departures of Sir Ian Blair in 2008 and Sir Paul Stephenson in 2011 illustrate the significance of tensions between elected officials and senior police leaders (Loveday,2013a). Chief constables therefore have to negotiate a fundamentally different governance network. The working relationship between PCCs and chief constables is a new complexity in the police leadership landscape (Lister,2013; Davies,2014). As such, new competencies and abilities are required in police leadership at every level of the police organisation, primarily, the skills of political negotiation (Reiner and O’Connor,2015).

A Different Sort of Police Leadership?

The recent reforms to the police have had a significant impact on police leadership. The current governance and financial landscape demand a broadening set of leadership skills (Brain and Owens,2015). Police leaders are required to manage new pressures and demands; they are political actors and change managers. The following section describes the challenges and expectations of contemporary police leaders that shape the understanding of police leadership.

Nature of Demand

In 2010, the Comprehensive Spending Review announced a 20 per cent reduction in central police funding from March 2011 to March 2015, equating to a saving requirement of £2.4bn for forces (HMIC,2013). The scale and impact of the funding cuts was unprecedented and had a significant impact on police leadership (Neyroud,2011b). Brain and Owens (2015:26) explain:

“Cuts on this scale, however, could not be delivered painlessly. The cuts were indiscriminating, with forces which had been more efficient before 2010 and with lower costs, being subjected to the same degree of cuts as the more costly and inefficient.”

The increasing financial pressures have prompted significant organisational and operational reform (HMIC,2017; Neyroud,2011b). Police forces have also made concerted moves to understand and reduce demand (HMIC,2017). Collaborations between police forces and public and private sector organisations, reduced expenditure on procurement, estates and fleet, for example, have been necessary to make substantial savings (Bayley,2016; HMIC,2014). Despite the political rhetoric of ‘protecting the frontline’ (Neyroud,2010), since workforce consumes most of the total spend, the scale of the cuts inevitably resulted in redundancies (Barton,2013). Nearly 35,000 posts were lost between 2010 and 2014, 16,000 of which were full time police posts (Brain and Owens,2015). This increasing complexity has required substantial changes to the management of police organisations (Bayley,2016), prompting policy and academic debate about the role of the police (Millie,2014) and the need, therefore, to begin to ‘reimagine policing’ (Thornton,2015).

In addition to the reduction in resources, evidence suggests that crime is changing and consequently the nature of the demand on the police is changing (Loveday,2017). Whilst recorded crime has fallen, the 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales reported the lowest estimate of incidents of crime since it began in 1981 (Office for National Statistics,2015), the nature of crime, it appears, is becoming more complex (College of Policing,2015b). Recorded sexual offences, for example, have risen significantly (Office for National Statistics,2015), particularly historic cases, as has child sexual exploitation (College of Policing,2015b); recent figures show that the number of defendants appearing in court charged with sexual

offences is the highest in a decade (Ministry of Justice,2015). Likewise, the increasing role of the police in statutory protective arrangements, such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Panels, the increasing role of technology in crime, deterring and responding to terrorism, and increasing calls to respond to people with mental health problems is also creating ‘new’, more ‘costly’ demands on the police, with increasing need for specialist expertise (Bayley,2016; College of Policing,2015b).

The economic reforms necessitate significant reorganisation of police constabularies and police activity (Barton,2013; Loveday,2017). This, combined with changes to police pay and pension from the Winsor Review (2011;2012) means that police forces have been working in a climate of ‘more for less’, increased productivity with diminishing resources (Barton,2013; Caless and Tong,2015). Police leaders are required to steer their constabularies through this economic and organisational uncertainty (Brain,2013). This challenge, as HMIC confirm, is situated as the responsibility of police leadership:

“Leaders will need to demand more of fewer people, ensuring they can work in different ways, against a backdrop of fewer opportunities to advance, and less advantageous conditions” (HMIC,2013:20).

Direct Entry

In November 2014, on recommendation of the Winsor Review (2012), the first direct entry superintendents began their training; a further response to the ‘problem’ of police leadership. Prior to this, the police service in Britain functioned based on a single-entry system of recruitment; all police officers enter the organisation at the lower rank of constable (Savage et al.,2000). All police officers therefore, regardless of rank, share a common experience of street policing (Van Maanen,1997) and consequently, chief officers are typically “cut from the same cultural cloth as lower-ranking officers” (Cockcroft,2013:138). Winsor (2012), in recommending direct entry at inspector, superintendent and chief officer ranks, signalled a challenge to the character of police leadership and introduced the possibility of less police-specific experience amongst senior police leaders (Brain,2013).

Primarily, the Direct Entry scheme represents a challenge to the symbolic necessity of police-specific experience in police leadership (Brain,2013; Wall,1994). Much of the support for Direct Entry therefore has promoted its potential in furthering the diversity and equal opportunities agenda in police leadership selection and development (Leishman and Savage,1993; Smith,2015). The Home Office (2013:14) consultation confirms:

“Improving the diversity of officers at senior ranks goes to the very nature of what the direct entry schemes are trying to achieve – an open culture”.

However, direct entry was met with highly publicised resistance from the police service (The Guardian,2013; The Telegraph,2015). The Police Superintendents Association, for example, opposed the lack of operational experience of candidates (BBC News, 2013c). A characteristic feature of police occupational culture is the credibility associated with operational police work in police leadership. Wall (1994:336) persuasively explains:

“In any organisation, the success of managerial policies literally depends upon the confidence that the managed have in the managers and an essential part of the common police psyche is the confidence that senior officers have experience of operational police-work and understand the pressures of ‘the job’”.

Rather than a challenge to police occupational culture and an impetus to managerial reforms as intended, the direct entry reforms have the potential to perpetuate and reinforce the internal, cultural divide between senior and lower-ranking officers.

The Police Executive Leader

The context of policing is changing and so too, it appears, is the nature of the leadership. More so than ever before, the contemporary police leader is understood as ‘the executive’ (Reiner and O’Connor,2015). The Direct Entry scheme, for example, was positioned as an attempt to adapt to the changing needs of police leadership by placing less emphasis on operational police experience in police leadership and recognising instead the generic nature of leadership (Kernaghan,2013). If police leadership is not fundamentally different to leadership in other areas of business (Adlam,2003a; Blair,2003; Neyroud,2011a), it follows that leadership practices and principles from business and other public-sector organisations

can be replicated in the policing context. Direct Entry was a crucial moment in accelerating the trend towards the police leader as the ‘police executive’ and the normalisation of the police leadership role as comparable with the public service executive rather than the frontline police officer.

This trend is particularly evident at the top of the police constabulary. Reiner (1992) first captured the trend of chief constables defining their role in terms of management rather than policing. Wall (1998) similarly documents the rise of the ‘executive director’ chief constable and more recently, those in Manning’s (2007:1) ‘top command’ describe themselves as ‘police CEOs’, their speech and manner mirroring that of the business world, placing greater emphasis on ‘management’ rather than ‘the job’. There appears to be a continuing acceptance of this ‘new breed’ of police leader, their role understood more as ‘leadership’ than ‘police’ (O’Malley and Hutchinson,2007), with leadership skills, such as communication, cooperation and ability to motivate, traditionally associated with politics and business (Casey and Mitchell,2007; Smith,2008). Chief officers, for example, are rarely required to use the powers of constable (Loveday,2013b). The future of police leadership, it seems, requires less police-specific skills; Rogers (2014:2) concludes:

“This calls, perhaps, for a different kind of senior police officer than hitherto required, for they, along with their senior colleagues, will need to possess business acumen and associated skills to navigate the organisation through potentially difficult times.”

Police Leadership on the Agenda

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of leadership to twenty-first century policing (Long,2003). The events of recent years, particularly the reforms to police accountability and governance have positioned police leadership as central to the professionalisation agenda. The College of Policing (2015a:7) confirms:

“Leadership is a primary issue for a body establishing the elements of a formal profession. It sits at the heart of what it means to practice as professional and it is the responsibility of a professional body to state what can be expected of leaders in that profession”.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the decisions of police leaders have hugely significant consequences for people's lives, a point which is no more powerfully captured than in Scraton's (1999) work on the Hillsborough Inquiry. Simply put, leadership decisions in the police matter. The meanings of leadership to police officers are important in order to further understand the decision-making processes and interactions that ultimately affect the lives of the communities which the police serve. Therefore, this research, through an analysis of the understandings of police leadership, makes a timely and important contribution to the current body of knowledge on the nature and practice of leadership in the police.

Contribution to Knowledge

The principle concern of this research is the understandings of police leadership to officers' in leadership positions in the police. In contrast to previous studies of police leadership, this thesis considers leadership in the police as a socially constructed, expressive and negotiated activity, central to which is the presentation and management of the authority of rank. This thesis therefore makes an original contribution to knowledge in a number of ways.

- Most police leadership research has studied the phenomenon from 'the outside' imposing external definitions of leadership onto the police, typically through quantitative methods, utilising existing frameworks or typologies. The meanings of leadership to police officers are not analysed. This research positioned police officers' perceptions, understandings and meanings of leadership as central. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, this thesis captures police leaders' understandings of themselves and their leadership; the meanings of leadership to those in leadership positions in the police. Without a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of leadership to police officers themselves, the mechanisms to reform leadership risk being removed from the reality of the way leadership is experienced by police officers.
- Current research and policy places emphasis on 'what works' in police leadership. Empirical studies on police leadership typically focus on the effectiveness of different leadership styles. The meanings of leadership to police officers are overshadowed by the emphasis on effectiveness. Responding to calls for a shift in the research agenda,

this research focuses instead on ‘what is important’ (van Dijk et al.,2016). In the study of police leadership, the first step is not action, as Gardner (1990) argues, but understanding.

- Leadership has an institutionalised social status in the police; both the source and solution to organisational problems. Police leadership is firmly established in policy and practitioner discourse, its importance is unquestioned. Despite the extensive academic and policy attention, the meaning of police leadership and the similarities and differences to leadership in other organisational contexts is unclear. This thesis presents a framework of ideas about the meanings of leadership in the police.
- There is a well-established acknowledgement of the cultural distance between senior and lower ranks in the police organisation. The majority of previous research on police leadership has focused on chief officer rank, with more recent work incorporating the perceptions and experiences of the superintending ranks. The meanings and understandings of other supervisory ranks is neglected. This research incorporates the perceptions of chief inspectors and inspectors to explore the diverse meanings of police leadership across different ranks and the negotiation, navigation and resistance embedded in these understandings.
- Current research and policy typically conceptualises leadership in the police as rank-free, with leadership and rank discussed as separate constructs. In contrast, this thesis demonstrates that occupational rank is inextricably connected with understandings and practice of police leadership. This thesis considers the relationship between the rank and leadership and shows that understanding the meanings and assumptions attached to rank is an essential precursor to understanding police leadership. This thesis demonstrates therefore that rank is ‘ever present’ in the practice and understandings of police leadership.
- This thesis argues that authority is attached to rank and this authority is used in police leadership; the authority of rank, in other words, is a resource for police leaders. This thesis conceptualises the different ways of using rank as an authority as the ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ of rank. The doing of rank describes the heightened presentation of

rank in police leadership. In contrast, the undoing of rank describes the downplaying or minimising of the authority of rank in leadership. Rank can act as a barrier in police leadership, reinforced in the doing of rank or navigated in the undoing of rank. The moments of undoing, however, reveal the management of the influence of rank as an important precursor to facilitate collaborative and participatory relationships between senior and junior officers. This thesis also describes the resistance and contradictions in response to the undoing of rank. The resistance to the undoing of rank exposes the strength of attachment to conventional assumptions about rank and leadership. This thesis reveals leadership in the police therefore to be a negotiated, navigated and contested process.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters and is structured as follows: The first part of this thesis provides the theoretical and methodological context for this research. Chapter Two, the first of the literature review chapters, is a critical analysis of conventional leadership theory as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented and calls for understanding police leadership as a socially constructed process. To conceptualise police leadership as socially constructed therefore, the second literature review chapter, Chapter Three, provides an analysis of the influence of the police organisational context to the understandings and practice of police leadership. Chapter Four provides a critical, reflective discussion of the methodological approach of this research.

The focus of the thesis then shifts to the empirical findings in Chapter Five, which is structured in three parts. The first part introduces the main thematic concepts that emerged from this research and situates this within a framework of ‘audience’, ‘risk’. The second part of this chapter documents the evidence of the ways in which the authority of rank is emphasised and prioritised in leadership; this is conceptualised as the ‘doing of rank’ in leadership. Finally, this chapter discusses the ‘undoing of rank’; the ways the authority of rank is downplayed in leadership. In the final chapter, Chapter Six, the research findings are situated in the existing literature to demonstrate the extent to which this research has furthered the theoretical understanding of leadership in the police. The implications for

theory and practice are discussed, the limitations of the research are considered, and the key themes of the research are summarised.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Perspectives on Leadership

Academic and practitioner understandings of police leadership are informed by conventional leadership theories situated in the leadership and management literature. This chapter sets out the theoretical context of this thesis through a critical analysis of leadership theory in the understanding of police leadership. The chapter begins with a description of the conventional theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational theories, followed by a consideration of how these theories have contributed to the understanding of police leadership. The chapter will critique the deterministic and reductionist assumptions of conventional theory and consider the extent to which followership, distributed and shared leadership theories address this gap in knowledge. The final part of this chapter will consider leadership as socially constructed, drawing on notions of power and authority as central features of this thesis.

This chapter argues that the dominant theoretical interpretations neglect to consider police leadership as socially constructed. Rather than focusing on the individual police leader, it is therefore more useful to understand leadership in the police as a social process. Likewise, it will also become evident that conventional leadership theory is preoccupied with the endorsement of desirable leadership behaviours over the description of meanings and understandings. The focus on behaviours as indicators of effective leadership fails to position individuals themselves as the definers of leadership, that is, as active participants in the construction of leadership. An alternative understanding of police leadership, in other words, is needed.

An Overview of Conventional Leadership Theory

The understanding of leadership has progressed through key theoretical phases (Bass,2008). This section provides an overview of the conventional leadership theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational/transactional. This will form the basis from

which to critique conventional understandings of leadership using social constructionism as the theoretical framework for this research.

Trait Theory

Many reviews of leadership theory begin with a discussion of the trait approach, as the first attempt to systematically define and study leadership. These theories, popular in the 1920s and 1930s, conceptualised leadership in terms of traits (van Maurik,2001). The central belief of trait theory was that individuals were born leaders (Biggart and Hamilton,1987).

Consequently, leadership studies during this period focused on the identification of “magic personality traits” (Fiedler,1997:126) that distinguished leaders from non-leaders and might predict an individual’s capacity for leadership. Individual characteristics were investigated, such as gender and height, age and appearance (Stogdill,1948), and psychological traits such as authoritarianism and intelligence (House and Aditya,1997) and extroversion or masculinity (Mann,1959), but with unconvincing results. Effective leadership could be linked to few, if any, universal traits (House and Aditya,1997). This, combined with the lack of consideration of the contextual influences, led to trait theory largely being discredited (Bass,2008).

Despite the lack of empirical evidence, there is recurring interest in leadership traits. Transformational, inspirational and charismatic characteristics have emerged in contemporary leadership discourse, which reflect elements of the trait approach (van Maurik,2001). Charismatic leadership, for example, develops Weber’s notion of charismatic authority and explores the process and impact of ‘charisma’ and emotional attachment in leadership (Conger,2011; Shamir et al.,1993). Studies on charismatic leadership are typically based on the premise that charisma is an identifiable and quantifiable personality trait. Gemmill and Oakley (1997:277) explain:

“The mistake in theory-building and research on ‘charismatic’ leaders is the belief that ‘charisma’ is a measurable attribute of the person to whom it is attributed that is entirely independent from the perceptual distortions of those attributing the ‘charisma’”.

More recent leadership theories therefore demonstrate a continued interest in the importance of personality and traits in leadership. Grint (2011:9) concludes:

“Coupled with concerns about the importance of emotional intelligence, identity leadership and the development of inspiring visions and missions, this seems to have ensured the return of the original normative trait approaches: we seem to have gone forward to the past”.

Behavioural Theory

In the 1940s, the focus of theory shifted from leadership as a trait of the individual to consider leadership in terms of the demonstration of the right sort of behaviours (van Maurik,2001). A central theme of behavioural theory, which remained popular to the 1960s, is that leadership behaviours reflect either a ‘task orientation’, that is a concern for production and achievement of objectives or a ‘relations orientation’ that is a concern for the needs and interests of followers (Reddin,1977). A number of behavioural typologies were hypothesised on the assumption that there are these two ways to behave, beginning firstly with Lewin et al.’s (1939) authoritarian-democratic dichotomy. The principles of the authoritarian-democratic dichotomy were developed by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) in their continuum of boss-centred to subordinate-centred leadership styles. Blake and Mouton (1978) and McGregor (1989) are other notable behavioural theorists. Blake and Mouton (1978) captured the varying emphasis on task or relations in their Managerial Grid. The Managerial Grid incorporated five main leadership styles; authority-obedience, country club management, impoverished management, organisation man management and team management. Team management appears the ideal leadership style, reflecting strong emphasis on both task and relationships. McGregor (1989) suggests there are two approaches to leadership, which he captures in his Theory X and Theory Y. The Theory X manager, according to McGregor is autocratic and adopts a carrot-and-stick approach to management. Conversely, the Theory Y manager is democratic and shares responsibility and decision-making with followers. Primarily therefore, behavioural theorists focused on the effectiveness of different patterns of behaviours in leadership.

However, the belief that defined behaviours are positively related to follower performance and organisational effectiveness failed to attract widespread support (Yukl,2011). Critics challenged the assumption that certain behaviours will be universally desirable and highlighted the way in which effective behaviours may vary across different organisational contexts or situations (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Pfeffer,1977). Thus, the notion of causality attracted criticism, most persuasively by Lieberman and O'Connor (1972) who argued that the experimental design adopted by behavioural theorists did not reflect the social reality and complexity of leadership. Context, therefore, appeared to have been overlooked. Despite the lack of empirical support for behavioural theory, the principles of task-oriented and relations-oriented styles gathered momentum in subsequent theories of leadership (Yukl,2011). Transactional and transformational leadership, for example, incorporates elements of task and relations orientation (Bass,2008).

Situational Theory

Situational or contingency theory, popular in the late 1960s, was the first attempt to capture the importance of the social context in the understanding of leadership (van Maurik,2001). The premise of situational theory was that there was no universal 'best' way to influence people, but rather, successful leadership involves adapting one's leadership style to the demands of the circumstances or situation (Hersey et al.,2008). Situational theory therefore differs from trait and behavioural theories in the considerations of the contextual influences on leadership. Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership model, developed in the late 1960s, is perhaps the most widely known situational theory. Hersey and Blanchard argue that leadership style is influenced by the demands of the situation. They describe leadership style as a pattern of task behaviours and relationship behaviours, reflective of task and relations-oriented classifications from earlier theories. Task behaviour is focused on ensuring tasks are completed compared with relationship behaviour which prioritises relationships and support of individuals (Hersey et al.,2008). Hersey and Blanchard identified four styles. Firstly, 'telling' describes a directive approach with a focus on task rather than the relationship and support of the individual. 'Selling' is both directive and supportive and describes a coaching approach to leadership. 'Participating' is a highly supportive style, demonstrating a high level of trust in followers, with less emphasis on the leader providing the direction. Finally, 'delegating' involves low support and direction, and

assumes that followers are highly competent and trusted. According to Hersey and Blanchard, the nature of the situation, such as the urgency required, or risks involved, is the most important influence on leadership style. The leadership style is therefore most effective when it corresponds to the demands of the situation (Hersey et al.,2008).

Fiedler's (1997) LPC Contingency Model is another notable example of situational leadership theory. Developed in 1967, Fiedler's (1997) theory proposes that leadership effectiveness depends upon the personality of the leader and the leadership situation. Like Hersey and Blanchard's model, the personality of the leader differentiates leaders as relationship-oriented and task-oriented. The leadership situation, according to Fiedler, describes the extent to which the leader can control and influence the situation. Fielder argues therefore that there is no universal effective leadership style, and in doing so, reveals the situated nature of leadership effectiveness. Fielder (1997:133) explains:

“We cannot really talk about a ‘good’ leader or ‘poor’ leader. Rather leaders may be good in situations which match their leadership style and poor in situations in which leadership style situational control are mismatched”.

The prominence of situational theory has largely been overshadowed by more recent theories, such as transformational leadership, that explore the impact of leaders on emotions. The lack of strong empirical support for situational leadership is one of the main reasons for the declining influence of the theory. Critics argue that the behaviour description questionnaires used in situational leadership research produce a halo effect of desirable leadership behaviours and reinforce leadership stereotypes (Yukl,2011). That said, situational theorists like Hersey and Blanchard and Fielder rightly emphasise the context or situation, which is an important move away from understanding leadership solely in terms of the personality or behaviours of the leader. The involvement of followers in decision-making in participatory leadership styles highlights the agency of followers to respond, adapt and resist leadership.

The influence of organisational context in leadership therefore remains an important consideration in contemporary leadership theory. Yukl (2011:297) confirms:

“In an increasingly turbulent world, the idea that leaders must adapt their behaviour to changing conditions seems even more relevant today than it was decades ago when the theories were first proposed”.

However, although organisational context and leadership situation is central to situational leadership, theorists neglect to consider leadership and leadership effectiveness as socially constructed. Similarly, situational leadership theory over-emphasises behavioural typologies or categories and assumes a linear relationship between the situation, leader behaviour and follower response (Graeff,1997; Podsakoff et al.,2003). Consequently, the theory fails to consider leadership as a negotiated, non-linear social process.

Transactional and Transformational Theory

Until the late 1970s, leadership theories were largely based on the assumption that leadership was transactional, that is, an exchange is required between the leader and the follower, whereby the follower is incentivised through reward for good performance and subject to sanctions in the case of poor performance (Bass,2008). Transformational leadership considers the capacity of leaders to transform the basic values, beliefs and attitudes of followers to motivate them to perform at a higher level (Podsakoff et al.,1990).

James MacGregor Burns was one of the first theorists to define the concept of transformational leadership. For Burns (1978), transformational leadership describes the process whereby leaders and followers form a strong attachment to produce higher levels of motivation amongst followers. Burn’s notion of transformational leadership presented transactional and transformational leadership on a continuum. However, subsequent work began to consider transformational and transactional leadership as separate constructs (Avolio et al.,1999). Bernard Bass and his colleagues have since provided the most influential interpretation of transformational leadership. Bass (1995) conceptualised leadership in a theory comprised of seven factors that combined transformational and transactional approaches with ‘laissez-faire’ leadership. The theory classifies transactional leadership as contingent reward and management-by-exception and includes four transformational factors, also referred to as ‘The Four I’s’, namely, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealised influence (Avolio et al.,1999). Overall,

transformational leadership encourages participation, collective activity and collaboration in leadership to bring about organisational change.

In contrast to the assumptions of collectivity and mutuality amongst conventional theorists, critical leadership scholars have argued that the premise that transformational leadership ‘transforms’ the abilities and attitudes of others towards shared organisational goals has negative consequences (Grint,2010a). This assumes a one-way relationship between the leader and follower, the dynamics of power, authority and resistance is largely ignored (Collinson,2011; Gordon,2011). Tourish (2013) argues that the basis of transformational leadership is power; the ability of transformational leaders as ‘the powerful’ to influence the behaviours and values of followers as the ‘powerless’. This, he argues, has corrupting and coercive consequences that have been overlooked by conventional theorists:

“It has long been clear that models of leadership which assume that powerful leaders can be relied upon to behave wisely, ethically and for the public good are mistaken. Power adversely affects our ethics, perceptions of others, levels of testosterone and our inclination to engage in risky behaviours” (Tourish,2013:8).

This section has described the central assumptions of the conventional leadership theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational theories. The simplistic assumptions of trait theory have been challenged by situational leadership theory by emphasising the influence of leadership context. Transformational leadership highlights the failings of trait theory through the role of emotions in leadership (such as Murphy,2008).

However, the individualism and essentialism of the trait approach has persistent influence on current understanding of leadership. A central challenge to transformational leadership for example is the reinforcement of heroic leadership stereotypes, which is reminiscent of criticisms levied at trait theory. Conventional leadership theories therefore fail to consider leadership as a socially constructed process. The following section sets out the main criticisms of conventional leadership theory.

Leadership Theory and Police Leadership

Conventional theory has made an important contribution to the understanding of police leadership, and as Fleming (2015a) observes, allows those interested in police leadership to examine the phenomenon using a range of different theoretical approaches. Villiers and Adlam (2003:xiv) confirm, “Much of mainstream leadership theory can be applied to police leadership”. Aside from the qualitative empirical contributions to the understanding of police leadership, which are discussed in Chapter Three, police leadership has typically been evaluated based on the application of behavioural, situational and transformational theories (Wright et al.,2008).

Behavioural theory is particularly evident in American studies of leadership effectiveness in the police. Kuykendall (1985), for example, applied Blake and Mouton’s (1978) Managerial Grid to police managers across 165 law enforcement organisations in America and found that a ‘team’ style was the most common primary managerial style. Engel’s (2001) qualitative study with 85 patrol supervisors identified four supervisory styles: traditional, innovative, supportive and active. More recently, Andreescu and Vito’s (2010) survey of 126 American police managers identified ideal leadership behaviours such as demand reconciliation and the ability to balance competing demands. Schafer (2010) surveyed over 1,000 police supervisors to identify desirable behaviours; integrity, work ethic, communication and care for personnel featured strongly in the descriptions of effective leaders. The preoccupation to consider police leadership in terms of behaviours or styles is similarly evident in contemporary empirical research. A central focus of the Scottish Police Service Leadership Study in 2008 was the relationship between leadership style and leader performance (Hawkins and Dulewicz,2007; Hawkins and Dulewicz,2009). The study identified three distinct leadership styles as ‘engaging leadership’, ‘involving leadership’ and ‘goal-oriented leadership’ and found that engaging leadership was the most common leadership style in the police (Hawkins and Dulewicz,2009).

The focus of these empirical studies therefore is the identification of desirable leadership behaviours in the police. However, there is a lack of consistent evidence on effective leadership behaviours in the police (Dobby et al.,2004; Wright et al.,2008; Fleming,2015a). The primacy of behaviours in police leadership research, as Chapter One explained, neglects

to consider the meanings and understandings of leadership as a socially constructed process. This remains a significant gap in the academic and practitioner understanding of police leadership.

Situational leadership theory also informed early empirical research on police leadership. Kuykendall and Unsinger (1982) used Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model to assess the leadership style of 155 police managers in America. Of the leadership styles telling, selling, participating and delegating, Kuykendall and Unsinger found that police managers were more likely to adopt the selling approach, or have no dominant leadership style, and documented a strong aversion to the delegating style. According to Kuykendall and Unsinger, there are occupational influences that explain reluctance to delegate, particularly in terms of the action-centred nature of police work. The authors explain:

“Police managers feel compelled to act, to do something, and the delegating style is the antithesis of action” (Kuykendall and Unsinger,1982:318).

Kuykendall and Roberg's (1988) research with 410 American police managers then used Hersey and Blanchard's model to consider the leadership style appropriate for different types of police employee. In the study, the authors identified six different employee types based on different attitudes to work, competence and motivation; rookie, worker, star, cynic, retiree and depleted, and each type of employee requires a different combination of the telling, selling, participating and delegating style. For example, on the basis of their lack of experience, 'rookies' are best managed through a telling approach, gradually using the selling style as their competency in work improves. In contrast, 'stars' are considered highly motivated and experienced and consequently respond best to the delegating style. The situational leadership model helps police managers to develop their leadership style to reflect the needs and experience of the employee. Situational leadership theory therefore contributes to the understanding of police leadership through emphasising the differential responses needed depending on the needs of the follower and the demands of the situation.

The premise of situational theory that leadership adapts to the changing nature of the situation appears particularly applicable to the police environment (Rogers,2008; Fleming,2015a). The police routinely deal with a diverse range of activities (Bayley and Bittner,1984;

Reiner,2010). As such, the autocratic, militaristic style traditionally associated with police leadership, is increasingly conceived as outdated (Villiers,2003; Grint,2012). Whitfield et al. (2008) showed that police leadership of critical incidents included both directive and supportive approaches. This included planning, organising and communicating, which the authors characterised as directive, and accessibility, inspiration, empathy and appreciation within the supportive approach. The authors conclude:

“Police leadership during critical incident management is a continual balancing act between directing and supportive” (Whitfield et al.,2008:82).

In the context of increasing complexity in police leadership, the influence of the situation to the understanding and practice of police leadership remains pertinent in the contemporary context. Police leadership involves complex decision making in response to diverse situations (Grint and Thornton,2015). Consequently, the College of Policing confirm that the ideal contemporary police leaders are individuals who respond effectively to the demands of the situation:

“Leaders who demonstrate resilience in responding and adapting to high pressure and complex situations” (College of Policing,2015a:6).

There is an established interest in transformational leadership practices in the police (Cockcroft,2014; Foster,2003; Neyroud,2011b; Silvestri,2007). In a rapid evidence review commissioned by the NPIA, Campbell and Kodz (2011) note the high levels of support for transformational leadership in the police. More recently, the College of Policing’s (2015a:6) Leadership Review confirms the importance of transformational leadership practices:

“A collective style of leadership is found in many successful organisations. It is a style that places the leader in the role of an enabler, ultimately working to support the team. A more collective model of leadership may shift power to all levels and improve two-way communication.”

Overall, the results from empirical research in different countries have been optimistic and generally support the impact of transformational leadership behaviours on employee attitudes, effort and performance (Podsakoff et al.,1990; Deluga and Souza,1991; Sarver and Miller,2014; Vito et al.,2014). In an early study, Singer and Jonas (1987) applied Bass’s

(1985) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to assess follower perceptions of police leadership behaviours in New Zealand and found that transformational behaviours were the favourable option. Densten (2003) surveyed 480 senior police officers in an Australian police force to examine transformational leadership. The study found perceptions of leader effectiveness varied by rank; senior sergeants, for example, considered individualised consideration, idealised influence and management-by-exception as predictors of leadership effectiveness, while executives valued inspirational motivation. Murphy and Drodge's (2004) qualitative study in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Department found that transformational leadership was associated with improved levels of work commitment, satisfaction and motivation. More recently, Swid (2014) surveyed 154 police members in two Middle Eastern countries and found a positive relationship between transformational and transactional leadership with employee satisfaction. In Britain, Dobby et al. (2004) found that of the 53 leadership behaviours that were identified by police officers as effective, 50 behaviours matched closely with transformational leadership style. These behaviours, according to the study, had a positive impact on job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation.

Despite the endorsement of transformational leadership in the police, there remains a strong organisational attachment within the police to transactional or command-oriented approaches to leadership (Grint,2010b). Villiers (2003:29) noted that although the command-oriented approaches are recognised as outdated, the style "is extremely difficult to eradicate, and has so far survived all attempts to achieve its extirpation". Similarly, Silvestri (2007:53) found little evidence that leadership practices in the police were changing from traditional command approaches and confirmed:

"The police organisation continues to cling firmly to a style characterised more by transaction than transformation".

Transformational leadership largely emerged in the context of private sector businesses and therefore critics have raised doubts about the relevance and applicability of transformational approaches in public sector leadership (Cockcroft,2014; Currie et al.,2005). Currie and Lockett's (2007) study of secondary schools in England found considerable resistance and constraint to the adoption of transformational leadership. According to the authors,

alternative approaches to leadership are needed to consider the distinctive public service context. In police leadership, Cockcroft (2014) argues that the operational context of police work conflicts with transformational approaches of participation, collaboration and innovation. Resistance to transformational leadership in the police, Cockcroft (2014:8) further argues:

“Is rooted in a fundamental mismatch between perceived problems facing policing and the solutions offered by transformational leadership”.

Likewise, Silvestri’s (2011) study shows that the rank-oriented culture in the police is a barrier to embedding transformational leadership practices, such as participatory decision making. It seems therefore there are distinctive challenges to adopting alternative leadership practices in the police.

A fundamental challenge to the transfer of transformational leadership to public services therefore is the tendency to idealise the approach as superior (Currie and Lockett,2007); a recurring criticism of conventional theory. This fails to consider the distinctive features of the organisational environment that constrain the applicability of transformational approaches. In the context of police leadership, Cockcroft (2014:12) concludes:

“The simplistic binary argument that has been used to extol the virtues of transformational leadership over transactional leadership fails to fully recognise the nuances of organisational life” (Cockcroft,2014:12).

Current understanding of police leadership has largely been shaped by conventional leadership theory. Situational theory, for example, rightly positioned the situation as central to understanding leadership and allowed for consideration of the influence of organisational context on leadership practice. Whilst this has been important in studying police leadership through a variety of theoretical prisms (Fleming,2015a), conventional theory has failed to contribute to the understanding of police leadership as a socially constructed process. The assumptions of conventional theory therefore inhibit the acceptance of alternative leadership practices in the police.

A Critique of Conventional Leadership Theory

This section will critique the conventional leadership theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational in three ways. Firstly, the theories assume leadership as person-centred and overemphasise the leader in leadership. Secondly, leadership is assumed as a positional allocation and thirdly leadership is assigned causal authority for organisational performance and effectiveness. These criticisms will then be summarised in a consideration of the persistence of heroism in leadership.

This section will demonstrate that leadership as person-centred, positional and causal is inherent in current understanding of police leadership. It is more helpful however to think about police leadership as a dynamic, socially-constructed process. This allows for consideration of the negotiations and contradictions involved in the process of construction and the potential of developing more participatory and collaborative approaches to leadership in the police. Barker (1997:344, original emphasis) argues:

“We have become mired in an obsession with the rich and powerful, with traits, characteristics, behaviours, roles, styles, and abilities of people who by hook or by crook have obtained high positions, and we know little if anything more about *leadership*”.

Leadership as Person-Centred

According to Gardner (1990:xv), the prominent leadership writer, leaders are individuals:

“Who are exemplary, who inspire, who stand for something, who help us set and achieve goals”.

Historically, leadership has been conceptualised as person-centred. From trait to transformational theory, the dominant theoretical perspectives on leadership have focused almost exclusively on the leader in leadership. Meindl (1995) describes this as a leader-centric understanding of leadership; an overemphasis of the leader in leadership. The location of leadership is firmly rooted within the individual (Peck and Dickinson,2009) and impacts of leadership are attributed to the personality, characteristics, qualities or behaviours of individual leaders (Shamir,2007). Leadership is therefore assumed, as Hosking (1997) argues, as a leader characteristic.

Consequently, most leadership research has focused on leaders' characteristics and behaviours (Barnard,1997; Hosking,1997). In an empirical study of leadership, Gronn (2002:423) describes "a strong commitment to a unit of analysis consisting of a solo or stand-alone leader." In theory and research therefore, leadership is synonymous with the leader (Rost,1993). The dominance of the leader in leadership exposes the essentialist and reductionist assumptions embedded in conventional leadership theory. Leadership, a complex social phenomenon, is reduced to single individuals, hierarchies of types and either/or dichotomies (Crevani et al.,2010; Reddin,1977). The challenge for leadership scholars is to shift the focus away from the leader and consider instead leadership as a relational social process (Shamir,2007). The emphasis becomes the process of leadership, not leaders (Owen,2012). Crevani et al. (2010:78) confirm:

"We must challenge our deeply rooted tendency to make the abstract notion of 'leadership' concrete in the guise of individual managers... instead try to redefine leadership in terms of processes and practices organised by people in interaction".

Leadership as Positional

In conventional theory, leadership is situated predominately within the most senior positions of formal hierarchies (Barker,2001). Leadership is equivalent to senior hierarchical rank and conceptualised in terms of vertical authority and a hierarchical, top-down process (Bennis,1999; Collinson,2011; Grint,2005a).

This positional understanding of leadership relates to the person-centred view described previously. Leadership is located within individuals and thus person-centred but importantly, only those who hold senior office are assigned leadership status. Leadership therefore is both individual and positional; the 'who' you are in terms of individual characteristics and 'where' you are in the organisational hierarchy. This is captured in Barker's description of conventional understandings of leadership:

"An image of a powerful male leader who sits atop a hierarchical structure directing and controlling the activities of subjects towards the achievement of the leader's goals" (Barker,1997:346).

This understanding of leadership positions followers as passive recipients of leadership; individual agency is reduced to privilege structural influence. This fails to consider the expressions of hierarchical structure in the construction of leadership, and the negotiation and navigation that takes place in the enactment of leadership. In encouraging new ways of understanding leadership, it is important to challenge the conventional assumptions of leadership as positional. Washbush (2005:1081) confirms:

“I see no way to make sense of leadership if it is perpetually and almost universally linked to the positions of people in executive positions”.

Leadership as Causal

Conventional theory and research assumes that leadership is causally related to organisational, team or individual performance. The eminent leadership author Warren Bennis (1989:15) writes of a leader as:

“Responsible for the effectiveness of organisations. The success or failure of all organisations, whether basketball teams, moviemakers, or automobile manufacturers, rests on the perceived quality at the top”.

Leadership is consequently understood as the solution to organisational problems. Since leaders are assumed as causal agents or the ‘initiators’ of action (Raelin,2011), success is perceived as the result of the leader’s performance. Shamir (2007:x) confirms:

“The leader is single-handedly capable of determining the fate and fortunes of groups and organisations”.

Likewise, leaders are blamed for organisational failures (Barker,1997; Grint,2010a). Failure of leadership is attributed to individuals, rather than the organisational conditions or external factors (Barnard,1997). This simplifies complex problems by situating them in one location, the leader, rather than dispersed across an organisation or wider (Gemmill and Oakley,1997). Leaders are therefore constructed as symbols; a source of organisation success and failure. Pfeffer (1977:110) confirms:

“The leader as a symbol provides a target for action when difficulties occur, serving as a scapegoat when things go wrong”.

Yet, this assignment of causal responsibility to individuals is entirely unrealistic, as Tourish (2013:23) reminds us, “most of us stumble and fall on a regular basis. Leaders are no different”. When it comes to improved organisational performance therefore, the call is for more leadership, less leadership, better leadership, different leadership; but leadership nonetheless (Tourish,2014).

Understanding leadership within a framework of causality consequently focuses attention onto leadership outcomes. The meaning of leadership within conventional theory is intertwined with ‘producing results’ and effectiveness against outcomes. Consequently, the source of study, once again, is the activities of the leader. The predominance of the leader is thus reinforced and our understanding of leadership becomes the search for ‘good’ or ‘effective’ leadership (Rost,1993).

The assumption of causality in leadership theory has been heavily criticised by critical leadership scholars. Meindl (1995:330) challenges the focus on “the personality of the leaders as significant, substantive and a causal force on the thoughts and actions of followers” and argues that there is a common tendency to exaggerate the contribution of leaders to organisational success. Firstly, in the study of leadership, establishing causality is inherently complex (Antonakis et al., 2010). It is virtually impossible to ascertain a causal link between the actions of leaders from the multitude of external social, economic or political factors; organisational performance is simply too complicated to reduce to the actions of a single individual (Grint,2005a). Secondly, the effects of leadership on organisational performance, where evident, are likely to be small. Pfeffer’s (1977) well cited critique of the ‘personification of social causality’ in leadership argues that there are many factors that influence organisational performance that are beyond leadership control. The observable effects of leaders on organisational outcomes, according to Pfeffer, are therefore likely to be small. Similarly, Lieberman and O’Connor’s (1972:118) research looking at sales, earnings and profit margin data from 167 business corporations concluded that leadership has limited effects on organisational outcomes. It is a myth therefore that leaders are in complete control of complex social, economic or political events (Mintzberg,1988); an illusion which helps to reduce feelings of uncertainty and helplessness in complex times (Tourish,2013). Gemmill and Oakley (1992:276) explain:

“The use of leadership as a cause or social myth seems to stem, in part, from the natural uncertainty and ambiguity embedded in reality which most persons experience as terrifying, overwhelming, complex and chaotic”.

The assumption of leader causality creates a sense of order and stability therefore, but leaves leadership as a dynamic social process unexamined.

This section has described the fundamental criticisms of the ways that conventional theory and research has conceptualised leadership as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented. The reductionist and deterministic assumptions of conventional theory oversimplify the complexity of leadership activity. Leadership as a social phenomenon is ignored; the agency of followers as co-producers in leadership is overlooked. An understanding of leadership therefore is more than a consideration of the actions of individual leaders. Rather, leadership is a socially constructed process (Alvesson,2011; Meindl,1995; Fairhurst and Grant,2010). The meanings of leadership are interpreted through social processes and interaction (Smircich and Morgan,1982). The dynamics of power are negotiated and resisted (Collinson,2014; Gordon,2011). Hosking (1997:293) explains:

“It is essential to focus on leadership processes: processes in which influential acts of organising contribute to the structuring of interactions and relationships, activities and sentiments; process in which definitions of social order are negotiated, found acceptable, implemented and renegotiated”.

Conventional Theory and the Heroic Leader

The main criticisms of conventional theory have been set out in the previous section. Leadership is conceptualised by conventional theory as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented. Leadership is, as Barnard (1997:89) reminds us, “confused with pre-eminence or extraordinary usefulness”.

In person-centred, positional and causal understandings of police leadership, leaders are constructed as romanticised symbols of heroic importance (Mastrofski,2002; Meindl,1995). Renowned leadership scholars celebrate and idealise leaders and leadership (Kotter,1990). For Kotter (1988), for example, leadership involves risk taking. Bennis (1989) defines a

leader as ‘an innovator’, ‘an original’, and ‘a master of context’. Inherent in conventional theory therefore are notions of heroism and masculinity (Bennis,1999; Gronn,2011; Rosener,1997). Leaders are depicted in leadership research, as Grint (2012:11) explains, as “heroic knights on horseback rescuing damsels in distress”, celebrated for success and targeted for failures as saints and scapegoats (Grint,2005a). Ford (2010:48) explains:

“The perpetuation of a single model of univocal and patriarchal leadership behaviours and the ever-continuing drive to create leaders in contemporary organisations perpetuates a model that is exclusionary and privileged and which constructs a homogenous and almost superhuman model of leaders and leadership.”

The pervasiveness of heroism in leadership within conventional theory exposes the centrality of power to understanding leadership. Yet importantly, power dynamics within conventional theory are largely ignored. Traditional theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational assume dualistic power relations between leaders and followers (Gordon,2011). In conventional theory, leaders are assigned an omnipotent and heroic status against the passivity of followers, who are ascribed a subordinate and dependent status and assumed to be inferior and compliant receivers (Burns,1978; Gronn,2002). In celebrating leaders therefore, followers are assumed to be powerless (Grint,2010a). The potential to conceive followers, therefore, as independent actors with the capacity to construct, interpret, influence or resist in the leadership process is entirely neglected (Shamir,2007). Raelin (2011:199) explains:

“By focusing only on the initiator, we engage in a fallacy that one party is active and the other – the recipient - passive, waiting for the ‘word’ to thrust them into action”.

Conventional theory, and the preoccupation with the leader in leadership, fails to consider the leadership as a mutual, collaborative, interactional and contested process (Shamir,2007). Alternative leadership arrangements and practices, beyond the dualistic and dichotomous leader/follower powerful/powerless relationship, are ignored; other theoretical interpretations of leadership, as Peck and Dickinson (2009:8) argue, are ‘crowded out’.

Police Leadership as Person, Positional and Causal

Current understanding of police leadership reflects the leader-centric assumptions of conventional theory that leadership is person-centred, positional and causal. Leadership in the police is typically located within individuals, often in formal positions of authority, who produce results.

Leadership in the police is person-centred, typically conceptualised in relation to the traits, characteristics, competencies, behaviours and styles of leaders. Police leadership therefore is conceptualised in relation to the individual leader rather than a collective, social process (Neyroud, 2011b). Leadership is inextricably linked with individual leaders and consequently, as Herrington and Colvin (2016:2) argue, “without these leaders there can be no leadership”.

A focus on the attributes or behaviours of individual leaders removes leadership from the influence of the local context. In contrast, understanding leadership as socially constructed allows for consideration of leadership as context dependent (Gemmell and Oakley, 1997). An appreciation of the organisational context in which police leaders operate therefore is largely ignored in current understanding (Cockcroft, 2014). Adlam (2003a:40) confirms:

“Leadership is coming, increasingly, to be viewed as if it is an entirely context-free practical skill or ‘competence’”.

Leadership selection and recruitment, for example, is largely based on competencies, which reflects person-centred assumptions about the nature of leadership. Caless (2011), in an empirical study of chief officers in England and Wales, demonstrated that police leadership is understood in terms of ‘assessable behaviours’. At the time of Caless’s research, there were twelve identifiable leadership competencies for chief officers including negotiation and influencing, team working, communication, problem solving and resilience. Caless (2011:82) therefore concludes:

“As far as the police service is concerned, the leadership issue is one of competency”

The focus in understanding police leadership, it appears, is the traits and behaviours of individual leaders. In his discussion of the ‘traits and habits’ of effective police leadership, Schafer (2013:7) defines leadership as a process of change whereby “leaders are those who

seek to accomplish this process”. Likewise, the College of Policing (2015a:6) communicated a person-centred understanding of police leadership in the need to identify “desirable traits in an ideal police leader”. Leadership in the police is typically understood therefore in relation to the individual.

Likewise, leadership in the police has strong positional associations (Herrington and Colvin,2016). Silvestri’s (2011) study of senior police women demonstrated that police leadership is interconnected with meanings attached to the authority of hierarchical rank. Silvestri (2011:57) explains:

“The ability to hold and maintain rank, using and drawing on the associated leadership scripts, is a key and potent feature of police leaders”.

The positional connotations assume police leadership is a linear, top-down process. Leadership in the police is not, however, a seamless transmission of influence from the top of the organisation to the bottom. Reuss-Ianni’s (1983) seminal ethnography vividly captures the capacity of ‘street cops’ to resist and adapt the leadership influence of ‘management cops’. Peers of the same rank also have an important influence on individual behaviour. Panzarella (2003), for example, provides a commentary about the influence of peer leadership. He explains:

“To the extent that a police officer’s actions are determined by someone else, they follow the leadership of peers more than the leadership of superiors. It is from peers that police officers learn the practical lessons of what to do in various situations” (Panzarella,2003:129).

These depictions capture the complex and dynamic nature of police leadership and challenge conventional positional understanding of police leadership as a top-down process. However, the authority of rank is central to leadership in the police; police leadership is not a rank-neutral process. The formal rhetoric that leadership “is not the sole preserve of those in high-ranking roles, but a capability that is necessary and can be developed at every level” (College of Policing,2015a:6) fails to capture the enduring and fundamental influence of rank in the construction and presentation of police leadership.

Understanding of leadership in the police similarly reflects assumptions about causality and leadership; police leaders are assigned responsibility for organisational change and are accountable for organisational problems. Part of the attraction of transformational leadership in the police, for example, is its potential as a driver for cultural change; the approach celebrated as “a panacea for organisational ills” (Currie et al.,2005:265). Foster (2003:220) describes transformational leadership as “a vital component for changing police cultures” and similarly Silvestri (2007:40) argues that transformational leadership practices are “crucial to effecting any real change in the police organisation”. Leadership is therefore conceived as the solution to the problem of police culture, the assumption being that leadership can provoke cultural change. However, policing scholars have long documented the resilience of police culture to change (Fielding,1988; Holdaway,1977; Sklansky and Marks,2008); occupational culture in the police, it appears, is more complicated than simply a matter of leadership.

Leadership in the police is constructed therefore on the basis of a “clear chain of causality” (Mastrofski,2002:153) whereby leadership is assumed as instrumental and determinant. Police leadership is the source of responsibility and accountability. Police leaders are charged with transforming complex crime and social problems; the response to such complexity is ‘better leadership’ (Graef,1990; Waddington,1999; Wilson,1968; Herrington and Colvin,2016). Leadership in the police is not unimportant. The key point however is that leadership is not the single determinant of organisational effectiveness. Mastrofski (2002:168, original emphasis) confirms:

“The metropolitan police chief is not *powerless* to effect substantive results, but he is not as *powerful* as the romance of leadership suggests”.

Understanding police leadership as person-centred, positional and causal ignores the capacity of followers to contribute to the leadership process and acts as a barrier to alternative understandings of leadership. Whilst critical leadership scholars accept leadership as a socially constructed process, this conceptualisation of leadership is missing in current discussions of police leadership. A shift is needed from the deterministic and essentialist assumptions of conventional understanding of police leadership to examine the complexities and negotiations in the social construction of leadership in the police.

Alternative Theories of Leadership

Historically, conventional leadership theory has predominately focused on the characteristics and activity of individual leaders in positions of formal authority, with assumed capacity to achieve results. More recently, there has been a shift towards alternative conceptualisations of leadership, referred to as post-heroic, which recognise the relational, shared and distributed nature of leadership; the practice of leadership beyond the leader (Fletcher,2004).

Followership

The emergence of followership in academic literature is a significant contribution to the re-conceptualisation of conventional understandings of leadership (Bligh,2011). There is historical interest in followership, research on leader-follower relations was evident in the 1920s and 1930, but this work failed to provoke significant change in the understanding of leadership (Bligh,2011). It was not until the late-twentieth century, and the work of Robert E. Kelley, that the notion of followership developed a more significant presence in the conceptualisation of leadership. Kelley (1988) argued for a greater appreciation of the role and influence of the follower in the leadership process and presented five followership patterns or styles; the sheep, the yes people, the alienated followers, the survivors and the effective followers. At a time when the leader was the primary focus of leadership theorists, Kelley's work was perceived as radical, but nevertheless designed, as Kelley (2008:5) later explains, "to put a stake in the ground and say to the world 'we need to pay attention to followers'". As such, Kelley's work was fundamental in challenging the conventional understanding of leadership as a social process.

The growing body of academic literature on followership has challenged the essentialism and determinism of conventional theory by considering instead the perceptions, motivations and experiences of followers (Uhl-Bien and Pillai,2007). Despite this, the theory of followership has failed to shake the leader-centric legacy completely. Whilst followers were recognised as influential in the leadership process, the focus remained on the leader. The followers' impact on the leader and leadership outcomes was investigated, yet follower perspectives of their followership experience were largely ignored (Shamir,2007). However, Collinson's (2006) analysis of the different 'follower selves' highlighted the diversity of follower response to leadership and therefore represented a shift towards the centrality of the follower experience

in leadership research. There is increasing interest, therefore, beyond followers' interpretations of leadership, to consider followers' interpretations of followership (such as Carsten et al,2010; Uhl-Bien and Pillai,2007).

Shared and Distributed Leadership

The theories of shared and distributed leadership represent a further challenge to the conventional leader-centric understanding of leadership. Rather than associating leadership with an individual or role, these theories portray leadership as an activity that can be shared or dispersed amongst group members (Pearce and Conger,2003). Leadership, as Fletcher and Kaufer (2003:22) explain, is conceived as:

“A set of practices that can and should be enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top”.

Contrary to conventional theory therefore, shared and distributed leadership is based on the premise that leadership is not the sole responsibility of the leader (Alvesson,1992; Raelin,2011). Consequently, as Gronn (2002) explains, shared and distributed approaches do not privilege individual leaders but position leadership as a collaborative, interactional activity. Leadership can either be formally distributed within organisations, allocated to strategists or review teams for example, or as Gronn (2002) highlights, a more informal, emergent diffusion of leadership practice can occur through what he described as ‘spontaneous collaboration’ and ‘intuitive working relations’. From this theoretical perspective, leadership is considered a collective, collaborative and less-hierarchical activity rather than an individual enterprise. It reflects a more lateral process across individuals rather than a vertical top-down activity from managers to followers (Raelin,2011).

Considering leadership as an activity rather than an attribute of a person allows for an organisational appreciation of expertise and knowledge over hierarchical position or rank. Pearce and Conger (2003:2) explain:

“The leader is therefore highly dependent on the expertise of team members. Leadership in these settings is not determined by positions of authority or depth of expertise but rather by an individual's capacity to influence peers and by the

leadership needs of the team in a given moment. In addition, each member of the team brings together unique perspectives, knowledge and capabilities to the team”.

Whilst shared and distributed leadership are established discussions in the leadership literature, there is less evidence of the approach in policing. Steinberger and Wuestewald’s (2008) evaluation of a shared leadership initiative in a U.S. police department showed significant improvements in communication, employee relations and employee motivation; the Chief Executive’s support and commitment to shared leadership was defined as critical. In Germany, Masal (2015) demonstrated support for shared leadership in the police; her survey of 1,165 respondents found that transformational leaders have a positive influence on shared leadership practices through goal clarity and job satisfaction. Craig et al.’s (2010) UK study of shared leadership in the policing of minority ethnic communities is particularly noteworthy, and illustrates the utilisation of shared leadership in community engagement.

There is emerging empirical interest in shared and distributed leadership in the police therefore. However, these studies draw attention to the challenges of shared or distributed approaches in a formal hierarchical environment like the police, which, as Steinberger and Wuestewald (2008:145) explain:

“Remain largely centralised in their decision making, structurally vertical, rule bound, and mired in power relationships”.

Shared leadership arrangements also place considerable demands on working practices, training, appraisal and promotion systems (Craig et al.,2010). Craig et al. (2010:336) conclude:

“The viability of shared leadership must be considered as conditional on making certain reforms in police practice and training.”

There are distinctive challenges to adopting alternative leadership practices in the police. Although the College of Policing (2015a) notes the importance of collaborative and participatory forms of leadership, police leadership remains largely understood in person-centred, positional and causal terms.

The alternative leadership theories of followership and shared and distributed leadership have been described to illustrate the challenge to the reductionist and deterministic assumptions of conventional theory. Shared and distributed leadership reveal leadership as a collaborative social process (Fletcher and Kaufer,2003). However, whilst these alternative conceptualisations of leadership have attracted scholarly interest, the principles of conventional theory remain firmly embedded in contemporary understanding of leadership. Gronn (2011:441) confirms:

“Leadership continues to be a domain of inquiry in which well-rehearsed binaries, such as leader-follower, leadership-followership, superior-subordinate and leader-manager, retain a tenacious grip”.

A New Understanding of Leadership

Conventional leadership theories of trait, behavioural, situational and transformational and the more recent alternative theories of followership and distributed and shared leadership have made significant contributions to the understanding of leadership in the leadership and management literature.

The reductionist and deterministic assumptions of conventional theory however oversimplify leadership to the attributes of individuals in positions of power. Whilst alternative leadership theories such as distributed or shared leadership promote different leadership arrangements, they fail to address the basic, taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in the understanding of leadership (Crevani et al.,2010). The emergence of research from critical leadership scholars aims to address the neglected areas of mainstream theorising (Collinson,2011).

Crevani et al. (2010:78) explain:

“We must challenge our deeply rooted tendency to make the abstract notion of ‘leadership’ concrete in the guise of individual managers that lead hoards of followers towards the achievement of shared goals”.

The following section outlines the emerging discussions, predominately from critical leadership studies, of new ways of conceptualising leadership; towards understanding leadership as a socially constructed process.

Leadership as Process

Whilst conventional theorists assume leadership is a one-way, linear process between leaders and followers, critical leadership scholars instead conceptualise leadership as a dynamic, negotiated and collaborative social process. These processes are not linear or reversible but rather continually under construction (Crevani et al.,2010). Conceptualising leadership as a social process recognises leadership as relational, emergent and dynamic. Leadership is relational insofar as it is a social and interdependent relationship, requiring participation and contribution. This marks a shift from understanding followers as passive and obedient recipients of leadership (Kort,2008). Shamir (2007:xix), for example, discusses leadership as “jointly produced by leaders and followers” and Crevani et al. (2010) consider leadership in terms of collective activity. Raelin (2011:197) explains:

“Leadership arises from this social interaction among mutual inquirers who share their inter-subjective meanings”.

Leadership is also considered as an emergent phenomenon, continually constructed and reconstructed, negotiated and renegotiated within a social environment (Kickul and Neuman,2000; Meindl,1995). This is best captured in Wood and Ladkin’s (2008:15) description of leadership as “an unfolding, emergent process; a continuous coming into being”. Likewise, leadership is dynamic, rather than a static and universal experience (Murphy and Drodge,2004). Gemmill and Oakley (1997:283) explain:

“Leadership as a social process can be defined as a process of dynamic collaboration where individuals and members authorise themselves and others to interact in ways that experiment with new forms of intellectual and emotional meaning”.

Conceptualising leadership as a social process challenges the essentialist and deterministic assumptions of conventional leadership theory; a key critique of orthodox understanding described earlier. Rather, leadership is a contested and negotiated phenomenon. This perspective therefore allows consideration of the different experiences and meanings of leadership, the different situations in which leadership is perceived to emerge (Wood and Ladkin,2008) and how authority in leadership is presented in particular ways. This affords a greater appreciation of the organisational context (Crevani et al.,2010); the presentation of

leadership through space, time and symbols, for example, become an important source of empirical inquiry. The framing of leadership as a process therefore moves the focus of inquiry from the leader as central to considering when, and in what ways, leadership is understood to emerge. Meindl (1995:332) explains:

“Less importance is placed on discovering who emerges as the leader and what he or she had to do to get there – a leader-centric agenda – and more emphasis is placed on discovering when and under what conditions alternative forms of leadership emerge”.

Leadership as Socially Constructed

As described earlier, conventional theory assumes leadership is an objective reality, typically observable in the attributes or behaviours of individual leaders. In contrast, critical leadership scholars argue leadership is instead socially constructed. Multiple ‘realities’ and meanings are possible, which are produced and reproduced, negotiated and renegotiated, through social interaction (Fairhurst and Grant,2010; Uhl-Bien and Pillai,2007). The social constructionist approach to understanding leadership fundamentally challenges the essentialist and deterministic leader-centrism of conventional theory, a point emphasised throughout this chapter, in which leadership is primarily the result of a leader’s personality, behaviour, or organisational position. Leadership is considered as a co-constructed reality and consequently the role of followers in the ‘meaning making’ of leadership is emphasised (Fairhurst and Grant,2010). In contrast to conventional theory, a socially constructed approach therefore rightly positions followers as co-producers of leadership rather than inferior passive recipients, which is an important move away from understanding leadership as an attribute of individual leaders (Shamir,2007). This perspective contends that socially constructed perceptions influence the attributions of leadership, that is, who we define as leaders (Bligh,2011). Uhl-Bien and Pillai (2007), for example, describe the way in which ‘follower schemas’ develop through socialisation and interactions with leaders. Similarly, Lord et al.’s (1984) leadership categorisation theory suggests socially-learned ‘leadership prototypes’ are accessed by followers to construct the leadership image. According to this theory, having identified a number of characteristics or leadership indicators, the follower is able to construct the complete leadership image (Lord et al,1984). A powerful ‘halo effect’ thus categorises our perceptions and understandings of leadership (Carsten and Bligh,2007).

In conceiving leadership as socially constructed therefore, the empirical focus becomes the meanings and understandings of leadership; where and how followers 'see' leadership. Meindl (1995:330) explains; "how leaders are constructed and represented in their thought systems". Emphasis is placed therefore on the way followers perceive, construct and define leadership, rather than leadership being evident in the actions of leaders.

Furthermore, studying leadership as socially constructed allows for a richer appreciation of organisational context. Alvesson and Sveingsson (2003:360) confirm:

"Such openness may involve an interest in understanding local context and the cultural dimensions of leadership and the centrality of language and narrative (discourse) in trying to reveal (or construct) leadership and a skeptical attitude to the 'realness' or at least 'robustness' of leadership".

Grint (2012) furthers the notion of leadership as socially constructed in his analysis of the social construction of organisational context. Problems faced by organisations, according to Grint, are socially constructed to legitimise particular approaches in leadership. Grint categorises these problems as tame, wicked and critical, and each require a different form of authority; command, management and leadership. The situation is constructed or 'framed' as tame, wicked or critical, a problem one person considers as critical might be defined as wicked by someone else, in order to justify the use of particular forms of authority. This allows scholars, as Grint (2005b:1471, original emphasis) explains, to "begin to consider not what is the *situation*, but not it is *situated*". This process of management or 'framing' of meanings, realities and context is central to understand the socially constructed nature of leadership (Fairhurst,2005; Smircich and Morgan,1982).

Leadership as socially constructed problematises conventional understandings of 'leaders' and 'followers'. It highlights the subjectivity embedded in the perception and interpretation of leadership and thus draws attention to the problems of applying 'objective' frameworks to the understanding of leadership. This is a key failing of conventional theory, as Meindl (1995:339) confirms:

"The point is that much of the trouble with conventional leadership research is attributable to the conceptual difficulties encountered when theorists and research

scientists attempt to impose outside, objective, third-party definitions of what is inherently subjective”.

Leadership, as a social phenomenon is therefore created and recreated in a continuous process. It becomes possible to explore differing, conflicting and interdependent, constructions (Hosking,2007), the normative assumptions about nature of leadership, that is, the ‘knowing’ of leadership, can be explored. This directs attention to what I will call the ‘common sense’ of leadership. Crevani et al. (2010:80) advocate:

“The dominating discourses on the nature and quality of leadership must be seen as an inevitable and integral of what is studied”.

Rather than focusing on the ‘who’ of leadership therefore, a social construction approach to leadership is concerned with the ‘where’ and ‘how’ of leadership (Raelin,2011); the construction and presentation of leadership.

Leadership and Performance

The notion of leadership as a performance, which is emerging within leadership studies, further develops the social constructionist approach to understanding leadership (Alvesson and Spicer,2012; Peck and Dickinson,2009). Studies, for example, have explored the impression management skills of leaders in their ‘performances’ to ‘audiences’ (such as Gardner and Martinko,1988 and Harvey,2001).

The concept of performance as a lens to understand social interaction is most commonly associated with Goffman’s (1990) dramaturgy framework. This perspective is a further challenge to the essentialist assumptions of conventional theory. Leadership is not reflective of an essential true self or exists objectively ‘out there’, but rather leadership is more usefully understood as an enacted and performed social process (Ford,2006; Biehl-Missal,2010, Peck and Dickinson,2009).

Emphasis is shifted therefore, as Pye (2005) explains, from the noun of leadership as ‘being’ to the verb of leadership as ‘doing’; the activity within leadership. The ‘doing’ of leadership, that is, the presentation and expressions of leadership is evident in Peck and Dickinson’s

(2009) framework of leadership 'is' and 'as' a performance. Leadership is a performance, according to Peck and Dickinson (2009:8) who describe the organisational rituals and symbolic acts which "literally render leadership a performance". Leadership as a performance describes the relationships and interactions of organisational life, the "(re)-iteration and (re)-citation", which shape the meanings and understandings of leadership (Peck and Dickinson,2009:8). The doing of leadership is also reflected in Raelin's (2011:196) discussion of leadership-as-practice:

"A practice is a cooperative effort among participants...leadership emerges and unfolds through coping in day-to-day experiences".

Similarly, Wood and Ladkin's (2008:17) focus on the 'playing out of leadership' highlights the shift towards the doing and likewise Mintzberg's (1998:144) empirical work on covert leadership emphasises a similar importance of this perspective:

"We need a greater appreciation in all managerial work of this kind of covert leadership: not leadership actions in and of themselves – motivating, coaching, and all that – but rather unobtrusive actions that infuse all the other things a manager does".

Thus, understanding leadership as a performance further confirms leadership as a process of 'meaning-making' (Smircich and Morgan,1982). Understandings of leadership are shaped by the processes of presentation, what leadership should 'look' like. In other words, particular expressions of leadership are legitimated whilst viable or credible alternatives are restricted (Grint,2005b). Ford (2006:80) explains:

"This performance process of leadership is achieved through a range of exclusionary practices that aim to offer a homogeneous definition of what a leader in an organisation is expected to be".

In understanding leadership as a performance therefore, the enactment, narratives, presentations and expressions of leadership are the source of empirical study (see Weischer et al.,2013). This allows for consideration of the 'presentation' of leadership, the symbols, rituals, scripts within particular organisational settings that shape the 'common sense' of leadership. Rather than conceptualising leadership as an objective reality 'out there',

leadership is better understood as performed and situated accomplishment. The processes of the presentation and construction of leadership, once again, become the source of empirical inquiry.

Final Considerations: Gender and Power in Leadership

There is an inherent gender-blindness within conventional theory; the issue of gender in leadership has traditionally been ignored. Yet understandings of leadership are intertwined with stereotypical beliefs in relation to gender and management (Powell et al.,2002; Sinclair,2005; Wajcman,2013). Gender stereotypes typically construct women as communal and expressive, reflecting an inclusive and sympathetic manner, compared with men as instrumental, referring to a more self-interested task focus (Scott and Brown,2006). Likewise, leadership is constructed based on powerful stereotypes; where leadership is constructed as authoritative, competitive and aggressive in nature, it assumes a masculine status (Dunn,2008). ‘Effective’ leadership therefore is perceived in relative masculine and patriarchal terms (Gemmill and Oakley,1997; Silvestri,2011; Sinclair,2005; Wajcman,2013). Rosener (1997), an eminent theorist in gender and leadership, provides a pertinent example. Her study identified descriptors such as ‘strong’ ‘rational’ ‘independent’ and ‘linear thinker’ associated with the word ‘leader’, which has strong resonance with the words women used to describe men; ‘strong’ ‘in control’ ‘macho’ and ‘rational’. Rosener (1997:214) concludes:

“This simple exercise shows why women are not seen in terms of leadership potential; they don’t exhibit male attributes”.

Similarly, Schein (2001:675) refers to this as the ‘think manager-think male’ phenomenon; indicators of successful leadership are more consistently associated with men rather than women. Consequently, ‘non-masculine’ leadership has been subordinated and marginalised in organisational practice, and indeed, in traditional leadership theory (Billing and Alvesson,2000). The dominant leadership discourse is therefore highly gendered. Leadership is, it seems, positioned as an exclusively masculine enterprise (Eagly and Carli,2003; Silvestri,2011).

Where gender features in leadership research, it typically perpetuates essentialist and deterministic assumptions in relation to gender and leadership. Empirical studies, for example, have explored the ways in which men and women ‘lead’ differently. Bartol and Butterfield (1976) found differences between men and women in ‘consideration style’ and ‘initiating structure’, and similarly, Petty and Lee (1975) found differences in satisfaction, with rates being higher for followers with female supervisors. In contrast, Dobbins and Platz (1986) meta-analysis found that the sex of the leader did not affect perceived leadership influence or follower satisfaction, and likewise Eagly and Johnson (1990) also found that male and female leaders did not differ significantly in leadership style. In challenging the masculine assumptions of effective leadership therefore, studies have championed women’s unique and valuable contribution to leadership, and thus encourage a greater appreciation of a ‘feminine’ approach to leadership (Alimo-Metcalf, 2004; Grant, 1988; Rosener, 1990). Such work, however, does little to elevate the deterministic stereotypes of gender and leadership.

In contrast to conventional leadership research, critical leadership theorists have problematised the biological essentialism, romanticism and dualism of mainstream research on gender and leadership (Collinson, 2011). Eagly and Carli (2003:810) confirm, “sex-typed leadership styles invite careful scrutiny”. Whilst the celebration of ‘feminine’ leadership is a helpful contrast to the gender-blindness of traditional theory, Billing and Alvesson (2000) argue that the gender labelling of leadership reproduces gendered stereotypes. The authors conclude:

“As a critique, feminine leadership would support a move away from conventional ideas on management, not so much a move to celebrating a feminine model intimately coupled to a stereotypical, idealised and essentialist views on talents and orientations contingent upon female sex” (Billing and Alvesson, 2000:155).

It is less about identifying gender-specific leadership styles or, indeed, championing the role of women in leadership. Rather, a fundamental shift in our belief systems about the nature and practice about leadership itself is needed (Gemmill and Oakley, 1997; Silvestri, 2011). It is more useful therefore to uncover and challenge stereotypical assumptions underpinning the question ‘what is leadership?’; or what I refer to as the ‘common sense’ of leadership. The appreciation of the value of gender diversity in leadership, whilst important, does little to elevate the fundamental essentialist and deterministic misconceptions of leadership.

Leadership has traditionally, as Billing and Alvesson (2000) remind us, been defined as an instrumental, autonomous and results-oriented endeavour. A shift is needed away from a person-centred, positional and causal understanding of leadership towards leadership as a socially constructed process. We are better placed therefore to study and challenge the normative assumptions embedded in the understanding of leadership.

The issue of gender in leadership also raises questions about structure, power and authority in conventional understanding of leadership. Conventional leadership theory assumes power as unproblematic. This chapter has described the extent to which conventional theory communicates a vertical power arrangement that prioritises the leader over the follower. Leadership is typically considered as the “business of persuasion” (Barnard,1997:97), “reach and influence” (Gardner,1990:4) and an “influence relationship” (Kent,2005:1012). Bennis (1959) associates leadership with the ‘problem of authority’ and Adair (2009) describes leaders as in charge and in control. Power appears in conventional theory therefore as a characteristic but uncomplicated, accepted, uncritical feature of leadership. Gardner (1990:56) discusses the necessity of power in leadership and confirms “by definition, leaders always have a measure of power”. Similarly, Burns (1978:12) argues:

“To understand the nature of leadership requires an understanding of the essence of power, for leadership is a special form of power”.

A shared characteristic of leadership theory therefore is an uncritical acceptance of orthodox organisational structures and power relations; this thesis, in contrast, approaches the study of leadership from a critical perspective. Gordon (2002:155) explains the lack of criticality of conventional theory:

“This relationship takes on a dualistic orientation in which leaders are given a position of privilege because they are considered to be, either through natural ability or the possession of appropriate attributes, superior to their followers – the argument being that if leaders were not superior, people would not follow them”.

Critical leadership scholars however emphasise power as central to the understanding of leadership (Collinson,2011). The consideration of power in leadership is not from a dualistic position of powerful/powerless but an appreciation of the complexities and tensions,

dilemmas and contradictions (Collinson,2014); Gordon's (2011) discussion of 'power through' or 'power with' against 'power over' illuminates this. Leadership, therefore, is fundamentally power-laden and indeed a distinctive feature of leadership, Kort (2008) argues, is power. Collinson (2014:37) explains:

“It is leaders who typically exercise considerable control over: scarce resources; decision making, structures, rules and regulations; formal communications; strategies and visions; corporate culture; performance management; rewards and sanctions; and hiring and firing.”

However, power in conventional conceptualisations of leadership is assumed to be uncomplicated. There is an inherent assumption of mutuality between the needs and interests of leaders and followers. Burns (1978:19), for example, defines leadership as a “pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose” and “the aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers”. Therefore, there is an assumption of coherence and collaboration between the objectives of the leader and follower; the power dynamics between leaders and followers is unexplored.

This understanding of power in leadership has two important consequences for understanding leadership. Firstly, discussions of follower resistance or reconstruction, as highlighted, are marginalised. The conformity of followers is understood uncritically and the capacity of followers to resist leadership is ignored by conventional theorists. Fairhurst and Grant (2010:175) confirm:

“Followers putatively surrender their right to make meanings by virtue of their employment contract with the organisation”.

Secondly, follower resistance is assumed as problematic and abnormal (Collinson,2011). Follower compliance is not always positive and desirable. Tourish (2013) provides examples of the risks of follower compliance in supporting unethical and dysfunctional business practices. Collinson (2012) discusses traditional models of leadership as disempowering; followers are discouraged from identifying problems or mistakes, he explains:

“Leadership encourages leaders to believe their own narratives that everything is going well and discourages followers from raising problems or admitting mistakes” (Collinson,2012:87).

Whilst recognising the significance of power relations, critical theorists therefore draw attention to leadership as an interactional experience, central to which is an understanding of the use of power and authority. Leadership relations, as Collinson (2014:37) explains, “are typically not so asymmetrical and top-down that they are invariably one-way and all-determining”. An important contribution from critical theorists, therefore, has been the growing emphasis on the agency of followers and the various means of follower opposition. The capacity of followers to ‘resist’ and contribute to the construction of leadership therefore is a worthy ‘complication’ to further our understanding of leadership. Consequently, this thesis considers leadership as a negotiated activity.

The interconnection between power, authority and leadership therefore is fundamental. Goffman (1990) reminds us that codes of order guide behaviour in social establishments. It is these codes, or ‘deep structures’ in Gordon’s (2002) analysis, that both convey and reinforce power relations. Conventional theory has typically assumed power and authority in leadership is unproblematic. Power and authority are embedded within the activity and practice of leadership. It is more useful therefore, as this thesis intends to achieve, to explore the ways power and authority are used in leadership (Kort,2008). Gardner (1990:57) concludes:

“To say a leader is preoccupied with power is like saying that a tennis player is preoccupied with making shots an opponent cannot return. Of course leaders are preoccupied with power! The significant questions are: What means do they use to gain it? How do they exercise it? To what ends do they exercise it?”

Power and authority in police leadership “as a display for persuading the audience” in Goffman’s (1990:234) dramaturgical interpretation, is central to understanding leadership in the police. Leadership is, as Fletcher (2004:647) argues:

“Not gender, power, or sex neutral but instead are rooted in a sect of social interactions in which ‘doing gender’, ‘doing power’ and ‘doing leadership’ are linked”.

To fully understand the relationship between power, authority and leadership in the police, it is essential that sufficient attention is paid to the structural and cultural arrangements of the police organisation. Silvestri (2007:46) confirms:

“The manner in which police officers relate to one another in using their power and authority is inextricably bound by the structural and ideological configuration of the police organisation.”

Therefore, the use of power and authority in police leadership is an important yet neglected source of empirical inquiry. The focus of this research therefore is the dynamics of rank as an authority in leadership in the police.

Conclusion

Current understanding of leadership is constrained by a legacy of leader-centrism (Gemmill and Oakley,1997). This inhibits alternative understandings of leadership. To capture the complexity of leadership as a social process, it is important to challenge the theoretical preconceptions about the nature of leadership (Alvesson and Spicer,2012). This chapter sets out the basic premise for problematising the person-centred, positional and causal assumptions of conventional theory. Instead, leadership has been conceptualised as a socially constructed process, central to which is an understanding of the nature of power and authority.

Whilst critical leadership scholars accept leadership as a socially constructed process, this perspective is not embedded in the academic understanding of police leadership. In contrast, leadership in the police is typically understood in person-centred, positional and causal terms. To examine police leadership as socially constructed, sufficient attention must be paid to the influence of the police organisational context, within which an understanding of the nature of the authority of rank is essential. This will be examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Police Leadership and the Significance of Organisational Context

Leadership studies to date have not adequately considered the meanings, experiences and understandings of leadership in different organisational contexts (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Currie et al.,2005). Thirty years ago, Robert Reiner (1992) asked the pertinent question whether police leadership is a unique form of leadership. Leadership in the police is only not required of senior officers; frontline officers perform leadership functions during critical incidents (Heifetz and Linsky,2002; Whitfield et al.,2008). Consequently, the police constabulary is a distinctive organisational environment (van Dijk et al.,2015). Yet current research on police leadership has paid insufficient attention to the influence of the police setting on the nature of police leadership (Adlam,2003a; Cockcroft,2014).

The preceding chapter explained the importance of understanding police leadership as a socially constructed process. To study police leadership as socially constructed, careful consideration of the organisational context is crucial (Alvesson and Sveningsson,2003; Bryman et al 1996). Peck and Dickinson (2009:52) confirm:

“Institutional settings define what kinds of actions and behaviours are legitimate, but also how actions, deeds or words might be interpreted. Thus, organisational context restricts the options available to leaders”.

This chapter critically considers the influence of the police organisational context on the construction and presentation of leadership. First, this chapter will outline the contribution made by the empirical studies of police leadership in Britain to the understanding of police leadership. Second, the structure and occupational culture of police constabularies will be discussed to demonstrate the influence of the organisational context on the understandings and meanings of police leadership. This chapter argues that leadership cannot be separated from its local context; on the contrary, leadership is highly contextual. In the construction and presentation of leadership in the police therefore, the context in which leadership occurs needs to be considered to better understand its influence. To understand police leadership, we must therefore first understand the nature of the police.

Empirical Research on Police Leadership

There is an established academic interest in leadership in the police. Police leadership has been the focus of edited collections by Adlam and Villiers (2003) and Fleming (2015b) and a recent publication by van Dijk, Hoogewoning and Punch (2015). The following section describes the key empirical studies of police leadership and considers the contribution of these works to the current thesis. The section concludes by highlighting the gaps in current academic understanding of police leadership.

Reuss-Ianni (1983) provided an early insight into the senior policing role. Based on an ethnographic study of a New York Police Department, Reuss-Ianni captured the conflicts and tensions in her depiction of the ‘two cultures’ of street cops and management cops. Management cops, to Reuss-Ianni, placed emphasis on public administration such as accountability, productivity and managerial processes. Whilst the two cultures shared broadly the same goal to combat crime, the perspectives and practices to achieve these goals differed. In contrast to street cops, management cops have a wider strategic overview of crime and balance priorities against political, social and economic considerations. Reuss-Ianni (1983:7) explains:

“Law enforcement, for the management cop, is not the immediate day-to-day interaction with a local community that the street cop sees. It is rather a carefully planned, well designed, and efficiently implemented program in which the individual officer and the unit are impersonal resources used”.

Reuss-Ianni eloquently captures the distance and division between the senior and lower ranks in the police, and the managerial rather than operational emphasis of the senior policing role. Importantly the work, in describing the efforts of street cops to “maneuver around, outwit or nullify policy decisions from headquarters” (Reuss-Ianni,1983:7), reveals the navigation and the negotiation involved in the relationship between senior and junior ranks in the police. In Reuss-Ianni’s depiction, street cops are not simply passive receivers of leadership influence, but rather, actively construct, adapt and resist. Reuss-Ianni’s work therefore raises the importance of considering leadership in the police as a socially constructed event.

Reiner's (1992) study was the first empirical study of police leadership in Britain. Prior to this, much of our insight into police leadership in Britain came from autobiographies of former chief constables. Reiner interviewed 40 chief constables in the late 1980s, a sample of 93 percent of serving chief constables, and described the origins, experiences and philosophies of chief constables using four ideal types; the baron, the bobby, the boss and the bureaucrat.

Reiner's work captures the shift in emphasis in the chief constable role from the operational 'bobby' towards the managerial 'bureaucrat'. Reiner (1992:306) describes the 'bobby' as typically working class "man of the people" who is proud of previous operational experience. In his 'bureaucrat', Reiner (1992:308) depicts the chief constable as able to "combine a mastery of modern managerial approaches with the characteristic image of a traditional bobby or detective".

Reiner's work made a number of important contributions to the understanding of police leadership. First, Reiner's study emphasised the power and authority of chief constables in shaping policing practices, yet conversely the low visibility of the role in academic literature. Consequently, Reiner positioned police leadership as an important source of academic study.

Second, Reiner provided an insight into the shared understandings and commonality of the leadership pressures and practices. In doing so, Reiner makes a persuasive argument for the presence of a 'dominant culture' amongst chief constables; he explains:

"The common experiences and problems which they encounter tend to generate a common set of responses, which constitute the dominant culture of chief constables" (Reiner,1992:303).

Finally, Reiner highlighted the increasingly managerial rather than operational nature of police leadership, evident in his description of the 'bureaucrat' chief constable:

"They had evolved into professional managers. As the directors of complex organisations their role had more in common with senior administrators in any large modern bureaucracy than with the policemen they managed" (Reiner,1992:247).

Importantly, the tensions between the managerial and operational aspects of the police leadership role are also evident; chief constables, according to Reiner (1992:225):

“Recognise the pressures driving them in the bureaucratic direction but hanker after the policing role as well, and try to distance themselves from a purely managerial conception of their function”.

Reiner’s work has continuing relevance for contemporary police leadership. The normalisation of the managerial rather than operational emphasis of the police leadership role has been recognised in the empirical work in Britain (Butterfield et al.,2005; Davies and Thomas,2003; Wall,1998) and American context (Manning,2007). Police leadership, it appears, is increasingly comparable with leadership roles in other contexts. The Direct Entry scheme in the U.K. marked a watershed in the recruitment of police leaders and accelerated a trend towards rewarding generic, less police-specific leadership (Loveday,2013; Smith,2015). The College of Policing confirm the managerial emphasis from business in formal policy rhetoric:

“Senior police leaders manage complex organisations, and the ability to do so successfully will be enhanced by encouraging positive aspects of a more commercial mindset. This does not imply a profit-motivated attitude but alludes to specific attributes, such as: creating opportunity rather than waiting for it; being able to ‘pitch’ new ideas convincingly; valuing positive relationships with peers, teams, and customers; adapting quickly to new circumstances” (College of Policing,2015a:30).

Reiner (1992:347) raised the question of whether leadership in the police represents a unique form of leadership, and this question continues to be the focus of academic and policy debate. Caless (2011) for example, in his empirical study of police leadership, highlights the generic nature of police leadership competencies, such as strategic perspective, openness to change and influencing others. The extent to which police leadership represents a distinctive form of leadership remains a pertinent consideration.

Likewise, Reiner’s argument of the ‘dominant culture’ of chief constables is a source of interest for the College of Policing in their attempts to create ‘difference’ in senior ranks in the police. The direct entry programme, for example, is the most obvious attempt to import

difference into the police organisation. Consequently, Reiner provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of contemporary police leadership.

Wall (1998) provides a further insight into the chief constable role in an analysis of the social and professional histories of all chief constables who held the position in England and Wales between 1835 and 1995; a total of 1,485 individuals. Wall situates the development of chief constables into “professionally trained managers” in a historical context by documenting the police organisational history into periods of standardisation, centralisation, unification and finally, corporatisation (Wall,1998:84). Providing a historical context to Reiner’s earlier observations, Wall charts the development of the ‘police chief executive’:

“As the growth in size and administrative complexity of police forces gradually removed chief constables from operational police work, their managerial role changed from being warrior/leader to being administrator/leader to becoming a chief executive.” (Wall, 1998:84)

Wall considers the two traditions of external and internal selection procedures and documents the historical shift from externally to internally recruited police managers. Much of this discussion is pertinent to the contemporary context; Wall, for example, captures the resistance to the direct entry proposals in Sheehy in 1993, which have been reignited more recently in response to the Winsor Review in 2012. Wall therefore provides an important contribution to the understanding of contemporary police leadership in his discussion of ‘the ideology of internal recruitment’. According to Wall, the ideology of internal recruitment establishes the existing mode of recruitment as ‘truth’ and taken-for-granted. He explains that this:

“Naturalises the assumption that chief police officers must have previously been police officers” and “creates a degree of false consciousness by precluding any competing theories from the debate” (Wall,1998:307).

The ideology of internal recruitment highlights the pervasive influence of operational experience and prestige on leadership credibility in the police.

Wall relates the ideology of internal recruitment to the development of the ‘sameness’ of chief constables. Resonating with Reiner’s earlier arguments of a dominant culture, a policy of internal recruitment, Wall (1998:315) explains, establishes “a lengthy and supervised professional socialisation” which ensures chief constables have shared, and importantly police-defined, competence in leadership. It is unlikely therefore, in Wall’s view, that a ‘maverick’ or ‘rogue’ chief constable would be successfully appointed. Chief constables consequently “speak a common occupational language and share broad assumptions about policing” (Wall,1998:315).

Overall, Wall’s research contributes to the understanding of contemporary police leadership in two ways. Firstly, Wall argues that the extent to which the professional socialisation of chief constables negates the influence of social origin to ensure a commonality of beliefs and understandings. This helps to understand the challenges in the creation of ‘difference’ at the top of the police organisation. Secondly, the ideology of internal recruitment helps to explain that despite the reality of the senior police role as increasingly managerial, indeed Wall (1998:309) confirms “there is no practical need for chief constables to possess operational experience”, there is considerable cultural attachment to the prestige of police experience in police leadership. The enduring prestige of operational experience in police leadership continues to be important and is captured more recently in Silvestri’s (2011) discussions of the importance of ‘time served’ to establish leadership credibility in the police.

Savage, Charman and Cope (2000) provided a further contribution to the understanding of police leadership in their empirical analysis of the role of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Savage and colleagues interviewed 41 ACPO members, which included 23 assistant chief constables, 8 deputy chief constables and 10 chief constables, and documented the changing role of ACPO from a secretive and fragmented body in the 1980s to a more coherent, corporate and persuasive body in the 1990s. In the context of the professionalisation of ACPO, the research captures the changing nature of police leadership, the managerialist philosophies of the police leadership role and greater transferability of leadership skills. The authors explain:

“As the rigours of ‘New Public Management’ take a firmer grip on the working of the police service, there is little doubt that the militaristic overtones of the ‘Command

Team' style of policy-making will give way more and more to one closer to a 'Directorate' and 'Executive' model, similar to that in other public sector organisations and, of course, the private sector" (Savage et al.,2000:125).

Savage and colleagues contribute to understanding contemporary police leadership through their analysis of the career path to senior rank. Firstly, the research emphasises the challenges of a single-entry system of recruitment for the identification and development of leadership talent. The authors explain:

"The British police manager is identified as such at a variety of career points and is provided with management training much later in his/her career. The effectiveness of the machinery for in-service selection and senior management training thus becomes an acute area of concern" (Savage et al.,2000:99).

Compared with multiple entry system, a single-entry system of recruitment, the authors argue, necessitates the provision of 'fast track' training and education within the service and consequently, a police-defined leadership competence is constructed. This is reflective of Reiner and Wall's earlier arguments of the dominance of particular experiences and understandings of leaders in the police.

Understanding the context of leadership selection in the police is pertinent to contemporary police leadership. Today, every chief constable in England and Wales entered the service at the rank of police constable. The research by Savage and colleagues further illustrate the challenges of creating 'difference' in the senior ranks of the contemporary police organisation. The authors note, the process in the police "tends towards uniformity in selection and inhibits those who do not fit easily into the 'mould'" (Savage et al.,2000:106).

Caless (2011) provides a more recent contribution to the understanding of the selection, promotion and development processes to chief officer rank, echoing the findings of Savage and colleagues. Based on 85 interviews with chief officers in England and Wales, Caless documents the journey to senior rank, and uniquely draws attention to the challenging nature of the process: "Becoming a chief officer in the first place is an arduous and prolonged

process. Only the most resilient and single-minded... achieve the goal of appointment” (Caless,2011:40).

However, Caless’s account of the leadership selection process reflects heroic, masculine connotations of leadership as strength and survival. This elevates leaders to a celebrated, elite status and reduces followers to inferior and compliant receivers. The capacity of followers as co-producers in the leadership process and thus leadership as a relational social process is overlooked (Grint,2010; Shamir,2007). Caless also considers the required competencies of police leaders. However, this competency-based understanding of police leadership ignores the complexity of leadership as a dynamic social process and neglects to consider leadership as socially constructed.

In noting that many of the police leadership competencies can be applied to command roles in other organisations, Caless’ consideration of leadership does however raise the question whether leadership in the police is a unique form of leadership, illustrative of Reiner’s (1992) earlier arguments. Indeed, Caless confirms:

“Research is needed into whether or not there is a specifically *police* leader, or whether leaders from any sphere would translate successfully into the upper echelons of the police” (Caless,2011:117, original emphasis).

In the context of increasing managerialism of police leadership and the acceptance of leadership principles and practices from outside industry in the police, the debate about the distinctiveness of leadership in the police remains pertinent today.

In contrast to previous empirical research on police leadership, Silvestri (2011) considers the gendered nature of police leadership in the first empirical study of senior policewomen in Britain. Based on 30 interviews with senior policewomen, from inspector to chief officer rank, Silvestri documents the barriers to the advancement of women in the police and reveals the construction of police leadership as highly masculine. The author argues:

“Police organisational cultures are powerful sites where symbols, images, and forms of consciousness that explicate and justify gender divisions are created and sustained” (Silvestri,2011:22).

Uniquely, Silvestri recognises the significance of rank in police leadership. Prior to this, the power, authority and meanings of rank were neglected in police leadership research; police leadership was largely constructed as rank-neutral activity. Silvestri (2011:57) explains:

“The powerful meanings attached to hierarchy and rank serve as strong clues to understanding the failure of attempts to fracture police identity. The ability to hold and maintain rank, using and drawing on associated leadership scripts, is a key and potent feature of police leaders”.

Silvestri rightly argues that rank acts as a barrier to developing alternative leadership practices that differ from the dominant transactional style. The extent to which the authority of rank can be downplayed, how the barrier of rank can be navigated, is however not addressed.

Caless and Tong's (2015) study of strategic police leadership in Europe is the most recent empirical contribution to the field. Based on a combination of 59 questionnaires and 49 interviews, Caless and Tong explored the leadership selection experiences, perceptions of accountability, the networks of relationships and future challenges. Many of the findings resonate with the previously cited research. Caless and Tong, for example, identify the prevalence of patronage and nepotism in leadership selection, which echoes Savage et al. (2000) and Caless' (2011) earlier observations; this study also notes the predominance of men in strategic leadership positions, illustrative of Silvestri's (2011) gendered account of leadership in the police. Similarly, Caless and Tong (2015:62) further emphasise the generic nature of leadership competencies in the police, noting “these competencies would be unremarkable in any boardroom, top team or cabinet anywhere in the world”. The authors argue however that a shift is needed away from the universalised conception of police leadership to consider the distinctive features. The authors conclude:

“We need to get away from thinking only about generic leadership skills and begin to elaborate those skills that are necessary to be able to perform excellently at the strategic level of policing” (Caless and Tong,2015:231).

Whilst Caless and Tong's work provide an illuminating account of police leaders across Europe, the influence of rank as an authority in leadership is not addressed.

The research cited in this section highlights an established interest in police leadership, revealing police leadership to be increasingly managerial and highly gendered. The research has therefore contributed to this thesis in a number of ways. First, previous research captures the ‘activity’ or ‘presentation’ of leadership and consequently highlights police leadership is socially constructed. Reuss-Ianni’s (1983) early work challenges the notion that followers are passive receivers of leadership by documenting the resistance of street cops to managerial policy, and likewise, Silvestri’s (2011) notion of ‘doing’ police leadership highlights the agency involved in the expressions and practice of leadership. Silvestri explains:

“In *doing* police leadership, women are enacting their own agency to develop more consultative, participatory and holistic styles... They have both adapted to and adopted new styles of doing things and exercising leadership, adding their own nuances to produce hybridised languages and styles of leadership” (Silvestri,2011:136, original emphasis).

Reuss-Ianni and Silvestri show that the practice of police leadership is a negotiated, navigated and social activity; this is the focus of this research.

Second, previous research has largely considered police leadership as a ‘rank free’ activity; the extent to which understanding rank contributes to the understanding of police leadership is largely neglected. Silvestri (2011:177) provides a unique acknowledgement of the militaristic connotations in police leadership and concludes that rank “gets in the way”. This provides an important insight into the ‘presence’ of rank in police leadership, but as noted earlier, lacks consideration of the ways in which the authority of rank in police leadership can be downplayed. Despite Silvestri’s contribution therefore, the influence of rank in police leadership remains under-explored.

An overview of the research in the area illustrates the relative stability and consistency of knowledge about the nature of leadership in the police. The insights provided by Caless and Tong from their research in 2015, for example, resonate with Reiner’s work in the 1980s. Likewise, underpinning much of the empirical research is the question of the distinctiveness of police leadership (Neyroud,2011b). Despite the growing body of empirical research on the topic therefore, there is a lack of clarity on the meaning of police leadership (Herrington and Colvin,2016). Adlam (2003a:40) confirms:

“No systematic analysis is offered concerning the ways in which police leadership is a) like all other manifestations of leadership b) like some other types of leadership (e.g. public service) and c) like no other form of leadership”.

There is a distinct lack of consideration of police leadership as a socially constructed activity therefore. The meanings and experiences of rank influence the construction and presentation of police leadership. Whilst there is growing interest in police leadership and questions have rightly been asked about the distinctive nature of leadership in the police, it remains the case that less is known about the influence of rank as an authority in police leadership. This thesis situates rank as integral to the social construction of police leadership.

The Context of the Police Constabulary

Current discussions about police leadership have not paid sufficient attention to the distinctive organisational environment and the influence of police occupational culture and the nature of police work on leadership (Cockcroft,2014). The organisational context shapes the meanings, assumptions and understandings of leadership in that environment. Manning (1978) reminds us that meanings and assumptions are not individual, but shared and patterned, and consequently, consideration needs to be given to the distinctive nature of the collective assumption-making in the police. Panzarella (2003:123) confirms:

“In the end an organisation is likely to create its leaders, and to create them in its own image and likeness, whether effective or not”.

To consider police leadership as socially constructed, critical analysis of the organisational context is essential. Banton (1964:xii), in the first empirical study of the police in Britain, captured the distinctive nature of the police environment:

“One of the difficulties is that the police service is a little world of its own in which almost everything is related to everything else and it is impossible to isolate a single aspect for separate examination”.

Therefore, to understand police leadership, it is important to also understand the ‘little world’ of policing. This section will consider the structure and occupational culture of the police and the implications for understanding the leader-centric nature of police leadership. This discussion will highlight the significance of rank as an authority in the understandings and practice of police leadership.

The Structure of Police Constabularies in England and Wales

Traditionally, the police have organised themselves in hierarchical, quasi-military arrangements (Angell,1971; Bruns and Shuman,1988). Auten (1981) specifies the characteristics of a quasi-military organisation. To consider the relevance of this to police constabularies, the characteristics are provided in full in Figure 1 overleaf.

Many of the features outlined by Auten (1981) are reflected in police constabularies. Reuss-Ianni (1983), for example, captured the ‘we-they’ attitude between senior and junior levels in the police. Not unlike the military, leadership in a police constabulary is typically distributed by rank. Currently, the rank structure in England and Wales, excluding London, comprises of nine ranks from chief constable at the top of the police hierarchy to police constable at the lowest level. The rank structure represents a clear division of labour and a clear structure of accountability (Herrington and Colvin,2016; Reiner,2010). At the top of the organisation, for example, assistant chief constables have responsibility for central functions, such as training or operations; chief superintendents and superintendents, as senior management ranks, will have designated localities or functions, such as roads policing; and finally, middle management tasks are completed by the chief inspector and inspector ranks, with sergeants undertaking the primary task of supervision of constables (Leishman and Savage,1993).

Figure 1 The Characteristics of a Quasi-Military Structure

1. A centralised command structure with a rigidly adhered to chain of command.
2. A rigid superior-subordinate relationship defined by prerogatives of rank.
3. Control exerted through the issuance of commands, directives or general orders.
4. Clearly delineated lines of communication and authority.
5. The communications process primarily vertical from top to bottom.
6. Employees who are encouraged to work primarily through threats or coercion.
7. Initiative at the supervisory and operational levels neither sought, encouraged, nor expected.
8. An authoritarian style of leadership.
9. Emphasis on the maintenance of the status quo.
10. Highly structured system of sanctions and discipline procedures to deal with non-conformists within the organisation.
11. Usually a highly centralised system of operations.
12. Strict adherence to organisational guidelines in the form of commands, directives, general orders or policy and procedure.
13. Lack of flexibility when confronted with problems or situations not covered by existing directives, general orders, or policy and procedure.
14. Promotional opportunities which are usually only available to members of the organisation.
15. An impersonal relationship between members of the organisation.
16. Feelings of demoralisation and powerlessness in the lower ranks of the organisation.
17. Concept of the administration and top command as being arbitrary.
18. Growing level of cynicism among supervisory and operational level personnel.
19. Development of a 'we-they' attitude among supervisory and operational level personnel toward top management.

(Auten,1981:69)

Similarly, there are statutory authorities assigned to rank. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 requires certain police action to be authorised by senior ranking officers. The Act stipulates, for example, that custody reviews are conducted by inspector or above and extensions to prisoner detention in custody granted by a superintendent. The Regulation

of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 also has rank-specific authorities for surveillance requiring the authorisations from superintendent to chief constable. These ranks are written in legislation; the structure therefore has a statutory element. Local police force policy can also provide stipulation that certain action or decisions require the administrative authority of specific ranks; some police forces, for example, require inspectors to classify risk assessment for missing persons or authorise a vehicle to be removed. Legislation and police force policy therefore specifies the appropriate level of decision maker and formally distributes authority based on rank.

There are also presentational aspects to rank through various symbols of rank. The rank insignia are worn on the epaulettes of the police uniform, for example, and distinguishing embellishment on the caps worn by senior officers. This represents a visual display of the status and authority of rank, a visual demarcation of 'who's who'.

The quasi-militaristic heritage has important consequences in shaping practices and behaviour within the organisation (Jermier and Berkes,1979; Reiner,2010). The demand for police services requires a disciplined structure that facilitates the immediacy of response to crisis (Bayley,1994; Reiner,2010). Communication, interactions and approach to leadership therefore typically prioritise speed; time is a crucial justification here, as McNamara (1967:178) explains:

“The police assume that their ability to respond to crises depends on the speed with which a variable number of police officers can be assigned to a given task and the speed with which orders are communicated to the assigned group of officers”.

The quasi-military hierarchical structure reinforces leader-centric understandings of police leadership (Herrington and Colvin,2016; Mastrofski,2002). Decision-making in the police has traditionally been centralised at the senior ranks and communicated down through the 'chain of command' (Bayley,1994). Officers are sensitised to respond quickly to 'orders from above' with limited flexibility, challenge or questioning (Reiss and Bordua,1967; Jermier and Berkes,1979; Herrington and Colvin,2016; Silvestri,2011). There is a strong culture in the police of deference to rank, and this is particularly observable in mixed-rank settings

(Herrington and Colvin,2016; Silvestri,2011); this is particularly observable in mixed rank settings (Fleming,2011). Senior officers, for example, are typically referred to as ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ as recognition of the status of rank (Silvestri,2011; Bayley,1994). Consequently, leadership in the police has traditionally been command-oriented, authoritarian and impersonal rather than participatory or consultative; the verbal issuing of orders and instructions or the dissemination of procedures or rules (Grint,2010b; Grint and Thornton,2015; Reiss and Bordua,1967). The structure of the police constabulary means that leadership can function entirely through the authority of rank. Herrington and Colvin (2016:2) explain:

“Individual leaders can operate effectively in such organisations by relying on their authority. That is, their ability to direct proceedings by virtue of others’ deference to their rank.”

The nature of decision-making, communication and management is influenced therefore by the rank structure (Bayley,1994; Silvestri,2011). Police leadership is inextricably linked to the meanings and assumptions of rank (Silvestri,2011). Despite the challenge to the command model through alternative policing strategies like community policing and shared leadership practices, leadership in the police has not completely shaken off its militaristic heritage (Masal,2015; Mastrofski,2002; Panzarella,2003; Steinberger and Wuestewald,2008). Police leadership retains its positional connotations, that is, leadership status assigned to particular individuals on the basis of their location within the police hierarchy.

The structure of recruitment in the police is another important consideration in understanding police leadership. Prior to the introduction of direct entry, policing in Britain functioned entirely based on a single-entry system of recruitment. All current chief constables began their service at the lowest rank of police constable; they all have experience of operational street policing (Savage et al.,2000). There is strong attachment to the single-entry structure within the police service (Savage,2003; Wall,1998). Neyroud (2011a:124), in the Review of Leadership and Training, found “overwhelming support” for this form of recruitment. Similarly, the resistance within the police service to direct entry is illustrative of the occupational attachment to internal recruitment (Kernaghan,2013; Smith,2015). Wall

(1994:323) captures the symbolic status of internal recruitment in his ‘ideology of internal recruitment’, which he describes as “an accepted and fundamental principle”.

The internal recruitment of police leaders creates two distinct challenges for the police service. First, the limited number of senior ranks combined with the length of time it takes to reach senior office, risks a ‘leadership skills deficit’ at the top of the organisation (Savage et al.,2000; Neyroud,2011a). Second, unlike multiple entry systems of recruitment, a single-entry system places the emphasis on internal processes for leadership selection and development (Savage et al.,2000; Roberts et al.,2016). It is up to the police themselves to select and develop future leaders. This second point is important in terms of understanding the socially constructed nature of police leadership.

A system of internal recruitment ensures that leadership credibility is attached to occupationally-defined skills and values, restricting the influence from ‘outside’ the police. Manning (2007:53) explains: “As one rises in rank, rewards are attached to new mini and situated rhetorics”. Value is attached to the skills acquired during police service, rather than prior to joining (Holdaway,1977), and similarly the demonstration of ‘time served’ (Silvestri,2006) in operational policing roles (Rowe,2006) that evidences reputation as a “shrewd thief taker” (Smith,2008:217). Those in senior roles therefore have effectively displayed ‘the leadership’ of value and achieved credibility in the ‘police tradecraft’. Roberts et al. (2016:27), in their consideration of leadership education, explain:

“Police organisations are generally led by those who, over extended careers, have been rewarded by a promotion process that values police tradecraft, tradition, and experience, rather than formal education in leadership”.

Since the selection and development of police leaders occurs within the police, particular forms of leadership are constructed and maintained.

The process of internal recruitment therefore preserves the symbolic necessity of operational experience in police leadership (Wall,1994), an argument resurrected in response to the direct entry scheme (The Guardian,2013). Since emphasis is placed on operational credibility, evidence of command experience in an operational setting is prioritised over participatory or

collaborative skills in leadership selection (Herrington and Colvin,2016). Grint and Thornton (2015:99) confirm:

“The ability to act as a commander is a prerequisite for large elements of policing and tends to be crucial for assessing promotion”.

Conversely, Reiner (1992), Wall (1998) and Caless’s (2011) empirical work reveals police leadership as increasingly managerial, rather than operational, in nature. Despite this however, in policy and practice, police leadership is understood primarily in command terms (Herrington and Colvin,2016; Grint,2010b).

The organisational structure of the police has been the source of recurring scrutiny in relation to leadership practice. The assumption is that the rank-based hierarchy is too rigid and stifles innovation, inclusivity and collaboration in leadership (Andersson and Tengblad,2009; Cowper,2004; Herrington and Colvin,2016; Singer and Singer,1990). Leishman and Savage (1993:231) confirm:

“A major obstacle to further advancement in managerial style and effectiveness, and ultimately policing overall, is the combination of a quasi-military, rank-structured hierarchy and single-entry point recruitment”.

Consequently, there have been attempts to move towards a ‘flatter’ organisational structure in police constabularies in the UK (Wright,2000); a trend also captured in empirical work in Australia (Fleming and Lafferty,2000) and South African police organisations (Fleming and Marks,2004). In the UK, the terms of reference of the Sheehy Inquiry in 1993 required an examination of the rank hierarchy to ensure that the structure “reflected the roles and responsibilities of police officers” (Home Office,1993:17). The Sheehy Inquiry found “significant overlaps” between the responsibilities across the ranks particularly amongst chief inspector, superintendent and chief superintendent and within chief officer ranks (Home Office,1993:30). The Inquiry confirmed:

“We consider there are significant opportunities to rationalise the distribution of responsibilities between ranks, particularly the responsibilities of ranks from chief inspector to chief constable” (Home Office,1993:31).

Recommendations from the Inquiry included the removal of the ranks of chief inspector, chief superintendent and deputy chief constable. This, along with other recommendations from Sheehy to reform pay and conditions, provoked significant resistance from police officers (Brain,2013; Savage,2003). More recently, political interest in the rank structure in the police has been reignited in the College of Policing Leadership Review, which once again, has met with concern from the police (Police Federation,2015). Recommendation Two of the Leadership Review confirms:

“Ranks and grades in policing may need to be reformed as we move towards policing based on greater levels of practitioner autonomy and expertise” (College of Policing,2015a:23).

Despite these reform attempts, the rank structure remains largely intact (Savage,2003). Whilst these discussions helpfully draw attention to the challenges of adopting participatory leadership practices in police constabularies, the focus on hierarchical structure is too deterministic, particularly in terms of the focus on the number of ranks within the police hierarchy. The agency of individuals to negotiate the rank structure is neglected, and similarly, the different ways in which rank is used as an authority is unexplored. Similarly, an assumption that leadership in the police is entirely based on command by rank also does not capture the complexity of interactions and decision making within constabularies (Grint and Thornton,2015). Holdaway (1977) for example, in his discussion of ‘managerial professionalism’ and ‘practical professionalism’ captures the capacity of frontline officers to adapt and resist managerial policy to reflect the realities of street policing. In response to managerial challenge, according to Holdaway (1977:134), “practical professionalism of workforce is enhanced rather than curtailed”. The rank hierarchy is not unimportant in police leadership but the primacy placed on structure neglects to critically consider the authority attached to rank (Silvestri,2011; Herrington and Colvin,2016). To understand police leadership, it is crucial that the use of rank as an authority is also considered.

Police Occupational Culture

The occupational culture of the police provides police officers with a powerful framework for understanding their environment and their work (Bacon,2014). Consequently, an examination

of the way in which the occupational culture of the police shapes the understandings, meanings and experiences of leadership is crucial to understanding the use of rank as an authority. Adlam (2003b:205) confirms:

“Police leaders and their styles are constructed within and spring from a distinct cultural milieu. Police culture impresses as unique, multiform and complex. Police leadership reflects this complexity”.

Contemporary understandings of police culture are largely grounded in classic police ethnographies of the uniformed rank-and-file from the USA (e.g. Bittner,1967, Manning,1977; Muir, 1979; Van Maanen,1978a), Europe (e.g. Punch,1979) and Britain (e.g. Banton,1967; Cain,1973; Holdaway,1983), and more recently, the work of Chan (1997) in Australia and Loftus’s (2009) British study are among the seminal examples. These studies have considered the informal methods and processes which construct the occupational ‘common sense’ (Holdaway,1983), the basic underlying assumptions (Schein,2010) that underpin police practice. The prevailing features of police occupational culture have been summarised in Reiner’s (2010) widely cited core characteristics; a sense of mission, suspicion, isolation/solidarity, machismo, conservatism, racial prejudice and pragmatism. These basic assumptions are developed through informal processes because, as Chatterton (1995) explains, they are not institutionalised in law, procedure or training, but are experienced in more subtle ways. These assumptions contribute to occupational ‘rules’ (Skolnick,2008) that have an important influence in developing understandings about the nature and practice of leadership in the police.

Skolnick (1975) argues that the nature of police work, particularly the distinctive features of danger and authority, constructs a ‘working personality’. Manning (1977:301), in his seminal study of police work in England and the United States, explains:

“The unpredictability, punctuating the work as it occasionally does and leaving enduring lore about risk, force and dangerous episodes with the officers, contributes to a special kind of quality to the work experience”.

The understandings, beliefs and assumptions of police officers are shaped by the shared experience of street policing (Van Maanen,1997; Bacon,2014). Since most senior officers began their service as constables, senior officers have therefore been exposed to the occupational culture of street policing; senior officers are, as Cockcroft (2013:138) argues, “cut from the same cultural cloth as lower ranking officers”.

Police occupational culture does not however describe a unified, monolithic or homogenous entity, but rather, police culture is fluid and dynamic (Loftus,2009; Reiner,2010). Skolnick (1975:43), in his earlier work, highlights variations within the working personality; “the professional behaviour of police officers with similar ‘working personalities’ vary with assignment”. Consequently, the police constabulary is a fragmented and divisive space. Niederhoffer (1967), writing about the New York Police Department, provided an early account of a police organisation characterised by division and conflict. Similarly, in the aftermath of the Amsterdam corruption scandal, Punch’s (1983:247) study exposes the separation of senior and lower ranks into ‘opposing camps’ and the “deep dichotomy between the values, styles and vulnerability of lower ranks and senior officers”. Examinations of police occupational culture should therefore capture this diversity to consider both the variations and commonalities of occupational experience; the tensions and negotiations within police culture. Cockcroft (2007:93) argues:

“Police culture has been viewed in terms that tend to gloss over many variations in police behaviour. Such an approach has allowed us to construct a conception of the police that highlights factors common to police environments but which fails to fully assimilate those factors that are not common to the occupational world of all officers”.

There is a longstanding acknowledgement of the cultural distance between frontline and senior officers in the police (Sklansky,2007; Waddington,1999); Reuss-Ianni’s (1983) research described earlier in this chapter is an early example of the distance and tensions between street and management cops. This cultural distance and antagonism between senior and junior officers has important implications for police leadership.

Police occupational culture has significant explanatory power in understanding the assumptions and occupational rules that inform police practice. An examination of the

occupational culture of the police reveals the complexity, fragmentation and tensions within the police organisation. Police leadership is performed within this complex organisational environment. The discussion of the capacity of lower ranks to obstruct managerial policy highlights the extent to which leadership in the police is not a simplistic, linear, top-down process, but rather, a resisted and negotiated activity. Current academic and policy discussions however oversimplify the nature of police leadership. Fundamental to understanding police leadership therefore is consideration of the negotiation and navigation of leadership as a socially constructed process, key to which is the relationship between rank as an authority and leadership.

Discretion and Accountability

A well-documented feature of the police organisation is the significant amount of discretion and autonomy afforded to the rank-and-file (Waddington,1999). Police work is highly complex and ambiguous. Although the legal constraints are universal, there are a variety of subjective or contextual factors that influence a police officer's decision whether, and indeed how, to intervene in a situation (Graef,1990; Reiner,1998; Wilson,1968). Bayley and Bittner's (1984) analysis of a domestic dispute and a traffic stop, for example, provides an insight into police officer decision making. The authors define 9 tactical choices available to the officer at the 'contact' stage, 11 at the 'processing' stage and a further 11 at the 'exit' stage. The nature of police work therefore allows police officers have a considerable discretion; uniquely to the police, this discretion increases the lower down the hierarchy (Wilson,1968).

The nature of discretion in police work presents distinctive challenges for accountability and leadership. Senior police leaders, as Wilson (1968:67) describes, "must deal with the problem of wide discretion being exercised by sub professionals who work alone". Typically, police work is conducted in relative isolation, alone or in pairs, hidden from supervisors (Klockars,1985; Reiner,1998; Waddington,1999). The interactions between the police and the public are often, therefore, unsupervised (Cockcroft and Beattie,2009). The diversity and complexity of police work ensures that comprehensive guidance in advance on the desired response is not possible (Wilson,1968). There are also limited opportunities to record the precise interactions as they happened and consequently access to an objective record of

events can be problematic for leaders (Cockcroft and Beattie,2009; Reiner,1998). Indeed, access to information from the lower ranks has continually been identified as an acute managerial challenge (Bunyard,2003; Reiner,1992; Reuss-Ianni,1983). This is exacerbated by the bureaucratic paranoia or ‘cover your ass’ mentality described by Van Maanen (1974), which is a pervasive feature of police occupational culture. Much of supervision of police work occurs therefore ‘after the event’. In this context, police leadership has limited information on the activities of those in their command.

Similarly, the translation, legitimacy and credibility of policy into frontline practice is a significant challenge for police leadership. Senior leaders create formal policies, documents or guidance to manage police discretion, but these can be adapted, misinterpreted or resisted by frontline officers (Holdaway,1977; Fielding,1988; Panzarella,2003; Punch,1983; Skogan,2008). Wall (1994:336) describes:

“Although rules and formal structures may attempt to change police practice they can be actively resisted, misinterpreted, or 'circumnavigated', if they are not 'internalized' by the officers charged with their enactment”.

Sources of resistance to leadership initiatives are evident throughout the police hierarchy. Reuss-Ianni (1983) noted the hindering of managerial reforms by frontline officers through strategies commonly associated with alienated employees, such as foot dragging and sabotage. Skogan (2008) describes the capacity of middle management to resist community policing reforms and similarly, Graef (1990) observes frontline supervisors’ ability to ‘thwart’ managerial proposals. Consequently, rather than policy, police behaviour is heavily influenced by the norms, values and assumptions of police occupational culture. Villiers (2003:21) confirms; “The police service might pretend to be a written culture, but it is in fact an oral one”. This presents characteristic challenges for police leadership, being ultimately accountable for the actions of the junior ranks, but with limited information, influence or control of frontline activity (Waddington,1999).

Within this context, police leadership is concerned with establishing a framework of accountability to manage the discretion of police officers (Stenson and Silverstone, 2014). The managerialist reforms, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, provide a

level of scrutiny of police performance against measures of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Fleming and Lafferty,2000; McLaughlin and Murihi,1995). This monitoring and regulation of police activity has become a taken-for-granted aspect of policing practice. Police officers are required to justify their decisions and conduct within an environment of invasive inspectorate processes, performance monitoring regimes and budgetary considerations (Barlow and Walklate,2018; de Maillard and Savage,2017). Although the police enjoy high levels of discretion therefore, this discretion is performed within restricted managerialist framework. As discussed earlier, Diefenbach (2009) describes the ‘pedagogical’ function of performance management regimes, which function to inform understandings and practice; An attempt, in other words, to curtail police discretion. Diefenbach (2009:900) explains:

“Probably the most important ‘pedagogical’ roles of performance management and measurement systems are guidance and control – paternalistic guidance, top-down control by managers and even control of control”.

There is a complex and contradictory relationship between discretion and accountability in the police, which presents distinctive challenges for police leadership. Senior police leadership is therefore increasingly required to navigate these tensions. Barton and Beynon (2011:358) explain:

“The question for chief constables is finding the balance between protecting and promoting the public interest, while at the same time dealing with the political and ethical dilemmas presented by their accountability downwards to citizens, outwards to colleagues (police officers) and upwards to political leaders”.

The Authority of Rank and Police Leadership

The authority of rank has important explanatory power in understanding the practices and interactions in the police constabulary. Rank is synonymous with intelligence, knowledge, competence and decision making (Bayley,1994; Graef,1990; Leishman and Savage,1992; Silvestri,2011). The meanings and assumptions associated with rank are an important influence on police leadership. Silvestri’s (2011) empirical study of senior policewomen

described earlier is a rare insight into the extent to which hierarchy and rank in the police are embedded with powerful taken for granted meanings.

However, the influence of the rank as an authority to the construction and presentation of police leadership is neglected. Understandings of leadership are shaped by the interactions and relationships within organisational settings (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Peck and Dickinson,2009). Rank provides a framework for understanding leadership; how leadership is observed, enacted, recruited and developed. The normative meanings, values and assumptions about rank are interconnected with the meanings and understandings of leadership. Notions of authority, power, credibility and legitimacy are attached to rank (Silvestri,2011). These are important considerations in examining the relationship between rank and leadership in the police. Central to understanding police leadership therefore is the authority of rank; the ways the authority of rank acts as a barrier in leadership interactions and the attempts at navigation and negotiation of rank in leadership.

Management versus Leadership in Police Constabularies

There has been a longstanding debate in the leadership literature about the interplay between leadership and management (Yukl,1989). Management is typically understood as focused on organisational structure, processes and stability, control and monitoring (Mintzberg,1998; Zaleznik,2004). In contrast, leadership is conceived as entrepreneurial, innovative and creative (Mintzberg,1998). Bennis (1989) provides the most commonly cited list comparing the differences between leaders and managers. Bennis describes managers as administrators with a short-term view, emphasising systems and structure, control and the status quo. In contrast, leaders are innovators with a long-term vision who focus on people, inspire trust and instead challenge the status quo.

However, there are two problems with current discussions about the relationship between leadership and management in the police. First, there is an assumption that leadership and management can work together as a compatible relationship, which fails to consider the inherent tensions (Golding and Savage,2011). The skills associated with careful management in the police are not always compatible with successful leadership (Long,2003). Villers and Adlam (2003:xii) confirm:

“The cautious, artful, consensus-seeking manager – who knows the cost of everything, who is determined to please everyone and upset no one, and whose quota is always fulfilled – may be quite incapable of swift and dynamic leadership when the situation requires it”.

Second, in the process of distinguishing between leadership and management, there is a tendency for leadership to be positioned as superior. Gardner (1990:3) confirms:

“Leaders generally end up looking like a cross between Napoleon and the Pied Piper, and managers like unimaginative clods”.

Whilst it is conceptually important to differentiate between the two activities, the prioritisation of leadership over management is unhelpful and does little to shift the understanding of leadership away from its idealised and heroic connotations.

Leadership and management in the police are overlapping concepts. It is largely acknowledged that police leaders need to display expertise in both activities (Casey and Mitchell,2007; Wright et al.,2008). Police leadership has often been conceptualised in managerial terms; a point first captured in Reiner’s (1992) empirical study of chief constables who considered their role in managerial rather than operational or leadership terms. Managerial skill, such as management of processes, systems and risk, is an accepted feature of contemporary police leadership (Butterfield et al.,2005; Davies and Thomas,2003; Smith,2008; Wall,1998). The managerial rather than operational emphasis further distances the police leadership role from command and control; the model increasingly recognised as an outdated approach to contemporary police leadership (Casey and Mitchell,2007; Panzarella,2003). Consequently, police leadership, it appears, continues to look outside policing to replicate managerial principles and practices from business (Casey and Mitchell,2007). New Public Management (NPM) is the most obvious illustration of the transfer of managerial practices from outside industry into the police; the principles of which are very much embedded in contemporary police leadership practices. The NPM reforms represented a transformation of the understandings of leadership and management in the police and accelerated the shift away from the command model of police leadership (Savage et al,2000).

NPM was a philosophical, ideological and cultural movement, a principle feature of which was a reform programme in the 1980s to situate the private sector principles of 'economy' 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' into public service management (Boyne,2002). Hood (1991:5), in one of the most well-known commentaries of the rise of NPM, refers to the phenomenon as "a marriage of two streams", namely 'new institutional economics' reflected in the administrative ideals of contestability, user choice, transparency and incentive structures, and 'business-type managerialism' which generated reforms associated with centralisation and the measurement of organisational outputs.

There was an emerging willingness from senior policing ranks to experiment with different managerial practices prior to the NPM reforms (Horton,1989). Parts of the police service, for example, had voluntarily adopted 'policing by objectives' (Lubans and Edgar,1979) and the Home Office Circular in 1983 had a significant impact in pushing forward the 'value for money' agenda. Yet it was the government reforms in the early 1990s that signalled a fundamental change to the nature of leadership and management in the police (Butterfield et al.,2005; Leishman et al.,1995).

The NPM reforms were designed to deliver both structural and cultural change by incorporating business-like managerial practices into all aspects of policing activity (Fleming and Lafferty,2000; McLaughlin and Murihi,1995). In doing so, the principles of managerialism have become an integral and accepted feature of police leadership (Reiner,1992; Long,2003). Today, the managerial philosophies of NPM are visible in much of the taken-for-granted activity of police leadership. An empirical study of the impact of NPM on a UK police constabulary by Butterfield et al (2005) found that police leadership incorporated more strategic and managerial responsibilities. According to the study, the changes to the nature of police leadership were particularly noticeable at the rank of sergeant; new managerial responsibilities for performance appraisals, planning, supervision, communication and administration that had been devolved from inspectors. The study concluded that the middle management ranks in the police incorporated more managerial responsibility following the NPM reforms, but not greater autonomy. The authors explain:

"There was a shift towards more managerial and strategic responsibilities, but this did not imply greater autonomy for the sergeants, nor a closer identification with senior

management. Rather, it entailed less personal contact with superiors, but tighter central control and scrutiny by means of organisational performance management systems". (Butterfield et al.,2005:338).

Managerial principles do not, however, easily translate into the police environment (Bradley et al.,1986; Fleming and Marks,2004; Loveday,2008). Davies and Thomas (2003), in their study of NPM in the UK police service, emphasise the individual agency of police officers to reproduce, resist and reinterpret managerial philosophies and caution that features of NPM are not compatible with innovative policing approaches. The conflict between police occupational culture and managerialism is also captured in Fleming and Lafferty's (2000) case study of Queensland and New South Wales police organisations. The authors conclude:

"The implementation of new management techniques has produced management division between senior police and rank and file officers. If indeed, the police culture as a whole has been fragmented, it may be that a stronger 'us and them' situation between police officers and their superiors is being created". (Fleming and Lafferty,2000:166).

That said, competitive tendering and outsourcing, decentralisation and organisational restructuring (Diefenbach,2009), performance reviews, staff appraisal systems, performance-related pay, quality audits, customer feedback mechanisms and customer charters (Butterfield et al.,2004) are accepted features of managerialism in police leadership. Attention has been shifted therefore from process, which was deemed bureaucratic and burdensome prior to the NPM reforms, to outcomes and 'getting results' (Cope et al.,1997). Objective setting (Butler,1992), performance indicators and league tables (Long,2003), the expansion of inspection and audit agencies (Golding and Savage,2011) and the application of 'lean' thinking in the police service (Barton and Barton,2011) illustrate the extent to which managerial principles are very much embedded in the discourse of management and leadership in the police (Wright,2000).

The NPM reforms firmly established managerialism as central to the understanding and practice of police leadership. The managerial principles of efficiency, effectiveness and economy form a 'guiding rationality' that shape the understanding and practice of

contemporary police leadership (O'Malley and Hutchinson,2007; Loader and Mulcahy,2003; Loveday,2008). The monitoring of police activity against performance criteria, for example, functions to, as Reiner (1998:65) articulates, "concentrate their minds and activities on doing well on these figures". Such managerial processes have pedagogic functions and reinforce the need for top-down organisational control (Diefenbach,2009). The managerial reforms have shaped the meanings and understandings of leadership and management in the police.

Diefenbach (2009:900), in a critique of NPM, explains:

"Performance measurement and management systems have primarily 'pedagogic' functions. They define the frameworks people think and act within, what they are striving for, how they are being evaluated, and how they behave and even what they become".

One legacy of NPM in police leadership therefore is the primacy of management over leadership in public service (Diefenbach,2009; Loveday,2008). The police service continues to embrace managerial principles from 'outside', to such an extent that, as O'Malley and Hutchinson (2007:165) note, police leaders are becoming "generic 'new' leaders almost as much as they were police". In the context of bureaucratic governance and accountability mechanisms, police constabularies have a well-established managerial culture emphasising rationality, stability, relegation and control (Adlam,2002; Casey and Mitchell,2007). In contrast, the entrepreneurial, innovative or 'risk taking' elements of leadership are underdeveloped; police leadership continues to be defined as risk-averse (Heaton,2010; Skogan,2008; Smith,2008). Shaped by the adoption of managerialist principles and philosophies therefore, police leadership has a distinctive managerial component.

Conclusion

The cultural distance between frontline and senior officers in the police is something of a received wisdom; the dichotomy and tensions well acknowledged (Adlam,2002; Holdaway,1977; Punch,1983; Reuss-Ianni,1983; Sklansky,2007). The shared meanings and experiences of frontline officers conflict with those of senior officers who increasingly embrace celebrated leadership approaches from business and other public sector organisations (Rowe,2006; Wall,1994). Current research on police leadership has neglected

to fully consider the influence of the police setting on the nature of police leadership. The structure and culture of police constabularies engender understandings about police leadership (Bryman et al.,1996; Silvestri,2011). Through the ‘long professional socialisation’ (Wall,1998), credibility in police leadership is attached to culturally-defined skills and these skills shape how we understand and interpret leadership (Grint,2005a). A particular form of leadership is constructed and alternative forms are restricted. The meanings attached to the authority of rank are interconnected with the meanings of leadership. Therefore, the ‘carrying’ of rank and the ability to navigate, negotiate and resist the authority of rank are crucial considerations for this thesis in studying leadership as a socially constructed process.

Chapter Four

Methodology: Reflections on Research on Police Leadership

This research, based on semi-structured interviews with 38 senior police officers in one UK police constabulary, explored senior police officers' understandings of leadership. This chapter provides a reflective account of the research experience, to allow, as advocated by Altheide and Johnson (1994), consideration of the validity of the research and establish confidence in the research findings. This will be achieved through a critical reflection of the research journey from inception through to fieldwork and analysis. First, the chapter will examine the formation of the research topic, followed by an explanation of the rationale for the research design. The research process will then be explained, which includes a discussion of the sampling strategy, the development of the interview guide and the conduct of the interviews, followed by an overview of the analytical strategy. The chapter will then describe the ethical considerations, research access and conducting the interviews. This chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of the research design and approach.

The Research Topic

This research evolved out of a research interest in the senior policing role and management and leadership generally. Primarily, I was interested in senior police officers' views of their role and their leadership and the understandings of their interactions with junior and senior police colleagues. There is a considerable amount of literature on frontline police officers, indeed much of our current understanding of police practice has developed from classic ethnographies of the rank and file (such as Cain,1973; Holdaway,1983; Manning,1977; Punch,1979; Skolnick,1975; Young,1991). Less is known, however, about the views, experiences and understandings of the senior policing ranks. Whilst police leadership is an increasing source of academic interest, the work of Caless (2011), Savage et al. (2000), Silvestri (2011) and Caless and Tong (2015) described in Chapter Three are notable examples, senior police officers, particularly at the superintendent and inspector ranks, remain underrepresented in the police literature (Reiner,1992; van Dijk et al.,2016). Senior police officers are increasingly defining their role in leadership and management terms (see

Chapter Three). An exploration of senior police officers' views of leadership, the influences that inform these views and how these views shape their interactions with colleagues therefore seemed particularly relevant.

Arksey and Knight (1999:45) and Hammersley (1992) evaluate research credibility in terms of relevance to academic and practitioner audiences. Within the context of revitalised discussions of professionalism in the police service, the nature and standards of leadership in the police is a significant focus of policymakers, senior policing officials and academics. In 2011, the Home Office commissioned a review on leadership standards and training (Neyroud,2011a). In 2013, a Home Affairs Select Committee was set up to focus on police leadership and in 2015, the newly established College of Policing published the Leadership Review. The contribution of academic work to policy and practice is something of a contentious issue however and there is still some ambivalence about the extent to which research should engage in shaping practice (Foster and Bailey,2010). This is particularly evident in police research. Historically, academic research has been criticised by police audiences for its narrow focus, its inaccessible language and themes and lack of practical relevance or application (Brown,1996; Van Maanen,1982). The police organisation is characterised as a task-oriented institution with an organisational focus on 'quick wins' and the necessity to 'get on with the job' (Weatheritt,1989; Young,1991). This does not easily marry with the deferred benefits of academic inquiry. In the context of policy and academic interest in police leadership, this research positioned practical application equally with contribution to academic knowledge. The 'transferability' of this research into practice was an important consideration. Police leadership is firmly established in policy and practitioner discourse, yet there remains a lack of clarity over the meaning of police leadership and indeed the similarities and differences to other forms of leadership (Adlam,2003a; Herrington and Colvin,2016; van Dijk et al.,2015). The focus of this research on senior police officers' understandings of leadership ensured its usefulness and relevance to policing practice.

Research Aims

Police leadership research typically studied the phenomenon from 'the outside' using quantitative methods, existing frameworks, typologies and definitions of leadership. Police

leadership has, for example, been assessed in terms of the transformational and transactional typologies (Indrayanto et al.,2014; Masal,2015; Swid,2014) using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Densten,2003; Sarver and Miller,2014). This oversimplifies the complexity of leadership to a standardised set of characteristics or behaviours. In contrast, this research situates the meanings and understandings of police officers as central. Based on semi-structured interviews, this research explored the understandings of leadership to those in leadership positions in the police. The primary research question for this thesis was; what are senior officers' understandings of leadership within their constabulary? There were also three sub-questions that formed part of this research:

- d) What are the understandings of leadership amongst officers of different ranks?
- e) How has this understanding of leadership developed?
- f) What are the implications of these understandings for leadership in police constabularies?

Research Design

Historically, leadership studies have typically adopted a quantitative approach. However, there is increasing recognition of the value of qualitative methods to develop alternative ways of understanding leadership (Bryman et al.,1996; Bryman,2004a; Bryman,2011). The purpose of this research is to explore the meanings and understandings of leadership in the police, which required a research design to access rich, contextual data (Schofield,1993). This research is a qualitative study, based on semi-structured interviews in one UK police constabulary. The following section will provide a rationale for the research methods in this study.

Methodological Framework

Grounded Theory

Social constructionism and Goffman's theoretical concepts frame the social world in terms of subjectivity, expressivity and multiplicity. From this perspective, social researchers are encouraged to explore how social phenomena are produced. The research design and analysis were informed by the principles of grounded theory to facilitate the examination of the complexities of social interactions and understandings. Grounded theory is most commonly

associated with the work of Glaser and Strauss. In their original work *'The Discovery of Grounded Theory'*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe a systematic approach to the development or 'discovery' of theoretical ideas from social research. The emphasis on grounded theory is the exploration, 'discovery' or 'uncovering' of social processes (Glaser and Strauss,1967). More recently, Charmaz (2014) has incorporated the inductive principles of Glaser and Strauss's version with social constructionism in 'constructivist grounded theory'. Constructivist grounded theory represents a further challenge to the dominance of positivist, objectivist and essentialist assumptions in research philosophies and instead provides a framework to explore society reality as subjective, processual and constructed (Charmaz,2014). Grounded theory therefore encourages an inductive, open approach, grounded in the data, to the development of theory.

In this research, constructivist grounded theory operationalises the principles of social constructionism and Goffman's dramaturgy to structure the research design and analysis. Constructivist grounded theory, for example, frames the interview as a mutual and emergent process; the interview, as Charmaz (2014:91) explains, "is the site of exploration, emergent understandings, legitimation of identity, and validation of experience". The constructivist principles of grounded theory facilitate the exploration of the processes of social construction; the taken-for-granted meanings and understandings of leadership in the police. Charmaz (2014:95) confirms:

"A constructivist would emphasise eliciting the participant's definitions of terms, situations, and events and try to tap into his or her assumptions, implicit meanings, and tacit rules".

In using grounded theory within a social constructionist framework, the focus is the development of an 'analytical product', the analytical process is progressive from descriptive coding to theoretical understanding (Gibbs,2012). Grounded theory also emphasises simultaneous data collection and analysis, whereby this early analytical work informs the direction of the research to produce new theoretical insights (Gibbs,2012). This supported the development of an analytical framework to capture the relationship between rank and leadership using the theoretical concepts of doing and undoing of rank.

Grounded theory therefore situates well within the theoretical framework and research interests of this work. As noted, leadership studies have typically adopted a positivist approach using quantitative methods and standardised definitions of leadership (Bryman,2011). The inductive approach and analytical openness of grounded theory was crucial in situating the meanings and understandings of police officers as central in the construction and presentation of leadership in the police.

The Research Constabulary

The research is based on semi-structured interviews in one UK police constabulary to allow for an in-depth exploration of the synergy and tensions, the complexities and subtleties in the meanings and interpretations of police leadership. Consideration was given to including additional research sites to allow for a comparison between the understandings of leadership in the different constabularies. This comparative approach was discounted to allow for a more detailed focus on the perspectives in one constabulary; the breadth versus depth dilemma. This research achieved an in-depth understanding of the meanings of leadership to police officers in one constabulary; over forty-five hours of transcriptions were produced. This level of depth would not have been possible with the inclusion of additional constabularies. The research also involved a comparison between the understandings of police officers within different ranks, particularly because the perceptions and experiences of the inspector and superintendent ranks are virtually absent in policing literature. A focus on one constabulary would allow for the inclusion of a greater number of police officers at these ranks to address this gap in academic understanding of police leadership. A case study approach was adopted, in one UK police constabulary, to provide access to rich, in-depth data (Schofield,1993; Stake,1995).

Cainland Constabulary

The preceding chapters have demonstrated the importance of considering the organisational context in which the understandings of leadership develop (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Bryman et al.,1996). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003:360), in their qualitative study of leadership narratives in a research and development company, explain:

“It is important to consider the specific organisational and professional setting in order to understand how people relate to, talk about, and possibly practice - or fail to practice - leadership”.

‘Cainland’ is a predominately rural county, one of the larger counties in England and Wales, with a relatively low crime rate. There are a small number of major towns in the county, including the county town of ‘Cain’. Police constabularies are arranged into ‘Most Similar Groups’ (MSGs) with comparable constabularies based on demographic, social and economic characteristics relating to crime. Cainland Constabulary is in an MSG with seven other police constabularies across England and Wales, and is one of the larger constabularies in the group. Cainland Constabulary comprises of over 1,500 police officers, including a chief officer team of five; at the time of the research, the chief constable had been in post for three years. Cainland Constabulary, like other constabularies in England and Wales, has made substantial savings in response to the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010 and has increased its focus on vulnerability, much of its business is now organised based on ‘threat, harm and risk’. Cainland Constabulary has undertaken an extensive collaboration programme with a neighbouring constabulary, through which many of the services outside of local policing are now jointly delivered. The HMIC inspection reports for the Constabulary have generally been positive over recent years and no significant areas of concern have been raised with regards to the Constabulary’s performance.

Selection of Cainland Constabulary

The choice to conduct this research in Cainland Constabulary as a case study was driven by two factors. First, Stake (1995) argues that the maximisation of learning is the most important criteria in selecting a research site. Choosing research sites that are hospitable to the research, according to Stake, goes some way to achieve this. In the early stages of this research, meetings with the chief constable of Cainland Constabulary were arranged to discuss the focus and scope of this research. During these meetings, the chief constable expressed enthusiasm and a clear commitment to the research; the chief constable noted the timely nature of research on police leadership. Importantly, the chief constable provided me with complete autonomy and discretion in the design and conduct of the research. This freedom and confidence provided by the Constabulary was an important factor in selecting Cainland

Constabulary. Moreover, Cainland Constabulary, not unlike other constabularies, has undertaken a collaboration programme with a neighbouring constabulary in which key leadership and management functions are now jointly delivered. This provided an important opportunity to maximise learning through the exploration of the tensions, challenges and synergy in the understandings and approaches to leadership.

Second, research practicalities, particularly in terms of research access, were also important considerations in selecting Cainland Constabulary (Schofield,1993; Stake,1993). Negotiating formal access to conduct research in closed institutions within the criminal justice system, like the police, can be especially problematic and time consuming (Smith and Wincup,2000). Access for this research was secured at chief constable rank, which is an essential requirement in working with hierarchical organisations like the police (Reiner,1992). Access was achieved relatively quickly. As previously explained, the chief constable expressed an interest and openness to support the research; a timely and relevant research topic eased the access negotiations considerably. The practical ease of access was another contributing factor in the selection of Cainland Constabulary for this research. In sum therefore, Cainland Constabulary offered the opportunity to explore areas relevant to the research question and benefited from ease of research access through an interested senior leader who was keen for the research to take place.

Interviews

38 semi-structured interviews were completed with police officers. The design of this research is informed by social constructionism and Goffman's (1990) presentation of self. Consequently, leadership is understood as socially constructed, produced and reproduced through social interaction (Fairhurst and Grant,2010; Uhl-Bien and Pillai,2007). If leadership is understood therefore as being "in the eyes of the beholder" (Meindl,1995:331) it is crucial that the presentations, meanings and interpretations of police officers, as co-producers of leadership, are prioritised (Shamir,2007). Yet the meanings of leadership to police officers themselves are neglected in current academic understanding of police leadership.

The use of semi-structured interviews positions the perceptions and experiences of police officers as central to the understanding of police leadership. Police officers' explanations are prioritised and 'taken seriously' (Brown and Canter,1985). Stephens (2007:205) confirms:

“Semi-structured interviews...provide the opportunity to gain an account of the values and experiences of the respondent in terms meaningful to them”.

The interview enables a consideration of meanings, perceptions and beliefs which importantly would not be captured through observations (Patton,2002), questionnaires (Brenner et al.,1985; Brown,1983) or recorded elsewhere in documents or reports (Richards,1996). This research was not interested in approaching the study with an 'existing framework'. Normative assumptions about the nature of leadership lie beneath the use of questionnaires, which neglect to prioritise the understandings of police officers themselves. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003:361) confirm:

“Embracing a more open approach than 'forcing' respondents to respond to questionnaire statements about leadership thus producing this phenomenon”.

In contrast, interviews uncover the beliefs, meanings and assumptions that underpin behaviours, interactions and routines (Arksey and Knight,1999; Brown,1983; Hammersley and Atkinson,1995). There is significant flexibility in the interview as a research method, misunderstandings or ambiguities can be discussed and clarified as part of the interview process (Brenner at al.,1985; Gillham,2000). The interviewer can adapt questions or probe for more information, thus facilitating a more in-depth response (Patton,2002). This is particularly relevant in the context of this research. The exploration of meanings, the routinised, taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership, is the central focus of this research.

This research also aimed to study leadership 'with' the police, to conduct research with the police as equal participants rather than 'on' the police as research subjects. The interview represents a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee, a mutual process and a joint accomplishment (Arksey and Knight,1999; Dingwall,1997). Feminist scholars have made a significant contribution in moving methodological discussions towards considering the importance of the reciprocal nature of the interview (Oakley,1981). In comparison to

other research methods therefore, a key strength of the interview is its 'mutuality', both parties are equal participants in exploring the meanings of questions and answers (Brenner et al.,1985).

The theoretical framework for this research places social context as central to the study. Leadership cannot be separated from its organisational context and consequently, the study of leadership needs to facilitate the understanding of contextual influences on the nature and practice of leadership (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Bryman et al.,1996). Unlike survey research for example, interviews allow for an exploration of the context of the perceptions, experiences and behaviours (Arskey and Knight,1999; Richards,1996). The contextual influences on the meanings of leadership, the contradictions and tensions between contexts, were an important consideration in this research.

Overall, the interview positions the participant as central and allows for an in-depth exploration of meanings to facilitate rich and vivid responses (Gillham,2000). Leadership is not a sterile, detached activity but rather a complex, dynamic social process (Murphy and Drodge,2004). This research was interested in the rich descriptions of the meanings, contradictions and tensions in the understandings of leadership. Primacy in this research was given to police officers' meanings and understandings of leadership. These are best captured using interviews.

Research Sample

Informed by grounded theory, a theoretical sampling strategy was adopted, shaped by theoretical ideas about leadership in the police (Gibbs,2012). Since this research was interested in exploring the perceptions of police officers at different ranks, rank formed a primary criterion in the sampling strategy. Participants were initially approached therefore based on their rank position, reflective of Caless and Tong's (2015) recent research with senior police leaders.

Adopting a theoretical sampling approach and the simultaneous data collection and analysis allowed for inclusion of additional participants based on emerging areas of interest. For example, during the interviews, participants discussed the importance of the staff officer role in challenging assumptions about rank. Theoretical sampling allowed participants with this

experience to be included in the research. The staff officer role consequently formed part of a case study to illustrate the complex relationship between rank and leadership (see Chapter Five).

Interviews were conducted with police officers from chief constable to inspector rank, as ranks with strategic responsibilities. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Finance Officer, as a member of the executive team, were also included. Leadership forms part of the activity of all ranks in the police and all police officers have an external leadership role in communities (Anderson,2000; College of Policing,2015a). The focus of this study is the understandings of organisational leadership within the police, rather than the leadership role that the police perform ‘outside’ in the community. Using the most recent Home Office (2015) data on police service strength for ‘Cainland Constabulary’, participants were recruited to reflect the proportion of police officers by rank in the constabulary. To protect the anonymity of participants, especially at the chief inspector and chief superintendent ranks, participants were divided into three sample segments:

- Senior Management (chief officer rank)
- Middle Management (superintendent ranks)
- Lower Management (inspector ranks).

These sample segments were informed by Manning’s (2007) categorisations. Manning, in his discussion of police culture in America, divided the police organisation into four rank segments; frontline officers as the ‘lower participant’, ‘middle management’ as sergeant to superintendent rank, ‘top command’ as those above the rank of superintendent and finally the ‘detective/investigative’ segment. A sample breakdown by sample segment is provided in Figure 2 overleaf.

Figure 2 Research Sample by Rank Segment

Rank Segment	Rank	Number	Sub Total
Senior Management	Police and Crime Commissioner	1	6
	Chief Constable	1	
	Deputy Chief Constable	1	
	Assistant Chief Constable	2	
	Chief Finance Officer	1	
Middle Management	Chief Superintendent	4	11
	Superintendent	7	
Lower Management	Chief Inspector	5	21
	Inspector	16	
TOTAL		38	

Although the primary consideration for the research sample was rank, effort was made to ensure a balanced mix in terms of gender and uniformed/detective officers. Of those interviewed, most participants were male and uniformed (see Figure 3), which was largely reflective of the make-up of Cainland Constabulary at the time of this research (Home Office,2015).

Figure 3 Research Sample by Gender and Role

		Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	25	66
	Female	13	34
Role	Uniformed	28	74
	Detective	8	21
	Misc	2	5
TOTAL (N)		38	

Data Collection

The Interview Guide

As discussed, the understandings and experiences of police leaders themselves is a central feature of this research. The interview guide (see Appendix 4) was semi-structured; consistent themes in relation to the research questions were explored whilst providing space for respondents, as Brown (1983) advocates, to discuss leadership in a way that was meaningful and relevant to them. Flexibility is particularly important in the context of interviewing those in positions of power, such as senior police officers (Caless and Tong,2015; Reiner,1992). Indeed, Ostrander (1995) and Richards (1996) caution against using a structured questionnaire-style interview guide in research with elites and suggest using a less-structured, thematic ‘check-list’. This method also aligned with the explorative, emergent approach of grounded theory (Charmaz,2014). A semi structured interview approach therefore facilitated a level of standardisation to allow for comparison across key themes in the analysis whilst also building in flexibility to pursue new lines of research inquiry. The interview guide was structured along three main thematic areas reflective of the research questions, to capture the process of understanding. These areas included:

- 1) The understandings: An exploration of the descriptions, interpretations and meanings of leadership to respondents.
- 2) The influencers: An exploration of the factors that had informed and influenced police officers’ understanding of leadership.
- 3) The context: An exploration of situational influences on the understanding of leadership.

The Scoping Phase

The fieldwork for this research was divided into two phases, the scoping phase and the main interview phase. A pilot study in qualitative research is helpful to refine the research approach and ensure the interview questions address the needs of the research (Janesick,1994; Stake,1995). Since senior police officers were giving up their time to be interviewed, this was particularly relevant to this research.

The importance of understanding organisational context is well recognised in leadership research (Biggart and Hamilton,1987; Bryman et al.,1996). There were two aims of the scoping phase; first, to familiarise myself with the case study site. As a researcher positioned as an ‘outside outsider’ in the police, this familiarisation was an important way to build rapport and legitimacy (Brown,1996; Van Maanen,1978b). Second, the scoping phase informed the questions during the interviews as fieldwork progressed to the next stage.

The scoping phase consisted of six interviews with inspectors and observations with two PCs conducted over a one-month period. Observations with PCs provided an invaluable insight into the organisational context and ensured that interview questions were grounded in frontline experience. The observations were used solely as part of the scoping phase and were not included in the main findings of this research.

The scoping phase was scheduled five months before the interviews in the next phase of the fieldwork to allow sufficient time for preliminary analysis and incorporate the observational insights into the development of the interview guide, consistent with grounded theory principle of simultaneous data collection and analysis. Emerging themes and issues were identified to pursue further in the next phase. For example, Cainland Constabulary had recently formed a ‘Challenge Team’ to review the Constabulary’s structure and processes in the context of austerity. During the scoping phase, police officers spoke about The Challenge Team as a mechanism of consultation. The topic was then included in the next phase in terms of the response to and ‘meaningfulness’ of this process.

Although initially delaying the beginning of the main interview phase, the scoping phase was an essential preparatory stage. Thorough preparation is a key way to manage the status imbalance when interviewing those in positions of authority (Mikecz,2012). Richards (1996) confirms the importance of being well prepared. The author explains:

“The more professional and well informed you appear to your interviewee, the more likely you are to gain his/her respect and with it the whole tone of the interview will be improved” (Richards,1996:202).

In the context of this research therefore, the familiarisation achieved from the scoping phase was invaluable in building rapport, communicating credibility and refining the interview approach.

The Interviews

38 interviews were conducted over a three-month period beginning in September 2015. The interviews lasted between one and two hours, averaging around 1.25 hours, and three to four interviews were conducted per day. Like Caless's (2011) experience of interviewing chief officers, the interviews were treated as formal events. The vast majority (37) of interviews were audio-recorded, consistent with Reiner's (1992) experience. Participants were requested to confirm or decline recording at the beginning of the interview (See Appendix 3).

Assurances of anonymity, as Reiner (1992) also observed, were crucial in recording the interviews. The audio-recorded interviews were later transcribed verbatim. Informed by grounded theory, the analysis and data collection occurred simultaneously; emerging insights were identified in the early stages of interviewing which formed part of subsequent interviews.

Data Analysis

The theoretical framework of this research situates knowledge and understanding of the social world as constructed through social interaction (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Goffman, 1990). It follows that the analytic strategy for this research is framed within a social constructionist paradigm. The role of the researcher is to interpret, illuminate, and make analytic sense of impressions, discussions and observations (Stake, 1995). Miller and Glassner (1997:105) explain:

“Narratives which emerge in interview contexts are situated in social worlds, they come out of worlds that exist outside of the interview itself. We argue not only for the existence of these worlds, but also our ability as researchers to capture elements of these worlds in our scholarship.”

The interviews produced over forty-five hours of transcriptions, so it was essential that the analytical approach was logical and systematic. Since the research was interested in the senior police officers' understandings of leadership, rather than approach the analysis with an existing framework, the analytical strategy was informed by grounded theory and the primacy of emergence (Charmaz,2014). As such, an inductive, iterative approach was adopted. The focus therefore was the meanings of leadership grounded in and emergent from the data. The analysis progressed through three main phases; fieldwork, coding and theorising.

Phase 1: Fieldwork

Analysis began during the fieldwork, in line with grounded theory. After each interview, emerging considerations were documented, followed by a summary of main points at the end of each interview day. Finally, a consolidation of insights was completed at the end of the fieldwork. Each of these three strategies functioned to capture the emerging insights through the data collection process.

The benefits of this approach were two-fold. First, informed by grounded theory, simultaneous data collection and analysis allowed me to capture emerging insights to pursue further in forthcoming interviews. The concept of rank emerged in this first analytical stage, which could then be further considered in the later interviews. Charmaz (2014:26) explains:

“You shape and reshape your data collection and therefore, refine your data and increase your knowledge”.

Second, the early analysis informed the analytical categories for this research and particularly the analysis of relationships between concepts. The meanings of rank, such as assumptions related to decision-making and competence, emerged as interconnected with the understanding of leadership.

Phase 2: Coding

Coding is an organising device that assigns a label to sections of data to classify, categorise and summarise the data (Robson,1993). The process of coding for this research, informed by grounded theory, was open, iterative and comparative (Charmaz,2014). An approach of

‘systematic doubt’ was built into the coding process, to, as Agar (2008:99) advises, “force yourself to look at the same material in a completely different way” to highlight preconceptions and potential bias.

NVivo 10 was used to support the analytical coding for this research. The first stage was ‘full coding’ in which interview transcripts were coded line-by-line. Following Charmaz’s (2014:112) advice to “stick closely to the data”, these early codes assigned a descriptor to the data which related closely to the subject being discussed. The focus of this stage of coding therefore was definition and produced descriptive codes, such as ‘caring for welfare’ or ‘asked opinions’. Similarly, all references to ‘rank’ were coded as such. This detailed and precise coding was time-consuming and produced a significant number of seemingly unconnected codes. Importantly though, as Charmaz (2014:121) advises, the process of staying close to the data preserves the authenticity of participants’ interpretations and understandings of leadership. Charmaz (2014:133) explains:

“Careful coding also helps you to refrain from imputing your motives, fears, or unresolved personal issues to your respondents and to your collected data”.

The second stage of coding was to interrogate the initial codes in relation to the relationship with thematic concepts. Following Charmaz’s (2014) guidance, the primary aim of this coding stage was organising the initial codes into thematic concepts or groupings. The analytical stage was meaning rather than description and consequently produced conceptual codes. The descriptive code of ‘asked opinions’ for example became a sub-category within the conceptual code of ‘consultative’. Importantly, the conceptual codes developed through interrogation and interpretation of the data rather than the application of theoretical typologies or frameworks and as such, the concepts remain grounded in the data (Charmaz,2014). A full list of descriptive codes is provided in Appendix 5.

During the second stage of coding, the descriptive code of rank was interrogated to identify the relationships with other codes, such as ‘empowerment’ ‘decision making’ or ‘accessibility’. In allowing the same section of data to be coded multiple times, NVivo 10 was an invaluable tool to identify the relationships between concepts.

The process of moving from descriptive codes to conceptual codes was an iterative one. There was much 'back and forth' between descriptive and conceptual codes, a continual process of refinement and negotiation (Charmaz,2014). Once again, a reflexive approach of systematic doubt was undertaken. Regular memo writing in NVivo 10 established a record of the coding 'journey' that was interrogated, questioned and validated against the data. The analytical openness, the focused engagement with the data and the continual interaction and involvement with the data consistent with grounded theory produced an enriched, in-depth analysis of the understandings of police leadership (Charmaz,2014). The different ways rank is used in leadership emerged from the data.

Research Ethics

There is often no perfect solution to ethical dilemmas in social research but there remains an obligation to uphold high ethical standards (Arksey and Knight,1999; Norris,1993; Punch,1986). This research was guided by the principles outlined in the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics. The following section details the steps taken in this research to secure informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

Informed Consent

The British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics specifies that research should be conducted based on informed and freely given consent. Researchers are required to be as open as possible about the nature and purpose of the research and ensure that participants have the right to refuse or withdraw from the research. The communication of the research, in a way that is relevant and meaningful to the participant, and the level of detail to include can make securing informed consent difficult (Hammersley and Traianou,2012). Participants in this research were provided with a Research Briefing prior to their involvement in the research, which provided an overview of the purpose of the research (see Appendix 1). Following this, participants were sent a more detailed Information Sheet (see Appendix 2). The Information Sheet included further information on the nature of the research, plans for dissemination and confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also contacted prior the interview, as an opportunity to ask any questions. The purpose of the research was explained again at the beginning of the interview. This phased process worked well to engage

participants in the research. The voluntary nature of informed consent can be difficult to secure in a disciplined, hierarchical organisation like the police, which functions on the basis of top-down, command and control (Gravelle,2014; Herrington and Colvin,2016; van Dijk et al.,2015). Police research is typically secured at chief constable rank and consequently junior officers may feel obliged to participate in the research (Norris,1993; Skinns et al.,2016; Thomas,2014). Rowe (2007:43), reflecting on the ethics of ethnography in policing, confirms the importance of considering the power dynamics inherent in the police organisation:

“The extent to which they were in a position to opt out of the study was limited by the implicit power relations at play”.

Whilst securing full and voluntary consent presents characteristic challenges in the police, it is nonetheless desirable (Thomas,2014). Access for this research was secured from the chief constable of Cainland Constabulary. I was acutely aware of the risk that the chief constable’s support for this research placed pressure on junior officers to participate. It was important that all participants personally agreed to be involved in the research and understood their right to refuse to take part despite the chief constable’s overall approval. I contacted all participants prior to the interviews to explain the purpose of the research, provide assurances of anonymity and confirm that refusal to be involved in the research would not be communicated to the Constabulary. This contact with participants before the interview was crucial. The research was clearly positioned as independent from Cainland Constabulary; correspondence about the research, for example, was branded with the University’s logo to communicate the independence and impartiality of the research. At the beginning of the interview, the Participant Consent Form (see Appendix 3) was discussed with all participants; the consent form included information on participants’ right to withdraw and right to refuse to be recorded. Participants appeared to speak freely and openly during the interviews and expressed support for the research, commenting for example on the timeliness of the research topic. Informal conversations ‘off the record’ before the interview allowed participants a further opportunity to ask questions about the research and this helped build rapport. Whilst these reassurances helped to alleviate any obligations participants may have felt to be involved in the research, it is difficult to know how much these strategies overcame the distinctive challenges of achieving full and free informed consent in an organisation like the police.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics also provides guidance on confidentiality and anonymity in criminological research. Confidentiality in social research typically describes the non-disclosure of information, unless otherwise agreed, while anonymity refers to the concealment of an individual's identity (Gravelle,2014; Skinns et al.,2016). Anonymity is usually achieved through the allocation of code numbers or names that subsequently offers protection from any potential harm if interviewees were to be identified (Spector,1980). Assurances of confidentiality and anonymity are essential to facilitate honest response and validity of the data (Gravelle,2014).

However, by the nature of their minority elite position, the policing elite are highly visible as public figures (Long,2003). Silvestri (2011:9), in her study of senior policewomen, speaks of the highly visible nature of their position as "a minority within a minority". In this research, there was, for example, only one chief constable and one deputy chief constable. The practice of code names, in this case, may not completely protect individuals' identities since there is likely to be other identifiable features associated with their unique organisational position. That said, senior police officers as elites are used to speaking 'on the record' and often therefore do not expect complete anonymity (Ostrander,1995; Spector,1980). However, as Caless and Tong (2015) note in their research with police leaders, these participants should be offered the same ethical assurances as junior officers. Anonymity and confidentiality in interviews with elites therefore presents unique methodological challenges (Mikecz,2012; Phillips,1998).

There are also distinctive challenges in protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of lower and middle management officers. Police occupational culture has long been characterised by fear, blame and lack of trust between 'street cops' and 'management cops' (Holdaway,1977; Reuss-Ianni,1983; Punch,1983). The truthfulness of junior officers' responses may be affected if they think the research findings will be reported back to the chief constable (Gravelle,2014; Norris,1993). Assurances of confidentiality are essential therefore to ensure trust and openness.

That said, the guarantee of anonymity is difficult to balance with the researcher's obligation to provide a comprehensive account of participants, place and experiences (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). The writing may reveal characteristic experiences or situations that identify individuals. This echoes Reiner's (1992:45) challenge of creating "a picture of chief constables' perspectives in their own words" without identifying the individual respondents. Therefore, a complete guarantee of anonymity may not be possible. It may be more useful to consider the varying levels of anonymity that are achievable and instead offer assurances that anonymity will be protected 'as much as feasibly possible'. Hammersley and Traianou (2012:127) confirm:

"Anonymity is a matter of degree. In being referred to in research reports, people are not either identifiable or anonymous. Rather their identities will be more or less difficult to recognize for different audiences."

All participants in this research were informed about how far their anonymity and confidentiality could be protected. The Information Sheet (see Appendix 2) explained that information provided in the interview was treated as strictly confidential, unless criminal activity was revealed. Likewise, the process of anonymising the interview was also explained; direct quotes would be used in the final thesis, but efforts would be made to ensure that the content of the quotes were not attributable to the individual. At the beginning of the interview, I also explained that where I felt the content of the quote would identify the participant, I would contact them to ask their permission before including it in the thesis.

There were various steps taken in this research to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. First, consistent with Hammersley and Traianou (2012) guidance, the process of anonymisation in this research began at the stage of data recording. The interviews were audio recorded and these files were coded with a unique reference number and saved in a password-protected file. At the transcription stage, the location of the research was coded as 'Cainland Constabulary' and other locations or individuals mentioned in the interviews were similarly provided with pseudonyms. A log of these names was kept in a separate, password-protected document. In the final thesis, careful consideration was given to protect the identity of individuals in the quotes used. The first consideration in this research therefore was the issue of identification by rank. This research was interested in the different understandings of

leadership across the ranks, so rank was an important inclusion. However, there were, for example, small numbers of chief inspectors and chief superintendents interviewed, often with unique responsibilities. It was likely therefore that these individuals would be identifiable if quotes were attributed to rank. Instead, in addition to the unique interview code number, quotes were assigned to the rank groupings of senior management, middle management and lower management (see Figure 2). This provided context in relation to the research interests whilst facilitating assurances of anonymity. Gender was a further identifiable characteristic, there was for example one female chief officer included in this research, so the assignment of gender to the quote from senior management grouping, whilst potentially interesting, would likely identify the participant. Consequently, gender was not included alongside the rank grouping in the quotes used. These steps were deemed a necessary compromise to order to protect the anonymity of participants.

Consideration was also given to anonymity in the writing up of the research. Effort was made to describe the constabulary with sufficient contextual detail whilst avoiding the inclusion of distinguishing or identifiable features. Similarly, the content of quotes from participants were reviewed to ensure anonymity. Where it was considered that the content would reveal the identity of participants, permission was sought from the research participant (although this was not necessary). The use of codes and sensitive writing was therefore considered sufficient to protect the identities of the constabulary and participants, as much as feasibly possible. This is consistent with the strategy adopted by Loftus (2009), her study of police culture in 'Northshire', where the constabulary and the research participants remained anonymous.

Ethical dilemmas are an inherent feature of police research (Holdaway,1983; Punch,1986; Rowe,2007; Westmarland,2001). Police researchers are often faced with competing choices (Norris,1993). Securing informed consent and protecting confidentiality and anonymity presents characteristic challenges; an important part of this is an appreciation of the power dynamics in the police (Rowe,2007). It is difficult to ascertain whether the steps taken in this research mitigated the power relationships within the police, reminiscent of the experience of policing scholars who found that ethical dilemmas can only be partially resolved (Holdaway,1983; Norris,1993). Consequently, this illustrates the importance of reflexivity in

relation to the ethical and methodological difficulties inherent in police research (Skinns et al.,2016; Thomas,2014).

Reflections on the Research Process

Reflexivity is largely accepted as good practice in police research (Ellis and Bochner,2000; May,1993; Young,1991). Guillemin and Gilliam (2004:274) define reflexivity as:

“A process of critical reflection both on the kind of knowledge produced from research and how that knowledge is generated”.

Within the theoretical framework for this research, the social researcher is considered part of the social world they investigate (Hammersley and Atkinson,1995). In constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz (2014) explains, “We are part of the social world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we produce.” Data is not ‘out there’ to be objectively observed and collected, but rather social research is an active social process between the researcher and the researched; the researcher is understood as the research instrument (May,1993). Manning (1972:256) comments that the researcher “has a considerable portion of himself invested in his data; his data are a part of himself”. There is a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the research environment.

Reflexivity allows for consideration of on the impact of the researcher’s experiences and beliefs on the research process and is therefore an important mechanism to bring preconceptions and biases into consciousness (Thomas,2014). Reflexivity, in keeping with the principles of constructivist grounded theory, fosters subjectivities as part of the research process (Charmaz,2014). Importantly, a continual reflective process of ‘systematic doubt’ supports development of more in depth analytical insights (Agar,2008).

The reflective practice in this research followed Gibbs’s (1988:47) model of reflection (see Figure 4) as a useful framework to formalise Agar’s (2008) notion of systematic doubt. The model, a common approach to reflective practice traditionally associated with education, refers to what Gibbs (1988) termed ‘structured de-briefing’ and provides a clear and systematic way to conduct reflective practice for social researchers. This model, supporting

the grounded theory principles of systematic reflection and analysis, was used throughout the data collection and analysis phases.

Figure 4 A Model of Reflective Practice

Description:	What has happened? Don't make judgments or try to draw conclusions, simply describe.
Feelings:	What were your reactions and feelings?
Evaluation:	What was good and bad about the experience? Make value judgments.
Analysis:	What sense can you make of the situation? Bring in ideas from outside the experience to help you. What was really going on? Were different people's experiences similar or different in important ways?
Conclusions:	What can be concluded in a general sense from these experiences and analyses? What can be concluded about your own specific, unique personal situation?
Personal Action Plans:	What are you going to do differently in this type of situation next time? What steps are you going to take on the basis of what you have learnt?

(Gibbs,1988:46).

This model of reflective practice, informed by the principles of grounded theory, provided a framework for uncovering potential bias and emerging analytical insights. This framework supported reflections during the fieldwork, what Schon (1983) refers to as 'reflection-in-action', which allowed me to reflect on the impact of my knowledge, assumptions and experiences as part of the data collection. Schon (1983:61) explains:

“Through reflection, he can surface and criticise the tacit understandings that have grown up around the repetitive experiences of a specialised practice, and can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness which he may allow himself to experience.”

A research journal, as recommended by Fleming (2012) in her research with the police, was a particularly useful outlet for these critical reflections.

Understanding the wider context of the police, particularly the power dynamics in the organisation as discussed earlier, is an important part of a police researcher's reflections. Warren (2012) for example, in her study with elderly people in assisted accommodation, explains the importance of understanding the wider institutional context to understand the type of answers provided by participants:

“The institutional context of fear promoted vague answers or nonanswers from elderly residents...the institutional context of loneliness, however, moved them in the other direction, toward elaborating and extending communication with the interviewer” (Warren,2012:133).

The reflective model therefore provided a structure to explore the influence of the organisational setting and the researcher's experiences on the management of the research interview, yielding additional analytical insights.

Research Access

Policing scholars have long recognised the challenges of conducting research in the police (Manning,1972; Punch,1993; Reiner,2000; Van Maanen,1978b). Research access presents characteristic challenges in closed institutions like the police (Lundman and Fox,1978; Manning,1972; Punch,1993; Van Maanen,1978b). The problem of access is pronounced where researcher is positioned as ‘outside outsiders’ (Brown,1996) Suspicion and distrust of outsiders is a well-documented feature of police occupational culture (Reiner,2010). Bittner (1990:315), in his seminal work on policing, explained:

“Suspiciousness manifests itself in a strong aversion of the police against having their affairs looked into by outsiders.”

Consequently, careful consideration was given to the process of negotiating access for this research.

Formal access for this research was negotiated with the chief constable of Cainland Constabulary; a typical approach when conducting research in hierarchical organisations like the police (Reiner,1992). Access to chief constables is not always successful; Jones (2016), in researching sexuality and policing, wrote formal letters to all forty-three chief constables but received no response. Access for this research however, utilising professional networks, was

secured with considerable ease. An informal approach was adopted. The chief constable was initially approached via email to arrange a time to discuss the possibility of conducting research with the constabulary. In the early stages of the PhD, a further meeting was arranged where research access was agreed. As part of negotiating access, it is standard practice to offer the research site something in exchange; Becker (1970) refers to this as ‘the research bargain’. In addition to access to the full thesis, Cainland Constabulary was offered an executive summary of the research findings and presentations to disseminate the findings to Cainland police officers were also discussed. A carefully considered dissemination strategy for the research findings, which included details of dissemination within the constabulary and policing audiences more broadly, also communicated the value and impact of the research. This translation of research findings, which Van Maanen (1978b) recommends as part of access negotiations, secured the value and legitimacy of the research to policing audiences.

Other factors appeared to facilitate ease of research access. As discussed earlier, the relevance and timely nature of the research topic aided early negotiations with Cainland Constabulary. Part of the process of selling the research, Van Maanen (1978b:333) explains:

“The researcher must make himself sensible to the police by addressing and articulating problems that the police can recognise”.

Communicating the value of this research in terms of its relevance to wider policy trends was therefore particularly important. This, however, was balanced with clarity as to the scope and likely outcomes of the research. It was important to avoid over selling the research to secure access (Ostrander,1995). I was honest about the aims and objectives of the research in the early discussions with the chief constable. The scope of the research was reiterated with research participants prior to the interviews. This managing of expectations was important in building trust and credibility in the research; I was not promising things that were not achievable.

Several face-to-face meetings were arranged with the chief constable during the early stages of the research. These meetings provided an opportunity to keep the constabulary up to date with developments and discuss any issues or potential problems. Conducting these meetings in person was a significant time commitment, but invaluable in building a successful working

relationship with the constabulary. This investment contributed significantly to the ease of research access.

Formal access to the police organisation from the chief constable is no guarantee of acceptance or access to participants (Loftus,2009). On the contrary, access granted at the senior levels of the organisation can act as a barrier to access to junior officers (Van Maanen,1978b; Brunger et al.,2016). Policing researchers, positioned as ‘outside outsiders’, have reflected on the challenges of overcoming perceptions of being seen as ‘management spies’ (Jones,2016; Loftus,2009; Reiner,1992). Occupational secrecy, the “blue code of silence” (Westmarland,2005), protection of its members from exposure or ‘muckraking’ (Van Maanen,1978b) and occupational concealment of privileged or ‘dangerous’ knowledge (Reiner,2000) make informal access particularly problematic for the police researcher. There are gatekeepers at every level of the police hierarchy and consequently access is better understood as a continual process of negotiation (Loftus,2009; Gravelle,2014; Rowe,2006).

There was no significant resistance experienced during this research. All participants expressed interest in leadership and enthusiasm about being involved in the research. All participants, for example, were interested in having access to the research findings and during the interviews, some participants asked for reading recommendations on leadership. Some of the participants had undertaken academic study alongside their police role, and this noticeably helped to ease potential uncertainties about the academic research process. Participants also appeared to discuss their experiences openly, for example, discussing sensitive situations with the preface of “I shouldn’t say this but”, which indicated my trusted position.

It is important to emphasise the attention paid in this research to building trust and rapport with participants. Whilst all participants had access to ‘formal’ communication related to the research, such as the Research Briefing and Information Sheet (see Appendix 1 and 2), the informal communication was equally, if not more, crucial in building trust. The communication before the interviews, as much as possible, created a ‘safe space’ for participants to ask questions about the research and seemed to break down barriers and ‘humanise’ the research. Likewise, steps were taken to make the beginning of the interviews

as relaxed and informal as possible; casual conversations whilst making tea, where I could reassure them about the purpose of the research, were important. These informal moments and being as open as possible about the research, on reflection, was helpful in building mutual trust.

The location of the interviews was a particular consideration for interviewing junior officers in terms of building rapport. Most of the interviews were conducted in the participant's office, where participants appeared comfortable and relaxed. However, some of the interviews were arranged to be conducted in chief officers' vacant office at Police Headquarters. This appeared to have an impact on participants, who seemed initially more resistant. The informal conversations before the interview were more important in this environment, where I discussed the setting, making light of it as much as possible, to reassure and put participants at ease.

The problem of informal access therefore is a problem of access to 'knowledge' or 'truth', which is magnified in the context of police research from a position of outside outsider (Brown,1996). Establishing trust and credibility is an important precursor to accessing beyond the 'social defences' of the police to outsiders (Punch,1993).

Interviewing

In contrast to a positivist tradition where the interview is treated as an objective and neutral event, scholars from a social constructionist paradigm argue the interview represents a mutual collaboration and negotiation, inseparable from social context, in which narrative versions of social reality are constructed (Charmaz,2014; Dingwall,1997; Holstein and Gubrium,1997; Fontana and Frey,2000). Miller and Glassner (1997:105) explain:

“Narratives which emerge in interview contexts are situated in social worlds, they come out of worlds that exist outside of the interview itself. We argue not only for the existence of these worlds, but also our ability as researchers to capture elements of these worlds in our scholarship.”

Various steps were taken in this research to ‘manage’ the interview encounter. The management of the interview can be challenging in the context of interviewing elites. Elites occupy powerful positions, whether in economic, political, cultural or intellectual terms (Kurian,2011). At the top of large and complex police bureaucracies, senior police officers have access to considerable resources, authority and influence (Loader and Mulcahy,2001; Savage et al.,2000; Silvestri,2011; Wall,1998). Reiner (1992) first recognised chief constables as an elite group and more recently Caless and Tong (2015), in their study of police leadership in Europe, consider senior police officers as elites. Typically, the interviewer is assumed to be in a more powerful position than the interviewee (Smith and Wincup,2000). However, the interview dynamics are different in elite interviewing; the researcher is instead positioned as lower status and ‘interviewing up’ (Ostrander,1995). Interviewing senior police officers therefore presents characteristic challenges.

Strategies were adopted to readdress the balance of power in the interview situation. First, thorough preparation is particularly important to manage the status imbalance (Mikecz,2012; Richards,1996). The scoping phase, as advised by Gravelle (2014), and reviewing documents relevant to Cainland Constabulary, such as HMIC inspection reports, was invaluable to familiarise myself with the structure and workings of the constabulary. This preparation, which Fleming (2011) describes as ‘mapping’, also helped me to learn the occupational language of policing, or police jargon, to further communicate my credibility and professionalism. Researchers interviewing elites can find themselves feeling patronised, particularly so where gender differences also exist (Odendahl and Shaw,2001; Ostrander,1995; Welch et al.,2002). On occasions, I was asked whether I understood the terminology or abbreviations used, for example, the call grading system. This preparation helped to readdress the status imbalance. That said, the position of ‘naïve’ outside-outsider was something that enabled me to ask additional questions to uncover the taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership.

A characteristic challenge in police research is accessing beyond the ‘managed image’ to achieve a more meaningful and personal account (Brunger et al.,2016; Rowe,2016). Elites are used to being asked their views from the position of the expert and are skilled at communicating a ‘public relations’ version of events (Mikecz,2012; Phillips,1998;

Richards,1996). The knowledge gained from the scoping phase of this research, particularly the observations with PCs, was invaluable in being able to challenge the public relations answers, for example, through questions such as “it’s interesting you say X, how might that be applied to [situation]?” In line with Ostrander’s (1995) advice about interviewing elites, non-verbal strategies were most effective in ‘disrupting the talk’. For example, the presentation of a tape recorder and interview guide communicated my position as the lead. These approaches helped to manage the power dynamics within the interview.

Similarly, in discussing leadership, there was a tendency in the interviews to adopt ‘managerial speak’, a point made by Manning (2007) in the language used by police leaders reflecting that of the business world. Interviewees, for example, used words commonly associated with leadership such as ‘vision’, ‘innovation’ or ‘inspiration’. Presenting questions in personal terms and showing interest in their personal experiences was helpful in steering the interview conversation away from the corporate. Questions, for example, were framed to focus on the meaning and interpretations of leadership ‘to you’ rather than ‘Cainland’ to focus on the personal. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview was helpful in clarifying, and at times challenging, the interviewee’s understandings of leadership. Encouraging participants to talk about examples of situations or experiences also worked well to guide the discussions away from the ‘official version’ and situate these potentially abstract concepts related to leadership into their experience of policing. Particularly in the context of researching leadership, these strategies helped to focus participants away from the corporate or managerial response and instead on their personal experiences, perceptions and understandings.

The research topic presented distinct challenges in the interviews. Police officers speak often about leadership but less about its meanings and definition (van Dijk et al,2015). Indeed, Barker (2001:47) concedes, “we all know what leadership is until someone asks us to define it”. A central focus of this research is the taken for granted assumptions that appear ‘invisible’, rarely spoken, and may simply be ‘beyond words’ (Altheide and Johnson,1994; Brown,1983). Framing the questions about leadership in personal terms and experience was again important. Prompts during the interview, such as “when do you think you were doing leadership today?” worked well to ground the abstract concept of leadership in the

participant's working day. Using examples, such as 'in x situation, is that leadership to you?', and covering the reasons behind the response, also helped to illuminate participants' understandings of leadership.

During the interviews, there was a delicate balance between allowing the interviewee to converse freely on a matter they considered important and needing to steer the interview to ensure the key themes were covered. Constructivist grounded theory emphasises the importance of uninterrupted talk in interviews to explore taken-for-granted meanings and understandings (Charmaz,2014). In the context of an exploration of police officers' understandings of leadership, I was keen to give participants space to express their views in as much detail as possible, and therefore, like Reiner (1992) in his interviews with chief constables, I made efforts not to cut the conversations short. Participants would, for example, refer to experiences or their personal stories, often operational situations, as a way of articulating their understandings of leadership. Rather than getting 'drawn into' the story, it was possible in these instances to use the example to further explore their perceptions of leadership. In line with the inductive principles of grounded theory, these moments of 'free speech' therefore yielded valuable and unanticipated insights.

Reflective of the social constructionist paradigm, the interview experience was viewed as a mutual and collaborative production, a joint accomplishment between the researcher and participant (Charmaz,2014; Dingwall,1997). Steps were taken to address the power dynamics related to my non-elite, outsider researcher status in order to 'manage' the interview relationship whilst at the same time creating space for moments of 'free space'. This process was important to position the participant's experiences and perceptions of leadership as central.

Limitations and Considerations

Interviewing is increasingly common practice in leadership studies (Bryman et al,1996; Bryman,2004a; Bryman,2011). This section provides a critical consideration of the interview method in the context of this research. This will primarily be considered in relation to the problem of generalisation and the problems of validity and reliability.

The Problem of Generalisability

Traditional conceptualisations of generalisation in social science has referred to the replication of research findings to other contexts. Hammersley (1992:88) describes traditional views of generalisation as “the representativeness of findings drawn from a particular setting in relation to a wider population”. Drawing on positivist notions, this perspective assumes the universality of social experience and consequently associated with the formation of universally applied theories (Cronbach,1975; Lincoln and Guba,2000). The social world, as Donmeyer (2000:47) notes, is understood in terms of “lawful regularities”. The emphasis is prediction and control, through for example, randomised research sample and tests of statistical significance (Schofield,1993; Donmeyer,2000). The traditional view of generalisation therefore assumes that knowledge and reality are neutral, objective and stable entities, and importantly, context-free (Christians,2000; Lincoln and Guba,2000).

However, there is established critique of the application of this traditional view of generalisation to case study research and qualitative research more broadly (Janesick,2000). Criticism in the methodological literature is largely centred around feasibility and desirability of this traditional view of generalisation in the context of case study research. Schofield (1993:201) explains:

“The major factor contributing to the disregard of the issue of generalisability in the qualitative methodological literature appears to be a widely shared view that it is unimportant, unachievable or both.”

Lincoln and Guba (2000) are highly critical of the feasibility of this traditional form of generalisation in case study research. Underpinning the traditional form of generalisation is the assumption of determinism; a ‘demonstrable’ and value-free relationship between components which is then universally applicable in grand formulas, laws or theories (Christians,2000; Lincoln and Guba,2000). This view is problematic in case study research, as it neglects to take into account the complexity of the social world. The traditional view of generalisation fails to capture the extent to which social action is informed and understood within particular social and cultural contexts. Human behaviour is socially constructed and reconstructed, and therefore, highly sensitised to social context (Blumer,1969; Goffman,1990). Stake (1995:17) highlights social interaction as “not simple and clean, but

intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal context”. From this perspective, generalisations are, in contrast to positivist conceptualisations, context-dependent. George and Bennett (2005:130) explain:

“Most social generalisations are necessarily time-bound, or conditioned by ideas and institutions that hold only for infinite periods”.

This is particularly pertinent in studying leadership as socially constructed, which challenges reductionist and deterministic conceptualisations of leadership and instead prioritises the influence of context (Bryman et al.,1996; Bryman,2011; Grint,2005b; Meindl,1995). In rejecting traditional forms of generalisation, Donmeyer (2000) argues, “it is impossible to talk of the nature of reality with any sense of certainty”. Our understanding of the social world therefore is not fixed or independent of social and culture processes. Lincoln and Guba (2000) therefore emphasise instead viewing social practices in terms of relativity rather than absolute truths.

The desirability of this form of generalisation in case study research is also questionable. The goal of case study research is not the production of general laws or theory, but the rich investigation of ‘the particular’ (Gomm et al.,2000; Stake,1995); the detailed analysis of the particular represents the value of the case study. Donmeyer (2000) argues that the deterministic and reductionist form of generalisation limits the contribution that case study research can make to applied fields. The author explains:

“Practitioners in fields such as education or social work, however, are concerned with individuals not aggregates, and for them, questions about meaning and perspective are central and ongoing” (Donmeyer,2000:66).

The purpose of case study is to explore the complexity and the particular; to thoroughly understand meanings, experiences, perceptions and interactions within a social context and capture these in rich detail (Stake,1995). This rich detail, the illuminating descriptions, represent the value and contribution of the case study (George and Bennett,2005; Schofield,1993). Standardisation and universalisation are not the goals of the case study. Rather, case study research, as Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue, suggests possibilities rather than direct action; “the forming of questions rather than the finding of answers” (Lincoln and

Guba,2000:52). Case study research should therefore be concerned with theorising rather than explaining (Hammersley,2012).

Methodological theorists therefore call for an alternative approach to generalisation that is applicable and relevant to case study research (Lincoln and Guba,2000; Stake,1995).

Donmeyer (2000), for example, argues that an alternative theoretical language to describe generalisability in case study research is needed and similarly Schofield (1993:205) confirms the need for a re-conceptualisation that is “useful and appropriate for qualitative work”. In considering new mechanisms of generalisation, Stake (1995) proposes ‘naturalistic generalisation’, whereby analytical insights can be applied from case study sites to other similar settings. Likewise, Schofield (1993) considers generalisability in terms of ‘fittingness’ and ‘comparability’ and similarly Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue for a focus on ‘transferability’ rather generalisation. In reconceptualising generalisation for case study research, the focus therefore is on application, rather than generalisation.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) develop Cronbach’s (1975) earlier notion of ‘working hypothesis’ for case study research. The authors define working hypothesis as:

“When a person moves to a new situation, he or she simply compares the sending situation to the receiving situation, determines the degree of fit, and applies those hypotheses that appear to be applicable to the new situation” (Lincoln and Guba,2000).

This principle prioritises application and allows for appreciation of social context. Cronbach (1975:125) explains, “when we give proper weight to local conditions, any generalisation is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion”. The focus is therefore applying the learning from one situation to others; application, adaption and refinement. George and Bennett (2005:112) refer to case studies as ‘building blocks’ to capture the continual process of learning and adaption and the “cumulative refinement of contingent generalisations”. Hammersley (2012) similarly advocates using theoretical insights from case studies as ‘tools’. By providing working hypotheses, case study research therefore contributes, develops and enhances the social constructions available; Lincoln and Guba (2000:63) confirm “the purpose of research is simply to expand the range of interpretations available to the research consumer”.

The researcher therefore develops a ‘working hypothesis’ rather than universal generalisation. From this perspective, the applicability is determined by the user of the research, as Gomm et al. (2000:100) confirm, “the burden of proof is on the user rather than on the original researcher”, while the researcher is responsible for providing ‘thick descriptions’ of the case studies to support this (Donmeyer,2000).

This research adopts Cronbach (1975) and Lincoln and Guba’s (2000) principle of ‘working hypothesis’. This research produced an analytical framework, using the concepts of ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ of rank, to describe the relationship between rank and police leadership. This analytical framework can be applied to other organisational contexts, within and outside policing, to consider the relationship between authority and leadership. In order to support the applicability of the analytical framework, this chapter provides a comprehensive description of the research process. With a substantial amount of information therefore, it is possible for the researcher user to make an informed judgment about whether the conclusions from the case study can be usefully applied to other contexts (Schofield,1993). Stake (1995) outlines practical steps to achieve the openness required to assist with the assessment of applicability, which forms the framework for achieving applicability for this research (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 A Framework for Applicability and Validity

1. Include accounts of matters the readers are already familiar with so they can gauge the accuracy, completeness and bias of reports on other matters.
2. Provide adequate raw data prior to interpretation so that the readers can consider their own alternative interpretations.
3. Describe the methods of case research in ordinary language including how the triangulation was carried out, especially the confirmation and efforts to disconfirm major assertions.
4. Make available, both directly and indirectly, information about the researcher and other sources of input.
5. Provide the reader with reactions to the accounts from data sources and other prospective readers, especially those expected to make use of the study.

6. De-emphasise the idea that validity is based on what every observer sees, on simple replication; emphasize whether or not the reported happenings could have or could not have been seen

(Stake,1995:87)

Overall therefore, the problem of generalisability highlights the tension between quantitative and qualitative research philosophies. An alternative conceptualisation of generalisation is needed that captures the value and relevance of case study research. This research advocates a move away from traditional forms of generalisation and utilises the principle of ‘working hypothesis’ to the qualitative study of leadership. In facilitating the assessment of the applicability of the working hypothesis, a detailed research account has been provided. Whilst generalisation in single site case study research is challenging, Stake (1995:85) reminds us that “people can learn much that is general from single cases”.

The Problem of Validity

Qualitative research, in contrast to positivist traditions, recognises the inherent ‘non-objectivity’ of research and therefore an alternative approach to research validity is needed (Altheide and Johnson,1994). In defining validity in qualitative research, Hammersley (1992) uses the term ‘subtle realism’ and relates the concept of validity with truth. The author explains:

“An account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomenon that is intended to describe, explain or theorise” (Hammersley,1992:69).

For qualitative researchers therefore, validity is a matter of accurate representation, rather than reproduction. Reflective practice is a valuable mechanism to achieve this; the structured reflexivity of this research (see Figure 4) therefore supports the validity and generalisation. Skinns et al. (2016:196) explain:

“Reflexive awareness by researchers – about their social status in the field and their relationship with the police and other key stakeholders – is perhaps one key way to ensure that organisation and individuals other than the police may also benefit from research conducted within the current impact climate.”

However, Hammersley (1992) is careful to point out that the process of evaluation of validity itself is also fraught with subjectivities. He explains:

“Given that there is no bedrock of truth beyond all doubt which we can use as a basis for our assessments, the process of assessment is always potentially subjective to infinite regression” (Hammersley, 1992:69).

It follows that evaluation of qualitative work needs to be grounded in reasonable judgement, based on the evidence provided; emphasis is placed on the term ‘reasonable’. As Hammersley (1992:70) goes on to explain:

“Since no point of absolute certainty can be reached, even among researchers, some notion of reasonable doubt must be operative beyond what is judged not necessary to go”.

To assess the validity of qualitative research, that is, that plausibility and credibility of the claims made, a complete description of the research process, as recommended earlier, is essential (see Figure 5).

Conclusion

Interviewing is a craft, as Thuesen (2011:614) articulates, “involving deliberation, the management of emotions and a strategy for context adaption”. This chapter has provided a critical reflection of the research experience of interviewing senior police officers about their understandings of leadership. The success of research in the police, as long history of police research reminds us, is based on the successful negotiation and cooperation between the researcher and the constabulary. Lessons learnt in the research emphasise the importance of preparation and paying close attention to building relationships with gatekeepers and participants based on mutual trust. Similarly, familiarisation with the constabulary’s internal structure and processes developed through the scoping phase was crucial in building trust and credibility.

The empirical study of leadership should facilitate the consideration of leadership as a socially constructed process. To achieve this, methodological and ethical considerations in police research should pay close attention to differential power relations in the police. Rather than approach the study of leadership using existing frameworks therefore, the interview approach prioritised the perceptions and experiences of police officers as central to the understanding of police leadership.

Chapter Five

The Doing and Undoing of Rank in Police Leadership

This thesis demonstrates that the authority of rank is central to the social construction of police leadership. Based on the empirical findings, this chapter captures the relationship between rank as an authority and leadership in an analytical framework of ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ of rank. This chapter is structured in three parts. The first part introduces the concepts of ‘doing rank’ and ‘undoing rank’ and situates this in a wider framework of ‘audience’ and ‘risk’. The second part of this chapter focuses on the doing of rank; the ways in which rank is emphasised and prioritised in police leadership. In the doing of rank, assumptions of leadership are closely aligned with the assumptions assigned to rank. Based on these assumptions, the meanings of rank are synonymous with the meanings of leadership. The third part of this chapter sets out the undoing of rank, the ways in which the authority of rank is minimised. In the undoing of rank, the assumptions of rank in leadership are challenged. This chapter will reveal the negotiation of rank as an inherent feature of police leadership and therefore demonstrate that leadership in the police is a rank-centric activity.

Part One: Rank and Leadership in the Context of Audience and Risk

The central premise of this research is the importance of police officers’ understandings of leadership. In the interviews, police officers discussed their experiences, perceptions and ideas of leadership. Leadership in different contexts was considered, different situations and experiences compared, which uncovered the taken-for-granted assumptions about the meaning of leadership in the police. The discussions of experience of leadership ‘in practice’ were used to consider what leadership means to police officers. This produced rich data on leadership narratives in the police. Informed by grounded theory and the principle of ‘emergence’, key themes were identified in the analysis. Rank was the dominant narrative drawn on by police officers in their understandings of leadership. Police officers at all ranks interviewed spoke repeatedly about the influence of rank in police leadership; the ‘presence’ of rank in the meaning and practice of leadership. Police officers discussed rank using descriptions such as “carrying rank”, “wearing of rank” or “handle the rank”; this use or

presentation of rank shaped the interactions between junior and senior officers. The way this police officer discusses the impact of the uniform as ‘carrying’ illustrates this how rank might be used in leadership:

“I don't think it's the rank that's the issue. I think it's individuals within that, you know, you've got the stuff on their shoulders but it's how they choose to carry it”
(Middle Management, Int27).

A relationship between rank and leadership emerged in the data. The analysis revealed that rank was considered by police officers in terms of both structure and authority. The vast majority of police officers interviewed discussed the hierarchical rank structure and the command structure in terms of the ‘workings’ or ‘activity’ of leadership in the police. Particularly at the inspector rank, police officers used these examples as police leadership ‘in action’. Police officers also spoke of the authority assigned to different ranks in the police hierarchy; uniformed officers in particular described the ways in which the authority of rank, for example, ‘gets things done’ in leadership. The analysis revealed dominant, taken-for-granted assumptions attached to the authority of rank. These assumptions, based on the analysis, are interrelated to assumptions about leadership. Rank emerged as synonymous with leadership therefore; the assumptions assigned to the authority of rank reflect assumptions about leadership. Based on the analysis, these assumptions about rank shape leadership behaviours and interactions in the police. Leadership occurs, therefore, within an occupational space characterised by the use and meanings of rank.

Through the analysis, it became clear that rank as an authority was being used in leadership in different ways. The authority of rank allows police officers to ‘get things done’ and is therefore used as a resource to facilitate leadership. Situations and experiences where rank is used in this manner revealed a heightened ‘presence’ of rank in police leadership. In contrast, the analysis revealed other experiences and situations where attempts were made to ‘get around’ rank in leadership interactions. In these situations, rank was perceived as a barrier rather than a resource in police leadership. Situations where the authority of rank was downplayed, bypassed or negotiated around emerged in the data.

This thesis captures the different ways rank is used in leadership in an analytical framework of doing and undoing of rank. The doing of rank describes the understanding and practice of leadership that reflects a heightened presence or display of rank, and likewise, situations or interactions which prioritise and reinforce the hierarchical rank structure in police leadership. Conversely, the undoing of rank denotes the construction of 'rank-neutral' space and ways in which rank as an authority is bypassed and minimised in police leadership.

The Importance of Context

The preceding chapters emphasised the significance of context in leadership to understand leadership as a socially constructed activity. Situations and interactions include presentational signals or cues that shape these interactions and influence how individuals understand what is expected of them (Goffman,1990). These presentational cues, as Goffman (1990) reminds us, are meaning-making; they help to define the situation. Equipped with this information, certain approaches to leadership are considered plausible and appropriate (Grint,2005a; Peck and Dickinson,2009; Smircich and Morgan,1982). The understanding of situation therefore legitimises particular constructions of leadership.

In the interviews, police officers of all ranks frequently used situations and experiences to illustrate their understandings of leadership. In the analysis, different situations were illustrative of different approaches to leadership and different ways of using rank as an authority. The understandings of the situation inform the doing or undoing of rank in leadership. Based on the data, these situations can be understood in terms of 'audience' and 'risk'. Whether police officers emphasise or downplay rank in their leadership, in other words, was influenced by perceptions of 'who' is watching and the 'what' is at risk.

Audience

Audience emerged as a recurrent theme in the analysis. Police officers at all ranks described different 'audiences' in leadership situations and the ways in which these audiences shape interactions and behaviour in leadership. In discussing the impact of 'who' is watching in leadership, this quote captures the influence on leadership practice:

“We all behave differently depending on who’s sitting in front of us and who we’re talking to, and being able to adapt to different social situations or environments, and for me, leadership needs to be considered in that vein” (Lower Management, Int18).

The type of audience in these situations informs the different ways rank is used; the doing or undoing of rank. Based on the analysis of the data, audiences are conceptualised as ‘high audience’ and ‘low audience’.

Low Audience

Low-audience situations are understood to be protected spaces, hidden from public view; there are no ‘outsiders’ to observe the leadership interactions. The most common example identified in the analysis is an informal, one to one exchange between a junior and senior officer, often taking place behind the closed doors of an office. This is perceived as a low visibility, protected and closed space in which the interaction between the leader and follower occurs.

Whilst the authority of rank is present because the officers involved are not rank-equals, the ‘performance’ or emphasis of rank in the doing of rank is deemed unnecessary. Based on the non-public status, this environment permits the undoing of rank. The majority of police officers discussed this space as one in which the conventions and assumptions assigned to rank, such as the reluctance to challenge or question senior officers, can be subverted or challenged. The sense of ‘safety’ to challenge, despite the difference in rank between participants, in a one to one situation is captured below:

“So, if I had a one to one with the chief, or he came out and met me, I would ask him questions and I wouldn’t be worried about challenging him... I know he’s open to challenge, and if it’s a one to one between me and him, I would.” (Middle Management, Int25).

The use of ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’ was a commonly expressed term to describe senior officers in the police. All police officers explained this as an accepted formality in interactions between senior and junior officers, and this was identified in the analysis as illustrative of the heightened presence of rank. In one-to-one situations, police officers, particularly at the lower

management ranks, spoke of providing their staff with ‘permission’ to refer to them by their first names. Once again, these situations are used as protected spaces to challenge rank conventions. Discussing the formality of rank, the perception of the difference between one-to-one situations and situations ‘outside’ is evident in this quote:

“They call me ‘sir’, I say when we’re outside and there’s lots of people there, that’s understandable. But when we’re one to one, I’ve got a name, use my name, let’s connect as human beings first.” (Lower Management, Int11).

By creating a space where first name terms can be used between junior and senior officers, the authority of rank is minimised. These low audience situations are used therefore to ‘undo’ the presence and authority of rank in leadership.

In some situations, the expectations and assumptions of rank can be suspended. One-to-one situations are assigned protected status in which conventions of rank, such as reluctance to challenge upwards and the referral to rank in sir or ma’am, can be ‘knowingly contradicted’ (Goffman,1990). These situations therefore allow for the undoing of rank.

High Audience

High-audience situations were particularly prominent in the discussions of relationship between rank and leadership. These situations are as highly visible spaces in which rank is most obvious and perceived as necessary. High audience situations are understood by police officers as public encounters, typically involving ‘outsiders’ and often powerful outsiders, in which the presence of rank in leadership is most evident. Police officers spoke of public accountability forums with the Police and Crime Commissioner as an example of this type of situation. In these situations, the authority of rank is restated and emphasised. The conventions and formalities of rank are clearly adhered to in these highly public situations; the use of sir or ma’am for senior officers, for example, is deemed necessary. Whilst there is an openness to challenge upwards in low-audience situations, for example, a strong resistance to these expressions in public forums was a common theme. In discussing the reluctance to challenge upwards in public, the quote overleaf reveals the attachment to rank conventions in leadership in high audience settings:

“I wouldn’t question a chief constable in a public forum, a sergeant might not choose to question a superintendent in a public forum. So, rank definitely plays out in the police, in public especially. Things like that wouldn’t happen.” (Middle Management, Int10)

The perception of the audience in different situations shapes how police leaders interpret and perform their leadership role. The understanding of the situation as high-audience or low-audience communicates expectations of appropriate behaviours between senior and junior ranking officers. Police leaders use rank differently influenced by their understandings of the audience, the presence of rank is emphasised in the doing of rank or downplayed in the undoing of rank relative to the situation.

Risk

Risk was identified as a key theme in the analysis. Situations were discussed in terms of risk and this perception of risk similarly shaped the understanding of the leadership required in that situation. Police officers spoke about risk in four ways; threats to the public, to personal safety, safety of police colleagues and reputational risk to the police force. Different leadership approaches were deemed necessary relative to the perceived risk and consequently, different ways of using the authority of rank in that situation. In the analysis, the different situations were conceptualised as low-risk and high-risk situations; these situations were discussed by police officers in terms of different expectations about how to use rank in leadership.

Low Risk

In comparison to high risk situations, low risk situations were less prominent in the analysis. Low risk situations were perceived as low threat to the public or officer safety and low reputational risk. Time was a common theme in relation to the understanding of risk; police officers of all ranks drew on narratives of time to conceptualise a situation as high or low risk. Low-risk situations are associated with the longer-term and less urgent aspects of police work; there were fewer examples of these situations compared with high risk situations. In low risk situations, the authority of rank in leadership is not necessary to ‘get things done

quickly'; there is no need for immediate decision making. Where these situations were discussed, police officers spoke of the ability to share or involve their staff in decision making; the potential to adopt a collaborative and participatory leadership style with less emphasis on the use of rank to facilitate leadership. The quote below provides a useful illustration of the leadership used in low risk situations; the police officer being described was afforded autonomy and responsibility:

“That’s a good example, she’s a beat manager, so she’s responsible for [area] so she’s, as far as I’m concerned, and she’s concerned, she’s the primary problem solver for [area]. She’s got a problem pub, drug taking, anti-social behaviour, violence and disorder. She’s called the meeting with the licensing panel, she’s called the meeting with the licensee, she’s come in now and suggested the tactical options, and I’ve given her some reassurance that she’s on the right line, great.” (Lower Management, Int11)

The above quote is illustrative of the potential of adopting a different approach to leadership in low-risk situations. The conventions of decision making based on seniority of rank can be challenged or bypassed in these low risk situations. Time is understood as a protective factor in the perception of risk. The use of rank as a facilitator in leadership ‘to get things done’ quickly is not necessary.

High Risk

Police officers more frequently conceptualised leadership in terms of high risk situations; high risk situations was the more dominant narrative to conceptualise leadership in the police. These situations are understood as emergency, crisis operational situations where there is a high threat to the public or officer safety. In discussing risk and leadership, police officers of all ranks frequently referred to public order and firearms incidents as particularly common examples. There is a strong attachment to the rank structure in these situations. The structure is perceived as critical in providing a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities and a clear allocation of decision making to facilitate rapid response; time once again is a characteristic feature. The centrality of the rank structure in high-risk situations shapes the expectations and understandings of leadership in that environment. These situations are

perceived to warrant a particular approach to leadership, specifically a crisis management approach in which the authority of rank is used to 'get things done'. Rank therefore is understood as inherent feature of the leadership in these situations. The reliance on the rank structure to organise the communication and leadership in high risk situations is illustrated here:

“If you went into firearms they are all very, very rank and hierarchical so if they want something they will go to Sergeant, Sergeant will go to Inspector, the Inspector will go to the Chief Inspector” (Senior Management, Int33).

In high-risk situations, the rank structure is relied upon to facilitate urgent action and this influences police officers' leadership. Based on the urgency required, the use of rank as an authority in these situations to 'get things done' in leadership is most evident. The quote below illustrates the dominant view of the necessity of a command approach to leadership, using the authority of rank, relative to the perceived risk and urgency of the situation:

“If you have a major incident, you know, a significant incident on the ground where you need people to do things quick time, that's when that [rank] side of it really kicks in. Because it's like, there ain't no time for asking a question. I'm taking the direction, this has got to be done, because there's a risk there, so you'd have to direct people quick time and I think that's where it then kicks in. You've got to have that control of that structure around deploying your resources in quick time. Because when you've got an incident on-going, there are things that just have to be done.” (Lower Management, Int15)

There is a clear attachment to the importance of the rank structure in leadership in high risk situations to facilitate immediacy of response. The authority of rank is a mechanism for 'doing' leadership, rank used to 'get things done' quickly. There is a clear understanding of the expectations of leadership in this environment; decision making is clearly assigned to senior rank. The 'doing of rank' in leadership in these situations is therefore most evident.

Understandings of audience and risk provide a framework for legitimising ways of using rank in leadership. In high-audience and high-risk situations, there is reliance and emphasis on the rank structure in leadership. In these situations, there is strong attachment to the conventions

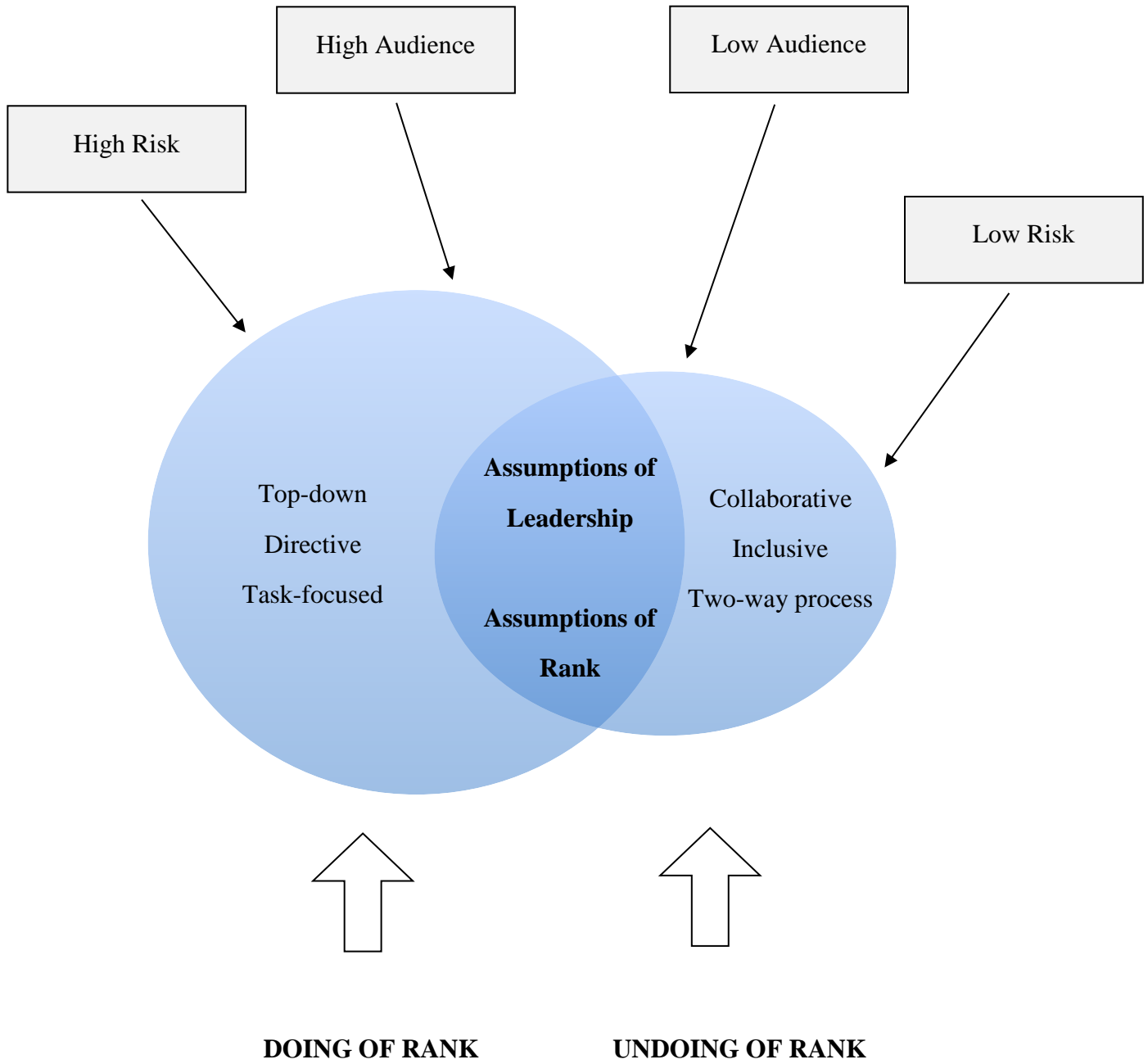
of rank; this is the dominant understanding amongst police officers of the appropriate leadership in these situations. Rank as an authority, for example, is recognised and emphasised in the use of sir or ma'am and expectations about challenge or questioning upwards. Decision making in these situations is clearly assigned 'upwards' on the basis of seniority of rank. The 'etiquette' of rank provides an 'ordering' or structure of leadership, rank provides clear lines of communication and clear expectations about the interactions between junior and senior officers. Leadership in these situations is positioned structurally on the basis of rank position and the 'doing of rank' is evident. In contrast, low audience and low risk situations, low risk situations in particular were less commonly discussed in the interviews, allow for the undoing of rank. Rank-free space, particularly low audience space, can be created, in one to one situations for example, where the conventions of rank can be bypassed. Decision making in these situations can be shared with junior officers and permission granted to question or challenge upwards.

The first part of this chapter situates the relationship between the authority of rank and leadership within a framework of audience and risk. The construction of the situation in terms of audience and risk influences understandings of leadership. Within the context of audience and risk, police officers' balance perceptions of demand and resources to explain their leadership. For example, the organisation of resources to meet the urgent demand in high risk and high audience situations justifies the emphasis of rank in leadership. The findings reveal therefore that in high risk and high audience situations, the 'doing of rank' in leadership is legitimised whilst low risk and low audience situations facilitate the undoing of rank.

Figure 6 depicts the analytical framework. The thematic concepts of doing and undoing of rank in leadership are introduced in the context of audience and risk. First, as the earlier part of this chapter has set out, Figure 6 captures the influence of the understandings of risk and audience to the use of rank in leadership. Situations perceived as high audience and high risk necessitate a top-down, directive and task-focused approach to leadership in which the doing of rank is most obvious. In contrast, low audience and low risk situations facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach to leadership in which the undoing of rank is perceived as possible. Second, the relationship between rank and leadership is depicted to capture the understandings and assumptions of rank as reflective of the understandings and assumptions

of leadership. In Figure 6, the 'doing' of rank, as the larger component of the framework, is depicted as the more prevalent theme from the analysis. This captures the dominance of the doing of rank in the understandings of leadership. This relationship between rank and leadership will be considered in more detail in this rest of this chapter.

Figure 6 Analytical Framework



Part Two: The Doing of Rank in Police Leadership

The doing of rank describes the use of rank as an authority in police leadership that adheres to the conventions of rank. Compared to the undoing of rank described later in this chapter, the doing of rank was more dominant way of using rank in leadership. Based on the analysis of the data, the doing of rank is was most prevalent in two ways. First, rank is used to construct difference and distance between the ranks which will be illustrated through an analysis of the use of time, space, language and communication, as the most commonly discussed concepts. The use of rank in this way communicates and reinforces understandings about police leadership. Second, rank is used to communicate and reinforce assumptions about the authority of rank. The assumptions assigned to rank, which were particularly evident in the analysis, such as competence or decision making, are interrelated with assumptions about leadership. Based on these assumptions, the meanings of rank are synonymous with the meanings of leadership.

Police Leadership and the Distance and Difference of Rank

The use of rank to establish distance and difference in police leadership is a recurrent theme; establishing and maintaining distance and difference is a prevalent feature of the doing of rank in leadership. Particularly at the inspector and superintendent ranks, police officers spoke of separation between the ranks in leadership, referring to 'boundaries' 'barriers' and 'space' between themselves and those in their command. Various mechanisms were used to achieve this distance. Specifically, police officers made choices about how to use their time, space, language and uniform to create a sense of difference and distance between themselves and their staff.

Time

The narrative of time was a prevalent theme in the analysis. Police officers spoke of using social time as a way of creating and maintaining distance between leaders and their teams based on rank. This particularly emerged in the interviews with lower management ranks who discussed choosing to avoid socialising with their teams, or not drinking alcohol on social events, as a way of establishing formality and professional distance. The negotiation of rank is perceived as necessary in social time. In discussing their working relationships with their

staff, the quote below illustrates the decision to establish separation between themselves as leaders and their teams:

“I think it can be a difficult thing, if you go out and have a few drinks, then it’s calling you by your first name, and then you come back here and you’re ‘boss’ or ‘sir’, so I separate the two... I don’t socialise with anybody, I don’t know who their wives or husbands are, because I don’t think it’s appropriate” (Lower Management, Int01)

The negotiation or ‘management’ of rank is also evident in other aspects of police officers’ social time. A discrete theme identified amongst the lower management ranks was the complexity of friendships ‘across’ the ranks. Some police officers provided examples of being friends with senior colleagues outside of work, this time was perceived as separate and distinct from interactions at work, reflecting different conventions. In discussing the formalities of rank, the quote below describes the negotiations that take place between junior and senior officers in social and work settings. This ‘reverting back’ to the formality of rank, in the reference to ‘sir’, in the workplace illustrates the attachment to the conventions of rank in leadership.

“I used to live next door to a superintendent when I was a sergeant, we used to have barbeques and go out running and stuff. I would never call him anything but sir when we were at work out of choice because even though he almost begged me not to, because I like that, I’m comfortable with that, it recognises where he’s at.” (Lower Management, Int20).

The informality associated with social time challenges the formality of the conventions of rank. For police officers interviewed, the use of social time in this way creates ‘complications’ for them in their leadership. Police officers, particularly at the lower and middle management ranks, frequently referred to socialising with junior officers as “in the ranks”, referring to frontline officers; this was considered inappropriate and undesirable in terms of their leadership role. The majority of police officers described professional distance as important in terms of maintaining authority and credibility in leadership. The quote overleaf highlights the association between the ‘way you conduct yourself’ during social time with the perceived authority required in leadership:

“Because, at the end of the day, there will be a point where you’re telling them what to do, and I think if you call each other Bob, Bill and Mary, and you go out and get pissed up out with them on a Saturday night, that authority is completely undermined. I know that sometimes it’s viewed as an old-fashioned view, but I think there should be that difference” (Lower Management, Int02)

In discussing the complexities of informality between the ranks, these police officers referred to disciplinary or performance matters to conceptualise the problematic nature of informal interactions. Across all the ranks interviewed, the majority of police officers discussed the need to have ‘difficult conversations’ as leaders; the role of leadership associated with staff and organisational performance. In these conversations, maintaining professional distance between leaders and staff was considered important. The construction of distance is used to facilitate the discipline and formality of leadership, professional distance to enable a leader to effectively deal with poor performance. In discussing the leadership interactions with their team, the following quote describes the importance of this distance to effectively manage disciplinary matters:

“It makes your job more difficult if you’re too friendly with people, I think they will treat you differently to a supervisor they didn’t know, just because it’s human nature, and you know, literally one day you’re out socialising with them, and the next day they’re telling you what to do, potentially dealing with disciplinary matters and things like that. I think it would make it more difficult, it would make it more awkward, certainly if you had to do any disciplinary work or picking up problems, reviewing something that hasn’t been done properly, I think that would be an awkward conversation to have with someone you’re really friendly with” (Lower Management, Int04)

Time is used to construct distance between junior and senior ranks. Social time is used in two ways. First, social time was understood as distinct from the workplace, a ‘safe space’ to build personal relationships with senior colleagues; interactions can ‘safely’ bypass the conventions of rank and ‘cross’ rank boundaries outside of work. Second, social time reflects and aligns with leadership roles in the workplace. The ‘stepping over’ of rank boundaries are avoided

and professional distance is maintained. Therefore, the conventions of leadership by rank 'inside' the organisation influence the interactions 'outside' the organisation.

The use of time to construct distance reveals assumptions about the meaning of leadership in the police. Leadership is understood in terms of its disciplinary function; distance is perceived as necessary to perform this aspect of the leadership role effectively. Social time reflects and maintains the distance and difference between junior and senior officers in leadership. Effective leadership is understood therefore in terms of the construction and maintenance of professional distance between senior and junior officers.

Space

Physical space emerged as a recurrent theme in police officers' conceptualisations of leadership; space can be used to construct difference and distance between junior and senior ranks. Office space in particular was discussed by police officers as creating boundaries and a sense of separation. It was noted in the interviews that PCs and sergeants, for example, have the use of open plan office space compared with inspectors who typically have offices separate from the communal environment. The use of space to communicate difference was particularly discussed in terms of the chief officer rank, as the most senior leaders in the constabulary. Police officers discussed the positioning of chief officers on the top floor of headquarters as a barrier between them and the rest of the workforce. This quote from a chief officer highlights the communication of difference and distance through the various 'symbols' of rank in space.

“There's even some symbols of rank in the way we do things, so the chief officers have their offices on the top floor, you know you don't think about it, but the feeling that if you have to go to the chief officers you have to go up to the top floor at police headquarters. Car parking spaces. So, they're just symbols of the culture that reinforce things, and possibly work against some of the messages the chief officers are trying to send out. You know, the fact that there are gatekeepers out there, staff officers and PAs, that in order to get to chief officers you've got to get through them first.” (Senior Management, Int08).

Space is used to establish boundaries between junior and senior officers and this communicates a sense of difference based on rank. The physical organisation of space communicates meanings and expectations that inform leadership in that environment. The barriers or divisions in space therefore can be used in leadership to establish, or indeed minimise, the distance between senior and junior officers. The vast majority of police officers, for example, frequently described leadership in terms of ‘an open-door policy’. The officers understood this removal of the ‘barrier’ of a closed door in space as communicating accessibility and visibility in leadership. Like the use of time, the use of physical space reveals assumptions about the meaning of leadership in that environment. Leadership is understood therefore as the construction, or indeed the removal, of difference and distance.

Language

The use of ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’, as a characteristic feature of leadership in the police, was a dominant and recurrent theme in the analysis. The vast majority of police officers, across all ranks interviewed, and equally among uniformed and detective officers, spoke often about rank in terms of the use of ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’; senior officers are typically referred to as ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ rather than by their first names. The reference to rank in language differentiates between senior and junior officers and functions to establish barriers between the ranks. This recognition of rank in language represents a clear demarcation in leadership by rank; this was frequently discussed in the interviews. Whilst discussing the impact of the use of sir and ma’am, the quote below illustrates the impact of this formality of language in terms of boundaries and demarcation by rank.

“You’ll get a lot of PCs say, ‘I don’t want to call the chief inspector by their first names’ they like that formality, you know, the sergeant is ‘sarg’ or ‘sergeant’, they like that, it’s nice and clear, there’s no boundaries crossed, there’s no nicknames bouncing back and forwards, there’s a nice clear demarcation of who is who, and what is expected... It’s quite nice at times, it’s good, it’s a clear kind of demarcation.”
(Lower Management, Int13)

The use of sir and ma’am situates the difference between the ranks within all conversation; interactions, even informal interactions, with leaders ‘contain’ the use of the formal rank title.

The attachment to this reference to rank, even in informal conversations between junior and senior officers is captured in the quote below. This illustrates the significant ‘presence’ of rank in leadership.

“If I go and sat down in the office and had a cup of tea with my staff, after every sentence they call me sir, you know, it doesn’t matter what they’re doing or what we’re talking about, I could be talking about football, you know, the fact that Chelsea got beat at the weekend, they call me sir at the end of it” (Middle Management, Int10).

The referral to rank in language appeared to have a taken for granted and accepted status in interaction with leaders; this was a dominant theme in the analysis. Police officers, for example, described the use of sir and ma’am in leadership as something you ‘get used to’ to the extent that it becomes ‘invisible’. Police officers typically expressed a sense of comfort and reassurance in the use of language to communicate a clear demarcation of responsibility. In the context of exploring the meaning of the use of sir and ma’am, the sense of reassurance is captured in the following quote:

“Once you’re in, you’re used to it, it does become invisible...Wherever you are in the chain of command, you can understand why certain people become quite comfortable with that, you know, so there will be some people who will say “actually, I’m quite comfortable with that. I don’t have to take responsibility for some of this, I just get told what to do and go off” (Middle Management, Int25).

The analysis revealed considerable resistance to challenging the conventions of acknowledging rank in language. The practice appeared to be a fiercely protected aspect of police leadership, legitimatised through understandings of formality, respect and discipline. Police officers explained the practice as the communication of respect for senior ranks and reflective of the disciplined nature of the police. When asked about the implications of challenging the accepted practice of reference to rank, the following officer expressed concern about the negative impact on respect and discipline:

“You know, does anybody call me by my first name? No. That is a conscious decision to actually stick to some rigour around the process. By opening the door too much to

informality, I think there would be something to be lost... If you have a rank structure you have to employ it properly, if you start drifting away from what makes a hierarchy work and one of the ways is losing that little bit of respect” (Middle Management, Int21).

The use of formal rank title conveys expectations and understandings about leadership in the police. Leadership is understood in terms of formality, respect and discipline, as the resistance to challenge illustrated. Since ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ recognise seniority of rank, that is used ‘upwards’ in the rank hierarchy, the source of leadership is similarly positioned ‘above’. Leadership is positioned ‘upwards’ rather than perceived as an equal or collaborative process. Likewise, the practice identifies leaders from non-leaders in the police and places emphasis on differentiation by rank; leadership is understood on the basis of difference between leaders and followers. Expectations about difference between the ranks in terms of responsibility and respect in leadership are communicated. Finally, the reference to rank in language situates the authority of rank ‘inside’ the interactions between leaders and their staff, even within informal interactions. This illustrates the significant ‘presence’ of the authority of rank in police leadership.

The Uniform

Police officers drew on narratives of visibility in conceptualising the relationship between rank and leadership; this was a particularly prevalent theme in the analysis. The uniform was discussed by police officers, particularly uniformed officers, as a highly visible expression of difference by rank. Symbols of rank are displayed on the epaulettes of the police uniform and consequently senior uniformed officers are immediately identifiable. The uniform represents a visual demarcation by rank, a visual ‘positioning’ of individuals or ‘arranging’ within the rank hierarchy. Police officers, for example, spoke of the uniform as ‘knowing who you’re dealing with’ in terms of rank. The impact of the uniform as a visual demarcation of rank in leadership, or the ‘dynamic’ of the organisation is illustrated in the following quote:

“The impact of the uniform is massive, you know, I mean, I’ve worked in private sector, public sector before coming to the police, would I have the same relationship with a chief executive officer as I would a chief constable? Absolutely not. The

dynamic is entirely different based on what the epaulette is on the shoulder. There's no getting away from our pseudo-militaristic attention to the structure" (Middle Management, Int32).

There were discussions in the interviews about the impact if rank was 'invisible' to uncover the meanings of the visual demarcation for leadership. Police officers compared uniformed and non-uniformed situations, particularly training courses as non-uniformed events, to consider the influence of the uniform on interactions between the junior and senior ranks. Non-uniformed situations were discussed as typically more informal and relaxed compared with the formality of adhering to rank conventions in uniformed situations. The quote below summarises the formality triggered by the uniform:

"On [training course] we were told to come in plain clothes, so just name badges on, so it was a really open forum. On one of the days, the instructor says please wear uniform, so, 'right ok'. They did exactly the same thing as we had before, where we had the initial meeting, we all turned up in uniform with our ranks on, the culture was completely different. In fact, I had someone come up to me, because I was a temporary inspector at the time, so I was the upper end of the ranks that were in there. I had a guy who I'd got on with really well, we went through the assessment centre together, it never came up in conversation as to what ranks we were, he was a PC and I was an inspector. He came up to me and went 'I didn't realise you were an inspector Sir' and I went 'what's this Sir shit about, you've been calling me [name] for the last six months?'"(Lower Management, Int12).

The visual demarcation of rank informs interactions with leaders. Police officers frequently spoke about this 'knowing who you're dealing with' as providing guidance on expected behaviours. Conventions of rank, such as the formality of sir or ma'am, can be used in response to the visual cue of the uniform. The following example reveals influence of the uniform on understandings of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour between junior and senior officers:

"I think we're all identifiable by our epaulettes so that's a good thing for me, because you know who you're dealing with. And that will affect how people respond and react. I'll give you a good example of that, the superintendent who you met yesterday,

obviously had crowns on his epaulettes that you could see visible, and I think I was explaining to you about the heightened security side of things in police stations? Well, not everyone wears a uniform, and there was an incident here at the police station where someone had opened up the door, someone came in behind them, and they got stopped and challenged. And it was all laughing and jovial, but it was a community support officer who'd actually challenged a detective superintendent, but that was all laughed off, but actually, the PCSO was really concerned that he was going to get in some sort of trouble. As soon as you see the epaulettes, as soon as you know they are a higher-ranking officer, that changes people's approach to them." (Lower Management, Int03).

The visibility of rank in the uniform provides an 'occupational script' to inform behaviours and interactions between senior and junior officers. These expected behaviours closely align with conventions of 'rank etiquette' in terms of formality and discipline in leadership. The uniform is a visual representation of difference by rank, which simultaneously communicates difference in leadership. The uniform is similarly a visual representation of the authority of rank; rank is situated within interactions and its presence can function as a barrier or inhibitor in leadership.

Various mechanisms are used to establish distance and difference based on rank. Time and space is arranged based on rank; divisions are created and sustained. The differential status and authority between junior and senior officers is reinforced. The emphasis on difference by rank reveals assumptions about the meanings of leadership in the police. The differentiation between the ranks communicates expectations about difference between leaders and followers. Leadership is constructed on the basis of the unequal dynamics between junior and senior officers and understood in terms of the difference, rather than similarity or equality, between leaders and followers. Using time, space and language, leadership is communicated as formal and disciplined whereby professional distance between leaders and followers is important. Distance is understood therefore as a mechanism of effective leadership.

Difference and distance is emphasised in the doing of rank. This situates the authority of rank as highly 'present' in leadership and this can act as a barrier between junior and senior

officers. Time, space and language can also be used to bridge gaps between the ranks and adopt participatory or collaborative forms of leadership. The uniform, for example, can be used to emphasise or minimise difference between the ranks; non-uniformed situations were understood as more open, inclusive environments. Leadership in the police navigates these assumptions of distance and difference by rank.

Communication

A recurrent theme identified in the analysis is the ways in which conventions of communication within the constabulary reinforce distance by rank. The processes and systems of communication emerged in the analysis as strongly aligned with the rank hierarchy. Police officers, particularly at the lower management ranks, spoke of the conventions of communication in terms of ‘rank etiquette’, ‘rank conscious’ and ‘courtesy’ of rank. The majority of police officers expected that communication would travel through each rank consistent with the hierarchical structure, one by one. This ‘rank consciousness’ in communication is illustrated below in response to being asked the level of influence upwards in the rank hierarchy:

“We are extremely hierarchical, so if you are a PC and you have an issue, you will go to your sergeant, and if you are a sergeant, you will go to your inspector, so you will go up the ranks. If you are a PC and you go to your inspector, your sergeant will get annoyed “why haven’t you come to me about it?” So, there is this really rigid structure, I don’t necessarily agree that that’s a good thing, but it’s the way it is” (Lower Management, Int06).

Whilst those at the senior management ranks expressed support for alternative practices of communication, the analysis showed a clear resistance to bypassing managerial ranks amongst the lower management ranks. These police officers expressed reluctance to communicate in ways that were inconsistent with the hierarchical rank structure; this was described as ‘arcing’ the hierarchy in communication. The consensus was that officers should use their line managers as the first point of contact; this was deemed appropriate and expected in communication with leaders. The etiquette of communication by rank is illustrated in the quote overleaf:

“I would be quite conscious of side tracking my line management, we are very aware of rank in the way we communicate, and downwards as well, so if I missed out my line manager, if I went to the superintendent it would probably be fine, but even then, I would be conscious of that, and my line management would be very conscious of that because they’re possibly getting side-lined.... And it would certainly be very unusual for me to sort of start knocking on the Exec door.” (Lower Management, Int20).

Likewise, middle management ranks expressed considerable resistance to their staff excluding them in communication upwards. Middle management officers were also opposed to the practice of chief officers bypassing the middle management ranks to speak directly with junior officers. The resistance to this practice of communication in leadership is illustrated below:

“I find it really annoying, as the commander of this department, that my boss will arc round me... So, the inspectors or sergeants have a brief from them on something that I then don’t know about...so there are two ranks in the middle that don’t know... So that’s quite difficult...All of my team understand that I don’t like that arcing down, so all of them, if for example the chief asks one of them to do something or asks them a question, they’ll respond to the chief because they should, quite rightly, but then they’ll send the response to me, I’m very rarely left unsighted” (Middle Management, Int22).

The resistance to bypassing the rank hierarchy in communication was explained by police officers with reference to feelings of potential embarrassment, concern about looking foolish and fear. Police officers drew on discourse of ‘knowing their business’ and ‘knowing their people’ as expressions of competence and credibility in leadership; a lack of knowledge, therefore, constructed as poor leadership. Through the bypassing in communication, police officers expressed concern that this gave the impression to senior leaders that they were unaware of problems in their areas of responsibility. In discussing this issue, the quote overleaf illustrates the implications of this practice in presenting a knowledgeable and competent front in leadership:

“Because what happens is... chief officers ring that individual and go ‘what’s really going on? What’s happening with PCs and sergeants and stuff like that? Is this decision going down well? Is there an issue with it?’ They quite innocently report back ‘no it was crap’ or ‘they’re really upset by it, in fact I’ve got one PC on my shift who’s said this’. Well the next thing that happens is the chief officers ring me and say, ‘what’s happening with this’ and I don’t know about it. So, I’m like ‘I don’t know I’ll get back to you’. So, you know, I say to my team ‘please just include me on everything’, I don’t want you not to talking to them, just include me in it so I don’t get embarrassed, so it doesn’t look like I don’t know what’s going on in my area” (Lower Management, Int12).

The use of communication reveals meanings and expectations of leadership. Through the strict compliance to the rank hierarchical structure in communication, police leaders are kept informed. In discussing the conventions of communication, police officers drew on narratives of credibility in terms of demonstrating considerable knowledge of their teams or areas of business; this was a prevalent theme in the analysis. Lack of knowledge is interpreted as weakness and understood as vulnerability in leadership, as the discussions of embarrassment revealed. In the context of discussing the processes of communication in the constabulary, the assumption of the successful police leader as ‘all knowing’, as a key theme identified, is illustrated below:

“As a senior leader, there’s an assumption that I should know everything about what’s going on in my area. So that’s the culture, so that underlines the culture, so as district commander, rather than strategically thinking or planning, or proactively working towards the future, you’re caught up in the day to day. I tell you what’s interesting, I should be able to go to a meeting and be asked a question and say, ‘I don’t know that, but I’ll find out’” (Middle Management, Int30).

The process of communication in the constabulary creates an ‘ordering’ and structure to leadership interactions. Communication in leadership clearly adheres to the rank structure, information passes through each rank; deviation is met with considerable resistance. The conventions of communication prioritise and strengthen the rank structure in leadership. This reveals the expectations of police leadership as ‘know your business’, ‘know your staff’,

discipline and formality. Successful leadership is interpreted against the ‘all knowing’ leader. Distance between senior and junior officers is emphasised and the importance of knowledge in leadership is reinforced.

The various mechanisms described construct and maintain distance and difference by rank. Leadership is similarly understood and enacted on these terms; leadership as differentiation and separation rather than accessibility and equality. Leadership is positioned ‘upwards’ and interconnected with rank. These practices reveal understandings of leadership in the police; police leadership is constructed emphasising formality, discipline, respect and ‘all knowing’.

The Assumptions of Rank and Leadership

During the interviews, all police officers discussed leadership using experiences and situations to illustrate their understanding. A prevalent theme in the analysis of the experiences of leadership revealed assumptions related to the authority of rank; the assignment of competencies and functions to rank. These assumed competencies related to rank are interrelated with assumptions about leaders and leadership. This section will provide an analysis of the assumptions that emphasise the authority of rank and consider the relationship with leadership.

Rank as Making Decisions

The majority of police officers discussed the relationship between rank and decision-making, and this revealed assumed responsibility for decision-making on the basis of seniority of rank. Police officers across all ranks spoke of senior rank as synonymous with decision-making, the rank structure described as facilitating and ‘known for’ decision making. Making decisions was not perceived as equally distributed across the constabulary therefore but assigned on the basis of seniority of rank. In the context of the relationship between rank and decision-making, the following quote shows the primacy placed on rank above the demonstration of competence and expertise, which is assumed through the accomplishment of senior rank.

“The police see rank as the be-all and end-all. There is a pseudo-militaristic approach to our hierarchy here which empowers certain individuals with the gift of decision

making, potentially without consonance of their level of skill, experience, expertise. And actually, we need to move away from the culture where you need to keep coming back to a supervisor for decisions” (Lower Management, Int11).

A discrete, related theme emerged in the example of chairing meetings. This practice was discussed in the interviews as an example of the assignment of decision-making by rank. Police officers explained that the most senior ranking officer typically acts as chair; this responsibility is assigned primarily by seniority of rank rather than expertise. The chair role was perceived by police officers as the ‘positioning’ of senior officers as the coordinator and decision maker of the meeting. One officer (lower management rank), for example, described the role of chair as being ‘in charge’ of the meeting, which was awarded to the most senior officer. The extent to which the process and structure of meetings reinforce traditional ways of working in relation to rank is described below:

“I quite often will chair a meeting related to a new piece of work, and very often I have not got a clue what the answer to anything is, but that’s not the expectation. I should know...I think it becomes the default because of our meeting structures, so if you look at daily management meetings, so the daily management meeting headed by the CBC Commander starts at about 9 o’clock or something like that. Before that everybody is in at the crack of dawn making sure that they are not going to get caught out during the DMMs so that instantly brings in that command and control, because actually what they are trying to do is please rather than lead...So the meeting structures reinforce the transactional nature of what we do, the hierarchy, and that I think is problematic” (Senior Management, Int33).

The relationship between rank and decision-making was emphasised in particular roles or departments in the constabulary. Police officers used the control room as an example of the arrangement of decision making authority by rank. In this environment, junior officers work in close proximity to senior officers which was discussed as creating a sense of limited influence and autonomy amongst junior ranks. Some roles in the constabulary therefore were perceived by police officers as ‘tightly’ managed and ‘restricted’ freedom and autonomy in terms of decision making. In discussing the role, the quote below highlights the restricted participation in decision-making through senior officers ‘holding on tightly’ to this authority.

“In the control room, you’re implementing the decisions from the chief inspector or superintendent... it can feel like a personal assistant to a manager, because they’re holding on quite tightly and rightly so, that’s appropriate for that environment” (Lower Management, Int20).

The interplay between rank and decision making was further complicated in high risk and high audience roles or situations. Lower and middle management officers in these environments discussed these roles in terms of visibility and exposure and related this to an increased sense of vulnerability. Consequently, officers explained that decision making in these environments was concentrated at the top of the constabulary. The nature of the role therefore emphasised the necessity to locate decision making in leadership with senior rank. In terms of leadership therefore, the clear association between rank and decision making was communicated as ‘control’ and ‘constraint’. The limited autonomy, despite middle management rank status, is captured below:

“I hold a rank but I have virtually no decision-making power... The chief has the ultimate decision-making authority for almost all decisions at a senior management level, ‘I just want to see that’, ‘I just want to ratify that’...now that I’ve climbed to this rank, I feel less empowered than I did as an inspector.” (Middle Management, Int17).

The analysis revealed a strong attachment to the operational necessity of decision making authority by rank; this was a dominant theme. Police officers discussed the functionality of the rank structure in high-risk situations and justified the allocation of decision-making ‘upwards’ in the need for clear lines of accountability and quick decision making. The authority of rank was understood therefore to enable accountability and responsibility and manage risk. The understanding of critical incidents therefore legitimatised the arrangement of decision making by rank. The following quote indicates the attachment to rank in terms of making decisions and the perceived functionality of the rank hierarchy for decision making in operational situations:

“You’ve got to have somebody who’s prepared to ultimately make the decision. And I think, you know, the rank structure allows and affords in a spontaneous situation to have that decision making. We’re used to making decisions with a lot of risk attached

to it, and actually, one thing that we're pretty good at is, when it's risky, we're prepared to go 'that actually now demands a decisive action'. Because you want to know somebody is sitting in the seat who's actually going to get on and go through it all and decide. People are comfortable then, they're almost reassured. Rank is known for the organisation as decision making" (Lower Management, Int13).

Police officers explained this provided 'top cover', a term used frequently in the interviews to describe the sense of accountability and protection in decision making from senior rank. In exploring the relationship between rank and decision-making, the quote below illustrates the level of accountability and reassurance provided by this 'top cover':

"It's like, it gives you top cover, a chief superintendent here talks about top cover, and it's absolutely right, if I have to make a difficult decision, you know, decisions with risk, no-win situations. So, it's a bit like that. The sergeant on the scene being able to say to an inspector in here, there's two ways of handling this, what do you think? He's passed on that responsibility to someone who's paid more to make that decision. So that top cover's really important, and when you're dealing with, like we are, threat and risk and vulnerability all the time, you've got to make those difficult decisions, and being able to go to someone who can steer you on it, and they take the decision off you because they're paid more, can be quite reassuring and comfortable, and we're generally comfortable with that" (Lower Management, Int20).

The implications of this assignment of decision making to senior rank were discussed in the interviews. Decision making by rank created a convention of 'reverting back' to senior rank, whereby senior officers are kept informed of decisions 'just in case'. This 'reverting back' was a prominent theme in the analysis and commonly explained in terms of risk aversion in decision making and leadership. In explaining this, most police officers spoke of the potential consequences of wrong decisions or making mistakes, and because of this, the tendency to assign decisions upwards. This provided a sense of reassurance, particularly for junior officers; if decisions are clearly located at particular ranks, the location of accountability is similarly clear. In exploring the relationship between rank and decision making, the importance of keeping senior leaders informed emerged in the analysis, particularly in terms of accountability and blame. This is illustrated in the quote overleaf:

“It’s like they think, ‘there’s a decision to be made here, I really should make it, but just in case I get it wrong, I’ll copy in my boss because he’ll tell me if it’s wrong, or they’ll tell me, if it’s wrong’. And we’ve got a bit of that culture. I honestly get 80 to 130 emails a day, 30 probably are for me, so most of them are cc emails, ‘just to let you know’ from my staff, so ‘you’re the boss just to let you know’.... Nobody wants to get one wrong and if you spread the blame or spread the pain as much as you can, you’re making it less damaging for yourself as an individual. We’re very risk adverse...No one wants to make a wrong decision, so you keep checking” (Middle Management, Int21).

During the interviews, the empowerment of staff to challenge leadership decisions was also discussed. Particularly amongst lower management ranks, senior ranks were discussed in terms of being trusted and skilled decision-makers. Consequently, the assumptions about rank and decision making were discussed as creating resistance to challenging the decisions of senior officers. The following quote from senior management indicates the reluctance to question upwards:

“So, I think the rank structure in the police definitely plays out and I do think amongst sergeants, probably inspectors, there’s still that reluctance to question the decision of a chief inspector or a superintendent. Of course, to a certain degree, that may stifle, I don’t think it necessarily stifles leadership qualities, but what it does do, is it may stifle people’s ability to deal with individual incidents” (Senior Management, Int09).

The conventions of decision making by rank positions decision-making ‘upwards’, which consequently facilitates a ‘looking up’ for direction. The authority of decision making is located at the senior levels of the organisation. This similarly positions leadership ‘upwards’ in the hierarchy. In the context of discussing the decision-making practices in the constabulary, the quote below reveals the relationship between decision making and rank in the positioning of leadership upwards:

“You’re constantly looking up in leadership, and that information is usually filtered through, their decisions. You’re looking up to that person, and basically what they’re saying, you look to your boss, and they look up to theirs. So, it’s all very much looking up” (Lower Management, Int03).

Decision making by rank communicates assumptions about responsibility and accountability. Senior officers are assumed to be skilled and trusted decision makers and the 'top cover' afforded by senior rank provides reassurance and protection to junior officers. The assignment of responsibility for decision making on the basis of rank prioritises and reinforces the rank structure in leadership, and acts as a challenge to the empowerment of junior officers. The assumptions about decision making therefore reveal the meanings of leadership. First, the conventions of decision making 'upwards' in the hierarchy communicates understandings of leadership as positional. Second, leadership in the police is also understood in terms of making decisions, risk, accountability and responsibility. Police officers, for example, discussed effective decision making as an important part of the police leadership role. Police leaders are perceived as decision-makers and the authority of rank can be used to facilitate this. The prioritisation of the rank structure in decision making furthers understanding of the practice of leadership in the police. Rank is used to facilitate decision making and accountability in operational situations but also acts as a barrier to empowerment and challenge in other situations. This reveals the extent to which the authority of rank can enable and inhibit leadership.

Knowledge and Experience of Rank

Assumptions about knowledge and expertise of senior rank was identified as a common theme in the relationship between rank and leadership. Police officers across all the ranks interviews provided examples of situations in which primacy was placed on rank over knowledge or expertise and explained that seniority of rank can overshadow skills. Competence is understood therefore through the 'lens' of rank. The following quote is an example of the way in which seniority of rank is conflated with strategic expertise:

“One of my staff has a PhD, so very much a scientific research background, and I put [name] forward to say you've got research skills, you've got someone who is a statistician and can look at different ways of thinking, but they're not a senior rank. We've always kind of gone 'that needs to be a strategic project so we'll put strategic people in' So it needs to be a strategic rank which means you'll always have a superintendent and a chief inspector there. We have to get better at working with people's skills” (Lower Management, Int12).

The analysis showed that the understanding of knowledge and rank was related to assumptions about experience. Police officers, particularly at lower management ranks, spoke of the assumption that senior officers have achieved their position through accruing experience and demonstration of competence. The quote below illustrates this association with rank and the 'building up' of experience:

“Ultimately people who’ve got to that level of rank within the service have put the effort in, they’d have done the exams, some of them will have quite a weight of service behind them as well, some people have done really well and got very high up very quickly, but ultimately, they have that service with them” (Lower Management, Int03).

In the doing of rank, knowledge and experience is situated at senior ranks; rank and competence become synonymous. The primacy of rank over knowledge and expertise means that some skills and experience are neglected in favour of the traditional rank structure; junior officers are excluded from strategic roles traditionally associated with strategic ranks. The primacy of rank over competence conflicts with the capacity of junior officers to challenge or 'influence up' in leadership. These assumptions about knowledge and experience reveal understandings about leadership and the credibility associated with rank and length of service in leadership. Leadership is understood therefore in terms of the display of commitment and competence in policing.

Rank as Protection and Filter

The analysis of the relationship between leadership and rank showed the protective function of rank as a dominant theme. The functionality of the rank structure was discussed in terms of 'filtering' pressures and demands through the organisation by most of the police officers interviewed; this was perceived by police officers as a benefit of the rank structure. Police officers, particularly at the lower management rank, spoke of their role as providing a 'shield' or 'buffer' between senior officers and their team. The leadership role, for police officers, had a protective function in 'filtering' the pressures and demands from senior officers. The quotes overleaf highlight the protective function of lower management ranks in leadership:

“I always saw, particularly as an [lower management rank], that I was a bit of a filter. There was a lot of pressure up above me to perform and what have you, but I was the filter for my staff.” (Lower Management, Int06).

“I’m held accountable and responsible by the people above me, which is quite right. I don’t want that pressure to be felt by them, so I hold the umbrella for my area, and I take that pressure, that’s fine” (Lower Management, Int11).

Police officers at the lower and middle management ranks spoke of their role in ‘filtering’ upwards and explained that part of their leadership role was protecting senior ranks from demands perceived as unnecessary. The rank structure was understood therefore in terms of a ‘two-way filter’, navigating the pressures and expectations through the hierarchy. The below quote illustrates the protection ‘upwards’ from the inspecting ranks:

“Because my [lower management rank] feels [his/her] job is to keep all the crap away from me, so all that stupid little things that [he/she] might deal with, which I don’t need to know about, and [he’s/she’s] quite right I don’t need to know about” (Middle Management, Int10).

The difference and demarcation of rank structure discussed earlier in this chapter is used to filter communication between the ranks. This was understood by police officers to provide protection between leaders and their staff. This reveals protection as important in police leadership, leadership is assumed to fulfil a protective function, leadership understood in protective terms. In the doing of rank, the protective function of leadership adheres to, and is aided by, the rank structure.

Respect and Fear of Rank

In exploring the influence of rank in leadership, assumptions about respect were particularly evident in the analysis. Police officers spoke of the automatic and unchallenged allocation of respect to rank. This contrasted by some police officers with respect that might be earned through positive interactions or awarded based on particular accomplishments. In the doing of rank, the assignment of respect in leadership is linked therefore with the attainment of rank. The quote overleaf illustrates this automatic assignment of respect to rank and contrasts

this with respecting ‘the person’:

“You know, you have two types of people, some people are absolutely crap at their job but I respect your rank, therefore I will be respectful when I talk to you, I will do as I am told, and I will try and discuss things with you and if you tell me “no, that’s not the way I want it done, I want it done this way” then, that’s the way it goes, because I respect the rank. So that is the basis of your relationship. Whereas other people, you respect them as people, individuals and police officers, and you respect their rank” (Lower Management, Int02).

In most of the interviews, the negative connotations using rank to gain respect in leadership were also discussed; this was typically discussed as indicative of poor leadership. The quote below describes how rank as an authority is employed to achieve respect:

“You hear people, don’t you? I am an Inspector, therefore you must respect me. Really? Why? ... I think we would work better if we could actually tone that down a lot and some people can do it and others can’t, but I think there is an element of, I have earned the right for this” (Senior Management, Int33).

In the doing of rank, respect is assigned on the basis of senior rank and similarly the authority of rank can be used to facilitate respect in leadership. The assignment of respect to rank communicates and preserves the formality of rank in interactions with senior officers. These assumptions about the respect of rank similarly reveal assumptions about leadership as formality, status and prestige. Leadership is also understood therefore in terms of respect.

The analysis also revealed a relationship between rank and fear as a prevalent theme. Police officers, particularly at lower management ranks, spoke of a sense of cautiousness, suspicion and fear towards senior ranking officers, particularly senior management rank. The status and authority of rank can provoke a sense of fear. This highlights the ‘presence’ of the authority of rank in interactions with leaders and the recognition of differential status. In discussing the relationship with senior officers, the following quotes capture the response to the authority of rank in terms of fear and concern about the expectations of leaders:

“There’s always been this little bit of fear within the police force about people higher up, a bit like any other organisation I suppose, the higher up you go, the more fearful

you are of them. There is this kind of fear or persona that anyone above an inspector, it carries this sort of fear around them” (Lower Management, Int03).

“When you get to chief constable, the ACC and the DCC, I’m always, not on my guard, that’s the wrong word if you like, it’s always a case that they expect me to know everything, you always have to think like that, and I don’t know everything so I’m thinking ‘oh god what are they going to ask me?’” (Lower Management, Int12).

The implications of the fear of rank for leadership were discussed. Most police officers considered this in terms of blame, fault-finding and risk aversion. In the context of discussing the fear of senior rank, the quote below captures the connection with risk aversion and punitive response:

“Cops feel if you put a foot out of line, they are going to hit with a big stick, PSD will come after them and that could be the end of their career. And actually, that creates a climate of fear, it creates a climate of risk aversion, non-decision making” (Middle Management, Int17).

The analysis showed a relationship between the assumptions of rank, such as decision making, protection and respect, and expectations of leadership. Leadership emerged as associated with strength and confidence, indicating masculine connotations of heroism. In discussing rank in leadership, police officers described skills such as courage, strength and determination. The following quotes illustrate this masculinised understanding in the use of rank in leadership:

“I think if you get a strong male voice, it’s like ‘oh he’s a force to be reckoned with’, ‘I’ll listen to that’. If I’m a strong female voice in the room, people tend to sit up a bit more, it has more negative connotations than a strong male voice, and that has probably become more noticeable the higher up the ranks I’ve gone, because the higher you go, it becomes fewer females you’re standing next in any case. Part of it is, I’m a loud and forward person, so it might be just because I have a big mouth and nothing to do with my gender at all. But, yeah, sometimes I’ve been ssshed down, and I wonder whether that is a gender function. And it’s been reflected back to me by

other colleagues, that they think it's because I'm female" (Middle Management, Int17).

"If I'd been a bloke, I wonder if I'd have been a more confident leader earlier on, you know, especially moving up to this rank, when you're younger and how you're brought up, the girls sat back and the boys made all the decisions" (Lower Management, Int14).

In the doing of rank, assumptions of fear are attached to the authority of rank. Fear of senior rank was explained by police officers in terms of blame; the role of leadership assumed in terms of responsibility and accountability for 'fault'. These assumptions about rank reveal understandings about the nature of leadership; leadership associated with risk, responsibility and discipline.

Final Considerations

The assumed authorities connected to rank about decision-making, knowledge, protection and respect were justified and explained by police officers in terms of the occupational necessity in operational situations. The assumptions about rank were connected to the crisis-management function of the police role; this was a particularly prominent theme in the analysis. Police officers typically referred to high-risk situations, such as public order or firearms incidents, to illustrate the functionality of these assumptions about rank for quick decision making and clear lines of responsibility and accountability. The authorities of decision making, knowledge, respect, protection of rank facilitated leadership in these operational situations. The presence of the authority of rank was perceived by police officers as necessary and valued in leadership in operational situations. Leadership in the police is understood therefore in operational terms. In discussing rank and leadership in operational situations, the influence of the crisis-management, and these assumptions about rank, on the practice of leadership is illustrated in the following quote:

"We are an emergency service, the clue's in the title, so it is very much I don't know what's going to happen in the next five minutes, and it sounds dramatic, but it could be I'm dragged off and I spend the next 18 hours which I didn't plan to do, and that's

the same for everybody, certainly police officer wise, in response to this job. So, you have to cope with that, that's part of our business. Then you've got to think about only certain positions have responsibility for things when they happen, so we have a rank structure, so we have certain places that we have to fill... The service does need people who say, 'just do it', because there is going to be a time where we'll ask people to do things that are a bit shitty, a bit against what they want to do, but it does still need to be done and quite timely" (Lower Management, Int29).

The analysis revealed that understandings of the police leadership role 'outside' shapes understandings and practice of leadership 'inside' the organisation. Most police officers spoke of the influence of the external crisis management role on leadership within the organisation. The impact of this external function on leadership is illustrated below:

"Our primary role to me is crisis management, and when you deal with crisis management, those involved in it, and even those who aren't, they really understand that you need that clear responsibility, we can make quick decisions in seconds and as long as everyone follows their level of command, that's why you need a command structure. We deal with crisis management really well...Where I think it's quite interesting with leadership is that when you get into the meeting situation or a situation where you need to analyse an issue and make decisions, and discuss it and listen to people, I think there's sometimes some weird and wonderful things happen in policing because it's very easy for us to resort to our crisis management head, because we're used to sitting at the table saying 'no I'm in charge, I'll make the decisions, you do this you do that'... I always think that sometimes that we take our police hats and helmets into rooms that we shouldn't." (Lower Management, Int20).

The high-risk, high-audience situations were perceived therefore to necessitate a command and control response with the emphasis on the authority of rank. The majority of police officers discussed the influence of this directive approach in these situations on relationships and interactions in leadership inside the organisation. Leadership interactions inside the organisation, therefore, reflect the same directive, autocratic approach used in operational situations. The influence of the external environment on the directive approach adopted in leadership is captured in the quote overleaf:

“On a day to day basis as police officers, we do handle difficult people, but it’s on a law basis, so ‘You will do this because the law says you will do this, and if you don’t, you’re going to be arrested’. We are very matter-of-fact with people. Taking that back to your relationships in work, sometimes that can come across in work where it probably shouldn’t do. So, it’s like, the same approach is applied to relationships at work, and that’s not the best way to deal with people you manage” (Lower Management, Int06).

A discrete theme in the analysis of the influence of the external environment on internal leadership practices was evident in discussions of public expectations. Where discussed in the interviews, public assumptions, police officers explained, position the police as leaders. Police officers, for example, described being seen by the public as ‘in charge’ and the public ‘looking up to you’ in operational situations. This shapes the perception of leadership inside the organisation as ‘decision maker’ and ‘in charge’. Similarly, some of the police officers spoke of public expectations to ‘fix it’ which consequently emphasises a directive ‘just do it’ approach to leadership within the constabulary. In discussing the influence of the external environment, the following quotes show the connection between public assumptions and expectations and leadership practices inside the organisation:

“Why do we fix things quickly rather than dealing with issues in a different way? There’s always that demand from the public, ‘fix it and fix it now’, the intolerance, you know... Instant gratification required by the public. So actually, faced with that, demand, demand, demand, do it now, do it now, fix it now, fix it now, you can find yourself slipping into ‘let’s just bobby it’, the expression ‘bobby it’ is ‘sort it’ make the problem go away now... there’s so much more we could offer in terms of leadership but there’s still that push constantly whether it’s from the public, whether it’s from the politicians, your MP’s letters, the media, demanding the police fix it there and then, now” (Middle Management, Int30).

“I do think that if you are too didactic or too commander control, people are fearful, I do think people expect me to be scary and demanding and didactic and aggressive. I mean I think it comes from being a police officer to some degree... people will say ‘I

can't believe you are a Police Officer, you don't look like one, you don't behave like one' so the public, they have preconceived ideas" (Senior Management, Int33).

The expectations and responsibilities in the external environment conflict with internal leadership practices. Most of the police officers discussed their authority to undertake significant external leadership responsibilities, but also spoke of feeling stifled and restricted by internal working practices. There is tension therefore between leadership within the 'inside' and 'outside' contexts, particularly evident in the doing of rank in leadership. The assignment of leadership authority 'outside' is interrupted by attachment to the doing of rank in leadership inside the organisation. The quotes below reveal the tension between leadership in the external and internal contexts:

"They have so much responsibility out there... but they can feel like managed children in many respects and actually, they don't have to keep coming back to people and asking, 'can I just do this?' 'can I have your authority for this?'...we need to move away from the culture where you need to keep coming back to a supervisor, they can make decisions" (Lower Management, Int11).

"I'm paid X thousand pounds a year to make critical decisions I can manage firearms for instance. I can make a critical decision as to whether to shoot someone or not, but if I want to spend a hundred quid, I've got to ask somebody... We are empowered to make big decisions on life or death situations, but, you know I need to get a signature to order what – three biros, you know what I mean" (Middle Management, Int21).

The assumptions associated with rank have implications for leadership. The demarcation of leadership responsibilities and capabilities and the positioning of these capabilities 'upwards' act as a barrier to the empowerment of junior officers in leadership. Influence or challenge upwards can be stifled through the assumed authorities of senior rank in leadership. The following quote captures the reluctance to influence upwards in leadership in the police, illustrative of the implications of the doing of rank in leadership:

"It's not my job to tell the chief how he should be running the constabulary. It's my job if that's the way you want it to go, if that's what we're aiming for, then right, I'll help get us there. But, if I don't agree with it, I'm thinking you know, I can't really

influence it now, I can give my opinion, but I don't think it will change the world”
(Lower Management, Int02).

Understanding the authority of rank reveals meanings about the nature and practice of police leadership. The authorities assigned to senior rank, in decision making for example, situates leadership upwards or above rather than as a shared process. Leadership in the police is understood therefore in positional, rank-based terms. The assumptions about rank also reveal the importance of discipline, formality and respect in police leadership. Effective leadership in the police is consequently understood in these terms. The use of rank in leadership is justified in terms that emphasise the functionality and importance of the rank structure in leadership, particularly in operational situations. This reinforces the importance of the authority of rank in the understandings of police leadership. Similarly, assumptions about knowledge and experience of senior rank reveal the importance of length of service and operational experience in leadership; credibility and effectiveness in leadership understood in this context.

The conventions and assumptions assigned to rank reveal police officers’ understandings about the nature and practice of leadership. In the doing of rank, rank is used to construct difference and distance in leadership; effective leadership is understood in the context of professional separation, rather than equality or participation. Competencies are assigned to rank, such as decision making, expertise or protection and consequently police leadership is understood in these terms. These assumptions assigned to rank therefore inhibit participatory or shared leadership practices. The analysis of the doing of rank has demonstrated therefore that rank is highly present in leadership. Similarly, the presence of rank in leadership can undermine attempts at participative or collaborative approaches to leadership. This highlights the power of rank to influence police leadership and the extent to which rank acts as a barrier to developing alternative leadership practices.

Part Three: The Undoing of Rank in Police Leadership

The undoing of rank describes the ways in which the authority of rank is minimised in police leadership. As noted, in comparison to the doing of rank, the undoing of rank was a less prominent understanding of leadership. The undoing of rank particularly evident in two ways. First, the authority of rank is downplayed through the construction of ‘rank-neutral’ environments which is considered in terms of the use of time and space. Second, the ways the rank structure is bypassed to minimise the authority of rank will be discussed. The implications of the undoing of rank to police leadership and the complexities in terms of power, response and resistance will then be explored. The undoing of rank further demonstrates therefore the negotiation of the authority of rank as an inherent feature of police leadership.

Police Leadership and the Construction of Rank Neutrality

The ways in which the authority of rank is downplayed through the construction of rank neutral environments is a recurrent theme in the undoing of rank. The vast majority of police officers spoke of rank as a barrier in leadership interactions, and police officers described various ways of designating spaces as rank neutral to challenge this. Time and space were used by police officers to create a sense of rank neutrality to minimise the presence of rank as an authority in leadership.

Time

Police officers across all ranks spoke of the importance of visibility and accessibility in leadership to overcome the barrier of rank. Typically, this was discussed in terms of physically ‘getting out of their office’. Police officers provided examples of ways they spent time in shared, communal space with their teams, as illustrated:

“So, this morning, I didn’t log on in here in my office, I logged on out there, and basically had conversations over a cup of tea... It’s about having that availability. It makes a massive difference.” (Lower Management, Int11)

As part of the decision to be visible, personable and informal interactions between the ranks were perceived as important. Some police officers, for example, spoke of the importance of 'walking around the station' and asking, 'how people are'. Rather than using this visibility to 'get things done' in terms of tasks therefore, the approach was discussed by these police officers as people-oriented. In the context of discussing their leadership style, the following quotes illustrate the emphasis on the informality of interactions with staff:

"When I come in the morning and I go and see the teams that are on, and I walk through the office and I make a point of making sure I say morning to all of the team. And straight away, they know I'm at work, they know I'm here, and we've already had a good interaction 'how are you?' all the rest of it. I'm visible, I'm accessible, anybody can grab hold of me, you know, I haven't just arrived up the back stairs gone in my room, people might think I'm down there, but nobody's even seen me all day" (Lower Management, Int13).

"Rank, you can have a huge impact on people... And it's just the silly little things that you do can have a, make a huge difference and an understanding that people will see you in the morning and if you are grumpy, it could go around a dozen, twenty, thirty, forty people that you were grumpy this morning" (Senior Management, Int35).

In the analysis, a relationship between visibility and accessibility in leadership emerged as a prevalent theme. During the interviews, police officers regularly referred to the importance of having an 'open door policy' in leadership. This accessibility was understood as creating an environment of open and inclusive communication with senior officers, irrespective of the rank difference. The quote below demonstrates the importance of accessibility between the ranks:

"I think, when people talk about an open-door policy, actually it's not about being visible, it's about people feeling confident enough that they can come and speak to you, that they can walk in, that they can email you and they can phone you, so on the whole, having that inclusive style" (Middle Management, Int21).

In discussing the impact of the visibility and accessibility of senior officers, police officers explained this as a 'humanising' process in leadership. Through time spent 'being seen',

emphasis is placed on the person rather than the rank and consequently the presence of the authority of rank is downplayed. The barriers and sense of difference between the ranks are minimised through how police officers' use their time. The quotes below illustrate the understanding of visibility as humanising process:

“You can't let rank speak for itself. So, you go out of your way to engage, to make yourself approachable and human and, you know, not use rank as the way in which you lead...it's always about getting to know the person” (Middle Management, Int30).

“I'm a [middle management rank], but it's important I think I have a human face, you know, I ask people to do things not tell them, I ask how they are, how they're day's been. Your staff need to relate to you” (Middle Management, Int21).

Police officers of all ranks however spoke of the challenges of visible leadership with their staff; this was a frequently cited challenge. Demands on their time, such as workload and large geographical areas of responsibility, were used as typical examples of difficulties in being seen by staff. In discussing the importance of visibility in leadership, the quote below highlights the geographical distance as a key challenge:

“I suppose the challenge really with all that is the geography that you know in terms of staff management and how I would like to run a team as a manager it just gets blown out the water by the fact that I don't see some of my staff for weeks, sometimes months” (Lower Management, Int18).

Visibility in leadership, as a key theme in the analysis, is used to challenge assumptions about the inaccessibility and remoteness of senior ranks. In the undoing of rank, time is used to minimise the presence of the authority of rank in leadership. Difference between the ranks is downplayed by emphasising the person 'behind' the rank. This reveals assumptions about the nature of leadership in the police. Effective leadership is understood in terms of visibility, accessibility and availability. Discussions about visibility also reveal police leadership as people-oriented, where relationships with staff are prioritised.

Space

The designation of space as rank-neutral environments emerged in the analysis of the undoing of rank in leadership. Police officers described attempts to manage the influence of rank in their leadership through the definition of situations as rank-neutral events. These rank neutral spaces were typically low-audience situations, such as informal one-to-one meetings, forums or team meetings; these were particularly prominent in the analysis. Often the designation of space as rank neutral involved verbally communicating the definition as such; one police officer, for example, described recognising this as “shoulders off” conversations, referring to the influence of the epaulettes on the police uniform. In discussing their leadership of their team, the quote below, through verbally communicating that everyone in their team has got the same rank, is an example of the construction of a space as rank neutral:

“So, what I’ve told everyone there is everyone there has got the same rank, we’re all equal, and we all have equal power in what we’re trying to say. People will only be open if you ask them to be open without having a rank there, it’s that type of thing of not asking stupid questions, there isn’t a stupid question if you don’t understand something, and we’ve not built up that confidence and trust that the sergeant and PC that came there can just talk” (Lower Management, Int37).

Most police officers discussed leading their teams in ways that downplayed the influence of rank. The Challenge Team was a common example used in the interviews to illustrate rank neutral space. This team have the remit to evaluate the functionality of Cainland Constabulary in response to the current fiscal demands. Part of the role of the Challenge Team was discussed by police officers in terms of thinking critically about all areas of the constabulary’s business. In the context of discussing the Challenge Team, the following quotes illustrate the attempt to create a rank neutral working environment where staff were considered as ‘not rank specific’ and on a ‘level playing field’. In this team, as the quotes reveal, attempts were made to minimise the influence of the authority of rank by using first names rather than reference to rank in sir or ma’am. Rank in this environment, according to one of the following quotes, had ‘almost disappeared’:

“You know, not rank specific in [The Challenge Team] ... We are all level-playing fields, everyone in the team gets that, are you going to be comfortable with it because we are all in it together? [The Challenge Team] is small... any small team I've

worked in I always found if you got, you know a group of people who are all trying to get the same goal then actually sitting in a room like we are now and somebody call you sir or ma'am, it's just really not going to work...when you are sat in an office and you are all trying to solve the same problem then you know you just don't need all that rank. You know you want those people in that room to be able to challenge, you know the Inspectors and Chief Inspectors and me... and they don't want to do that if they think that somewhere there is this barrier of rank there” (Middle Management, Int25).

“If you look at the challenge team, you will see there are police staff, sergeants there, inspectors and chief inspectors. They are all just working, they are all just getting on with it. All the rank has almost disappeared in that office” (Senior Management, Int35).

The analysis showed that language and uniform are important features in designating space as rank neutral. The formal reference to rank in the use of sir or ma'am situates the authority of rank within interactions between junior and senior officers. In undoing rank in leadership, most police officers used examples of situations where junior officers were asked to refer to them by their first name. This was perceived as an articulated minimisation of the presence of rank in leadership. The quote below is an example of the permission to downplay the authority of rank in low-audience situations:

“I always tell people that my mum named me [name] before the police named me chief inspector or inspector, so I am [name] to everyone. So, I have a closed meeting like this with all my command team and my sergeants and they'll call me [name]” (Lower Management, Int12).

The uniform was a dominant expression of rank in leadership and can therefore be used to minimise the presence of rank. The majority of police officers discussed the impact of non-uniformed situations on interactions. Training courses, often taking place away from their usual place of work, were typical examples provided by police officers. In these situations, police officers explained that they were requested to wear plain clothes. This designated the space as rank neutral, where the visible presence of rank through the uniform was minimised. Police officers explained that this removal of rank created a more 'open' forum between

junior and senior officers. In the context of discussing the influence of the uniform in leadership, the quote below describes the sense of free conversation between junior and senior officers in a non-uniformed training event:

“When we go away on courses and we’re in plain clothes, we don’t know the rank structures. So, I did a [course] recently and we had to wear plain clothes, and I was the lowest rank there, but when we all met, we could have conversations, so we were talking to each other as if, if they were wearing uniforms as superintendents I don't know if I'd have probably gone up to them” (Lower Management, Int31).

In the undoing of rank, the construction of rank neutral environments is an attempt to manage the influence of the authority of rank in leadership. The analysis revealed that time and space, typically low audience and low risk situations, are used in ways to communicate rank neutrality. Teams, meetings or events are assigned a rank neutral status, often verbally articulating this intention to junior officers; symbols of rank, such as the uniform or reference to sir and ma'am, are removed. Signals or cues, such as the use of first name terms and personable language, designate these spaces as rank neutral and therefore 'safe places' to challenge or bypass traditional conventions of rank in leadership.

The designation of space as rank neutral represents an attempt to remove the barrier of rank in leadership, where the authority of rank is perceived as unnecessary and therefore the presence of rank in these environments can be minimised. A sense of 'safety', equality or openness is constructed which facilitates participation and collaboration in leadership. In these situations, value is attached to influence and challenge between junior and senior officers in leadership, independent of rank. The use of space in this way reveals the understanding of leadership as a shared rather than an individual, top-down process. These environments facilitate alternative approaches to leadership, such as collaborative and inclusive forms, which are less influenced by the authority of rank.

Police Leadership and Bypassing the Rank Structure

Earlier in this chapter, the conventions of communication that adhere to the rank structure have been described, such as information filtering through each of the ranks. In the undoing of rank, internal communication mechanisms can also be used to downplay the influence of

rank in leadership. Police officers spoke of stepping outside of the rank structure in communication between junior and senior officers as ‘arcing’ the hierarchy.

Communication

Communication was a key theme identified in the analysis, and the bypassing of the rank structure in communication as a discrete theme. For example, police officers explained that the chief officer team has regular meetings with inspector and sergeants. These meetings allow the chief officer team to bypass the rank structure and speak directly with lower management ranks. The Chief Constable’s blog and the ‘Ask the Chief’ mechanism were also typical examples used by police officers to illustrate the bypassing of the rank structure by the chief officer team. The Chief Constable’s blog was explained by police officers as a channel for the chief constable to engage with the whole workforce without using the rank hierarchy. Similarly, the ‘Ask the Chief’ mechanism allows individuals to post questions via an email channel to the chief officer team. Questions then are assigned to the relevant department for consideration. Police officers discussed ‘Ask the Chief’ as a route in to communicate with chief officers regardless of rank. These mechanisms were discussed by police officers in terms of ‘opening up’ of the constabulary to challenge, questioning and ideas generation from all ranks. In discussing the impact of these mechanisms, the following quotes describe the ‘humanisation’ of senior leaders and facilitating openness and challenge throughout the constabulary:

“The Chief’s Blog is good...one was about taking his dog for a walk, I’ve just moved house and I’ve been redecorating it. That actually makes you identify with the person rather than just being a figurehead and if you’re just a figurehead you’re easy to like condemn and say, oh you’re a crap boss, just, why are you making us do this?... You actually say, oh they’re a human being just like us” (Lower Management, Int24).

“The Ask the Chief has got rid of that, you know, a PC feeling like they can only go to their sergeant with something, a sergeant to their inspector. And people are coming up with really good ideas” (Senior Management, Int35).

“There’s an Ask the Chief website, so challenge us on decisions that have been made, ask us, propose alternatives. It’s all about trying to create an open organisation, you know, an open structure around that” (Senior Management, Int08).

The downplaying of rank in communication was considered by police officers in terms of the accessibility and visibility of senior leadership. In discussing the notion of ‘good leadership’, the Chief Constable’s blog as an example of accessibility in leadership is illustrated below:

“Accessibility to senior leaders is key. We started blogging for the chief about 18 months ago, so try to understand that he’s trying to support the front line as much as possible but here are my challenges. You know, challenge that, ‘the ivory tower we’re not listening’ or the ivory tower as this mystical beast. It’s getting a clear message to the front line and they kind of get it now. It’s important to see what’s going on at chief officer level” (Lower Management, Int11).

The communication mechanisms were also discussed by most police officers in terms of bridging the gap between senior and junior officers to encourage influence in leadership outside of rank. The quote below highlights the impact of Ask the Chief in terms of openness, connection and challenge in leadership:

“Ask the Chief has brought about some confidence and actually, you know, it’s fine to bring new rationale out, and it challenges the people with the so-called expert area to receive new and interesting, innovative approaches. It’s quite a good connection, because you’ve got to start connecting the practitioners with the direction-and-control, the strategic thinking” (Lower Management, Int31).

In the undoing of rank, internal communication processes can be used to overcome the barrier of rank in leadership; the construction of rank-neutral processes. The Chief Constable’s Blog and Ask the Chief are examples of communication that challenges conventions of rank to facilitate influence and participation in leadership throughout the constabulary. Through these processes, senior leaders are presented as relatable and accessible figures, placing less emphasis on the authority of rank in leadership. The use of communication to bypass the rank structure reveals the understanding of police leadership in terms of accessibility, visibility

and participation. Leadership in the police understood, in other words, as a shared process between the ranks.

Influence of Role

The analysis showed a relationship between role and rank in understandings of leadership. The majority of police officers interviewed discuss their experience of roles that challenged the conventions of rank in leadership. These roles afforded junior officers high levels of influence, freedom and autonomy, despite their junior rank position. For example, the span of influence of an inspector with the portfolio for mental health was constabulary-wide and there was considerable freedom and autonomy afforded to the role. Similarly, the inspector in the force incident manager role in the control room has force-wide responsibility for critical incident management; considerably more responsibility than that assigned to colleagues of the same rank in other areas of business. District leads of local policing areas, at middle management rank, discussed the increased freedom and sense of ownership in the delivery of local policing, which was perceived as different to the autonomy of colleagues of the same rank in other areas of business. These roles were considered as challenging assumptions about rank and leadership; junior officers within this role were assigned considerable freedom and responsibility, discussed as “beyond their rank.” The quotes below capture the influence of role in leadership:

“I was a local policing commander, so I had an area, with a lot of staff, yes then I [felt like a leader]. I felt like this is my patch, I’m running the show, these are my teams, I was making the decisions” (Middle Management, Int19).

“We've got some really good inspectors who are leaders because they've got more responsibilities and they have got a geographical area that is theirs and yes they've got targets to hit but actually how you do it is down to you to lead that team though” (Middle Management, Int25).

A relationship between the external role and the practice of leadership inside the organisation emerged in the analysis of the undoing of rank in leadership. Police officers described the nature of their role outside the organisation as influential to their leadership style with their staff. Officer spoke of roles working with partner agencies, where the importance of

influence, negotiation and compromise was discussed. Officers explained, for example, that external partners were not 'compellable'; the authority of rank, in this environment, could not be used to 'get things done'. The nature of the external role was discussed therefore as influencing leadership practice within the organisation; police officers spoke of adopting a more participatory approach to their leadership, with less emphasis on the authority of rank. The following quotes illustrate the influence of external roles in leadership:

"The arrangement for [partnership working] is very different to that, it's very much more, as I said, negotiation and influence, so I think that's a model I'd like to adopt, so instead of being forthright, demanding, very much 'it's my way or the highway', it's all about negotiation and influence really" (Middle Management, Int22).

"You know, the operational firearms incident, make that decision in five seconds, do it, resolve it. But trying to apply that approach to partners, it doesn't work, because what you do is 'well this is the way forward' but actually you've got four or five other partners which are intricate and key to that working, and you haven't sold it to them, then it's never going to get delivered. In terms of working with partners, is all about influencing and negotiating, it's a different job... my rank here, for partners, isn't that relevant, it's all about influencing and negotiating" (Middle Management, Int30).

In addition to assumptions about leadership and rank therefore, police officers considered leadership attributes in relation to role. Certain roles within the organisation disrupt conventions of rank and leadership, particularly evident in the undoing of rank. Within these roles, junior officers are assigned authority in leadership 'beyond' their rank position and likewise rank cannot be used to direct activity in working with external partners. These roles consequently facilitated different approaches to leadership, such as shared and participatory practice, and understandings of leadership in terms of freedom and autonomy, negotiation and influence. The particularities of role complicate the relationship between rank and leadership and further reveal the situated nature of leadership in the police.

Rank Neutrality and the Implications for Leadership

The strategies to minimise the authority of rank, such as bypassing the rank structure in communication, challenge the conventions of rank in leadership. The key theme identified in the analysis therefore is that alternative approaches to leadership were possible in rank neutral situations. In the analysis, situations or spaces of rank neutrality revealed inclusivity, participation, influence and challenge and creativity and authenticity in leadership. In the undoing of rank, leadership was therefore understood in these rank neutral terms.

Inclusivity in Leadership

The downplaying of the authority of rank, for example the visibility and accessibility of senior leaders, challenges traditional conventions of distance and difference between the ranks. The majority of police officers spoke of the importance of creating a sense of team in their leadership, with an emphasis on inclusiveness, equality, and building rapport between senior and junior officers. The below quote describes this sense of team, with an emphasis on people within the team rather than rank as a demarcation or separation in leadership:

“We’re a team, we have to look out for each other. And even upwards, I’ll say ‘you look a bit tired boss, are you alright?’ and it’s nice, in actual fact, it reassures you as a leader that your team are looking out for you as well, watching your back. Paying attention to people, irrespective of rank...you’re human” (Lower Management, Int37).

Strategies to downplay rank, such as attempts at communicating visibility and accessibility in leadership, help to challenge assumptions of the remoteness and invisibility of senior leadership. Emphasis is placed on building trust and equality between senior and junior officers in leadership; trust in leadership was a dominant theme identified. In discussing the perceptions of good leadership, the following quote highlights this association between visibility of leaders and trust in leadership:

“Some inspectors you don’t see very much at all, and I’m speaking from when I was a sergeant myself, there’s some sort of, you know, occasionally they throw out a couple of emails telling you, you should be doing something, but they’re like a mystical magical thing, you never actually see them. You need to actually take time to sit in the briefings, come in and talk to people and learn a little bit about people, and follow that up.... You should be seen, as a leader, you’re not some distant person, because

otherwise people don't trust you, if they don't know you, they don't trust you" (Lower Management, Int02).

In the downplaying of rank, emphasis is placed on the shared occupational identity of being a police officer, being part of a team, rather than the internal demarcation by rank. Most police officers, for example, spoke of the occupational solidarity within their teams, a shared positioning and status of senior and junior officers. Within a discussion about the meaning of good leadership, the quote below captures this equality in leadership through drawing on notions of shared occupational identity:

"That's the big thing about being a leader, that you are approachable and you're not putting yourself above. Just because I am an [lower management rank], it doesn't make me any better than anyone else. It makes me the same as everyone else, we're all police officers" (Lower Management, Int01).

In downplaying the authority of rank, rank is not used to differentiate between leaders and non-leaders. Visibility, accessibility and approachability of senior officers, for example, are used to challenge the barrier of rank in leadership. Leadership is understood and communicated as a shared, inclusive and equal process.

Participation in Leadership

In downplaying the influence of the authority of rank in leadership, primacy is placed on expertise and knowledge above rank position. Some police officers spoke of leadership as competency-based rather than specific to rank. This perception challenges conventions in leadership that conflate rank with expertise and knowledge. Competence, expertise and knowledge are constructed therefore as rank-neutral. In discussing the influence of rank in leadership, the quote below describes the preference for competence over rank:

"What's more important for me is competence. So, having the ability to engage people, having the ability to influence and negotiate with people. You know, it doesn't matter if that's a PC to me, I would rather have them on my team rather than just someone because of what their rank is" (Lower Management, Int12).

In downplaying rank, responsibility and decision making is shared rather than assigned on the basis of rank; this was a discrete theme in the analysis. Some police officers, particularly at lower and middle management ranks, spoke of the importance of consultation and participation in leadership, placing less emphasis on the authority of rank. Decision making, for example, was discussed as a consultative and participatory process, rather than rank-based. In the context of discussing their leadership style, the construction of decision making as a shared, rank-neutral process is illustrated below:

“I think on a more personal note, my team’s views are really important, so I would consult with the team about decisions we make, as a command or as a department, and make sure they’re involved in the decision making, create that environment... it’s not just about my views because I’m a higher rank” (Middle Management, Int22).

The assignment of decision making and expertise to senior rank is challenged through minimising the authority of rank in leadership. Responsibilities and decisions are instead shared between junior and senior officers. Junior officers are encouraged to participate in leadership and consequently leadership is constructed as a shared and collaborative process.

Influence and Challenge in Leadership

The analysis revealed the construction of rank neutral situations as an attempt to create an environment of open discussion and challenge. Police officers, particularly at the middle and senior management ranks, recognised the authority of rank as a barrier to influence and challenge upwards in the organisation. In discussing the relationship between challenge and rank in leadership, the following quotes from senior and middle management capture the recognition of rank ‘getting in the way’ of open discussion and challenge in the constabulary:

“We want people to challenge and they don’t want to do that somewhere there is this barrier of rank ... you end up going along with something just because somebody of higher ranking said so, we want people to have that confidence to challenge that” (Middle Management, Int25).

“We don’t want people to just take everything for granted. You know, they need to understand that they work in a hierarchical structure, of course they do. I think in

policing, policing tends to sometimes to get hung up on that hierarchical structure, and you probably notice, people are calling people “sir” or “ma’am”, to me that can just gets in the way of the ability for people to challenge. I expect people to question and challenge and ask you know is that really the way of doing things?... Sometimes I fear that the nature of our hierarchy as an organisation mitigates against that, and people, some people, feel less able to do that” (Senior Management, Int08).

As a related, discrete theme, police officers spoke of the value of questioning and challenge in leadership irrespective of rank, for example, explaining the importance of ‘bringing people with them’ rather than imposing change. Challenge upwards was discussed as a component of good leadership by the vast majority of police officers. The following quote describes the necessity of questioning and challenging senior leaders:

“I think there’s less and less reliance on rank because I actually think that our staff are far more sophisticated than they’ve ever been, far more questioning, far more challenging in terms of ‘why?’ and you can’t just always rely on ‘because I said so’ because I’m the inspector or I’m the chief superintendent. People are much more wanting to hear why we need to do that” (Middle Management, Int30).

Influence in leadership also emerged as a prominent theme. Police officers discussed the importance of creating opportunities for junior officers to influence upwards. Senior officers, for example, spoke of not having a ‘monopoly’ of good ideas and the importance of accessing different ideas across the constabulary. In the undoing of rank, ideas and knowledge, in other words, are viewed as rank neutral. The following quotes reveal the value attached to ideas and influence, irrespective of rank:

“I’m not the fountain of all knowledge, so I appreciate it, others might not appreciate it, but there are others below me who wouldn’t dream of doing it, because you’re still seen as the district lead, you know, ‘don’t tell that to the superintendent’, well actually, I appreciate it.” (Middle Management, Int10).

“I can take ideas upwards... there's no inhibition to that anyway, there's nothing that says you couldn't do that and I'd like to think that's the same for certainly my staff in

that they could come to me and say look why don't we do this because it seems to be a better idea, I've no issue with that at all" (Lower Management, Int14).

The authority of rank inhibits challenge and influence 'upwards' in the constabulary. However, influence and challenge, as a two-way process between senior and junior officers, is understood as an important part of leadership. The contribution of junior officers in leadership, in other words, is valued. In the undoing of rank in leadership, rank neutral environments create 'safe spaces' in order to facilitate this open challenge, irrespective of rank.

Creativity and Authenticity in Leadership

The analysis also revealed that the authority rank was perceived to stifle creativity and innovation within the constabulary; the stifling influence of rank was discussed often in the interviews. Senior and middle management officers in particular discussed rank as an inhibitor to 'doing things differently' in leadership. The downplaying of the influence of rank was discussed as important to facilitate creativity and innovation within the organisation. In discussing innovation in leadership in a rank-based hierarchy, the quote below shows the value of creativity as rank neutral in leadership:

"I would like to think that we have the emerging culture here where there is appreciation of good ideas... people's ability to think, people's ability to innovate is actively encouraged, recognised and rewarded. And the rank is not important" (Senior Management, Int35).

Leadership and authenticity was a prominent theme in the analysis; the downplaying of rank was considered important way to facilitate this. Police officers, particularly at the lower management ranks, discussed rank as inhibiting honesty and trust in leadership; a sense of fear or blame was associated with the presence of rank in leadership. The authority of rank was perceived to 'get in the way' of 'genuine' working relationships with leaders. These perceptions were particularly evident when police officers responded to a question about the impact on leadership if rank was 'invisible'. The invisibility of rank revealed the potential for 'authenticity' and 'honesty' in leadership illustrated in the quotes overleaf:

“If rank was invisible, I think people would be more honest, their personalities would come out more... I think people are pretending to be something that they’re not...it’s that fear of rank and getting into trouble...So the rank, it’s all about delimitating that authority I suppose. I just don’t think you get people’s honesty, you take it away” (Lower Management, Int12).

“Authenticity goes out of the window I think because people change their behaviour to leaders upwards because, an element of fear I think potentially... I perceive people tend to conform to a stereotypical persona when they take a responsible leadership position. That’s not authentic. Authenticity is still being the same person that you are outside of the work, inside of the work. Authenticity is about, who are you as a person? How can you influence them as people? How can you connect to them as people in an authentic way that they want to follow you? Putting barriers up is not the way” (Lower Management, Int11).

The authority of rank acts as a barrier to authenticity and creativity in leadership. In the undoing of rank in leadership, rank neutral space represents an environment in which the barrier of rank is challenged to facilitate authentic, more ‘genuine’ and open working relationships between junior and senior officers.

The downplaying of rank creates a designated safe space to enact alternative forms of leadership. In rank neutral space, leadership is constructed in terms of competency or expertise rather than solely a product of rank. Challenge, creativity and collaboration in leadership are facilitated in these environments. Discussions with police officers about the barrier of rank reveal understandings of leadership as a shared, participatory and inclusive process. This conceptualisation of leadership places less emphasis on the use of rank as a resource ‘to get things done’ in leadership. The undoing of rank therefore facilitates more participatory leadership activity through, for example, seeking junior officers’ views. Conventional wisdom of leadership in the police, such as senior officers as assumed decision makers, can be challenged. In the safety of rank neutral environments, conventional assumptions about leadership are suspended, without judgment, exposure or risk.

The Power and Permission of Rank Neutrality in Leadership

The construction of rank neutral environments represents an attempt to downplay the influence of the authority of rank in leadership. The analysis revealed that the influence of rank, although minimised in these environments, was not dissolved completely; differential authority by rank still exists. Police officers referred to the continual presence of rank in leadership using terms such as ‘aura’ and described the ‘etiquette’ of rank as ‘everywhere’. The negative impact of the presence of rank in leadership is revealed below:

“It’s kind of like, organisational symbology, it’s like, the biggest obstructive thing, you know, it’s the elephant in the room” (Lower Management, Int11).

“It’s difficult in a rank-based organisation, I think that’s as much a cultural thing, people get indoctrinated into, you know, this is the way it is...Understanding the power of leadership, understanding the power of ranking. Understanding the force for good that it can be, but also if you abuse it, the force from evil that it can be” (Senior Management, Int08).

Most importantly, the authority of rank is required to designate the space or interaction as rank neutral; permission is required by the most senior ranking officer. Junior officers for example cannot decide to call a senior officer by their first name without prior permission; this was a dominant theme in the analysis. In the context of discussing the influence of rank in leadership interactions, the following quote describes the permission required and resistance to referring to senior officer on first name terms:

“I am forever saying to people ‘call me [NAME]’...because it almost psychologically causes you to behave differently, when someone is sir or ma’am. But no, I do try really hard to get past that” (Senior Management, Int33).

The construction of rank neutral environments in leadership therefore requires permission from senior ranks in the organisation and consequently contains the authority of rank. The undoing of rank, in other words, requires the permission and authority of rank.

The presence of rank in rank neutral environments was a dominant theme in the analysis. Officers at lower management rank, in particular, spoke of their awareness of the authority of senior officers, despite attempts at downplaying this. In the context of discussing the response to a consultation meeting, as an example of downplaying rank through encouraging participation in leadership, the quote below captures the presence of the power and authority of senior rank:

“You know, a former chief was known for it, hold a consultation meeting, but he was a skilled narrator and he was in charge, so with this power, it was almost visible, yes, he would welcome you asking questions in the right way, but there were limitations. It didn’t feel like there were free discussions” (Lower Management, Int20).

The necessity of permission situates the authority of rank within rank neutral environments. The discussions reveal therefore the significance of rank as an influence in leadership. The influence of rank is minimised in rank neutral environments but not entirely removed. Rank neutral environments are not rank free therefore; the power and authority of rank is downplayed but still present.

The Staff Officer: A Case Study of Rank Neutrality in Leadership

The relationship between rank and the staff officer role was particularly prominent in the analysis. Police officers interviewed drew on previous experience of the staff officer role to describe their experiences and perceptions of leadership. The staff officer provides operational and strategic support to the chief officer team. There are a number of staff officer posts to support the senior management team of Cainland Constabulary. A staff officer of inspector rank supports the chief constable and deputy chief constable and sergeants act as staff officers for the assistant chief constables and chief superintendents.

In terms of leadership in the constabulary, the role is unique. Staff officers work in close proximity with chief officers and the role also involves providing advice to chief officers about the frontline implications of strategic initiatives. The staff officer role therefore creates distinctive experiences and perceptions about the nature and practice of leadership in the police.

The Staff Officer and Undoing of Rank

The analysis showed that the staff officer role challenged conventions of rank in leadership. Police officers predominately spoke about this in two main ways. Firstly, police officers discussed the increased exposure and access to senior leadership. The exposure to senior leadership challenged the barriers of rank in leadership; police officers, for example, spoke of the role as breaking down barriers of rank and building working relationships with senior leaders, which they described as ‘humanising’ senior leaders to junior officers. The increased access to senior leadership was also discussed by police officers in terms of their ability to influence. Police officers with experience of the staff officer role described it as a position of influence, explaining, for example, being asked their opinions by chief officers. The impact of removing the barrier of rank on leadership is described below:

“The staff officer role was one of the most empowering roles for me personally because it gave me a relationship with the senior operational leaders, superintendents, the chief superintendents, because they knew I was the right-hand man to the chief and the deputy chief. So, their attitude changed, their behaviour changed. So, I was able to have more open conversations with them which I would have perhaps never have allowed myself to do, certainly these guys wouldn’t allow themselves to do, in that role. So, I’ve been incredibly empowered to try and influence them” (Lower Management, Int11).

In the staff officer role, police officers felt confident and empowered to participate and influence in leadership. The increased visibility of senior leaders in particular shaped understandings of leadership in terms of accessibility and participation.

Second, the majority of police officers explained that a large part of the staff officer role is acting on behalf of the chief officer team. The role was discussed in terms of having constabulary-wide influence, where staff officers would, for example, delegate tasks to senior leaders in the organisation on behalf of chief officers. Junior officers, at inspector or sergeant rank, would often therefore be requesting work from more senior ranking officers. Rather than adhering to the rank hierarchy in delegating or influence, the staff officer role represents a ‘stepping out’ of the rank structure in leadership. The following quotes capture the extent to which the staff officer role challenges the conventions of rank in leadership:

“As staff officer, a lot of work goes through you, so there is influence there. I would sometimes ring people and they’ll go ‘ah-oh’, because I was often the spokesperson for the chief. And it’s peculiar, because I would, daily, task senior officers with pieces of work” (Lower Management, Int31).

“You know, you’re speaking on their [chief officers’] behalf a lot of the time, going to meetings in other forces with ACPO rank, it makes you think, did I really do that? It just gives you confidence, when you think back to what you’ve achieved. It turned on a few light bulbs for me, that’s the best way to describe it” (Lower Management, Int37).

“I was dealing, as a sergeant, with superintendents and chief superintendents and chief inspectors. You have to manage upwards as a staff officer, basically you’re getting the superintendents and everybody else to do what the chief superintendent wants, but he’s not told them directly, you have to tell them and you’re only a sergeant” (Lower Management, Int04).

The staff officer role represents a safe space where conventions of rank in leadership are challenged. Through junior officers contributing ideas and opinions to chief officers, leadership is constructed in terms of accessibility, inclusivity and participation. In contrast to the strict adherence to the rank hierarchy in communication and influence, the staff officer role has permission to bypass assumptions and expectations.

The Staff Officer and Doing of Rank

The staff officer role was discussed by police officers as a challenge to the conventions of rank in leadership. Police officers perceived the staff officer role as a ‘stepping out’ of rank conventions in leadership but importantly on a temporary basis relative to the role. In describing the staff officer experience, the situated nature was a particularly prominent theme. The ‘bubble’ of the staff officer role is revealed in the following quote:

“My style wouldn’t be a bosh, bosh, bosh, email out, ‘why’s this happened’. So, I didn’t create too many enemies amongst the superintendent ranks, because I know it

sounds awful, but that was an aim of mine not to upset people, purposefully thought that, because that can happen. Because when you leave the staff office, it's a very lonely world out there, because you know, you haven't got that bubble" (Lower Management, Int37).

The analysis revealed continued adherence to the etiquette of rank amongst staff officers as a dominant theme. Reflecting on their experience in the staff officer role, the vast majority of police officers discussed their reluctance to call senior officers by their first names. The quote below reveals the attachment to the formality of rank, despite the development of close working relationships with senior officers:

"I have been working with chief officers probably for the last ten years or so really in various roles...you know even if it's been three or four chiefs now over that period of time, you can have conversations and still never call the chief by the first name" (Middle Management, Int25).

Similarly, despite the permission to act on behalf of chief officers, most police officers discussed their awareness of the differential rank status. Police officers, for example, spoke of tasking senior officers with a respect for the authority of rank and recognition of their rank position. The following quote portrays the sense of 'rank consciousness' in the conduct of the staff officer role:

"You've got to be careful, you know, in this role, you can't let it get to your head, think you're a mini chief constable or something. Because I'm an Inspector at the end of the day, and once this posting has finished, I'm back out on area, working with these people again. So, I am aware of it definitely, definitely aware that they're senior. I still call them sir or ma'am, I always look at them as a senior officer" (Lower Management, Int31).

Whilst on one hand, the exposure to senior officers challenged the barrier of rank and facilitated participation in leadership, the close proximity was also discussed in terms of limited freedom and autonomy. Senior officers, for example, retained decision making and responsibility. In understanding leadership as autonomy and decision-making therefore, the quote below reveals the limited sense of 'space' to achieve this in the staff officer role:

“As a staff officer, you’re actually doing it for someone else... if you’re writing a speech or a presentation or doing a piece of work, it’s not how you would set it out, as a leader, so you’re doing it for someone else. So, it’s like you facilitating their leadership rather than doing yourself.” (Lower Management, Int31).

The staff officer role provides a protected space for challenging the conventions of rank in police leadership; the role is an example of the ‘stepping out’ of the rank hierarchy in leadership. Leadership, in this context, emerges as participatory and collaborative process between junior and senior officers. However, the authority of rank in leadership, although downplayed, retains influence. The continued reference to rank, in the use of sir or ma’am, communicates awareness of the differential rank status; a rank consciousness. The presence of rank retains influence over the process of leadership. Likewise, the role is assigned ‘special status’; permission to work outside of the expectations of the hierarchy in leadership, with the implicit understanding that the individual will return to ‘business as usual’ on completion of the staff officer posting. It is not a permanent transformation of the expectations of rank in police leadership therefore, but contextual allowance. This reveals the situated nature of the construction of police leadership.

The Response to Rank Neutrality in Leadership

The downplaying of rank challenges traditional conventions of rank as an authority and resource in leadership. The response to attempts to minimise the presence or barrier of rank in leadership emerged in the analysis as a recurrent theme, and in particular, the resistance and ‘meaningfulness’.

Resistance to Rank Neutral Leadership

The vast majority of police officers discussed resistance from their staff to attempts to minimise the presence of rank in their leadership. The reference to senior officers on first name terms was a typical example used by police officers, and this was discussed often in the interviews. The quote overleaf describes the response to instead emphasise the formality of rank in leadership:

“It doesn't matter though how many times I tell them that, if there is someone else in the room who they don't know, they will call me [sir/ma'am]. Because they feel they don't want to be disrespectful, because they don't know who that individual is or their agenda is or anything else. If anyone is nearby they will call me [sir/ma'am]” (Lower Management, Int24).

Similarly, police officers spoke of fear, suspiciousness and scepticism in response to attempts to downplay rank in leadership. This was particularly evident in terms of visibility and accessibility of senior leadership, as attempts at downplaying the barrier of rank, where senior officers explained the fear in response to their presence; this was a prevalent theme. In discussing the impact of rank in leadership, the following quotes illustrate the fear and resistance to informal interactions with senior officers:

“I'm a [middle management rank], I see myself as myself, and sometimes I do, I just want to sit down and have a chat with someone, just to get away from work, but it's like, gosh, I've got to be quite selective about who I go and sit with because they'll think 'what the hell is [he/she] doing sitting down with me?'... I still go in, you know, sit down and speak to my PCs, and I'll talk to them about anything, it might be about what was on Eastenders last night, and I know the sergeant is hovering in the background, thinking 'what is he going to say to the superintendent?'. Does the [middle management rank] have some reason for coming in here and talking to them? Or does [he/she] just want to pass the time of day? And that's the inspectors and the chief inspectors too, because they have a fear, and this is nothing else other than historic, a culture thing, they will have a fear of 'what's the superintendent doing?' 'Why is [he/she] sitting down talking to my PCs?'”(Middle Management, Int10).

“I sit here now as a [middle management rank], I'm no different in my thinking...to what I what I was like when I was a PC, I'll go and talk to anybody, and I want people to come and talk to me, you know, 'what are you doing?' 'how're you getting on' 'what's your day been like today?' But they don't view you like that anymore, they view you, not as [NAME] they view you as 'oh my God the [middle management rank] come to speak to me'. You know, either 'what have I done wrong?' or 'bloody

hell, how can I make this as short an interaction as I possibly can' because of the rank issue" (Middle Management, Int30).

There was also evidence of resistance to alternative, rank-neutral leadership practices. Police officers spoke of the challenges to the acceptance and development of participatory or collaborative decision making with junior officers. The quote below captures this resistance to shared decision making and the attachment to the use of rank as a resource in leadership:

"What does happen however is that people will jump to that tune, so if somebody does say 'I don't care, I am the Chief' then it will happen... I don't do that sort of thing very often... It's not always valued. But I think that is because that is what we have come to expect of people... I quite often will chair a meeting related to a new piece of work...I will sit there and say 'Right, today's problems is x, I need your help' and a lot of people find that hard to come into a meeting of that nature" (Senior Management, Int33).

A discrete theme in the analysis was the relationship between resistance to downplaying rank and leadership training and development. Some of the police officers discussed the lack of investment in skills to 'do things differently' in leadership, which led to reverting to using rank as a resource in leadership. Police officers, for example, spoke of sharing decisions in leadership as 'more difficult', 'time consuming' and 'uncomfortable' and instead therefore maintained senior officer as the default decision maker. The lack of training to equip police officers to adopt alternative practices in leadership is described in the following quotes:

"There are other people who say, actually it's hard work engaging people and getting people around saying, 'what do you all think' and problem solve things together because you'll always get the idiotic view from Jim over there or whoever, 'he'll have his say but we'll ignore it' attitude, so actually it's more comfortable to just tell me what to do in the first place. I just wonder if that then, the softer style is harder, maybe that's where we need to do more work with people to develop them to operate in that way so as a result, all levels just acquiesces back to the command and control side of it." (Senior Management, Int08).

“I always say the minute you have to point at your shoulders and say, ‘I’m your inspector, you will do as you’re told’, you’ve lost it with that individual because there are other ways of dealing with it.... there may be reasons for that, but it is an extreme last resort. But we don’t give people the skills or and that training do to that” (Lower Management, Int06).

The analysis revealed that attempts at downplaying rank in leadership are met with a response to emphasise and prioritise the authority of rank. Reference to senior officers on first name terms, for example, is resisted in favour of the formal recognition of rank through sir and ma’am. Rather than dissolving the influence of rank, the authority of rank is instead reinforced. The fear of senior rank in informal interactions between senior and junior officers similarly reveals the enduring presence of rank as a barrier in leadership. The perception of downplaying rank as the more difficult and resisted option was considered in terms of the lack of training to adopt alternative rank-neutral practices in leadership. Consequently, the use of rank to direct activity is reinforced as the default, conventional approach to leadership.

Meaningfulness of Rank Neutral Leadership

The authenticity of rank neutral practices in leadership emerged in the analysis as a prominent theme. Police officers discussed their understandings of the downplaying of rank in terms of ‘meaningfulness’. Particularly at the lower management ranks, police officers spoke of interpreting these attempts as emphasising, rather than downplaying, rank in leadership. In discussing attempts to remove the barrier of rank by chief officers, the quote from a junior officer highlights the presence of the authority or ‘power’ of rank within these interactions:

“We meet, all the [lower management rank], the Chief and the Dep every year...I’m daunted, I’m nervous walking up those stairs and like hot under the collar thinking there’s a lot riding on it... I think if I hadn’t performed very well, would I still be sitting in here doing the same role that I’m doing now?... They wield so much power, I think you’re so concerned if you make a mistake it will have an effect on you, like your day to day living... they could post you like an hour away from where you live” (Lower Management, Int24).

There was also evidence of conflicting messages or expectations in the downplaying of rank in leadership as a discrete theme. Police officers spoke of senior officers articulating situations as ‘rank neutral’ but their practice was instead interpreted as communicating an emphasis of rank in leadership. This was particularly evident in the context of situations designed to facilitate challenge between junior and senior officers, where officers interviewed at lower management rank spoke of adherence in practice to senior officers as decision makers. The conflict in negotiating the presence of rank in leadership is captured in the quote below:

“I have a good example, we went to a meeting one day, it was called a consultation meeting, and we were looking at different things in the organisation and how we were going to move forward. It was chaired by the Chief Superintendent, and they said it’s a consultation meeting, you know, ‘the idea is we all get together, talk about what the issues are, and we move forward, we’ve got a couple of hours, so nobody be shy, let’s throw all these ideas in the air and see where we get’. But then went on to speak about their vision, honestly for about an hour and a half, and then said, ‘well that’s been great, thanks all for coming’, nobody else had hardly said a thing. There’d been this wonderful opening about consultation, and he genuinely believed he’d discussed it with us, and listened to everyone and come up with ideas together” (Lower Management, Int20).

In communicating the genuine nature of attempts to downplay rank in leadership, police officers also discussed the importance of consistency and commitment to this approach in leadership. Police officers provided examples of negative experiences of challenging senior rank which served as a reminder of the influence of rank in leadership. The following quote highlight the importance of ‘following through’ in commitment to rank neutral practices in leadership:

“Internally, like a challenge meeting, we have them, on paper, we have lots of structures which allow this upward challenge. And I’ve seen it, I’ve seen it, you ask the wrong question of the wrong person, and that’s it for a while, it leaves a mark on you” (Lower Management, Int03).

“Because, you know... A leader that holds that rank, that always expects someone to sir them. Although they say, ‘challenge me’, if they’ve immediately got the answer to that challenge, it sort of, puts that person back in their box doesn’t it?” (Middle Management, Int27).

The resistance and tension to downplaying rank demonstrates the strength of attachment to assumptions of rank in leadership and the enduring presence of rank in interactions between junior and senior officers. The conflict, for example, between rank neutral leadership ‘on paper’ and ‘in practice’, between intention and response, reveals the complexities in the negotiation and navigation of rank as an inherent feature of police leadership. Leadership in the police is revealed as a negotiated activity, central to which are the understandings of the authority of rank.

In the undoing of rank, rank neutral environments, constructed through time, space or designated roles, facilitate participatory, inclusive and collaborative approaches to leadership. The removal of the barrier of rank allows for authenticity in leadership and emphasises competence and expertise over rank status. Findings reveal however that the authority of rank is not dissolved completely in rank neutral environments; resistance to attempts to downplay rank capture the strength of attachment to the ‘etiquette of rank’ in leadership. This highlights the negotiation and navigation of rank required in leadership in the police.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the relationship between the authority of rank and police leadership using the analytical framework of doing and the undoing of rank. Police leadership is understood through the conventions of rank. Police officers assign meaning and assumptions to rank which inhibit participatory or shared leadership practices. Rank neutral environments provide protected moments where the authority of rank is negotiated, its influence navigated, to develop alternative approaches to leadership. However, police officers’ responses to downplaying rank reveals the pervasiveness of ‘rank consciousness’ in leadership, despite permission to step out of conventions. The navigation of rank is an inherent feature of police leadership. This reveals the situated and fluid nature of the conventions and expectations of

police leadership, based on, for example, understandings of audience and risk. It is essential therefore to understand the construction of leadership in the police as a rank-centric activity.

Chapter Six

Police Leadership as a Socially Constructed, Rank-Centric Activity: Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

Leadership is simultaneously identified as the source and the solution to organisational problems. Police leaders are highly visible public figures, their decisions increasingly scrutinised and their leadership practices increasingly risk averse (Heaton,2010; Long,2003; Mawby,2014). High profile organisational failings have reignited public debate on leadership standards and integrity in the police. The Hillsborough Inquiry situated police leadership in public consciousness to an unprecedented level and saw the criminalisation of leadership decisions. Consequently, police leadership is a fundamental focus of the current reform in the police; the College of Policing (2015a) firmly situate leadership as central to the contemporary professionalisation agenda. Yet despite leadership being well established in policy and practitioner discourse, the meaning of police leadership, and the similarities or differences with other forms of leadership, remains unclear and under-explored. This thesis responds to a call for further research on leadership in the police and importantly a focus on ‘what is important’ rather than simply ‘what works’ (van Dijk et al.,2016) and presents an analytical framework of the meaning of police leadership in terms of the relationship between rank and leadership. The findings of this research reveal the ways in which the use, meanings and understandings of rank inform the construction and presentation of police leadership. Rank has important explanatory power in understanding police leadership therefore; Leadership in the police, as this thesis has argued, is a socially-constructed, rank-centric activity.

This chapter will discuss and summarise the findings of this research in relation to the literature and contemporary developments in police leadership. The first part of this chapter situates this research in the context of existing knowledge. First, the chapter considers how police officers’ understandings of leadership relate to conventional leadership theory. Second, the contribution to knowledge of understanding police leadership as socially constructed is considered. Third, the chapter discusses the contribution to knowledge in terms of understanding police leadership as rank-centric.

The second part of this chapter discusses the implications of the research findings in five broad areas; the study of police leadership, theory, policy, police constabularies, and for outside policing. The limitations of this research and outlines recommendations for future research are then considered and the main arguments summarised.

Research Context

This thesis is situated within a growing body of police leadership research and contributes to existing research on police leadership by Reiner (1992), Wall (1998), Savage et al. (2000), Caless (2011), Silvestri (2011) and most recently Caless and Tong (2015). Specifically, this thesis contributes to established arguments by police leadership scholars. First, the dominant culture of senior police leaders in Britain, their shared experiences and outlook, was recognised in Reiner (1992), Wall (1998) Savage et al.'s (2000) work. This highlights the distance between senior and junior officers in the police, resonant of Reuss-Ianni's (1983) work which vividly captures the tensions between 'management cops' and 'street cops'. The findings of this research show the ways in which rank is used to construct distance between junior and senior officers and reveals the meaning of police leadership in terms of division and difference. These divisions between senior and junior officers inhibit the development of alternative leadership practices in the police.

Second, the agency of junior officers to participate in leadership is also recognised in police leadership research. Reuss-Ianni (1983) first revealed the capacity of junior officers to resist and adapt managerial reform and more recently Silvestri's (2011) work highlighted the 'activity' involved in leadership. There is emerging interest therefore in the presentation or 'expressions' of leadership in the police, which is reflective of this thesis. Junior officers are presented in this research as active participants in the construction of leadership illustrated, for example, in the discussion of resistance and meaningfulness of rank-neutral practices. Understanding police leadership as a socially constructed process, as this thesis has advocated, allows for consideration of police officers as co-producers in leadership.

Finally, previous academic research has debated the distinctiveness of police leadership. Indeed, Reiner (1992) first asked the question whether leadership in the police is a unique form of leadership. The distinctiveness issue is particularly relevant in the contemporary

context, with an increasing acceptance of managerialist practices, recognised in Savage et al.'s (2000) research with chief officers, and contemporary policy initiatives such as the Direct Entry scheme. The continued trend, it seems, is to look outside policing for development and innovation in leadership. Through identifying rank as a framework for understanding leadership in the police, which separates police leadership from other forms of leadership, the findings of this research confirm the need for a greater appreciation of the distinctive nature of the police organisational context.

The following section considers the research findings in the context of conventional leadership theory.

Police Leadership and Conventional Leadership Theory

Police Leadership as Person-Centred, Positional and Outcome-Oriented

Conventional theory has conceptualised leadership as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented. Trait and behavioural theories situate leadership as characteristics, attributes or a set of behaviours of the individual (Antonakis,2011). Police officers in this study drew on trait and behavioural connotations in their understandings of leadership. Leadership was discussed, for example, as characteristics and qualities using terms such as 'persona' and 'style'. Police officers also spoke of leadership using their previous experience of 'good' and 'bad' leaders; the primary focus being the individual leaders themselves. Likewise, police officers explained leadership in terms of sets of behaviours, such as inclusivity and collaboration in the undoing of rank and directive and task-oriented in the doing of rank.

The primacy of traits and behaviours in conceptualisations of police leadership reflects existing empirical research which has typically focused on the effectiveness of leadership behaviours (such as Andreescu and Vito,2010; Engel,2001; Huberts et al. ,2007; Krimmel and Lindenmuth, 2001; Kuykendall and Unsinger, 1982) and, more recently the College of Policing's (2015a) call for an identification of effective leadership traits. The findings show therefore that police officers' understandings of leadership are informed by trait and behavioural theories.

This study also reveals leadership in the police is understood in positional terms. The discussion of the influence of rank as an authority shows that police officers assign leadership status relative to position in the police hierarchical structure. This is reflective of Grint's (2005a) arguments of the 'vertical authority' of leadership. In this research, positional understanding of leadership was most evident in the doing of rank; the most senior officer, for example, designated as chair in meetings, physically 'positioning' them as the coordinator of discussion, the final decision maker. Leadership authority and influence therefore is assigned to seniority of rank.

Police officers in this research also drew on principles of situational theory in their understandings of leadership. The basic premise of situational theory is leadership adapts to the requirements of the situation or circumstance (Yukl,2011). The findings reveal the extent to which police officers adapt their approach to leadership based on perceptions of risk and audience. Signals or cues, such as the use of language, are used to define the situation and communicate expectations of appropriate behaviour between senior and junior officers in that context. In high-risk and high-audience situations, a directive and task-based approach to leadership was considered most appropriate, in which the authority of rank was most obvious. In contrast, low-risk and low-audience situations facilitate collaborative and participatory leadership whereby the authority of rank is downplayed. Effective leadership is understood therefore as relative to the understandings of risk and audience of the situation or context.

Finally, police officers, particularly at the senior and middle management ranks, used transformational theory in their discussions of leadership. Transformational qualities, such as innovation and change, formed part of police officers' leadership narratives. This is reflective of broader academic and policy endorsement of transformational leadership as the desirable approach in the police (Cockcroft,2014; Densten,2003; Dobby et al.,2004; Murphy and Drodge,2004; Swid,2014). For example, Neyroud (2011a), in the review of leadership training and standards, advocates greater adoption of transformational leadership in the police and likewise the College of Policing (2015a) recognises the importance of leadership as an enabler of change. Notions of causality were embedded in police officers' understandings of leadership. The capacity of leaders to inspire change, improve team performance, 'get the job done' was discussed in the interviews. Leadership is therefore understood as 'getting results',

but importantly, leadership can get results. The findings reveal therefore that police leadership is understood in transformational terms and importantly as causal and outcome-oriented; police leaders have the capacity, in other words, to bring about change.

The research findings show that the principles of conventional theory inform police officers' understandings of leadership. Since conventional theory conceptualises leadership as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented, police leadership is similarly understood as 'the person', 'the position' and 'producing results'. Police officers, in other words, drew on leader-centric narratives in their understandings of leadership; leadership is situated as the individual, typically in a position of authority, who has the capacity to bring about change rather than understood as an interactional process between people.

The prominence of leader-centric conceptualisations is illustrative of existing literature on police leadership, which reflects the same conventional assumptions. Wright et al., (2008) confirm that trait, behavioural, situational and transformational leadership theories most commonly inform the study of police leadership. Schafer (2013), for example, uses behavioural, situational and transformational leadership theories to consider leadership effectiveness in the police in the U.S. Conventional leadership theory has therefore largely been uncritically accepted into the discourse of police leadership and this thesis demonstrates that the understanding of police leadership reflects traditional leader-centric thinking.

Understanding leadership through conventional theory, however, preserves the myth of heroism in leadership. Indeed, critical leadership scholars have challenged the idealisation and romanticism of leaders in conventional theory (Grint,2005a; Meindl,1995). Police officers in this study, for example, explained leadership in terms of strength, confidence and protection. Similarly, fear and respect attached to senior rank in the doing of rank reveal notions of heroism in police leadership. By drawing on trait, behavioural, situational and transformational theories, notions of heroism, which are inherent features of conventional theory, are perpetuated through the understandings of police leadership. By showing the persistence of person-centred understandings of leadership, the findings of this research illustrate Mastrofski's (2002) and Grint's (2010b) arguments of heroism associated with police leadership. Mastrofski (2002) applies Meindl's (1995) notion of the romance of

leadership to the police and by doing so, challenges assumptions of heroism in police leadership; he explains:

“The chief-in-charge image has changed over the last century from military icons of ‘command’ to evocations of the preacher, teacher, or business person who inspires, educates, or makes deals. In any of these forms, the chief’s leadership helps account for important events in the life of a police department and it helps to satisfy popular impulses for a clear chain of causality, or in policy terms, accountability.”

(Mastrofski,2002:153)

In his argument that police leaders are ‘addicted to command’, Grint (2010b) reminds us that the cultural expectation of leaders as ‘all knowing’ problem solvers creates pressure for leaders to act decisively, legitimising command approaches to leadership rather than collaborative practices. Leaders are assumed to ‘decide’, to ‘influence’, to ‘change’. Consequently humility, ‘weakness’, sharing, are not seen in leadership terms. Gemmill and Oakley (1997) argue that assumptions of causality in leadership provides reassurance and social order in an increasingly complex and ambiguous social world. In the police leadership literature, Panzarella’s (2003) ‘leadership myths’ and more recently Grint and Thornton (2015:95), challenge the conventional assumption that “the leader has the answer to the problem”. Most importantly, the heroism of police leadership reduces the capacity of junior officers as followers to meaningfully engage and contribute in leadership, as a shared activity, and therefore acts as a barrier to the acceptance of collaborative and participatory leadership practices. To work effectively within the complexity of the changing policing landscape, the police service would be better placed to consider leadership as ‘asking the right questions’ rather than ‘knowing the answers’ (Grint and Thornton,2015). Police leadership, in other words, should be considered as a process of facilitation, which is reflective of the current endorsement by the College of Policing of collaboration and participation in leadership. However, the enduring influence of the person-oriented, positional, and causal conceptualisations of leadership is a fundamental barrier to the development of these practices.

Understanding leadership in leader-centric terms has important implications for the identification and development of leadership talent in police constabularies. Where leadership

is understood as ‘the person’ ‘the position’ and ‘producing results’, those individuals who have not displayed such characteristics, status or achievements are not considered as legitimate or credible leaders. This leader-centric understanding of leadership is constructed and reconstructed, shapes how organisations recruit, retain and reward certain presentations of leadership and consequently constructs ‘more of the same’. This supports Grint’s (2005a) observation that the construction of leadership has implications for how organisations function. He argues:

“The point is not simply to re-describe varieties of interpretation but to consider how this affects the way leadership is perceived, enacted, recruited and supported. For example, if organisations promote individuals on the basis of one particular interpretation of leadership then that approach will be encouraged and others discouraged” (Grint,2005a:17).

To challenge this, a shift from the conceptualisation of police leadership in leader-centric terms is needed. Abstract, context-free ‘wish lists’ of desirable leadership behaviours, as critiqued by leadership scholars such as Bolden and Gosling (2006) and Rost (1993), will not fundamentally reform the nature of leadership in the police. It is essential that leadership training and development is grounded in the meanings of leadership to police officers and importantly recognises leadership as a social process beyond the individual.

Gender and Police Leadership

Conventional leadership research perpetuates stereotypical notions of men and women, and masculinity and femininity. Effective leadership has typically been conceptualised in masculine and patriarchal terms (Gemmill and Oakley,1997; Rosener,1997; Schein,2001). The person-centred assumptions of leadership, emphasising leadership as particular competencies and behaviours for example, reinforce these gender and leadership stereotypes. Understanding leadership as a socially constructed process, rather than leadership as ‘the person’, challenges the essentialist and deterministic assumptions of conventional theory.

Whilst gender was not a central focus of this study, effort was made to incorporate the perspective of female police officers; 13 female police officers were included in the research

sample which broadly reflected the organisational profile. Gender however was not identified in the analysis as an overt theme. The use of rank in leadership, for example, did not appear related to gender; men and women did not appear to use rank differently. The invisibility of gender however does not render it unimportant or mean that understandings of leadership are not, in some way, gendered. The discussions with male and female police officers revealed understandings of leadership in masculine terms, drawing on notions of heroism. Leadership, for example, was explained in terms of strength, confidence and decisiveness. Similarly, there was some indication that resistance or meaningfulness to the undoing of rank in leadership is influenced by gender, although this requires further, dedicated exploration. Consequently, the ‘gendering’ of understandings of leadership in the police is suggested as an area for future research, which would contribute to knowledge on the development of diversity of practice in police leadership.

Power and Police Leadership

Conventional leadership studies assume differential power status in leadership to be unproblematic and uncomplicated. There is an uncritical acceptance of the mutuality and compliance between the needs of leaders and followers (Collinson,2012; Tourish,2013). Critical leadership scholars argue that power is central to the understanding of leadership (Collinson,2014; Gordon,2011). This thesis applies this criticality to the study of police leadership through the analysis of the authority of rank. The authority of rank is a central feature of police leadership; the assumptions of rank, in relation to decision making, respect or responsibility for example, reflect assumptions about the nature of leadership in the police. The problematic and complex nature of police leadership is also captured in the ways in which rank acts as a barrier in leadership. Similarly, the analysis of the resistance and meaningfulness in the undoing of rank reveals the negotiation and opposition as inherent in the process of leadership. Consequently, this thesis highlights the power-centric nature of leadership in the police; this will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The leader-centric conceptualisations of leadership have therefore been challenged by critical leadership studies. Scholars such as Collinson (2011) and Grint (2005b) have criticised the reductionist and deterministic foundations of conventional theory and argue instead that leadership should be viewed as a socially constructed process. The following section

describes the contribution of this thesis to understanding police leadership as socially constructed.

Police Leadership as Socially Constructed

In contrast to much of the existing work in the field, this thesis studied police leadership as a socially constructed process. There are three key contributions to understanding police leadership as socially constructed. Firstly, this thesis reveals the situated nature of leadership in the police. Challenging the deterministic assumptions of situational theory, this thesis shows that leadership is understood in terms of the social construction of the context and these understandings legitimise the different ways of using rank in leadership. This develops Grint's (2010b; 2012) work on the social construction of leadership by showing how situations are framed to justify the use of rank as an authority. Grint (2005b:1470) explains:

“Leadership involves the social construction of the context that both legitimates a particular form of action and constitutes the world in the process”.

The findings of this research show that time, space and language are used by police officers to define situations or spaces as rank-centric or rank-neutral. In rank-centric space, time, space and language communicate notions of difference and distance in leadership; barriers between junior and senior officers are constructed and reconstructed. In contrast, in rank-neutral space, the same mechanisms are used to communicate accessibility and collectivity in leadership; a sense of ‘sameness’ is constructed. In other words, time, space and language were used by police officers to create or remove barriers in their leadership; these mechanisms communicate expectations of appropriate leadership behaviours in that context.

These mechanisms can therefore be used to facilitate alternative practices in leadership. Using time, space and language mechanisms differently, such as the construction of communal space or permission to refer to senior officers on first name terms, communicates expectations of participation and collaboration in leadership. Likewise, particular roles or spaces are assigned ‘protected status’ to challenge conventional approaches and adopt alternative practices in leadership; the role of the staff officer and the Challenge Team, for example, revealed the situated nature of police leadership.

Context in leadership, and in particular how ‘the situation is situated’ (Grint,2005b), is crucial. This thesis also reveals that situations are framed in terms of ‘audience’ and ‘risk’ to legitimatise the use of rank in different ways, and this is depicted in the analytical framework (Figure 6). Police officers perceived the doing of rank as appropriate in high-risk and high-audience situations, compared with low-risk and low-audience situations which facilitated the undoing of rank. In addition to the rank structure, the assumptions attached to rank, such as responsibility, accountability and competence, function as ‘organising devices’ in high-risk and high-audience situations. In situations of heightened visibility, exposure and risk therefore, police officers default to using rank in their leadership.

Second, studying police leadership as socially constructed reveals the fluidity of understandings of leadership in the police. In contrast to conventional understandings of police leadership, this applies the contribution of critical leadership studies, which considers leadership as a dynamic construction, in the police setting (Crevani et al.,2010; Gemmill and Oakley,1997). In exploring how leadership emerges and unfolds within everyday social experience (Raelin,2011; Wood and Ladkin,2008), the findings reveal the importance of how space is constructed in police leadership. Through the analysis of the meaningfulness of rank-neutral practices, the findings reveal the different and conflicting interpretations of leadership. The staff officer case study also shows the shifting expectations of rank in leadership and the way in which rank is negotiated and navigated within a protected space. Whilst there were examples of challenging conventions of rank in the staff officer role, such as the empowerment of junior officers to act on behalf of senior officers, the attachment to rank etiquette in leadership interactions was retained. The fluidity of leadership is also captured in the interplay between role and rank. This is captured in the influence of the external role on leadership practice, such as external partnership working facilitating a collaborative, negotiation style of leadership inside the organisation. The rank/role contradictions and expectations, such as junior officers having organisational-wide leadership influence, similarly highlight the dynamic and complex nature of leadership in the police. The findings therefore challenge conventional assumptions of the universality, objectivity and transferability of leadership and instead present police leadership as a complex and dynamic activity. Leadership in the police, in other words, is a continual process of construction and re-construction.

Finally, drawing on Goffman's (1990) dramaturgy framework highlights the performative nature of police leadership. Pye (2005) argues that leadership should be conceptualised, not as 'being', but rather, as 'doing' and equally, Silvestri's (2011) notion of 'doing' leadership highlights the activity inherent in the construction and presentation of leadership. The concepts of doing and undoing rank have been used in this thesis to position the activity in the construction of leadership, through rank, as central. This thesis argues therefore that leadership is not 'a person' but instead, leadership is better understood as 'a process', 'a practice' or 'a presentation'.

Understanding police leadership as socially constructed therefore shows that junior officers are active participants in the leadership process. Police culture has long been characterised by the capacity of front line officers to adapt and resist managerial influence; Holdaway (1977) provided an early insight into the tensions between managerial and practical professionalism in the police in Britain. Whilst the conflict, negotiation and fragmentation is well recognised in academic understanding of police occupational culture, the same knowledge is not consistently present in police leadership literature. As highlighted, Silvestri (2011) uniquely captures the activity or resistance involved in 'doing' police leadership, but this remains a neglected area of research. The focus of empirical research on leadership effectiveness for example, such as Schafer's (2013) work in the U.S. or Densten's (2003) Australian study, centralises the role of the leader and in doing so, positions junior officers as passive recipients rather than active co-producers.

In contrast, in addition to the thematic concepts of doing and undoing of rank, the findings of this research capture the capacity of police officers to construct rank neutral spaces and resist the rank neutral practices of senior officers. Police leadership is presented, not as a one-way or linear process, but rather as an actively interpreted and reinterpreted, negotiated and renegotiated process. The concepts of doing and undoing rank capture the activity involved in the presentation of police leadership. By understanding leadership as a socially constructed process, that is, an activity between people rather than located within the individual, this allows consideration of alternative leadership practices. In positioning leadership as a shared collaborative process, this thesis therefore furthers understanding of the agency of junior officers in the co-construction of leadership.

Understanding police leadership as socially constructed confirms that leadership reform needs to reflect the complex negotiations that take place. Top-down reform imposed by senior leadership will not fundamentally transform practice without the engagement and participation of junior officers. The findings from this research further illustrate existing literature, such as Cockcroft (2014) and Rowe (2006), on the importance of organisational reform in the police being meaningful and relevant to the frontline policing experience.

Police Leadership as Rank Centric

Police leadership has typically been conceptualised as a rank-free activity. The focus of empirical research and policy is the competencies, knowledge and skills required of police leaders (such as Casey and Mitchell, 2007; Densten, 2003; Wigfield, 1996). These competencies are assumed to be rank-neutral behaviours; the authority of rank in the construction of leadership is largely ignored. Critical leadership scholars have argued that leadership is inherently power-centric and draw attention to the tensions, contradictions and dilemmas in the construction of leadership (Collinson, 2014; Gordon, 2011; Tourish, 2013).

This thesis applies this criticality to the study of police leadership and as such, argues that the authority of rank provides a framework for understanding leadership in the police. The exploration of the relationship between rank and leadership in this thesis shows that the assumptions that police officers' attach to rank reveal the meanings of leadership.

Assumptions that senior ranking officers are decision makers, for example, communicates expectations of leadership as decision making. Informed by Goffman's (1990) work, this thesis shows that rank is 'meaning-making' in the presentation of police leadership. Symbols of rank communicate expectations of behaviours in rank-neutral or rank-centric space; particular approaches to leadership in these spaces are defined as credible and legitimate. Rank and leadership, in other words, are inextricably linked; police leadership is a fundamentally rank-centric activity.

Where rank features in policy and academic discussions on police leadership, the focus is the structure, rather than authority, of rank. Academic commentators recognise that the rank structure is functionally important in the management of critical incidents and that the

structure lends itself more obviously to command or directive approach to leadership (Whitfield et al.,2008; van Dijk,2015). Consequently, the rank structure is accepted as inhibiting participatory and collaborative leadership in both academic and policy discussions (Bayley,1994; Herrington and Colvin,2016; Silvestri,2011). The College of Policing's (2015a) Leadership Review, for example, identifies the number of ranks in the police hierarchy as problematic; Recommendation Two of the Leadership Review sets out to "review the rank and grading structures in policing across warranted and staff roles". The structure is assumed to inhibit innovation and creativity in police leadership, "clog up" decision-making and create a barrier to communication. The question is whether the hierarchy is "fit for purpose", the call is for a 'flatter' rank structure. The Review explains:

"There is evidence from the commercial sector to suggest that flatter structures may allow organisations to be more responsive to social shifts and agile in meeting market demands, because they have fewer levels of decision making and therefore fewer communication barriers" (College of Policing,2015a:22).

To a lesser extent, rank features in discussions about police leadership from a skills-perspective. Leadership in the police is recognised at all levels of the police organisation (Caless,2011; College of Policing,2015b; van Dijk et al.,2015) and consequently the focus of policy is the development of leadership skills, in different ways, at all ranks (College of Policing,2017c). There is an assumption that leadership, to varying degrees, occurs in a generic organisational-wide capacity. If leadership is understood to occur at all ranks, therefore, discussions then turn to the rank-related skills required of police leaders at different levels of the organisation (Wright et al.,2008); empirical work largely aims to identify rank-specific leadership skills (Pearson-Goff and Herrington,2013). Densten's (2003) study of the leadership styles of senior police officers in Australia, Engel's (2001) U.S. study of the supervisory styles of sergeants and lieutenants, and Krimmel and Lindenmuth's (2001) study of police chiefs' leadership styles, are illustrative of this body of work.

A focus on structure to understand the influence of rank in police leadership neglects to consider the negotiation, navigation and politics of rank in the construction of police leadership. The assumptions assigned to rank, as this thesis argues, reflect assumptions about the nature of leadership. The Direct Entry reforms and the provision of fast track selection

and promotion mechanisms represent an attempt to navigate the rank structure, but on a structural process level. The meanings and understandings of rank illustrated through the different ways rank is used in police leadership are therefore more important than an exclusive focus on structure or skills. This thesis captured the presence or ‘carrying’ of rank compared with the downplaying of rank in leadership to illustrate the influence of rank on leadership. The practice and enactment of leadership in the police reinforces or challenges the rank hierarchy. The hierarchy is ‘rebuilt’ through adherence to rank-centric conventions, such as the resistance to bypassing the hierarchy in communication, or challenged in protected spaces such as the staff officer role. It is this construction and presentation of rank as an authority that is an essential contribution to understanding leadership in the police beyond structure and skills.

Drawing on the sense-making leadership literature, the concepts of doing and undoing of rank in this thesis reveal the different ways rank is used as an authority in police leadership. The concept of sense-making allows for consideration of how social actors ‘make sense’ of social interaction, environments and organisations (Weick,1995). The use of rank helps to ‘make sense’ of police leadership; the symbols attached to rank, such as the uniform or language, act as cues for interactions and expectations in leadership. This further develops Mastrofski’s (2002) arguments about the expressive, performative nature of police leadership. The author explains:

“To state the case for the dramaturgical perspective... It helps us rethink the role of the big-city chief as manager. He manages people, money and other tangible things but most of all symbols. This is his domain of greatest consequence”
(Mastrofski,2002:185)

Likewise, Smircich and Morgan (1982) consider the ways in which taken-for-granted meanings and assumptions inherent in organisations, characterised by hierarchical relationships provide a blueprint of how organisational members experience and understand the organisational world. Rank is meaning-making in leadership. The authors explain:

“Authority relationships institutionalise a hierarchical pattern of interaction in which certain individuals are expected to define the experience of others – to lead, and others to have their experience defined – to follow” (Smircich and Morgan, 1982:259)

This thesis has shown that heightened presence of rank is deeply embedded in the politics of power and relationships in the police organisation. The concepts of doing and undoing of rank captures the presentational activity involved in the construction of leadership. This draws on Smircich and Morgan's (1982) notion of sense-making to capture the process by which meanings of rank provide a framework to understand and enact leadership. The authors explain the sense-making theoretical perspective:

“A flow of actions and utterances (i.e. what leaders do) within the context of a moving ground – the actions, utterances, and general flow of experience that constitute the situation being managed” (Smircich and Morgan, 1982:261)

Consequently, this thesis furthers Silvestri's (2011) observations that rank acts as a barrier to alternative leadership practices in the police, through an analysis of the different ways rank is enacted. Silvestri (2011:177), in her discussion of 'rank mentality', argues rank 'gets in the way' in police leadership. Similarly, Adlam (2002:29) highlights the “hierarchical and status-laden” nature of interactions in the police that reinforces a culture of 'know your place' and 'rank knows best'. In the doing of rank, this thesis shows the extent to which 'rank consciousness' inhibits leadership and in the undoing of rank, the ways in which rank is negotiated and navigated in leadership. Although the discussion of the undoing of rank reveals the extent to which alternative understandings exist, the doing of rank remains the dominant orientation, reflecting, as Schein (2010:28) explains, “the preferred solution among several basic alternatives”. The understandings of rank as an authority therefore defines the situation (Goffman,1990), sets out the expected and appropriate leadership behaviours and interactions, and thus, frames the understandings of leadership in the police more broadly.

The undoing and doing of rank is enacted within a cultural milieu of the police organisation; the symbols and rituals that perpetuate and reinforce the authority of rank. This research has explored the way rank is used as an authority, the moments of downplaying and the situations of emphasis. Therefore, this research has moved beyond the statement 'rank has influence' in police leadership and the primacy of structure and considers in what ways, and in what context, rank has influence. This reveals rank to be deeply embedded in the understanding and practice of police leadership. Attempts to dismantle the rank hierarchy does not reflect the agency of police officers to construct and maintain the structure. Through an analysis of

rank as an authority, the findings of this research contribute to academic knowledge of police leadership beyond structure to consider the interactions and presentation of leadership and capture leadership as a process.

This thesis has shown that the presence of rank is routinised, ritualised and taken-for-granted in the organisational culture of the police. Police officers in this research criticised the overt use of rank to 'get things done'. This however reflects a lack of awareness of the presence and authority of rank, in other words, rank as a taken-for-granted and deeply-rooted authority that 'defines the situation' (Goffman,1990). The 'power' of rank is embedded in the interaction such that, senior officers do not need to overtly use their rank to give a direct order. Requests from senior officers 'carry' rank, and consequently, are understood by junior officers as an order; rank 'speaks for itself'. The authority of rank in police leadership is normalised therefore, forming part of the basic assumptions about the nature of leadership in the police that is both "nonconfrontable and nondebatable" (Schein,2010:28). The doing and undoing of rank in this thesis uncovers the taken-for-granted, non-confrontable and non-debatable, beliefs about the authority of rank inherent in the construction and presentation of police leadership.

The doing and undoing of rank reveal the power and politics embedded in leadership in the police; a fundamental obstacle to the meaningful adoption of shared or distributive leadership practices. Silvestri (2011:177) confirms the need to overcome the 'rank mentality' to develop a culture of openness and honesty in the police. There has been, however, very little empirical study of more participatory or collaborative leadership practices in the police; Steinheider and Wuestewald (2008) American study of collaborative leadership practices and more recently Masal's (2015) study of the interplay between shared and transformational leadership in German state police, are perhaps indicative of an emerging interest in this area.

Within the context of professionalisation, the vision from the College of Policing, as the newly established professional body, is towards a participative and collaborative organisational culture in the police (College of Policing,2017c).

The College of Policing (2016) Competency and Values Framework identified collaboration as a key competency within ‘inclusive, enabling and visionary leadership’. According to these competencies, police leadership should:

“Provide space and encouragement to help others stand back from day-to-day activities, in order to review their direction, approach and how they fundamentally see their role in policing. This helps them to adopt fresh perspectives and identify improvements” (College of Policing,2016:18)

The rhetoric from senior policing circles is to facilitate challenge and ideas generation at all levels of the police organisation (College of Policing,2015a); the call is for ‘canaries in the mine’ to “challenge the system, ask the questions, spot the faults” (Tuffin,2016). In a speech at last year’s Police Federation Conference, Alex Marshall (2016), the Chief Executive Officer of the College of Policing, confirmed:

“At the heart of it is the ability to challenge, to ask why, to have a culture in policing where the hierarchy doesn’t mean you’re not allowed to ask a difficult question, where we listen.”

However, values of ‘thinking’ ‘questioning’ and ‘challenge’, promoted by the College of Policing (2015a), are discussed as rank-free concepts. The assumption is that challenge and influence are equal accomplishments, uninterrupted by the authority of rank. This thesis has illustrated that the vision of a ‘thinking’ or ‘learning’ police organisation appears removed from the reality of leadership interactions in the police, which are performed within a cultural framework characterised by rank. The authority of rank is, to use Bayley’s (1994:56) description of organisational culture, “like the water that fish swim in – it affects all that the police do even though they’re not aware of it”. In the reality of leadership in the police, therefore, this thesis demonstrates the extent to which such concepts, ‘ideas’, ‘challenge’ and ‘decisions’, for example, are laden with the authority of rank.

In the current political and economic climate, competition for limited opportunities to reach senior ranks is characteristic of the contemporary police service (Silvestri,2011; Smith,2015); senior rank is increasingly reserved for the ‘select few’. In this context, it is difficult to foresee a widespread acceptance of ‘difference’ in leadership practice. Non-conformity has

not traditionally been a celebrated or valued trait in the police service (Panzarella,2003). The undoing of rank is a challenge to the 'status quo' of leadership authority in the police, participative or collaborative practices are perceived as 'out of the norm' in leadership practice. The question is therefore, whether we are observing a greater emphasis on, and reward for, the 'doing of rank' as the dominant expression of police leadership.

There is cause for optimism however. The undoing of rank challenges conventions of rank in leadership and suggests an awareness of 'being careful' with the authority of rank and the emergence of alternative leadership practices. Rank-neutral spaces represent protected environments where shared or participatory leadership was developed. Whilst findings indicate tension and resistance, the situations of the downplaying of rank reflect a developing understanding of the negative consequences of the over-reliance on the authority of rank in leadership.

This research expands on Silvestri's (2011) work to further illustrate that the presence of rank in police leadership cannot be neutralised completely. In the police, leadership occurs in a space characterised by the expressions and presentation of rank. The flattening of the rank structure will not, in isolation, fundamentally alter the politics of rank in police leadership; the deeply entrenched, taken-for-granted beliefs about the nature and authority of rank. This thesis therefore echoes Silvestri's (2007:54) cautionary note that change to the rank structure is not "a panacea for reform" and instead, as Dijk et al. (2015) and Herrington and Colvin (2016) also argue, consider the power rank holds in the police. The challenge is, as Gordon (2011) argues, the management of power, in other words, the construction and presentation of rank authority. Leadership in the police is, and continues to be, a rank-centric activity. Police leadership needs, therefore, to further develop a 'rank awareness'; an understanding of the authority of rank, equipped with recognition of the persistent and fundamental influence of rank in police leadership rather than continue on a position of denial or 'problematism', and begin to have meaningful discussions about how to make best use of rank.

Police Leadership and Discretion, Accountability and Responsibilisation

This research conceptualised the use of rank in leadership in terms of understandings of audience and risk. The accountability landscape in police leadership is at a time of significant change, and within this context, police leadership is exposed to competing pressures (Barton and Beynon,2011; de Maillard and Savage,2017; Skogan,2008). The introduction of PCCs represents a transformation of the formal accountability mechanisms in policing (Caless and Owen,2016). Likewise, ‘informal’ accountability is changing; the rise of social media, for example, ensures that the decisions and activities of police leaders are highly visible and scrutinised on a global platform. There are also accountability pressures from ‘within’ the organisation; the procedural justice literature highlights the importance of transparency and fairness in relationships in police leadership (Blader and Tyler,2003; Bradford et al.,2014; Bradford and Quinton,2014). Police leadership is therefore increasingly accountable to competing, often contradictory, ‘high audience’ voices.

The environment of police leadership is also increasingly ‘high risk’. The high level of discretion afforded to police officers is well documented in the police occupational culture literature (Bayley and Bittner,1984; Waddington,1999; Wilson,1968). Police leadership is in the uncomfortable position of being ultimately responsible and accountable for a resource with considerable discretionary power, with perhaps, limited information and influence. This constructs a form of vulnerability in police leadership, and combined with the perceived risks associated with high audience scrutiny, functions as a potential disincentive to ‘doing things differently’ in police leadership. Rather than embracing alternative practices, this context may function to strengthen the risk averse leadership culture. We may witness, therefore, a continued ‘retreat’ to the ‘safety’ of conventional, rank-centric approaches; in other words, a more obvious tendency towards the doing of rank in leadership.

Against a backdrop of powerful and intrusive accountability arrangements, there is additional risk to the ‘responsibilisation’ of junior officers. Garland (2001) considers responsibilisation in terms of the redistribution of responsibility for crime control, away from the state, towards organisations, agencies and individuals. Garland (2001:126) explains:

“The state’s new strategy is not to command and control but rather to persuade and align, to organise, to ensure that other actors play their part”.

The principles of responsibilisation can be seen in the professionalisation of the police service. The rhetoric from the College of Policing (2015a; 2017c) is a shift away from centralised command and control leadership to participatory and collaborative approaches; the sharing of responsibility. The doing of rank, as this thesis has shown, clearly positions responsibility at particular ranks. Responsibility is positioned upwards to ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’; the reference to rank reveals expectations about ‘who’ is responsible. Indeed, sense-making literature draws attention to the power of language in defining appropriate interactions and framing expectations (Pye,2005; Smircich and Morgan,1982; Weick,1995). Since responsibility is assigned upwards, this functions to relieve the responsibility of junior officers; a sense of ‘they are responsible, not me’. Tourish (2013), in his critique of the ‘dark side’ of transformational leadership, alludes to the challenges of strategies of responsibilisation in hierarchical organisations. The author argues:

“If power corrupts then the same might be said of powerlessness. It corrodes our ability to act purposively, take responsibility for our actions and manage our own destiny” (Tourish,2013:5).

The undoing of rank represents a shift towards the responsibilisation of the police workforce, irrespective of rank. However, this research documents the resistance to the undoing of rank, such as reference to senior officers by their first name, which illustrate the attachment to rank-centric practices. In leadership, the doing of rank is comfortable, familiar and reassuring, whilst in contrast, the undoing of rank is uncomfortable and ‘risky’; sharing of responsibility, in other words, is a risk. Within this context therefore, rank, as a powerful framework for understanding leadership, represents a significant challenge to the responsibilisation of the police workforce. Responsibility, as this thesis has shown, is strongly associated with the authority of rank.

The relationship between rank and leadership is, however, more complex. Police officers have the power to interpret, adapt and resist managerial policy and learn to navigate the complex and ambiguous organisational space (Barlow and Walklate,2018; Willis and Mastrofski,2018). Importantly though, this should be understood within the context of invasive and punitive accountability mechanisms (de Maillard and Savage,2017); discretion, it seems, within a constrained, scrutinised and ‘high risk’ framework. This thesis captured the

agency of junior officers to resist and adapt practices. The construction of rank-neutral space, in particular, illustrates the capacity of police officers to permit alternative practices in leadership. Rank-neutral space, in the context of increasing managerialist regulation, may provide a 'safe' and 'protected' environment for expression of autonomy and freedom; a space, perhaps, to reclaim discretionary power.

Police leadership performs an increasingly 'visible' role (Mawby and Reiner, 1998; Mawby, 2014). Institutional accountability and governance arrangements also assign considerable risk to the position (Caless and Tong, 2013; Lister, 2013). Within this hyper-visible and high-risk environment, police leaders may choose to avoid additional 'risk' and 'play it safe' in their leadership decisions and practices. Rather than encouraging innovation and challenge therefore, this environment may instead facilitate a stronger attachment to conventional, rank-centric leadership practices.

POLICE leadership or police LEADERSHIP?

Martin (1980) used the concept of '*policewomen*' and '*policewomen*' to capture the complexities and tensions in emphasising occupational or feminine identities for female police officers. In police leadership, there has been a longstanding debate on the balance between operational uniqueness and generic leadership competencies in senior leadership role. This is particularly relevant in the contemporary context and the changing demand and expectations on police leaders. The current professionalisation agenda from the College of Policing has encouraged the police service to look outside to replicate traits from other established professions such as medicine and law (Holdaway, 2017). The Direct Entry scheme, for example, is indicative of the trend towards the acceptance of generic leadership skills from outside policing. In this way, leadership in the police is constructed as a universal, transferrable and context-free skill. The rise of the 'executive police leader' is widely noted in academic literature, depicted first in Reiner's (1992) 'bureaucrat' chief constable, Wall's (1998) argument that chief constables are increasingly 'professionally trained managers' and Savage et al.'s (2000) observations that the 'director model' has replaced the command model. Police leadership, it appears, is increasingly being discussed in less police-specific and more managerial-oriented and 'professionalised' terms.

Particularly at senior ranks, police officers in this study used language reflective of business in their discussions of leadership. Police activity was described, for example, as “the business”, the constabulary as “the organisation”, chief officers as “the executive”, staff as “direct reports” and senior officers as “line managers”. Terms such as ‘the strategic direction’, ‘vision’ ‘performance’ and ‘benchmarking’ were also used regularly and similarly phrases such as ‘buy in’ ‘corporate message’ ‘business case’ and ‘open door policy’. Police officers drew on managerial connotations in their understandings of leadership, which reflects the transferability of leadership competencies.

That said, this thesis argues that rank is central to understanding police leadership. The assumptions assigned to rank, for example, reflect the meanings of leadership. The doing of rank reveals the ways in which rank is used as a resource in police leadership to ‘get things done’; a resource with distinctive connotations and expectations reflective of police occupational culture. Whilst the ‘talk’ of leadership reflects business, the emphasis placed on ‘leadership’ rather than ‘police’, the practice of leadership is heavily influenced by the assumptions and meanings assigned to rank as an authority; emphasising, in other words, ‘police’ rather than ‘leadership’. The police organisational context, and in particular police occupational culture, has an important influence on the nature of leadership.

Implications for the Study of Police Leadership

Historically, police leadership has been studied using quantitative methods with existing frameworks or typologies to categorise leadership style and effectiveness. Evidence based policing has positioned quantitative methods, and specific tools such as the well-cited Maryland scale and approaches such as the randomised control trial, as the ‘gold standard’ in social research (Lumsden and Goode,2016; Sherman,1998). The endorsement of particular methodological approaches as reliable and credible ‘evidence’, as Wood and Bryant (2016) argue, functions to exclude other forms of knowledge. The contribution to qualitative research to the understanding of policing and policing practices is consequently unappreciated. This thesis addresses the need for greater utilisation of qualitative methods in police leadership studies and for academics to continue to work with police leaders in police research (Bryman,2004a; Bryman,2011; Fleming, et al.,2015; Grint and Jackson, 2010). Through a social constructionist theoretical framework and the use of semi-structured

interviews, this research positions police officers' perceptions, understandings and experiences of leadership as central. Informed by grounded theory, the taken-for-granted meanings of leadership to police officers were uncovered. Furthermore, the majority of previous research on police leadership focuses on chief officers and superintending ranks. This research incorporated the perceptions of chief inspectors and inspectors to capture the understandings of leadership across the supervisory ranks. The cultural distance between senior and junior officers in the police is something of a received wisdom in academic research. This rich understanding of police leadership, achieved by the use of qualitative methods and engagement with all supervisory ranks, is an essential contribution to policy and academic discussions on leadership reform to ensure that proposals for the future development of police leadership reflect the way leadership is experienced by junior officers.

Police leadership is also understood within the contemporary 'What Works' agenda; this has been formalised in the establishment of the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction in the U.K. The current context of policing research is prioritising 'what works' and 'policy relevance' (van Dijk et al., 2016). Whilst this represents an important shift in recognising the relevance of research in policing practices, the focus on 'what works' risks neglecting topics of study that do not appear immediately transferrable to policy. Through the exploration of the meaning of police leadership, this thesis contributes to an emerging body of research that attempts to challenge 'thinking', the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices in policing, and recognises this as a fundamental part of the role of academic research. Punch (2010:158) confirms:

“In policing I believe that there has certainly been research that has influenced policy but that more important has been the stream of research that has opened up policing to external scrutiny, has made policing an object of study, and has altered the thinking of police elites.”

Implications for the Theory of Police Leadership

Current understanding of police leadership is inhibited by the legacy of leader-centrism in conventional theory. Whilst critical leadership scholars have progressed leadership studies beyond this conventional view, the same criticality is not yet embedded in the understanding of police leadership. An important part of this research, therefore, was to think critically

about the concept of police leadership; to explore the taken-for-granted, ‘unquestionable’ and ‘non-confrontable’ meanings and assumptions of police leadership. As such, this thesis has problematised the person-centred, positional and outcome-focused conceptualisations of police leadership and argued that leadership in the police is better studied and understood as socially constructed. Police leadership is not an objective or context-free entity but rather a negotiated and contested social process. Treating police leadership as socially constructed fundamentally transforms the way the leader-follower relationship is understood. In contrast to positioning junior officers as passive recipients, this research has captured the role of junior officers in the co-construction of leadership and importantly their capacity to adapt and resist. As such, this thesis captures the complex and nuanced nature of police leadership.

Police leadership has typically been conceptualised in academic and policy discourse as rank-free, in which leadership and rank are discussed as separate constructs. Where rank features in the current literature, it is typically in structural or skills-based terms. The rank hierarchy, for example, is recognised as an inhibitor to alternative leadership practices and similarly the expected leadership competencies by rank. In contrast, this thesis has argued that rank provides a framework for police officers to understand leadership. The authority of rank is meaning-making in the construction of leadership; rank has an important function in framing the legitimacy and credibility in leadership. Authority is attached to rank and police officers use this authority, in different ways, in their leadership. The different ways of using rank in leadership were conceptualised as the ‘doing’ and ‘undoing’ of rank; the doing of rank describing the emphasis and heightened presence of rank compared with the undoing of rank which captures the downplaying of rank as an authority. The doing and undoing of rank were considered relative to police officers’ perceptions of risk and audience. In high-risk and high-audience situations, the doing of rank in leadership was most obvious compared with low-risk and low-audience situations which facilitated the undoing of rank. Rank acts as a barrier in police leadership, a barrier which is reinforced in the doing of rank or navigated in the undoing of rank. Through an analysis of the relationship between the rank and leadership, this thesis demonstrates that rank is inextricably connected with the understanding and practice of police leadership. The meanings and assumptions attached to rank are interconnected with the meanings of leadership. Rank, in other words, is ‘ever present’ in police leadership.

Consequently, understanding the meaning of rank is an essential precursor to understanding the nature of leadership in the police.

Implications for Policy

Under the professionalisation agenda, the recent reforms to police education and training in the U.K. has situated educational knowledge as central; we are witnessing an increasing ‘academicisation’ of police education. Amongst senior police officers, Punch (2010:158) recognises this trend of “a broad academic orientation to policing education rather than a narrow vocational one”. The PEQF formalises the requirement for academic qualifications at all levels of the police organisation. Primacy is no longer placed on operational expertise to ‘credentialise’ a person into a police leadership role, as the Direct Entry scheme indicates. The recent reforms to the selection and promotion processes, particularly the Direct Entry scheme, also signals an opportunity to challenge conventional assumptions about leadership in the police. Potentially, direct entry police leaders may ‘do’ rank differently in their leadership practices. Wall (1994:335), in his critique of the ideology of internal recruitment, confirms:

“In the future there will be no need for chief constables to possess operational experience: their prime domain will be the quasi-political world of resource management.”

It appears therefore that legitimacy in police leadership is increasingly framed in terms of academic qualifications. The recognition of the value of education in police leadership may signal a challenge to the authority of rank. The powerful assumptions aligning seniority of rank with knowledge and experience may, for example, be disrupted. Similarly, it is likely that new leadership skills will be required to manage an increasingly educated workforce. Police officers can no longer rely on the authority of rank to ‘get things done’. These contemporary developments to the police workforce may challenge the traditional working practices in police organisations, and importantly, the dominance of the doing of rank in leadership captured in this thesis. Bryant et al. (2014:392) confirm:

“The process of establishing appropriate professional standards for all police roles leads to a transformation in policing, away from a preoccupation on rank, towards a much more explicit focus on the roles performed by officers”.

The role of the PCCs represents an interesting dynamic in understanding the power relations in police leadership; an introduction of powerful ‘high audience’ political actors in police governance relationships (Lister,2013). The authority of PCCs to ‘hire and fire’ chief constables, in particular, places a new pressure on the relationship between the chief constable and the accountable body. The careful negotiation of this relationship, and the associated politics, is an essential skill of senior police leadership (Caless and Tong,2013; Reiner and O’Connor,2015). Within this context, the chief constable role, it seems, is increasingly ‘high audience’ and ‘high risk’. This pressure may act as a barrier to the development of alternative, ‘risky’, leadership practices. We may observe, therefore, a more explicit ‘reverting back’ to the doing of rank in leadership to be seen to ‘get things done’. At a time, therefore, when the contemporary demands from crime require police leadership to embrace collaborative and participatory leadership practices, both within police organisation and with partner agencies, the external pressures from the new governance and accountability mechanisms may result in a greater reliance on rank as a resource in leadership.

Whilst the policy reforms to police education, recruitment and accountability represent a challenge to the dominance of rank in police leadership, the authority of rank is, however, a significant obstacle to the development of diverse and alternative practices in leadership. The rank-based assumptions, as this thesis has demonstrated, provide a framework for understanding credibility and legitimacy in police leadership, and these assumptions will continue to act as a barrier to the acceptance and development of policy designed to create ‘difference’ in police leadership. The assumptions assigned to rank are powerful in shaping leadership expectations beyond the individual. Whilst the individual has the capacity to negotiate and adapt their leadership practices, in the construction of rank-neutral space, for example, these alternative practices are typically situated, protected ‘moments’ and consequently the fundamental assumptions assigned to rank and leadership are largely unchallenged. Without a critical consideration of the power and politics of rank, policy aimed to create diversity in leadership, through mechanisms such as the Direct Entry scheme, will

not result in diverse leadership practices. In addition, whilst leadership promotion in UK police constabularies still predominately functions via internal mechanisms, the introduction of Direct Entry at inspector and superintendent ranks may inadvertently act to block promotion for serving officers. Skogan (2008), for example, noted the resistance to reform of middle management ranks because of the limited opportunities for promotion. Police constabularies may be better placed to invest in understanding and developing the leadership skills of their current workforce, from people-oriented rather than rank-based perspective, in order to effectively respond to the changing policing landscape.

Implications for Police Constabularies

The College of Policing (2017c) outlines the guiding principles of organisational leadership in terms of understanding leadership, developing leadership and displaying leadership. The findings of this research have contributed to furthering the understanding of leadership in the police. This thesis has argued that the construction of leadership, based on leader-centric conceptualisations, influences the recruitment and retention processes and practices; certain presentations or ‘displaying’ of leadership are considered legitimate and rewarded as such. Understanding police leadership as socially constructed enables critical consideration of how police constabularies attract, select and develop their leaders. Central to understanding leadership development practices in police constabularies is the relationship between rank and leadership, and importantly, the resistance and rewards to the different ways of using rank.

Leadership recruitment and development in the police has typically focused on competencies or as Caless (2011) describes ‘assessable behaviours’. The focus on competencies perpetuates person-centred, positional and causal assumptions about the nature of police leadership. Wall (1998:315) reminds us that the career path to the top of the police organisation functions as a “lengthy and supervised professionalisation socialisation”. The selection processes in leadership form part of this socialisation process therefore; these procedures and structures represent institutionalisation of leader-centric notions of leadership. Value, as this thesis has argued, is attached to particular constructions of leadership; those who demonstrate competency in person-centred, positional and causal terms are rewarded. Leadership, as this thesis has argued, is better understood in process terms, and as such, this conceptualisation of

leadership should be embedded in recruitment and selection procedures. Savage et al. (2000) draw attention to the pressure on internal selection and promotion processes under a single-entry system of recruitment. The advent of Direct Entry and the continued discussion from the College of Policing (2015a) about 'flexible entry and exit points' marks a challenge to conventional leadership development practices in the police. Importantly, this creates an opportunity to facilitate and value leadership in process and relational terms.

A key policy response to leadership reform has been to focus on the rank structure; the police hierarchy, according to the College of Policing (2015a), inhibits the development of alternative leadership practices. The structure is depicted as a barrier to communication, an inhibitor of innovation, and thus, the flattening of the hierarchy emerges as the proposed solution. Reform to the rank structure, as this thesis has argued, will not, in isolation, fundamentally transform the deeply entrenched and taken-for-granted beliefs about the nature and authority of rank. The rank structure is not unimportant in police leadership, but a focus on the problematisation of the hierarchy overlooks the use of rank as an authority in leadership. The agency of police officers to construct and reconstruct conventions of rank in leadership is ignored. A critical appreciation of rank as an authority is crucial to understanding the nature and practice of leadership in the police.

Likewise, the vision of policing policymakers is to create a culture of challenge in the police service (College of Policing, 2015a; Marshall, 2016). This thesis has shown that the 'ever present' authority of rank acts as a barrier to collaborative or participatory approaches in leadership. This thesis reveals assumptions, such as competence and expertise, are assigned to senior rank in leadership. Leadership values promoted by the College of Policing (2015a), such as innovation and challenge, are not rank-free concepts or equally distributed across the police organisation. This thesis has illustrated the understanding of leadership is shaped by the use and meanings of rank. Policy narratives of shared, collaborative or participatory leadership practices neglect to capture the way in which leadership is experienced by police officers, central to which is an understanding of the politics of rank.

The moments and situations in the undoing of rank, however, reveal attempts to minimise the influence of rank in leadership; the 'management' of the presentation of rank. Police officers

used rank-neutral spaces as ‘safe’ and ‘protected’ environments to facilitate collaborative relationships between senior and junior officers. The construction of rank-neutral spaces is an essential precursor to the development of alternative leadership approaches in the police. This research also captured the resistance, tensions and contradictions to the undoing of rank in police leadership. As such, it is crucial that junior officers are engaged and involved in the ‘design’ of rank-neutral spaces to ensure that these spaces are meaningful and relevant to them; reform ‘imposed’ by senior ranking officers, as academic research has long argued, will not transform police leadership practice.

This thesis has presented police leadership as inextricably and inescapably linked to the authority of rank. Police leadership needs therefore to cultivate an understanding of the influence of the authority of rank to leadership; a ‘rank awareness’. Rather than continue to problematise rank and resort therefore to structural solutions, policing policymakers and senior practitioners would be better placed to begin, equipped with this rank awareness, to have meaningful discussions about how to make best use of rank in police leadership.

Implications for Outside Policing

This research produced an analytical framework which captured the relationship between rank and leadership. Rank, as an authority, has been shown to inform the understandings and practice of leadership. The concepts considered in this thesis can be applied to leadership in organisations outside policing. Bryman’s (2004b; 2007) work on leadership in higher education draws attention to the authorities and credibility of leadership in the sector, and this highlights the relevance of seniority within higher education institutions. Indeed, de Boer (2009:347) analysis of academic deanship as “more senior, more strategic, more complex and more managerial in nature” is comparable to the role of the chief constable; this work provides an insight into the authority of the dean. The complexities of negotiating authority is similarly captured in research on leadership in secondary schools. Currie et al.’s (2005) research reveals the ways in which secondary schools empower leaders differently depending on their role within the school. The authors confirm:

“While individuals lower down the organisation’s hierarchy may have had to take on board greater management roles – in particular deputy and assistant principals –

leadership has consistently remained the role remit of the principal”. (Currie et al.,2005:292)

Like police leadership therefore, leadership in education is conceptualised in positional terms; leadership, in other words, is constructed as ‘looking upwards’. The authority and structures in leadership in higher education can be used to reinforce or navigate these positional assumptions, in the same ways this thesis has described the use of rank. Bolden et al. (2008:366), in their study of leadership in twelve U.K. universities, confirm:

“Despite the complex organisational structures present, university leaders frequently spoke of needing to learn how to navigate and utilise the informal paths and networks, sometimes totally bypassing (and occasionally undermining) the formal channels”.

This thesis has demonstrated the assumptions assigned to rank reveal the understandings of police leadership; these assumptions are affirmed in the doing of rank and challenged in the undoing of rank. In the doing of rank in leadership, rank, for example, is understood as synonymous with knowledge and experience. In similar ways, seniority in leadership in higher education is understood through the demonstration of academic credentials, expertise and experience (Allan et al.,2006; Whitchurch,2008). Achieving seniority in higher education therefore assumes the attainment of appropriate education and experience. In the doing of rank in police leadership, rank also has a protective and ‘filtering’ function in police leadership. In higher education, Bryman (2007) notes that university employees consider effective leadership in terms of protection and support. This draws on Mintzberg’s (1998:146) notion of ‘covert leadership’, which places less emphasis on direct supervision of professionals, and instead leaders in higher education serve as “the conduit for social pressures on the organisation” and “pay a lot of attention to managing the boundary condition of the organisation”. The use of seniority in terms of protection reflects the functionality of rank in police leadership, and in higher education, Allan et al. (2006:44) confirms that authority in leadership in higher education can be conceptualised as “a productive force, rather than a primarily prohibitive or repressive one”.

This thesis has also described the construction of rank-neutral space as part of undoing rank in police leadership. In this space, conventions of leadership could be challenged to facilitate

participatory leadership practices. Salvovaara and Bathurst (2016) argue for an understanding of the nuances of power, and the ways in which power is negotiated, in leadership in a range of organisational contexts. The authors argue against a reliance on ‘power over’ models of leadership and emphasis instead a ‘power with’ approach. ‘Safe spaces’ may therefore be an environment for this approach to emerge, as the authors notes, ‘releases’ the contradiction and tensions of adopting participative leadership in hierarchical organisations.

The concept of ‘safe space’ is evident in leadership in higher education. Whitchurch (2008:379) discusses the concept of ‘third space’ in higher education and describes this as a space of mixed teams, where organisational structures and conventions are bypassed and negotiated. Whitchurch (2008:379) explains:

“Individuals are not only interpreting their given roles more actively, but are moving laterally across functional and organisational boundaries to create new professional spaces, knowledges and relationships”.

Like rank-neutral spaces, third spaces encourage collaborative working and building “communicative relationships and networks” (Whitchurch,2008:386). This is reflective of Bryman’s (2007) arguments of the importance of participative decision making in higher education, and importantly, structures to facilitate this; this, Bryman (2007) noted, was identified as indicative of effective leadership. Likewise, the situated nature of third spaces is a characteristic feature; there are, as Whitchurch (2008:385) “clear temporal and spatial parameters.” Importantly, the protected nature of these spaces affords permission to challenge conventional leadership processes and practices, which is also comparable to the construction of rank-neutral spaces. Whitchurch (2008:386) confirms that “third space work may occur in spite of, rather than because of, formal structures”. Third spaces therefore reveal the application of the concept of ‘safe space’, an environment in which authority in leadership is negotiated, situationally suspended, in order to develop alternative leadership practices.

This thesis has conceptualised police leadership to be a power-centric activity. The concept of authority, and how this authority is reinforced and negotiated, represents an important contribution to understanding leadership outside policing. The analytical framework of this

thesis therefore has useful application to understanding leadership more broadly, and in particular how authorities in leadership are negotiated, in alternative organisational contexts.

Limitations and Future Considerations

This research is based on 38 interviews with senior police officers, from chief constable to inspector rank, in a UK police constabulary. The method uncovered the meanings of police leadership and accessed rich, qualitative data, and an analytical framework describing the relationship between rank and leadership was produced. Whilst it is acknowledged that the generalisability of findings from case study research is a challenge, this research supported a shift away from traditional forms of generalisation and emphasised instead the development of ‘working hypotheses’. To support this, the research adhered to the framework for applicability as detailed in Figure 5 (Chapter Four). For example, interview quotes and the context of these discussions in Chapter Five provided sufficient raw data to assess the validity and transferability of the analytical insights. The findings of this research are also supported by existing literature. In particular, Silvestri’s (2011) research, using a similar methodological approach, documents the extent to which the rank consciousness in police constabularies ‘gets in the way’ of alternative leadership practices. Other policing commentators have similarly acknowledged the influence of rank in police leadership. Adlam (2002), for example, highlights the influence of rank on interactions with leaders. More recently, Herrington and Colvin (2016) note the deference to rank in constabularies and allude to the significance of the meanings of rank to police leadership: The authors explain:

“As a hierarchical organisation designed to defer to the highest-ranking leader with the explicit expectations that the person at the top will be the ‘expert’, will have the answer, and will know what to do”. (Herrington and Colvin,2016:10)

The findings therefore reflect contemporary academic understanding of the significance of rank in police leadership, which indicates the applicability and relevance of the research.

To expand on the findings set out in this thesis, there are two key considerations for future research. First, this research was interested in leadership inside the police organisation, rather than the external leadership role of the police. Chief constable to inspector rank were considered therefore as holding strategic responsibilities. Sergeants and police constables

were therefore not included in this study, since their role was primarily considered as leadership 'outside'. However, the role of sergeant is increasingly considered a pivotal leadership function and an important rank to encourage meaningful and sustainable reform to frontline policing (Butterfield et al.,2005; Engel,2001; HMIC,2008; Rowe,2006; Van Maanen,1997). The Direct Entry reforms, the formalisation of academic qualifications, and increased emphasis on workforce development and well-being are changing the nature of demand on the police sergeant. Empirical study to explore how sergeants use the authority of rank in their leadership and how this compares with the findings set out in this thesis, would contribute to understanding the nature of leadership in police constabularies and importantly the implications of leadership reform.

Second, this thesis showed that the authority of rank is central to understanding leadership in the police. This research was interested in the meaning of leadership to police officers and consequently captured 'police-officer specific' understandings of leadership. Further research to explore leadership in other areas of the police organisation would contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge base on police leadership. The changing nature of police organisation and management, particularly in terms of workforce modernisation, has formalised leadership arrangements between police officers and police staff. Yet police staff are an entirely neglected area of police leadership studies. An exploration of the leadership role and experiences of police staff, in comparison to that of police officers, would further contribute to the development of alternative leadership practices in the police, a key vision of the College of Policing (2015a). The way in which the politics and authority of rank is navigated in police staff roles, and the implications of this for understanding the diversity of leadership and leadership roles in police constabularies, is an important area of future research.

Conclusion

This research has made key contributions to the understanding of police leadership. Firstly, this research illustrated the significance of context, using the concepts of audience and risk, in the construction and presentation of leadership, and thus, supports further consideration, as Cockcroft (2014) similarly promotes, to the distinctive and complex context in which police

leaders operate. Continuing attention must be paid to the unique nature of police work and police occupational culture in discussions of police leadership.

Secondly, this research has challenged the understanding of police leadership as person-centred, positional and outcome-oriented, and calls therefore, for a move away from conceiving leadership in terms of abstract, context-free wish lists of desirable leadership behaviours. The person-centred assumptions inherent in existing empirical work perpetuate notions of heroism which act as a barrier to participatory and collaborative leadership. This research has conceptualised leadership instead in terms of the processes of social construction. Leadership training and development should incorporate the principles of social constructionism to facilitate understanding of leadership as a process.

Thirdly, this thesis has shown the different ways in which the meanings of rank shape the construction of leadership in the police, and produced an analytical framework to conceptualise this relationship. This research challenges the existing preoccupation with rank as a structure and furthers knowledge of the use of rank as an authority in leadership. This thesis has argued that the meaning of rank reflects meanings of leadership. These meanings inhibit the acceptance of collaborative, participatory or transformational leadership and the endorsement of such approaches is removed from the realities of understanding police leadership as rank-centric. Police leadership is a product of both structural influences and individual agency, captured through the negotiation of authority. Consequently, police leadership is reformed not solely through a focus on rank structure, but rather, meaningful discussions about the influence of the authority of rank. To develop leadership practice in the police, greater attention should be paid to transforming the assumptions related to rank as an authority. An understanding of the influence of rank in the police organisation, beyond the rank structure, is essential.

This research applied the criticality of leadership scholars to the understanding of police leadership to contribute to knowledge of leadership in the police as a socially constructed, rank-centric activity. Whilst there are limitations in case study research, this thesis provides a unique insight into the practice of leadership in the police. To understand police leadership, rank, context and agency are crucial. The development of an occupational 'rank awareness' is

fundamental to overcome the barrier of rank and an essential precursor to the development of alternative or 'difference' in leadership practices. This research has challenged the current policy focus on structure in leadership reform and calls for greater consideration of the use of rank as an authority. Future research on the leadership of police sergeants and police staff is recommended to understand the diversity of leadership experiences and perceptions in the police. It is hoped that leadership selection, recruitment and development will reflect the socially constructed nature of police leadership and as such, recommendations of reform will be grounded in the realities of police officers' experiences and understandings of leadership.

Appendix 1: Research Briefing

An Exploratory Study of Police Leadership and Management

Research Briefing

January 2015

This research will provide an important contribution and considerable support to leadership practices in the police. There has been no research on police leadership to the extent and depth proposed by this project. Much of recent academic research has focused on the activity of frontline police officers, whereas little is known about police leaders and their leadership role. Current understanding of police leadership and management does not adequately reflect the complexities and distinctive nature of the practice within a policing environment. This research will therefore make a timely and significant contribution to the debate about the nature of police leadership and diversity of leadership practices.

Purpose of the Research

This research is being conducted as part of a PhD at Nottingham Trent University with full support from the Chief Constable [NAME].

The principle aim of the research is to explore chief and senior police officers' understanding and views of management and leadership within [CAINLAND CONSTABULARY].

Requirements of the Research

The research will be based on interviews with chief and senior police officers. Each interview will last no more than one hour. Having been involved in the research, all officers will be offered an executive summary of the key findings for [CAINLAND CONSTABULARY].

If you have any questions about this research project, please do get in contact with me. Thank you in advance for your time.

Claire Davis

Doctoral Student, Nottingham Trent University

claire.davis2012@my.ntu.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

Research Title: An Exploratory Study of Police Leadership

Researcher: Claire Davis

Thank you for your interest in my research. You have been invited to take part because of your role within the Constabulary and the knowledge and insights you may be able to offer which will be hugely beneficial for this research. 37 other participants have also been invited to take part.

This Information Sheet explains what the research is about and what is involved in taking part.

1. Purpose of the research

The aim of the research is to explore the meaning of, and approaches to, police leadership in [CAINLAND CONSTABULARY].

This is an interesting time for police leadership, and one of considerable change. This research provides a timely and important contribution to developing policing practice in leadership.

There has been no research on police leadership to the extent and depth proposed by this project. Your involvement will make this research possible.

The intention of this research is that it will develop the knowledge and practice of leadership within police forces and input from officers involved will help steer the project. As part of being involved in the research, all participants will be offered:

- Access to the full thesis, which will include an academic review of the leadership and management literature
- A bespoke executive summary outlining the key findings for your Constabulary.

[THE CHIEF CONSTABLE] supports this research, but it is your decision to take part. If you chose not be involved in this research, this information will not be passed to the Chief Constable or any senior management in the Constabulary. Your involvement in this research is entirely voluntary.

2. Nature of the research

The Interviews

Understanding your views of leadership is one of the most important parts of this research. It is anticipated that the interviews will last approximately one hour, and will be arranged at a time convenient to you, with plenty of notice. My intention is to place as minimal a demand on your time as possible.

The interviews will be conducted at your place of work, or somewhere convenient for you. There will be no need for additional travel to take part in this research.

You will have access to the interview transcripts from your interviews, which you are able to review and confirm that they are an accurate representation of the interview.

As long as you are happy, it is hoped that all the interviews will be recorded. This is so I can pay attention to what you are saying. The recordings of your interview will only be used for this research and will be kept on a securely. The recordings will not be passed to any one outside the research project or any other members of the Constabulary.

A full CRB and security check has been conducted.

The Research Findings

The information from the interviews will be analyzed for themes and how it relates to other learning about police leadership. Findings will form part of my PhD thesis and also academic journal articles or academic presentations, which are expectations of conducting a PhD. Communicating this research to policing audiences is also particularly important. The dissemination plan will include sharing the research findings with the College of Policing, ACPO, the Police Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation.

3. Confidentiality and anonymity

This research has been reviewed by Nottingham Trent University's Ethics Committee and adheres to good practice outlined by the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics.

ALL information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be passed to any other members of the Constabulary, or used for any other purposes.

ALL information will have your name and any other identifiable features removed and provided with a unique code number. The research findings will be the basis of PhD thesis, which will be published through Nottingham Trent University. The findings may also be incorporated into academic journal articles or presentations. However, all information in the final thesis, academic journal articles or presentations will be presented in a way that it will not be possible to identify the people or Constabulary involved.

Quotes may be used as part of the final thesis, academic journal articles or presentations but these quotes will not include any information that may identify you.

I will not breach your confidentiality unless you tell me about unsafe or illegal activity or serious misconduct within the Constabulary, which has to be disclosed. This will be done with advice from my supervisor at Nottingham Trent University.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the fieldwork phase. You are also free to withdraw two months after fieldwork has been completed, after which time it is difficult to remove the information you have provided from the analysis.

4. Contact details

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me.

Claire Davis

Doctoral Student

Graduate School, Nottingham Trent University

Claire.davis2012@my.ntu.ac.uk

0779 3031 359

Alternatively, you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Di Bailey, who will also be happy to answer any questions you have.

Professor Di Bailey

School of Social Sciences. Nottingham Trent University

di.bailey@ntu.ac.uk

0115 848 6079

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

Research Title: An Exploratory Study of Police Leadership

Researcher: Claire Davis

Name of Participant:

		Please tick box
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided in the Research Briefing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I understand that, unless I reveal information about illegal activity or serious misconduct within the Constabulary, the information I provide will be kept strictly confidential.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	I understand that direct quotes may be used, but that my name or any identifiable features will not be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I understand that the interview/s will be recorded and the recordings will be kept secure and used only for the purpose of this research	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I agree to take part in this research	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....
Participant's Signature

.....
Date

.....
Researcher's Signature

.....
Date

Researchers contact details:

Claire Davis

Doctoral Student, Nottingham Trent University Graduate School

claire.davis2012@my.ntu.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Interview Guide

Research Question: What are senior officers' understandings of leadership within their constabulary?

Research Sub-Questions:

What are the understandings of leadership at different ranks of the constabulary?

How has this understanding of leadership development?

What are the implications of these understandings for leadership in police constabularies?

1. [WARM UP] If I knew nothing about your job, how would you describe it?

The 'what'? (what is the current understanding)

2. What is the strategic vision of the Constabulary?

3. When you hear the term 'leadership', what comes to mind? What words would you use?

4. How would you describe your leadership style?

5. What is your understanding of those you lead? [motivated/able?]

6. What does the Constabulary want from its leaders? What values are important?

7. Is rank important in police leadership? (Why?) What impact does it have on interactions/relationships? What does rank do to our understanding of leadership?

The 'how'? (how has this developed – the definers of understanding)

8. What have been the key influencers to your understanding of leadership? [prompt: Relationships? Experiences? Training?]

9. What leadership values would you say are communicated from the chief constable? [prompt: leadership 'tone'/ messages?]

10. How would you describe the chief constable's leadership style?

11. How do the messages about leadership come down from the chief constable?
Do these messages translate/make sense to you?

12. What does the 'doing of' leadership look like? Today, where do you think
you've 'done' leadership?

The 'where'? (where does this understanding apply? When is it different?
Importance of context)

13. Does your understanding about leadership change depending on the situation?
How? Give examples.

14. [Spectrum Public order = directive versus briefing = participatory] Where the
'middle ground'? What influences your choice of approach then?

FINAL POINT

15. So overall then, what would you say leadership means to you?

Summary/close

16. I understand then that for you leadership in [CAINLAND CONSTABULARY]
means XXX. Have I got that right?

Appendix 5: Coding List

Analytical Category		Category Name	Sub Category (A)	Sub Category (B)	Sub Category (C)
A	WHAT? is the current understanding of leadership? (Research Question 1)	Rank oriented	Hierarchical	Structure	Command
		Directive			
		Participative	Consultative	Negotiation	
		Openness	Accessibility	Visibility	
		Challenge	Question	Thinking	Ideas
		Protective	Filter	Translation	
		Responsibility	Ownership		
		Accountability	Blame		
		Decision Making	Chair		
		Competence	Knowledge	Skill	Credentials
		Influence	Influence up	Influence down	
		Respect	Person	Rank	
		Status	Power	Authority	
		Sir/Ma'am			
		Uniform			
Empowerment	Freedom	Space			
B	HOW? Definers of understanding (Research Question 2)	Rank	Authority	Structure	
		Relationships	Interaction		
		Training	Education	Nurture	
		Person	Nature	Personality	
		Language	Operational	Managerial	
		Role Model	Good Example	Bad Example	
		Line Manager	Good Example	Bad Example	
C	WHERE? Importance of Context (Research Question 1& 2)	Context 1	Audience	High Audience	Low Audience
		Context 2	Risk	High Risk	Low Risk
		Context 3	Operational	Managerial	
		Context 4	Inside/Outside		
		Context 5	Influence	Freedom	

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