Aims

• To assess the presenting and changing attitudes, values and beliefs of the new recruits to the police service in the early stages of their police career
• To evaluate the key influences upon the formation and development of the attitudes, values and beliefs of new police recruits
Methods

Four year longitudinal research study utilising semi-structured interviews (with quantitative elements) with a cohort of 24 new police recruits to ‘Evermord Constabulary’ in England.

• QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS
  • The role of the police
  • How to learn to be a police officer
  • The influences of others in learning to be a police officer
  • The expectations and realities of being a police officer
  • What makes a ‘good’ police officer
  • The major challenges facing policing

• QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS
  • Most important priorities of a police officer
  • Most important characteristics of a police officer
  • Most important influences upon a police officer
  • 22 statements about policing with which to agree or disagree on a 5 point Likert-type scale
Six Enduring and Emerging Cultural Characteristics of Policing

- Cynicism
- Communication
- Comradeship
- Code of self-protection
- Compassion
- Categorisation
SOCIAL IDENTITY

The Group

The Individual

The Self

“socially shared patterns of individual behaviour” (Tajfel, 1981: p.49)

STAGES AND CONSEQUENCES OF IDENTITY FORMATION

• Categorisation with the group
  • Self categorisation occurs when you:
    • Adhere to group values
    • Are given a voice within the group
    • Support group leaders
    • Identify with given role
      (Bradford, Murphy and Jackson, 2014)

• Comparison with others
  • Those who are perceived to be the same and those who are different
  • Sustains the group
  • Enhances self-image
  • Defines group boundaries

“we are what we are because they are not what we are” (Tajfel, 1981: p.323)
THE IDEAL VICTIM

• “If you've got an elderly lady whose husband's died and has just been the victim of a burglary and had all her husband's possessions stolen. You know, you just think the amount you can do for that person to help them, to safeguard them, to solve their crime, put somebody behind bars for committing that offence” (A3)

• “I see a 90 year old lady, if someone's broken into her home, as a real vulnerable victim” (Z7)

• “your genuine victims of crime are burglary victims and...this is going to sound a bit awful, but they've worked all their lives, they've worked really hard for everything they have and somebody's come in and taken it all from them” (B3)

JOB SATISFACTION

• “I like the nice jobs that you go to where you've got a genuine victim. For example, I had a really nasty domestic the other day where the female had been … choked and strangled … But we had a real impact on her … and it was quite a nice job like that because I did genuinely think, quite satisfied that I had done the best that I could and her partner was arrested and she was safeguarded” (B3)

• “The good work is the people that are genuine, the genuine victims, I would class them as. They're the good jobs, whereas 90 per cent of our work are people who can't live a normal life because they can't cope, they can't cope with normality” (D6)

• “you crave a job where there's a genuine victim and you're doing proper policing. I love the day when I go to something like burglary in progress because that, to me, is policing and I don’t do a lot of that” (D8)

• “I like going to burglaries and dealing with genuine victims of crime” (Z9)

• “genuine victims, we always say that it’s really nice when you come across a genuine one, which is a bit bad to say really, isn’t it?” (Y1)
THE ‘UNDESERVING’

• “you can tell a genuine victim from one that’s not. The 17 year old lad that’s already got two kids, and you’re thinking, are they really a subject of CSE?” (D5)
• “Generally the clientele of X is quite bad anyway, it’s normally never an angel involved in an incident, there’s two bad people and two stories are always different” (Z9)
• “there’s quite a view on crimes where both parties are, like, bad people, so a lot of drug related and stuff like that” (X9)
• “Obviously there are real victims, but there’s some that do just use the police service because they can’t look after their own lives” (Z7)

BLURRED BOUNDARIES

• “I get a bit disillusioned sometimes because a lot of the victims we deal with, one minute they’re the suspect as well, so I don’t always see them as real victims” (Z7)
• “So it’s a lot less of your nice victim of crime ... there’s a lot more of your victim of crime that phones the police every week but is also the suspect of crime every week as well ... I don’t think anyone would think ... that you’re dealing with victims that will be your suspects next week ... and it’s the same people or the same families calling again and again and again. And I don’t think you think anything like that will happen when you join the police. I think you think of just victims of crime and criminals” (D12)
• “in my mind from [training school] it was like, right, one person’s been assaulted, the other person’s entirely not to blame and they’re a victim, they’re clearly the offender, they’re getting arrested in a textbook way, whereas the reality is they’ve both been as bad as each other” (Z9)
DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT I

• "the reality is they’ve both been as bad as each other, they both want to make a complaint against each other, it’s almost like, well, therefore we take no complaint and we deal with it out of the police and you deal with it in your own way, as opposed to us getting involved and potentially making matters worse … you get to learn certain people and certain types of incidents” (Z9)

• "although they’re all victims, the victim might be a drug user or a common thief, and you think, well, I don’t really want to give all my time to somebody that I know tomorrow will be committing these offences” (Z9)

• "people are quite cynical … I think they’re more inclined to give more attention to people who are genuinely victims of crime, where there’s a bad offender; whereas, when it’s, like, bad person on bad person, I think people get quite annoyed with that” (X9)

• “you’ve got to know how to play the game a little bit as well and understand where jobs are going and who is going to be looking at things, and stuff like that, not so much as to give the quality of what you do with the time, but just to know, sort of, have a bit of a long term awareness and to think, you know, this job is not going to go anywhere, so you deal with that accordingly” (Y2)

• “I’m more inclined to get involved outside of work if I see someone who’s a genuine victim, like if I saw an old lady getting mugged or something then I would definitely go and help. But a bunch of guys fighting in a bar or fighting out in the street I’d just leave them to get on with it, I think” (Y7)

• “My attitude towards the police has definitely changed. I can understand more why the public are more frustrated with us, because we do a rubbish job, especially in CID. Get rid of it, is what you’re told, get rid of the job, get rid of it, sort it out so it’s no longer there. Rather than investigating.” (Z1)

DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT II

• “you turn up to a job and you...people go, oh he’s coming, he said he’s going to come and kill me. Right, what did he actually say? So, you’re already thinking this is rubbish; I need to get rid of this job ... every job you go to you’re thinking, right, where’s my way out of this offence and out of this job. And so you lead them down to the garden path as if you’re selling them a product. So, are you really that bothered? Has he ever hurt anybody before? Well, no but he could. So could I right now but it doesn’t mean I’m going to. Oh yeah, I see what you’re saying. So, you know, do you really think he’s going to tell him? Well, when you word it like that probably, no. So how about you just ignore him for a week and if you do get any more you give us a call and then you leave ... Whereas if you turn up and you go, oh my god, really. Oh my god he’s going to kill you, you’re going to back do threat to life reports, you’re going to take statements and it will go because after a week they’re going to go, oh yeah, I went for tea with him yesterday. Oh yeah, they came round for dinner, they bought my baby a new t-shirt. Oh yeah, it’s fine. No, no, can I retract my statement. And you’re like [sighs]. So you sell them out of a job when you turn up. And you do that 90 per cent of the jobs you go to because you get an instinct for what is a real job and what isn’t ... If you haven’t figured the way out the other person has and between you, you’ve wormed your way out of it and go. That’s just, sometimes you know you’re not going to be able to and you just resign yourself to it and get rid of it a week later when they call you up saying they’re not bothered anymore. The better salesman you are the better you are of getting rid of it.” (D10)
The stigma of place

Benign and/or deliberate neglect of places and individuals

Different levels of control and support

‘Non-ideal’ traits eclipse all other identities

No recognition of potential victimisation

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The Birfurcation of Victim Status

Where the voices of the victims fit the established and seemingly well understood criteria of what is deserving, worthwhile and genuine, then those voices are heard loud and clear by a police service which exhibits compassion and empathy in their support for this public.

Where the voices of the victim are deemed to be undeserving or ingenuine, then those voices are lost. Their status as victims is withheld. This exacerbates what has been described as the ‘hierarchy of victimisation’ (McEvoy and McConnachie, 2012).
Thank you

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