Legitimacy seeking, authenticity seeking and practitioner ---- identity orientations in the process of identity work:

A case study of newcomers in a UK police force

By

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Declarations

I hereby declare that this PhD thesis entitled 'Legitimacy seeking, authenticity seeking, and practitioner ---- identity orientations in the process of identity work: A case study of newcomers in a UK police force' has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor Gerry McGivern and Professor Nick Llewellyn. It has been submitted only for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Organisation Studies in Warwick Business School.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I analyse the identity work process of police newcomers in a large UK police force. Predicted on the view that identity work is an ongoing dialogue between individuals and the social contexts they encounter, this thesis contributes the conceptualisation of identity orientation to capture the specific pattern of identity work that varies among individuals and is relatively consistently held by them across social contexts. With this concept, new dimensions are added to identity work theorisations. First, I argue that individuals' pattern of identity work is determined by and determines, to a large extent, the specific way they relate the self to the situated social context, which has been found to be preoccupied with legitimacy, authenticity or practical competence, though not exclusively, among different individuals. Second, I argue that rather than fixed identity meanings, individuals' sense of stability is provided by the identity orientation that they draw efforts to maintain amidst fluid and contradictory social experiences.

In addition, the thesis also derives a focused examination on the social contexts with which the newcomers engaged to coproduce their identity. The analysis generates a two-dimensional evaluation framework that enables understanding multiple social contexts as an unfolding process, wherein the enabling and conditioning elements for different orientations of identity work are changing. The framework could therefore be utilised as an integrative and processual analytical tool for assessing contextual conditions in identity work research.

Finally, I argue that identity work process is a dynamic and two-way communication between individuals' striving identity orientation and socially offered influences and resources. I advance this understanding with a processual model.

Abbreviations

LPA: local policing area (i.e. police station)

PDU: police development unit (i.e. tutored placement session)

PCSO: policing community support officer

SP: special constable

IPLPD: initial policing learning and development programme

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Original ideas

My PhD study originated from my curiosity regarding individual identity formation when entering into a new cultural, occupational and/or organisational environment. Observing from the socialising experiences of both myself and others, I was intrigued by two things. First, socialisation is commonly understood as a process wherein newcomers acquire some collectively shared attributes, habits, values and memories, yet simultaneously make their own choices and form quite heterogeneous identities (Ibarra, 1999). It seems that people vary considerably in their ways of interpreting and responding to an identical or similar array of events, people, relations and rules in any given new environment. These internal dialogues and social interactions often accumulatively channel people in significantly different directions over time. This could be seen, for instance, among freshmen of the same university intake, whose different attitudes and orientations to their initially shared university life gradually develop into divergent ways of being a student in the following years. The question follows, what are the key different aspects among newcomers during socialisation that lead to their later variation of identity?

The second thing that drew my attention was the tension between newcomers' aim of seeking a relatively consistent understanding of the norms, values and rules of the new social context (Mead, 1934; Van Maanen and Katz, 1979), and the complex, contradictory and fragmented clues they actually receivced from the encountered experience. Admittedly, structured interventions, such as systematic induction or training, are constructive in guiding newcomers to 'fit in' (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Yet, these mechanisms are still prone to the biases of the people or subgroups who devise or deliver them because of their individual preference and perspective, partial scope of knowledge and/or self-interest (cf. Covaleski et al., 1998; Ibarra, 1999). It therefore remains unavoidable that newcomers have discrepant, confusing or even shocking experiences in the early stages of their involvement with a new organisational or social environment. Since the socialising process is non-linear, and involves multiple sources of impacts, how would individuals reconfigure these varied inputs in

their identity construction and strive for a coherent and progressive life (Gergen and Gergen, 1997; Giddens, 1991)?

1.2 Study aims and methods

Started with interests and fundamental assumptions, I constructed the theoretical landscape for this research by iteratively reviewing my pre-existing understanding of the subject and adding to it with critical reading of pertinent literature. Through this course of intellectual efforts, my interest in the broad filed of identity construction was narrowed down to the frame of 'identity work' at individual level (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008), though theoretical resources beyond this scope were also drawn upon open-mindedly. The nature of identity as a temporary product of the ongoing interplay between individual agency and multiple or dissonant social regulating forces is well understood within the 'identity work' camp (Davies and Thomas, 2003; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), allowing an in-depth focus on the identity producing process which is anything but stable and orchestrated. Moreover, this approach highlights and deliberates various forms (e.g. narrative, dramaturgical, relational and so on; Down and Reveley, 2009; Snow and Anderson, 1987), initiative levels (e.g. pre-emptive or passive; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), and inner processes (e.g. inward and outward; Beech, 2010; Watson, 2008) of individual agency. Therefore, this study's attempt of probing nuanced individual variation resonates with and finds considerable insights from this theoretical stream.

However, while the existing literature as a whole has documented considerable types of identity work, the majority of studies engage deeply with one path of identity work and very few have noted, elaborated on and explained inter-individual variation within the same context or similar situations. While some works are an exception to this in presenting a collection of identity work cases of varied motives or strategies under the same theme (e.g. Essers and Benschop, 2009; McGivern et al., 2015; Thomas and Davies, 2005), they do not go very far or aim to account for the differences at underlying level. Probably, it is squarely the high appreciation of relational and interactive details that renders studies of identity work very often concentrated on localised, micro and single cases and rather cautious of drawing 'broad-sweeping' comparisons.

Instead, identification-oriented studies (i.e. based on a relatively static and coherent view of the collective identity) have provided more insights regarding different means and ends in identity construction (e.g. Ibarra, 1999; Pratt, 2000b; Pratt et al., 2006). However, they do not address individual variation from the lens of individual-context dialogue, or go into great details on the specific critical events and processes that stimulate and reinforce varied individual agency.

Following the theoretical exploration, this study sets out to explore and hopefully systematically frame the main differences between identity constructors in their social interactions during socialising periods. By doing so, it aims to contribute more 'applicable' remarks to help practical and scholarly readers recognise and understand individuals involved in identity work, rather than merely delineating a historically and socially localised story for its own value.

Moreover, coming from a social constructionist origin, identity work scholarship is inherently sensitive to the co-existence of incongruent discourses, structures and norms, and the unstable nature of social realities. Some studies substantially examine the identity work driven by a momentary crucial event or radical change wherein conflicting meanings are encountered, so that identity work is principally about assembling socially contrasting or dispersed elements (e.g. Clarke et al., 2009; Thomas and Davies, 2005). Another host of studies explore the identity work preoccupied with fabricating chronologically fragmented episodes into desirable life story (e.g. Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Watson, 2009). Nevertheless, there has been relatively little attempt at combining both temporal and social inconsistency into one picture. In fact, the organisational life unfolding in front of the eyes of fresh newcomers, due to their unfamiliarity with the new field, often entails sense making of disjointed meanings from both spatially and temporally dispersed spheres (Louis, 1980). Among other things is the need to adjust self-understanding by integrating the past elsewhere 'self', the present living 'self' and the future aspired-to 'self'. Given this, this study is also intended to investigate newcomers' identity construction from their own point of view, and pay particular attention to how they interweave multiple elements in the socialising process into an identity they desire and strive for.

Considering these theoretical aims and the underlying interpretivist approach, the research was conducted as an in-depth, contextual-specific and longitudinal

qualitative study (Pettigrew, 1990), which helped to critically unveil the nuanced individual differences and zigzagging processes of newcomers' identity construction. The methodology was chosen based on two considerations. Firstly, the subtle interplays between individuals and what occurs in their socialising experience could only be captured when both the individuals and the contexts are well comprehended (Alvesson, et al., 2008; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). This means that a long-term and intimate engagement with the studied subjects and the environment in which they are situated is necessary. Secondly, the potentially inconsistent and ephemeral identity statuses during the identity building process could be effectively captured when data were gathered timely and freshly from fieldwork (cf. Down and Reveley, 2009; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Watson, 2008). Based on these considerations, I spent 10 months doing on-site observation within the workplace and performed interviews with newcomers at four points during the initial entrance period, which afforded me surprisingly affluent and relevant data.

Furthermore, the study was contextualised in a new intake of operational policing within a large English police force. On the one hand, this type of prototypical occupations often requires newcomers to observe substantial social prescriptions attached to their social category (Hughes, 1956; Kreiner et al., 2006b). On the other hand, it is widely acknowledged that the actual policing routine is, in contrast, highly discretional and permits crucial room of job crafting (Gordon et al., 2009; Lipsky, 1980; Van Maanen, 2010; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Also frequently noted are the discrepancies between divisions (Constable and Smith, 2015) as well as individual actors (Waddington, 1999). These features jointly render the chosen context a 'revelatory' case (Yin, 2009). Within this occupational setting, the divergence of individual work identity was prominent and thus easy to recognise, and diverse and mutually contesting resources could also be expected to exist and impact newcomers. As the outcome of this study shows, the context of police identity construction does prove a fertile ground for examining idiosyncrasies, over-time transitions, and subtle iterations in identity work.

Besides, given the research context and the method, this study also attempts to contribute implications concerning the training scheme and new recruitment for the police force in study as well as other forces. What to be included and how to deliver the initial training in the police has been discussed long in the police sector. However,

there has been a paucity of commentaries generated from the perspective of the people who are directly involved in the training and recruitment (Constables and Smith, 2015; Lee and Punch, 2004). In addition, since the implementation of Winsor's recommendations (i.e. a series of reforms in recruitment, promotion, pension scheme and so on in English and Welsh police forces), although much attention has been paid to direct entry at higher ranks in the police sector (cf. Loveday, 2013; Smith, 2015; etc.), hardly anything has been said about the externally recruited police constables. With an in-depth and longitudinal investigation of the socialisation process of the new intake, this thesis aims to offer relevant and convincing information and suggestions for practitioners in the police sector.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

To elaborate on the theoretical background, research process, empirical findings and key arguments, the thesis main body is structured as follows.

In chapter 2, I will build up my understanding on the central inquiry by critically reviewing the existing theoretical resources. Since the inquiry is contextualised in the particular occupation of police, studies of the police will be explored first to familiarise myself and the reader with the occupational environment where the identity work in question took place. Also, with the aims of adding dimensions to the theoretical field of identity work, I will provide a review on a wide range of literature that is relevant to my thematic interests of inter-individual variation and intra-individual coherence. Based on the critical reading of these two sets of literature, I sharpen my research interests and phrase them into two specific research questions.

Chapter 3 will present in detail the methodology of the present research. I will explain the philosophical underpinning, the macro and micro research setting, the data collection activities and products, and the process of analysis. In the end of this chapter, I derive some reflexive and critical evaluation of the chosen methodology.

Chapter 4 and 5 will present empirical findings respectively of the social contexts and individuals' identity work. Specifically, the study found the entire socialising path could be divided into four phases ---- that is, *training at the academy, first tutored-placement, post-placement training and probationary shift* ---- which all

situated newcomers in distinctive social contexts. To deepen our understanding of the identity work, Chapter 4 will delineate these social contexts in a chronological order and then derive a comparison between them to evaluate the major contextual transformations through the process of socialisation, whereby *a two-dimensional framework* is developed and employed for the evaluation.

Chapter 5 will analyse the specific identity work processes of newcomers' identity work across the four contexts, which were identified to be undertaken in three main patterns among the studied newcomers, which I term as *legitimacy seeking orientation, authenticity seeking orientation and practitioner orientation*. Following this, the three patterns of identity work will be compared to pin down *four key aspects* that contribute to the variation between individuals. To facilitate explanation, the comparison is illustrated in a 3-by-4 table.

In chapter 6, I will derive theoretical reflections on the empirical findings. Predicted on the view of individuals' identity work as an ongoing dialogue between their agency of identity construction and the influences from their situated context on their identity, I argue that the identity orientation they adopt is what makes them engage with social contexts in a specific way and pursue a specific version of social or work identity. I then demonstrate how the concept of identity orientation could be applied in differentiating the identity work among individuals in the same context, and how it helps understand the micro processes of identity work and the tension between identity stability and fluidity.

In chapter 7, I will offer practical implications for the police sector. Specifically, evaluation and advice will be given to the initial training and tutored placements for police recruits, which were found to be significant for police novices to progress into competent police officers. In addition, grounded in the findings of the socialisation experience of externally recruited police newcomers, reflective implications will be given to evaluate and offer advice for the recruitment reform in English and Welsh police forces implemented after Winsor's recommendations.

In the final chapter, I will draw overall conclusions based on what has been delivered throughout the entire thesis.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Among the various interconnected theoretical positions, a widely shared vantage point in identity scholarship is the dialectic between social-identity (i.e., socially prescribed identity) and self-identity (i.e., what one takes him/herself to be). On the one hand, socially imposed identity penetrates into individual actors' sensemaking and behaviours (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Watson, 2009). On the other hand, individuals could also negotiate the personal version of identity against various social shaping forces (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). This dialectic is especially salient when the work identity is prototyped socially and historically (Hughes, 1956), and/or characterised by its esoteric set of attributes, values, intentions and norms (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006), in that individual members often need not only to acquire the readymade identity, but also to retain their distinctive and authentic identity (Kreiner et al., 2006b; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

The work identity of police officers involves similar, if not more intensive, tensions. Undeniably, on a broad level, it plays an imperative role and has a considerable impact on the society. Thus, it is bestowed with an influential and admirable identity by the public. Also, the occupation has its own expertise, skills and moral standards that grant it a highly specialised and competent status superior to the general society (Conti, 2009; Manning, 2008; Waddington, 1999). Besides, the high discretion in the job also affords individual members substantial latitude to establish themselves as heroic, competent and distinctive figures (Fielding, 1984). Even so, the police identity also involves negative ascriptions, especially the stereotyped characteristics of forcefulness and insensitivity. As Van Maanen sharply points out, 'the occupation lacks the institutional status and social prestige that leads managers (and outsiders) in other organizations to trust so-called professionals to control themselves' (2010: 114). With these conflicting aspects interwoven in the police identity, the dialogue between outer defining and inner striving could be significant in the process of identity construction.

Furthermore, the entry process that police newcomers undergo could make the dialogue of identity construction more fluid and iterative. Generally speaking, as detailed in police studies (Fielding, 1984; Hopper, 1977; Van Maanen, 1973), the initial training and real policing are critically different contexts, presenting differential elements of the occupation and demanding inconsistent cultural scripts and behavioural standards. Hence, the social-identity' that police newcomers set out to absorb and negotiate might transform over time and involve contradictory meanings.

Since concrete knowledge of the context is vitally important to uncover the identity construction that occurs there (Langley and Abdallah, 2011; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), I shall first locate the identity issue within the police setting by examining the various aspects of this occupation pertaining to individual work identity. Based on a deeper understanding of the empirical context, I will sharpen my theoretical approach to the inquired issue by specifying the thematic focuses and critically reviewing the relevant articles on the themes. In the end, by drawing on these two parts of deliberation, I will formulate the research questions of this study.

The aim of this chapter is to set up the inquiry by drawing upon and raising questions to the existing scholarship of police and identity.

2.2 Understanding police identity

In the existing police studies, two general streams provide the most relevant insights into the work identity of police officers, one being investigations from a managerial or functional perspective, including concerns about job attitudes, competence, managerial control and so on (e.g., Fielding, 1984, 1988; Van Maanen, 1973, 1975, 2010), the other being studies from a social or political perspective, focused on the use of power, the establishment of street authority, police ideology, and policing conduct justification (e.g., Alpert and Dunham, 2004; Bittner, 1974; Dick, 2005; Davies and Thomas, 2003; Fielding and Fielding, 1991; Gordon et al., 2009; Manning, 1977; Van Maanen, 1978; Waddington, 1999). While neither of the two streams has explicitly committed to inquiry of identity, their comments on the crucial aspects of this occupation, including the social and political environment, practical competence and organisation of work, facilitate analysis of the context and process where the work identity is derived and enacted, negotiated and circumscribed.

Grounded in a reflective and integrative reading of these resources, I found identity construction from the entry point could be understood as a transition process in three aspects: 1) socializing into a highly distinguished social group whose boundary and image are shaped by societal and organisational discourses; 2) acquiring policing expertise, skills and norms to be able to perform the job competently, and 3) crafting a policing style that agrees with personal characteristics and perspectives. More precisely, these three aspects of transition correlate with three principal dimensions of the occupation that contribute to the formation of the work identity, namely the historically and socially ascribed identity (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner et al., 2006b), the governing rules and norms of job practices (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006; Van Maanen andSchein, 1979), and the personalised work persona in conducting routines (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Van Maanen, 2010; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

Since newcomers inevitably encounter these three facets of police identity, their identity construction could be metaphorically regarded as negotiation between self-identity and social-identity in three arenas, with social discourses, practice and agency respectively being the core tension of each arena. The rest of this section will be devoted to an in-depth evaluation of the police identity in the three arenas.

2.2.1 Police identity at social arena

Police is a long-established occupation. On a broad level, its existence is significant for political and social security and stability. It is also interactive and interdependent with the public. Police officers and their work not only serve organisational objectives and are managed by the organization, but also contribute significant influences on and receive appreciation and monitoring from the public (Lipsky, 1980). The positive presence of the police in books, films, newspapers, and other media, be it real, artistically dramatized or politically constructed, establishes a heroic image in the public's perception. Even a 5-year-old child knows how to mimic a police officer and may express a desire to become one, as police officers are often depicted as superman-like and always 'catching bad guys'. That is to say, these law enforcement officers, with their commanding and dignified image, are deeply ingrained in the social and cultural discourses.

Consequently, these external discourses could be the original, and perhaps deepest, vessel of definitions of police identity for most newcomers. When stepping into this role, police rookies switch from an antagonist to a protagonist position among these discourses. In parallel, for these novice members of the police force, these discourses are transformed from perceptions, expectations and demands to responsibility, duties as well as dignity. As Waddington vividly states, 'the vision of a "thin blue line" not only places the police in the position of valiant protectors of society, but also of those who are knowledgeable of the dark side of society and therefore, in a uniquely privileged position to apprehend the danger that threatens' (1999:299). In the eyes of the public, the positive police identity—dominated by rationality, masculinity, rich social knowledge, practical capability, altruism, integrity, fairness and so on (Conti, 2009; Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Hopper, 1977; Van Maanen, 1973)—becomes what new entrants need to absorb into themselves.

On the other hand, however, the police have also been associated with 'dirty work', 'harm', 'coercion' and 'trouble', and are often alineated from the public. It is believed that their core tasks involve the use of force and violence, and interfacing with disorder and the filthy, sinful side of the society so that most policing work is conducted away from public sight (Bittner, 1970; Manning, 1977; Van Maanen, 1978). The presence of the police is a reminder of the permanent existence of threats of disorder and crimes and provisional peace and order in the living environment (Dick, 2005).

Therefore, attitudes towards the police are ambiguous and ambivalent (Douglas, 1966). These contested discourses about the police, in effect, jointly create an 'aberrant and sacred' image (Manning, 2008) of the police that distances this occupational community from the rest of the society, or in another word, 'mystifies' it (Goffman, 1959) and keeps it away from its audience. As a result of this set of social discourses, the police have been traditionally characterised by strong insularity, and the ideological strategy of self-defending and dignifying (cf. Cain, 1973; Davis and Thomas, 2003; Dick, 2005; Fielding, 1984; Waddington, 1999; Van Maanen, 1978). The externally perceived distance and distinctiveness of the police, reinforces the sense of in-groupness among its members—and it is this strong collective identity that intensifies members' disidentification with the out-group and strengthens the group boundary (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel and Turner, 1985).

Additionally, this in-group identity of the police has also been observed to exist as rhetoric (Waddington, 1999) or front-stage presentation (Dick, 2005; Manning, 2008). Regarding this point, social constructionist views of identity could lend deep explanation. As many theorists argue, identity narratives stressing integrity and coherence of an individual or collective are often used to symbolically define a self against others so as to essentialise some desirable and sustainable qualities of the self (Brown, 2006; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Watson, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009). In fact, some scholars believe that identification and disidentification could be adopted as a strategy to optimize one's position in a competing and multi-ordered context (Creed at el., 2002; Garcia and Hardy, 2007).

The symbolic use of identity, while never applied as explanatory tool in police literature, echoes many critical issues of the police. For instance, it has been noted that the ideology that callously distances and demonizes members of the public who are 'potential offenders' is deliberately established for the instrumental purpose of enforcing the authoritative position of police in the society. Thus, this ideology facilitates officers' enactment of compiling authority over public members in face-to-face encounters (Alpert and Dunham, 2004; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Van Maanen, 1978).

That is to say, identification and attachment with the group could be not just stimulated by the critical and confrontational social discourses with the aim of defending and protecting oneself, but also initiatively chosen as a strategy to dignify oneself or support one's presentation of self in interactions with the public. Yet, the specific aspects that individuals identify with differ between the two situations: in the former situation, individuals could be more attached to the distinctive and superior dimension of the police social-identity, while in the latter one, individuals may focus more on the confrontational aspect.

In brief, the societal prescriptions of the category of police are embedded in extensive social and cultural discourses, and therefore deeply rooted and relatively resilient to individualistic articulations or activities (Sewell, 1992; Van Maanen, 2010; Ybema et al., 2009). However, the socially offered identity definitions are somewhat polarising, with both idealised expectations as well as critical, estranging perceptions from the public. The positive discourses act upon newcomers as both a source of prestige and an ideal identity to live up to, whereas the negative discourses might

compel individuals to attach themselves to the collective identity to gain desirable self-meanings, and enable them to play the law-enforcing role.

While these discourses are stable and unavoidable, the extent of their effects could vary considerably among individual members, as they could embrace, partially accept, negotiate with or even reject any of the discourses. Nevertheless, from the newcomers' point of view, their autonomy in deciding how to approach these discourses is extremely constrained by the initial training of new police recruits. It is widely acknowledged that this training invariably attempts to cultivate attitudes and values based on the idealised notion of the superior police identity (Constables and Smith, 2015; Fielding, 1984; cf. Conti, 2009; Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).

Moreover, these profound role implications ultimately have to be embodied tacitly and tactfully in concrete practice (Down and Reveley, 2009). And the practices not only sustain social-identity in palpable activities (Goffman, 1963), but also condition individuals' ability to carry out the social-identity they wish to embrace (Van Maanen, 2010). Therefore, closely related to the essential dimension of social discourses is the practices involved in this occupation, which is elaborated below.

2.2.2 Police identity at practice arena

The socially entrenched aspect of police identity naturally raises the question of role performance in practical everyday realities. More specifically, the socially sanctioned rules are not merely a historical construction, but involve everyday contingencies (Gordon et al., 2009; Van Maanen, 2010). Hence, it is vitally important to look at the operational side of police identity, and assess how concrete experiences shape police officers' identity.

A crucial body of organisation studies has offered insights into identity in established occupations, and many share the point that 'what I do' in combination with 'how I do' pivotally accounts for 'who I am' (e.g. Fine, 1996a and b; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009; Van Maanen, 2010). Individuals create meanings from direct engagement with 'work content' and 'process' (Pratt et al., 2006), including day-to-day undertakings, the job range and sequence, intricacies and challenges, interactions with clients, cooperation with colleagues, experienced feelings and emotions, utilization of tools and skills, use of language, challenges and achievement, outcomes and byproducts, dressing code, and so on. These meanings will stabilize as a

constellation of situational definitions and become incorporated into self-definitions (Ibarra, 1999).

Among others, Pratt and coauthors' (2006) study indicates that by performing real tasks, medical professionals deepened, expanded or altered their notion of the work identity. The customisation of identity through work experience highlighted by these authors suggests it was not external perceptions, but squarely the routine activities that constituted and shaped their professional identity. Ibarra (1999) examines the deliberate self-crafting process of consultancy and banking novices, which shows how behavioural models of seniors were internalised, tried out and modified. It was through continuous trial of provisional behavioural imperatives in encounters with clients that the novices obtained thorough comprehension of who they wanted to be in their new positions.

Like many other discretional and esoteric occupations, 'doing' is also an essential component in police officers' identity. Police scholarship acknowledges that, given that the work outcome is constantly difficult to objectify, measure or judge (Lipsky, 1980; Van Maanen, 1980), 'how the work is done' becomes a primary yielding ground of police identity and offers materials of identity talks (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 2010; Waddington, 1999). For patrolling officers, not many high-profile incidents occur in daily routines; instead, restoring peace and order among citizens in, for example, domestic disputes or shoplifting incidents, is the most prevalent undertaking. It is the ongoing everyday activities that stage dramaturgical role performance. Then, the practical episodes turn into 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1981 cited in Van Maanen, 2010) that sustains and stabilises identity.

Drawing on police literature and practice-based identity studies, competence seems to be the central dimension of practices of policing pertinent to work identity. The rationale for highlighting competence is threefold. First, it is a crucial signifier that distinguishes the police from other occupations (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 2010), hence materialising the social identity of the police. Second, it is prevalently embedded in everyday policing activities. For example, even in the basic task of communicating with members of the general public during patrolling, police officers will enact sophisticated (or esoteric) skills of assessing intentions (Van Maanen, 1978) and subtly questioning (Fielding, 1984). Third, it captures the differentiation among individual police members under the prevailing occupational identity, and marks the

transformation in their work identity over time (Fielding, 1984, 1988; Van Maanen, 1974; Waddington, 1999).

A number of police studies have contributed detailed reviews on police competence and practical knowledge (e.g. Bittner, 1967; Gordon et al., 2009; Muir, 1977; Van Maanen and Katz, 1979). However, most of them sketch policing competence from the perspective of external observers (Fielding, 1984), with a functional focus, rather than from an interpretive approach that views competence as significantly constitutive of and shaped by individual work identity (see exceptions Fielding, 1988; Van Maanen, 2010).

Given this, I build upon the perspective of conceiving 'professional competence as a way of being', advanced by Sandberg and Pinnington (2009), to evaluate police competence in association with work identity. This standpoint, as indicated by the authors, underscores the notion that professional competence is fundamentally a given existing status, constituted by the actor's constellation of interrelations and interactions with the surrounding world. Therefore, competence is not an entity-like resource. Rather, it is the ongoing enactment of a niche, where the actor lives (or 'exists' in their word) by practicing historically produced norms, interacting with other social actors and utilizing relevant tangible and intangible tools.

This idea is congruent with the practical dimension of police work identity discussed here. In the policing context, the notion of 'way of being' is highly relevant, in that how police officers deploy their motives, knowledge, skills and tools in relating themselves to role-set members reflects what kind of police officers they would like to be. For instance, Fielding (1984) and Van Maanen (2010) note that how offenders and victims in domestic incidents are pre-judged, treated, emotionally related to, advised and disposed by police officers suggests what role they take on for themselves and apply themselves to discharge. When choosing to be like a social worker, a friendly listener, a nonchalant professional or a big-crime fighter, different officers could deal with the same incident in different ways.

Another example of competence in the form of 'way of being' is the geographical boundedness in policing. Since patrol officers are normatively assigned to take charge over a certain physical territory, they develop intimate knowledge of, experience and skills of dealing with, emotional connection with, and a sense of ownership and

responsibility for the local area (Dick, 2015; Van Maanen, 2010). In this way, patrol officers' specific relations with and experienced interactions in their local niche become the direct source of their self-meanings.

The concept of competence as a particular way of being in a given context of practice has also been used by scholars to examine police newcomers' fit-in process, albeit implicitly. One pertinent example is Van Maanen and Katz's (1979) study on how new police officers make sense of their working environment. They find rookie officers define their situations and direct their actions by drawing upon 'temporal' and 'spatial' knowledge, which respectively refer to the locally routinized processes or procedures, and normalised relations with various surrounding actors. By internalising these sets of knowledge, they could 'account for and anticipate the recurring events of everyday life (Mead, 1930, cited in Van Maanen and Katz, 1979) in the workplace, and thereby grow into 'competent' officers.

Moreover, the competent way of being in this occupation could be far too ambiguous for new entrants to grasp in the first place. Apart from the localised norms mentioned above, the integration of formal accountability and practical flexibility is also a vital but elusive element in police officers' everyday activities. It is widely recognized in police scholarship (e.g., Harris, 1973; Fielding, 1984; Manning, 2008) that norms and cultural scripts of the operation sector are largely determined by the specific environment of policing, rather than formal prescriptions because the contingency of policing activities necessitates using rules flexibly and tailored to situations without breaking them (Gordon et al., 2009). Simultaneously, formal rules remain significant as they are organisational 'licenses', with which members of the police should be able to use to account for their activities in line for managerial and public consumption (Dick, 2005; Gordon et al., 2009; Van Maanen, 1980). Thus, an essential aspect of competence that newcomers need to cultivate is the ability to address two levels of expectations by interplaying with organisational mandates creatively to construct legitimacy for pragmatic work routines (Bittner, 1967; Fielding, 1984).

Furthermore, these two integral components of police competence are normally introduced separately to newcomers. As observed in police scholarship, while formal training normally espouses written laws and the principle of rule following, the operation sector introduces probationary recruits to the reality and importance of

permissible deviations in policing routines (Fielding, 1984; Gordon, et al., 2009), such as giving lighter punishment to offenders in exchange for important intelligence (Manning, 2008). Not until they have entered the operation sector—and only after reflective realisations—could newcomers recognise and construct this dimension of competence.

Indeed, newcomers' pursuit of competence in the real policing context has been reported as a process of building professional 'common sense' by gathering personal work experience and reflection (Fielding, 1984) and absorbing knowledge from seniors and peers in the workplace (Butterfield, et al., 2015; Gordon et al., 2009). Van Maanen (2010) defines the common sense in operational policing as a set of tacit knowledge for independent decision making that is developed from long-term policing experience. As he puts it,

'*a kind of presence of mind that leads an officer to a shrewd analysis of problematic situation and can be acted on in certain ways to achieve or at least try to achieve a desirable goal*' (2010:24).

As this definition suggests, although common sense is only consciously activated when officers run into complicated situations, it has a substantial knowledge base derived from certain stabilised attitudes and approaches in the work. Therefore, it could be reasonable to see common sense as a mental representation of the way the actor positions him/herself in relation to the various elements and roles involved in his/her work life. To illustrate, the valuable common sense of police officers in dealing well with widely diverse individuals (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 1978) comes from the officers' own experience of role performances in combination with empirically deducted experience shared in the local policing community. These policing behaviours and the meanings extracted from them are already dominated by a certain policing identity (e.g., social worker or big-crime fighter). A relevant example is Llewellyn's (2008) analysis of the narratives of an inspector during community patrolling, which reveals that the implementation of rules had been heavily shaped by the inspector's pre-judgement of certain groups' attitudes, dispositions and motives.

In addition to conceiving officers' work identity as the source of their common sense, Van Maanen (2010) continues to argue that common sense is often perceived as a signature of police officer's work identity in the policing community, and thus

often highlighted in storytelling during informal socialising. Even so, conversations concerning critical events where personal common sense is described do not completely constitute free expression of personally valued identity, as they are inevitably shaped by the perspectives of the listeners, and/or the prevailing cultural norms in the local community (Gordon et al., 2009; Waddington, 1999).

This tension suggests that while common sense and the integration of formal rules and practical situations could be calibrated by individuals creatively and idiosyncratically, they could not be entirely self-defensive and oblivious to established norms. This correlates with the widely embraced idea that practical competence involves, primarily, an ability to take roles of 'others' and perform the typical norms (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009).

Then, an ensuing question is how far police officers can—and would like to—depart from the prevailing norms and strive for their idiosyncratic work identity? This question leads to deliberation over the agency arena of police identity.

2.2.3 Police identity at agency arena

Due to high discretion (Fielding, 1984; Gordon et al., 2009; Manning, 2008), the occupation of policing inherently involves substantial latitude for job crafting and identity manoeuvring. In this situation, individual members' agency has to be evaluated at two levels. At a macro level, the occupation itself entails enactment of agency in interaction with external prescribing or delimiting forces (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner et al., 2006b), such as the negative labels from social discourses and the inflexible written laws. However, at a micro level, individuals could refine the use of agency in these processes with their distinctive self-concept (Fine, 1996b; Ibarra, 1999; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009), such as the personally held boundary of breaching laws for pragmatic reasons. In other words, the former level focuses on the agency evoked by the job, which explains broad unspoken norms, while the latter looks at the agency deployed by individuals that accounts for unique work identities. Given this assumption, and drawing upon analyses in police literature, two key dimensions are selected—the interface between police and public, and the interrelation between one's self and the work—both of which invoke the dual level of agency and permit the incorporation of idiosyncrasies.

Regarding the interface between the police and the public, one inevitable theme is police presence, which refers to police officers' establishment of authority in encounters with the public, as determined by the mission of law enforcing and crime fighting. A considerable number of police study scholars have argued that it is a mandate as well as a strategy to maintain the 'edge' (i.e., a compiling position) in interactions with public members (Alpert and Dunham 2004; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Van Maanen, 1978, 1980). On the one hand, since individual officers embody the image, worth, and dignity of the entire police institution, they are entailed to play their role following the 'order' with other role-set members (Goffman, 1959), that is, taking charge of situations and disposing of people they encounter. On the other hand, considering the devaluation and distrust from the public, the police deliberately maintain their authoritative position to repair and reinforce their role as a justice and law enforcers, and demarcate themselves from the immoral, disorderly and harmful characters with whom the public always associates the police (Van Maanen, 1978, 1980).

For these profound implications and effects of officers' self-presentation, the notion of police presence may even need to be extended beyond confrontational policing situations. For example, Fielding (1984) documents police presence deliberately managed in general social interactions. One probation officer, when recognised as a new face by local people, pretended to be an old-timer who was just transferred there, with the intention of maintaining his stature and authority in the public's perception. Another officer whom Fielding reports chose to ignore the insults directed at him by some people he encountered in order to avoid stigmatising narratives and protect the police image.

Importantly, however, a criticism has been raised that the authority-oriented presence should not be taken as a 'monolithic and static' culture in the police. Even if all officers are fully aware of the significance of their authority on street, their personal predispositions may make them embrace and externalise this ideology to various degrees (Conti, 2009). In addition, the behaviours of members of the public could be interpreted by different officers in differential ways during interactions (Fielding and Fielding, 1991). Furthermore, a large number of alternative discourses, such as the liberal-democratic discourse (Dick, 2005) and New Public Management discourse (e.g. Davies andThomas, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2005), which are often encountered

and/or upheld by police officers, espouse values directly at variance with the notion of the police as the absolute authority. Therefore, one aspect of the agency in police identity is how individuals, with their personal values, cognitive approach to people, as well as absorbed alternative discourses, receive and negotiate against the norm of police presence in public encounters.

Moreover, when interactions with the public happen in situations of problem solving, idiosyncratic agency could also be manifested in the specific way officers choose to engage with other people involved (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). As mentioned earlier in the above subsection, when officers view themselves in different ways (e.g., as social workers, nonchalant professionals or crime fighters), they differ from each in terms of applied skills (e.g., persuasion, execution or coercion), communication manners (e.g., patient, professional or compiling), emotional and relational boundary (e.g., sympathetic, detached or confronting), and outcomes (e.g., advice-based disposals, procedure-following intervention or punishment) (see detailed review in Van Maanen 2010). Since operational policing officers are granted with great discretion in addressing incidents (Gordon et al., 2009), they have ample space for calibrating the quality and extent of interactions with the public based on their personal values, motives and proficiency (Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009). This is not dissimilar to what is found in other occupations featured with client-service or people-management, such as consultants (Ibarra, 1999; Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009), middle managers (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008), and nurses (Benner et al., 1996).

In addition, the way individual officers orient themselves to the work is an inherently subjective matter, and potentially marks individual variation. First, the tension between individual aspiration and limited work conditions could stimulate cognitive re-adaption among new recruits. As discussed in subsection 2.2.1, socially ascribed attributes of the police, which are often too idealised, are often people's original motives for choosing this occupation, and constitute their desirable identity at the initial stage (Van Maanen, 1973, 1975). However, these romantic presumptions of policing work soon dissipate, as new recruits become 'disillusioned' when they realise that the majority of duties are routine and mundane jobs, or 'dirty work' as they often refer to (Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1973, 2010; Waddington, 1999), which prompts them to reconceive the real police identity.

Furthermore, while external social discourses often define the policing world in black and white terms, newly hired officers normally transform from that dichotomous mentality to a more ambivalent perception of the world. As they experience more ambiguous or dilemmatic situations, such as dealing with first-time offenders or homeless shoplifters, they become less certain about attributing crime simply to the people involved themselves (Fielding and Fielding, 1991). Also, after seeing recurrent criminals, their anticipation of the impact of police and the efficacy of punishment could be severely eroded (Van Maanen, 1975; 2010).

These unexpected and disturbing discoveries or realisations have been found to give rise to the prevalent 'instrumentality' perspective (Cook, 1977 cited in Fielding 1984) and lay-low philosophy in the police (Van Maanen, 1973, 1975; Van Maanen and Katz, 2009). However, since these transitions in orientation to work involve officers' personal sensemaking and ideological reformulation, they should be viewed as heterogenous at individual level.

Regarding this point, some correlations could be found in other occupations. First, the disillusion after entry has also been observed among medical students (Becker et al., 1961; Pratt et al., 2006) and accounting trainees (Grey, 1994) who are challenged with intensive training but assigned with 'scut work', that is, extremely basic tasks for which they are overqualified. Under such circumstances, new professionals timely adjust their understanding of the job to what they do currently (Pratt et al., 2006), or cast the anchor of self-meanings towards a promising future (Grey, 1994).

Also, in some occupations people expand or reorganise their work content or change way of perceiving the work to amplify the value of their work and themselves (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Fine's (1996a) study of professional cooks is a classic example. By integrating small tasks into a coherent and 'aesthetic' project, the cooks perceived their 'aesthetic judgments' and creative management in the otherwise basic yet intensive work. Similarly, in morally stigmatic occupations, people 'reframe' and 'refocus' the meanings of their work to glorify their work identity (see review in Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999).

Although there has been little discussion on how police officers subjectively reshape their approach to the work, and the heterogeneity in the reshaping process, one

thing that has been noted is the individual judgements involved in this process (Fielding, 1984; Fielding and Fielding, 1991). Some police scholars point out individuals' pre-entry experience and antecedent factors, such as socio-economic and educational background, gender, age, accent, occupational status and so on (Dick, 2005; Fielding and Fielding, 1991; Van Maanen, 1978), could account for variation in job approach. Moreover, some researchers point out that with the attempt of obtaining acceptance and affiliation with the police community (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 1973), newcomers may feel the urge to converge attitudes with the paramount local culture first and then rely on their own judgement. All in all, there is considerable space for individual agency in the process of negotiating with the limitations and critical elements of the work.

Besides, self-narrative construction is another dimension where agency is mobilised. Informal storytelling has been widely noted for its valuable role in sustaining a community. Whilst support from the society is scattered and the use of power involved in the job causes self-doubt, the 'backstage' talks (Goffman, 1959) help storytellers obtain social and affective support from in-group members. As a consequence, the phenomenon of mutual reassurance through informal communication, widely known as 'canteen culture' (Waddington, 1999), is frequently blamed for leading to a 'self-serving' mentality and in-group 'insularity' of the police (Dick, 2005; Fielding, 1984; Reiner, 2000; Waddington, 1999).

Nevertheless, the stories, as a crucial form of self-articulation, may reflect rather diverse work personas than captured by the 'homogeneous culture' (Waddington, 1999). In Van Maanen's (2010) ethnography, patrol officers all seemed to have their 'signature' of work, meaning their preferred work genre, specialised skills and distinctive work personalities, which were made known and recognised among the shift through the sharing of work stories. Likewise, Manning (1977, 2008) has drawn upon the 'entrepreneurial' work pattern of a drug control department to underscore the officers' discretion in recognising the boundary of 'tasks' and recognising their role within them, which consequently generates differential self-articulations among drug policing officers. Based on these examples, it could be argued that individual agency is manifested in officers' narratives of how they position themselves in engagement with their work.

2.3 Understanding identity

Based on the exploration above, it is easy to see that the work identity of police contains multi-layered meanings. Therefore, it could be perceived differently by different officers or in different situations. Likewise, Alvesson and co-authors (2008) point to the example of McDonald's, the fast-food chain, which could possibly be seen as a service provider, a workplace characterised by Fordism, or a vehicle of Western culture. With this example, the authors argue that the multiple available 'discursive spins' concerning an identity allows individuals to make choices and change choices at different times. The aforementioned three crucial sets of meanings of police identity are apparently interconnected, yet sometimes mutually conflicting, such as the social discourses dimension and the practical competence dimension. Given this situation, on the one hand, depending on the context, certain meanings might be principally presented to and/or imposed on newcomers through socialisation mechanisms or discursive practices. On the other hand, newcomers might tend to prioritise a certain anchor of meanings over the others. Therefore, under the joint influences of contextual conditions and individual selection, the identity construction of police newcomers should be a synergetic, iterative and dynamic evolution process.

The existing literature on police socialization and competence, however, often focuses on only one dimension, and frames the socialising process as a relatively linear transformation. Among all, Van Maanen's (1973, 1975; Van Maanen and Katz, 1978) series of studies look at the socialising process mainly as a culturally 'breaking-in' process, and offer substantial ethnographic and statistical evidence on how novices' motives, work attitudes, work mannerisms and personal characteristics are adapted or passively modified as a co-production of tough police routines and influence from supervisors and peers. This approach is in line with the conventional socialisation perspective (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), which tends to direct less attention to subjective sensemaking and divergence between individuals within this transition process (Louis, 1980).

Another area of research in the literature, including Bittner (1965), Van Maanen (1980), Fielding (1984, 1988) and Manning (1997, 2008), highlights the gap between formal rules and procedures in rhetoric and practical norms and improvisation in realities. It often emphasises the latter as sophisticated but crucial professional

competence that newcomers need to discover. However, this abundance of intellectual resources sheds little light on 'the specific process' (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) in which newcomers evaluate, select or reconcile conflicting discourses, values and principles along the path of socialisation.

Conti's (2009) and Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce's (2009) studies are exceptional in contributing insights into the process whereby newcomers' loyalty, dignity, solidarity and identification were manufactured through specific discursive practices during initial training. Nevertheless, they have looked only at the initial stage, when the prevailing discourses focus on the social component of police identity. Thus, the identity constructed there is rather provisional, subject to change and only partially constitutive of the occupational identity. To substantially analyse the identity construction of police officers, it is necessary to scrutinise what they encounter in their daily routine and how they negotiate with the localised norms and cultural scripts (Fielding, 1984; Hopper, 1977; Van Maanen, 1973, 1975).

With this consideration in mind, I will build upon the scholarship of identity construction in general organisational settings to guide my inquiry into identity construction in the particular context of the occupational socialisation of police officers.

2.3.1 The focal 'identity' and 'identity construction'

In the present study, the identity construction in question is at the interface between the occupational identity and the individual self-concept, and between an unfolding, new universe of social relations and interactions and individuals' pre-existing knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world. This situation naturally invokes a certain degree of self-doubt and self-openness (Alvesson et al., 2008a; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008), and ensuing efforts to acquire a credible and desirable identity in the new social context. Therefore, the identity focused on here exists as only a temporarily achieved status (Beech, 2008, 2010; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Ybema et al., 2009) and, accordingly, identity construction is an ongoing process striving for a becoming identity. That is to say, the focal identity is the answer to the question 'who am I becoming'.

Given this notion of identity development, the two preliminary thematic interests laid out in the first place—individual variation and construction of coherent meanings

in identity construction (see subsection 1.2)—lead me to two tensions of identity in building a fundamental understanding for the present inquiry. The first tension rests in the dialectic between structure and agency (Ybema et al., 2009) in identity construction. The critical situation of occupational socialisation inevitably entails acquisition of social norms and rules that govern practical conduct in the occupation (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) and trigger discovery, reflection and negotiation of self-concepts (Ibarra, 1999). Thus, the structure-agency tension could generate explanation to the focal issue of identity construction, especially the thematic interest of individual variation.

Second, another tension in identity construction concerns the ontological spectrum between stability and fluidity. The entry phase captivates newcomers in structural liminality (Turner, 1967; Conti, 2009), somewhere in-between their past work or general identity and the fully-fledged police identity, which lays the ground for a precarious and iterative identity status (Beech, 2010; Louis, 1980). Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the inconsistency of elements presented in the police socialisation path could further contribute to instability and contradictions, whereas what newcomers ultimately search for is a relatively stable and coherent work identity (Gergen and Gergen, 1997; Ybema et al., 2009), or the attainment of a quasi-stationary equilibrium in the new occupation (Pratt et al., 2006). Therefore, how individuals manage a balance between stability and fluidity in identity construction could also account for the focal identity construction issue, especially the second thematic interest. In the following section, an extensive review of these two tensions of identity will be presented.

2.3.2 Structure and agency

It is worth mentioning that ‘structure’ in this thesis is used to denote a specific array of rules, norms, cultures, value systems or discursive regimes (Kunda, 1992; Grey, 1994), in conjunction with the practices and social relations set in place to reinforce them (Covelaski et al., 1998; Townley, 1993). ‘Agency’ broadly refers to an individual’s mental reflexivity, creativity and physical ability to express and enact internal will (Ybema et al., 2009). Thus, exploration of these two concepts is not exclusively committed to one theoretical underpinning, but embraces a wide spectrum of theoretical positions sharing similar concerns, which include, to name a few, Mead’s

(1934) ‘society’ and ‘self’, Foucault’s (1972) ‘knowledge’ and ‘subjectivity’, Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) ‘institutional structure’ and ‘individual actor’, and Giddens’ (1984) ‘structure’ and ‘knowledgeable humans’. In different theoretical approaches, the institutionalising power of macro structure and the range and quality of individual agency could be slightly different.

Symbolic interactionist perspective

First, from a symbolic interactionist stance, the impact of structure on identity is manifested in daily interaction or communication. ‘Structure’ is seen here primarily as ‘community’, an organized set of attitudes and symbols in social interactions eligible and accessible to everyone in the community, so that one could act in relation to others with the self-consciousness of whatever attitudes arise from others (Mead, 1934). That is to say, structure grants generalized rules for individuals to reference in social interactions within a community, from which individuals derive a socialised concept of self (Charon, 2004). In addition, in an individual’s inner world, reflexive thinking could always react to the social self—for example, in terms of ‘self regulation’ and ‘self development’. It is via these thinking practices that community members obtain a sense of selfhood ownership, and potential changes could be initiated in the social community (Mead, 1932, 1934).

Not dissimilarly, Goffman (1959), in his classic analysis of people’s everyday self-presentation, emphasises that personality, interaction and society are interlinked in ongoing interactions between performers and audiences. It is through a performer’s gestures, postures, verbalisations and audiences’ responses that a social situation is defined among them and the performer receives a sense of ego. Therefore, whether the interchange between a performer and audiences proceeds as the intended order determines audiences’ judgement about the performer’s ability as well as that of the entire group to which this performer belongs (Goffman, 1959: 165-166; Manning, 2008).

Another relevant study is Roy’s (1973) examination of informal interactions among factory workers during long working hours. It illustrates how regularity is enacted during interactions and how work-based identity is simultaneously formed. From his participant observation, Roy suggests that informal conversations could ‘be abstracted into a social structure of status and roles’, which in turn could become

constantly ‘discerned in the carrying out of the various informal activities’ and ultimately form a system of rules about times and themes (1973: 218, cited in du Gay, 1996). Through these structured conversations, the subculture of the group as well as the workers’ identity were produced (du Gay, 1996).

These works give validity to the assumption that identity stems mainly from interactions in the social sphere in which an individual is embedded, and the rules and orders created or reproduced in these interactions constitute this individual’s identity. They also emphasise that under a prevailing structure, there is a high level of homogeneity among individual identities in that enclosed social sphere. Moreover, Goffman (1959) distinguishes between back-region for breaks and front-region for self-presentation. Roy (1973) notes the division as well as integration between work and leisure in workers’ identity. These positions indicate that apart from the dominant structure that determines the reproduction of identical identity, there is a space where individuals could reflect upon the structure-prescribed identity (Mead, 1932), and/or distance themselves from it (Goffman, 1959, 1961).

These theories have underpinned a vast number of socialisation studies. Following their assumptions, ‘appropriate mannerisms’, role expectation, occupational norms, local culture, and professional presence have been stressed as crucial aspects that newcomers require in order to settle in the new role (e.g. Dixon at al., 2012; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Van Maanen and Katz (1979), for instance, assert that knowing how to play one’s role in front of various inside and outside audiences is a necessary part of integration into the new work group.

Another body of socialisation literature, with similar assumptions, devotes attention to organisational techniques in establishing an encapsulating structure and reconstructing newcomers’ identity (‘divestiture socialisation’ in Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) (e.g., Conti, 2009; Kanter, 1972; Snow and Machalek, 1984). Pratt’s (2000) study of Amway’s managing of salespeople’ identity offers an extreme case of how organisations reconstruct employees’ identity by using exclusive ideology and interpersonal relations.

While this stream of literature explains how organizations shape identity through various forms of symbolic work that impose the dominant structure, they ignore, to some extent, individuals’ reflexivity and creativity in internalising these symbolic

meanings (Ibarra's study is exceptional in this respect). In other words, this cluster of socialisation studies inspired by symbolic interactionism tends to overemphasise the determination and entirety of structure, and pays less attention to individual agency.

Another group of studies addresses identity construction from a more interactive and native perspective, and maintains that the process is not a matter of one-sided role internalisation, but a mutual adaptation between personal mental, physical status, preferences, etc., and organisationally situated roles (Ashford and Taylor, 1990; Hughes, 1956). Ibarra's (1999) study is one of the most convincing in this stream. She notes that after moving into a higher position, junior consultants were motivated to 'convey a credible image long before they [had] fully internalised the underlying professional identity' (p. 764). By saying this, she suggests a gap between what is delimited by the dominant presentation rules and what individuals reflexively perceive themselves to be. With this underlying perspective, Ibarra probes into junior professionals' internal processing of interactions with mentors and clients and discovers the significant influences of these reflections on their identity building.

Alternatively, when individuals' self-meanings are stronger than prescriptions of the dominant structure, social interactions could be engaged in less as part of an identity defining process, but more as a stabilising or confirming process. For instance, the manager in Down and Reveley's (2009) study, in contrast to the junior professionals in Ibarra's (1999) study, demonstrated more independence and initiative in his conceptions of who he was and who he would like to be. Hence, day-to-day interactions principally served to consolidate his manager identity. Van Maanen's (2010) study of police patrolmen also suggests that the informal communication of police officers functions mainly as a stage where officers express their characteristic work identity, rather than a vessel of moulding identity.

Taking all into account, the second set of studies reflecting symbolic interactionism supports the notion that getting socialised into a role entails identifying with some attributes upheld in the dominant structure, but individuals could enact agency by incorporating subjective judgement in social interactions. However, how much agency individuals are able to or would like to enact in negotiating with the structure may vary from case to case.

Foucauldian perspective

Another theoretical stance profoundly addressing the structure-agency tension is influenced largely by Foucauldian theories (1972, 1977, 1980). According to this lens, dominant structure shapes individuals' identity through the nexus of knowledge and power. 'Knowledge' arbitrarily produces meanings of the external world and individuals, whereby individuals' construed self and their conduct is governed. In organisational setting, knowledge, in the form of dominant discourses, seems appealing to individuals and constitutes their self-understanding, which in turn reproduces the fundamental structure. Also, by exercising disciplinary practices, such as surveillance, ranking and punishment, individuals are turned into self-regulating subjectivities, so that the structure is permanently imposed on them.

In identity literature, Foucauldian concepts underscore investigation on identity as a production of managerial regimes in the disguise of benevolent discourses or treatments (e.g., Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Grey, 1994; Grey and Costas, 2014; Knights and McCabe, 2003; Townley, 1993), which propels individuals to undertake a project of self-discipline and -regulation with an illusion of self-actualisation (e.g., Fleming and Sturdy, 2009; Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009).

An illuminating case is Grey's (1994) study of accounting trainees. The discursive and non-discursive elements (e.g., professional image, dress code, performance appraisal, formal and informal feedback, social networking events, and so on) centralized around professionalism and career development prompted newcomers to keenly align themselves with the elite role models in terms of work and lifestyle. Thornborrow and Brown (2009) have made similar observations of UK paratroopers, including both novices and veterans, whose subjectively aspired identity is deeply invested in organizational dominant discourses, which were reinforced through surveillance and storytelling arousing pride and solidarity (e.g., Willmott, 1993).

This school of identity studies holds the view that the determination of structure on identity is inevitable. Even if some individuals feel they are striving for a personally valued, rather than externally imposed identity, this theoretical position maintains that their identity construction is only 'productively repressed' (Alvesson et al., 2008a: 16; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Moreover, the inherent focus on discourses in this

theoretical stance explicitly breaks the boundary of organisation as the primary source of identity, and allows for multiple structures, including organisational and extra-employment ones, that are constitutive of individual identity. Thus, this position is more sensitive to historical and broad social contexts than is social constructionism. However, both viewpoints maintain a restricted agency in interacting with structure, and thus underplay agency in identity construction (du Gay, 1996; Giddens, 1991).

Identity work perspective

Unlike the studies influenced by social constructionist or Foucauldian theories, another crucial theoretical track, loosely classified as 'identity work' camp, places greater emphasis on agency, in terms of how it enables individuals to counteract, negotiate with, reframe, reject or diminish or, otherwise, confirm, embrace or sustain socially prescribed identity. Identity work was first theorised in sociological scholarship. Anderson and Snow's (1987) study of homeless people depicts their creation of 'self-worth' by embracing or distancing their social category, peer group and affiliating organisations, and fabricating stories of an embellished past or illusionary future. This rich variety of subjective identity construction activity supports the possibility of agency overriding structure in identity construction.

Later, Sveningsson and Alvesson's (2003) milestone study conceptualises identity work in organizational setting based on the empirical material of identity construction of a newly appointed middle manager.

'People being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness'. (2003: 1165)

Influenced by this fundamental stress on agency, some of the more recent identity-work studies unveil even more calculative and impactful identity work, which involves agency propelling transformation in macro structure. In Creed and co-authors' (2010) case study, for instance, protesters objecting to discrimination against sexual minorities (GLBT) in workplace used discursive resources to formulate their own identity that attracted others to join their camp. Similarly, Garcia and Hardy's (2007) study reveals that academics, senior executives, and general staff, when involved in a reform, constructed respective identities by defining their similarity or difference with the other two groups with respect to actors, doings and perceptions. This strategy

enabled them to place themselves in a favourable position vis-à-vis their respective self-interest. However, as newcomers situated in a rite of passage, they have a higher tendency to be vulnerable and submissive (Turner, 1967; Van Maanen and Katz, 1979). Whether they could enact agency to exploit and transform structures in the same way as revealed in those studies is a matter for empirical investigation.

In addition, Sveningsson and Alvesson's study also lays crucial foundations for ensuing identity work studies. In comparison with the scattered identity ascriptions of the homeless people mentioned in Snow and Anderson's (1987) study, more concrete and systematic organisational discourses are offered to pin down the managerial identity in this study. By doing so, this study sets up the format of investigating organisation identity: thoroughly examining both structures and activities of agency (Alvesson et al., 2008a). This vital investigation format is manifested in the detailed contextualisation of identity work in considerable empirical studies (e.g. Clarke et al., 2009; Down and Reveley, 2009).

Moreover, a recent vital development in this respect is more nuanced treatment of the structure that acts upon identity, majorly influenced by Watson (2008). By using symbolic interactionist approach to refine identity work theory, he advocates, rather than the external discourses per se, it is the 'social-identity' that individuals take from those discourses (2008: 131) that presses upon their notion of self. Additionally, Beech's dialogic (2008, 2010) models more systematically delineate the two-way route of identity construction, between outside-in 'reaction' and inside-out 'initiation'. As suggested in these models, individuals' recognition significantly determines how and to what extent the meanings generated from outer structure imprint on identity construction.

Moreover, based on this point, Watson outlines multiple types (or layers) of social-identity that are possibly adopted by individuals in framing their identities, and accordingly highlights the latitude of agency in selecting or resembling social-identities to craft personally preferred identities (Jenkins, 1996). Similar to Watson's study, a considerable number of other identity studies devote attention to the identity work that resists restraints of certain structures by creatively deploying plural discourses and meanings attached to one's social-identity (e.g., Carroll and Levy, 2008; Essers and Benschop, 2009; Sturdy et al., 2006; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). These studies strongly support the commonplace multiplicity and

intersection of structures (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2014; Davies and Thomas, 2003; Sewell, 1992), and the possibility that identity workers could be adroit at identifying and utilising the overlapping and conflicts between structures. However, as commented by Watson reflexively, individuals 'vary in the extent to which they are relatively active or passive in these matters' (2008: 130).

2.3.3 Stability and fluidity

The tension between stability and fluidity is also relevant for this study. In identity literature, there has been a longstanding debate on identity stability. One side asserts that identity is stable, durable and coherent, whereas the other views it as primarily fluid, malleable, contested and fragmented.

Stable identity

One crucial theoretical orientation within identity literature quite sharply underlines a discrete and enduring notion of identity. Influenced by social psychological and sociological research, this broad theoretical stance advances the relational and comparative nature of identity (Ybema et al., 2009), that is, identity being mainly defined by 'to which group I belong' and 'who are we/others'. It also accentuates the emotive and cognitive effects, such as in-group-ness, associated with social identity. 'Social identity theory' and 'self-categorization theory' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987), as well as 'organizational identity' and 'organizational identification' (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Dutton et al., 1994), are representative and influential theorisations based on this fundamental approach.

In individual identity studies, two types of thematic issues could be traced to deep influence from this stability-oriented view of identity. The first issue is transitions of social identity. The vital investment in social categorisation to produce identity renders individuals highly subject to changes in their membership, such as career transition or organisation change (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Petriglieri, 2011). Thus, they may use narrative construction, such as 'life stories', to maintain identity stability and coherence (Gergen and Gergen, 1997; Giddens, 1991; Watson, 2009; Weick, 1995). Moreover, this kind of ontological stability could also be obtained from socially confirmed trustworthiness (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Van Maanen, 2010), which

is reflectively seen by individuals themselves as a token of their consistent commitment to a given social identity.

The second issue is competing demands from the varied identities that one individual may hold. In Ashforth and Mael's (1989) initial theorisation, it was already postulated that individuals could encounter multiple or contradictory identities, and conflicts could be resolved cognitively by separating, buffering and ordering (p.30) (cf. not dissimilar ideas in Pratt and Foreman, 2000). In organisation or occupation life, this tension could arise when the social group to which individuals belong is overtly distinctive and different from or incongruent with their personal identities. Related literature offers examples of various patterns of engagement with demanding work identities, such as separation and integration of work and personal identity by priests (Kreiner et al., 2006b) and ideological reformulation among 'dirty workers' (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Despite acknowledging the changes people make in the composition of their entire identity, the underlying assumption of this host of literature is that people's personal identity and the work identity that they interplay with are both concrete and lasting entities, and a relative stable equilibrium between them is achievable.

Moreover, the application of Foucauldian theorisation in organisation studies also tends to substantiate the stability of identity. This assumption maintains that identity is largely produced as subjectivity of dominant discourses, thus giving limited or little room for creative and transformative identity construction. On the one hand, disciplinary practices are widely adopted to regulate and control identities (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Brown and Lewis, 2011). On the other hand, dominant discourses constitute self-knowledge and set up life trajectories that are appealing to individuals, which colonise their self-construed identity as well as their continuous constructive project (Casey, 1995; Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Hence, identity is stable to the extent that the dominant discursive regime remains stable and unitary.

Therefore, both theoretical perspectives mentioned above hold that social identities are imprinted heavily by macro institutions, which are historically rooted, 'slow in the move', and relatively remote and unshakable in daily activities. Accordingly, agentic identity construction is no more than minor-scale modification of a steady and robust social identity.

Fluid identity

In contrast, among a few other theoretical positions, identity is conceived in perpetual flux and, accordingly, identity construction is an eternal open-ended project. One theoretical position is based on the social-psychological and psychoanaltical assumption that paradoxes and reflexivity are inherent in the human mind so that real conditions could always trigger disillusion and existential anxiety (Knight and Willmott, 1989; Roberts, 2005; Voronov and Vince, 2012), and this is exacerbated by radical social changes in the contemporary era (Collinson, 2003).

Furthermore, another group of postmodern-oriented scholars point to the unstable nature of identity, based on the fluidity of social discourses that prescribe identity. Some contend that organisational and social discourses are inherently poly-semantic and fragmented, thus less totalising in compiling individual identity and leaving room for manoeuvring (Davies and Thomas, 2003; Sewell, 1992; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Some assert that due to continuous changes in organisational image, meaning and structure, social discourses become unstable, and social identity becomes increasingly vague and precarious (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2014; Collinson, 2003; Down and Reveley, 2009). Some others stress the dynamic competition among discourses that intersect in an individual's life, and argue that this competition causes individual's permanent identity construction of reflectively reassembling discourses (Linstead and Thomas, 2002; Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Webb, 2006).

In other words, instead of maintenance and preservation of a core set of identities across diverse situations, the matter of identity construction is more likely to be a temporary and expedient configuration of multiple identity meanings (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Ybema et al., 2009). And fundamentally, identity is less of a construct but more of a metaphor or 'symbolic rallying points' (Brown, 2006; Ybema et al., 2009).

However, this notion of a decentred identity remains an idealised conception, and normally 'taken less seriously' in empirical analysis (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Critics maintain that it inflates the malleability of individual identity and ignores the fiction, inertia and insensitivity that impedes such highly adaptive identity construction (Alvesson, 2010; Cohen, 1994; Handley et al., 2006). However, some scholars address this tension by proposing a *putative core of self*—noted in empirical

studies as the authentic self (Costas and Fleming, 2009), personality (Watson, 2009), and life story (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003)—a notion that constitutes an anchor for individuals grappling with the complex, contradictory and rapidly changing world around them.

This stabilising notion of self, however, differs from the essential self-identity considered in the social identity theoretical camp, in that the self-identity is believed to be constructed socially rather than absolutely internally (Jenkins, 1996; Ybema et al., 2009). For instance, self-narratives that advance a core self are pivotally subject to others' confirmation (Beech, 2008; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Roberts, 2005; Van Maanen, 2010). In particular, when critical incidents prevent existing self-narratives from going on, people will adjust the specific self-meanings to repair and restore a sense of self (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008: 110).

To sum, the theoretical positions reviewed above both assume identity in constant flux, as obstructions to sustaining or reproducing identity in social life constantly require individuals to critically reflect on and recalibrate their identity (Knights and Willmott, 1989; Beech, 2008).

2.4 Research questions

In existing identity literature, the three theoretical positions on the dialectic between structure and agency supplement each other and jointly offer valuable implications to the focal inquiry on identity construction. The social interactionist approach underscores the generic path of identity construction during occupational socialisation, as the distinctive police identity, especially its social and practical dimensions, inevitably requires newcomers, to replicate the established norms to a certain degree.

The Foucauldian position of structure-agency dialectic helps evaluate identity regulation forces (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) in the organisation context, especially in terms of how dominant discourses, in combination with disciplinary and cultural practices, influence identity construction.

Moreover, the perspective of identity work draws significant attention to the multiplicity of structures, which correlates to the threefold police identity delineated earlier. It also encourages scrutiny of the specific process where individual agency interplays with structures, which is also where individual divergence emerges. Hence,

based on integrative understanding of the three broad theoretical approaches, the first research question is raised:

During identity construction, how do newcomers differ from each other in their interplays with discourses and practices in the socialising context that prescribe police identity?

The two contrasting positions concerning the stability/fluidity of identity, shall not be recognised as mutually exclusive (Ybema et al., 2009), but taken as intellectual resources to contribute to a deeper understanding of the various aspects involved in the identity construction in question. The relational and comparative view of identity and Social Identity Theory could be applied to comprehend two things. First, career entry or transition could invoke newcomers' pursuit of an entity-like work identity to accelerate their restoration of a stable sense of self (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). The social and practical dimension of police identity may receive great attention from them for this reason. Second, the self-work negotiation, which is inevitably triggered during the socialisation process (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006), increases newcomers' sensitivity to the 'us-them' division (Ybema et al., 2009) and sense of boundary between work identity and private identity.

The psychoanalytic and postmodern assumptions are useful to guide analysis of how the above work on self-identity—while supposedly constituted by stable, concrete and fixed meanings—actually involve shifts, discrepancies and ambiguities during the unfolding process of socialisation, especially when conflicts between different dimensions of police identity emerge. Through this scrutiny, I could identify among the socially provided and personally strived elements of identity, what newcomers adhere to more consistently to produce a sense of coherence in self, and what they give away along the ongoing socialising process, consciously or unconsciously. Based on these considerations, the second research question is generated:

During identity construction, how do newcomers strive to construct a coherent work identity within a changing and multi-ordered socialising context?

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology of this study has been chosen in accordance to the theoretical underpinnings and the two research questions laid out in the last chapter. In the following sections, I will first elaborate on the philosophical underpinnings of this study and the rationales of adopting them. I then will offer a multi-levelled evaluation of the research context. Following this, the methods, processes, an outcomes of data collection and data analysis will be explained in depth. Finally, I will produce a substantial reflexivity of this study regarding to the methodology chosen as well as the theoretical construction in this study. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the designs and process of completing this study, and reflect on the methodological and theoretical tensions and limitations involved in it.

3.2 Philosophical underpinnings

When I started doing research, I was instinctively an interpretivist. After I located the research focuses, I followed a 'hermeneutic circle' (Alvesson, 2010: 196) to expand and deepen comprehension on the topic, that is, repeatedly moving between selective text reviewing directed by pre-understanding, and in-depth reading of the chosen resources to build up underlying understanding and navigate further literature exploration. From these probing practices, I became more certain of using interpretive approach to conduct the study.

First, given the particular thematic interests set out initially, the present inquiry has already taken a subjective ontological and epistemological stance. The identity in question is assumed as socially and historically constructed meanings, and mainly in the form of narratives (Czarniawska, 1997; Giddens, 1991) and dramaturgical performances in social interactions (Goffman, 1959, 1967), instead of a-contextual, essential realities. In addition, identity is constituted by meanings embedded in specific and interactive processes, which could not be measured by fixed variables or captured in single interviews (cf. Dunne, 1996: 143; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003: 1165). Hence, social constructionism, principally Berger and Luckmann's (1966) theorisation

of the interplays between individual actors and society, is taken as the main epistemological position.

This underpinning is congruent with a considerable amount of identity literature in the subject area of organisation studies. In this theoretical community, there has been a consensus in assuming and emphasising the interplays, namely reciprocal and dynamic interactions, between individual and society, or agency and structure (see substantial reviews in Alvessona, 2010: 194; Brown, 2015: 23; Watson, 2008: 122; Ybema et al., 2009: 302). Fundamentally, the concept of identity involves both individual's reflexive self-knowledge (Brown, 2015; Collinson, 2003; Giddens, 1991) as well as the meanings attached to individuals that are produced out of their full control. The mutual influencing processes between the two parts could be well explained through the processes of objectification of subjective ideas and internalisation of external social orders in social construction theory.

In addition, social construction theory underlines social actors' ability to propel change in macro social structure. When promoted through intelligible language and actions, meanings at individual level could possibly be stabilised as supra-personal processes that in turn govern wide scope of individuals' actions. The fundamental dialectic between structure and agency, instead of pure determinism of structure, argued by social construction theory could offer powerful explanatory basis for individuals' highly active and agentic identity construction in empirical phenomena (e.g. Essers and Benschop, 2009; Snow and Anderson, 1987; Thomas and Davies, 2005). Its allowing for individually propelled transformation and creation makes social construction theory more suitable than, for instance, Bourdieu's notion of habitus (see detailed review in Sewell, 1992), to account for identity issues in organisation setting.

Regarding the identity issue in this study, the structure-agency dialectic will also be highly active and, potentially, creative. As elaborated in the earlier chapter, the police socialising context not only involves interfaces of multiple institutions, including societal convention, moral code, formal police institution, local practical regime as well as those brought over by newcomers. Meanwhile, the job itself also involves large amount of agency in crafting work persona. This means, both internalisation of institutions and objectification of inner meanings could significantly

appear in the identity construction process of police newcomers. Therefore, social constructionism is believed a desirable approach for the present inquiry.

Nevertheless, given the complexity of identity, the epistemological stance of a researcher or a study should not be refined to one particular position but drawn on multiple sources (Alvesson et al., 2008b; Brown, 2015: 23). Despite the explanatory advantageous of social constructionism, it could lead to a myopic analytic focus (Alvesson et al., 2008a; du Gay, 1996) that pays attention primarily to localised dialogical meaning making and dramaturgical performances (Goffman, 1959, 1967; e.g. Down and Reveley, 2009), but downplays relatively remote historical processes that are also vitally related to local identity issues. Therefore, the study underpinned by social constructionist approach should be supplemented with a broad insight of historical, cultural, and political structures (Alvesson et al., 2008b; Watson, 2008). When incorporating these high-level elements into the analysis of individual identity issues, I may occasionally draw on poststructuralism theories too, such as Foucauldian power/knowledge theory, as they explain penetration of grand discourses into micro decision and sensemaking.

Besides, while the underlying approach assumes identity to be socially constructed, it is very likely to encounter identity constructors' 'essentialist' articulation of their self and the organisation or occupation. This is because, on the one hand, the putative core and boundary of identity is significant for them to make sense of the group they belong to in differentiation from other social categories, in which they could invest moral and affective attachment (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Ybema et al., 2009). On the other hand, they also hold fast to a notional essential self-identity for maintaining existential authenticity in face of socially imposed or created meanings (Costas and Fleming, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Ybema et al., 2009). Given these, some theories from socio-psychological background that openly address these aspects, such as social identity theory (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and self-verification (Burke and Stets, 1999), are also implicitly incorporated into my understanding, inquiring and investigating, even though they are mostly based on realist ontology and positivist epistemology.

As has been called for by Alvesson and colleagues (2008a: 9) and Brown (2015: 21) in identity studies, the study attempts to interrogate the identity producing process

mainly by scrutinising over the local social interactions, and also keeping open-minded for macro-level, historical, and political and socio-psychological elements, despite of a mild level of ontological oscillation this may cause (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Besides, when it comes to identity construction, it also inevitably involves the debate concerning the fluidity of identity. I tend to agree with postmodernist processual view that construes identity less of fixed or abiding essence (Gioia et al., 2000) but more likely existing as a becoming status. However, I also find myself refrain from a 'strong' or complete postmodernist position that exclusively talks of 'becoming', and belies any temporary facticity, or transient secure and integrated substance. In that extreme view, process is 'all-there-is' (Sandberg et al., 2015: 332), and identity is a sheer flux without any inertia. Instead, this study would rather take an in-between position by, on the one hand, focusing on the turbulent process of identity construction embedded in a multi-discursive, structural intersecting and rapidly changing contemporary world, and on the other hand acknowledging the temporarily achieved equilibrium at local social context that individuals strived for, for the sake of their existential direction and purpose (Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 1996; Ybema et al., 2009). Importantly, this position echoes the central social constructionist dualism of structure-agency. It also justifies the knowability of individuals' identity status that they try to persist with, by using interpretative research methods.

Given these philosophical considerations, the study is not designed or attempted to uncover definite causal correlations between identity construction and organisation conditions, and accordingly generate generalizable prescriptions or implications, as functionalists are engaged with (e.g. Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Sass and Canary, 1991). Based on the social constructionist approach, both identity and organisation conditions are socially constructed, and embedded in the specific social and historical context of this study. The central aim is, therefore, to understand the 'complex, unfolding and dynamic relationship between self, work and organisation' (Alvesson et al., 2008a) as well as society, by, using an inductive approach, doing in-depth study over one historically and socially specific process, which could, at best perhaps, contribute hermeneutic values for readers who have experienced or are experiencing similar things, their judgement based on rich and nuanced contextual details the study offered (Langley, 1999; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, as Watson (2008) advanced, social research at micro level should try to incorporate

insights on the historical transformations and social structures at the time of the research. Hence, the study might also shed some reflections upon the broader and more generic level of processes that affect more people in contemporary organisations.

3.3 Research context

3.3.1 Rationales of choosing the research setting

Given the underlying interpretive approach, and the research attempt of scrutinising the idiosyncratic, nuanced and iterative identity constructing process at career entrance, I was looking for a case where the career transition could elicit newcomers' conscious sensemaking (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). It should preferably involve a certain level of complexity, ambiguity and/or changes in the context, so that different individuals might diverge from each other in perceiving and interacting with the context, and their newly crafted identity might need to be significantly and continuously repaired or edited.

With all these concerns, police newcomers' socialisation came to my mind. As informed from related literature, the socialisation process constitutes a substantial transition (e.g. Conti, 2009; Gallo, 2001) from civilian to police status. Besides, the recent reform of police recruitment has embraced more diverse workforce, and therefore increased the variation of age, gender, social class, educational background and so on among new intakes, which could possibly give rise to differed ways of thinking and integrating in the socialising context and different work identity at length. Taking these into consideration, this context should be, as Yin (2009) describes, 'revelatory' enough, to yield some illuminating empirical grounds and thus enabling the study to shed some novel and deepened light on identity construction (Lanley and Abadllah, 2011). Before moving on to elaboration of research process, a more detailed introduction of the police and its broad social and political setting, as well as the studied police force, will be delivered below.

3.3.2 About the police

Among all public services, police service is arguably the one entitled with biggest power, and most mystified by the society. Its existence and function premises imposition of power and inflicting harm on some public members, albeit deserved (Bittner, 1970; Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999), which renders it an authoritative and

punishing nature that distinguishes itself from all other public service. For its political significance, the state and the police system itself 'had through its own promotional rhetoric and politics created quasi-sacred status in the polity' (Manning, 2008: 688). Whereas, while being a historically political construction, in recent decades, the police has become more driven to its public-serving identity and developed more substantial relations and partnership with the civilian world.

Broadly speaking, the recent half century has witnessed great changes in the policing approach in Western countries, with more emphases placed in internal and external ethics, flattening organisational structure and enhancing relations with the public (see case of USA police in Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2009; case of Australian police in Gordon et al., 2009). In the UK, since Blair government's promotion on greater cooperation and collaboration, the public forces have been pushed to 'break down organisational boundaries' and increasing vertical and horizontal integration with 'voluntary bodies and private business' (Davies and Thomas, 2003). Police, conceived one of the most highly hierarchical and bureaucratic sectors, has been pressured to reform its structure, policy as well as strategy and approach (Horton and Farnham, 1999). A wide range of changes have been introduced in the UK police force for this reason, including, for instance, policy of community oriented policing (Davies and Thomas, 2003) along with establishment of great number of affiliations and cooperative projects with civilian organisations, such as Red Cross, Alcoholics Anonymous, and so on.

Additionally, media exposures on police power abuses and scandals in recent years, along with a growing number of public campaigns and criticisms on the presence, ethics, and efficiency of police performance have pushed the government to reinforce reforms in the police sector. Especially, in response to the commission of Theresa May, the then Home Secretary, of producing a comprehensive review of police pay and conditions, Tom Winsor, an earlier Rail Regulator, conducted review on police officer and staff remuneration and conditions. In the ensuing 2-part report published from 2011 to 2012, he proposed 183 recommendations in total (Jarrett, 2011). Among other things, he highlighted the 33-year old 'dysfunctional' police pay scheme, the enclosed recruitment and the unsatisfied fitness condition among police officers ---- in particular, disproportionately high rate of obesity (Beckford, 2012a). These findings strongly convinced the government the necessity of launching reforms

in the police, which include making the pay system fairer and more specialised (especially role and skill based and contribution related pay), raising pension starting age, heightening entry requirements (equivalent to 3 A levels), relaunching direct entry schemes (qualified applicants from business, military and security service could rise to inspector in 3 years) and enforcing annual fitness test (and relating test result to pay and function designation) (Home office, 2015a).

Besides, these reforms set out not only to save budget and strengthen the internal management of police services in England and Welsh, but also, as intended by the political commission, to improve the professional status of police. With higher entry requirements and enlarged external recruitment, it is attempted to enhance the occupational prestige (Beckford, 2012b) and social image of the police, and heighten public trust and satisfaction. The response from the then Home Secretary to the proposals made these goals even more explicit,

'We have the best police force in the world, but I said when the review was launched, it is vital that we have *a modern and flexible service to meet the demands placed on it*. The Government recognise and value the *professionalism* of the police and have made clear their commitment to *supporting and maximising front line services to the public*. Police officers and staff should be rewarded fairly and reasonably for what they do. They deserve to have pay and work force arrangements that both recognise the vital role they play in fighting crime and keeping the public safe and *enable them to deliver effectively for the public'*. (My emphases)

Also, this set of changes in the police force substantially influenced the retention of existing workforce and recruitment of new applicants. During the research, from new starters to long-serving sergeants, all acknowledged the new pension policy, in particular, impacted the career path, morale and motivation of existing as well as incoming police officers. An epidemic trend among the new-generation recruits was considering it a short-term job, unlike officers in old times who took it as 'the job for life' (Beckford, 2012b).

Moreover, reinforcing work ethics in operation policing was also part of the reforms. One principal endeavour was the publication of Code of Ethics by the College of Policing in 2014, which updated previous police act principles to attending to the latest public demands, such as respect from the police, and embedded ethical standards

into ‘everyday business consideration’ (College of Policing, 2014). Besides, policies in justice procedures and power using were modified drawing on the new circumstances in the broad society, such as the lately updating on proportional disposal of crimes due to public complaints on heavy punishments. According to the new policy, less severe offenses are encouraged to be dealt with using minor means, so as to reconcile conflicts between victims and offenders and simultaneously rehabilitate the offenders. Changes in the policing policies as such were made to regulate work ethics in accordance to the principle of ‘policing by consent’. At the same time, they offered more structured reference and justification basis for front-line policing conducts (Home office, 2012). All these changes in policy and approach of operation policing were reflected in the formal training schemes among England and Welsh police forces.

3.3.3 About the police force

The hosting organisation (hereafter referred as the Force) is one of the largest police forces in England in terms of its size and the geographic area and the population it serves. It covers three big counties with more than ten local policing areas (LPAs). In congruent with the recent advocates from government, the Force celebrated working in partnership with other police forces, public service organisations, and voluntary and business organisations, which is explicitly reflected in organisation aim ---- ‘working in partnership to make our community safer’. Specifically, it worked in cooperation with many social work, mental health, caring and charity organisations and agencies. Police officers would help public members to establish contact with these professional organisations if support is needed. Besides, experts from these organisations are invited to give on-job training to police officers, and consulted for professional advice for addressing special issues, such as how to deal with mentally disordered offenders.

Another crucial organisational value of the Force is its commitment to facilitating development of professional knowledge and skills in the police, which echoes the government commission and Winsor’s recommendations. ‘Specialised expertise’ and ‘technology’ are key words in its Service Delivery Plan 2016-2017, and frequently referred in other organisation’s publications. The force believes technical knowledge is imperative for effectively handling and preventing high-tech and complicated types of crimes that arise in recent years, and therefore should be

cultivated among its workforce. Accordingly, colossal investment has been made in initial and on-job, comprehensive and specialised training for police officers.

Moreover, like many other forces, the Force emphasizes evidence-based management and has increased collaboration with academic researchers in the latest decades. It aims to, with the help of rigorous research, diagnose 'what works and what does not' (the Human Resource Director) in the organisation and improve its management based on the solid evidences. Also, several academic professors were hired into high- and middle-level management in the Force. Thanks to its embracement of research and academic expertise, this research was offered generous access and facilitation from the Force.

These core values suggest that the Force held a certain degree of openness to external perspectives and knowledge, and willingness of making changes, which is opposed to traditional police culture that celebrates in-group insularity and its exclusive practical knowledge, and has strong resistance to academic world and organisational changes (e.g. Constable and Smith, 2015; Davies and Thomas, 2003).

3.3.4 About the initial training scheme and the studied intake

Since over ten years ago, initial policing learning and development programme (IPLDP), the curriculum for training police constables developed by College of Policing, has been implemented in police forces in England and Wales. The programme includes four main phases, namely introduction, community (legislation and placement), supervised patrol and independent patrol. While the format, length and structure of the initial training has been roughly standardised by the IPLDP, each force has its own discretion in selecting content to cover, organising placements and designing courses.

In the Force, its espousal of professional knowledge seemed to lay the ground for its 'all-inclusive' initial training. The Force was said to be one of the forces that tried to cover everything in depth from the IPLDP learning package. Besides, members from nuclear and terrorism departments were invited to deliver lectures to inform new recruits of their specialised functions, which was quite 'unusual' in initial training among police forces (officer 14). Besides, with the purpose of exposing recruits to different types of public services and alternative perspectives, the Force incorporated a wider range of placements into the initial training, including operational response

teams, neighbourhood policing teams, road policing teams, crime investigation department (CID), NGO organisations and other fledging associations.

Specifically, most probationers of the Force had their IPLDP training in a training centre (hereafter referred as the academy), which was located in a very rural and quiet area. The programme for normal recruits constituted 30 weeks of training, which included two policing development unit (PDU) sessions and community placements. The PDU sessions were vital for recruits' development. Each session lasted for four weeks, with recruits posted to different LPAs to do patrolling activities under supervision of a personal tutor. And the two sessions started respectively from week 10 and week 22.

On the condition of successfully passing the training assessments, recruits would then be attached to neighbourhood policing teams and criminal investment department for another 4 weeks, following which they would start independent patrol under probation in local stations. Provided recruits passed the Diploma of Policing assessment during probationary period, they could then progress into normal constables at the end of the second year of entrance.

The studied intake joined the Force in October 2014. It was constituted by 19 newcomers, including 1) 7 internal recruits, who earlier worked as police community support officers (PCSOs) or special constables in the Force, 2) 3 adjacent recruits, who previously working in fledging organisations of the Force, and 3) 9 external recruits, among whom 3 were graduated less than 2 years. 9 out of the 19 recruits are female, higher than the gender proportion of police officer in the Force, which was around 29 % according to its own force diversity report in 2010, also the proportion nationwide, which was 28.2% according to Home office's report in 2015 (Home office, 2015b), but not significantly higher than other intakes to the Force at the time of research. Their ages ranged from 21 to 29, which was common among intakes. In 2014 and earlier years, around 300 normal recruits joined the Force each year.

Two of the new recruits, one female and one male, were 'direct-entry' probationers, whose route of progression was faster than the majority recruits (promoted to inspector in three years' time). The direct-entry scheme was also part of the series of reforms ensuing Winsor's Report. Candidates of direct-entry were required for higher education level (minimum 2:1 degree in bachelor degree), and

trained for only 6 months before going on to independent patrol. They had initial training together with others in the intake for the first 9 weeks, and did their 1st PDU session for 4 weeks. But after that, the two of them started to receive condensed training courses separated from others. From the end of March 2015, they acted as normal officers until their inspector exam in October. After they passed the exam, they were promoted into sergeant position in January 2016, and will be progressed into an inspector in October 2017. These two fast-trackers were the only two direct-entry probationers in the year of 2014.

Besides, since 2014 there have been some changes in the entry requirements and routes, as well as initial training structure in the Force. One of the most ostensible changes is that the training for normal entry route has been shortened to 23 weeks, but applicants are required to, apart from two A-Levels, hold a Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (CKP), which is a qualification of basic knowledge of policing. Besides, another major route of entry, through obtaining the Foundation degree (FdA) of policing at the partner universities of the Force, has become more competitive than before, due to increasing population of graduates and restricted percentage of successful application. Moreover, the fast-track route for inspector trainees is now open for both external and internal candidates rather than only external ones. Special constable, another major entry route, has also heightened its threshold, i.e., two A Levels on top of a CKP. Apart from these 4 main entry paths, there were two other routes, namely direct entry (superintendent) and Police Now (Graduate leadership development programme), which are both partnered programmes that are run between forces.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Research access and ethics

The hosting police force was introduced by a professor in Warwick Business School, whose relative worked in the organisation. After establishing contact with the Human Resource Manager of the Force, I provided a research proposal to introduce the research title, aims, methods, specific support needed as well as ethical considerations. Besides, my supervisors and I also had a face-to-face meeting with the manager in the head quarter, where I further elaborated my research and the research

plan. Through effective communication, the research was officially given access in May 2014.

After some follow-up communication with people in the Force, and preparation for fieldwork, I began data collection in October. The studied intake was chosen as their starting time (6th October) fitted with my timeline, and the two fast-trackers of year were included. From then, the training programme manager at the academy became the person I mainly contacted. Apart from introducing me to the studied cohort and training faculty, he also provided considerable information about the training programme and shared his opinion on the training and the new-generation intakes during multiple points of interviews.

The research activities throughout were all conducted in full compliance with the research ethical principles stipulated in University's Research Code of Practice of Warwick University, The Economic and Social Research Council's Research Ethics Framework, and the Warwick University's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee's guidelines for research students. Specifically, all data collection activities were performed based on the consent of the informants, with both 'research information form' and 'consent form' read and signed. The copied of these forms were saved at my office at WBS. Besides, all data were recorded, documented and saved in encrypted format in my personal laptop. That is, I have been the only person who has access to the dataset. Moreover, whenever I presented the data to other people, all real names were replaced with pseudo-names and all ostensible identifying information was removed.

3.4.2 Data, collection methods and processes, and evaluation

In line with the dominant interpretive and processual approach, data collection was conducted through longitudinal engagement with the researched and mainly through three qualitative methods, namely ethnography, interviews and documentary analysis. Chronologically, data collection could be divided into two parts, i.e., training and probationary shift, which were two overtly distinct stages of socialisation and identity formation. Now the collection processes of the two parts are detailed below.

Eight-month training

Interviews with newcomers

During the first eight months, from October 2014 to May 2015, the studied group of newcomers had their residency training in the academy before released to probationary shift. Residency or centralised training, for its intensive training coursework and semi-enclosed circumstance, was believed the most pronounced period of professional identity formation and change (Pratt et al., 2006) as well as collective identity internalisation and in-group solidarity development (Conti, 2009; Freidson, 2001 cited in Pratt et al., 2006). Given this, with the aim of capturing how newcomers in study came to understand and positioned themselves in specific situations and how their interpretation to these events and meanings changed over time, I decided to undertake an in-depth ethnographic fieldwork in combination with multiple-wave discourse-based data collection.

Specifically, the 8-month training was divided into three phases, namely pre-PDU training, first PDU placement, and post-PDU training, which was drawn upon trainers' knowledge of new recruits' dynamic status in general. They suggested recruits demonstrated crucially different levels of self-confidence, morale and competence in these three stages. The first PDU was acknowledged as a critical period that ostensibly bolstered recruits' confidence and made them more interactive during lectures. Therefore, the first wave interviews were taken during week 4 and 5 on the training calendar, i.e., the mid-term of the curriculum before first PDU; the second wave reflection diaries[1] were collected at week 16, i.e., the first week back at the academy after first PDU session; and the third wave interviews took place between week 26 and 30, spread over training courses as well as second PDU session. There were respectively 19, 13 and 7 respondents at the three waves. The individual interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes, and the returned diaries included roughly 300 to 450 words. All these data in result generated around 24 hours of interview-recording, which were transcribed verbatism, and around 4,500 words of diaries.

Importantly, the response rate dropped mainly for the sake of time. First, as the coursework became much denser in the later stage of the training and recruits were increasingly tied up with coursework revision, it became more and more difficult to

[1] Due to the intense policing training at this phase and the pressure of end-term exam, it became hardly possible to schedule face-to-face interviews with the recruits. Therefore, a substitutional method ---- using reflective diaries, i.e., asking informants to give accounts of their PDU experience, guided but without being bound by four open-ended questions, was applied to allow respondents to provide data at their flexible time.

schedule interview outside the training time. Second, from the second half of the training, many recruits stopped staying in the residence but started to commute back to their home every evening. Therefore, it was hardly possible to get hold of those who had to travel 2 hours between home and training site before morning sessions or after afternoon sessions. All interviews took place in lecture rooms at the academy at lunch breaks, free-study time, or evening off-duty time.

The three waves of investigations were all semi-structured and open-ended, with the leading questions formulated to encourage informants to expand on issues they found important in their subjective experience. Considering the concept of identity might be related to in various ways and signalled potential judgement from the interviewer (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), I started with more familiar and morally neutral terms such as 'understanding about the job of being a police officer', 'your way of surviving in the current collective training life', 'your past expectation, current feedback and future anticipation from the training and yourself' and so on, which was attempted to allow the informants to more spontaneously account for their socialising experience that implicitly conveyed their identity position. This strategy was inspired from a qualitative study of 'self-esteem' among mothers (Magnusson and Marecek, 2015), which shares some commonality with the interview context here.

Moreover, questions for the informants were modified as the research went on, in order to direct more attention on the emerging thematic interests and allow new, relevant concepts to be uncovered (Gioia et al., 2012; Spradley, 1979), thanks to the preliminary-analysis undertaken at the same time of data collection. Yet, the key aspects remained more or less consistent throughout, namely 1) their understanding of who they are, 2) whether and how they believe they have changed, and 3) activities, people and relationships they believed significant to them at that period of time, and 4) how those activities and/or people influenced them. The inductive and open-ended nature of these questions allowed recruits to express their personal thoughts on what seemed important to them during the socialisation, with a minimum level of bias from me. Interestingly, their answers to these questions exhibited significant intra-personal consistency over time, as well as marked inter-personal divergence. These naturally occurred patterns inspired the original conception of 'identity orientation'.

There is an inherent paradox of using interviews to study identity, which paradoxically suggests the usefulness of interview of this method. On the one hand, it straightforwardly affords the native voice of identity work actors; on the other hand, though possibly eliciting intentionally fabricated accounts, it squarely functions as an external 'stimulus for identity work' (Alvesson et al., 2008a), thus triggering reflection on who one is and who would like to become. As a host of scholars (e.g. Czarniawska, 1997; Karreman and Alvesson, 2001; Ybema et al., 2009) acknowledged, the individuals' identity talks should be seen, fundamentally, as deliberate presentations of self in a particular social and discursive context, rather than a-contextual reflection of who they are essentially. A resonant point is Goffman's (1959) impression management at front stage. He rightly noted it that the managed front-stage image may speak more truly of social actors' life experience than the conception of a pre-defined self. Since individuals' aspiration of personal identity is what this study seeks to investigate, the 'identity' expressed and possibly managed in the interviews can be conceived fruitful and illuminating in this regard.

Moreover, as the study went on, I observed the big discrepancies in espoused values and discourses among the training academy, placement departments and operational policing community. In such an ambiguous and multi-ordered context, my position could have been perceived by the studied recruits in different ways: I could be either associated with the training authority as I spent most time in the academy, or seen as an academic person, or a third party who held an alternative value system. In either scenario, however, identity narratives and performances of the informants in front of me could all be somewhat consciously 'presented'. As acknowledged by identity scholars, researchers always play a non-neutral role in co-producing knowledge (Mama, 1995), with their image affecting informants' self-presentation.

Nevertheless, informants' potential cautious self-presentation elicited by my presence could be self-consciously analysed and even leveraged upon to indicate crucial information. One good example was Dick's (2005) interviews with police informants, whose perception of her 'potential hostility' and 'moral pre-judgement', as she asserted, ended up propelling them to incorporate liberal-democratic discourses in their justification for using of coercive power, which squarely revealed the multiple ideological positions at the deployment of the informants to construct an ideal front image. Besides, Clarke and colleagues (2009) also discovered manager-informants'

qualifiers to mitigate their commentaries that cast them as emotional human beings in front of the interviewer.

As Van Maanen (1979) pointedly comments from his long-term ethnography experience, ethnographers, even with intimate and long-term engagement with informants, still need to carefully distinguish between presentational and operational data, i.e. deliberately projected narratives and actions and spontaneous ones. He continues to note that those somewhat misleading and pretending behaviours as well as evasion and hidden aspects of informants, if uncovered by ethnographers, could afford precious information of what informants, their group and organisation care about or espouse (1979: 544).

Whereas, in the present study I could not massively utilise the 'special' identity of the researcher as the cases above. First, my appearance should not be another source of stress or a representative of any regime, as this could further complicate the context of socialising and identity constructing. Second, what recruits really engaged with and how their priority in social engagement transformed over time were what the study tried to find out. Thus, the informants should not be overshadowed by the idea of presenting a perfect identity in my perception. With this in mind, I carefully managed self-presentation and social relations during fieldwork, and tried hard to craft myself a culturally naive, purely knowledge-driven and 'laid-back' presence, and with no association with training and organisational authority.

To wit, at the onset of the fieldwork, I introduced myself to the cohort as an academic researcher who was interested in studying career entrance. It was explained that I would observe the training and gather recruits' feedback with the purpose of generating implications for the Force to improve its facilitation of career transition. During the training courses, I normally sat silently at a corner of the classroom and kept notes in the same way as the recruits. Occasionally, I was asked to play as a public member in role-play exercises. Besides, I hung around with them during breaks or off-duty time, such as lunch-break chat and playing badminton together. I was also invited or volunteered to join plenty socialising events with the recruits for a couple of times. With these efforts, I showed myself as trying to integrate and settle down in almost the same way as the newcomers, by means of which I gradually became 'a normal part of the cohort' (cf. Becker et al., 1961; Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2009). Though the

recruits were aware I still frequently met and talked with instructors and managers, they saw me as neutral.

Furthermore, interviews conducted at this stage, considered as identity enacted interactions, were not merely used to generate tape-record texts on identity, but also observed subtly for the talks-in-action involved, such as informants' 'bodily orientation', 'tone of voice', (Down and Reveley, 2009: 386), and the way they related to me. Intriguingly, the newcomers diverged significantly in these detailed aspects ---- with some found tame, scrupulous (e.g. bring pen and paper to interviews), and inclined to seek confirmation or agreement from me (e.g. saying 'you must know they don't like us, don't you'); some seen rational, far-sighted, and willing to be heard and known by me and the wider society; others appearing vocal, genuine and even candid and cynical in their approach. These precious details provide another latitude of knowledge that facilitated making sense of informants' identity presentation and, more profoundly, the way they related self to the situated context.

Multi-angle interviews

In addition, I undertook 10 interviews with training faculty and the programme manager, plus 5 with sergeants and tutors from placement hosting units, as well as several informal communications with the civilian administration staff at the academy, which contributed to 20,000-word notes. This source of data informed factual knowledge of the training programme, the Force and the police system, and reflected the culture, core values and purposes of training and placement units, which jointly deepened and enriched my understanding of the multifaceted socialising process.

Moreover, these data cross-checked identity narratives generated by recruits and performances observed by myself. By incorporating a multitude of perspectives other than the single voice of the very subjects, who are liable to present positive and honourable sides of themselves (cf. Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Van Maanen, 1979), I was able to assess informants' self-narratives in a more reflective way. Also, since they illustrated important members' expectations and perception of the recruits, by comparing them with recruits' self-narratives, I could see to what extent and in what way they internalised the 'socially provided identity' at broader scope into their self-identity meanings (cf. Watson, 2008).

Ethnography

Additionally, long-term participatory observation constituted another integral component of this study. Generally speaking, the significance of ethnography in organisation studies does not only lie in its' supplementary value to interviews, but also in its facilitation in delineating the specific historical and social context where the social process in question was situated (Langley and Abdallah, 2011; Van Maanen, 2011). Such a detailed sketch of overall context is especially important to evaluate organisational identity, as identity is inextricably interwoven with specific elements, events, relationships and processes in the organisation context (Alvesson et al., 2008a; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008).

The fieldwork spanned over all the three significant phases, including 10 full-weeks of on-site observation[2] at the academy, as well as 5 days of shadowing in PDU placements. Specifically, the 50 days of observation encompasses participation in a good number of legislation courses, physical assessment and training sessions, role-play exercises on stop-and-search detention, house searching, suspect interview, victim interview, road policing and car search, and some important events and meeting, such as attestation ceremony at entry point, first and second PDU debriefing sessions, 'passing out' (i.e. graduation) parade and ceremony. Besides, the 5 off-site shadowing sessions include ride-along observation (i.e. going out with officers for street patrolling and/or incident assignments) in two PDU sessions, one road policing attachment session, and one neighbourhood policing session, as well as one-day shadowing of a recruit's community placement in a local caring organisation.

These research activities benefit this study in two broad aspects ---- delineating 'the events, processes and role expectations' in the police with which recruits' identity construction was interwoven (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), and expanding the investigating scope of 'identity' from narratives in ordered, front-stage communication to performances and talks in messy and spontaneous everyday life.

Firstly, over 20,000 words of ethnographic notes (excluding notes of course content) were yielded, which was focused on themes such as culture, social environment, macro and micro discourses, people, relationships, critical events and so on. During observations, I always endeavoured to note down as much as possible in

[2] I lived at the residency, took nice-to-five training courses together with the intake, and spent evenings mostly taking ethnographic notes, reviewing and analysing data, and occasionally socialising with the intake in study.

those key aspects, which allowed me to obtain a relatively comprehensive account of the socialising path the recruits went through. In this way, on the one hand, the study did not have to rely on newcomers' fragmented, divergent and possibly biased depiction of the socialising process to learn what happened during the process of identity construction; on the other hand, by sketching out the 'background process' relatively impartially, so to speak, the idiosyncratic colour became more visible when comparing individually articulated stories with the detailed and relatively objective story that I produced.

Moreover, by reviewing notes produced earlier from time to time, I was able to reflect on the frequent shifts in the social context that newcomers were embedded in, and changes in their own perception of key people, events and relationships. The sensitivity to these nuanced external and internal changes was enabled by the partially insider position I carefully maintained, which permitted both 'seeing the world as they do' and reflective evaluation at a distance (Gioia et al., 2012; Van Maanen, 1979, 2011). More specifically, while the pure insiders ----police newcomers---- were concentrated on interacting with the current social context, I was able to, not only understand the current context and newcomers' account of identity status, but also detect the transformation in both the context and newcomers compared with the previous stage, which they might not have reflectively reckoned on.

Secondly, the shadowing, observing, and informal socialising activities with the studied recruits allowed me 'a rare glimpse' (Ybema et al., 2009: 316) of what they might not realise, recall and share in interviews. The ethnography enabled me to witness their indecisiveness, uncertainty, frustration and critical self-perception throughout the course of identity construction. This was important as recruits' predicaments of identity construction squarely reflected what they really yearned for and what the social context failed to sustain (cf. Clarke, et al., 2009; Down and Reveley, 2009), and how they ultimately coped with the conflict between personal striving and contextual conditions. Therefore, ethnography allowed scrutinising over the iterative and bumpy interactions between identity constructors and their lived social contexts, which helped address the second research question.

Besides, identity constructors' dramaturgical practices (Barley and Kunda, 2001) and interactions with key actors (e.g. trainers, tutors, mentors) 'in naturally

occurring situation' (Snow and Anderson, 1987) constituted their externally projected identity (Alvesson et al., 2008a). Therefore, close observation of newcomers' daily social engagements afforded a crucial supplement to identity narratives, which, as said earlier, could be deliberately constructed for the sheer sake of impression management (Down and Reveley, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003).

Probationary shift

The second part of data collection took place after the studied intake graduated from the academy and posted to different stations as probationary constables. It is widely shared that this stage normally witnesses radical change in newcomers' outlook, motivation and approach to formal rules and management (cf. Fielding, 1984; Hopper, 1977; Van Maanen, 1973, 1975). Also, police newcomers will have much more independence and discretion in work conducts than the training phase (Fielding, 1984). Taking these factors into consideration, I reckoned it important to follow up with the new recruits. But this time, since newcomers then worked in different LPAs and the policing activities involved much more danger than before, I was not encouraged to continue ethnographic observation by the Force and my supervisors. The absence of ethnographic data at this stage has both merits and limitations, which will be elaborated later. Thus, I continued using interviews to investigate the recruits' identity construction. Even though I did not obtain first-hand observational data, interviews with the newcomers and their sergeants at this time still afforded rich data about the policing routines, local work environment and newcomers themselves.

Interviews

Given the inflexible shift pattern and intensive workload, it became extremely hard to re-establish contact with the recruits. With two rounds of invitation through emails, 8 recruits from the cohort agreed to participate the fourth wave interview through skype calls. Among them was one recruit who invited me to her station to do face-to-face interview and provided a 600-word reflection diary on top of the interview. The interviews were taken between two to eleven months after the start of the probationary shift. The four waves of data collection contributed 10 interviews of a total length of 13 hours, which were tape recorded and transcribed verbatism.

The interviews remained semi-structured and led by the four key themes outlined earlier. As before, informants were encouraged to freely raise issues about

themselves, the job and the organisation that they found critical, interestingly, or important. Answers to this question, again, revealed how recruits related themselves to contextual elements and what were their primary resources for identity construction. During this wave of data collection, many respondents signalled a matured or stabilised police identity, which could be easily seen from their much less use of qualifiers in self-narratives (Pratt et al., 2006: 246), and ideological struggle or wiggle in expressing opinions (Fairclough, 1992). Given this common change among the recruits, a new question was added to the interview ---- when or what triggered the informants to feel him/herself as a real police officer.

Besides, another theme added to this wave of interview was recruits' retrospective perception of the training programme. This was believed a relevant question as answers to it could reveal how durable was the influence of training regime on recruits on the one hand side, and how the way they related their identity to the training transformed after great transition of temporal-social location on the other hand side. These two aspects helped evaluate recruits' identity stability/fluidity across social contexts and therefore served well for inquiring the second research question.

The gap

One issue worth to note is the temporal and spatial gap between this wave of data collection and the previous three. The few months in between witnessed the recruits moved from a strictly controlled and rudimentary status to a discretional and creditable status. For many, the beginning of probationary shift meant a clear breaking away from the past and a brand-new page. Therefore, it is hard to deny the formal and/or informal connections, if there were, I effortfully built with the recruits became somewhat faded, which could be clearly told by the increased difficulty in getting in touch with the intake at this phase. Besides, one would wonder with such an interval, how much trust and familiarity was left, and strangeness and distance was formed between me and the recruits. The following question is, to what extent their narratives at this time would be 'presentational data'. Moreover, without being closely engaged with their routines, would I still be able to tell the presentational, distorted, or withheld elements (Van Maanen, 1979) in the narratives?

Admittedly, coming from an ethnographic background, I took these issues seriously and felt partially assertive about this part of the data. Nevertheless, the slight

strangeness and distance between me and the informants also contributed some crucial benefits that possibly outweighed for the limitations it caused.

First, thanks to the gap, the data collection at this stage was purely voluntary, without any peer pressure or stress from managers, Hence, Van Maanen's (2011) observation on informants' behaviours in ethnographic study seems relevant and helps make sense of the response from the recruits. They mention that, under a voluntary condition, members who were more willing to share their opinions could be intentionally doing so to shape ethnographer's views and research results. Similar, the research purpose was initially introduced to the recruits as improving organisational facilitation to career transition. Following their reasoning, recruits' attitudes and behaviours in responding to me could be understood as partially reflecting their perception of the work, the organisation and themselves within the organisation context.

For instance, there were informants who were highly earnest and forthcoming to express their critical views on the training during training, but never bothered again to talk at this stage. This indicated that they had become even more cynical to the extent that they saw the research as another box-ticketing organisation initiative that would make no difference in their work life. Besides among those who positively responded to follow-up invitations, some people's responses seemed more like a gesture to help me individually than expecting their feedback really mattered to the organisation, while others believed they had the right as well as responsibility to report existing problems in the organisation to make it a better place.

Secondly, the big temporal gap could to some extent prevent the deliberately crafted consistency in their narratives (Watson, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009). This is important because it is the ongoing process infused with conversion, iteration, contradiction and endurance that the study seeks to probe into. In this way, when there was consistency in informants' self-narratives across contexts, it meant they did have a persistent aspiration in identity construction. Alternatively, when they gauged certain things in a rather conflicting way over time, it suggested the constellation of their identity construction had transferred. All these observations helped identify what newcomers chose to retain consistently and what they would not mind give away in

identity construction. Again, this allowed insights to answer the second research question.

Thirdly, this time I was overly remote from their work environment and managers. In addition, mostly the interviews were taken at off-duty hours when informants were at home, which constituted a neutral setting (Magnusson and Marecek, 2015). Given these aspects, there could be less assumption from interviewees about my judgement on them, hence minimising the chance that they put on an upright front before me. Since there is a much looser link between me, the informants and the high-level management body, in contrast to the intensive and tight interrelations at the training stage, they could also talk more freely regarding their perception of the organisation. By the same token, they also had less moral burden to speak about others from the intake, since they were no longer in their or the researchers' immediate social life.

Finally, considering the following factors, the weakening effects of the temporal-relational distance in this wave of data collection might not be too strong. Since the intake were posted to separate LPAs, neither have they as a group regularly met up or got in touch with each other, mainly due to time collision between different shifts. Because of my previous insider-hood, it was likely that I was seen by informants as no more 'strange' than other fellows from the intake. That is, even the connection and trust cultivated before were naturally diluted over time, they were still there. That was why I did not sense overtly reluctant, glossing, or diplomatic responses during the interviews. Besides, the informants agreed to take part this time were self-selected, as they were the ones who I had developed stronger ties with and participated also in earlier waves of data collection. Hence, their lasting keenness in engaging with the research made up for the temporal and social interval. Moreover, their continuous participation in interviews allowed me to follow up many individuals throughout the four phases, and therefore enable me to do in-depth processual analysis and inter-personal comparison with these individual cases.

3.5 Data analysis and theorisation

Inspired by Van Maanen's ethnography theorising (1979, 2011), Gioia's modelling of qualitative data analysis (Corley and Gioia, 2004) and Strauss' grounded theory building (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), the raw

qualitative data were analysed mainly through three steps, which will be elucidated one by one now. The three-step analysis yielded three levels of codes, which are visualised in Figure 3.1 to Figure 3.8.

3.5.1 Open coding and first-order concepts

Following those established models of qualitative data analysis, the discursive-based data were coded into terms or short sentences that were primarily 'informant-based' (Gioia et al, 2012; Langley and Abdallah, 2011), and the ethnography data were coded faithful to 'descriptive facts' (Van Maanen, 1979). This process was difficult, in that the codes created during this analysis should neither be too extensive to manage, nor too generic and vague so that emerged meanings are prematurely enveloped into a narrow theoretical framework. For this issue, Gioia and colleagues (2012) helpfully introduce the conception of 'concept', which, in their term, is a less 'well-ridden wheel', but an inductive tool. It explains social phenomenon at a higher level than describing, and allows creative, innovative, and data-driven meaning creation. Thus, concepts could be potentially developed into well-defined constructs and core dimension of new theories.

But as a fresh qualitative researcher, I still did not find it easy to pick up 'concepts' from the messy and somewhat unfamiliar (not similar to any empirical study I had reviewed by the time) data. Langley and Abdallah (2011) state that researchers doing a single case study might be confronted by the 'trap of having nothing but a boring sequential narrative to tell'. On the contrary, my study involves too many interesting issues and a large variety of ways of coding them, which paradoxically rendered my data as flat as that is described by Langley and Abdallah.

A second challenging aspect of this study is to distinguish the generic socialisation path that unfolded over time from the identity construction process that was experienced by newcomers at individual level. Although based on the philosophical underpinning of this study ---- social constructionism ---- such separation does not ontologically exist, it is not unacceptable to slightly differentiate between the socialisation processes and experiences of individual newcomers, as the former were infused with discourses, institutions and structures that were, most of the time, deep-levelled, slowly transformed, semi-immune to everyday acts (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Sewell, 1992; Watson, 2008; Ybema et al., 2009), and the latter were

more idiosyncratic and fluid. These are analogous to what Van Maanen (1979: 541) tells about 'the studied scene and the member interpretations of what stands behind'. As discussed in earlier section, the separation would make it possible to view how individual newcomers made sense and engaged with social and cultural context to construct their identities.

However, at points it appeared rather ambiguous in the data. For instance, training faculty's strict discipline and lack of trust on student officers could be seen as either general properties of the academy or the subjective perception of some of the studied newcomers. In a word, it was a delicate analysis process that demanded reflexivity to define the 'boundary' in empirical data in order to both keep faithful to the data and construct a neat theoretical framework.

After repeated data reviewing and some preliminary coding practices, some interesting, unexpected and inspiring observations emerged, which suggested directions of thematic interests. These observations provided some provisional answers to the two research questions and constructively pushed analysis to move forward. To wit, when asked what influenced them most or attached most attention from them at a given phase, recruits spontaneously mentioned different aspects or elements in that context; and given aspects that drew vital attention from some newcomers might be barely noticed by some others. One rudimentary observation in this regard is that a few newcomers particularly pointed out the stress gendered from the fact of 'being assessed by' and 'wanting to impress' knowledgeable tutors and colleagues in role-play exercises, whereas, some others, albeit equally unsure about how to perform the role-play tasks, conceived it a chance to learn from each other and expressed little sense of inferiority. Another example is recruits' reflections on PDU1, with some focused on how they were treated better than at the academy while others on how much progression they had made in doing various kinds of jobs. These salient differences in their interpretation of and reflection on the shared experiences indicated the divergence in their propensity to define their situated position. Different individuals were preoccupied with different dimension of the social context, to which they directed most efforts to engage with.

This data-driven analysing process was only undertaken to sharpen eyes so that the first-order codes could be more meaningful than, otherwise, gestalt and random. It

helped to solve the first challenge mentioned above of 'getting lost' in data, for where informants' attention, emotion, and effort was mostly attached and what they perceived, believed and cared about constituted crucial comparative elements (Langley and Abdallah, 2011) to derive deeper and reflective understanding of the data. It also facilitated addressing the second challenge, in that the idiosyncratic interpretations of informants rendered subjective accounts more visible and easily distinguishable from the commonly recognised 'essential realities'. For example, following this rationale, the feeling of nerve at role-play exercises was regarded as a naturally invoked emotion that generally existed in such a situation, but how informants accounted for this feeling and let it shape their self-perceptions and behaviours reflected their different ways of sensemaking and identity producing. To wit, some recruits considered the nerve as a result of the position of 'being assessed' and let this recognition reinforce their sense of vulnerability, whereas, some saw it as normal for every rookie and motivated themselves to get involved in more practices alike. Nevertheless, this thematic dimension was carefully applied to prevent it from imposing constraints on or overruling open coding.

Moreover, the data collected showed overt discontinuities at the frontiers between the four waves outlined earlier, each bearing its distinctive contextual characteristics, namely where newcomers were, who they interacted with, and what they were preoccupied with. Given this, data were chronologically broken into 4 units of analysis at the open-coding stage. Drawing on Langley's (1999) review of 'temporal bracketing strategy' for theorising in organisation studies, the method of analytical division could be utilised to generate comparison and integration of multi-dimensional causality of a process. Inspired by that template, the four chronological episodes were comparatively evaluated as alternation between police academy, PDU sector and operational policing domain in shaping the identity of newcomers. Additionally, this breaking-to-integrating pattern of analysis allowed both inter-personal comparison as well as examination on intra-personal trajectories.

Through these practices, at the first round of open coding, 130 first-order concepts were coded. After getting more familiar with the data and the practice of open coding, the researcher continued with some minor aggregation and selection based on two criteria ---- a given issue's significance (e.g. issues peculiar to a small number of people were eliminated or merged into other or new concepts), and relevance (e.g.

focused on issues relevant to inter-personal and intra-personal comparisons). This activity was not dissimilar to Pratt and colleagues' (Pratt et al., 2006) practice of 'abandonment and revision of provisional categories' based on data-category fit.

Via this process, the number of first-order concepts was brought down to 54. 20 codes were extracted from the set of individual identity matters, which are shown as the headings without bullet points in the rectangular boxes in the first row in Figure 3.1 to Figure 3.4. These codes denote the general aspects that had attached individuals' attention and stimulated their reactions in identity construction in the four distinctive contexts. Additionally, 34 codes were drawn out from the set of contextual descriptions, which are shown as the headings in the rectangular boxes in the first row in Figure 3.5 to Figure 3.8. These codes describe the key influences and elements of the social contexts on individuals' identity construction.

3.5.2 Axial coding and second-order themes

As guided by Gioia methodology, the second step of analysis was aimed to abstract empirical details in a creative and constructive way, driven by an attempt to explore and evolve the concepts coming from these data but undertheorised in existing literature (Gioia et al., 2012: 20). Towards the end of first-order coding, in the set of concepts of individual identity construction, how newcomers perceived **what it meant to be a police officer** seemed to be a core issue that closely related to other concepts of identity construction and explained individual transitions in association with shifts of social contexts. Simultaneously, it also marked roughly three main categories of newcomers, based on whether their perceptions of being a police officer were dominated by the authority's prescriptions, their own independent aspiration or work content in the context they were embedded in. I then found it a promising direction to continue probing the interconnection between individuals' focused dimension of work identity and their specific ways of engaging with the contexts, as well as individuals' variation in this regard.

Given these considerations, the raw data about individual identity construction were revisited regarding to the key aspects represented by the 20 first-order codes, which extended the first-order codes with the identified manifestations of the three tentative categories of identity construction, which are shown as the headings with

bullet points in the rectangular boxes in Figure 3.1 to Figure 3.4. This practice also helped to further clarify and refine the three categories.

With this data-grounded knowledge of the three categories, I searched for theoretical underpinnings to reflectively engage with them. I performed a hermeneutic cycle between reviewing these data to deepen comprehension of data, doing independent theoretical mapping to distil ideas and consider interrelations, and reading literature to critically reflect on the nascent categorisation system derived till this point. Consequently, I came up with the term *identity orientation* to conceptualise the paramount and relatively enduring pattern that individuals adopt to engage with their situated context to construct and sustain a pursued version of identity (see more substantial theorisation in subsection 6.2.1). Specifically, the three types of identity orientation were 'legitimacy seeking orientation', 'authenticity seeking orientation' and 'practitioner orientation'.

This core concept helped to locate the empirical findings, i.e. the first-order codes, of the three categories in association with three broad themes in identity literature, namely constructing a legitimate subjectivity, maintaining an authentic self and developing competence in role performance. Guided by existing literature in these thematic areas, the 60 items of extended from the first-order codes were then translated and synthesised into 12 themes, which identify the essential activities involved in individuals' identity construction in each of the four contexts. These themes are displayed in the boxes in the second row.

With the three broad themes of identity construction in mind, the first-order codes of social contexts were interpreted as enabling or obstructing elements/influences for individuals' identity construction, by means of which the analysis identified three essential aspects ---- structure, discourses and practice ---- that were imperative for construction of a legitimate, authentic and competent identity.

Furthermore, the four contexts were compared regarding these three aspects to identify the value or quality of each aspect in every context, which helps to specifically captured characteristics of the social contexts. To wit, the aspect of structure was specified by the degree of control/autonomy, as the four contexts demonstrated saliently different levels of control/autonomy in the prevailing structure, which had great impact on individuals' identity construction over time. In the same vein,

discursive condition was specified by the level of diversity and the condition of practice was specified by space of enactment, the degree of autonomy and level of complexity. This refinement process produced 19 themes, which are displayed in the boxes in the second row of Figure 3.5 to Figure 3.8.

3.5.3 Aggregating, modelling and theorising

Once the second-order themes were constructed, I stepped back to reflect on the central assumption of identity as produced by ongoing dialogue between individual self-strivings and socially provided meanings and interactions. The third level of analysis was derived from the contemplation on how the second-order themes, including both contextual features and individual activities, were interrelated with each other and jointly spoke for the dialogue. This process allowed me to move towards an integrative theorisation and modelling.

First, a two-way and progressive pattern of interaction between individual identity constructors and social realities could be found generic to the three identity orientations. With this idea in mind, the second-order themes of identity construction were integrated into four underlying dimensions for all of the three types of identity construction, namely contextual assessing, identity defining, identity constructing and identity confirming. Furthermore, by integrating the four dimensions within the continuous process of identity work, the study produced a processual model of identity work (more discussion will be presented in subsection 6.4.1).

Second, the three broad aspects of social contexts demonstrated significant transformations and dynamics over time, which were influential in channelling the identity work. Based on this observation, I found it crucial to abstract the second-order themes of social contexts into fundamental dimensions that capture the changing process across the four chronological episodes. In attempting to gain those dimensions, I identified two spectrums could effectively capture the over-time transformations and interweave the three broad aspects, namely structure, discourses and practice, together.

The first spectrum is *structure-agency*, indicative of the space of agency enactment for identity construction or the determinism of structure in dominating identity construction. And the second one is *unitary-fragmentation*, indicative of the degree of unification or diversity of institutions, practices, discourses, cultures, and so on. These two dimensions deepen comprehension of each social contexts in relation to

individual identity work, but also enable evaluation of them as a continuous process over time (see details in subsection 4.6).

Third, drawing upon these two theoretical moves, I observed the links between two sets of aggregated dimensions. Going back to the empirical materials, intriguingly, the cross-context development of the three identity orientations revealed different dynamics, with the identity work of one orientation flourishing while that of another remaining threatened or restrained in the same context; and the identity work of a given orientation while entailed much effort to construct the desired identity in one context but enabled stable maintaining of the desired identity in another. Since the concept of identity orientation and the two-dimensional evaluation tool are both abstract generalising frames, this study sought for profound reflections on how the identity work of each type of identity orientation proceeds in wider organisational contexts (see details in subsection 6.3).

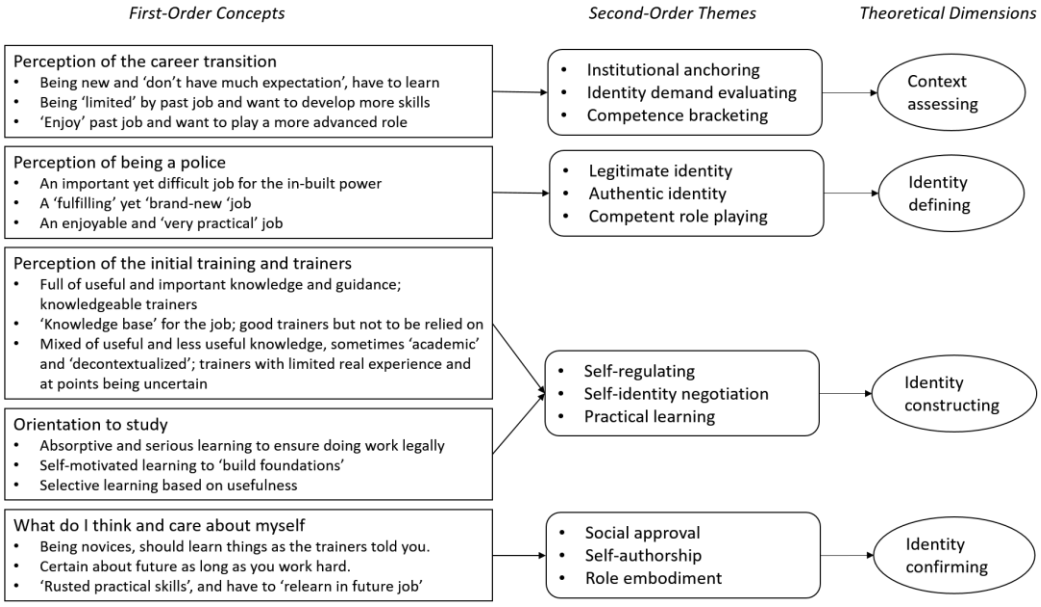


Figure 3.1 Data structure of identity construction in the first context

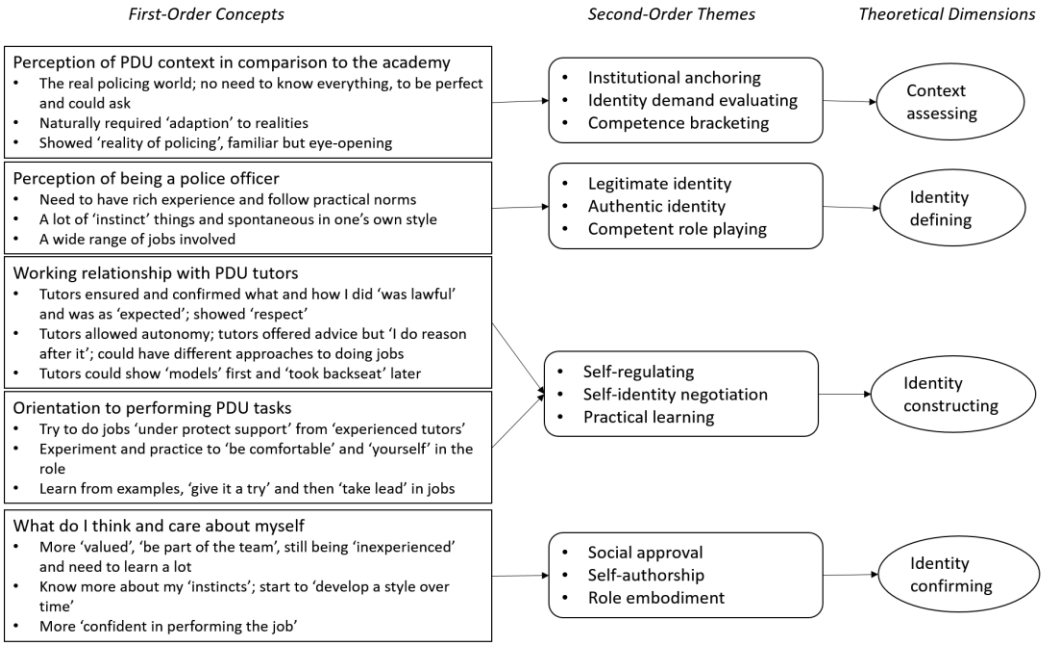


Figure 3.2 Data structure of identity construction in the second context

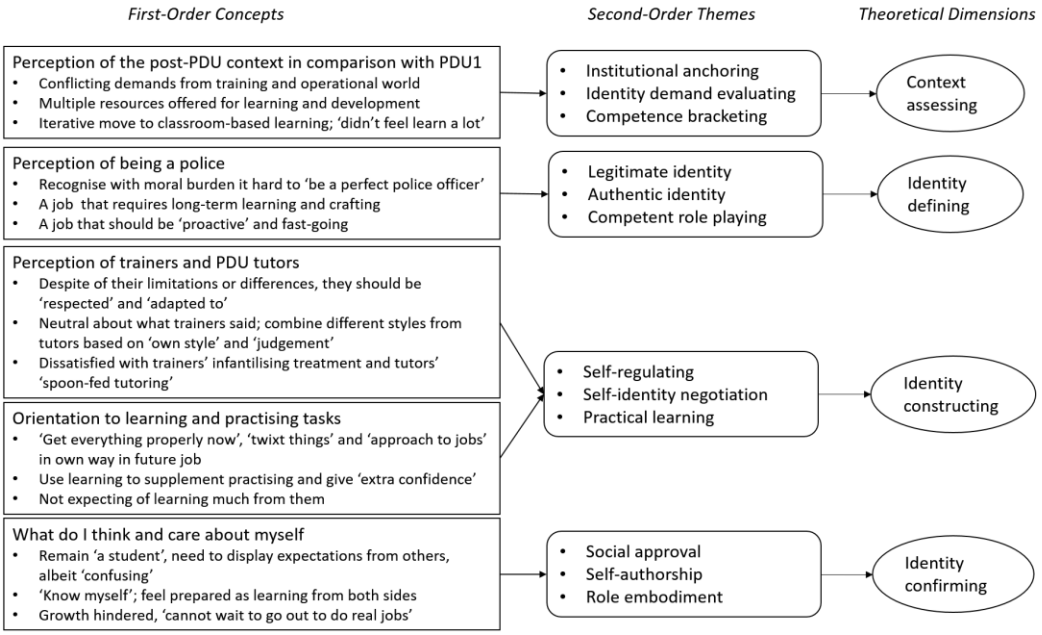


Figure 3.3 Data structure of identity construction in the third context

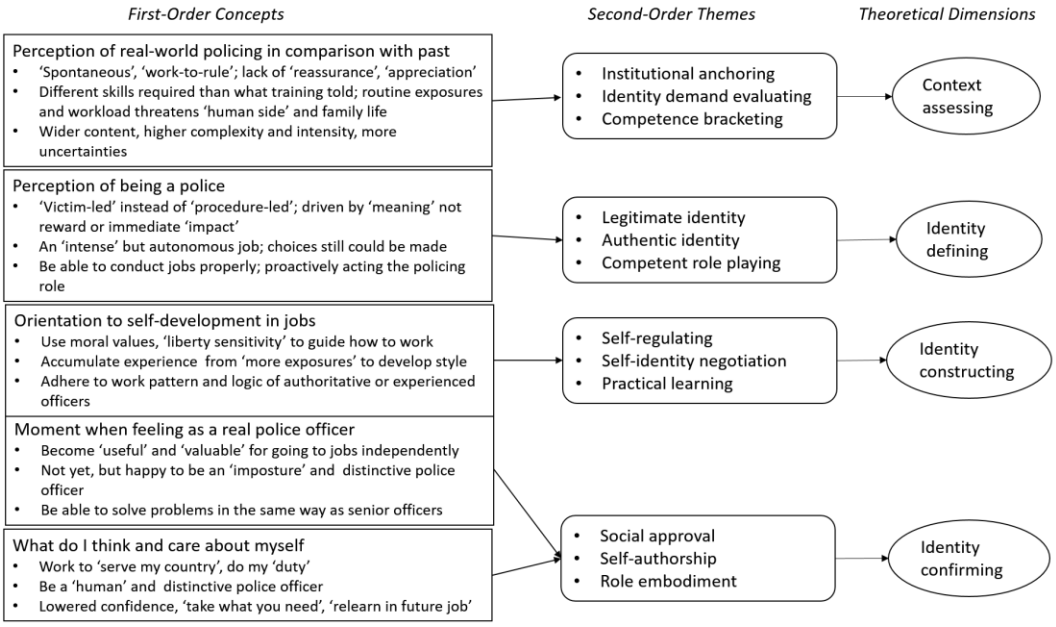


Figure 3.4 Data structure of identity construction in the fourth context

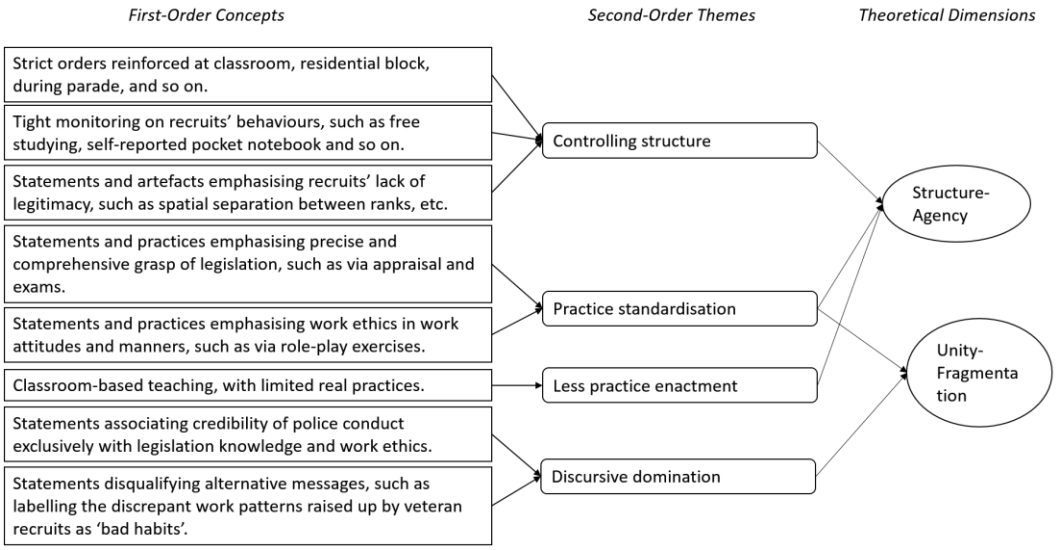


Figure 3.5 Data structure of characteristics of the first context

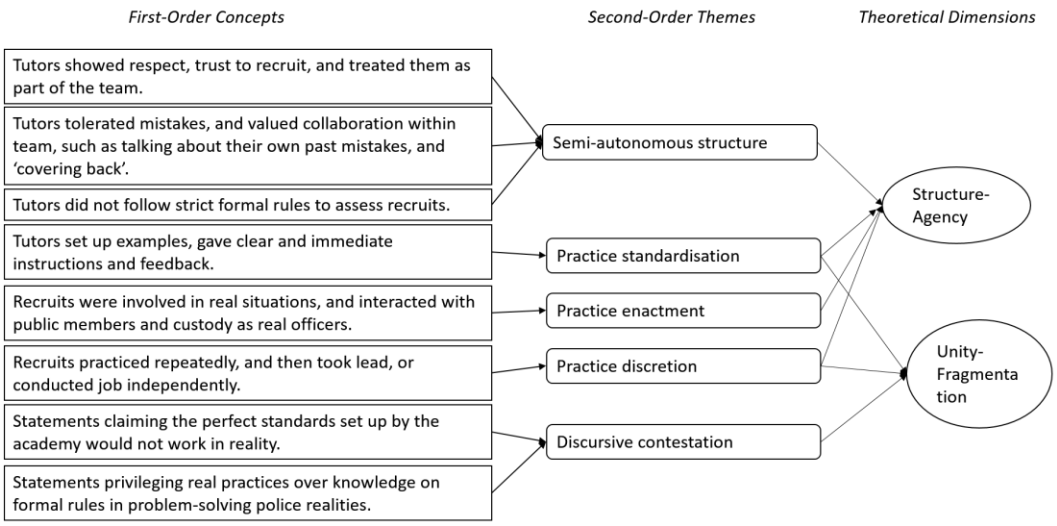
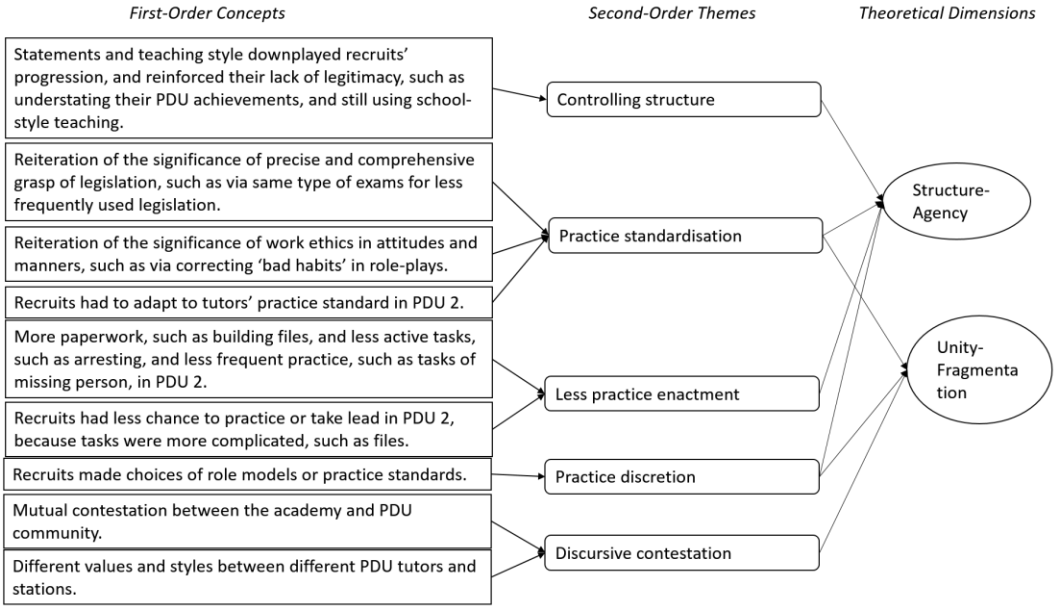


Figure 3.6 Data structure of characteristics of the second context



Graph Figure 3.7 Data structure of characteristics of the third context

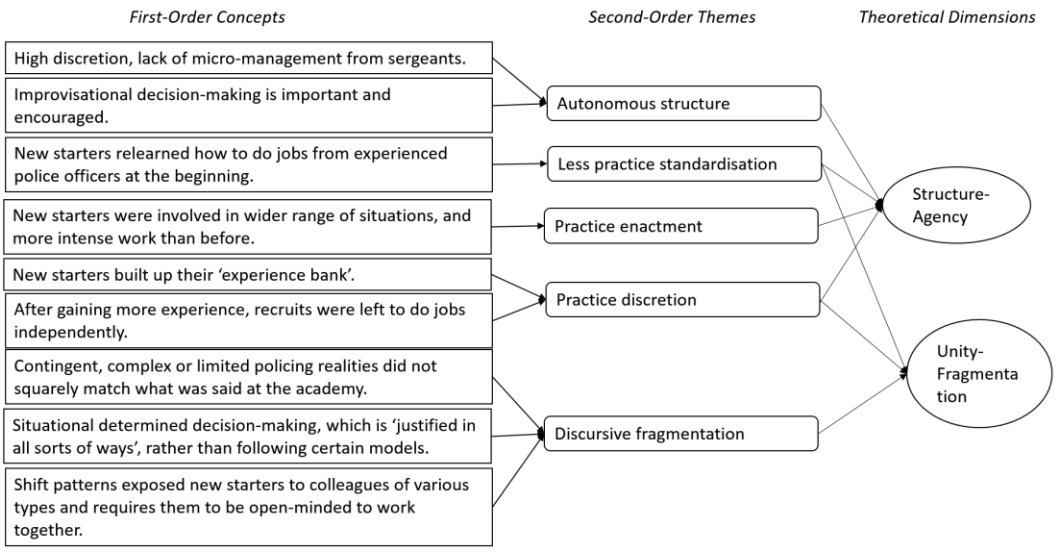


Figure 3.8 Data structure of characteristics of the fourth context

3.6 Reflexivity

3.6.1 Methodological reflexivity

According to Johnson and Duberley's (2003) systematic evaluation on reflexivity in management studies, reflexivity focused at methodological level tends to be driven by an objectivist epistemological and realist ontological stance. Especially but not exclusively for ethnographers, this type of reflexivity is given in the anticipation that by justifying minimised subjective interference from researchers (Van Maanen, 1988) or confessing how researchers themselves and their research interests were created and shaped in the research or fieldwork (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993; Van Maanen, 2011), the research and researchers' knowledge production could be counted as 'robust', if not truth-claiming, self-consciously censored, or constructive to potentially advancement from researchers' side.

With Johnson and Duberley's (2003) contention in mind, doing methodological reflexivity does not perfectly agree with the ontological underpinning of this study. However, I still believe practising methodological reflexivity on research design and process, as well as theorisation development is still imperative for 1) reflectively recording on the first-time empirical research for my future research career; 2) reflecting on the balance/imbalance between me and my informants (Alvesson et al, 2008b); and 3) deepening the reflexive understanding of my authorial role in the

research process, thus building towards evaluation of my knowledge-producing and -reproducing role in wider contexts, namely identity scholarship community, business, management and organisation sphere and contemporary society.

First, I was involved in the socialising experience from the moment the studied newcomers entered the onboarding scheme. From the first day arrival, as mentioned in data collection section earlier, I intentionally sought for trustful and natural relationship with informants, by explicitly speaking my wish to 'make friend with everyone', so that I could relatively easily settle down and integrate into them, and simultaneously make my participation less interfering, which made it possible that more authentic and richer backstage data yielded from the fieldwork and interviews. Paradoxically, however, this could lead informants to pay more attention to their self-presentation, when they believed their behaviours and narratives were received by me as 'authentic' presentation of themselves. Following this reasoning, the study might give rise to self-fulfilling identity construction among some individuals, in that they might be pushed to do more self-reflection than they naturally would be when my concern on self-reflection, albeit very implicitly and carefully inserted in interview questions or informal conversations, was seen as a 'normal' thing naturally expected from them. One critical incident that pushed me to reflect on this effect was when I invited an informant, who was one of those I hung around and spoke vocally with. The informant asked me, in slightly joking way, if it was okay to bring another informant with her as she always felt awkward in 'serious things'. This event made me realise that I was trusted as a person but my identity as a researcher still caused problem, especially among people who were inclined to feel being judged.

Second, drawing on Reinharz's (1997) comment that the way the researcher presents to informants could be constructed and hence transited during fieldwork, I reflexively recognised my own changes in identity position and presentation might partially brought changes in informants' attitudes towards me over time. It was recognised that my deliberate preparation for the first presentation in field, i.e. finely crafted speech notes, carefully planned body language, and intentionally staged confidence, in addition with my 'mystified and elite' background in the eyes of police newcomers, did win me some power in interpersonal relations (French and Raven, 1959). Whereas, as I moved on to more everyday interactions and occasioned some awkward situations, such as missing the points of informants' narratives, lack of

knowledge on UK culture, education or geography, the power was undermined in their eyes or, more possibly, dwindled in my self-perception. My high level of self-reflexivity, such as the hovering note to myself 'what a weird Chinese female nerd', rendered me less 'compiling' in later interactions with the informants. Therefore, the ever-increasing assurance and certainty exhibited in informants' self-narratives, apart from their growth in confidence, might also be partly resulting from my less powerful and authoritative image to pose 'real' judgement on them. In other words, familiarity and slight lack of confidence on my part could possibly encourage them to present a more confident, positive, and upright self in front of me.

Third, admittedly, my propensity to recognise people based on their way of relating self to others did slightly channel my understanding of the informants. Specifically, what drew considerable intention from me in the beginning of the fieldwork was the degree and source of self-confidence among informants. A variety of types emerged, including severely less confident and felt inferior to everyone else, trying to be confident by looking on the positive side, confident for self-improvement in the future, and certainly confident for vitally advantages compared with certain people. This did serve as a starting point for me to explore the issue underlying those existential worries from the least confident ones, which slightly shaped my view of and the later conceptualisation of legitimacy seeking orientation. Besides, the recruits who seemed to constantly stay highly confident were investigated from the source of their sense of stability, with subjective authorship in identity construction surfaced to be that anchor. This was the miniature of authenticity seeking orientation. Finally, the recruits who seemed to switch between confident and less confident status were examined for the changes in their situations, and opportunities to enact their skills and knowledge were identified as a key factor, which, after rigorously confirmed from data, was theorised as practitioners.

This starting point overemphasises on the comparative and relational dimension of identity, and particularly at the scope of peer group. Although later gathered data extended to other constituents of identity, such as performances in role-set group, it is believed that without 'confidence and peer relations' being so heavily incorporated in the initial observations, the three types might not be created, or constructed in another way. In either scenario, theoretical explanations on newcomers'

identity construction over time would be drastically different from those in the present study.

It is widely acknowledged by all stances that all theories have to start from some incidental, specific, and possibly 'unscientific' observation. From a social constructivist perspective, the fact that the starting point of this study was vitally affected by my personal perception on people or worldview is taken as an unavoidable epistemological issue. Moreover, it is conceived that my perception on people is not exactly 'personal' but a product of historical and social processes, which is examined below.

3.6.2 Theoretical deconstruction and epistemic reflexivity

As noted briefly above, I am aware that the theoretical construction proposed here is only one, among many, plausible way to interpret the data. Following many identity theorists (Alvesson et al., 2008a and b; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Knights and McCabe, 2002), I use the method of critically deconstructing the theorisation in this study not only for theoretical refinement but also for an archaeological examination of the chosen theoretical position. With the attempt to deconstruct the theoretical landscape of this study, I found a number of reflexivity points contributed by identity scholars vitally enlightening. First, Ybema and co-authors (2009: 315) call for identity analysts' reflection on their own immersion in an historically contingent and invariably institutionalised set of knowledge-producing practices'. Similarly, Alvesson and colleagues advocate identity researchers pay attention to the broader contexts to avoid 'myopic pitfalls' (2008a: 12; see also Brown, 2006). Based on these arguments, I believe the academic life could be a latent but powerful regime shaping researchers' interpretation of matters of identity. With these ideas in mind, I directed effort to deconstruct the theorisation on two levels. On the broad level, I uncovered the underlying assumptions and tensions in the theoretical building blocks of this study. On the local level, I reflected upon my own identity, the discourses I adhered to, and the identity position I took in the fieldwork as well as in the 'textwork' of this study (Van Maanen, 2010).

One significant aspect derived from the reflection on the broad level is the contemporary cultural as well as scholarly trend of 'narcissism' (Lasch, 1978 cited in Alvesson et al., 2008a), which has encouraged and accentuated individual

distinctiveness, and magnified the status and producing of subjectivities in understanding various organisation and social phenomena (Klein, 2000; Ybema et al., 2009). The overall interpretive analytical approach of the social issue of individuals entering a new occupation in this study ---- that is, scrutiny over individual newcomers' agency-infused identity constructing process ---- could be largely attributed to this fashion. By this token, individuals' specific pursuits at micro level ---- legitimacy, authorship and competence ---- were conceived as the mobilising force for agency to engage with macro-level structures in given patterns and accounting for identity constructing activities, dynamics and temporary achievements.

Otherwise, if following the alternative mainstream position in identity scholarship that highlights knowledge/power regime, the identity construction phenomena could be assessed as results of institutions and institutional processes, with individuals' identity constructing efforts seen as deployed by specific institutionalising practices, triggered by institutional shifts, constrained by institutional boundaries and channelled towards some inescapable destination or self-fulfilling resisting subjects (Collinson, 1992; Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). In other words, if pushed further along the line of power/knowledge theories, legitimacy, competence and self-authorship could be comprehended, beyond individual level, as shaped by the engine of certain institutions. To illustrate, pursuit of legitimacy and competence could both be seen as institutionally produced, with the former by the institution of training academy or more profoundly, by social discourses laying significance to police legitimacy, and the latter by institution of operational sector, and also social discourses laying expectations on the 'grand competence' of police. Self-authorship, though appearing to be more agency-ridden than structure-complying, might also be understood as produced by macro institutions, namely institutions that emphasising individuals' responsibility for their life, success and social status, which Collinson (2003) draws observation upon as identity seeking preoccupation that is driven by contemporary structure of class and economic status.

In fact, the individual focus taken in this study and the alternative institution focus mentioned above are fundamentally similar in accounting for two things: the existential insecurity of individuals driven by the changes of social and economic structure, and the conflicts and ambiguity prevalent in modern social contexts (Collinson, 2003; Knights and Willmott, 1989). Also advanced from these social

trends are, among others, scholarly currency of process studies, change management, and organisational temporality. These recently burgeoning theoretical interests reflect academic as well as managerial agenda of enhancing knowledge on how individuals in changing situations think and act (so that they could potentially be predicted and controlled). Within this historical broad context, questions are asked towards change-involved processes, theoretical works are evaluated based on its processual complexity, and theories are driven to better representation of organisational changes.

In this study, all these three aspects of influences were manifested. Firstly, the identity issue was sought beyond the black-box 'identification' approach (e.g. Dutton, 1994), and case study was chosen to locate in a changeful and multi-vocal socialising context, which, had 'change' not become high in current agenda, could have been seen as an unnecessary inquiry in a deviant case. Secondly, differences, rather than similarities, between social contexts were focused on and substantially examined, if not exaggerated. It is undeniable that this latent inclination was propelled by the aim to let the study be appreciated as 'interesting' in my scholar community. Thirdly, theories built upon were directly linked to either their inherent description of dynamics, such as social construction (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) and dual structure (Sewell, 1992), or their explanation of phenomena embedded in changes, such as temporal agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) and self-narratives (Giddens, 1991). Other theories were either dismissed or used with modification due to their limitations in recognising or attending to changes, such as symbolic interactionist theorisations.

Moreover, apart from the trend of 'change', identity was chosen also partially for its own popularity and broad relevance in organisation study community. The subjective socialising experience of police newcomers might also be assessed from sensemaing, power and resistance, emotion, culture and other theoretical angles, but identity might arguably be the most attractive option, due to its malleability of being levelled up to institution or down to agency theories, and being driven towards discursive-focused or practice-based literature.

The reflexive practice on local level generated a second thought on the three types of identity orientations emanated from this study. The typology created here to represent the divergence among the group is ineluctably affected by the societal categorising discourses lying in my sub consciousness, such as those differentiating

people by gender, educational background, social class, age and so on, which echoes Dick's (2005) reflexive remark that the social categories could impose constraints on agents in socially constructing or enacting a particular identity that they aspire to, regardless of their creativity. It is possible that I embedded my knowledge of these societal categories in making sense of the phenomena of identity narratives and performances. The trajectory of legitimacy seeking orientation, for instance, was particularly identical with my own path of identity construction at the interface between educational and professional life, between family, micro social circle and wider and diverse society, between familiar, somewhat homogenous culture in my home country and unfamiliar, international culture in current living environment. Hence, my own socialising experience and changes in life could be intertwined in mapping out the story.

3.7 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter I have elaborated on the methodology of this study, which has been chosen based on the theoretical assumptions and research interests. The social constructionist stance in combination with the interpretivist perspective has been found most suitable for this study, and is used to guide research design and data analysis.

The research has been contextualised in a police intake of an England police force, with both the recruits and the organisation affected by a series of reforms promoted by the government and a growing scrutiny from the public. Data collection and analysis were performed mindfully and creatively. Multiple types of qualitative data were gathered through a longitudinal fieldwork. Individuals as well as social contexts were examined in depth and compared across time, which produced two sets of models that address the research questions and offer wider contributions.

In addition, my specific way of self-presentation during the fieldwork, interactions with the studied individuals and idiosyncratic interpretations of them have been discussed as elements that potentially influenced this study, and the research interests, analytical levels and theoretical orientations have been deliberated regarding to the possible social and historical imprints on them.

Chapter 4 The unfolding social contexts

4.1 Introduction

The police intake in this study was subject to a two-year probationary period after joining the organisation. During this process, newcomers went through four distinctive chronological stages: initial training, tutored placement (i.e. policing development unit or PDU), post-placement training and probationary shift. These four stages of socialisation took place within four distinctive social contexts, wherein a multiplicity of elements was presented and drew active interactions from newcomers. The aim of this chapter is to thoroughly investigate these four social contexts in order to understand with which recruits engaged over time to co-produce their police identity.

With the two research questions in mind, the social contexts were assessed on two levels. First, they should be evaluated as multidimensional and constituted by materials, stimuli and impediments related to more than one type of identity work. Second, the unfolding flow of these social contexts, given the resonance, congruence, discontinuity, and conflict among them, constituted a changing, contradictory and iterative process, with which the newcomers grappled to build their identity.

Based on this understanding, it was found that three key aspects sustained and conditioned the different types of identity work emerging in this study, and demonstrated significant changes and tensions throughout time, namely **discourses and discursive condition, power structure** (referred to as 'structure' hereafter) **and practice enactment** (referred to as 'practice' hereafter).

This chapter will first present an in-depth evaluation of the four social contexts in relation to the above three aspects. A two-dimensional framework was abstracted from the three aspects to more directly respond to the core research interests on identity work. Pinned down by the **agency-structure** tension and **unity-fragmentation** tension, these contexts are interrogated in a closer link with the inter-individual variation and intra-individual dynamics within identity construction.

4.2 Training at the police academy

4.2.1 Structure: less paramilitary but remaining formal and hierarchical

The initial stage of identity construction was situated in the police academy. At the outset, the academy impressed many new recruits as a 'humane' learning environment. My observation was similar, in that the academy was less stern and masculine than the 'paramilitary' police training schemes portrayed in previous literature. As noted by many long-serving faculty members and operational officers, a lot of traditional deference and disciplinary rituals had been eliminated or simplified at the academy in recent decades. Interactions between new recruits and uniformed instructors no longer followed the rigid pattern of command and obedience as before. For instance, novices did not need to perform 'posting', i.e. standing attentively against the wall when coming across people of higher ranks (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2009; Conti, 2009). Low-rank members were permitted to raise queries about mandates, which used to be unthinkable in a dominantly command culture (Gordon et al., 2009). Additionally, there was no ubiquitous use of harsh disciplines, such as verbal debasement and physical intimidation, individual and collective punishment, to 'degrade' and impose compliance on the novices (Conti, 2009; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). Instead, the training faculty were generally caring and engaging with the new recruits. One telling instance I witnessed was that a trainer persuaded one sick recruit that she needed rest and sent her to the dormitory room during training.

Despite these characteristics, the police academy remained a fundamentally formal and bureaucratic context. Firstly, the rules and procedures of the academy still emphasised order, discipline and conformity, and were rigorously implemented. Among others, there remained an array of rituals that featured more formality than pragmatism. For instance, all members in the academy had to participate in the parade ceremony every Monday morning, during which all recruits were inspected by the inspector. Besides, after being provided with their uniforms and equipment, recruits were required to wear their whole set of uniform and maintain it clean and tidy all the time. Hats must be worn whenever they went out of the training building. In addition, recruits were required from time to time to put away their infrequently used materials, stationary and bags to maintain the tidiness of classrooms.

Moreover, order was enforced beyond the boundary of training occasions, and extended to recruits' behaviours during off-duty periods. For instance, on the first day of induction, recruits were told to show respect to the administration and maintenance staff in the centre, and those who stayed in the accommodation of the academy were asked to act mindfully and minimise the noises of TV and phone calls at their rooms. Two recruits in particular were sanctioned by the sergeant in charge of training for arguing loudly in the dormitory building and therefore behaving improperly as police probationers. As is shown, in spite of the softened and humane treatment, stringent control on recruits' behaviours in public as well as private settings remained strong in the training context, which was similar to the 'encapsulating' Boot Camp training in Pratt and co-authors' (2006) study of medical newcomers. Therefore, after a few weeks the academy came to be perceived by the majority of recruits as 'being very particular about its own things' (officer 17).

Furthermore, even though more democratic interactions were allowed between recruits and training and managing personnel, the structural distance between them surfaced frequently in training routines, where the authority and domination of the latter was highlighted. One of the manifestations was the faculty's tight monitoring of recruits. There was, for instance, low autonomy granted to them for arranging their free time after lectures.

> 'When they would give you some free time to do some studying, they would not trust us to leave the site. We had to study in that building ... And they'd come around and check on us, and take a few people.' (Officer 14)

The pocket notebook was used as an instrument of supervision. It has been introduced as a recording tool that police officers normally use to keep track of activities at incident scenes, serving for their post-hoc file building and protecting them from false charges from the public. However, during training the notebook was used as a monitoring device in that recruits were asked to log their training routines therein, and it could be spot checked by any faculty member, who would expect busy schedules entered in the notebook. Not dissimilar to lawyers' electronic logs of billable activities (cf. Brown and Lewis, 2011), the notebook in effect imposed on new recruits the celebrated principle of hardworking and forced them to constantly conduct self-regulation.

The very practice of notebook inspection flagged the authority's control power to those newcomers who held unrealistic expectation of substantial democracy and flattened structure in the training context, which is well illustrated by the conversations below.

> Officer 04, 'why it is my pocket notebook being checked?' (Questioned bluntly)
>
> Instructor, 'because I can.' (Smiled but left no room for further inquiry or negotiation)

Besides, the hierarchical power structure was conspicuous in the training context. The spatial arrangement of the training block (Bourdieu, 1977) ---- with classrooms for fresh intakes and the library on the first floor, and classrooms for established trainees and offices for training staff and the higher ranks on the second floor ---- ostensibly reflected the rank-based hierarchy and tenure-determined power structure. By this token, new recruits barely had direct interaction with the higher ranks, whose physical distance and social mystification, similar to the managers in Knights and McCabe's (2003) study on the call centre, consequently accentuated the grand power held by the authority of the academy.

While trainers tended to create an enjoyable and engaging learning environment, the formal relationship between trainers and recruits remained deeply rooted and came to the fore when breaching behaviours occurred and were critically dealt with. For instance, some veteran recruits (ex-PCSOs[3] or ex-special constables) who hijacked the lecture by vocally speaking about their own policing experience were deemed disrespectful behaviour, which consequently caused an inspector to give them a warning and a superintendent to speak to the whole intake.

4.2.2 Discourses and discursive condition: 'all-inclusive' learning, 'gold-standard' policing and discursive domination

While the strict rules and rigid hierarchical structure in the academy attempted to control and regulate new recruits within this specific domain, the discursive avowals were set out to standardise newcomers' thinking and behavioural patterns in a far-reaching way, so as to establish organisational control at a distance (Fournier, 1999;

[3] Police Community Support Officer

Townley, 1993). As widely noted in existing police studies, police forces invariably aimed to prescribe formal and ideal behaviours and procedures for new intakes to follow throughout their career via a pedagogical and 'didactic' training scheme (Van Maanen, 1973).

As also remarked in the literature, the inculcated formal principles could be somewhat idealistic and artificial, and could simplify realities into a right-or-wrong dichotomy that does not resemble the real work. In result, the principles are subject to contingencies in practical policing context (Bittner, 1965; Fielding, 1984, 1988; Van Maanen, 1973, 2010). Whereas, these idealised principles are still predominantly advanced at the initial training stage for their significance in identity conversion. On the one hand, the exaggerated and dramatic behaviour standards (Goffman, 1959: 19) and well-rounded identity template constituted by these principles sharply demarcate the becoming-officers from their own past status, and distinguish them from the general society that they hold responsibilities to protect and serve (Conti, 2009; Dick, 2005; Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 1978; Waddington, 1999). On the other hand, those formally issued principles constitute straightforward and clear-cut criteria for newcomers to easily reference and consistently apply, relatively speaking, when high discretion, ambiguous tasks and intangible outcomes undermine direct and micro control and management (Bittner, 1965; Fielding, 1984; Manning, 2008; Van Maanen, 2010).

This common feature of police initial training was found to be prominent in the academy. Specifically, legal justification was cherished as an essential principle of policing. Solid knowledge of legislation and procedure was avowed as essential for justifiable policing conduct and comprehensive education around legislation was considered vital for recruits to build up professional credibility. Under the influence of this set of discourses, recruits were propelled to re-cognise commonplace issues through legislative definitions in a rigorous and precise pattern. The basic concept of 'theft', for instance, was defined as a type of crime that strictly meets five conditions simultaneously, which meant all these five aspects had to be assessed by police officers before any judgement and action was taken.

Also, drawing on the significance of legal legitimacy in policing, the training staff frequently stressed that through meticulous learning newcomers could acquire

concrete knowledge foundations and develop ethical working styles, which would grant them a more legitimate position than a lot of long-serving officers in the force. By instilling a sense of superiority in police newcomers regarding their prospective identity in comparison with old-timers and common citizens, the training authority aimed to attract new recruits to invest their aspirational identity in the current training programme and to adhere to the meticulous and detail-focused learning style it avowed. The technique of envisioning desirable identity with the aim of determining members' identity construction efforts adopted here was analogous to, among others, the use of collective 'elitism' in the British Parachute Regiment (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009:364) and the use of aspirational 'career' in consultant companies (Grey, 1994). These cases share the commonality of privileging one identity in conjunction with one regime over all alternatives, which will be further explained later.

Additionally, the recruits were differentiated (Covaleski, et al., 1998) within the cohort according to their performance in legislation study. For instance, the formative examinations were largely constituted by questions on definitions, and thus laid great emphasis on accurate grasp of details. Recruits who failed an exam would be spoken with by the trainers, which was taken as a warning sign in the cohort., whereas, those who performed well in the exams, came early or stayed late to do revision, or took notes scrupulously would be established as peer models within the intake. Through structured mechanisms as well as informal articulations, the core value of striving to become an all-round officer was strongly reinforced. Importantly, given the massive amount of details and constant changes in legislation, this principle demanded that recruits continuously concern themselves with legislation even after they had graduated from the training. The inherent infinity and elusiveness (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009:355) of this prescribed all-round identity rendered members perpetually inadequate to reach the ideal identity, and propelled them to govern themselves with the principle regardless of the situated context.

Along with legal justification, work ethics were also strongly emphasised by the training authority. The encoded ethical principles[4], developed by College of Policing, were the first thing introduced in the training programme, and were then reiterated in each section of legislation training and embodied in the prescribed policing procedures.

[4] *Code of Ethics 2014* published by College of Policing includes the following main principles ---- accountability, fairness, honesty, integrity, leadership, objectivity, openness, respect and selflessness.

For instance, the stipulated procedure of conducting arrest was encoded into the 'GOWISELY model[5]', which directly embedded the core ethical principles of 'accountability', 'fairness', 'objectivity', 'respect' and so forth. In addition, training faculty's frequent reference to the 'intense public scrutiny' on the police in the present society was aimed to heighten recruits' sense of collective social image and individual accountability (Conti, 2009). The external pressure and responsibility for the collective underlined in these articulations further reinforced the vitality of ethical working conducts.

Moreover, the role-play practices[6] were not merely exercises in technical execution of policing tasks, but, more importantly, an opportunity for the training authority to check and correct on recruits' manners and attitudes in job delivery before recruits joined the shifts. The 'public members' in the exercises, normally played by instructors, would deliberately act in an uncooperative way, to stimulate recruits' reaction to difficult situations. Therefore, whilst these role-play interactions took place in an enclosed training setting, they were intended to invoke recruits' presentation of the policing role in the front-stage, i.e., facing the 'outside audience' (Dick, 2005; Goffman, 1959; Manning, 2008; Van Maanen and Katz, 1979). For this reason, instructors gave evaluation both on technical skills and, more importantly, professional mannerism. Consequently, although student officers were told to 'be yourself' in the role, instead of being a robot, the 'oneself' was not actually expected to be the spontaneous self, but someone else ---- the 'subjectivity' of the formal regime that privileges work ethics (Knights and McCabe, 2003: 1602). In this vein, through role-play performance and evaluation processes, work ethics were further stressed and penetrated recruits' practices. Given that the 'ethical' policing practices taught in lectures and expected during role-plays demanded perfect embodiment of the ethical norms and tolerated no compromise, they were often referred to by recruits as 'gold standards'.

However, while discourses of all-inclusive learning and gold-standard policing potently governed the training context, they were not monolithic, given that both self-

[5] Grounds, Objective(s), Warrant card, Identification, Station, Entitlement to receipt of copy of form, Legal powers, You ---'you are detained for the purposes of a search'.

[6] Practical exercises with student officers working alone or in pairs, conducting policing tasks on members of the public acted by trainers. There were 7 practical role-plays in the 30-week training, including stop and search, house search, vehicle search, suspect interview, victim interview and so on.

contradictory elements within the training and dissonant messages from veteran recruits emerged throughout the training, albeit not significantly.

Firstly, the principle of all-inclusive learning was self-defeating when trainers sometimes implied that certain legislation content would be tested during exams but not frequently used in real work. This happened when some recruits were scrupulous about small details of particular laws. Given the time constraints and limited teaching resources of the training programme, trainers unavoidably made the above kinds of suggestion with practical considerations in mind, which was in opposition to the avowal of the training regime that learning at the foundation stage should not be reduced to only that with obvious regular practical application. Moreover, veteran recruits previously exposed to day-to-day policing made comments, openly in class and privately between peers, that while some taught issues were relevant routines, others were only rare occurrences and therefore 'adjacent information' (Officer 06).

Secondly, when it came to specific practical issues, the gold-standard procedures were found by recruits to be too vague to guide problem solving, and too idealistic to allow action taking. One obvious example is making a detainment, where speculative judgement based on mediocre information and short-cut actions were unavoidable and quite commonly adopted in real-world policing. Given that such slightly rule-breaching aspects were often involved in practical details, trainers, in order to avoiding contradicting the gold-standard discourses, would not elaborate in great details on the tacit processes, but often glossed over the tricky part by using the general term 'professional thinking'. As a result, some novice recruits reported being confused about what was the right thing to do. Again, in informal communications, veteran recruits tended to speak about how overly formal and idealistic the prescribed procedures were, and how policing jobs were performed in discrepant ways at local stations.

Although the dominant regime could not totalise the training domain due to these contradictory, inconsistent and dissonant elements, it still strongly governed the formal training processes. On the one hand, the training faculty leveraged on recruits' novice status and the attempt of obtaining credibility (Ibarra, 1999; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Specifically, they privileged the avowed principles as the only behavioural reference that could ensure recruits a legitimate position under the judgement of

various inside and outside audiences (Fielding, 1984). On the other hand, they imposed on recruits a vulnerable and ignorant identity status. To wit, they explicitly disqualified localised practical norms (e.g. labelling them as ‘bad habits’) and accentuated that the limited experience of recruits disabled them from telling good from bad, right from wrong. In this way, recruits, especially the rookies, were trained to cast doubt on informally spread articulations.

These discursive practices jointly marginalised deviant voices from individuals and devalued knowledge produced in the practical world, thus unifying discourses in the social context in adherence to the all-inclusive and gold-standard principles.

4.2.3 Practice: minimal involvement of practice

Similar to findings in existing literature, the initial training programme was dominated by classroom-based learning and preoccupied with formal standards and written rules (e.g. Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 1973). As indicated above, the legislation and procedures were deliberated in details and precise grasp of them was enforced through structured exams and verbal incitation. Practical knowledge, by contrast, was barely brought in during the training and when mentioned only dealt with briefly. Application of the theoretical knowledge in practice was left for exploration in the phase after training, according to the demand of the training authority that recruits should build solid and legitimate foundations first to ensure appropriate progression later.

Besides, there were only few role-play exercises ---- seven times in total in the course of 30 weeks. As most recruits reflected, the exercises were ‘formal’, ‘fake’ and ‘predictable’, not resembling the real policing context. Therefore, recruits could not really enact their practical policing competence, such as negotiation with members of the public, as they were preoccupied with the appropriateness of their manner. Neither could they continuously practice performing the same tasks to strive for improvement.

In sum, the training academy socialised the newcomers within a formal, bureaucratic and centripetal social context. Though bearing less resemblance to the military sector than before, ranks, deference and discipline remained regimented and impersonal, and social distance and sanctions were employed to enforce these tenets.

Besides, the all-inclusive and gold-standard discourses were predominantly advanced in order to forge new recruits in line with the social identity prescribed at 'front-region' (Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1978), so as to standardise their practices at future work (Bittner, 1965; Fielding, 1984; Manning, 2008; Van Maanen, 2010). In addition, through its arbitrary construction of policing realities as well as recruits' status, the training authority critically strengthened its discursive power against deviant informal discourses. As regards practice, little instruction or exercise was structured in the training, rendering the context rule-dominant and practice-absent.

4.3 First tutored-placement

4.3.1 Discourses and discursive condition: 'experience-prioritised', 'anti-academy' and backstage discourses, and discursive contestation

Experience-prioritised discourses

Subsequent to the two-month intensive training was the first PDU placement. At this stage, recruits were sent to a PDU shift team to do policing tasks under the supervision and protection of their allocated tutors. The tasks they dealt with this time were real incidents, but selected by their tutors based on the criteria of potential risk, complexity and emotional effects involved in the task. Whilst the academy inculcated that the written legislation and work ethics should be held as the predominant guideline for policing actions, the placement context presented more difficult and dilemmatic situations than were indicated in the formal context (Fielding, 1984). Given this, the abstract written rules, legislation and procedures learnt from the academy failed to offer immediate guidance or an adequate toolkit.

Instead, PDU tutors and the local policing team possessed a rich asset of competence, including not only practical skills in negotiating with public members and restoring order in chaotic situations, but also knowledge about their local area and all walks of life gained from years of policing experience. When recruits performed real tasks, therefore, tutors and the team were more likely to be taken as the authority or referencing point as they could provide in-time and specific solutions to various tricky problems (Van Maanen, 1973). The experience in a real policing context propelled recruits to appreciate the significance of practical experience in problem solving.

In addition to recruits' own experience of task performance, tutors also invariably verbally highlighted the practical aspects as the essential part of the job, such as talking to people of all kinds, reconciling domestic disputes, and so on. To address these issues, as tutors often stressed, required both social and life experience as well as tacit communicating and negotiating skills, with which the formal rules had almost nothing to do. The relatively young age and limited social experience of new recruits, observed by many PDU tutors, could make it particularly difficult to relate to public members, let alone to help solve their problems. One PDU sergeant vividly explained it through a proverb---- 'a midwife should give birth to a child first'. Therefore, PDU communities often maintained that recruits had to learn through on-the-job mentoring to get the 'sense' of what was expected from them and how to deal with scenarios. Correspondingly, the situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) facilitated in the PDU sessions was considered fundamental, whereas the 'theoretical' training programme only secondary, which gave rise to another dominant array of discourses in the PDU context ---- 'anti-academy' discourses.

'Anti-academy' discourses

It has been widely acknowledged that police forces almost universally assert training that ill-represents the real world (e.g. Constable and Smith, 2015; Van Maanen, 1973:412). Likewise, the PDU supervision teams in this study commonly criticised the training programme for its overemphasis on legislation details, which were regarded as only partially useful, to the detriment of competence in delivering jobs, which was believed much more imperative in a real context. Openly expressed critiques were ubiquitous, which the following comment from a PDU sergeant well represented,

> 'The legislation laws training could be cut off by half. What they need to know is only a part of it. What they learnt is very fragmented and superficial. If you want to be able to do your job safely and legally, that will be far from enough.'

At a more profound level, the PDU community contested the ideology the training tried to impart onto recruits. Specifically, recruits were frequently told to be less scrupulous about, if not ignore altogether, the principles of strict rule-following and perfectly ethical mannerism. They also defended against the 'bad habits' degradation from the training authority by emphasising how practical norms (Olivier de Sardan,

2015; Lipsky, 1980) crucially served the ultimate mission of crime fighting within a constraining material working context. In sharp contrast to the formal ideology, PDU community, analogous to the operation police community (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003), advanced a pragmatic ideology that grounds thoughts and actions in the practical work realities.

Furthermore, since the PDU community believed they were superior to the training authority in respect of their front-line job knowledge, and therefore could better mentor the new recruits, tutors were often found to afford 'custodial supervision' (Butterfield et al., 2005), i.e., instruct, lead and evaluate recruits based on their own work style, knowledge and experience, instead of the formally outlined criteria. The stipulated criteria to assess recruits' job performance [7] was construed as 'self-contradictory', and the report was often filled with inflated positive comments to tick all boxes. Rather, they placed more stress on practical norms that they maintained could generate better results and assure security. One common manifestation was omission of caution before arrest, as making that claim could 'leaving more time for suspect to resist' and possibly 'raise more issues'. Reproducing these norms became what was expected from recruits in this context. Therefore, the commitment of PDU community to exposing recruits 'how the real world is like' and 'how colourful it is', as a few tutors stated, was contesting the aim of the formal training in establishing black-and-white standards among the new recruits.

Backstage discourses

Moreover, in the police, working shifts and crew pairs are informal social space where backstage discourses are commonplace. The significance of these backstage discourses, as documented in considerable literature (Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1978, 2010; Waddington, 1999), allows development of not only tacit practical knowledge, but more importantly subgroup culture and in-group solidarity, which is greatly needed due to the isolated and controversial social sphere in which the police is located.

Firstly, unlike the formal training context, PDU apprenticeship allowed ample socialising space, where not only 'legend' but also 'mistakes', and 'flub' (cf. Van Maanen, 1973: 413, 2010) were genuinely shared by tutors with recruits. Also,

[7] The performance of each piece of task was assessed based on five aspects, namely serving the public, decision making, working with others, openness to change and profession.

individual perspectives or even complaints on other shifts, higher administration and 'out-group' members were vicariously shared. These backstage talks apparently deviated from the well-rounded police image celebrated in the formal discourses, or the ideal role characterised by morality and integrity expected by the society (Goffman, 1959; Manning, 2008). But, paradoxically, it was constantly through these informal, imperfect and slightly cynical talks that new recruits were integrated into the community and afforded the sense of belonging.

Furthermore, prototyped categorisation of people based on social groups ---- such as 'people from a wealthy area have to be spoken with more carefully', and people who live in certain areas 'do not mind being arrested'---- were also transmitted to recruits. PDU community reportedly cared less about whether these perspectives went against the fairness principle, but considered them important to increase recruits' social awareness and protect them from avoidable troubles.

Additionally, backstage collaboration and covering for each other's mistakes was another thing the PDU community informed the recruits about. Closely associated with the prevalent cynicism regarding external criticism and formal management were the discourses emphasising mutual support and in-group integrity. One telling example is the following comment from Officer 06, who learnt from his reference group the criticality of backstage support, which they thought was even more vital nowadays to defend fellow officers against 'the hostile public'.

> 'You have to support your colleagues. Because people, in this modern days, with cameras and everything, they make police officers second guess themselves a lot of times… everything I did, I did with the confidence that my colleagues accepted my decisions. They accepted, and helped me if I wasn't very sure. Paper work was done efficiently. And they said 'look, you have written this wrong' or 'state why you have done it. Put the power in. Tell them what you have done'. And you'll feel a lot more confident in your job role, if you know you can act.'

4.3.2 Structure and practice: semi-autonomous structure and semi-discretional practices

The PDU sessions, though including intensive supervision, afforded plenty opportunities for new recruits to perform real jobs, and embraced them into a trustful and empowering local community.

Compared with the infrequent and piloting role-plays in the training domain, PDU exposed individual recruits to a relatively authentic policing context, though still with supervision and protection from tutors, and rendered them responsible and accountable for the actions they took and the impacts they made. While recruits endured tremendous pressure in this context, they were also permitted to enact and 'try out' (Fielding, 1984) the role they wish to play in real work. By means of applying their natural capacities and nurtured skills in tasks of, for instance, calming down confrontational people, producing report, spotting crimes and so on, they were enabled to empirically learn the nuances and wide range of content in the job, and to explore their fitness and mismatches, advantages and challenges relating to the job (Hughes, 1956; Pratt et al., 2006). For this reason, PDU sessions were unanimously deemed an 'eye-opening' and self-discovering learning experience. Although recognising 'things to improve' in the future, recruits significantly boosted their confidence as they proved, through real policing activities, their competence or potential competence for this job.

> 'I attended a domestic which first came in as a non-recordable, so verbal argument. However, when I attended it was apparent that an assault had taken place. Due to my previous experience, I was able to talk to the individual concerned and was able to show empathy towards her. This showed that I was taking her allegation seriously in a professional manner.' (Officer 02)

All these practical episodes crystalized the recruits' understanding of the role, and in turn built up their self-understanding in relation to concrete policing realities (Down and Reveley, 2009; Van Maanen, 2010). After returning from PDU 1, policing episodes became newcomers' common topic of discussion in peer socialisation, and functioned as a medium to express one's preferred work style, elements and types of policing activities, which over time formed and stabilised into the signature of one's work identity (Van Maanen, 2010).

The PDU on-job mentoring offered timely and hands-on instructions to recruits in specific situations, such as what follow-up support and related information to give to a domestic victim under a certain circumstance. In this way, when recruits were allowed to deal with similar incidents independently in following shifts and managed to well accomplish the tasks as tutors demonstrated, they could directly obtain palpable reassurance from tutors and a solid sense of achievement. This apprenticeship learning pattern radically contrasted with the eternal learning project advanced in the training academy with an idealised and somewhat unachievable objective (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). In other words, unlike the training regime upholding rule-following and theoretical learning, the PDU context not only provided room for role-embodying practices, but also recognised individual actors' agency in conducting them.

Apart from recognition of recruits' capability, the autonomy allowed by tutors also reflected the higher level of social inclusion in the PDU context compared with the training context. While at the academy recruits were led by mandates, rules and ranks in a formal structure, the apprenticeship, by contrary, witnessed a mutually trustful and respectful working relationship between recruits and tutors (Van Maanen, 1973:412). The denotation of trust and discretion in operation policing, as Manning (2008) notes from his long-term observation, was endorsement of not only professional abilities, but also commitment and loyalty. Therefore, the trust granted to recruits represented tutors' verification of the recruits' legitimate membership.

Manning (2008) wisely observed that, given the high discretion needed in this occupation, members had to be trusted to tacitly adopt unspoken norms to pattern their own actions in congruence with collective objectives. Therefore, the trust of tutors was more than an endorsement of recruits' competence, but also an endorsement of their attitude and commitment, and a verification of their police membership. This was obviously the inverse of the correction-oriented supervision in role-play exercises. Therefore, many newcomers felt extremely positive at the later stage of PDU, when they were left to conduct tasks on their own, with tutors taking 'a step back', unless guidance was necessary. Even if guidance had to be given, it would still be from 'behind the scenes'.

In sum, in the PDU context recruits were imbedded in practical working realities and intimate apprenticeship. In the operational setting where working experience was prevalently prioritized, tutors and local police community accordingly possessed their authority in defining policing realities and shaping recruits' identity construction. The discourses in this context devalued all-inclusive learning and gold-standard discourses, but emphasised situated learning, local working norms, backstage collaboration and tacit practical knowledge sharing. Moreover, while involved in the real job, recruits readjusted their understanding of the job and self-knowledge (Pratt et al., 2006), and vitally enhanced their self-esteem (Goffman, 1959). Finally, embraced into the supportive and tolerant community (Van Maanen, 1973), albeit still custodial (Butterfield et al., 2005), recruits' job performance was empowered and appreciated, which marked that their identity as a police officer was enacted and socially approved.

4.4 Post-placement training

4.4.1 Discourses and discursive condition: gold-standard discourses and discursive re-domination, idiosyncratic practical discourses and discursive diversification

Gold-standard discourses and discursive re-domination

Throughout the PDU phase, the recruits, to various degrees, picked up local norms and got socialised within the practical community. Their changes in perspectives, habits and attitudes gave rise to a series of re-adjusting and resisting behaviours from the recruits in response to the correcting and regulating practices exercised in the academy. The more acute contestations between formal discourses and deviant ones distinguished the social context at this stage from that which recruits had initially entered.

Having recognised the undesired impacts of PDU community, the training aptly normalised (Covaleski et al., 1998: 296; Foucault, 1977) the recruits that showed deviant thoughts and behaviours, by using gold-standard discourses to re-constitute their understandings of the job and themselves.

On the first day back at the academy, the intake was asked to share their PDU experience one by one, by answering three questions ---- what was done well, what was done not so well, and what was done differently from as instructed at the academy. In response to the first question, recruits tended to recollect, with excitement and

passion, various critical practical experiences as their personal achievement throughout the PDU phase. For instance, many mentioned how they 'dealt with 8 arrests' or '3 sudden deaths', 'calming people down' well in domestic or burglary scenes, 'doing multi-tasks' after a fire accident, 'took a case to court' and so on.

Nevertheless, the trainer, though acknowledging recruits' competence demonstrated in these episodes, re-formulated these accounts within gold-standard discourses, refocusing on organisational prescriptions and downplaying individuals' unique agency. For instance, she reframed recruits' stories using vocabulary associated with the formally constructed well-rounded police image, which includes, for instance, 'show presence of the police', 'professional management of scenes' and 'relate to victim's emotions', and 'independent decision making'. While the articulations originated from recruits were infilled with sense of ego (Goffman, 1959) and self-esteem, and carried emotional charges, thus underlining individual distinctive agency, the trainer's reproduced version reframed micro-level value and contribution into macro-level objectives and prescriptions (Covaleski et al., 1998), and therefore abstracted active agency and 'nested' agentic individuals into the formal hierarchical structure.

While the debriefing was conducted by the trainer in an apparently reassuring style, fundamentally it was a power-laden practice of identity regulating, which Alvesson and co-authors called the 'invisible identity cage' (2008: 17). Through this process, gold-standard discourses were echoed and re-accentuated, and therefore penetrated again into recruits' self-understanding (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Townley, 1993:537).

Likewise, in the role-play sessions at this stage, some student officers were seen apply 'tricks' picked up during PDU placement, which are either 'grey' or unlawful under the gold-standard regime. One example is putting a foot at the door when requesting a house search to stop people from shutting the police out. Trainers tended to caringly point out to the recruits that they 'might have not realized the bad effects associated with these practices', and 'there could be many better options to choose from'. The relating-to tone rendered corrective feedbacks more likely to be appreciated by recruits (cf. Alvesson et al., 2008a: 16; Ibarra, 1999: 781). Nevertheless, despite the amiable and persuasive manner, trainers' practices of correction during role-plays

were actually attempting to arbitrarily demolish not only these suboptimal policing practices, but also the fundamental value in the practical regime, which ignored rationales of legitimacy but upheld instrumentalism (Fielding, 1984: 584). By doing so, the training authority intended to dwindle the further-reaching undesirable impacts of PDU placement on recruits' identity formation.

Moreover, regarding differences between training and placement areas, raised points were mainly concerning 'less formal' procedures, such as omission of cautions during taking arrest and flexibility of the time taken to producing paperwork. Most recruits reported a relatively 'laid back' ambience in the PDU community. The trainer reiterated to recruits that being 'knowledgeable' and 'well-practiced' were virtues valued in both the police system and society, and would accordingly would secure legitimacy in their future job. Also, she reasoned to recruits that they were new to the field with limited background knowledge about the local area, and had to be individually accountable for their own actions. It would therefore be safer for the recruits themselves to conduct their jobs as appropriately as possible. Via this seemingly empathetic persuasion, the training authority attempted to 're-key' (Goffman, 1974) recruits' status of not being fully-fledged or ready enough to approach to job autonomously, by means of which it intended to re-establish its discursive domination among recruits.

Idiosyncratic practical discourses and discursive diversification

After a few weeks' training, recruits went onto their second PDU placement, where they performed more tasks than in the first placement, still under protective supervision. Since this time recruits were placed with different individual tutors, shift groups and stations from those at the first placement, they were very likely to come across discrepant subculture and norms (Fielding, 1984; Waddington, 1999). By and large, after this second apprenticeship, it became more visible to them that in the operational world, policing approaches, performing manners, working tempos, interpersonal relations and so on, which Van Maanen and Katz (1979) conceptualised as spatial and temporal local norms, could all vary crucially between groups, and sometimes even between individuals.

The divergence could be so much so that carrying out jobs in a way of which the first tutor approved might not be appreciated by the second tutor, or being proactive in

attending incident sites that was encouraged in one PDU station could be seen as rash action in another. Apart from norms in conducting jobs, supervision patterns ---- such as deciding with whom and to which policing assignments recruits should go, whether and how to introduce the recruit before the two of them interact with the public members, and how much autonomy the recruit had in producing paperwork ---- had to be re-cognised and adapted by recruits when working with their second tutor. This was clearly illustrated in the following quote from officer 12, who experienced different fashions of policing between tutors even from the same shift group,

> 'Different tutors will give you tips on their styles of policing, which obviously can be a little bit conflicting. So you can get advice from one tutor… will advise you how they would have it done in their styles. And then you work with a new tutor and they tell you how they would do it…' (Officer 12)

In addition, all tutors and experienced officers faithfully maintained a certain set of macro or micro discourses and attempted to kindly impart them to recruits as 'truth'. However, the differences among them, as witnessed by recruits, vividly revealed that there was multiplicity, flexibility and contingency, instead of uniformity, even among different PDU groups. This common reflection led to transitions in recruits' understanding of their identity status and agentic capabilities, and gave rise to changes in their interactions with the authorities in their local social context, which are discussed below.

4.4.2 Structure and practice: relatively controlling structure, constrained yet reflective practices

In contrast to the first PDU placement, where recruits were empowered to act independently and were included socially, their situation in the formal training context and the second placement was rather an iteration imposed by the authority. In the formal context, recruits were once again governed by the gold-standard discourses, which meant they remained stuck in a novice position and treated as inadequate newbies, under tight monitoring and regulation and permitted little space to enact individual agency. Besides, during the second PDU placement, as mentioned earlier, recruits were not granted more discretion but remained an apprentice performing new types of tasks with a new tutor.

Until this stage most recruits had enhanced their self-perception and believed in a more advanced identity status than previously. However, this construed version of self at this stage was in drastic conflict with the actual position of recruits and the way they were managed in the academy and PDU sector. This conflict escalated into various types and degrees of resistance towards the perceived 'infantilising' and 'patronising' treatment at training and the second PDU sessions. Among the cohort, resistance was not only exhibited in some recruits' disregarding or rejecting of certain discourse inculcation and identity regulation practices, but was more commonly reflected in recruits' critical, reflective and selective engagement with the dominating influences as part of their own identity work.

Also, the emergence of this tension was interdependent with recruits' growing independent discernibility in evaluating different discourses, practice patterns and work identities (Fielding, 1984: 584; Van Maanen, 1973: 414-416), as a natural progression from long-term theoretical and empirical learning. On the one hand, the current structure offered recruits less latitude of autonomy, legitimacy and agency than they expected and desired. On the other hand, however, their heightened awareness of pursued identity and its corresponding discursive foundations and specific practice patterns turned them into a less passive actor under the pressure of regulating prescriptions, and enabled them to actively select or synthesise differed sources of identity to formulate aspired self-narratives (Watson, 2009; Ybema at el., 2009). For that reason, while from the perspective of social context this was an iterative and constraining stage, from the perspective of identity constructors it was a crucial phase in which the identity project became significantly crystallised. Consequently, inter-individual divergence in identity pursuits and constructing endeavours also became more salient.

For instance, some recruits identified with a particular tutor as they valued the '*high standard*' [corresponding to 'gold-standard discourse from the first context] represented by the tutor and it 'wasn't far from' their own desirable working identity (officer 15); some dis-identified with a tutor because '(she) wasn't *proactive* (as much as the tutor in PDU 1)' (officer 04), which went against their favoured way of identity work---- '*learning by doing*' [corresponding to 'experience-prioritised' discourses from the second context]; others started to craft their own individual style, in that there

was no available individual model perfectly matching with their pursued identity, as the narrative below demonstrates.

> 'I felt in PDU, sometimes you have to go against what you think you would do in your style… because you need to make them think you have done well…... just mirror the image of style of policing to your tutor… when you get there on your own... by that point you've enough knowledge to know that everything I am going do is lawful [echoing gold-standard discourses from the first context]. I am not going to make things redundant, so that I will have time to focus on how much I am going to approach things. Obviously now I have got certain things for arrest and stop and search, how you approach people and how you speak to people [personally cherished discourses]. Before, I did it as my tutor did it. Now I can handle that in my style so.' (Officer 12) (Emphases added by me)

In sum, multiple discourses from different social spheres or significant actors were interwoven into recruits' socialising context at this stage. Via strategies of ideological persuasion and corrective governing, formal discourses were strengthened by the training authority to combat the influences of anti-academy discourses and working norms on recruits. Besides, various macro or micro discourses at the second placement sector were also strongly impressed upon recruits. These controlling efforts, however, stimulated different forms of resistance from recruits, and simultaneously triggered them to critically compare and reflect on the available multiple discursive sources of identity. At the same time, the second PDU experience presented alternative perspective and practices, and therefore enriched recruits' identity and behavioural reference repository (Ibarra, 1999), allowing them to actively align with, partially adopt or distance themselves from certain identity prescriptions and practical norms in mind. This series of reflections crucially prepared recruits for striving for and living out the pursued identity in the next stage.

4.5 Probationary shift in real policing world

4.5.1 Practice: highly demanding practices

In this final stage, practices became the principal part of the social context and key dimension of identity work, not only because role practices became routinely enacted, but also because practices became so highly demanding and thus called for vital response and adaptation from recruits. In the following texts, three main demands on practices in this context will be elaborated.

Vast job content

After the 30-week entrant training, recruits were upgraded to probationers and initiated their career as a bona fide police officer. New recruits departed from the training environment, which used to discipline, train and test them in a protected and enclosed setting, and now entered into the real-world policing context in which they had to face the unprotected, uncontrolled and often unexpected realities almost independently. Given this transition, the recruits were, first of all, propelled to undertake a significant process of re-learning and re-adjustment, which was described as patchwork of socialization in previous literature (Fielding, 1984; Hopper, 1977; Van Maanen, 1973).

A police officer has to be able to understand and empathise with a wide variety of members of the public under various circumstances to solve problems skilfully and effectively (Fielding, 1984; Muir, 1977; Van Maanen, 1978). This became rather difficult for the recruits who had little experience of interacting with people from walks of all life and received barely any training on this. For instance, they might very often come across domestic dispute, and sometimes even domestic violence, while they had no experience of marriage or being a parent themselves. However shocked or uneasy they might feel inside, they had to display an empathetic but composed presence in front of the family of a dead victim, and summon courage to hand-cuff offenders who were shouting, screaming or carrying weapons.

A police officer also has to insightfully consider many factors before making a decision on disposal of offenders. For instance, they might run into dilemmatic situations like dealing with aggressors with mental illness or suspects who were single parents to young children. They had to think about and try to address the wider issues

that may be associated with the incident that had happened, such as historical racial discrimination underlying hate crime incidents, and potential risk to domestic victims who reported abuses.

Now involved in the complex policing routines without experienced mentors as before, recruits had to pick up versatile skills from working experiences, and, over time, evolved into a 'jack of all trades'. Even those with a prior policing background admitted going through a steep learning curve initially on the regular shift. Officer 11, a veteran recruit who used to work in a 999 control-room department, recalled her shock at the beginning of shift, which suggests the stark contrast between the distant view of policing realities from a 'behind-the-scenes' department and the 'live' problems front-line patrol officers are responding to.

> 'Joining the shift and being on area, which is obviously terrifying, because you do feel like you don't know anything… do feel uncomfortable and unconfident in your own ability… Obviously, I was lucky having been working to the police before. And I think it is a good experience to know what to expect when being there about. But each job is different. And everything is always going to be different. And it is about learning about skills with people, and anything like learning by dealing with the job in front of you, doing the best of your ability, and protecting yourself.' (Officer 11)

Ambiguous and perplexing situations

In addition to the infinite variation of situational contexts, another big transition that recruits had to accommodate to was the ambiguity and perplexity in day-to-day policing routines. The real response jobs were never planned out or established as in the role-play scenarios during initial training, nor were they deliberately picked for recruits' learning purpose, i.e., relatively straightforward as they had been in PDU placements. During their initial shifts, it could be tricky for recruits to find out what had really happened at the scene, as the information from 999 calls would commonly be exaggerating or contradicting what was really happening, and people at the scene could merely responded to police's questions with 'I don't know'. This ambiguity could affect, for instance, what exact caution should be given to the suspect during arrest, which is why in general most officers omit the caution step in order to avoid making mistakes in procedures.

> ‘(You should) not arrest them for the wrong offense. That will lose your investigation because you couldn’t change it. We know it’s bad form. But… that’s where it is grey... I don’t know… you turn out to a burglary, and no one else tells you to do a statement, like we do (at the academy), (where) if you forgot to do that, then you are screwed. Possibly like you are arresting them for like, burglary a non-dwelling, when it was a dwelling. You are going to lose your case. (Officer 05)’

Moreover, people involved in real incidents were seldom purely guilty or innocent. For instance, the member of the public who reported being harassed turned out to be the one fuelling off the other in the first place. Real life issues were found to barely ‘squarely match the laws’ (officer 08), which made it impossible to directly apply a pre-established decision-making model and action procedure. Neither did real life issues provide a clear-cut fit with the black-and-white moral frame. In situations like dealing with rebellious teenagers, people with mental health problems, domestic victims unwilling to have police involved and so on, societal conventions or formally prescribed principles would have it that the police are obligated to take actions to sanction offences and enforce laws. In reality those principles were not always categorically applied due to the negative effects of police intervention on the people involved, such as a bad impact on a teenager’s image and his/her future career and life. As one recruit reflected, ‘our turning up could make it even worse’ (officer 04).

Furthermore, there would always be compounding matters in operation that placed officers in an executive predicament. For instance, without visible injury on victims, it could be hard to justify issuing penalties against suspects of assaults. Also, the police might have to give up pursuing a case further simply because they lacked video evidence when members of the public refused to allow access to their private CCTV.

Given these diverse and sometimes unclear circumstances, moral ambivalence, and executive difficulties, as well as manifold social issues involved both before and after police intervention, formal principles became oversimplified as a cognitive stance and too unrealistic and abstract for operationalisation (Bittner, 1965; Fielding, 1984, 1988; Van Maanen, 1973, 2010). As a result, short-cuts were adopted in practice toward the ultimate end of fighting crimes.

Limited resources

Furthermore, formal principles in practice were also heavily subject to the resource scarcity at operational sector. Many local policing areas suffer to various degree from limited time and information (Lipsky, 1980) and a shortage of other resources, such as personnel, custody space, and specialized expertise (e.g. mental health treatment). Especially in urban areas, time pressures could significantly restrict the processing of less severe crimes or incidents, rendering it impossible to follow perfect procedures or to always pursue a tangible, positive outcome. For this reason, a considerable amount of daily policing activities might fail to reflect or embody the core values of the police that were so strongly emphasised during the formal training. The following excerpt demonstrates how time constraints restrained the extent of patrol officers' intervention in each incident, thereby disabling consistently practicing of 'serving the public' and 'fairness'.

> 'I had got calls from both parties, trying to get me into taking action against each other. And I told them in terms of the police involvement, it stopped, and they had to sort out themselves … Because be fair, I do this job because I want to help. So equally I do want to help them both. But I'm not a counsellor … and there is a time constraint… I'm not going to lie. (My LPA) is busy. You don't really get too much time to deal with things in a slow-time manner. You have to deal with jobs there and then …' (Officer 12)

Another commonplace circumstance in patrolling routines ---- being short of information or intelligence about members of the public ---- often causes officers to develop professional scepticism and use coercive force when encountering suspicious individuals (Dick, 2005; Fielding, 1984: 585; Waddington, 1999), which is ostensible in the conduct of stop and search activities as well as vehicle checking during street patrols. It was widely held in the operational policing sector that being overly concerned about 'fairness' and 'respect' may hinder or even conflict policing activities, and consequently fail the essential objective of patrolling (Dick, 2005). Hence, the acts of rushing into search and detainment without too much consideration and the use of force could always be instantly justified by the necessity of policing functions and, more importantly, reframed (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 421) as discharging the glorious duty of the police ---- crime fighting (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999: 299). Formal rules would be muted in one's mind when a decision is being made ---- 'the

thick rulebooks they carry remain in the trunks of their prowl cars' (Van Maanen, 2010: 125). The quotations below show that taking short-cuts in procedure were not just driven by technical reason in individual instances (as reflected by the narratives of officer 04), but systematically endorsed by the practical policing rationales (as indicated by officer 08).

> 'When something happened in front of you ... if you act and get it wrong, sometimes it can be better than doing nothing at all. Because if you do nothing at all … in a matter of seconds, people could be gone. You are left with … everyone ran away from the situation. You've got no one to talk to. And you haven't detained anyone and you haven't searched anyone, or anything like that. You have obviously got nothing to go by.' (Officer 04)

> 'Because you're pushed tight, you know, you are low on resources, so you don't always do the things completely the way they're meant to be done. And I think that's *a good thing*, because it really sees where *we push things*.' (Officer 08) (Emphases added by me)

Operationally, therefore, it was because of the limitation of many key resources in the everyday policing environment that pragmatic working rules were, to various degrees, institutionalised in the local practical domain (Fielding, 1984; Olivier de Sardan, 2015). Also, due to limited resources, the ready-made and repeatedly espoused formal role prescriptions could not be continuously verified from policing realities (Down and Reveley, 2009; Van Maanen, 2010). Instead, since they requested a method of role performance often impossible to realise in real-life conditions, preoccupation with them could impugn officers' decisions and, more importantly, undermine the sense of achievement and ego one could derive from role performance (Goffman, 1959). Given this, the formal set of discourses was often ignored or estranged in daily policing activities, and treated as instrumental materials that were used only in formal account of behaviours to organizational authorities, or 'front-stage' justification for the 'lay' audience (Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1980, 2010). The comment below well reflects how recruits gradually distanced themselves from formal prescriptions.

> 'I think in (the academy) it's golden standard. You have to do perfectly when you deal with any single incident. Whereas in real life, if custody is full and you only got two officers, you might not arrest certain people… They (the

academy) don't prepare us for what the reality is... Just every single day you do things that (the academy) would tell you not to do.' (Officer 14)

The above three aspects vitally, albeit not exhaustively, delineated the expanded range, intensified tempo and heightened difficulty of practice entailed in this social context. Up until this stage, practices had replaced class-room based learning, becoming the main component of recruits' work life. To understand how this practice-dominated life experience conditioned their identity construction, apart from the nature and demands of this practice, practices were and demanded, we should also evaluate how practice was organised within the structure of the present social context, which is elaborated next.

4.5.2 Structure: highly autonomous structure

Given the foregoing ambiguity, contingency and limitation that conditioned policing practices, it was 'impossible to replicate' (officer 19) the paradigmatic performance established in the police academy on any occasion, or directly employ the procedures demonstrated by PDU tutors in that very context. As shared amongst operational police officers, very rarely was the resolution to problems at the frontline readily and squarely informed by written rules, others' or one's own experience (cf. Gordon et al., 2009). Rather, a mix of improvisational and referential agency was normally called for in problem solving (Fielding, 1984; Goffman, 1959). Also, as Waddington (1999) contends drawing on a substantial array of policing studies, operational conduct is generally guided more by 'context-specific strategies' (293), rather than by a pre-established model, or a 'culture' that was assumed by the public to prevail in the broad category of police. The recruits, therefore, were compelled to keep any earlier obtained overarching discourses open for interpretation and adaptation in specific situations.

Consequently, when adapting to a situation-contingent working pattern immediately after the procedure-following discursive context, some recruits could be stricken with a feeling of insecurity as they regarded improvisational decisions as 'expedient' solutions. They found it hard to accept, especially at the beginning of a shift, that a lot of solutions were produced somewhat spontaneously, rather than based on pre-tested, systematic references, and therefore did not guarantee any positive outcome.

> ‘A lot of the policing is about common sense. You are always left with a decision to make, where I’m supposed to try to do the right things. And there is no one to ask, and there is no law that necessarily fits up to the situation. So, it’s just, beating on your feet, and just going for it. And it might work out, it might not.’ (Officer 08)

Furthermore, as indicated by the above excerpt, common sense, i.e. experience and knowledge derived from normal social life, was an imperative aspect of operational policing, in that it could backup recruits when they encountered situations that did not find match in their archive of professional experiences (Fielding, 1984). More profoundly, the wide recognition and appreciation of ‘common sense’ in the operation policing sector gave reassurance to officers because, palliative as they might be, the decisions made out of common sense were still based on individuals’ shrewd and valuable personal knowledge in the background (Van Maanen, 2010). Therefore, recruits’ private, unique and autobiographic life experiences, values and knowledge became incorporated into the daily policing practices, as an integral part of the core competence. In this way, agency was accentuated and enacted to a much greater extent than in the earlier stages.

For this reason, behavioural mandates espoused in formal training and models imparted from mentors on shifts were broadly diluted over time as individual improvisation and discretion was frequently activated. While before, certainty and legitimacy of acts was generally generated from conformity to formal guidelines or experienced exports’ instructions, in operational policing, recruits obtained assurance mostly from their own progressive iteration between learning from experience and enacting accumulated common sense to address the issues they faced.

> The researcher: ‘Do you do your job modelling after senior officers?’
>
> Officer 11: ‘Generally no. Because I am driving (i.e., single-crewed) now, so I am a lot on my own, so you have to use your own judgement a lot more. And obviously before that I was always with someone. I used to use my own judgement and talked to him when he was there. Just to make sure that you are doing the right things. But now I think I have got my own judgement as to how to deal with things. You just do what you can deal with the things in front of you the best you can.’

Besides, the substantial job discretion to which police officers were entitled was manifested at two levels. Firstly, most routines were conducted and decision were made in the 'field' and outside of stations, thus distant from 'in-house' managers, who accordingly tended to 'minimise interference' in management (Fielding, 1984: 575; Van Maanen, 2010: 125). This substantial autonomy under the disguise of bureaucratic management is labelled by Van Maanen (2010: 125) as 'a façade of organizational control'. This explains what was observed in the practical sector that police constables were normally left to work in their own manner, and being asked to speak with a sergeant normally signalled that one had done something seriously wrong (Van Maanen, 1973).

The researcher: 'Does your sergeant debrief your jobs?'

Officer 05: 'No. He'll tell you if you have done something very wrong... I just keep going. I don't really speak to my sergeant, if I can avoid it... But if it is investigation, or anything moody, or something I don't know what to do, I will speak with him. If it is not going anywhere, it is rubbish, and you need to file it, you can speak with them. But once your job is finished as well, you can ask for reviewing as well. But it's up to you. It is entirely self-managed. But they have overall a managerial role.'

Secondly, the high demand of agency in this job, such as using power subtly in engaging with the public, deriving context-specific stratagems and enacting creative impromptus (Muir, 1977), inevitably granted officers a sense of authority, ownership, dignity and identity in their work, for which Manning (2008: 689) notes the self-definition as 'entrepreneurs' among police officers in a drug policing department. For this reason, individual-directed job performance constituted the autonomy that was respected by peers and supervisors within the police community (Fielding, 1984; Manning, 2008; Van Maanen, 2010). In the operation policing sector, overlooking or allowing officers' agency-laden but slightly rule-breaching practices was often taken as recognition of constables' competence and work ethics, and therefore employed by sergeants as an 'incentive' (Anteby, 2008) for constables that won their commitment (Van Maanen, 2010: 126-132).

'My sergeant is very good. She is not my crew manager. But she stands back and she gets on with things... When I have a problem, I will go and talk to

her about it… Otherwise she trusts officers to deal with things themselves. She will very rarely come and ask what you are doing.' (Officer 08)

In short, the loose supervision in practical policing domain vitally removed up-down institutionalising forces, and the forgiving, even encouraging, attitude towards personalised conducts alleviated new starters' anxiety of slightly breaching written rules or norms.

4.5.3 Discourses and discursive condition: micro and fragmented work-based discourses

As discussed above, the high level of discretion and large proportion of improvisation in organisation of the work enabled individual officers to develop their individualised working knowledge and 'characteristic' policing style (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 1973, 2010; Waddington, 1999), which constituted the primary foundation of the discourses they maintained. In this study, policing styles and corresponding discourses were found to be greatly diverse across and even within geographical and departmental boundaries, for example regarding level of commitment, self-definitions, propensity for using power, and openness to outgroup, as were widely documented in police studies (cf. Dick, 2005: 1372; Fielding, 1984: 574; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993; Van Maanen, 2010: 16-22; Waddington, 1999: 290). For this reason, at the beginning of socialising in their posted squads, recruits were exposed to as wide a range of policing philosophies as they were sufficiently sensitive to identify (Fielding, 1984).

Additionally, recruits were most likely keen to obtain social acceptance and pass the social inclusion boundary (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Simultaneously, norms had it that they should adhere to experienced partners' working styles to present consistent 'team' performance on the front stage (Goffman, 1959). Recruits, therefore, felt obligated to develop malleability and amiability in terms of how to approach and perform work. Especially in crewwork, they became noticeably more able to (more or less) overlook interpersonal differences, and act like a task-oriented and mature work partner.

The researcher: 'Have you changed since joining the shift?'

> Officer 04: 'Socially. Because you know, every shift you got to pull up with someone different, someone new. And you have to … It's about being out of your comfort zone sometimes … you always have people you get on with better than with other people… I think I have sort of grown up a little bit and been able to work with different people in different situations.'

Recruits' openminded approach to various work patterns and discourses was not merely a façade but was lodged in their deeper values and self-conceptions. As noted in a host of police studies (cf. Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 2010; Waddington, 1999; also see Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), story-telling was a crucial method police officers used to establish distinguishable and/or reputable individual work identity among peers. In the study, personal stories and perspectives were often told by senior officers not only to express 'self', but also to pass 'wise' advice from their abundant working experience onto junior officers. As recruits experienced the good and bad about their work over time, they became more able to understand the sources of those micro discourses, and approached them with a milder, more respectful or identifying attitude. Many recruits even reported actively learning from various senior colleagues, which is not dissimilar to junior consultants' creation of their own presenting style by combining different mentors' models in Ibarra's (1999: 784) classic study.

Through such a learning process, recruits incorporated diverse discourses into their own self-definitions. Meanwhile, the previous salient and mutually conflicting discourses became fragmented and liquidated (Bauman, 2000) in recruits' perception, as conveyed in the following comment.

> 'You have slight different reaction to each job, just because you have a different crew mate. You just adjust to that person's style and get prepared yourself, so that you are fine to work with each other. Generally, it is quite positive things. There are so many styles. It means you have got people who are good at all different things. You need to prepare to be a perfect police officer, which no one is. So you got to combine all different people.' (Officer 14)

In sum, working under a vast variety of circumstances and constantly affected by contingency and limitations, recruits were preoccupied with the practice elements when moving into the context of probationary shift. The substantial improvisational

and discretional dimensions in operational policing prioritised individual agency over written rules, and to a considerable degree freed recruits from various discursive controls. Through experience of socialising, in combination with individual and collaborative work, recruits were brought face to face with heterogeneous discourses, of which they became more appreciative over time. As they merged the micro discourses to formulate self-narratives, the boundary, competition and comparison between discourses became no longer significant.

4.6 Evaluation of the four social contexts and the process

Having analysed these social contexts in order, it is time to integrate them to offer some organised and reflective observations to address the research questions. As indicated from the findings, the three key elements of social contexts, namely discourses, structure and practice, were interconnected and jointly constituted the context with which individuals interacted. Based on their interrelations, these aspects were interwoven into two underlying dimensions of contextual characteristics, which are more pertinent to the processes of identity work, and help make sense of inter-individual variation and intra-individual transitions.

To wit, these two distilled contextual dimensions are 1) **the degree of unity/fragmentation of prescriptions of identity** and 2) **the tension between structure**[8] (i.e. rule determinism) **and agency**[9] (i.e. agency advancement). Seen through the lens of these two dimensions, the flow of the four contexts could be understood as two overall trends. One is increasing agency advancement and decreasing rule determination over time with iterations. The other is ever increasing fragmentation of identity prescriptions. This process is visualised in Figure 4.1.

[8] The concept of 'structure' in this model refers to the institutionalized rules, principles and values that imposed prescriptions on identity (Watson, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009). Hence, it differs from the 'structure' discussed earlier as one of the three key elements in social contexts.

[9] The concept of 'agency' in this model refers to the individual creative and discretional acts that advanced individual version of identity (Snow and Anderson, 1987).

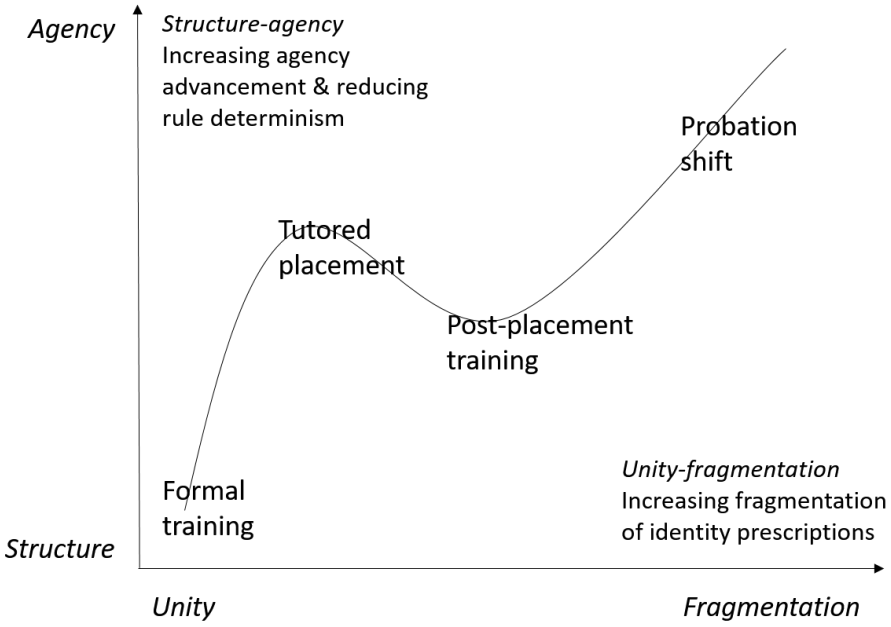


Figure 4.1 Two-dimensional evaluation of social contexts

First, the four social contexts were all dominated by certain sets of discourses, which were privileged over deviant or alternative discourses (Foucault, 1980) via uses of hierarchy, social relationships or discursive practices. The combination of discourses and the practices and events enforcing the discourses determined how unitary or fragmented identity prescriptions were. Chronologically, the condition of identity prescriptions changed from the strong domination of a single set of formal discourses, to polarising discourses from two competing institutions, and finally to intersection of multiple micro discourses with loose enforcement and large exploitive space for individual actors (Sewell, 1992; Thomas and Davies, 2005).

In the formal training context, the training authority, leveraging upon and accentuating recruits' lack of professional credibility, arbitrarily defined the only correct standard of police. To enforce its core avowals ---- all-inclusive learning and gold-standard policing ---- the training authority imposed tight control and turned recruits into self-governing subjectivities. By doing so, the dominant discourses effectively, albeit not totally, shaped recruits' identity construction.

In the context of the first PDU placement, since the significance of practical experience and community interdependence was self-evident in daily activities, recruits tend to readily comply with the local discourses that emphasised experience, empirical learning and backstage collaboration. The imprint of these discourses was

further reinforced by PDU tutors to recruits through one-on-one 'custodial' mentorship. The competition and contestation between the training and PDU sector in this context made recruits realise the partiality of both scenarios and stimulated their deliberation between them, which laid the foundation for their choice of identity later.

At post-placement training, to erase the impacts of the practical field on recruits and restore its own discursive domination, the formal authority re-constructed the 'truths' of police and belied alternative articulations once again. Whereas, because of the exposure to practical working norms and absorption of practical discourses at the earlier stage, recruits were able to critically evaluate and even counter the arbitrarily defined prescriptions. Similarly, the prescriptions and values tutors espoused in the second PDU placement were also treated by recruits with much more critical reflection than in the first placement. Therefore, although both formal and practical discourses were substantially advanced, neither of them remained as monolithic or impactful as in the initial training phase.

When released to the real policing world, recruits were surrounded by articulations and behaviours underscored by more diverse discourses. Within such a highly contingent and discretional working context, none of the discourses was enforced by controlling or monitoring mechanisms. As a result, recruits were further liberated to choose their position among the multiplicity of discourses and direct their own identity work. That is to say, the systematic discourses had become fragments by that point.

Second, the process also witnessed the waxing and waning of structure in competition with agency in shaping identity work. In the four social contexts, discursive prescriptions, power relations, involvement of practical elements and discretion allowed in practices jointly conditioned how 'deterministic' the authority and/or dominant rules were in shaping individuals' behaviours (Snow and Anderson, 1987). Among the four contexts, the level of structure was higher in the training sector than the practical sector. But the structure was unavoidably declining along the timeline, given that individual agency evolved continuously, albeit iterated at the third stage.

In the first context, the authority intended to encapsulate a terrain where it could determine the only 'truths' of the policing world (Goffman, 1959; Pratt et al., 2006)

and therefore exercise behavioural and ideological standardisation on the new entrants. The standardising process was strict and arbitrary, for it aimed to establish organisational control upon individuals transcending specific temporal and social context (Fournier, 1999; Townley, 1993). The formal stipulation was so predominant that individual discretion was severely constrained and almost invisible. The only emergence of agency was veteran recruits' disclosure of practical norms as alternative to formal rules, which, however, was immediately disqualified by the authority.

In the second context, the practical sector prioritised practical norms over formal rules to the extent that this was called for in real policing activities (Waddington, 1999). Recruits, therefore, were taught and encouraged to enact agentic practices in PDU tasks, and to socialise with the informal ethos of instrumentality and backstage collaboration. Although recruits were permitted ample room to play out and develop their practical competence, the latitude of discretion in practices remained restricted, given that the tasks were still conducted under tight regulation and close supervision by PDU tutors.

Moreover, when new recruits returned to the academy, the training authority reinforced its control over them. For this purpose, formal rules were again advanced to be more benevolent than uncharted local norms in guiding recruits' practical learning and identity development. Notwithstanding these efforts, the avowals were not received with as much compliance from recruits as in the initial stage. Additionally, at the second PDU placements, the ostensible discrepancies between different stations and/or individuals also weakened the 'structure' established in the PDU sector. Hence, while this social context allowed recruits little room to actively and freely mobilise practices, their capability of enacting agency evolved significantly, in the sense that they became less passively adherent to certain set of rules but more able to reflectively and selectively project aspired work identity.

Eventually, the highly discretional and improvisational working nature and 'out-of-gaze' decision-making pattern largely reduced the enforcement of formal rules, and rendered tacit work consent (Manning, 2008) hard to impose. Besides, the larger variety of existing discourses in the practical context further diluted the determination of any set of discourses, yet created space for creative editing or integrating among them. Since agentic practices were now routinely enacted, individuals could improve

their competence and craft a personal work identity through experiences over time, which further enhanced their capacity of agency in negotiation with structure.

In short, throughout the four contexts, the capacity of agency almost continuously increased, as management allowed more autonomy, routines involved more practices, and discourses became diverse and more and more served as deployable identity work resources. Closely linked with this transformation were the increasingly fragmented identity discourses, driven by similar elements, namely reducing imposition of discourses, increasing enactment of discretional and improvisational practices, and co-existence of more miscellaneous discourses.

4.7 Conclusion

So far, I have addressed the research questions on two levels. First, power structures, discourses and discursive condition, and practice enactment emerged as the key contextual elements that sustained and conditioned recruits' identity work. A significant observation from this was that individuals' prioritising of one element over the other two could potentially reflect their variation in identity construction. Second, the iterations, transitions and conflicts in social contexts over time, which were assumed to entail one's ingenious efforts to construct identity, were captured by two dimensions of contextual conditions. As the social contexts unfolded, the structure-agency tension and the fragmentation of identity prescriptions were critical variables that affected the continuity of individuals' identity project. The next chapter will present an in-depth analysis of how individuals actively interacted with these contextual elements and engaged with the two dimensions of dynamics in the social contexts.

Chapter 5 The orientations of identity construction

5.1 Introduction

After examining the four distinctive contexts the recruits experienced, particularly the specific aspects that played a crucial role in recruits' identity construction, this study will continue to explore how individuals interpreted, interacted with and were influenced by those key aspects throughout the four contexts, and built them into their identity. The aim of this chapter is to recognise, categorise and compare recruits' subjective inputs into the identity work.

In attempting to answer the two research questions, the interview data were analysed with two particular inquiries in mind: first, how did the ways in which recruits engaged with a social context make them different from one another; second, how did the ways in which recruits engaged with a social context link together their experience in previous and/or later contexts. Three significant patterns of engaging with a social context were drawn out through this in-depth examination, which captured the divergence among individuals in constructing identity, and simultaneously explained the continuity within individuals' identity work over time. This study uses the term 'orientation' to denote the particular pattern of social engagement that served for identity construction. And based on the recruits' essential motives, I label the three orientations legitimacy seeking, authenticity seeking and practitioner.

This chapter will first elaborate on how each orientation directed identity work through the four contexts, with ample narrative data. I will then explore each orientation from four aspects ---- trigger, agency, confirming mechanism and driver ---- based on which I will draw comparison between the three orientations to engage with the research questions more profoundly.

5.2 Legitimacy seeking orientation

One significant pattern of identity work was principally driven by the pursuit of institutional legitimacy and social approval. Preoccupied with the intention of 'fitting into' the new occupational group and gaining professional credibility, this pattern of identity work was constituted by endeavours of recognising, internalising and reproducing the norms that reigned the esoteric field of policing (Katz and Van

Maanen, 1978; Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934), and confirming and validating one's legitimacy through the attitudes of significant others (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006; Mead, 1934).

As examined in the previous chapter, on the one hand, discourses and corresponding norms in the four social contexts were inconsistent and competing with each other; on the other hand, social relations, power structure and discursive practices changed from context to context. Therefore, what was assumed as 'legitimacy' kept changing across contexts, and what 'legitimacy' one earned in one particular context was temporary and fragile (Beech, 2010; Collinson, 2003; Knights and Willmott, 1989; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Through such a discursively turbulent and contradictory process, the eternal seeking of legitimacy paradoxically placed individuals in an ongoing struggle between discrepant prescriptions of legitimacy, and therefore always immersed in the feeling of lack of legitimacy. In other words, every transition of social context provoked individuals to relocate themselves, re-assess their status of legitimacy and readjust themselves accordingly (Beech, 2010).

5.2.1 Engaging with the formal training: subjectivity

Upon arrival in a new demarcated realm, recruits adopting this orientation (hereafter referred as 'legitimacy seekers') self-directed to find out the dominant rules, with the intention of using them as behavioural guidance to secure appropriateness and normalcy (Ibarra, 1999; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Moreover, individuals who had high career aspiration would regard conformity more than survival requisite, but as a subjective strategy to earn the authoritative group's recognition and appreciation, and then the chance of promotion in the organization (Collinson, 2003; Covaleski et al., 1998).

Both of these motives were found among the recruits in this study. The concurrent ambivalent societal discourses about police and ubiquitous public scrutiny over police conduct intensified legitimacy seekers' yearning for legitimate job performance that would be unquestionable by external audiences. For this purpose, the formal rules and codes of ethics outlined in the training, which provided indisputable legal justification, were conceived as a behavioural yardstick. Moreover, legitimacy seekers also pursued a work identity that was approved and appreciated by their co-workers and managers. Since policing routines constantly involved precarious decision making and morally

controversial job conduct (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999), legitimacy seekers regarded the principles endorsed by the organisation authority as an organisational certificate (Bittner, 1967; Fielding, 1984). They believed that by embodying the core values they could establish a reputable work identity in their community (Van Maanen, 2010).

> '(When being watched by the public) I think being confident, knowing your stuff, knowing what you are doing (is important) … that's why I studied quite hard (in the police academy) ... because then you don't need to question your decisions.' (Officer 05)

> 'I know we are perceived by the public quite badly sometimes. But I am keen and a quite fair person. I'm impartial. I don't really like to judge people. I definitely will go start my career like that. And I definitely like to finish like that. But to give officer's credit or maybe empathy, I can understand why some officers lose their impartiality, having dealt with certain people or certain types of people for years and years and years. I'm not saying that's right, 'cause you should always go into every job, not having a bias or anything like that, but I can understand what happens... And maybe I can use my freshness in the job, maybe trying to stop them to be worn down by police over the years.....' (Officer 12)

Given that the formal training and its advocated rules, i.e. legislation and formal procedure, were conceived by legitimacy seekers as the only source of legitimacy, they engaged with discursive processes at the academy with an appreciative attitude. The regimented disciplinary practices and heavy workload of legislation-related learning were received as significant elements of an aspiration-realising passage, whereby one reconstructed self-identity in line with the desirable police image, elevated moral and technical qualification, and earned certificate and credibility (Conti, 2009; Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009).

First of all, this inclination was vitally manifested in their conforming approach to the accuracy-demanded training programme. In regard to the meticulous digestion of legal terms during formal training, while some reckoned it unnecessary to complicate common-sense issues like 'theft', legitimacy seekers recognised its necessity because they maintained, in congruence with the formal discourses, that

substantial legal knowledge was the premise for rigorous and justifiable police acts towards the public.

> 'It's just like theft, simply, right, you think, okay, they complete one part of the aspects of theft. But, actually, it is not theft until you complete all five aspects of theft... So, whenever you do arrest somebody, you got to think have they actually committed theft, or have they not. And that's why it's important to know all these parts in depth.' (Officer 07)

Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the training domain was not purely infused with gold-standard discourses, but was mixed with dissonant messages ---- discourses about discrepant local practical norms (Olivier de Sardan, 2015) sent from veteran recruits. The long-established nature of these 'alternative' norms in practical world rendered rookie recruits uncertain and reluctant to dismiss them in the way the authority suggested. Rather, these deviant discourses remained creditable to a certain extent in the eyes of legitimacy seeking novices. However, this went against their original pursuit of a single-direction identity project, i.e. constructing identity simply by internalising and sticking with the 'objectified' and homogeneous standards. Therefore, grievances and a sense of insecurity were common among these newcomers due to the incoherent, multi-vocal and ambiguous discursive landscape with which they were faced.

> 'I can see the thinking behind it. You put PCSOs and specials (i.e. special constables) into the class, and everyone … feed each other… there is no *benchmark*, as the way *it should be*.' (Officer 05) (Emphases added by me)

As elaborated earlier, the paradigmatic principles at times proved inapplicable in a real-life policing context. Inconsistency between pedagogical discourses and practical demands could therefore occasionally surface in the faculty's discourses, especially when practical guidance was offered to recruits, such as detaining someone suspicious before the crime was yet confirmed or proved. From legitimacy seekers' perspectives, those contradictions revealed the somewhat speciousness of formal avowals, and thwarted their romantic faith in the entire edifice of the formal domain.

> 'It's always getting stuck in like a tangent between, one is they want to teach you and let you pass the exam, and to teach you what you need once you are actually there. I think they just need to make their mind up… commit to one

side... If they teach you just for the exam, then must get over the fact that they are doing it. I mean we are all like "oh but you need to use it in the real world". It won't make a difference by saying that. What it makes so much difference is what we got to know now.' (Officer 05)

However, as indicated by the above excerpt, legitimacy seekers might not have been concerned about, or believed they were able to evaluate, the usefulness of formal discourses in real work, because they mainly sought authority's prescriptions that lent legitimacy to those who acted in a conforming fashion. This also means that they accepted the 'innocent novice' position in which they were cast by the social structure at the formal regime, and submitted to training authority's determination of 'what we have got to know' (officer 05). This powerless position in turn strengthened their striving for legitimacy and, accordingly, their reliance on formal prescriptions (cf. Conti, 2009; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). By this token, despite the fact that veteran recruits often pointed out to peers that policing routines merely required partial of and basic level legislation knowledge, legitimacy seekers remained docilely committed to the path set by the formal training.

'Because I have got no experience, my purpose was pretty much from writing down everything, because I *don't want to miss anything*. But it is helpful to learn of those that do have experience, because they will tell you, okay, this is what you get taught, but when you are actually out there, from a practical side, you only need to know this... I think that's helpful for us because it gives me points which I am going to put a bit more effort into learning... But I think part of me always wants to learn, everything, just because *it makes me more a rounded officer, if I have knowledge of everything*.' (Officer 12) (My emphases)

Another dimension of formal avowals legitimacy seekers recognised as crucial for obtaining legitimacy were the police work ethics. Since the training authority 'differentiated' (Foucault, 1977) policing officers based on ethical principles, and a perfectly ethical style was privileged over instrumental, corner-cutting ones, legitimacy seeking recruits keenly identified with the organisation issued ethical standards. As illustrated by the following self-narrative, practising core values of the occupation, especially fairness and commitment, endowed individuals with senses of duty, dignity and integrity (cf. Covaleski, et al., 1998; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009).

> ‘You want to provide the best service. You’re on behalf the police. Of course, you want to do the best you can… I think you watch some programme and watch people do stuff, leave(ing) away the knowledge. Some people use the power just for the sake of using power… I wouldn’t change (myself)… I am not going to cross (that boundary). I think *it’s duty*… you are never off duty. You have always to be aware what you are doing, yea, much more aware of *how big the role it is*.’ (Officer 05) (My emphases)

Legitimacy seekers’ preoccupation with following ethical standards heavily constrained them when they physically practiced police tasks, especially under the examination of the training faculty. As introduced previously, the role-play exercises were inherently aimed at normalising recruits’ policing manners within the gold-standard regime. These newcomers were therefore highly conscious of how they displayed ethical behaviours in the exercises, and regarded the exercises as a self-assessing process.

When they performed, for instance, a stop and search task, many sensitive aspects involved from police newcomers’ perspectives induced self-subjection ---- tone of voice, use of language, facial expression, body language and physical contact (i.e., ‘hands on’) were exercised with great caution and intense self-examination. Many recruits acknowledged during debriefing, that it was hard to proceed with the search when they did not ‘feel confident about the grounds’. They also found it difficult to enact police authority in interactions ‘without being rude or unfair’. Thus, they tended to be overshadowed by the attempt to perfectly identify with the gold-standard rules, and were burdened by their extremely strict self-disciplining (Townley, 1993). Since the policing tasks entailed so many subtle skills that needed to be developed over a long time, it was almost impossible to reach the target they set for themselves. As a result, legitimacy seekers ended up feeling fallible and inadequate during the exercises. Their overemphasis on gold-standard behaviours in the training context paradoxically resulted in them feeling less legitimate themselves.

> ‘Tomorrow, we are going to conduct witness interviews in front of the whole class. Sometimes I think it’s actually harder because now we are a bit more nervous … because we know it’s fake … we are doing it in front of other people. And I think I’d probably rather just do it for real … because you don’t

have those nerves in terms of *wanting to impress and being assessed*.' (Officer 12) (My emphases)

5.2.2 Engaging with the first tutored-placement: mentorship

At the beginning of the first PDU placement, legitimacy seekers brought with them the values celebrated at the academy, that is, precise grasp of legislation and perfect practicing of work ethics. Therefore, they entered this context with the assumption that PDU tutors and reference teams would evaluate them using these principles as the criteria. Consequently, many recalled feeling daunted and even ashamed at being unable to meet these anticipated standards. What PDU tutors actually considered most important for the job but unfortunately missing from the new recruits was experience in the role. Conceiving it their own responsibility, tutors spent considerable time and effort teaching 'inexperienced' recruits what real policing was like and how to do various jobs 'properly'. The close mentorship and daily inculcations of tutors soon prompted recruits to recognise and earn 'legitimacy' in this local context, which is recorded in the following narrative.

'I felt frustrated at the beginning of the PDU as I wanted to know all the processes so I could get on with the job and not have to ask questions… Initially, trying to learn all the little tasks needed to complete for every job was confusing, and I needed a lot of reminding. However, after only a couple of days I felt more confident in knowing what is expected of me and how to go about things.' (Officer 12)

Apart from being a trigger for short-term adaptation, the PDU experience also caused legitimacy seekers to reflect on how to engage with the two conflicting and competing sets of discourses together, and how to position themselves around them and/or within them. PDU tutors were influential in this process, as they often claimed the knowledge and values in the practical sector were grounded in long-term, front-line, highly engaging policing experiences, but the formal discourses were derived from arbitrary, fragmented and decontextualised management ideas. Under these influences, recruits realised that the legitimacy stipulated by formal training would hardly be sustainable in the real setting. They consequently shifted the anchor of identity construction from the formal regime to the practical regime. The following

comment manifests the shift of identifying regime among legitimacy seekers during PDU phase.

> 'There were plenty of positive influences on PDU with people talking to me and teaching me about certain things … My tutor was very helpful in showing me everything I needed to know and where some things differ from what you are taught in (the police academy). It also helped to go to fairly straightforward jobs to start off with and build up to more complicated jobs.' (Officer 12)

Furthermore, in contrast with the elusive and idealistic expectations advocated in formal prescriptions and broader societal discourses (Down and Reveley, 2009; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009), the behavioural standards in the PDU sector were closely based on concrete working realities, and thus much more realistic and achievable. Besides, the one-on-one mentorship offered exemplification of what a legitimate identity was like in even 'subtle, tacit and noncodifiable' aspects (Covelaski et al., 1998; Townley, 1994), such as how to approach, persuade and make suggestions to members of the public during a stop and search incident. Recruits could also get immediate verification of their behavioural appropriateness through the attitudes and feedback of tutors (Burke and Stets, 1999; Down and Reveley, 2009; Mead, 1934; Pratt et al., 2006). In short, the PDU context afforded concrete definitions and easy access to 'legitimacy', as well as solid social validation for one's acquired legitimacy, which jointly granted legitimacy seekers a real sense of being a police officer (Down and Reveley, 2009; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Pratt et al., 2006). The quote below strongly echoes these observations.

> 'I clearly had lots to learn but I didn't feel patronized. I felt guided but not forced into actions. After a large fight involving many people where uninstructed by my tutor, I got involved and acted productively, I felt my tutor knew I wouldn't freeze and I was competent. Following this, (I) felt our relationship further improved … I showed myself to be competent and knowledgeable and finally felt like a police officer, not just a person pretending to be a police officer.' (Officer 05)

Nevertheless, as also indicated by the above narrative, although they were allowed more initiative and autonomy in practices, legitimacy seekers' sense of

identity was primarily conditioned by confirmation from significant others. That is, their own performances and themselves were understood via tutors' judgement and evaluation (Covaleski, et al., 1998), driven by the underlying aim of finding the universal norms and shaping oneself into a normal subject (Foucault, 1977), or 'social self' (Mead, 1934). Given this, they were more likely than other newcomers to perceive tutors as possessing the entire knowledge and authority, and tutors' own working patterns and what they approved of was trustfully considered as the parameter of legitimate behaviours in the practical sector.

> 'You are guided in PDU 1 a lot at the start as you don't get much say into what jobs you go to. But *the tutor will know what jobs are most appropriate for us and what we can handle*. The tutor gave me instructions on what to do at each job. Towards the end of the PDU when I had learnt the processes I started to work more independently and do things without being asked. You do spend the time under *protective support* but this is needed because policing is such an important role, I felt more comfortable having an *experienced tutor* there just in case things went wrong or they can make sure everything I did was lawful.' (Officer 12) (My emphases)

Another dimension of PDU 1 vitally influencing legitimacy seekers came from the vicarious backstage socialisation. Before PDU placement, their aspired identity was constituted by the attributes espoused in the formal, dogmatic discourses, which was a well-rounded and completely rational identity. However, PDU apprenticeship involved numerous relatively informal and relaxed debriefs as well as patrol-car/canteen socialisation between tutors and newcomers, whereby recruits were encouraged to verbalise their worries, concerns or other feelings regarding jobs, such as embarrassment caused by not understanding what a member of the public was talking about, or anger fuelled by offensive drunk people.

While these aspects tended to be ignored, if not implicitly opposed to, in formal discourses and societal expectations, and thus intentionally suppressed and withheld by the conformity oriented legitimacy seekers, backstage communications incited them to disclose, acknowledge and not feel guilty about those aspects. These conversations were imperative as they appreciated and, more importantly, legitimised the wholeness and authenticity of each police officer, instead of only tolerating and granting legitimacy to the front-stage role that well embodied formal standards and

societal expectations (Van Maanen, 2010). Therefore, these informal interactions not only fostered recruits' relatedness, sense of belonging and loyalty (Dick, 2005; Townley, 1994; Waddington, 1999), but also enhanced their self-perceived personal value, as they were still recognised as worthy even if they were not perfect.

Besides, the social inclusion (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) also heightened legitimacy seekers' sense of their police membership. While the training awarded official membership only until after the hardship had been overcome and regimented tests had been passed, the PDU community's welcoming acceptance and equal treatment constituted endorsement from the authority in the practical sector, thus significantly elevating recruits' position in the organisation.

Both these factors explained why many recruits felt that the rapport with local teams during PDU made them feel more valuable as a person. As a result, these affective factors in the practical sector rendered it more attractive and appealing (Alvesson et al., 2008b; Ibarra, 1999) for legitimacy seekers compared with the discipline-prone training regime

> '(I) was treated well and felt respected. I didn't always feel just like a student… I felt like a normal officer, part of the team … After a pretty diabolical end to the end of the term at (the Academy), I entered PDU feeling unmotivated and unvalued. PDU turned this around for me.' (Officer 05)

5.2.3 Engaging with the post-placement training: identity struggle

The PDU placement vividly showed recruits the discrepancies between the practices advocated at the academy and those actually performed in the field. Like other recruits, changes also occurred in legitimacy seekers' self-understanding and identity anchor, albeit less radical. However, the training faculty brought discourses of professional credibility, work ethics and individual accountability again to the foreground, through a series of persuasion and normalisation practices. Whilst other recruits tended to resist or turn indifferent to these discursive and identity regulating practices, legitimacy seekers were more likely to agree and comply with both sides.

On the one hand, legitimacy seekers' self-perception was more influenced by training authority, which re-emphasised recruits' inadequate status. Hence, they believed they were 'not experienced yet' and thus still needed to appreciate and follow

training authority's prescriptions. On the other hand, their persistent search for legitimacy and social approval rendered them more inclined to accept and respect authoritative figures in the local context. Given this, they were against the trend of cynical attitudes and disrespectful behaviours from fellow recruits towards faculty.

> 'I think it's like less respect for rank personally. I know the teachers should be sergeants… the person is there to teach you and you respect that ... People are far too eager to voice their opinion… when you got onto the shift, you started to get to know your sergeant and whatever. He is like 'oh don't call me sergeant. Call me Bob'. Yea, fine. I can understand. But it's their call for us to call their first name, which is good, because it's just like in the university. It should be a respect thing. I mean it's not equal. You are certainly above. I don't have the tolerance or the space to adjust the basic principle of respect. You still call each other's first name and have respect.' (Officer 05)

Likewise, during the second phase of PDU sessions, recruits were often tutored by people with different styles from their own. Unlike other recruits, legitimacy seekers were more likely to see it an unquestionable obligation to be quiet and do what tutors told them to do. This orientation revealed their fundamental assumption of the asymmetric power relations between authority and novices throughout the socialising passage, where novices did not have institutional legitimacy to establish alternative identity.

> 'I felt in PDU, sometimes you have to go against what you think you would do in your style… coz you need to make them think you have done well….. you need to just mirror the image of style of policing to your tutor…' (Officer 12)

Furthermore, at the intersection of the two acutely conflicting sets of discourses, legitimacy seekers' attempts to adhere to both stances in identity construction paradoxically made them somewhat less legitimate in each regime. In order to cope with this dilemma situation, legitimacy seekers tended to de-layer their identity spatially and temporally (Ashforth and Mael; Goffman, 1959; Nkomo and Cox, 1996) to maintain legitimacy in both institutions. They generally believed they should conform to the foundational training first as they were still at a preparatory stage, and

simultaneously stay open-minded to the practical discourses and norms, which they would switch towards after they gained qualification.

Nevertheless, in previous literature the 'identity-splitting' identity workers were much more initiative and at ease, such as the 'institutional surfer' who could be highly flexible in going through contextual changes (Alvesson, 2010: 202), and the 'story-teller' who could skilfully integrate inconsistent life episodes into coherent self-narration (Alvesson, 2010; Watson, 2009). Yet, legitimacy seekers were distinguished from them for the moral costs and submissiveness caused by their dual-identity.

Firstly, the dual-identity violated an essential entailment of a legitimate identity, namely consistency in one's way of being. The self-contradictory status intensified their self-reflexivity, and consequently triggered feelings of shame, guilt and insecurity (Collison, 2003). Secondly, given their inherent dependence on external attitudes to verify legitimacy, and that the dual-identity position was unlikely to be endorsed in either regime, the dual-identity required constant justification and negotiation (Sims, 2003). As shown by the following narrative, legitimacy seekers often tried to justify both discourses against each other's criticisms, so as to negotiate the legitimacy of their own identity.

> 'I think most officers will rarely say, like, ''you are under arrest''… (that's a) bad form. But mostly we do that. And that's not a problem apparently, though... We know it's bad, but maybe not that bad… People are trying to get practical policing here. Whereas here they are just trying to teach us how a perfect officer should be. Obviously, everyone isn't like that. And I think the best way (is) to get everything properly now, and when we get out there maybe twist things a little bit just to make things easier but … people have to get a bit more cooperative with practical policing. In the training, I think the best thing is to be the best officer you can be. When you get on there, get on with the area.' (Officer 17)

5.2.4 Engaging with the probationary shift: complex self-regulation

As noted in the previous chapter, all new starters started their probationary shift with an intensive learning process to adapt to the highly demanding working context. Yet, in respect of whether and how their perspectives of themselves, other people and the job changed, newcomers diverged. Since the formally celebrated principles were

generally inflexible and difficult to fulfil in reality, and practical norms were so prevalent in local stations, most new starters promptly divorced from the formal discourses, and switched into a pragmatic mind-set (Dick, 2005; Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 2010). Legitimacy seekers, however, were inclined to engage in more reflective self-questioning and endure a moral burden when they transformed from a rigid, rule-following mindset to a more contingent way of thinking and acting.

First of all, as discussed in previous chapter, the contingent and limited work setting meant there was little opportunity for prudent and rigorous decision-making. That is to say, the job often entailed prioritising instrumental aspects over ethical issues (cf. Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999). For instance, exercising power to restore order, protect safety or minimise risk was more urgent and, perhaps, more important in certain situations than spending time thinking how to make sure that use of power was justifiable, human rights were protected and so on. Yet, this policing rationale was rarely appreciated by people outside the force, or directly criticised (Van Maanen, 2010). Hence, strongly unified ideology of police was developed to legitimate and defend itself (Reiner, 2000; Waddington, 1999). Questions, challenges, and accusations from outsiders were likely to be treated as 'lay' discourses, which the in-group members deemed 'hostile' and irritating, but had to be vigilant about (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Dick, 2005).

Regarding this boundary, legitimacy seekers, however, had one foot in and one foot out. They reserved their 'lay' part of the identity, and used it to reflectively examine the 'in-group' identity, so that their identity would not be entirely occupied by the relatively enclosed group identity. These self-regulating practices rendered them perpetually unstable and self-questioning (Beech, 2010; Beech et al., 2016). To illustrate, this thesis elaborates on four central issues causing the reflexive conversations to occur between the two parts of identity.

Firstly, time pressure was an unavoidable limitation in the real policing setting. While some recruits thought it was fair to absolve themselves of not doing their best on each job due to the time constraint, they were more disturbed by the fact that they themselves became too ready to use it as an excuse. When recollecting 'critical incidents' in the first 6-month shifts, officer 12 pointed out that the most 'difficult' one

was a dispute in which he was no longer to intervene to resolve it because of the busy schedule in his station.

Secondly, another commonplace issue was the unspoken norm in the operational police sector concerning how to deal with less serious crimes, such as thefts. Generally, those crimes were addressed with means lighter than arresting such as a warning or restorative justice, partly because these methods could deal with small problems 'there and then', and consequently more time and resources could be spent on investigating serious crimes, such as assaults. Officer 17, not taking this ordering of crimes by seriousness as unchallengeable, considered it from the lay view of members of the public and suggested that less 'significant' crimes were not necessarily trivial and should be given more attention and power to address.

> 'I think … to problematize (is important), because most people's encounter with the police would be small things like theft. But that's maybe their only experience of policing. And it can affect someone a lot. If we let these small things go, then it becomes just normal, which is why I think you have thefts more common now. It's because the punishment isn't balanced enough. You can come out as theft a lot of times before you get put away… And maybe because people think, oh there is no point (spending time addressing thefts), because there is obviously always going to happen. But that's not really a good approach. It means the problems haven't got solved. It's never getting solved because it's never getting lessened.'

Thirdly, the deeply rooted discourse of 'crime-fighting' in the police underscored nearly all police acts in routine activities (Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1980, 2010) and vitally shaped police's perception of new or changing elements in their environment (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003). Whereas, at the level of individual conduct, whether this organisational license was used duly or excessively, sensibly or instrumentally, was 'untestable' (Dick, 2005: 1370) and only accessible by the actor him/herself (Van Maanen, 1980). In this inner and private process, legitimacy seekers strived to make sure that their use of 'crime-fighting' as justification of acts did not violate morality, justice and legitimacy. Hence, legitimacy seekers tended to oppose unreflective or indiscriminate implementation of crime fighting, even though it was so prevalently celebrated. The following comment on prosecution echoes these findings.

‘I am not a big fan of prosecution stuff. I can see why it is there... People are told and educated … it’s a lot of things all come down to the backup of the police. It makes sense. We are not saying we should not act, or we are not all on people’s behalf. But I don’t particularly like that aspect of jobs… because I think, as a police [officer] *you should be entirely victim-led*. But we are now procedure-led... Sometimes the police said ‘‘we are going to act on your behalf’’, even they didn’t want you there… people lose face in the stay … I have come across it a few times, where …I don’t really agree with that.’ (Officer 05) (My emphases)

Fourthly, the high level of improvisation and discretion as well as infrequent debriefing and scarce use of human resource appraisal in the police (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 2010) meant that new starters had to become independent soon after they joined the shift, and could not frequently seek confirmation or feedback for their work. It also was relatively rare that an officer was internally condemned for what he or she did unless it was obviously unlawful. As discussed in the last chapter, the variation in policing perspectives and styles in practical sector was so vast, and policing routines were so inherently equivocal and ambiguous, that it became pointless to demand that recruits perform jobs in an identical way to senior constables.

Whereas, as Collinson (2003:531) highlighted, the more freedom one was given to choose his or her way of being, the more ‘sense of insecurity and vulnerability’ one will experience (see also Knights and Willmott, 1999). In the police work context, any articulations on legitimacy, espoused either by individuals or groups, were too fragmented and precarious for reliable reference. The autonomous and individually accountable pattern of work organising therefore left individual officers to define, and occasionally, defend their own line of legitimacy. As reassurance from the authoritative ‘significant others’ (Meads, 1934) was removed from work life, legitimacy seekers lost an important identity verification source, and consequently struggled with a strong feeling of uncertainty, as shown below.

‘When I first joined, it’s like seeking constant reassurance. And now I discovered you never will hear you are doing well. No one ever goes like ‘’Eddy does a cracking job…’’ They will always go doubt, ‘’crap’’ ‘’you are fired’’. But I think that’s what’s changed (about me). I don’t seek reassurance

and I just do it. And you will soon learn it if you have done anything wrong. As a person, I still don't want to rely on that approach.' (Officer 05)

Moreover, drawing on Foucault's (1977, 1980) theories, disciplinary power and discursive practices produce realities through which subjects understand, manage and craft themselves (Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009). The absence of predominant discourses and processes that stipulated a legitimate way of policing severely disabled the legitimacy seekers in their efforts to effectively construct a legitimate identity. There were also relatively few chances, if any, to verbalise self to authorised experts, despite daily canteen storytelling among peers. This closed a channel for new starters to comprehend and improve themselves with the help of knowledgeable mentors (Foucault, 1980; Townley, 1993). Thus, as well as insecurity, legitimacy seekers were affected with a certain degree of social isolation and a feeling of being lost, as shown in the first quote below, and struggled to anchor their self-meanings and prove their self-value and creditability, as shown in the second.

'I think it's like in the battle … just being confident in your decision. And people feel you are confident, and they won't question your decision. So… I don't know. I like to think I am doing quite well, in terms of … I am just left to it. I am not being in like more micro-management by my sergeant or anything like that. I am like, pat on myself to do a big investigation and pat on myself after I have done a big investigation. So, I actually think I am doing quite well.' (Officer 05)

'I think once I passed the driving, I started to become more confident (as a police officer) … I am going to scenes by myself and deal with things ..... It's proving to people you can do it by yourself… I think in a way it is a shame for me, that's a long time after (the police academy), because I become more useful on my team as well since I passed my driving test.' (Officer 17)

Under these circumstances, legitimacy seekers tended to turn to the discourses that they internalised autobiographically to interpret work realities and themselves sometimes deliberately and sometimes unwittingly (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). The 'lay' perspectives and discourses that emanated from their reflexive check were largely derived from discourses at a broader level than the scope of their practical function (Watson, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009). These discourses in general, though not

exhaustively, included three streams, namely 1) sociological discourses, such as liberty (e.g. caution about 'taking people's liberty away' by arresting, conceiving 'deterring' more important than 'constraining' people), and human right (e.g. not willing to 'press into people's personal lives'); 2) moral values, such as sense of responsibility (e.g. being uncomfortable regarding caring less about making mistakes), and empathy and sympathy (e.g. being uncomfortable about a more indifferent attitude to 'bad things' happening to others); and 3) principles espoused in formal training, such as work ethics (e.g. being committed to solving all kinds of problems instead of chasing arrest statistics). The following excerpt demonstrates how officer 17 let the principle of respecting people's 'liberty' communicate to the police function of 'crime-fighting' in his mind.

> 'People have some argument in their houses, so they ask us to turn up... There actually is being something, but could be not as serious as crimes. So, it's difficult going to your houses, because you have got no concern or it's too little, so they could just not let you in, although I have always been let in in the past... but it's one of the hardest to get right because it's something you need a little bit of pushing... No one is going to give a statement, because it is just one thing that just happens to people… but technically that's not offense… you don't want to start arresting people for pushing when there is no real offense. But then there is a bit of offense. If there is no injury, it is hard to come to that liberty'. (Officer 17)

More importantly, in the domain featured by discursive liquidity and structural fragmentation, their self-narratives were often attributed with the wider course, duty and merits of the police (e.g. serving the people) (Fielding, 1984: 570; Thomas and Linstead, 2002: 83; Van Maanen, 2010), which seemed more deep-rooted and secure as referencing points in comparison with the fluid, discrete, precarious and possibly contradictory discourses from complicated working realities. By means of reaching out for alternative discourses, legitimacy seekers created their own confirmation of roles (Thomas and Linstead, 2002)

> 'I like to serve my country and serve people… I don't think anyone works for the money, do they? I think you got to believe in something when you are doing it. Otherwise I just wouldn't do it... Definitely the biggest appeal for

me is being a police officer. It got a lot prestige. And it has a bit meaning.' (Officer 05)

'I want to serve my country. It's me being a police officer is eventually trying to … obviously as one man you cannot do that. But the whole system is trying to make the country a better place, a better social space… the victims are so thankful of what you do. It makes the job a lot more worthwhile …' (Officer 17)

Significantly, it appeared legitimacy seekers up until this stage were able to creatively construct legitimate identity independent of or beyond the local institutions. Yet, this did not mean that they became fully in control of their legitimacy status, as they remained dependent upon other discourses to constitute their self-meanings. Those drawn upon discourses were all deeply embedded through early life experiences, such as education (e.g. disciplines in schools and universities, education on liberty from higher education), occupational socialisation (e.g. military training) and social experience (e.g. societal expectations on the police). It could be concluded that legitimacy seekers remained primarily reliant on macro institutions and social approval, rather than self-negotiation, in identity construction.

5.3 Authenticity seeking orientation

The second prominent orientation identified among newcomers persistently pursued a perceived self-authorship through various social interactions. This orientation had and tried to maintain a sense of selfhood, i.e. an essential 'self' believed to be authentic and consistent across time and space. With this orientation, individuals would not always accept the socially prescribed identity, but would more likely negotiate their personally held identity (McAdams, 1996; Ybema et al., 2009; Watson, 2008).

The apparent differences between the four contexts meant that the socially prescribed police identity was inconsistent. The self-construed, -preferred or -aspired identity had to therefore actively negotiate and re-negotiate across temporal-social contexts. It is noteworthy that while it seemed the central 'self' was robust and transient in one's own notion, in different contexts the 'self-meaning' could have different meanings (Ybema et al., 2009) and be promoted by differed gestures in social interactions, such as identifying with the police at one stage but dis-identifying with

the police at another (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001). In another word, the authentic identity individuals sought after, though appearing to be determined by them, was still conditioned by favourable and impeding conditions within social contexts.

5.3.1 Engaging with formal training: reserving distinctiveness and the buffering space

First of all, at the threshold of this career, authenticity seekers and legitimacy seekers had vitally different ways of positioning themselves around the mixed societal discourses cast to the police. Echoing formal discourses, legitimacy seekers took the positive ones as standards to live up to and the critical ones as signals of demands for extra efforts. Authenticity seekers, by contrast, constructed favourable individual identities by associating themselves with the praised aspects of police social identity and distancing themselves from the criticised aspects (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001).

To wit, they noted their identification with the core values of the police (Dutton et al., 1994) by saying it '(had) always been something (they were) interested in' (officer 06, 08), and it was a job that 'had purposes' (officer 14) and 'made differences to the society' (officer 11, 18). At the same time, they still emphasised their distinctiveness by drawing on their personal advantages and creating a self-other boundary (Ybema, et al., 2009) against the negatively stereotyped police officers. In their self-narratives, credit was deliberately given to their previous prestigious profession or higher education, ranging from managerial roles in the private sector to university degrees. They suggested that these crucial experiences allowed them to foster important knowledge, capacity and perspective, which were usually missing from the police. We can see several illustrative examples of these three aspects.

In the quote below, officer 06 highlighted his degree in criminology as having afforded him a wider and deeper background knowledge, which implicitly built upon the widely criticised police culture of antagonism to education, academic theories and intellectualism (cf. Constable and Smith, 2015; Lee and Punch, 2004).

The researcher: 'So you did a criminology degree instead of FDA[10]?'

[10] Foundation Degree of Policing, a degree recognized as a pre-selection route into police department, with a combination of academic learning focused on policing subjects, as well as practical placement as a special constable.

> Officer 06: 'That (FDA) wasn't available when I started university. It was born a year after. But I was quite happy to do the full degree because it, umm, I could … study *a bit more detail*, which is nice because I got a view *outside … and inside*. So, I was quite balanced about … when I look at things.' (My emphases)

The 'outside' experience could also be drawn upon to advance one's distinctive capacity to undertake the policing role. This was especially important for those authenticity seeking recruits to establish their personal value in the initial training context, where the formal authority placed all newcomers at the lowest level, and internal recruits cast themselves in a more experienced position within the cohort. For instance, when asked about what she thought about different levels of practical experience among the new intake, officer 11 confidently drew upon her Degree in Psychology and her working experience at a police control room to portray herself as an officer with empathetic personality, mental health knowledge, relevant experience and serious attitude.

> 'I've got knowledge on stuff that the rest of the group doesn't. Because I was in the other side, the empathy side of that. So all the sort of mental health stuff we did, I know all about that. We will be doing domestic (module) this week. PCSOs have never been to the domestic scenes. But I would know that. The only thing I don't know is to fill out the form, which is basically you ask a question, and they say yes or no. I don't have that operational side, but that also means I'm not gonna be complacent when I go out. And not be like ''ah I have done this a million times. Look at me....'' and like swaggering around. I'm gonna be like, right, this needs to be done as my tutor is telling me. But that could be something missing if you've already got some experience.'

It is noteworthy that she emphasised the significance of 'empathetic' style, 'mental health' knowledge and a fresher perspective in the job, and reduced the difficulty of operation experience. By doing so, she gave credits to her earlier education and service-oriented work experience, and downplayed her lack of operational background. By the same token, in the rest of interview, she repeatedly referred to psychological-sensitivity and customer-service working style, such as being 'aware that (when they call the police) is the worst day in their life'; 'being nice

to people so that they can be nice to you'; being at the frontline allows 'doing more for the customers', and so on.

Alternative perspective was another avenue to mark authenticity. Authenticity seekers tended to subscribe to a policing approach that contrasted with the 'conventional policing approach', which was condemned for overemphasising on punishment of crime to the detriment of crime prevention and serving the public. To this end, they tended to narrate their approach to policing from a neutral standpoint and with more empathy and reflexivity. The following comments on making arrest from officer 18, an ex-air stewardess, reflect her self-positioning as a concerned and thoughtful citizen, who considered that problems with individuals were rooted in more profound problems within society. Her position was constructed by disproval of the traditional policing approach and referring to it as 'dictatorship'. She also implicitly blamed 'government' for hardship experienced by individuals, by means of which she indicated a standpoint independent of the police (as part of national authority).

> 'I think the problem is if you are going too far down, the only role of police officers is to arrest people, then you are gonna end up with like military kind of dictatorship. I think you do need a balance. Obviously, our job is to do that. But I don't think it's the primary reason for it… there are others as well… try to alleviate… Maybe there are reasons why people are committing crimes. And that is out of control because it has to deal with like the government and the habits of growing up. But I think that does go a long way…'

Additionally, officer 11 and officer 06 had previously worked in a control room and as a special constable respectively, also highlighted their reflexivity on policing 'ethicality'. To negotiate an individual identity, they explicitly contrasted themselves with bad police practices, which they delineated as 'so grounded to be a police officer', 'keep(ing) pushing batons', and 'get(ting) high almighty'. They also promoted their inherent propensity for 'being patient' 'treating people the way I'd like to be treated' and 'using common sense', in stark contrast to the stereotyped police identity. The following quotation illustrates the self-sarcasm/-abasement (Clarke et al., 2009; Down and Reveley, 2009; Goffman, 1967) of officer 06 on his 'unhelpful' trustfulness and overly patient personality was in effect crediting his attributes of compassion, respect and understanding, which constituted precious merits in the context of policing.

> ‘Unfortunately, I tend to believe people. And I have to work on that…my colleague who I worked with would always challenge people… they (suspects) go ‘ehhhh…’ and their story would fall apart. And I would be like ‘okay…’ I would give it a quick search. I wouldn’t go into the pockets… so you get to be slightly sceptical all the time.
>
> But we have got police officers’ aggression... I think building a reputation, especially with people we are gonna to meet at a regular basis, and I think I’d rather to build a reputation with them and understand them… I think just punishing them doesn’t solve anything. It’s just like ‘why are you doing it, get (the offenders) to the court?’ If it is not something that you affect, at least you know why they are doing it so you can go straight to the problem … And do get a bit patient as well.’ (Officer 06)

One of the two fast-trackers, officer 14, not only constituted her distinctive individual identity within the police by drawing upon private-sector principles ---- effectiveness, efficiency, innovation and strategy ---- and customer-culture rationality. Instead of understanding her future sergeant role through the lens of the police rank structure, she envisioned her identity based on the ‘grandiose leadership’ discourses in contemporary organisations (du Gay, 1996; cf. Brown and Humphreys, 2006; Clarke et al., 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003), which underscored her personal insight, volition and capacity to act as an ‘entrepreneur’, strategist’, and ‘culture-creator’ in the police.

> ‘I think the police should be about serving the public, rather than catching criminals ... I think we should put a lot *resources* into ... people who are potentially to be criminals... Whereas there’s a huge amount of people even in this classroom, and elsewhere that I have met who think the purpose of the police is to catch criminals. Whilst I think these days it’s quite an *old-fashioned and a small-minded* way of thinking. If we want to be more successful, we have to get more like private sector. Private sector *is customer-focused*. For us the public is our customer… we want to stop the bad guys from ever being bad guys. And that will *save money* and prevent crimes and do all the good things we want to do.’ (My emphases)

Another significant manifestation of authenticity seeking orientation was the buffering space individuals maintained against the predomination of formal training. By reserving their other-than-police identity, authenticity seekers' socialisation into the formal power/knowledge regime was much less complete than legitimacy seekers'. And this space could even be exploited to resist the dominant discourses and discursive practices (Foucault, 1980; see Brown and Humphreys, 2006 and Clarke at al., 2009). This was exhibited by their common indifference to the identity shaping discourses and practices in the formal context. Therefore, the processes of accentuating recruits' novice status, advancing formal prescriptions as the only legitimate behavioural reference, and disqualifying norms in practical sector, for example, while heavily impacting legitimacy seekers, often failed to marshal their self-conception. Hence, they normally demonstrated confidence and composure during the training.

The following excerpts suggest that authenticity seekers believed, in opposition to what the formal regime claimed, that lack of knowledge did not necessarily mean no qualification, and that gold-standard principles were not the only acceptable manner of doing policing jobs.

> 'It's a hindrance that I haven't been the special (constable), I haven't been to the ground dealing with people face to face... But it's not to rank, it's more like a self-motivation ... I don't want to be the best. Don't get me wrong… if I see I'm not doing as well as someone else, I think I know I might need to put a little bit more work in it… So, it's more of my motivation thing, as opposed to like something negative.' (Officer 11)

> 'Asking here (at the academy) we get the kind of golden-standard answers that may or may not be particular once we are out in force. So, lots of questions like that. If I can't get an answer from the legislation or from the lesson, I know I can just ask, and I'll learn how I work in my area.' (Officer 14)

By the same token, while the process of being assessed during the training often reinforced legitimacy seekers' sense of subjectivity and inferiority (Foucault, 1986; Townley, 1993), it was not exactly the case to authenticity seekers. This was because they did not accept the examination of the formal regime as the entire definition of themselves, and they believed in and credited their personal progression. This, again,

showed the self-conception of authenticity seekers was not restricted by the 'innocent novice' label imposed by the training authority (Foucault, 1980).

> 'I guess everyone gets slightly nervous when they do things like that (role-play exercises) ... (but) it is definitely helpful. Especially when you are doing for the first time, if you got other people around you, they can pick up on things you haven't done, and recognize things that you have done but you maybe haven't recognized that you are doing. That is good because you can build on it for the next time.' (Officer 15)

Besides, the space deliberately maintained from the externally prescribed identity also suggested authenticity seekers' relatively stable self-knowledge, which spared them dependence on the new regime they were situated in to define and guide their life. Officer 08 believed his experience of initial training in the earlier occupation, in combination of his self-knowledge, to be adequate to navigate his socialisation.

> 'It was quite uncomfortable (in the beginning). But I think I know myself a bit better than I did when I first started to be at (my previous organization). So, I know I will get there in time and, you know, I know how I learn.'

5.3.2 Engaging with the first tutored placement: establishing authenticity in practices

In the practical-apprenticeship context, recruits were permitted a large number of opportunities to practice policing tasks, which were employed by legitimacy seekers as agential space to develop authentic police identity through real work practices. Therefore, their PDU experience was preoccupied with a purposeful quest for 'establishing (themselves) as a police officer' (officer 06), 'being (themselves) in that situation' (officer 19) and 'learn(ing) to do everything comfortable' (officer 08). Compared with legitimacy seekers' pursuit of well-rounded competence and a culturally approved style, authenticity seekers' aspiration for a 'naturally' presented role was more self-striving and -forgiving, in the sense that personal characteristics, dispositions and subjective feelings were not concealed or overshadowed by the predominant celebration of practical competence and in-group ethos (e.g. masculinity), but were initiatively recognised, valued and negotiated with the conditions and demands of job.

> ‘I guess you get a lot of instinct things. When you actually come onto shift and you come out to a lot of situations, some things officers will do very well, and some won’t do very well. And you are not gonna know until you get into the situation, how you are gonna react. (Officer 14)

Allied with the respect for their own nature was the maintaining of relatively independent judgement. The intensive inculcation of technical experience and local working norms in the practical sector, though often dominating other newcomers’ PDU experience, was critically incorporated into their repertoire and negotiated in relation to their personally preferred working identity.

> ‘Sometimes I do ask questions to see what they (the reference team) think, to get advice. But at the same time, I am trying to think it through myself because I want to make my own decisions, if I come across other things. So, I do reason it afterwards and talk it through with them, and make sure the ways are left for a situation.’ (Officer 08)

Another scenario where authenticity was deliberately maintained was when, instead of submitting entire decision-making power to tutors and taking an apprentice role, authenticity seekers insisted on their initiative during the placement phase to search for materials and opportunities for identity development. Officer 19, for instance, recalled her PDU experience as being mainly about her ‘motiving (she and her tutor) to go to jobs’, with her booking the jobs she wanted to attend. Although she admitted she would ‘do investigation more thoroughly if (she was dealing with it) on (her) own’, it still showed she did not readily or unreflectively accept her tutor’s style of job performance. Since she claimed herself ‘a busy personal all the time’ and was aiming to learn through substantial practices at the placement, it could be clearly seen that she let this authentic identity and personal objective channel her interactions in the placement context.

A similar example was officer 08. While he acknowledged that transiting from a service-oriented job to this law enforcement role, he had to ‘work on the adaptation’ from a ‘treatment manner’ to a ‘dominating’ one; he also asserted that he should not be ‘rushing into the position’ by directly picking up long-serving officers’ ‘back carriages’. Rather, he insisted on the importance of subjective learning and calibration over time. Since, in his opinion, work identity should be authentic, the transition

entailed interweaving self-identity into the work realities through nuanced crafting, rather than superficially committing to a new set of discourses and norms (Handley et al., 2006). This also explained his shock and discomfort of 'being batched so fast' to the sergeant role.

> 'In my former industry, I developed a style that I was very comfortable with. And I kept using like continuously, and I thought I did a good job. It took me a few years to develop a comfortable style. That's why I am still thinking I am still kind of developing it at the moment. I am trying different ways of interacting with people. And I think over time I would develop.' (Officer 08)

5.3.3 Engaging with post-placement training: integrating multiple materials

After the placement, the competing discourses of the practical sector and formal training left many recruits struggling between or highly resistant to the regulating practices of the training academy. There was a general consensus among authenticity seekers, making them a third camp, that the discrepancy did not need to be construed as conflicts or cause a dilemma, but should be instrumentally integrated to serve one's own identity work project. On the one hand, they did not believe the training should necessarily cast recruits in an infantile and naïve role. Hence, they were lukewarm and relatively unaffected by the persuasion and control processes engendered by the training authority, and maintained that those practices could not ultimately determine 'how people will behave when they get out' (officer 19). On the other hand, they perceived the vocal challenge as well as undercurrent cynicism from many newcomers as 'unnecessary' (officer 15), 'childlike' (officer 14), 'unprofessional', 'disrespectful' and 'immature' (officer 08).

Instead, drawing on their own experience from the placements, authenticity seekers reflectively recognised the useful elements of formal training and incorporated them into their identity building. Specifically, many noted injecting formal discourses and comprehensive knowledge as crucial supplement, given the work was predominated by practical elements.

> 'I think at the time, I would have said, it (the training) was quite long… But actually, I haven't felt unprepared for anything I think they didn't cover. Pretty much everything, I know how to deal with. So, I think it's probably necessary to be sort of that long when … and that sort of detailed… it is

> important not to rush, that kind of training, because you really don't have time to (review) … you know you don't do everything all the time on shift… so, you need to be able to cover.' (Officer 19)
>
> 'I don't think you can actually train for (dangerous) situation. But I do think probably doing before, officer safety training we did at (the academy) would help, even if I didn't use any registered official move. But they teach you. It still gives you that a little extra confidence.' (Officer 14)

This neutral and appreciative orientation can be understood on two levels. Firstly, absorbing different dimensions of knowledge into one's repertoire allowed authenticity seekers to resourcefully and independently shape their working identity, instead of being overwhelmingly depending on particular local norms or experience of specific experts (e.g. tutors, mentors or senior colleagues). This resonated with their eternal pursuit of maintaining self-authenticity in working life.

Secondly, their strong sense of the 'core' self and allegedly ever-growing self-knowledge buffered and filtered discursive domination of formal and practical regime, and diluted the conflicts between the two systems of discourses. With an inherently stable self-identity, fed by their earlier life stories, past achievements, and socially granted reputable professional identity (e.g. doctor, air stewardess, customer manager), there would be much less need of external identity verification (Down and Reveley, 2009) and less reliance on either regime to direct their technologies of self (Grey, 1994).

Thanks to the relatively incomplete socialisation in each regime, authenticity seekers were not entirely constrained by either set of discourses, but possessed a narrative and ideological 'wiggle room' that permitted them the flexibility to always cast their identity into a morally virtuous, politically safe, and institutionally favourable image across different contexts (Alvesson, 2010: 205; Clarke et al., 2009: 344; Dick, 2005). In short, neither the training nor practical domain was conceived as totalising their identity, but both were exploited for materials for constructing their authentic identity.

Furthermore, the exposure to heterogeneous policing styles in this phase also stimulated authenticity seekers to reflectively integrate and merge into their own way of performance. Again, it was more a strategic, rational and selective carving of self

(Ibarra, 1999; Markus and Nurius, 1986) than a passive, submissive and comprehensive adjusting to others. Hence, even if they noted their 'modelling after' a very positive role model, they always stressed the fact that this person's 'standard wasn't far from (them)' (officer 15), and that they gradually 'used more of (their) own judgement' (officer 11). For this reason, authenticity seekers distinguished themselves from the rest of the cohort by their willingness to work with different crew partners, in order to 'learn and talk with different people' (officer 08), and 'combine all different people' who 'are good at all different things' (officer 14). Fundamentally, it was their orientation to reserve and negotiate authentic identity in social interactions that granted their power, relieved the burden of compromising the entire self, and therefore sponsored their open-mindedness.

5.3.4 Engaging with probationary shift: initiative identity construction

As explained earlier, the highly precarious and contingent aspects in real- world policing rendered it difficult for recruits maintain a distinct and consistent work identity. Besides, due to intensive workloads and routine exposure to 'dirty work', the career of policing became more identity demanding (Kreiner et al., 2006b), i.e., to a certain extent contesting self-identity and dominating an individual's work and life, body and mind, thus pressing work-identity into one's entire selfhood. Encountered with these threats to identity authenticity, they carefully carved out their social and psychological space to safeguard their identity.

One strategy observed from many authenticity seekers was deliberately keeping a separation between work-identity and the 'self' in social life. As they noted, they tended to 'keep ground as a human', 'joke with and make fool friends' and 'make sure to go to social event with non-police people when invited' (officer 06); 'not watch television with criminals in' with family (officer 08); play ball games with non-police teammates and 'keep (herself) busy and go to see friends and relatives' off from work (officer 19); and ensure 'home time is home time' and 'don't think about when (she is) at work, (she) will get stressed out' (officer 11). These coping up methods seem somewhat short-sighted, self-deceiving and 'fantasized' (Brown and Humphreys, 2006), as they only artificially and temporarily kept ideological, emotional and agential investment in the work out of sight and mind, which is pretty similar to the reaction of ostriches in danger. However, they crucially afforded a space for

autonomous construction of an aspired self under the intensive occupational and organisational marshalling of identity (Costas and Fleming, 2009; Roberts, 2005).

They also employed various means to imaginatively detach from the work and/or attach to alternative social categories. Officer 08, for instance, imagined himself as an 'impostor' in the police and claimed that he refused to abandon his 'sensitive work personality' fostered from his past job, which gave him a symbolic space to be the distinctive 'self' within the group (officer 08). Likewise, officer 14 noted that she enjoyed being seen by people at first sight as someone 'working in banking, consultancy or management', which indicated she perceived herself as distinguished from the common image of police. Given that she used to work as a customer manager, her attachment to the attribute of 'management' showed that she maintained elitism, which had nothing to do with the police, in her self-conception.

This mental travelling across social identity boundaries, though not necessarily affecting how they performed in work realities, allowed a workable integration of disparate, incompatible but all significant self-meanings in one's living experience (McAdams, 1996; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). In this way individuals reserved their distinctiveness and truly favoured compartments or episodes of self in their identity. Even though this strategy in some sense risked causing self-contradictions, it facilitated the creation of an enduring desirable self-image across temporal and institutional contexts (Clarke et al., 2009), thus in turn reinforcing a sense of integrity, i.e., consistently living as one desired and strived for.

Moreover, only authenticity seekers explicitly stressed that 'it is a choice' of whether 'bring work to your life' (officer 08), and the significance of avoiding 'burdening your family with your job' (officer 06). Whereas, even though some legitimacy seekers also noted keeping healthy work-life balance, they did not go very far to actualise it as they still put legitimacy before individual intention. Legitimacy stipulated in broad institutions usually directed them to marginalise their private, personal and authentic self and life. Examples include work ethics of commitment, professionalism discourses of privileging work over family and friends (Clarke et al., 2009; Founrnier, 1991) and the police ethos of masculinity (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003). In contrast, by making various efforts, authenticity seekers took more initiative to shape their work, life and identity. Although with contextual restraints (Watson,

2008) and sometimes merely in personal imagination and illusion (Brown and Humphreys, 2006), these processes still lent them a sense of authentic self.

Another dimension of leading identity construction resided in their authoring of self-narratives. Authenticity seekers were normally adroit in constructing their self-image with specific discursive materials that carried institutional endorsement. One common manifestation was their retrospective narration of the formal training and how they related their current self to the past training experience. As discussed earlier, most recruits entered the probationary shift with great shock and spent a long time learning again how to function in the practical environment. In their recollection of that period, authenticity seekers were likely to attribute all the subjectively felt awkwardness, under-preparation and disillusion to the shortcomings of the training programme.

> 'Joining the shift and being on area, which is obviously terrifying, out there, because you do feel like you don't know anything, you do feel it is a bit of waste … so you get there and do feel about sort of uncomfortable and unconfident in your own ability …' (Officer 11)

> 'So, we spent days and days and days having a lot of specialist departments coming talk to us. Whereas, in reality, we are not going to have any dealing with them whatsoever, for years. And we are gonna forget it anyway. So, it's just a waste of time. And we didn't get taught things that would be useful.' (Officer 14)

In the narratives, the entire system of formal training was accused of not preparing individual newcomers for the real-world policing and its value was nearly totally denied ('a waste of time'). Thie could be arguably understood as a scapegoating strategy to protect themselves from a life episode of failure (Brown and Humphreys, 2006). By attributing their transition of working references to the limitations of training, they made themselves less inconsistent over time. However, this blaming attitude towards the training was in sharp contrast to their appreciative attitude iat an earlier stage; a good case in this point being this comment from officer 11 during the training stage. With crucial assertiveness, she said

> 'apparently the programme has run for 7 years… So, good long time. So, it obviously works.'

But her attitudinal transition was radical at the later point:

> ‘Obviously, being taught about things in the classroom, it doesn’t quite prepare you for being out there and dealing with people… it’s a bit weak one, really… Obviously, the whole way the training is going has changed, massively. Yea. It’s all changed.’

At both points, she respectively drew on the long establishment and recent restructuring of the training programme to support her arguments about the training programme. She also respectively claimed an identifying and dis-identifying position with it. It was her aptness of searching for discursive materials among polyvocal contexts at each stage that allowed her to underscore legitimate and convincing self-narratives in each context (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). Therefore, the sensitiveness to institutional conditions and the capability in leveraging on discursive materials made it possible for authenticity seekers to make their stories hold up coherently, even if critical transition, departure, revision, denial and so on were involved.

5.4 Practitioner orientation

An alternative orientation exhibited in the identity construction process was principally seeking to ably enact the policing role in real work, thus being mostly concentrated on the learning of various working skills and key scripts of interactions with main teammates and audiences (Goffman, 1959; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006). This orientation premised a certain level of basic knowledge of the occupation (Van Maanen, 1975; 2010) and accordingly held realistic expectations of the work, which recruits used to guide their learning, acting and identity forming when they were encountered with a bewildering multiplicity of experiences and articulations throughout the four contexts. For this reason, practitioner orientation was adopted mostly among newcomers who were pre-socialised in the operational policing sector, mainly through working as a special constable or PCSO. The relevant working background bestowed on them crucial insights of the becoming policing role.

In the identity construction process of practitioner orientation, notions and narratives of identity were primarily derived, realised and secured by role-embodying interactive practices (Goffman, 1963; Van Maanen, 2010). Therefore, bodily practices and the practical field became prioritised as truth source, whereas other elements and spheres in the social contexts, such as theoretical knowledge, classroom-based training and gold-standard principles, naturally became less important to engage with. The

processes of identity retaining, repairing and moving were grounded in or propelled by experiences of role practicing, which however was not continuously included throughout the four contexts.

5.4.1 Engaging with formal training: dependence on past work experience

As said earlier, individuals adopting this orientation normally came from a policing-relevant background. At the onset of initial training, their pre-socialisation was attached with both advantageous and disadvantageous value at the academy. While the hierarchy in this context institutionally privileged tenure and policing working experience, and the operational knowledge of ex-PCSOs and ex-specials did earn a little seniority over their peers in the intake, the training academy's centralising practices, conversely, disqualified the practices these newcomers had formerly performed daily. The training faculty iterated that 'bad habits', i.e. deviant work norms in local areas, should be abandoned and supplanted by organisational licensed 'gold-standard' practices, which elicited a host of veteran newcomers' identity crises.

Since individual actors' characteristics, motive, contribution and connection with colleagues and the public were all inextricably imbedded in their work habits, norms and experience (Van Maanen, 2010: 123), the practical norms veterans used to maintain were infused with their sense of 'ego', self-esteem, and socially recognised competence (Down and Reveley, 2009; Goffman, 1959: 22; Pratt et al., 2006). The gold-standard discourses, however, gave almost no credit to, but explicitly criticised the norms into which these veterans invested so much of their identity. Without doubt, this engendered destructive effects on their pride, dignity and self-assertiveness. The following excerpt clearly indicates how critical and corrective articulations on past local practices influenced a veteran's self-perception.

> 'I feel like I am great at talking. I used to go and visit loads and loads people… get good intelligence, visit old people… go to schools. And I really miss all that stuff. Because I've built bridges with those people… every month I'll go to somebody. And I always used my radio... But neither we were being taught. Again, it feels like what I did was wrong, although I know it was right, and everything was lawful. I feel I am losing in my brain, some of what I already knew. Because I am doubting myself now… I have been

taken the idol of the area and now I am in training I feel I have lost all that information and have to start over again.' (Officer 07)

This did not mean that the authoritative portrait of ideal police identity defeated their practice-stemmed past identity, or overshadowed the police identity to which they aspired, in that their cognition of the difference and separation between training and the practical world allowed them to conceive the current training was temporary and would ultimately give way to the practical world. By then, the practices they identified with would be appreciated and allowed again. Besides, practitioners exploited opportunities for practicing job performance, such as role-play exercises and PDU placements, to enact their existing skills and improve practical competence. That was why officer 07, after reporting her thwarted self-confidence, expressed that she 'missed' getting involved in the real policing routines. Apparently, she held onto the idea of re-activation of her practical competence after passing the temporary passage of initial training.

'But I think that having the PDU where we go out will help bring it back again… it's been 3 or 4 months that I had been in the PCSO… I miss it. And I am trying to forget things. Just simple things. But I know once I get back out there, it will be just like sack or turnover to do them over again.' (Officer 07)

Among practitioners, a shared view of the training programme was that it was far from sufficient to prepare the new intake for the practical work, because most of the crucial practical elements were not covered in the training. They maintained that those tacit, nuanced and locally adapted aspects in particular could hardly be imparted without practicing in real situations. Commonly noted was the wide gap between training and real work, of which the following comment is a good example.

'It all comes down to experience. It's going on and being able to deal with it. And getting the experience and getting the practice to make you better... you can sit in the classroom and you can talk about it all there every day. But you're not gonna to know what is gonna be like until you get out there and you do it. It's completely different element to it, from being in the classroom and talking about it, and then being there and being in the situation. It's quite scary'. (Officer 10)

Moreover, in the context in which all-inclusive learning and gold-standard policing were intensively espoused, and newcomers' status was arbitrarily defined as 'ignorant novice', practitioners could hardly freely enact their practical skills and work norms, and were thus unable to constitute and construct their identity. Under this circumstance, they tended to demarcate an ontological space separated from the formal regime, whereby their past practice-based identity could be recognised and celebrated. In this independent space, by drawing on their past practical experience in a real policing context, practitioners could cast their identity in a favourable light again and sustain their identity when living out the identity could not be enacted.

First of all, they anchored their current sense of identity in their highly agentic working experience in the past, which served as an undeniable and irreducible 'identity peg' (Goffman, 1963: 57) or identity 'building block' (Van Maanen, 2010: 120). By doing so, they strived to cast themselves in the role of pre-socialised, experienced and competent newcomers, thus at a much higher level than their peers in the cohort. Secondly, their account of episodes of socialisation in the previous policing role often came with a conclusion that new starters were often able to perform better than they had thought. By saying this they constructed a highly agential identity and defended against the vulnerability and inadequacy imposed by the formal regime. These could be well illustrated in the recollection of a first-time patrol experience from an ex-PCSO, who believed that the only issue impeding new recruits from stepping onto the stage was their own fear and self-doubt, rather than lack of knowledge or anything else. He also conveyed that he had passed the threshold and been ready for the new job.

> 'I remembered thinking to myself --- I don't really know … what to do here. And then I went on ''okay, I am gonna go this direction'', and I uttered to my mouth… I don't remember what I said. But what I can remember (is) thinking is subconsciously going, ''I am talking here and everything coming out here is the right things''. And then in their head, I was going along with things. I was saying all the right things. But I just I don't know where it came from. It was out there somewhere. It just takes that little push. Getting dropped the dependents.' (Officer 01)

The practitioner recruits not only used past experience to rejuvenate the practice-constituted identity, but also actively resisted the discursive domination of the formal regime. They used real work experience as concrete evidence to argue against the

formal assertion that learning all legislation by heart and behaving in accordance with perfect standards should be the preoccupation of newcomers and be the attributes of their future police identity. As this ex-PCSO continued, based on his own reflection after breaking into the role, he believed that what the training authority tried to enforce upon recruits and rookies accordingly strived to achieve was almost impossible and unnecessary in working realities.

> 'There is nothing in this job, unfortunately, is clear-cut. I mean you can do the same job a thousand times. And each time it would vary in some degree. It's best to know the legislations, A, B, C, D, as a whole. I agree, with all the framework of it… you may use A, but you may not use B or C, but you may use D. So, you take what you need and put it into context. So, all these what-if questions are just irrelevant. But it all comes with (experience)… some (people) haven't done before, so...' (Officer 01)

Another good example is officer 06. His somewhat ironic description of what happened in lectures, in association with the self-abasing account of his own experience as a rookie before, implicitly suggested that the rigid formal training misled and unnecessarily confused the current recruits.

> 'Operationally, you don't actually have to know everything they are telling you. But I can understand why they have to tell you. So … sometimes, it's like me and Louise, and a couple of other guys who I know have done (policing) before. You can see us come to going down slumping in our chair a bit, because … it's stuff that we know. But you were starting to look over to people like, eh, Andy and Dan. They're going 'Oh. God. What's going on?'…… And I remember back to I did it for the first time and it was all a blur. And they're all throwing all these words in ears, and you're going (like) 'oh my god, my god'. I know…'

By drawing upon and sharing among one other the abundant experiences that highlighted individual agency, competence and progression, practitioners constructed an ontological space independent of the formal regime that focused on rule following but restrained individual agency, competence and progression. Through these efforts, they not only stabilised and sustained identity, but also derived epistemological autonomy, which allowed them to plan their learning activities during the training

based on their own judgement from practical experience, regardless of the prevalent 'all-inclusive' principle formally avowed. In this way, practitioners concerned themselves only with the 'relevant' elements and let go all the 'adjacent' information. As for the useful parts, they learned only to the extent that was pragmatic and practically helpful, rather than in-depth exploration encouraged by faculty (e.g. 'reading around the subject').

> 'As I said, I am not very academic. So … I don't need it to be complicated. But the way they lay out the things --- this is the bit the law says, this is the bit you need to prove. Okay. Cool. Got that. And this is all the bits around it. So, I sometimes zoom out a little bit after that, because otherwise it confuses me.' (Officer 06)

Also, the gold-standard policing discourses were filtered and diluted at the reception of practitioners. They were understood more as political rhetoric than as real behavioural references, thus only adding to their scope of exposure but not necessarily provoking changes in how practitioners carried out work. Among practitioners, there was an 'open-minded' yet indifferent orientation to the principle of 'well-rounded' policing, as clearly revealed from the following narratives. Apparently, the narrator interpreted the gold-standard policing discourses mainly based on his standpoint from experience in the practical world. In his assumption, the rules of work were ultimately determined by experienced experts according to real work conditions.

> 'I would stay open to this (gold-standard policing) … because it's not like saying you are wrong, it's more that they are trying to help you. And that's something that we, as students, should be open-minded about, like things we have not necessarily been told in area on how it should be done… obviously if you relate it back to the new manners we got told of majority benefits, and justify in proportion, the upper bit of it, and you still think you can do (gold-standard policing in realities), then I personally wouldn't necessarily see an issue of it. But if you get told by someone, who has a greater knowledge and experience, I would be more inclined to believe them but, again, if I am in doubt, I would speak with my supervisor, sergeant to clarify that.' (Officer 13)

As regards the role-play exercises, practitioners were appreciative of their usefulness in facilitating recruits' enactment learned knowledge in task performance, but at the same time were highly aware that the exercises barely resembled what happened in the real policing routines. As the following quotation indicates, practitioners did not really expect to get good preparation for the real work from these exercises.

> ''I think the role-plays are good... It's better for your own development. And it does put you in a bad situation. Obviously, the trainers can't push you too far. But they push you as far as physically they can then ... It's a good element of what you are going to face out there, and may not be the exact way, but it's a good insight of how you are going to deal with things' (Officer 10)

In short, since the formal training context mainly presented abstract written rules and codes of ethics, but little practical elements, practitioners' understanding of the new identity was barely expanded. Accordingly, they remained heavily reliant on their past work experience to direct their learning activities and identity construction in this stage. As they held that the classroom-based training only offered limited relevant resources for building the new identity, they anticipated more significant identity work in the next phase.

5.4.2 Engaging with the first tutored-placement: expanded understanding, learning and identity constructing

For veteran newcomers, the placement in a practical context vividly and impressively presented them a broadened scope of work content, power and responsibilities as well as impact, which is described by Pratt and colleagues as 'identity enriching' (2006: 264). Firstly, in reflections on PDU 1, one aspect of the job drawing great attention from practitioners was the wider range of function compared with their prior civilian roles, i.e. PCSOs or special constables. Often this meant more intervention in incidents, which allowed them to participate in more intellectual and impactful parts of incident processing, such as investigation. The following comment from a veteran recruit represents how practitioners felt about PDU placement.

> 'It was certainly eye opening to certain procedures, (as) I haven't been exposed to custody before and the booking-in process that follows (before)'. (Officer 13)

Secondly, closely linked to the increased range of function was the upgraded power and accordingly heightened requirement in policing conducts. Importantly, as consensually noted by practitioners, only when they presented themselves as a police officer in interactions with the public did they realise what the new role was all about and what it entailed. In comparison with the role of PCSO or special constable, which was mainly about communicating with the public and subordinating police constables without the power of making decisions or taking action, the current work identity entitled them to take a more discretional, leading and authoritative role, and therefore demanded higher competence in dealing with people and situations. Given this, success in performing the more demanding tasks would greatly enhance their self-esteem. One of many comments conveying this idea came from officer 16:

> 'I already had experience with working with the public as I had previously been a special constable, so the experience was not completely new to me. However, I felt on PDU, as an actual police officer I took the lead a lot more, and I felt more valued as an individual. I felt more confident in performing tasks'. (Officer 16)

Thirdly, the new role also allowed them to exert more positive influences in normal people's lives. Although the influence of police was not unfamiliar to them, and had been the biggest motive for many to pursue the occupation, the real activities embodying the influence of police, such as resolving disputes, finding missing persons and consoling victims' families, afforded them a more palpable and concrete comprehension thereof. These experiences, therefore, further enhanced their sense of responsibility (Pratt et al., 2006), and strengthened their feeling as a real police officer. This is demonstrated by the following excerpt.

> 'I attended a domestic which first came in as a non-recordable, so verbal argument. However, when I attended it was apparent that an assault had taken place. Due to my previous experience, I was able to talk to the individual concerned and was able to show empathy towards her. This showed that I was taking her allegation seriously in a professional manner.' (Officer 02)

Drawing on these aspects, a learning loop can be easily seen from practitioners. By practising the police role, practitioners understood what the new identity included, offered and demanded, and the deepened understanding in turn directed their

engagement with PDU experiences. Through learning of the key skills, repetitive practices, and then independent carrying out of jobs, practitioners harvested a higher confidence in their own competence, and solidified their sense of being a real police officer (Pratt et al., 2006).

It is noteworthy that this context allowed practitioners massive progression of their identity project, so that they shifted their anchor of identity from past work experience to the newly acquired one during PDU placement. This was reflected not only in what they drew upon to narrate themselves after placement ---- episodes of job performance during PDU instead of stories of past work ---- but also in how they evaluated the usefulness of training and directed attention in learning. Based on PDU tasks, practitioners normally found legislation knowledge learning, for instance, to be indeed important, as it endorsed the actions taken by police constables. However, they also believed that the espoused all-inclusive learning style was not necessary, given that a lot of details covered in lectures were not used at all at PDU tasks. The following quote clearly conveyed these widely shared observations.

> 'First PDU was a great reality check. It brought weight to what we had learnt in the classroom... It also showed me the reality of policing, what I would be dealing with on a daily basis and what offence are a rare occurrence. I did find that the imbalance in the things we are dealing with is not reflected in the learning we are given, however.' (Officer 06).

This set of recognitions again served as a basis for judgement when practitioners returned to formal training.

5.4.3 Engaging with post-placement training: role distance and identity regression

The first PDU elevated practitioners' self-perception. It was commonly believed among practitioners that they were ready for this new job, as they proved themselves capable in dealing with the various policing tasks they came across, as well as good at learning new things, which is well reflected by the following quote;

> 'PDU made me look forward to starting my career, made me feel confident that I will be able to cope with most situation' (officer 19).

Since then, their engagement with learning and practising activities had become less about verifying the qualification for a police officer, but more about demonstrating

their good mastery of practical skills and their ease and confidence in handling familiar as well as unfamiliar tasks. Through various means, they openly refused to behave or be treated as a student. These nuanced changes of self-presentation, according to Goffman's (1961) notion of role distance, reflected practitioners' resistance towards the 'innocent novice' identity status imposed by the training authority. As mentioned, based on their PDU experience, they had already conceived themselves at a much more advanced stage than that.

Back in the pre-placement training stage, while practitioners actively restored their practice-based identity and carved out their independent ontological space, these efforts were relatively private and silent, and did not directly compete with the formal regime. This meant that although practitioners had already positioned themselves above what they were labelled as, they did not externalise the role distance in the initial stage. This was mainly due to their disconnection with practical working life and operational community. However, throughout PDU sessions, their sense of identity and confidence in competence became re-activated through real practices. Consequently, role distance was much more saliently expressed.

Specifically, there was growing cynicism about the infantilising treatment of and tightened control on newcomers at the police academy, which practitioners believed conflicting with their growing competence and upgraded identity. A good example was some recruits' orientation to the group presentation activity on the topic of vehicle. The cohort was divided into groups, given some time for research on certain parts of a vehicle and then asked to share their findings in class. The trainer encouraged them to use innovative ways to present the findings, such as making models of the vehicle components with paper and tape. It was received by some practitioners as a 'silly' exercise (officer 09). They reckoned that such a simple and not essentially relevant topic should be delivered a lot more succinctly and efficiently, and that the task was arranged in an immature and unprofessional way. Consequently, many of them did not even participate in the group discussion at all and reacted indifferently to the presentation. There were even a few veteran officers mocking the session by sarcastically calling the presenters 'knowledgizer', and saying 'I am knowledgized' after the presentations.

With the role-distancing mindset, PDU 2 was anticipated not merely as a second wave of repertoire building, but also as a chance to display adequate capability for becoming a fully-fledged police officer in the near future. However, many reported it as a rather iterative experience, because they were not entitled by tutors with the discretion that they expected, considering the high level of autonomy they had at the end of PDU 1, or because they did not actively take various tasks throughout PDU 2. Despite of their intentions, practitioners did not find a channel to externalise their role distance, but instead found themselves still captive in the apprentice role.

Nevertheless, this did not necessarily mean practitioners did not learn anything at all. Three aspects have to be taken into consideration to explain practitioners' notion of iteration. Firstly, the policing tasks included in PDU 2, such as dealing with the case of a missing person, naturally happened less frequently, so that there were not as many chances to practice and improve as for the commonplace tasks like arrests in PDU 1. Secondly, given the complexity and contingency of PDU 2 policing tasks such as statements and case files, recruits unavoidably needed to seek guidance and confirmation from their tutors on aspects such as use of words and key points to get across, regardless of how many times they had practiced the same type of work. For this reason, they did not feel that they were given as much discretion for job practicing as in PDU 1. Thirdly, most of the tasks in PDU 2 were paperwork-based, back-stage and slow-paced, hence different from the stereotyped 'real police work' (Van Maanen, 2010), that is, front-line role-fulfilling activities. Thus, there was far less salient 'dramatic realisation' (Goffman, 1959: 19) of the police identity.

All of these aspects suggest that their preoccupation with active role-playing made practitioners focus on a narrow range of policing tasks and high degree of discretion, and give little credit to alternative elements. The narratives below clearly show how, in practitioners' perception, lessened involvement of dramaturgical identity display during PDU 2 led to a perceived regression of identity.

> 'I didn't feel I learn a lot (in the second PDU) … On my first PDU, I put up three jobs a day. I was getting off late. I was getting involved in everything. And I felt I had learned loads. But then on this one (PDU 2), if we have got one job one day we would be lucky. I didn't use my radio at all to speak to control. I didn't say 'attach me to this job'. We weren't proactive..... When

> I was in (the first PDU), I was on the radio every day. 'Cause you go to a job, and then you update it on the radio and then you move on and get to another job. But in this one, we went to a job and we just went slow time.' (Officer 04)

Their first PDU experience had grounded their understanding of the job, themselves and the autonomy that they should be allowed in jobs. Based on this judgement foundation, their expectation for the PDU 2 tended to be overoptimistic, considering the more difficult work tasks this time, and eventually led to a feeling of disillusion. However, the PDU 2 experience hinted to practitioners that their previous understanding of the job was narrow and partial, and the real job included a larger variety of tasks, and therefore required more competence.

5.4.4 Engaging with probationary shift: expanding repertoire and evolving identity

Joining the real policing world, as elucidated earlier, police newcomers were invariably encountered with an unexpectedly vast variety of work content and highly contingent working conditions, so much so that they normally experienced another course of learning and adaptation in the job with the help of mentors. Besides, the work nature, that of high autonomy and individual accountability, also generated great pressure on the newly batched police officers, who had to constantly make decisions under rather uncertain circumstances.

For practitioners, the enlarged work content, increased intensity and heightened discretion and responsibility in the real-world policing expanded the competence repertoire attributed to the police identity. Accordingly, they committed themselves to another intense learning process in order to meet the new demands and become a real competent police officer. At the same time, as they encountered a new set of behavioural habits and principles at their local policing community ---- constantly different than those espoused in earlier placement contexts ---- practitioners also set out to deliberately re-adjust their working pattern to the local practical norms (Van Maanen, 2010: 12).

Interestingly, practitioners' particular pattern of re-learning made their identity work at this stage more significant than in their earlier stage, and more submissive than other types of identity workers. Based on the new understanding of the work, practitioners conceived of themselves as 'new' and inexperienced again, despite

having considered themselves adept at carrying out jobs in earlier contexts. They started to build up their identity accordingly by shadowing senior officers and modelling through their scripts of job delivery. Interestingly, since the idiosyncratic policing styles senior officers developed over time made it less obvious to new starters where the diameter of practices lays, veteran recruits became even more dependent on 'role models' than rookie recruits in the intake. This was because the rookies ---- either being legitimacy seekers who principally sought justifiable rules that were independent of dubious local norms, or being authenticity seekers who strived to author a true-to-self work identity ---- did not invest their identity primarily in playing the policing role in line with contextual cultural assumptions. A quote from an ex-special constable is illuminating in demonstrating how backseat observation preoccupied practitioners' learning at a local reference group;

> '… ever ever I am still the newest person on shift, so everyone is more experienced than me. If you want to, you could just always take a backseat, be like 'oh I am the least experienced person here. I'll let you do with it'. And when I first came to the shift, I did that a little bit, just in terms of, I just want to see how everyone dealt… because everyone deals with something differently. So, I sat back for quite a bit.' (Officer 04)

Moreover, reality shocks or dissonant experiences in the early stage of shift life struck practitioners with the unexpected complexity of the work, and reinforced their reference and conformity to the behaving styles and assumptions of more experienced shift members. For instance, officer 04 experienced a critical incident whereby she failed to see through the lie of a voyeur offender and nearly let him go. From the episode, her understanding about police work was further extended given that dishonesty and abnormality as such should always be taken into account. This reflection intensified her awareness of lack of experience in interacting with different people, and therefore inclined to turn to senior colleagues when dealing with tricky issues. To illustrate:

> 'you have to always talk to other people with more experience when you are dealing with something.' (Officer 04)

Another case is the experience of officer 19, who handcuffed a member of the public with mental issue to stop her from hurting people around, but was told by a

sergeant that she should not have done so for the sake of 'using force unjustifiably'. The incident caused her to reflect that,

> 'I thought, you know, I was absolutely honest, if I wasn't a police officer in the uniform, then I wouldn't help the mom with the thing. But why because I am now in uniform, can I help less?' (Officer 19)

When asked how she would deal with situations like this in the future, she commented that she would find an in-between solution that allowed her to offer help but without putting herself in a rule-violating position. That is to say, while she did not completely agree with the sergeant's point in the first place, she took it as an indicator of the boundary of accepted behaviours in the field and would use it to guide her practices in the future.

Therefore, practitioners' pursued competence in dramaturgical role playing was taken as the ability to perform jobs in similar ways as experienced officers did. They confirmed their identity by comparing their own practices with those of role models (Pratt, et al., 2006: 251), or by checking the reaction and feedback from significant others (Down and Reveley, 2009: 385; Ibarra, 1999: 779). Officer 04 reported both methods of identity validation. She recalled the critical moment that prompted her to move out of the backseat and take the lead more, when she found that her way of interpreting and addressing a situation was identical to her senior colleagues. She had clearly regarded senior officers' working identity as her template and their work patterns as the standard by which she measured her own work competence.

> 'It was at that time when I was still sitting in back… I remember sitting back and I was listening to everything my colleague was saying. And I thought that was exactly what I would have done, and that's exactly what I would have said. And I thought if I just have taken that step forward and done it, and then I could have dealt with it. And then I think that was like a point where they literally did everything I would have done. And I thought, now I just need to go for it now. Just go forward. And I started to take the lead more.' (Officer 04)

She also noted that in the early stage of probation shift, she often called her sergeant for advice or permission. And the moment she felt herself to be a real police officer was when she could make a decision in addressing complicated issues on her

own in an assertive way. This confidence still came from her knowledge of her sergeant's way of dealing with those situations. It was the idea that the sergeant would agree with her decision and be happy to leave her to make her own choice that allowed her to progress into a more independent officer.

> 'A couple of months earlier, I might have point-to-point my sergeant to make like 'this is the situation, am I okay to deal with it like that?' But now, given I have previously done similar things for shoplifter, I knew the correct processes, I knew what I was doing, so I was like ''I knew that. This is the right thing to do. I can deal with it this way''. So, I think finding your own feet would lessen supervision.' (Officer 04)

By means of learning to enact policing role through experience in various situations, practitioners gradually enlarged their practical repertoire, and over time their 'learning curve became less steep' (officer 19) and the sense of being a police officer stabilised. As Pratt and colleagues similarly noted, as practical learning transformed from a major and radical level to a more nuanced level, new medical professionals found the gap closing between their identity status and their targeted work identity (2006: 254).

However, practitioners' reliance on role-embodying interactions to feed identity caused their sense of identity to be directly linked to everyday routines, which also meant that it was constrained by the scope of those everyday routines. As revealed from their experience during PDU 2, practitioners were inclined to take credit from the interactions that tangibly embodied police function. Up until this stage, their comprehension of the identity, albeit expanded, was still squarely based on what and how they actively conducted on daily basis. Since what they did was determined by what happened in reality, and how they did was templated by experienced officers, practitioners rather passively accepted these external definitions. This limited their own reflective thinking regarding the occupation, its far-reaching impact, social environment and so on, and made them less likely to make inquiries or critical contemplation on the job than other types of recruits.

For example, the interpretation of officer 04 on her work demonstrated that, to her, the meaning of work was getting involved in various kinds of policing activities,

and what she expected from the work was already delimited by the range of activities. Thus, nothing beyond that was likely to be incorporated into her work identity.

> ‘People quite like to exaggerate things. But you still got to go in at that level, thinking that ‘well someone said they are doing this.' you have to be prepared for the worse’. So even just that, get your agenda up anyway. And even it might not be what it turns out to be. You still have that. Still sort of keep you going.’ (Officer 04)

5.5 Comparison between the three identity orientations

By scrutinising the specific identity constructing processes, it is found that the three orientations differed in four aspects of identity work. It was the divergence at these crucial points that cumulatively channelled the same group of newcomers towards different directions of identity construction. These four key dimensions are now discussed below and outlined in Table 5.1.

Each time they entered a new context, newcomers were invariably propelled to launch or modify their identity work. Yet, the specific ‘*trigger’* (Beech, 2010: 297) for these identity projects might vary significantly among people with different orientations. For the legitimacy seeking orientation, the new set of rules in the situated context was frequently the primary mobiliser for identity work or adjustment of identity work. In this study, individuals adopting this orientation often accounted for their identity work at that moment by focusing on the transition of regime and subsequent changes occurring to their own status of legitimacy. In the case of the authenticity seeking orientation, however, identity work was more likely to be invoked or shifted by the challenges to preservation of self-authenticity engendered in the new context. In accordance, newcomers with this orientation constantly evaluated their situation by principally assessing what obstacles and opportunities of actualising their ‘real self’ existed in the new context. As for the practitioner orientation, initiation or customisation of identity work was stimulated by newly emerged practical demands. As manifested in the data, practitioners activated identity construction at points when new job content was introduced, practical role-playing was involved and competence repertoire was enlarged.

In responding to the focused dimension of contextual conditions, different orientations mobilised different forms of *agency*. Legitimacy seekers set out to

accommodate to changes in dominant legitimacy system by aligning self with the new rules. As indicated in the above findings, this type of agency resided in individuals' recognising of prevailing norms and rules, reproducing of established principles, and making re-adjustments based on the feedback of authority or audiences. Authenticity seekers, however, exerted efforts to seize and utilise elements agreeing with the authentic self and address the disagreeing ones to advance a true-to-self identity. This type of agency often manifested in activities of formulating one's distinctiveness within a collective category, maintaining self-identity in an identity-demanding work context, and reconfiguring fragmented experiences into one's own life story. In accordance with the preoccupation with practical competence, practitioners devoted most agency to competence building, often in the specific forms of selective knowledge acquisition, repertoire construction and competence embodiment.

In tandem with the agential endeavours of identity constructing, newcomers had to verify their identity status to ensure the efforts led them towards their pursued identity status. Since the three orientations linked identity issues closely with different spheres of social context, their *confirming mechanisms* were naturally discrepant from each other. Given the attempt to become an appropriate member in the new context, legitimacy seekers assessed identity work progression mainly by viewing important members' attitudes and feedback, with endorsement taken as the indicator of acquired legitimacy. Since authenticity seekers intended to resume their authentic identity in the new context, they used the latitude of self-authorship in living and articulating their life to measure the outcome of their identity work. Practitioners maintained practical competence development as their preoccupation, so that the achievement of their identity work was evaluated in their own performance of the role. Successful embodiment of the repertoire was perceived as designating a mature identity.

Finally, it could be seen from the above three aspects that each of the three orientations had a primary '*driver'* (Alvesson, 2010: 199) for identity construction. On the one hand, the driver existed as individuals' sustaining pursuit in social interactions and characterised their preferred way of being. Therefore, contextual disturbance, threat or heightened demand regarding this aspect would stimulate individuals' conscious acts to repair, re-establish, or enhance it, the process of which is referred to as identity work in considerable identity literature (e.g. Beech, 2010; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). The driver appeared prominent when newcomers entered new social

contexts. Once they realised the preferred identity could not be directly replicated in the new environment, they often promptly came up with a new definition of identity that adjusted the aspired identity to their local context.

Dimensions / Orientations	*Trigger*	*Agency*	*Confirming mechanism*	*Driver*
Legitimacy seeking	New regime; changes of rules	Recognising and adhering to rules; reproducing established principles; making re-adjustment according to feedback	Seeking social approval	A legitimate identity
Authenticity seeking	New social prescriptions; challenges to self-authenticity	Formulating distinctiveness; maintaining authentic work style; integrating episodes into one's own life stories	Testing self-authorship in living and articulating life	An authentic identity
Practitioner	New practical elements; higher demands of competence	Knowledge acquiring; repertoire building; competence embodying	Embodying competence in practising of the role	A competent identity

Table 5.1 Comparison between the three identity orientations

On the other hand, the driver served as the objective of these agential identity projects and energised the subsequent series of efforts towards it. Moreover, through continuous interplays with the material world, identity constructors had to modify their pursued identity based on the contextual conditions, and the degree and pattern of these alterations also differed between the three orientations. As indicated by this study, legitimacy seekers, authenticity seekers and practitioners coordinated contextual

elements and individual agency respectively towards a legitimate, authentic or competent police identity. During the process, legitimacy seekers were most heavily affected by the complexities and contradictions in social contexts, and had to come to terms with the precariously constructed legitimacy. However, the identity driver of authenticity seekers somehow agreed with the fluid social contexts and allowed more actualisation than compromise over time. As for practitioners, the driver of practical competence rendered their target of identity work squarely generated from practical elements in the unfolding social context.

These interdependent and interrelated dimensions jointly explained how individuals with given orientations organised their means and ends of identity work, and negotiated between individual attempts and contextual conditions. Therefore, the generic identity construction process could be depicted by the pattern individual actors move between these dimensions. Hence, the divergence among individual newcomers over time could also be explained by the escalating effect of nuanced individual variations at each minor step of identity construction. These conceptions were integrated and abstracted into a four-step cyclical model, which will be detailed in the next chapter.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have probed into the identity construction process from individuals' own perspectives. It was found that they normally adopted a particular orientation to live through the four socialising phases and, accordingly, constructed identity with certain means and ends. By scrutinising the three most significant orientations emerged in the case, I drew observations that more directly addresses the research questions.

Firstly, individuals differed from one other in the course of identity work mainly in four aspects, namely trigger, agency, confirming mechanisms and driver. Their divergence in each of these aspects jointly made them differ in interpreting and interplaying with social contexts, as well as perceiving self-status and desiring identity.

Secondly, when identity constructors went through discontinuous and conflicting process, the orientation they persistently held provided a robust anchor of ontological consistency. By viewing each of the three orientations chronologically, it was very

clear that while individuals' attitudes, self-perception, agentic efforts and social relations were rather fluid across social contexts, what they sought for, i.e., legitimacy, authenticity and competence, was consistently upheld and directed all micro processes of identity work.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

Whereas the two preceding chapters have addressed the research questions empirically, the inductively generated answers will now be considered at an abstract, theoretical level, with the aim of adding relevant strands to the body of existing research on identity work.

To this end, first of all, the concept of identity orientation is formulated reflectively. It will be then used as a bridge between individuals and historical and social contexts in order to explain why individuals diverge in identity work and how multiple ways of identity work can coexist. Finally, it will be availed upon to scrutinise the process of individual identity work. Through the micro-level analyses, this thesis demonstrates how identity work is both consistent, progressive, change-resistant, while simultaneously contradictory, iterative and change-infused.

6.2 Identity orientation: a useful analytic lens of identity work in organisation

As indicated at the end of Chapter 5, to make sense of the unwieldy empirical findings, I have created the concept of *identity orientation* and categorised three types of identity orientation. Now I will further develop the concept, sharpen its definition and connotations, and critically evaluate its usefulness in academic research as well as the practical sector.

6.2.1 Conceptualising identity orientation

My in-depth longitudinal study has added new dimensions to my understanding of identity work. While I had previously set out to explore it as a *critical issue*, I realised during my research that it is more like an *everyday issue*. In other words, instead of seeing identity work as a bracketed life episode or momentary life project, it should be comprehended as an organic part of an individual's life, hence open-ended and naturally embodied in daily interactive practices (Alvesson et al., 2008a; Barley and Kunda, 2001). Thus, identity construction in a specific context should reflect the way people tend to relate to the social world in that very context—that is to say, there is congruency in how people are inclined to live their lives in a

certain situation, what identity they intend to achieve and how they strive for that identity. This pattern was solidly evidenced in the study, as recruits persistently pursued a certain version of police identity, which was dominated by legitimacy, authenticity or competence, throughout the long term of socialisation. In addition, these recruits maintained a corresponding way of interpreting, reacting to, and reflecting upon the external world: focused on legitimacy, authenticity and competence.

Therefore, individuals' existential consistency and security are vitally generated from their ability to consistently maintain their preferred or familiar way of social engagement. Having said this, however, I do not intend to say people's identity orientations are static or a-contextual. Setting aside the biological and psychological factors, people could also substantially or slightly modify life approach as a consequence of critical events, and subsequently change their identity conception and construction strategies (e.g. Beech, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Also, career progression could also have an impact on identity orientation (Clarke et al., 2009). The legitimacy seekers could become more authenticity seeking at a later stage of their career, for example. Based on these perspectives, I conceptualise identity orientation as follows:

The way individuals relatively consistently choose to engage with the social contexts they encounter, the dialogical process of which produces their identity.

6.2.2 Differentiating identity and identity work with the framework of identity orientation

As the concept of identity orientation facilitates the identification three different patterns of identity work process, it is not pointless to propose this concept as an analytical lens through which to explore identity work in other organisational contexts, especially when individual variation in identity work is theoretically interested. As an analytical lens, identity orientation has two advantages in addressing limitations in the existing literature.

Firstly, as discussed in the literature review, critics of identity studies have commented that empirical studies tend to promote one or very few specific version(s) of identity work with one or very few framework(s) to 'relate to' and 'shape' (Alvesson, 2010) their focal case studies. In this way, however, the phenomena of identity work

are often, relatively speaking, captured individuals in a unitary image and interpreted organisational context within a one-dimensional picture. This mode of inquiry has the potential risk of eliminating or missing the nuanced heterogeneity between identity constructors (Ibarra, 1999; Watson, 2008) situated within the same context or process, and underestimates the polysemy (Alvesson et al., 2008b; Davies and Thomas, 2003; Sewell, 1992) of the organisational context or process that individuals interact with.

Considerable effort has been devoted to investigating identity issues from 'a native point of view' (Alvesson et al., 2008b). Thanks to this work, in the recent decades significant insights have been gained concerning the subtle, evolving and dialogical processes of identity work from an interpretive perspective. However, the complexity and inconsistency of individuals (Alvesson, 2010) renders scholars inclined to approach identity issues with high sensitivity to the 'localised' (Alvesson, 2010) 'empirical context' (Watson, 2008). It can be argued that this tendency has been one of the major factors prompting researchers to be less willing to draw comparisons between individual cases and generate a comparative framework from empirical studies. Accordingly, more often than not, readers are educated with ideas, albeit very enlightening ones, rather than with systematic modelling of individual identities from empirical studies.

As a relative beginner in this area of research and theorisation, I deeply appreciate how challenging it could be to theorise in a qualitative study of individual identity work in organisation setting, since human beings are the most complex creatures in the world, identity work is an intricate process, and organisation context is constantly multifaceted. Based on my research experience and reading of relevant studies and reviews, I argue that the identity orientation framework has its merits in facilitating the theorising process.

Identity orientation is an analytical level between specific data of individuals' social interactions and fundamental theoretical underpinnings. Specific identity orientations, like but not exclusive to what I used in this study, could serve as 'theoretically guided empirical themes' (Alvesson, 2010: 210) that could not only capture nuanced divergence between individuals from the empirical side, but also be related to more than one meta-theory. In other words, on the one hand, researchers who are faithful to an inductive approach could avoid getting lost in the messy data,

and still synthesise significant categories of identity or identity work. On the other hand, when reflecting upon the research at a theoretical level, by abstracting data into specific orientations, researchers could pin down thematic focuses without prematurely arriving at only one theoretical camp and compromising the rich data.

The lens of identity orientation allows reliable zooming in, open-minded zooming out, and smoother movement between data analysis and profound theorisation. In this way, studies could generate outcomes that are both data-driven and theoretically concrete and novel. It is hoped this approach will facilitate the task of other identity researchers by allowing them to recognise and theorise the variation in individual identity work.

Secondly, the conceptualisation of identity orientation underscores the interconnection between social engagement and identity work, in specific aspects of trigger, agency, confirming mechanisms and fundamental driver. Hence, the underlying assumption of this analytical lens encourages researchers to make sense of individuals' identity matters in an *integrative, continuous and processual* way. Taking the present study as an example, these orientation themes not only sensitise me about individual divergences in socialising experiences, but also lead me to connect pieces of experiences into big pictures.

As an illustration, encouraged by the identity orientation framework, I took seriously the variation in recruits' reported attitudes towards the role-play exercises during formal training. These findings from interviews were then related to my observations of their behaviours during the role-playing sessions. I then found connections between recruits' different ways of engaging with role-play exercises and their varied orientations to the entire training. By practising this mental mapping, I was able to explain recruits' specific experience at role-play exercises as part of their unique pattern of identity work ---- the exercises were seen respectively as a process of subjectivity reproduction by those seeking approval of legitimacy (Townley, 1993), as experiential raw materials of self-narratives by those seeking authentic self-concept (Giddens, 1991), and as dramaturgical interactions that embody the police role by those seeking self-perceived competence (Goffman, 1959).

This advantage addresses another limitation in identity studies. In the pertinent literature, differences among individuals tend to be identified as isolated aspects,

instead of continuous patterns or trajectories. For instance, Ibarra's (1999) study crucially points out different 'strategies' in junior professionals' identity work, with some imitating the 'wholesale' of senior colleagues, some imitating parts of others, some crafting 'true-to-self' style. She also mentions how these different strategies could be related to their differed reactions towards feedback. The analysis, however, could be pushed further by, for instance, indicating in a neater and coherent way the underlying interconnections between imitation strategy choosing, feedback perceiving and identity modifying throughout identity work.

While the identity orientation framework does not intend to explore the causal links between micro aspects of identity matters or help predict identity work results, it does underscores a processual view of identity work, which could facilitate researchers to ask themselves 'so what' questions after spotting heterogeneity among individuals, and avoid a superficial understanding focused only on surface differences in a single aspect.

In addition, for the practical world, the first benefit of categorisation of identity orientation is it allows vivid and accessible capturing of the various types of employees, which will help practitioners understand people in organisations or in specific contexts. Second, the orientation lens helps gather details of varied effects of organisational events and processes upon employees, which could generate direct implications regarding enhancement or modification of those elements to better cater to the people involved. This aspect is especially relevant for socialising, training and organisation 'sensegiving' mechanisms (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Third, by approaching to organisation issues from the angle of identity orientation, investigators could dive into a more fundamental level than the visible and fluid level to understand people. For instance, while attitudes, satisfaction and personal values could be subject to many influences and therefore constantly changing, orientations might be slower changing, which could be particularly useful in the field of Human Resources Management at, for instance, recruitment and training.

6.3 The three identity orientations: from the case study to general organization studies

After proposing identity orientation as an analytical lens, a crucial question follows: what identity orientation is suitable for researching identity in organisation

setting? In a large number of organisation studies, identity work has been assumed to be preoccupied with existential consistency, and/or distinctiveness (e.g. Costas and Fleming, 2009; Kreiner et al., 2006a; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2008, 2009). Additionally, some studies offer critiques to this assumption by demonstrating that identity work could target at flexible, changing or multifaced identities. Among others, Clarke et al. (2009) offer a major study that advances the identity work of combining antagonistic discourses in self-narratives, by which they suggest 'moral uprightness' is sometimes what matters most for identity constructors. Still, some other studies do not explicitly frame the orientation of the studied identity work within any fixed theme, but generally suggest that coping in a changing or challenging context is what identity work aims for (e.g. Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

While they do empirically explain the focal phenomena of identity work, these equivalent versions of identity orientation are either too vague and general, such as existential security, to helpfully appreciate the vital idiosyncrasies of identity work, or too localised, such as withstanding the religious condemnation of businesswomen (e.g. Essers and Benschop, 2009), to generate hermeneutic observations that contribute to an understanding of identity work occurring elsewhere. Conversely, the three orientations advanced in this study prove to be appropriate themes. They not only effectively explain this empirical study, but also, as I will discuss shortly, prevalently exist in contemporary organisations.

Now I will examine these three identity orientations at two levels. First, I will separately analyse their key features, grounded in empirical evidence. At the same time, by using the two-dimensional contextual evaluation model (see subsection 4.6) to navigate, I will relate these orientations to identity matters in other similar organisation contexts and discuss how these orientations could guide inquiry of those issues. Second, I will reflect on why these orientations co-existed in the context of police socialisation. Through this analysis, I aim to 1) highlight the importance of appreciating different patterns of identity work in the same case; 2) present how to reflectively identify and differentiate identity orientations; 3) demonstrate that these orientations do not function solely as categorising labels to aggregate data horizontally, but help make sense of empirical data of individual subjective experiences in association with historical and social contexts, thus tracing down individual identity phenomena vertically.

6.3.1 Legitimacy seeking identity work

Inspired by the case study, I maintain that legitimacy is a crucial and commonplace orientation for identity work in organisation setting. First, the police recruits constructed identity during a critical phase ---- socialisation, which naturally highlighted the importance of legitimacy. Specifically, new recruits in the study were devalued as 'in-between' novices (Turner, 1967) and required to complete a change of state through a strict rite of passage (Conti, 2009; Gallo, 2001), before the end of which they were not granted legitimacy. This was reinforced by the highly controlling structure, strong emphasis on rule-following as well as arbitrary discourses in the formal training context.

Additionally, the police community has always conceived its professional competence wide-ranging, sophisticated, and hardly understandable to outsiders (Fielding, 1984; Van Maanen, 2010). Echoing this notion, the study found both training and placement authority advanced an elusive system of competence that recruits had to acquire, although the competence they respectively referred to was different. This factor rendered legitimacy even harder to access.

Moreover, the police 'in-group' solidarity is widely recognised in the literature (e.g. Alpert and Dunham, 2004; Dick, 2005; Van Maanen, 1980; Waddington, 1999). In the study, the notion of in-groupness was conveyed through both the hard boundary set up by formal training that distanced newcomers and the backstage collaboration in placement context that embraced them. This meant that recruits were half-in and half-out, which paradoxically emphasised their powerless and in-between position.

These aspects correlate with the connotations of 'high structure' and 'high unity' in the contextual evaluation model developed in chapter 4. Therefore, based on the study as well as substantial evidences in related police studies, it can be argued that within the socialising context of the police, which is characterised by 'high structure' and 'high unity', newcomers are imposed with a low legitimate status and thus compiled to seek legitimacy.

When compared to socialisation in some other occupations, the present case shows general relevance. Specifically, the high-structure and high-unity context correlates with some widely acknowledged socialisation themes, including 1) entering the organisation or occupation at a relatively low and powerless level within a steep

hierarchy (Grey, 1994; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009); 2) joining a prestigious group that has esoteric knowledge, competence and rules of behaviours (Covaleski et al., 1998; Grey, 1994; Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006); and 3) facing strong in-group identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and 'divesture' (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979) of previous and alternative identity (Pratt, 2000a and b).

Similar to what happened in the context of the police, in these situations the dominant discourses could forcefully or attractively totalise newcomers' self-understanding (Foucault, 1980). In this way, legitimacy issued by the authority becomes all that makes newcomers valuable and meaningful beings, as well as what gives direction to their life trajectory (Collinson, 2003; Grey, 1994). Consequently, one could argue that occupations or organisations possessing these characters are likely to prompt individuals to seek legitimacy at entrance or continuously throughout the career. Inquiries of phenomena in those contexts could be investigated from the perspective of legitimacy seeking.

Second, in the case, the quest for legitimacy was further intensified as a result of the critical discursive discrepancies between regimes. Especially after being exposed to both formal and practical discourses, the legitimacy seeking recruits were found to try very hard to earn legitimacy in both spheres, but paradoxically suffered from a rather precarious status of legitimacy. That is to say, when existing discourses are powerful yet mutually competing, striving for legitimacy could increase individuals' insecurity (Collinson, 2003; Sennett, 1998). This contextual feature is consistent with 'high structure' and 'high fragmentation' in the previous model.

With these two contextual features as clues, within the wider identity work literature we can find closely related themes, including 1) intersection of conflicting discourses in a local context (e.g. Davies and Thomas, 2003; Down and Reveley, 2009); 2) changes of organisation structure or individual position (e.g. Beech, 2010; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Thomas and Linstead, 2002); 3) intrusion of judgement from alternative discourses (e.g. Clarke et al., 2009; Dick, 2005). Similar to what was found in my study, these situations all could threaten, undermine or demolish an individual' previously held, and thus propel identity work of re-establishing legitimacy.

In addition, it has also been noted as a universal trend that organisation life has become increasingly changing, contradictory and ambiguous because of radical

restructuring (Bauman, 2000; Collinson, 2003; Giddens, 1991; Gioia et al., 2000; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Simultaneously, scholars oriented to postmodernist view contend that individuals are always heavily invested in discourses. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to argue that the growing fluidity of today's organisations, in combination with individuals' unavoidable dependence on discourses, has made legitimacy a more vulnerable and temporary construct. Correspondingly, identity work for legitimacy becomes an ongoing project. The topic of middle managers' identity work has documented rich examples supporting this argument (cf. Down and Reveley, 2009; Sims, 2003; Thomas and Linstead, 2002). Yet, there are also many other roles grappling with the aforementioned changes and challenges in life that could be comprehended from the perspective of legitimacy seeking identity work.

6.3.2 Authenticity seeking identity work

Authenticity also proves an important identity work orientation in both the specific context of police socialisation and the general organisation setting. First, the seeking of authenticity during police identity work was largely stimulated by the heavy stereotyping of the police identity outside and inside the parameter of the police community. Outwardly, the historical and conventional portrait of the police to some extent overshadowed the uniqueness and agency of individuals (Ybema et al., 2009; Van Maanen, 2010). As examined in the literature review, the social identity of police has been associated with ambivalent and somewhat polarising social discourses, including both fantasied expectations as well as distancing, unsupportive and critical ascriptions (Dick, 2005; Manning, 2008; Van Maanen, 1973; etc). Both these extreme and deeply rooted social discourses could have imposed a huge influence on newcomers' individual identity when they became part of the collective, and therefore provoked identity work that involved the negotiation of internal self-identity with the external social-identity of police (Kreiner et al., 2006b; Watson, 2008).

Within the boundary of the occupation, the highly standardising training and tutoring, along with tight control and monitoring in the first two contexts, exerted similar pressure on recruits' identity. The formal and practical authority both attempted to solely dominate, shape and control the behaviour and values of new recruits in accordance with their own rules, which also neglected the distinctiveness and

discretion of individuals, and allowed little room of autonomy and creativity in conducting work and crafting identity.

Predicated on these considerations, the features of the outside and inside environments are in keeping with the 'high structure' and 'high unity' context abstracted in the model. Under such circumstances, recruits activated identity work to defend what they taking as the authentic essential self (Costas and Fleming, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). In pre-emptive interplays with the externally prescribed identity, as shown in the first and second phase of socialisation, recruits subjectively choosing and reconfiguring identity constituents by selecting what to embrace, what to reject, and what to negotiate among the socially given discourses. By doing so, they strived to actualise their sense of selfhood (Giddens, 1991) and actively 'influence the various social identities which pertain to them' (Watson, 2008: 129).

While the specific police socialising contexts seem hardly to be found identical with other occupations or organisations, the fundamental dimensions of 'high structure' and 'high unity' underlying the specific case do suggest broad relevance in organisation studies. Relatively uniform rules, norms and values, in combination with their strong determinism on agency, could also be found in various empirical milieus. Among others, working under a rigidly set assessment and progression path (e.g. Grey, 1994), in social groups dominated by certain acknowledged attributes (e.g. Clarke et al., 2009; Ibarra, 1999), and in 'halo'-attached occupations (e.g. Kreiner et al., 2006b), all could captivate individuals in a readymade role that, albeit socially credited, is construed distant from, conflicting or sacrificing their original and complete self. For instance, Ibarra (1999) documents an informant who reported feeling not himself when experiencing the aggressive self-presenting style of an experienced superior.

Thus, the thesis argues that authenticity seeking not only could be triggered by tight monitoring (Collinson, 2003) and negative cultural clichés (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999), but also could reside in encounters with the attractive and culturally accredited but firmly fixed identity. A closely related idea in organisation studies is the control over identity and behaviours generated by the label of 'professional' (Fournier, 1999; e.g. Clarke, et al., 2009; Granfield, 1992). However, I believe the scope of authenticity tension is more ubiquitous than professionalism. The far-reaching principle of

calculative rationality, for instance, captures individuals by their economic and functional role, and measures them with standardised indicators (e.g. Butler, 1991; Gilligan, 1982). By promoting 'structure' and 'unity', it threatens individual authenticity. That is to say, authenticity seeking identity work could be applied as an analytical angle in a broader context to individuals' relations with society.

Furthermore, as reflected in the study, authenticity seeking identity work was enabled to thrive at later phases of socialisation. The discursive segmentation between formal and practical domains, and among subgroups in the operation of policing offered a robust pool of discursive resources (Watson, 2008). At the same time, the competition between different discourses created an ambiguous and complex overall discursive context in the police, and therefore weakened the compiling pressure of each set of discourses (Giddens, 1991; Jenkins, 1996). This context was utilised as an exploitive space (Carroll and Levy, 2008; Davies and Thomas, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2005) by recruits to ingeniously select, integrate and edit discourses to serve their own identity work. Besides, their active authoring of identity was empowered more when the overall context did not enforce strict rules in moulding individual behaviours so that creative and discretionary agency was more frequently enacted and accordingly developed. This tendency suggests that the context featured with 'high agency' and 'high fragmentation' is favourable for authenticity seeking identity work.

These two dimensions are also correlated with a wide range of empirical themes in organisation studies. First, organisational or occupational socialisation, when taking place in a voluntary and practical context, is relevant. A good case is Ibarra's (1999) classic study on junior bankers and consultants. While she theoretically captures subjects' choice of true-to-self work identity over pure imitation of others' as a matter of clinging to old, familiar roles, the issue could also be interpreted with the logic presented here. That is, the vital dependence on and appreciation of individual agency as an organisation's asset ('personal styles', 'technical and analytic skills' in Ibarra, 1999: 778), in conjunction with the diversity of work identities permitted, encouraged the junior bankers and consultants to actualise themselves in the work setting.

Moreover, people experiencing organisation changes could be looked at through the lens of authenticity seeking. Apart from the pressure to secure their

legitimacy, as discussed earlier, individuals are also afforded a beneficial level of contextual ambiguity and contradictions to advance their preferred version of self. Down and Reveley's (2009) hero, Wilson, while struggling to establish a managerial role where radical conflicts existed in organisational discourses and subordinates' conversations, utilised the situation to cast himself in a more people-concerning and open-minded image than that of high management in the company. Consequently, he succeeded in incorporating the attributes of leadership and people-expert, which he desired, into the manager identity.

Finally, the intersection of multiple rule systems and, correspondingly, the polysemy and ambiguity of objects, events, relations and processes (Bauman, 2000; Sewell, 1992) in contemporary society has created more transforming capacity in individual agency. In addition, the increasingly diverse, competing and contradictory discourses in our life are pressures that evoke identity work, and, simultaneously, resources that sustain identity work (Giddens, 1991). Authenticity seeking identity work could be understood more expansively as the project of living as one desires in a complicated and demanding, yet malleable and resourceful environment. This means that in certain social, industrial or occupational contexts marked by fluidity and fragmented institutions, individuals are frequently compiled to re-construct themselves to various degrees (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001). Hence, this type of authenticity seeking could become widely adopted, as it helps individuals to retain their stability and integrity in their understanding of self in such an ever-changing and complex environment.

6.3.3 Practitioner identity work

Drawing on the experience of practitioners in the study, the quest for practical competence was also imperative in the policing socialisation process. First, it was stimulated in the formal training context. At the academy, the formal discourses dominantly prescribed work identity. This formally defined 'way of being' (Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009) a police officer encompassed well-rounded knowledge and 'gold-standard' manners. This version of identity posed high demands on the recruits' knowledge, skills and behaviour. For the veteran recruits, the demands were not only higher than, but also in some way conflicting with what used to guide them in their previous roles at local stations. This change caused ambiguity in their understanding

of the fundamental practical norms which they believed work should be organised in the local community and which individual officers should carry in their daily trades (Manning, 2008; Van Maanen, 2010). Hence, recruits turned out to be rather dubious and resistant to formal discourses, and nonchalant about their espoused work identity.

At the same time, the training context did not allow sufficient practice opportunities for recruits to 'acquire' the newly entailed practical competence ---- that is, to put discursive descriptions into individuals' own practices, let them turn into their own practical 'repertoire' (Ibarra, 1999) and therefore incorporate into their identity. As recruits often remarked, 'practices will help you get the knowledge into background'. Hence, recruits could not enact the role they had normatively become. In another word, the lack of room for agency led to violation (Pratt et al., 2006) of their assumed identity. This situation prompted recruits to retreat into their past work experiences, which served as 'identity pegs' (Goffman, 1963; Down and Reveley, 2009) to anchor their sense of being like a real police officer.

In contrast, when the recruits moved to tutored placement and later to their probationary shifts, the quest for practical competence was appreciated and supported. First, the routine in those contexts facilitated the effective learning of skills of dramaturgical self-presentation and problem solving, which, according to Goffman (Goffman, 1959; Manning, 2008), could only be acquired through enactment within a real-life setting that frequently includes out-of-order situations. Second, the social and power relations and local culture provided vital permission and appreciation to discretion and improvisation, contrary to the emphasis on strict replication of formal procedures in training, thus making it possible for recruits to derive a 'sense of ego' (Goffman, 1959) and self-perceived competence (Pratt et al., 2006) from their work performance.

Furthermore, the work norms implemented locally, while sharing commonalities with what veteran recruits maintained before, still demonstrated idiosyncrasies. However, their preoccupation with acquiring competence entailed acquisition of relatively well-defined mannerisms, attitudes, and social rituals governing the practice field (Ibarra, 1999; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). In response, practitioners tended to anchor their reference foundations in a selected and normally important group of people. By reducing the scope of reference and embracing the

coherent scripts of practices, they were able to retain a consistency of actions and integrity of self-meaning. It was the narrowly focused reference that allowed the norms to become incorporated into their natural enactment of performance, thereby freeing them from constant reflexive referencing (e.g. 'It's all in your head. You don't always think about that').

Informed by the case of practitioners in the police, we can see that this orientation of identity work seeks 'high unity' and 'high agency', and when the situated context does not fit, practitioners could actively transform the system of relevance (Schutz, 1964; Weick, 1995) that they concentrate on ---- a relatively unified reference to guide thinking, acting and producing identity. This relevance system could be the individual's own practical experience, or other front-line, experienced role models.

These observations relate significantly to a number of issues in professional identity work studies. For instance, Ibarra (1999) notes that imitation of role models' presentation style is a widely used strategy among junior professionals. She also mentions that many people use it as a temporary measure to improve performance. Compared with the police recruits, who generally, at least throughout the socialisation period, adopted the practitioner approach, the junior bankers and consultants were more concerned with their impression on clients, which would make them ultimately authenticity seeking. In contrast, the policing norms, as examined in literature review, are normally developed with the instrumental purpose of ensuring policing activities make no waves (Van Maanen, 1975), or get by 'unmarked' (Bittner, 1967; Harris, 1973; Waddington, 1999) by authorities or the public.

Drawing from these comparisons, I argue that practitioner identity work could be chosen by newcomers as a socialising strategy at the preliminary stage, when reductionist-oriented 'seeking' (Pratt, 2000b) is deemed important, and reflective crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) is not felt ready for. Alternatively, it could be interpreted as a survival strategy in work settings, such as the public service sector, where individual style and innovation are institutionally discouraged. Future research could probe further into the relevant issues from the perspective of practitioner orientation.

Pratt and colleagues' (2006) study shares more commonality with the conception of practitioner identity work, as it highlights that medical newcomers evolved their identity by learning and embodying medical professional identity in their medical practices. Taking into account what happened in the police socialisation, I believe it is not unreasonable to understand the medical newcomers' choice of investing identity meanings entirely in tasks performances as prompted by their situated social context. Since highly congruent behaviour templates were imposed and little room was allowed for alternative ways of thinking or acting, they were discouraged from seeking identity meanings beyond what they literally do. This context effectively 'immersed' (ibid., 250) them in an 'encapsulating' (ibid., 257) domain of practices, and rendered them tightly identified with each other and with their daily routines. Whereas, external social discourses, managerial prescriptions and alternative practical advice were not salient during the socialization phase. That is to say, practitioner orientation was adopted by medical newcomers because well-defined practices were pretty much the sole and predominant resource of identity, a situation which was unlike the training process of police recruits.

Even so, when those recruits entered their last jobs (i.e. PCSO, SP), the socialising experience was more or less the same as it was for medical newcomers, that is, with singular input of practical norms and an intensive workload started from the second week. Comparing this research to the present study, one thing that merits mentioning is that practitioner orientation could be moulded within an enclosing socialisation process. But after the formative stage, it could become a stable voluntary approach that some people choose as a means of screening experiences and preserving stability. The practitioner orientation could perhaps add a reflective dimension of understanding for research interests of standardisation-oriented socialisation, and collective decision making and sensemaking.

6.3.4 Why more than one orientation among the police recruits?

Legitimacy seekers

An abundance of studies on similar empirical issues, such as police socialisation, police training and military identity work (e.g. Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Conti, 2009; Gallo, 2001; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), tend to use theoretical underpinnings emphasising institutionalisation and disciplinary power, and

thus, view individual actors as normalised subjectivities. As examined in subsection 6.3.1, some socialisation processes in other sectors are also portrayed in similar patterns (e.g. Covaleski et al., 1998; Grey, 1994). In this case, part of the group conforms to the above theoretical position, but since the others did not fit neatly into the identity work pattern described in those theories, I would like to reflexively consider why within the studied socialising process, some recruits regarded legitimacy as their identity anchor instead of choosing other options.

From reflective reading of theoretical literature, I have observed that individuals' striving for legitimacy is highly related to their reliance on external social structure, relationships with authoritative people and dominant macro or local discourses (Collinson, 2003; Grey, 1994; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009) to provide desirable meaning of self and direction of life. This means that they might be not particularly concerned about organisational legitimacy when they have 'other' strong sources from which to derive self-meanings. One of those sources of self-meanings is 'other identity'. This is possible as contemporary social beings are embedded in multiple social categories or identities (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Giddens, 1991). Admittedly, identity recognised by the workplace authority is an imperative part of a modern individual's entire identity (Collinson, 2003; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008). Nonetheless, there are also alternative identities that are equally meaningful and dignifying, yet more stable and manageable by individuals themselves.

Identity scholarship has offered valuable insights into this aspect. To illustrate, advantageous expertise and skills (e.g. Down and Reveley, 2009; Thomas and Linstead, 2002), one's role as a parent, family member, or breadwinner (e.g. Kreiner et al., 2006b; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Thomas and Linstead, 2002), personally held moral values (Clarke et al., 2009; Watson, 2008) or individuals' distinctive or alternative self (Beech, 2008; Costas and Fleming, 2009; Fleming and Sturdy, 2009; Watson, 2009) could take precedence over the specific identity legitimated by an organisation. One key argument from this literature camp is that those 'other identities' could supply a solid and preferred sense of self that significantly frees individuals' dependence on an organisation-determined identity. Accordingly, identity constructors are shaped into an initiative-taking, open-minded, creative and resourceful image.

This apparently does not apply to what I have found about the legitimacy seekers. Therefore, I challenge the above theoretical position by suggesting that not everyone possesses or could recognise these crucial 'other identities' to reference, yet even if he or she does, those identities could be withheld by the preoccupation with legitimacy. In the study, it was not a coincidence that the legitimacy seeking orientation was taken by the youngest recruits in the cohort, who were freshly graduated from universities. Their commencement of service in the police force marked not only their departure from academic life but also their entrance into a career and mature adult life.

On the one hand, even though they had significant life experiences or memberships in the early part of their lives that possibly constituted 'identity pegs' (Goffman, 1967), such as extensive reading or completion of a research project, those meanings could be hardly recognised socially in their current environment of the police force and the general society. As one informant remarked ironically, 'People don't know how hard you have worked to get a degree. They thought it's a Micky Mouse degree'. The lack of other sustainable identity references rendered them inclined to invest their entire self-meaning in their professional identity. As a result, they always eagerly endeavoured to be recognised as acceptable in front of a wide spectrum of audiences (Ibarra, 1999; Fielding, 1984). Even without micromanagement, they still often sought reassurance for their own acts. This orientation rendered them highly reflexive and self-conscious.

On the other hand, the worldview of these young people was largely moulded by their previous long-term and ideologically 'encapsulating' (Pratt et al., 2006) embedment in education institutions, where examinations, disciplines and discursive domination (Covaleski et al., 1998; Townley, 1993) are prevailing. One of the principal impacts is self-reflexivity on legitimacy, which made them highly reliant on external prescriptions and validation to produce self-understanding (e.g. 'People who bounced into education know their limits.'). This spoke to their suppression of alternative views during training and placement, which they believed they were not entitled to express. And another far-reaching impact is the perpetual preoccupation with earning higher institutional legitimacy. The idea of self-progression (Casey, 1995; Cooley, 1902; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009; Webb, 2006), which is commonly espoused in the academic world, has penetrated into these young graduates' vision of

their career path (Grey, 1994), and motivated them to adhere to the organisation's institution.

Furthermore, the impetus for upward movement does not only mobilise young graduates' continuous efforts, but nowadays compels a broader range of people in their work and life to align themselves with the rules set by employers (Collinson and Collinson, 1997). Likewise, influenced by the 'success ethic' (Collinson, 2003; Webb, 2006), professionals who are ambitious and committed to the careers they have chosen, normally reputable ones, tend to voluntarily embrace the prescribed identity, regardless of their possession of other identities or higher self-esteem than the graduates (e.g. Pratt et al., 2006).

Yet, in order to maintain a mature and independent image, those legitimacy seekers may claim and present themselves as 'reasonably convinced' (Casey, 1996, cited in Thornborrow and Brown, 2009: 372) by dominant discourses, instead of being tamed to conform. This suggests that not only juniors, but also senior level individuals—depending on their occupational status, promotion structure and so on—could prioritise legitimacy over other things, albeit implicitly. Besides, the attempt nowadays to present oneself as rationally making one's own choices inspired me in interpreting authenticity seekers in this study as well as in the general society.

Authenticity seekers

Again, the recruits who sought authenticity in identity work also came from similar backgrounds; all of them had worked for two to seven years in well-established occupations or organisations, which were not directly related to operational policing. Some of them had even been employed at the middle management level in other fields. Their decision to enter the police force in the first place was somewhat against 'social desirability' (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010), given that the occupation of police officer continues to be perceived as a 'blue collar job' today (Lee and Punch, 2004), not to mention the serious societal criticism associated with it. Therefore, the career movement naturally called for extra discursive constructions (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) from them. For instance, their conscious efforts to improve the police image in social interactions (e.g. 'I enjoy educating my friends what the police is about'), was not observed much from other recruits, thus suggesting that they aimed to impress others with their own desired police identity.

Additionally, their ample previous work and social experiences afforded solid and vivid extra-employment identities that allowed wiggle room (Clarke et al., 2009). These experiences included work as a customer manager with high corporate social responsibility and a customer service employee highly rated by clients. Moreover, the self-perceptions of these police recruits contrasted with the depersonalising, dominating, and 'infantilising' (Fleming and Sturdy, 2009) governance from the authority in each socialising sphere. This further stimulated them to reserve authorship of their own identity by taking a predominant role in their interplayed with those social experiences.

However, not everyone could manage to construct the authentic identity as he or she desires. In this study, apparently, no matter how much the external entrants clung to their previous work identity or personal values or characteristics, they had to adapt themselves to the current job eventually. As analysed in subsection 4.5.1, this job inevitably extends into people's private life, and transformed their interpersonal relations, outlooks and behavioural manners.

Then, how could authenticity seekers manage their identity project through? First, as a considerable body of literature has claimed, they had to be able to tell a coherent life story by commanding various discursive resources and using plotting techniques (e.g. Gergen and Gergen, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Watson, 2009). Second, they were less vulnerable, in comparison to middle managers, for instance (e.g. Beech, 2008; Sims, 2005), to the acceptance or rejection of their co-workers in establishing their desired identities, since discretion and acceptance of idiosyncrasies in the job was seized upon as space for their self-authorship.

More importantly, however, they had to be able to come to terms with their limitations in materialising the desired identity. As reflected in the study (see subsection 5.3.4), authenticity seekers enabled themselves to sustain an authentic, distinctive and self-determining lifestyle with techniques of imaginative detachment, mental travelling and so on. They also kept telling themselves 'it is a choice' in terms of where to set the boundary between work and life, even though the workload and emotional effects of police work were extending into their lives. Given all these factors, this orientation rendered them somewhat less affected by the winding down factors in the job, which could in turn help them maintain a reflective space in the job.

Looking to the wide society, where rapid changes have made it difficult to maintain a stable and authentic identity (Knights and Willmott, 1999; Shotter and Gergen, 1989), this thesis argues that people's expectation of an authentic identity might be adapted, turning into the fabricated version of 'becoming' identity that they aspire to and are willing to believe, Indisputably, however, some individuals are less likely to feel an identity as real unless it is materialised in some way, such as Paul in Costas and Fleming's (2009) study. When realising he could not living out his aspired identity, he felt alienated to himself. When realising he could not living out his aspired identity, he felt alienated from himself. This example also suggests that performing a desired identity in reality is fairly important to certain individuals. The practitioners in the study were among such individuals.

Practitioners

Preoccupation with practices was found most popular among internal recruits. Several factors could possibly speak for their practitioner approach. On the individual part, they commonly expressed passion for the active, physical dimension of the job (e.g. 'I could not imagine myself doing work all days before desk'). This means their biggest motivator, or which part of job they identified with, was undoubtedly the practices.

It should be noted that social influences and situations also played a key role. First, their focus on practices was critically related to their knowledge of operational policing. Since they were aware of the contingency and improvisation involved in the job, the discursive descriptions became too high-standard, and vague (Down and Reveley, 2009; Manning, 2008) to offer useful guidance in their eyes. Second, having witnessed the discrepancies between different sources of discourses, including their old stations, these recruits had a diminished reliance on articulations of principles and values to navigate their conducts, but increased investment in practices in real situations, as these practices could generate a more concrete, indisputable sense of self and direct feedback for future reference. The lack of trust in discourses and concentration on embodied practices was also what fundamentally distinguished them from the other two types.

Given these three factors, practitioners identified with the job to a higher degree than did others, but at the same time construed identity in a somewhat short-

sighted way—based squarely on the niche of their current work and filtering out alternative perspectives.

6.4 Reflection on the process of identity work during socialisation

In the last section, identity orientations are understood in association with social contexts and individual situations, which offers answers to the questions '*why* they emerge' and '*where* they are likely to be found'. Subsequently, one critical question could be raised regarding '*how* they direct individuals to construct identity in interplay with social contexts'. Thus, this present section sets out to explore the specific identity work process patterned by the three orientations. With the following theorising efforts, I aim to further enhance the analytical and hermeneutic value of the concept of identity orientation.

Considering that identity work could exist in such a vast array of situations, it is worth mentioning that this thesis principally focuses on identity work during the stage of organisation socialisation, although the modelling and arguments could also be related to identity work in other settings. The socialising context is singled out in that during socialisation, identity constructors, without a strong basis for the identity, are more inclined to be sensitive to and assimilate context offerings to produce identity than they would in other situations.

6.4.1 Modelling identity work during socialisation from the perspective of identity orientation

In existing studies on identity work during socialisation, a number of relevant works have offered process models. Ibarra's (1999) and Pratt's (Pratt et al., 2006) models are among the most widely acknowledged ones. The former pins down the process of career adaptation with three basic tasks: observing role models, experimenting with provisional selves and evaluating experiments according to internal standards and external feedback. One of the critical contributions of this model is its clear focus on individuals' idiosyncratic choices regarding each specific task, which partially explains the varied identities the junior professionals developed over time. The latter model detailed medical newcomers' identity work process intertwined with their learning of work. This model is also useful because, among other things, it strongly establishes and connects the essential aspects of the identity work process:

impetus (identity 'integrity violation'), strategy ('customisation type'), material ('identity set'), and confirming mechanism ('social validation'). However, neither of them addresses the divergence between different individuals (more precisely, identity orientations) within the process in a continuous fashion. With inspirations from these classic works, I critically revisited the data, and used the concept of identity orientation to strengthen my understanding of the process. This exploration allowed me to produce a processual model of identity work with a detailed and coherent account of identity orientations. See Figure 6.1 to Figure 6.3 for details.

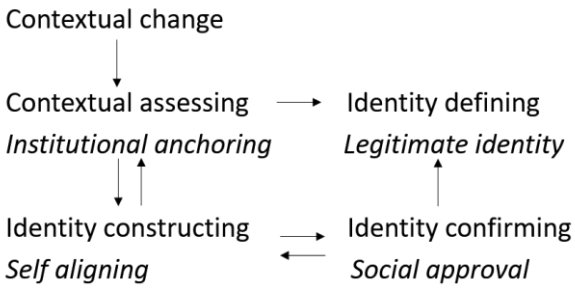


Figure 6.1 Identity work model ---- legitimacy seeking orientation

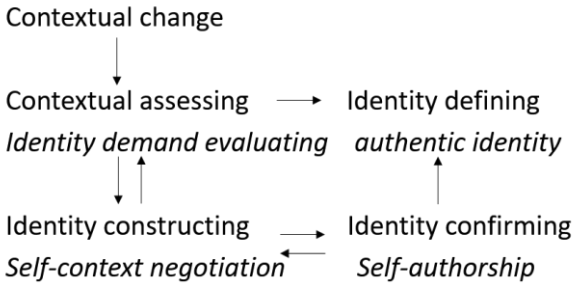


Figure 6.2 Identity work model ---- authenticity seeking orientation

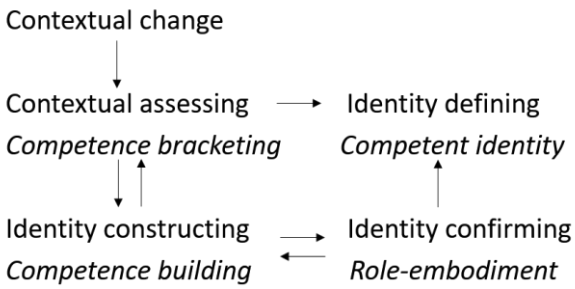


Figure 6.3 Identity work model ---- practitioner orientation

As illustrated in the analytical chapters, each transition of social context witnessed major or minor transitions in individuals' identity work and identity status. These changes, while triggered by the changing context, were produced from a series of identity work efforts characterised by individual identity orientations. Following the abstraction and comparison of the three orientations in chapter 5 (see subsection 5.5), I now incorporate the four pinpoint dimensions together based on their interconnections in the identity production process. By doing so, I construct a cyclical model that delineates the route of identity work provoked by contextual change.

First, changes in the broad context influence individuals insofar as individuals 'recognise' (Beech, 2008, 2010) external impacts on their identity. As underscored by many prominent identity scholars (e.g. Beech, 2008, 2010; Watson, 2008), it is not the external events or discourses per se, but what individuals receive and accept internally that activates subsequent responses. Since different identity orientations have their respective identity driver during socialisation, individuals perceive contextual changes primarily focused on how the changes affect, enable or militate realisation of the identity driver. Hence, it entails a process of '**contextual assessing**' from individuals to continue their identity project in the new context.

Furthermore, depending on the specific driver, the process of contextual assessing varies with respect to scope and complexity. For legitimacy seeking individuals, the assessment not only involves recognising the institution that defines legitimacy in the new context, but may also entail deliberate comparison and choice making when the new institution conflicts or differs from the one(s) they adhere to previously. Taking the legitimacy seekers in the present study as an example, when assessing each specific context, they also weighed the new version of legitimacy against the old ones and then decided which to be put to the fore. Ultimately, the assessment leads to individuals' anchoring of the pursued identity in one particular institution, which I have termed *institutional anchoring*.

Authenticity seeking individuals are concerned with how the new context sets up the identity that pertains to them, which constitutes external demands with which they will negotiate. Since in this orientation the self-identity is the permanent anchor and stabiliser (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Ybema et al., 2009), contextual

assessment does not necessarily involve iterative comparison between different social contexts. Yet, the assessment will include deliberate consideration of which part of the demand agrees with or is useful for self-identity and which conflicts with or differs from self-identity (e.g. Essers and Benschop, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2009). Hence, this process could be termed as *identity demand evaluating*.

Practitioner orientation, as argued earlier, privileges practical competence defined by an important and narrow niche in identity work. Accordingly, context changes are screened, reduced and then targeted and internalised. Since practical competence, for practitioners, resides in the local constellation of practices (Sandberg and Pinnington, 2009), the new context is related to previous context(s) simply for the purpose of identifying alteration, enlargement, upgrading or intensification of 'content' and 'process' of practices (Pratt et al., 2006) in the new context. As practitioners' assessment is inherently a simplifying process, I use the term *competence bracketing* to describe it.

In view of these specific purposes, this process of contextual assessment could yield two important observations. One is what constitutes the desirable 'becoming' identity in this new context, based on individuals' examination of essential aspects of identity work in the new context. That is, there is a subsequent mentally '**identity defining**' process closely following contextual assessment that consciously reinforces (Beech, 2008) one's persistent identity driver, thus restoring a sense of meaningfulness and continuity (Giddens, 1991; McAdams, 1993) in engagement with the complicated and multi-ordered socialising context.

The other observation, directly linked to the first one, concerns the tasks to complete and actions to take in order to continue striving for the identity driver. Based on knowledge of their current identity status in relation to the new definitions, demands and resources of the aspired identity in the current situation, individuals strategize and mobilise efforts of '**identity construction**'. This pattern resonates with Pratt's (Pratt et al., 2006) emphasis on the gap (i.e., 'integrity violation' 2006: 245) between targeted professional identity and the identity embodied in daily routines. However, the proposed model recognises more diverse patterns of identity construction in addressing the gap than evaluated by their model.

In attempting to attain a legitimate position, legitimacy seekers conduct more in-depth recognition of the institution they decide to anchor, so as to *align* their self-narratives and behaviours with the espoused values and orders constitutive of the upheld institution. Conversely, authenticity seekers are engaged in identity *negotiation*, with the distinctiveness, consistency and authoring power of their 'self' on one side, and the enabling and/or militating discourses and experiences in the context (Beech, 2008) on the other side. Practitioners devote efforts to learning, experimenting and practising the entailed repertoire to *build competence* in line with the bracketed niche of practices.

Furthermore, the process of identity constructing allows individuals to engage more intensively with the new context, and thus often expands their understanding of the new context ('**contextual assessing**'). This reflective aspect has been manifested in the present study in, for instance, the legitimacy seekers' deeper understanding of the gold-standard mannerisms after trying to replicate the espoused principles in role-play exercises. This is also echoed by medical professionals' increased ability to read mentors' demonstration of medical treatment in Pratt's (Pratt et al., 2006) study.

Through these identity construction efforts, identity constructors move ever closer to their anticipated identity status, which has to be '**confirmed**' through another assessing process. Since the confirming process includes the relation between individual and context, it is to certain extent in parallel with contextual assessment, though the former on changes in individuals themselves and the latter process focuses on changes in the situated context.

Legitimacy seekers validate their legitimate identity by assessing their position within the institution they adhere to, which is normally reflected in approval from authoritative agents, which could be conveyed through attitudes, responses or feedback (Mead, 1934). Apart from the *approval* that tutors/mentors grant to appropriate performance, as noted in most identity studies, this study also finds that legitimacy seekers look for approval granted to themselves as valued people (e.g. 'I wasn't treated just like a student') (Collinson, 2003). Also, legitimacy seekers may receive 'approval' on occasions or to the extent that they have not expected. To illustrate, the PDU placement issued legitimacy seekers a legitimate membership that bolstered their self-perception beyond what they had imagined (Ybema, et al., 2009)

their existing identity building efforts could lead them to. The messages obtained from the **confirming process**, therefore, may encourage legitimacy seekers to replicate or refine the endorsed aspects of themselves, or adapt their strategy and shift their focus (e.g. change role models after getting promoted) in '**identity construction**'.

While practitioners also take attitudes, responses and feedback into account, such as reactions from role-set members (Burke and Stets, 1999; Down and Reveley, 2009; Goffman, 1959), these are only temporary identity markers until competence is internalised into their individual competence package. After that short adaptive period, practitioners still principally confirm their identity in *role-embodying* performance. Successful and unsuccessful role-playing episodes become the first-hand information indicative of individual competence and skills to improve.

Authenticity seekers, unlike the other two, more frequently reflexively view life experiences and calibrate self-meanings as they move along the socialisation path, by means of which they strive to hold fast the *authorship* of their life and avoid giving way to contextual demand. Awareness of failure in actualising the authentic self will directly cause feeling of loss and further efforts of establishing self (Costas and Fleming, 2009; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Hence, the identity confirmation of authenticity seekers is more often initiatively enacted in their inner conversations, as an inextricable extension of the **constructing** process.

Given the above elaboration, the **confirming process** could lead to two directions of identity movement. On the one hand, the confirming process often exposes new meanings, challenges and opportunities of the context and deepens self-understanding of identity constructors. Therefore, it could trigger iterative reflection on **identity construction** and prompt improvement on strategies, targets and so on. On the other hand, it also updates **identity definition**. Specifically, it either straightforwardly signals arrival at the desired identity status, or alternatively produces meanings somewhat different from earlier anticipation, which leads to modification of the originally defined identity. As Ibarra rightly states, by confirming their identity in social engagements, 'people learn more about who they are and who they want to be' (1999: 781; Becker et al., 1961; Kondo, 1990).

As individuals move iteratively between these minor processes, they gradually obtain the desired identity status in the new context. Yet, when the context shifts again,

and thus removes or alters the external conditions supporting this freshly formed identity, the entire process is repeated again. In other words, identity work is an open-ended project that circulates both in a progressive pattern within a relatively continuous context, as well as in a roughly repetitive pattern across different temporal-social contexts.

6.4.2 Remarks on identity stability/fluidity during and beyond socialisation

Through the practice of modelling the identity work process from the perspective of identity orientation, the study also yields some thoughts on the tension between stability and fluidity of individual identity, which hopefully adds some fresh insights into the 'in-between' position (i.e., between the traditional fixed and essential identity and postmodernist's fluid and coreless identity), which most organisation studies on identity work share (Alvesson, 2010: 194), yet have not substantially reflected upon.

First, by viewing the entire process common to all orientations, it is apparent that as identity work unfolds, both 'means' (i.e. identity construction) and 'end' (i.e. identity defining) iterate or evolve, especially when they 'come together' (Watson, 2008; Ybema et al., 2009) at the confirming process, which often leads to modification of either or both of them. In many cases of role transition, confirming could be a crucial and radical turning point for identity work to the extent that the identity constructors only crystallise the real goal of identity work after confirming their identity status in the specific context, through others' perception, their own reflexive evaluation or real performance. Fitting examples include Ibarra's (1999) junior professionals who found out whom they really wanted to become by evaluating their own performance internally, and Down and Reveley's (2009) newly promoted manager who realised the management role in organisation routines by encountering critical testing events.

In addition, more overt changes of 'means' as well as "end" could be found when contextual change is introduced. The present study vividly demonstrates that changing and contradictory contexts rendered newcomers hardly able to 'keep a specific self-narrative going' (Giddens, 1991) over time. Although legitimacy seekers were engaged in loyal investment of identity in a dominant institution, their identity position paradoxically became precarious and constantly shifting.

However, what keeps chaos, disorder and self-betrayal at bay and gives meaning and direction to identity constructors is the vague identity driver that they chase after in socialisation or during a long-term lifetime. Importantly, the identity driver is vague in that it is not a specific meaning but is socially constructed and reified within specific social and historical contexts. Consequently, it is fundamentally a relative status that represents a particular relation between individuals and the context (Shotter, 2008; Ybema et al., 2009). Taking the three orientations in this study for example, what the drivers really denote is individuals' being in a context as a socially approved, self-directed or well-practising social being. This understanding resonates with and enriches the theoretical position that promotes identity as project rather than meanings (e.g. Watson, 2008), as *becoming* rather than *being* (e.g. Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2005; Weedon, 1987), and simultaneously echoes the emphasis on individual inertia and attachment to a particular identity (e.g. Cohen, 1994; Handley et al., 2006).

This observation also shows that existential stability or coherence does not square with a static or smoothly moving identity, but could involve substantial constructive as well as deconstructive processes in identity work. The tension between existential security and identity coherence is especially salient in legitimacy seeking orientation, which is clearly shown by the self-doubting and -regulating identity work of legitimacy seeking recruits during probationary shift. While this chosen way of constructing and maintaining identity gave them a sense of continuity and assurance of being themselves, it also rendered them critical, insecure and cautious about their identity, and perpetually preoccupied with inner self-questioning dialogue (Beech et al., 2016). This study therefore pushes the 'becoming' view of identity even further by suggesting that individuals' identity work may not even aim for an 'end', a restoration of 'core', or a stabilised equilibrium (e.g. Kreiner, et al., 2006; Pratt., et al., 2006), as sometimes deconstructive identity work provides them with ontological security.

Second, drawing on the different patterns of identity work between orientations, it is obvious that a collectively shared experience could act on and stimulate responses from individuals in varied ways. In comparison, legitimacy seekers might be faced with the highest magnitude of transitions and struggles in identity work, as the orientation is inherently reliant on a coherent and unitary institution to sustain identity meanings, which is a condition most difficult to endure in the current unstable,

contradictory and fragmented society (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2014; Bauman, 2000; Collinson, 2003; Gioia, et al., 2000; Knights and Willmott, 1989; Shotter and Gergen, 1989; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

Practitioner orientation, by contrast, has the least imprint from contextual changes, as high-level or external changes reduce significance at an individual's constellation of practices, unless the changes critically transform the definition of competence, as happened during formal training in the study. This effect is especially true when individual discretion is high (e.g. Davies and Thomas, 2003).

Authenticity seekers, albeit adept at constructing coherent self-narratives and creating buffering space, are still sensitive to contextual changes because changes influence the socially offered discourses that feed their self-conception and delimit the space of creative agency.

From this analysis, two arguments could be made. First, it is reasonable to believe the level of identity stability or fluidity is varied between different identity orientations. Thus, talks of identity stability should allow for individual idiosyncrasies. Second, when evaluating the possibility of sustaining identity stability, we also need to be specific about which element(s) of social context is (/are) changing. For instance, in recent years, the intersection of the new managerial prerogative and the para-military and bureaucratic institution in the police force, which are two contrasting institutions, has brought tremendous transformations in dominant discourses (Davies and Thomas, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2005), yet only small-scale change in front-line policing practices (Butterfield et al., 2009; Gordon et al., 2005). Within such a context, identity ambiguity and alteration might be more likely to occur to those seeking legitimacy in the system than to those concerned mainly about practical competence at the local level.

Moreover, given that different types of identity orientation have different levels of resilience to contextual changes, identity constructors could alter their identity orientation strategically at unstable times. As an illustration, in this study, legitimacy seekers were inclined to seek authenticity, in particular the moral and reflexive self, when they realised legitimacy was difficult to secure in the contingent work setting. It created a tension, however, as they preserved a conscious police identity, yet broke the principle of ensuring appropriateness from authoritative reference before acting. That

is to say, in one way the shift of orientation enabled continuity in their identity project, while in another way it paradoxically engendered self-contradiction and unwanted transformation.

Reflecting on all the above considerations, we are left with two salient points. First, identity stability could be understood as existing only symbolically (Brown, 2006; Giddens, 1991) in the dynamic process of both individual changes and contextual changes. People like to conceive themselves as consistent in how they live their life, but how this consistency is defined is manoeuvrable. Second, the level of identity stability is contingent upon which type of identity orientation is adopted, as well as how specific dimensions of the context are changing.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I push forward the theoretical inquiries from the empirical data to more profound assumptions of identity and identity work. Based on the inductive finding from the study that identity work and social interactive engagement (Beech, 2008, 2010) are mutually constitutive, identity orientation is conceptualised and evaluated in depth. First, it is examined as an approach to explore the differential individual identity work process in organisations. Its mesoanalytic level allows faithful and sensitive capture of individual variation as well as relatively clear theoretical location. Also, its essential emphasis on the ongoing process enables the incorporation of idiosyncratic aspects into coherent patterns. With these underlying assumptions, identity orientation is then investigated on the above two dimensions.

From the first dimension, as exemplified by the three orientations as examples, identity orientation is concrete enough to identify the key features of identity work phenomena, and also abstract enough to creatively account for a wide range of empirical themes, some of which may be rarely probed from the identity work angle. Also, it provides a reasonable, rather than oversimplifying, avenue to categorise individuals, which could then be used as a starting point to study antecedents and results.

From the second dimension, the entire notion of identity orientation offers a new lens through which to view identity work as it reconciles the individual propensity for stability with the inevitable change in social construction. Besides, drawing on the

three orientations, different identity orientations channel identity work to be performed with different activities and modes of communication with social context. Due to these differences, the issue of identity stability varies from individual to individual, and from context to context.

Chapter 7 Practical implication

7.1 Introduction

The in-depth investigation on the police newcomers' socialising experiences and identity formation has generated ample observations relevant for the police sector, among which three key issues appear to be most significantly reflected in the study and have attached great attention in English and Welsh police forces. This chapter will present evidences and implications for these three key issues.

Specifically, the design, delivery and internal inconsistency in the initial training will be critically evaluated, in order to propose what aspects of initial training worked well, what did not, and what could be improved. Then, PDU placements will be discussed in respect of its significance to facilitate newcomers' development and its coordination with initial training. Last but not least, implications will be given concerning external recruits, in particular aspects of the problems they encountered during the entrance and early stage of independent patrols, as well as their distinctive advantages and strengths. By doing so, suggestions are drawn for the police sector to better facilitate the external recruits to realise their valuable potentials.

7.2 Implications for initial training

First, the study echoes existing literature that highlights the importance of professional identity construction, or more precisely reconstruction, during initial socialisation. Especially for the police occupation, which is laden with unique power, role responsibilities and somehow social mystification, the threshold into the membership always entails substantial and ceremonial identity transformation, hence frequently compared to 'rite of passage' (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010; Conti, 2009; Fielding, 1984). Therefore, it has been widely acknowledged that organisational socialisation (and training) is paramount in moulding new recruits' identity in adherence to the distinctive attributes of the police (e.g. Conti, 2009; Skolnick, 1964). In particular, since work ethics have been put high on agenda in police services in recent decades, initial training has been emphasised as a key mechanism of producing officers thinking and behaving in congruence with the newly promoted ethical codes and performance culture, not least because culture and policy change directly injected

in operation sector is often obstructed by the deeply grained crime-fighting instrumentality in the practical field (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2005).

As found in this study, while using various means to standardise police officers' work conduct from the initial stage, the onboarding training could not achieve the goal of regulating their work conduct in the long term. The restricted effect of formal training in institutionalising the ideal work standards could be attributed to two broad aspects, one lying in the structure and discourses of the training academy, the other in the (lack of) concurrence and reconciliation from the practical world with the formal training.

It is inevitable that gap exists between training and policing realities, thus creating space and necessity for individualised consideration, improvisation and even deviances. As Morrell and Currie comment, police training could at best prepare recruits for routine scenarios at the 'possible' level within constraints of a large bureaucracy (i.e. in organisation controlled context), but could hardly re-create the unexpected, complex, dynamic, largely client-driven, 'impossible' part of the job for practice (Morrell and Currie, 2015: 271). Whereas, training could still contribute vital value in providing recruits with 'habituation' basis or second-order nature that to certain extent backups frontline officers in unpredicted and sensitive situation, so that judgement and decision could be made relatively rationally and consistently (Morrell and Brammer, 2014), which means chance of 'spontaneous', instead of legitimate, actions could be decreased.

However, the aforementioned gap was accentuated, and the foregoing merit was less actualised in the training in this study. On the one hand, the habituation Morrell and colleagues observed in riot police sector was not sufficiently facilitated during the present training. The scant and sparse episodes of hands-on exercises, together with its slow pace (e.g. recruits in pairs took turns to complete one task in a half-day session without pressure for taking other jobs) and artificial, predictable interactions (e.g. with peers or trainers playing public members within predefined scenarios, taking place in safer and quieter environment), were far from enough to form a 'second nature', or a rehearsed and preliminarily tried out identity, in preparation for real working situations (Constable and Smith, 2015). No matter what

recruits might rely on to produce a preparatory identity as such, be it authority's confirmation, personal authorship, or successful role display, scarcity of practices invariably confines them in experimenting the standards in practices.

On the other hand, the majorly reinforced factors during training, on the contrary, turned out to be remote from day-to-day policing, weak in affording newcomers the much-needed how-to reference and self-confidence in face of the real policing world, and consequently discarded by a lot of newcomers. It was perceived distant from real-life policing for several interrelated reasons. Among other things, many trainers had spent several years (one extreme case was 17 years) in the academy, with little fresh frontline experiences to share to help recruits understand abstract terms with real examples and been less informed of the latest changes in laws and procedures.

Besides, the learning package for probation assessment that had been long wanting modification and updating. These factors not only marked the lack of contextualisation and synchronisation of training content with street-level realities, but more importantly, harmed the fidelity and validity of the training institution as a whole in the eyes of new recruits. As discrepancies between curriculum content and practical policing were such that they surfaced to even rookie recruits, it became common that recruits cognitively separated formal learning from real-world policing, conceiving the former as merely 'theories' in book and later as 'real world', which could be evidenced by the comment following from an external rookie recruit, 'whether you are teaching us for the exam, or you are teaching us for the practical policing?' (Officer 05)

Furthermore, gold-standard discourses that explicitly disqualified practical norms (e.g. using labels such as 'bad habits') rendered approaches and articulations regarding how to police emanated by the academy and by local police community contrasting and competing with each other. Without concrete instruction or demonstration of how to translate dogmatic principles into various specific situations, the high-level principles advocated in the training could not be grounded in empirical episodes, adding another dimension of distance of the training domain with police routines. For instance, the issue of options of disposals was very abstractly introduced in the training, which was somehow unavoidable due to its high contingency on specific situations. Hence, while the training programme intended to channel recruits into more rehabilitative pattern of giving disposal, the way recruits exercised disposals

was still predominantly determined by local norms. That is to say, a lot of new starters (especially practitioners') readily broke away from literally everything upheld in the academy, and some others (especially legitimacy seekers) fell into the dilemma between embodying formally issued values by grappling with practical circumvents and getting accustomed to local norms with the insecure feeling of compromising legitimate principles.

In summary, while the gold-standard policing principles were not concretely and frequently enacted and established in drilling practices, so as to allow development of behavioural habituation among new recruits during the training, the narrow and tight encapsulation of legitimate parameter rendered its espoused values insulated to the high-level bureaucracy, decreased their transferability and feasibility in day-in-and-day-out policing, and created unnecessary incompatibility and competition with practical norms. It is hard to measure to what extent the discursive practices of the training domain implanted prescriptions in newcomers' identity composition, as it is quite intangible and merely manifests in their inner sensemaking in specific situations. But as police newcomers moved temporarily and spatially away the training domain but well into the practical community, the influences from training would gradually evaporate.

On the other hand, there was very few echoing and consolidating elements of the formally celebrated principles available in the operation sector. Apart from perpetual shortage of resource in relation to demand in the police (as all public services) (cf. Lipsky, 2010: 29-33), which constrains replicating the 'ideal' service delivery set out in the training, the street-level work realities prove constantly disjointed or only partially squares with the high-level role prescriptions. To be specific, whilst the prescribed role responsibilities, work ethics and principles are associated with black-and-white role set, and definitive criteria and objectives, street-level police tasks in reality often involve ambiguous interactions with clients (e.g. victims 'in trouble' but want to be left alone), diffused impact and uncertain outcome (e.g. recurrent criminals, arrest and evidence gathering not leading to desirable result in court), and amid incongruent and fragmented discourses (e.g. public members' widely differing expectations for police intervention in communities).

Given relatively rare straightforward representations of high-level values in everyday policing, discursive practices that reconstruct work experience within the frames of the formal institution become imperative to reassure new officers the significance and possibility of embodying them in real life. Yet, there is little structured discursive practice (such as through debriefing) in place. And mostly new starters were left to process experience individually or under 'custodial supervision' or mentorship of experienced officers who tend to hold traditional and pragmatic perspectives (Butterfield et al., 2005). Moreover, the 'performance culture' is found, paradoxically, leading sergeants and patrol officers to prioritise the tangible aspects of work performance (e.g. number of stops, arrests, or incidents attended and processed) and to neglect other relevant aspects (Butterfield et al., 2005). Hence, new starters' preoccupation could be further dragged away from exercising formally inculcated ethical values in work. A good case in the present study is that a recruit inclined to maintain client-prioritised working style was somewhat impeded and discouraged by the institutional arrangement chasing on merely completion of 'file-able' tasks.

'If you attend to domestic assault and do file during your shift, then something else just happens, and it's very difficult to remember at the end of your shift to upload it, so pull out. And then they will come next day and go ''why have you done this; why have you done that''. But considering, you might have done one million jobs before you got to shift and station, they are very likely to criticize that kind of things because they are very driven by statistics and what certain aspects they can achieve. So … I understand that. It is kind of indicating your performance. But, I think the shift is sort of, you know, don't take a lot of grounds like that kind of thing, because you are doing a wide range of things. And we are not specialized in just one area … we are medium-specialized in so many areas rather than being focused on a few issues.' (Officer 17)

In short, the abstractness and idealisation of role prescriptions, work principles and ethics means gap inevitably exists at the frontier between training domain and real work condition, and thus threatening what the formal training has been trying to construct in the new batch of patrol officers. Whereas, reiteration of those values was largely absent, and coping up with overloads and quantitative performance indicators were heavily inscribed, which jointly rendered it difficult to cling with the 'gold-standard' doctrines.

Considering the foregoing analyses, training should substantially strengthen its function of fostering habituation of well-practiced policing by giving richly grounded instructions on how to police with high standards, and by adding more scenario-practices of high fidelity. Equally important, and probably more challenging, is to reinforce the newly constructed policing approach after newcomers get faced with the somehow worn-down policing routines and try to fit themselves in the local communities. Given that the coming together of standardised policing rules and concrete policing tasks is a crucial moment when recruits re-evaluate the job and reconfigure (or select between) different sources of work identity, PDU sessions emerge pivotal in bridging between the two worlds and facilitating relatively smooth transition, and more importantly, reifying values celebrated in training in real practices and reinforcing their embodiment in street-level practices, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

7.3 Implications for PDU placements

The combination of classroom-based training and tutored placement was another important dimension in newcomers' socialisation and identity formation. In this studied case, PDU placements did, among other things, help recruits to make sense of and implement their learnt legislation knowledge in real context, and enable them to, through experience, develop skills in conducting policing tasks, albeit of only few basic types. Whereas, what recruits were exposed and/or adjusted to at one local policing areas (hereafter referred as LPA) for PDU could be different from or conflictual with the institution at the training domain or another LPA of placement, thus creating ambiguities, dilemmas, or unreflective absorption of certain sub-culture among recruits.

In the studied force, as well as other police services in England and Wales (NPIA, 2010), the structure and assessment of PDU is an integral part of initial training and mutually complementary with learning modules. Therefore, in terms of legislation sections as well as service delivery principles, PDU sessions should be in correspondence with training curriculums. However, the contrast between training and PDU was ostensible, in the sense that while the former sets out to standardise the recruits' behaviours and primes written rules and code of ethics, the latter witnesses

PDU tutors and sergeants supervise and evaluate recruits mainly basing on local norms and, most of time, individualised styles.

Admittedly, the essential purpose of PDU placement is to allow recruits to 'learn about local police delivery' (i.e. street-level policing) under 'close contact' with supervisors and tutors, thus making subjective habits and approaches of the latter an inevitable impact on recruits, especially the fresh ones (cf. Van Maanen, 1973). Yet, it was not merely their specific personal influences, but more crucially the explicit message prioritising localised practical norms and even individual preferences, usually to the detriment of regulating and standardising efforts of training, that left training discourses and street-level realities in polarised positions. The gold-standard values, though too idealised to be unbendingly and evenly applied in real situations, too soon gave its way to operational pragmatism, with very few residues to generate recruits' reflective thinking in their later working life.

It was found in several LPAs, tutors vocally criticised the gold-standard standards and encyclopaedic legislation learning promoted in the training for its unreality and insufficiency for addressing operational challenges, which reflects the longstanding denigration on classroom-based training from operation police (Bayley and Bittner, 1989; Chan, 2003; Van Maanen, 1973). And PDU assessment that stresses the exact behavioural principles laid out in training, was in accordance largely ignored as an extended form of formal training that had little to do with real competence entailed of the job (e.g. ticking all the boxes so long as recruit could perform to the satisfaction of tutors). Therefore, recruits' preoccupation during PDU was shifted towards mirroring tutors' way of practicing tasks, or developing personal practice style within the accepting parameter of tutors.

Considering one tutor along with one localised area could be too narrow to allow recruits to absorb diverse constructive coaching and develop reflective thinking, the arrangement of locating the second PDU at a differentiated LPA was helpful to present an alternative and additional referencing points. But neither was the second LPA likely to encourage attachment to things attempted to be established by formal training, hence reiteration to recruits of the 'anti-academy' position commonly adopted in practical field. Moreover, recruits that attempted to continue with and/or defend behavioural imperatives from earlier referencing system were likely to be frustrated

by another subculture (e.g. tutors did not feel obligated to take account of norms maintained in other LPAs in supervising recruits). For many recruits, the asymmetrical power relation in the apprenticeship meant they had no choice but adaptation to the social niche they had to fit in (e.g. 'you are being assessed by them, so you should adapt to them').

While structure and policies (e.g. conferences and assessment for PDU tutors, assigning PDU assessors to inspect on PDU assessment documents) were put in place to impose managerial control on the form and statue of PDU sessions, there remained considerable automatic power of tutors in PDU sessions in aspects of approaches of policing to impart, practical habits to pass on, and extend of discretion, thus space and time to reflect, allowed for trainees, which is excluded from the formally issued PDU package yet of great influence to recruits' identity formation.

As this study demonstrated, the self-privileging, or 'defensive' (Fielding, 1988), culture and custodial supervision style prevalent at PDU LPAs often strongly urged recruits to develop certain level of flexibility, and even nonchalance, so as to aptly adjust to the stances and habituations maintained in the current local area. Also, the invariable anti-academy perspective critically conveyed shop-floor cynical negotiation with bureaucratic authority and emotion charging division between 'street cop' and 'management cop' (Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Van Maanen, 2010), which to various extent shaped newcomers' outlook in the organisation (e.g. reinforcing veteran recruits'/practitioners' existing attachment to operation sector and indifference to managerial discourses, and channelling legitimacy seekers towards pragmatic mentality). While recruits could subjectively reconfigure diverse resources of references after progressed into constables and obtaining trust and discretion, the PDU experiences at the key phase of socialisation could implant in the new generations the historically problematised police culture of acting to 'peer pressure' (Butterfield et al., 2005; Constable and Smith, 2015). In another word, the overt and excessive influence of police subculture during PDU sessions reproduce the perspectives and habits among the newly joined force the initial training programme nowadays at large is attempted to protect them from.

Given the aforementioned analysis, the inappropriate contestation or lack of cooperation from PDU domain to training domain is deeply rooted in the tension

between management objectives and street-level agents in the police (Lipsky, 2010), and between newly promoted performance culture and traditional operational priority (Davies and Thomas, 2003), thus intractable to overcome or resolve. Nonetheless, the problem in PDU should not be left to offset the professional values strived to foster by formal training, which are important for the far-reaching target of recent reforms in the police to produce new generation of force that is reflective, well-informed of diverse cultural diversity, and sensitive and engaging to the public (Benyon, 1987; Loveday, 2013).

In order to achieve better result, training faculty of PDU need be more appreciative to the influences they could exert on newcomers, and the responsibility of reconciling between formal, abstract, 'idealised' training and discretional, operational, stressful routines. Instead of taking the PDU sessions as merely a competence based apprenticeship, tutors are suggested to take a more comprehensive role in nurturing good work ethics, reflective thinking and adaptive learning skills, which could allow recruits to continue learning and improving beyond the short period of PDU or initial training. And for this, tutors could take more into account of trainees' individual dispositions, conditions and wills in supervision, and let individually tailored mentoring to render space for newcomers to take responsibility for their own development, instead of convenient but blind copying of senior colleagues. And more explanation, inspiration and instruction could replace ordering and dictation, despite time and resource constraints, by means of which recruits could evaluate others' work styles and develop their own based on knowledge and rationales rather than power relation or peer pressure. Moreover, formal training should be more positively portrayed and better translated and integrated with practical realities. It is right to acknowledge gold standard principles are removed from real policing context, but the high-level values could still be reiterated in association with practical episodes, such as during briefing. In so doing, newcomers could be encouraged to interpret the policing routines within work ethics, moral codes or other meaningful social discourses (e.g. legitimacy seekers' attribution of 'large causes' in the last context), which will relieve the winding-down effect of difficult routines through officers' later working life.

7.4 Implications for external recruitment and Direct Entry (Inspector) Scheme

Another implication drawn from the study concerns experience and situations of recruits from non-policing background during socialisation and early career. The issues of employing people with higher academic standards to be patrol officers and direct entry scheme at inspector level have been attached great attention and engendered polarised positions (Smith, 2015), yet little has been offered from newcomers' own point of view (Lee and Punch, 2004). It is hoped, based on this qualitative, in-depth, longitudinal study, and from the perspective of the recruits' socialisation and identity construction experience, albeit only a parsimonious number, to contribute to the discussion pertaining to these two issues. It is not my intention to use these individual cases to generalise the whole population of externally recruited PCs. But their experiences are evaluated in light of factors at social level rather than individual/autobiographic level, thus yielding implications of heuristic value for operational team management as well as talent management.

In fact, efforts of incorporating educational and intellectual aspects in the police, of various types and scales, have commenced much earlier than Winsor's recommendations (2012). Since 1930s many initiatives have been tried by police forces in England and Welsh to improve educational calibre of police of all ranks, including both in-service training such as Police College at Hendon and Essex Scheme, and pre-employment education programme in collaboration with universities, such as Student Officer Programme (SOP) and Foundation degrees (FdA). Apart from these, candidates with higher education status and from wider professional and ethnical background are also targeted for all levels of the police. This is based on a recognition increasingly shared by academic researchers as well as police practitioners ---- due to various internally and externally driven needs, including need of enhancing the 'legitimacy' and trustworthiness of the police in public perception, of improving ability of understanding culturally diverse society, and of addressing more complicated types of crimes (i.e., acting as 'knowledge broker'), the traditional workforce dominated by officers from working-class or lower middle-class origins turned to be insufficient, and those having received higher education and with different perspectives than the majority of in-service members should be embraced into the police (Kernaghan, 2013; Smith, 2015).

In the studied intake, 9 out of 19 recruits were from external background, ranging from private to public sector, from blue-collar to white-collar occupations. Their strong motives for the job (in aspects other than monetary reward or perks) suggest that policing indeed appeals to numerous external talents. While it is true that they joined with fresh and diverse political, moral, cultural and ethical values stemmed from higher education and/or professional experience, it does not necessarily mean these elements would be appreciated, utilised and then benefit the organisation. Given what was found in this study, how external recruits socialised and interacted within the settings they experienced crucially determined whether, and to what extent, their differences, if not advantages, could make a real difference.

In general, the data agreed with the existing literature that argues experience of higher education, especially in sociology subjects, usually renders individuals more self-reflexive, enquiring, and sensitive to the grey area and use of power in the job (Lee and Punch, 2004). But more importantly, within the group, different self-perceptions and ways of negotiating with social contexts led to crucial divergences among newcomers at their interface with various settings. Therefore, differentiation has to be made in analysing the process of their development over time. Specifically, emerged in the study were two distinctive strands, roughly represented respectively by fresh graduates and professionals who had degrees but also several years of working experience in other occupations.

The fresh graduates were in their early twenties, shortly after graduation moving into not only a new career, but also a new stage of life. With little experience of working at an established occupation and of socialising into a work group, this host of newcomers constantly underwent dual pressure ---- occupational credibility building and social acceptance. Given this, while they joined with a reflective eye, thankful to the cultivation of higher education, they were also significantly vulnerable to the prevailing subculture as well as influential and powerful people in their situated settings, thus not always able to persist with alternative views. For instance, when faced with the tension between their expectation for respect and autonomy afforded for all individual members as what is common in universities, and the traditional militaristic command culture and bureaucratic hierarchy in the academy and police stations, they struggled about how to interpret it --- whether it was manifestation of the unreflective and thus yet-to-be-changed culture of the police or it was just a shock

resulting from their paucity of work in bureaucratic organisations or most employers in general. Hence, reflective views were consequently withheld to themselves.

Besides, since joining the police constituted a massive individual relocation, their self-knowledge and self-confidence was not stable or solid enough and subject to critical events and external evaluations (Hall, 1987; Pratt et al., 2006). This was especially apparent in their ambivalent position at the initial stage of socialisation. Where different subgroups of the police held discrepant perspectives, such as on procedures and approaches to public members, their position was likely to be channelled by the currently dominant voices and practices. Therefore, while identifying with gold-standard principles that were overwhelmingly emphasised at the academy, they then were convinced by experienced tutors of their pragmatic philosophies and related to corner-cutting practices when they were encountered with difficulties in real-life policing. However, their flux of approaches to controversial policing issues, as Fielding and Fielding (1991) conclude, were mainly due to lack of strong empirical cases to cement and justify, and thus should not be taken as their policing approach in the long run.

Indeed, after months of independent task delivery, noticeable increase in self-assertiveness was exhibited among these graduate recruits. And it could be seen the emergence of personal philosophy of policing, which incorporated their maintained moral values and world views into work identity. Discretional space and ample real experience made it possible for them to form and exercise independent policing approach and work identity. Besides, they were more inclined to treat the organisation as a whole, and thus able to observe and question discrepancies between departments, divisions, and hierarchies, rather than readily accepting localised habits and norms and blindly identifying with them (e.g. '(my LPA) is weird, but I love it'). Some of them derived insightful thoughts on their workplace and relates it to systematic problems in the organisation at large, such as on issues of shift morale, allocation of force and coordination between departments in the police organisation.

Nevertheless, we should not be overoptimistic about these recruits' innovative thinking, as there are restricting and undermining forces from both the police and society. First, practical competence and field engagement is still deeply held by most people as separate from and superior than 'abstract', 'inflexible' and ivory-towered

theories for this ‘practical job’. And the paramount significance of frontline working experience as well as life and social experience is dominant in operation policing (Constable and Smith, 2015; Holdaway. 1983; Manning, 1979). In this line of thinking, graduates’ scarcity of life outside schools and social common sense, in conjunction with their theoretical and idealistic perspective rendered them in a rather marginalised position, scornfully referred by some long-service officers as ‘Micky mouse degree’. As reflected in conversations with sergeants and PDU trainers, the young graduate recruits were believed less entitled to comment on what have been practiced for a long time at local areas, or disagree with an experienced patrol officers in terms of how to deal with a domestic incident.

Regarding in interface with the public, on the one side, their appreciation of ‘liberty’ and individualised consideration normally laid focus on the legitimacy of ‘means’, over the pragmatic ‘ends’. Hence, they were less inclined to use force or coercion, and less driven by detection statistics (i.e. personal record of arrests made) to take actions, which help could improve the image of policing. Whereas, their policing style night not always be understood or appreciated by public members, especially those who judge on the police with the social convention that the police should throw every offender behind bars and act on the behalf of victims. This was illustrative in one informant’s cautious attitude towards prosecution (‘you don’t want to press into people’s life’), which was met with critical response from the people who reported crimes (‘they said I just want the police to speak with them). Also, recurrent criminals were a strong factor pushing them to act the other way around, which, as they doubted, might change their approach after years (‘it started to bother me, and maybe bother me more in the future’).

Furthermore, since most of their life time was spent in academic institutions, where individuals are firmly instilled with the idea that there is infinite knowledge to learn and perpetual room for self-improvement, these officers are always highly aware of their own ‘limits’ (e.g. ‘I knew I still got loads to learn’), and own ‘place’ (e.g. ‘earning your stripes and until you have done that you aren’t really allowed an opinion’), which to certain extent stopped them from ‘making waves’ in their local community. Given this, compared with the group of inspectors who conducted university degrees after years of service (cf. Lee and Punch, 2004), these recruits were far less confident of their alternative and critical positions, as they were always highly

aware of their disadvantages in practical experience. That is why informants tended to follow their comments by adding statements like ‘maybe after years …’, ‘I don’t know, this is just my personal opinion’. By the time of the research, these critical thoughts had not yet been told to their sergeants or inspectors. It is hard to say, without the occasion of individual interview and a ‘trustworthy’ interviewer, as they perceived, whether they would ever express those opinions to their team and tried to make some impact in the local area.

On the contrary, the professional recruits entered the police with relatively stronger self-perception and worldview, which had been stably established from several years of professional experience prior to police entry. Therefore, unlike graduates seeking self-definition and -value from the new job and work group, they were preoccupied with maintaining and re-presenting preferred self-concept in the police. Given this, their experienced stress during the occupational transition lied in the frontier between the work identity they had previously held and the one entailed by the new job. As shown from the study, depending on the expertise, prestige and relation with clients of their earlier occupations, professional recruits experienced various kinds and magnitudes of identity transformation and negotiation. Those coming from occupations that have less specialised competence, definite social image or fixed patterns of social interactions (e.g. construction workers), socialisation into the police was comparably smoother. Although they experienced frictions in adapting work identity, their transforming path was very likely to be similar as that of most people joining the police for the first time.

However, for those used to work in occupations that are knowledge-intensive, of higher social image or routinely engage with clients/customers in a serving and mutually respectful relation (e.g. medical therapist, sales manager), the transition possibly called for giving away some habitual, identifying and even pride-ridden working styles, to achieve some comfortable equilibrium between past and current life. Therefore, this latter type of professionals tended to retain more substantial, and for longer time, distinctive attributes from their earlier professional identities, which could potentially bring ‘fresh’ or ‘alternative’ elements to the police. As the characters of high professional status and considerate work patterns are most ostensibly, though not merely, found among Direct Entry Inspector newcomers, the next key implication concerning external recruits to be elaborated is focused on these fast-track recruits.

Fundamentally speaking, direct-entry schemes are aimed to accelerate promotion process for the 'brightest, most promising candidates' (Winsor, 2012), so that those talented people would be attracted to and serve, with their valuable knowledge and capabilities, at impactive positions in the police. Whereas, since the direct-entry inspectors (serving one-year as constable and two years as sergeant before promoted to inspector), dissimilar to direct-entry superintendents, are located closest to street-level policing and play their role by directly managing PCs, their external background and speedy promotion potentially may confine the leadership and impact they could establish at their teams. As indicated from the two fast-trackers in this study, the role they played as a sergeant was, in nature, more of structure prescribed management than discretional and influential leadership.

Specifically, from the perspective of subordinate PCs, the shortened entry and promotion path in effect weakens fast-trackers' leadership. First, as noted earlier, working experience in real life contexts is considered the prime source of professional credibility in operational policing, which means long-term serving is believed a premise to build up competence and authority. Whereas, the 'high-flying' knowledge and qualifications obtained and evaluated elsewhere, such as managerial experience, academic achievement, or even the police fast-track assessment, are not thought as truly sufficient in the policing context (cf. Kernaghan, 2013), because the special role of police, in respect of its law enforcement nature and wide range of routine tasks, entails skills that are far more complicated than knowing legislations and are thus not really transferrable from other occupations (Fielding, 1984; Muir, 1977; Young, 1991). Yet, the fast-trackers only spend 6 to 7 months serving as a PC before getting promoted and retreating from the frontline to inside- and paperwork-bound work (Butterfield et al., 2005). Whereas, traditionally, the essential role of a sergeant encompasses making decisions and giving support and orders to PCs in crisis, dangerous or ambiguous situations, which now they themselves might have not yet experienced. From this long-established perspective among followers, these fast-trackers are liable to possess limited authority in the group that they are in charge of.

Second, the subculture and in-group integrity (referred as 'silo culture' in areas) remains very strong in operation sector, so much so that well socialising with the ethos of local operational community is imperative for in-group trust, solidarity (Dick, 2005; Waddington, 1999) and effective leadership (Kernaghan, 2013). However, on the one

hand, the fast-trackers start their sergeant role without spending long time with the squad day in and day out; on the other hand, they are likely to craft self to a 'policing professional' and attempt to get only partially adjusted, given their high-prestigious other-than-police identity as well as the organisation's encouragement of incorporating their alternative elements into the police. For instance, the police masculinity, or 'professional backbone' (Kernaghan, 2013; Van Maanen, 2010) is regarded as a key attribute of the collective identity of police. This identity element is, however, hardly possible to be fully accepted, adopted and enacted by fast-trackers in their short period of service in the PC role, not least because their prior occupations involve cooperation-oriented relation with clients. Consequently, as the study shows, a lot of action-oriented constables in their team would apply more job discretion than asking for permission or seeking advice from the sergeant before acting.

Moreover, from their own point of view, direct-entry recruits' self-establishment could also be restricted by a feeling of insecure achievement. In the study, the training for fast-trackers did not include more support than normal officer, but mainly focused on legislation and crammed into half time of the training for normal officers. Additionally, while they received some training on management, it was relatively abstract, focused on principles and psychologic rationales and less informative about day-to-day management. Therefore, though great efforts had been devoted to the extremely 'rigorous', intensive fast-track assessment, they stepped to the sergeant position, as they perceived, still quite 'under-equipped'.

Apart from technical under-preparation, ambiguities and uncertainties pertain to their role poses another layer of stress. As noted previously, these fast-trackers remained somewhat clinging to their past professional status and reputation, and accordingly had set up high standard for themselves in the new role. Hence, their self-reflection of performing the current job like 'imposture' ---- striving to present self as a confident and competent manager in face of both crew superiors and subordinates, while privately anxious about how much they had not yet known about operation policing. Moreover, being the precious few, there are not any role model or even just earlier fast-tracker that they could turn to for guidance and confirmation within the force, which rendered them struggled in 'no man's land'.

Moreover, since their rising into higher ranks in only three years seems a sharp privilege against the traditional decade-taking promotion path, these fast-trackers tended to make sense of or justify their direct entry to sergeant/inspector position by attributing it to the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in the police. Nevertheless, NPM also paradoxically led to transformation of managing structure of operational teams, from the traditional 'troop' model, which is based mostly on sergeants' leadership, participative supervision and close engagement with constables, to a managerial pattern, which emphasises more upon management, measurement and individual accountability and in effect distances sergeants away from the frontline as well as constables (Butterfield et al., 2005). Seeing themselves as part of the macro political change further perplexed their self-positioning. This is because, on the one hand, their entrance was grounded on the rationale of utilising talents and perspectives from external world to enhance police performance and culture; on the other hand, their sergeant role is, conversely, focused on rigidly stipulated management tasks and situated in a system that aims to demolish 'elitist' leadership (Loveday, 2013). Therefore, the informants' aspiration upon entrance to incorporate customer-centred and crime-prevention conceptions in policing management was let down by the high volume of administrative managerial tasks and little direct intervention in constables' street-level policing.

Based on the analyses above, three main points could be concluded. First, compared with internal recruits, graduates and professional recruits were more likely to be subject to multiple sources of uncertainties, including both inside-struggle ---- past-present tension, self-perceived inadequacy, as well as organisation ambiguities ---- contradictions within latest recruitment reforms and NPM policies (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003) and discrepancies between departments and hierarchies. However, as they acquired more working experience, they became more capable in coping with these uncertainties and simultaneously maintaining moral codes, work ethics and professionalism. And this is exactly where their merit lies in ---- when risk, hostility, isolation, austerity, bureaucracy abound in the policing job within current political, social and economic context, instead of conveniently sipping into instrumental, defensive and insular subculture and cynicism, they retain self-reflexivity and critical thinking, that is, actively reflecting upon their role performance and questioning commonly accepted values and practices. Therefore, to answer the question raised at

the onset of this section, indeed, external recruits do constitute valuable resources, contributing to enhancement in performance quality and work attitude at street-level policing.

Second, a crucial part of the social pressure restraining external recruits comes from, again, the deeply ingrained 'artisan' (practical-oriented) assumption of the occupation and long-existing antipathy to education (Constable and Smith, 2015; Lee and Punch, 2007) in operational policing. Since the crime-fighting institution remains strong, and ironically strengthened by NPM performance control mechanisms (cf. Davies and Thomas, 2003; Loveday, 2013), short-term operational demands are consequently stubbornly prioritised. Hence practical community's depreciation of any knowledge, qualification and competence produced from formal training, academic institution or other organisation or industry. Under this pressure, after months' sharp-end patrolling life even some external recruits shifted attitude from appreciative to totally against inspirational policing-related education, such as psychology and criminology. Therefore, it is fair to suggest that to improve the calibre of frontline practitioners, measurement on tangible performance indicators should not be overly compiling on practical community so that nothing except pragmatic competence is valued and focused on to the detrimental of work ethics, service quality, reflective, innovative thinking and, in the case of direct-entry inspectors, ingenious leadership that are intangible, time-consuming to sustain, test and harvest benefit, yet very crucial for all levels of the organisation in the long term.

Third, the encapsulating and masculine in-groupness of operational community determines that all alternative stances, either managerial, academic or public or perspectives, are perceived with bias, scepticism and defence. Situated in an enclosed social context that marginalises and despises high-level, critical and revolutionary stances, external recruits could be severely restrained in developing personalised work identity. Whereas, their identity conception based on worldview alternative to the traditional police thinking is squarely the perspective the organisation desires to use to better engage with the public, which is composed of increasingly diverse and new culture and ideas. Therefore, if the police aim to improve understanding of and relationship with the society, it has to primarily respect and understand its own members with perspectives differed from the predominant ones. Apart from increasing ethnical and social-class diversity, more importantly to this end is being more tolerant

and encouraging to different approaches within the police, so that external recruits, especially fast-trackers, could be relatively free of peer pressure to form innovative opinions and spread over and influence their local policing community. Only by virtues of recognising and allowing changes inside the policing community, could the police become more adept at addressing changes in its external environment.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed about the initial training, PDU placements and recruitment and management of external recruits with the data from this study. When evaluating the three aspects, I found a central issue underlying these aspects ---- that is, the segmented subcultures in the police system remain strong ---- which has been obstructing the introduction of new conceptions, principles and people, and the coordination and collaboration between divisions. The empirical data from this study well support this point, in that the faculty at formal training and PDU placements were found demonising and competing with each other and carrying out their own training to the detriment of other important aspects that the police newcomers required. Also, the externally recruited newcomers were under the pressure of social inclusion and restrained from bring reflective or critical elements into the police. Consequently, although enormous money and materials have been invested in improving the way of training police officers and recruiting external candidates, the subcultures in police have led to the repetition of traditional way of producing police officers (Butterfield et al., 2015).

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Identity construction is one of the most extensively developed themes in organisation studies, for its wide range of hermeneutic origins, abundant theoretical debates and rich empirical resources (Alvesson, 2010; Alvesson et al., 2008a). Within this broad field, the perspective of identity work, a view that understands identity construction as coproduced by individual agency and social context, has been widely adopted and rapidly developed in recent decades. However, the existing literature of identity work has offered little insights to inter-personal variation in the process of identity construction. Also, investigations on individuals' interplays with multi-ordered social contexts in constructing identity remain confined in giving detailed and systematic accounts to the dynamic process whereby individuals deal with the discrepant and/or competing elements. Consequently, this study has been committed to exploring and enriching knowledge of these two under-theorised aspects.

Drawing from the rich empirical evidences of the identity work among a police intake over the socialisation process, this study yielded multi-levelled findings on the two essential aspects of identity work ---- social context and agency, and derived many reflective arguments.

First, the socialising process in study was found to encompass four distinctive social contexts, which differed from each other in three key aspects ---- **discourses and discursive practices, power structure, and practical enactment** (analysed in Chapter 4). These three aspects were remarked by the newcomers as crucial elements in their identity work. Therefore, the discrepancies between socialising contexts in these aspects situated the newcomers' identity work in an iterative, contradictory and complicated process.

This finding underscores the postmodern-oriented view of a fluid, conflicting and fragmented world (Bauman, 2000; Gioia, et al., 2000; Shotter and Gergen, 1989; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) in which people are constantly struggling for a coherent sense of identity. Also, it generates a critical commentary on the research of socialisation and identity construction during socialisation, that the processes of socialisation or identity construction could involve much more complexity and multiplicity than the

linear or one-dimensional processes portrayed in a lot of studies (e.g. Dutton, et al., 1994; Nicholson, 1984; Pratt, 2000b).

Moreover, the three crucial aspects of social contexts were integrated into two fundamental dimensions ---- **the degree of unity/fragmentation and the tension between agency and structure** (explained in subsection 4.6), which constitutes a two-dimensional framework for evaluating social contexts. To be specific, a social context, when located within the two-dimensional map, could be analysed as a set of contextual conditions that are relevant for the identity work taking place within it. The data of this study have well supported that different combinations of high or low 'fragmentation' and high or low 'agency' could act on individuals' identity work in vitally different ways ---- the context could be enabling or constraining, resourceful or irrelevant, manoeuvrable or dominating. Also, by using the framework to analyse a process throughout multiple contexts, the over-time transformations in the overall context could be easily identified. To illustrate, the increasingly fragmented discursive regime and the growing space of agentic practices throughout the police socialisation, as informed by the framework, constitutes a very explanatory and convincing assessment of the process, and helps to reflect on how the status of the newcomers changed throughout.

While more and more studies of identity work have made effort to deliver focused examination of the specific influences of social contexts (Alvesson et al., 2008a), little has been done to offer a structured and integrative framework to facilitate and deepen the examination, let alone to capture the dynamic process. Consequently, this framework contributes an effective analytical tool for identity work research. It could facilitate identity work research to strengthen the analysis of social contexts by integrating more relevant dimensions in the investigation and using a processual perspective (Langley and Abdallah, 2011) to examine the dynamic process.

Second, three main orientations of identity work emerged significantly from the data ---- **'legitimacy seeking' orientation, 'authenticity seeking' orientation and 'practitioner' orientation** ---- which captured newcomers' different ways of social interactions and the different versions of work identity they pursued (analysed in Chapter 5). Specifically, the newcomers were found to prioritise one among the three dimensions of a work identity throughout the socialisation period, which were

namely the legitimacy certificated by social approval, the authenticity defined by self-authorship in engaging with social life, and the competence embodied in active practices. In accordance to the specific orientations that newcomers adopted, their identity work was constituted by different constellations of **trigger, agency, confirming mechanism and driver** (illustrated in subsection 5.5).

The observation that the three orientations differentiate among each other in a multiplicity of aspects underscores the validity and significance of my previous assumption on inter-individual variation. By integrating with the framework of social contexts, the identity orientation could be understood as the fundamental way individuals tend to relate themselves to the situated context (Shotter, 2008; Watson, 2008) (detailed in subsection 6.2). Thus, identity constructors with a given identity orientation could more easily sustain their desired relation with certain type of social context than others. Specifically, the identity work of legitimacy seeking, authenticity seeking and practitioner-orientation is respectively best enabled by the context featured by high-unity & high structure, high-fragmentation & high-agency and high unity& high-agency (elaborated in subsection 6.3). The trajectories of identity work revealed in this study has also shown that identity work is not always smooth and progressive, but could be iterative, and constantly prone to predicaments (Beech et al., 2016; Ybema et al., 2009). Especially, legitimacy seeking orientation is very likely to invoke self-doubt and critically reflecting one's own legitimacy is almost a default characteristic.

The varied identity orientations underline the diverse types of interrelation between identity constructors and social contexts. This observation offers a reflective view to consider some tensions or debates in identity work literature, such as whether organisational changes invoke passive resistance or creative identity re-construction (Thomas and Davies, 2005), whether a liminal position imposes precarious status or affords exploiting room (Beech, 2010; Sturdy et al., 2006) and so on. The observation also engages with Alvesson's (2010) identification of the various types of identity work existing in the scholarship by explaining their co-existence with substantial analysis.

Besides, the variation of identity work could be vitally influential at both individual and organisational level. To illustrate, the legitimacy seekers were inclined

to follow rules in order to act appropriately, but faced with the pressure of the dominant culture in subgroups; the authenticity seekers had a relatively stable worldview and sense of themselves that they wished to re-stablish or maintain in the new work setting, despite of external regulating or winding-down elements; the practitioners tended to focus on getting the work done and almost filtered out other aspects of the job, such as formal rules, far-reaching effects and so on (reviewed in subsection 6.3.4).

As is shown, the differences between the three orientations were found to be more significant than micro idiosyncratic heterogeneity, and simultaneously more reliable and in-depth than a generic identity construction or socialisation path. It is not my ambition to argue that any case of identity work would fit perfectly with these categories, or any group of identity constructors could be divided into these three types. But I hope the analytical frame of identity orientation can heighten scholars and managers' awareness of different types of identity work in one setting or process, and facilitate reflective understanding of the deeper aspects beneath tangible variation. By doing this, I respond to and enrich the 'anti-reductionist' approach in identity work studies eagerly advocated by Alvesson (2010: 201).

In addition, the four aspects outlined above allow pinning down the inter-individual variation in the continuous process of identity work, which is delineated in a **processual model of identity work** constituted by four micro processes (demonstrated in subsection 6.4.1). Specifically, the **driver** shapes individuals' system of relevance (Schutz, 1964; Weick, 1995), that is, their focused aspect in social interactions. Hence, it naturally determines how they **define** their becoming identity in a new social context. In accordance to their relevance system, individuals recognise the **trigger** of identity work in the situated context by **assessing the context**, that is, decoding the present context as a set of opportunity or threat, materials or obstacles of identity construction (Beech, 2008, 2010). Based on what influences and provisions are offered in the context, individuals correspondingly direct specific **agency** to **construct** the identity and use particular **mechanisms** to **confirm** the produced identity. Consequently, they could **redefine** themselves in the present context. When the trigger is recognised again from the context, this series of activities will be re-activated.

This processual model confirms and refines the widely appreciated framework of two-way communication between internal and external world (Beech, 2010; Watson, 2008). By integrating the four interlinked micro processes of identity work, and identifying the specific issue in each micro process according to the adopted identity orientation, this model contributes a more comprehensive and idiosyncrasy-sensitive analytical apparatus for inquiries of identity work process.

Furthermore, the model also captures the tension between stability and fluidity in identity work. The arrows in the model not only suggest an evolving and cyclical pattern of identity work, but also indicate its open-endedness. This is based on the finding that newcomers tended to persist with given identity orientation across various social contexts. It was the identity orientation they held in relating their self with the surrounding social context that granted them a sense of stability amidst various changes in themselves as well as the social environment (elaborated in subsection 6.4.2). Also, since each identity orientation of identity work may be mobilised primarily by changes in a corresponding aspect in the social context, both the specific identity orientation and contextual changes need to be taken into account in evaluating the stability of identity. These remarks offer a fresh way of perceiving identity stability and fluidity. And a conclusive argument derived is that, within a fluid living and working context, people's inherent search for existential coherence/consistency could make them modify or narrow down their preoccupation, which consequently puts them in a paradox of adjusting themselves to maintain a consistent self.

In addition, the research also produces some implications for the police sector. First, regarding the initial training, the written rules and paradigmatic behavioural principles overshadow practical exercises. This limitation, in conjunction with the decontextualized learning materials and off-line faculty, created the impression that the formal training had little to do with real work condition among the newcomers. Additionally, it had scant concurrence with the PDU community, and found no echo and reinforcing mechanisms from the practical policing world. This factor severely weakened the efficacy of formal training in turning the new intakes into well-practiced, ethical work force.

Second, the PDU LPAs and tutoring faculty, in general, were highly against the training academy and its 'gold-standard' ideology, but being somewhat self-

privileging and box-ticking. And the procedure and structure of PDU placements in fact left great automatic power to individual tutors, which resulted in a custodial-styled supervision. This imposed heavy pressure on new starters to reproduce established norms at highly local practical community and to decouple from the standardised procedures advanced by formal authority, thus rendering them gradually losing distinctiveness and reflexivity, but to a large extent surrendering to peer pressure (Butterfield et al., 2005; Constable and Smith, 2015).

Third, this study also contributes knowledge on external recruits from their own account of socialising and identity developing experiences, which is exceptional in recent police studies. It was found both fresh graduates and professional recruits possessed higher reflexivity in understanding the policing routines as well as broader organisational issues (e.g. structure, payment and morale). Whereas these reflective considerations and work goals are often thwarted by a variety of reasons. This includes, first of all, the deeply seated celebration of frontline practical experience in the policing community and hostility and scepticism to other types of knowledge (Fielding, 1984; Muir, 1977; Young, 1991). This means that the 'high-flying' interpretation of policing activities (e.g. liberty) and externally imported ideas (e.g. customer-servicing policing style) will not be given any credit, but mostly disqualified and dismissed in the practical community. Also, persisting their personally valued work philosophies could exacerbate external recruits' marginalised and uncertain position in the organisation. For the graduate recruits this means risking their social inclusion in the police and appreciation from the public, thus undermining their already quite vulnerable self-esteem. For the fast-trackers this directly affects their authority, ethos and leadership in the operational team, and subverts their self-respect gained in earlier career.

The problems exhibited in the foregoing three aspects, however, are interrelated and could be attributed to the same long-lasting issues in the police, such as contestation between managers and practitioners (Constable and Smith, 2015), lack of reciprocity between training and practical field (Fielding, 1984), box-ticking treatment of revolutionary ventures (Butterfield, et al., 2005) and adversity to external ideology and knowledge (Lee and Punch, 2007). These tensions not only constantly put newcomers in dilemmatic position between polarised institutions and wind down their initiative and confidence in self-advancement, but also systematically eliminate

their room of voice, enact and promote alternative worldviews, distinctive perceptions on work, and elsewhere cultivated skills.

Therefore, in order to tackle the stubborn group-thinking and resistance to change prevalent in the community, the police should not only embrace larger range of talents, perspectives and knowledge, but also culturally tolerate, accept and appreciate them, and avoid overriding the quality by heavily emphasising on quantity in assessment and evaluation mechanisms.

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