"HEROIC CRIME FIGHTERS" A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF POLICE OFFICERS' IDEALISTIC ROLE CONSTRUCT

A thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies
of
The University of Guelph

By
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In partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
July, 2011

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ABSTRACT

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This research seeks to understand how public police officers phenomenologically construct and conceptualize their occupational role. Most research has overlooked officers’ intimate constructions of reality. The present study addresses this gap in the literature by presenting an inductive analysis of how police officers define their role, capturing officers’ intimate constructions of their life-world, while acknowledging the contradictions and tensions that characterize this role construct. My interview data indicates that officers define their role in terms of an ideal construct that is oftentimes at odds with their lived reality. Moreover, the data suggests that there is a discontinuity between officers’ definition of reality, the nature of their lived experienced, and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the media, the public and the courts which, ultimately, fosters feelings of powerlessness among the officers. I conclude with discussion about the implications of holding onto this role construct and offer potential policy initiatives.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge all of the people that helped to make this project possible:

To Patrick, I could not have asked for a better mentor. I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to you for everything. In the six years that I have had the pleasure of working with you - you have been more than just a supervisor but a friend to me. Thank you for your guidance, support and compassion throughout this project and throughout my academic career at Guelph. But most of all thank you for pushing me to be the best I can be. I would not be the student I am today without your continual guidance and support.

To Bill, thank you for your critical spin on things. Not only did your input strengthen this project but it also pushed me to explore new avenues.

To my Soc girls, Kristina E, Kristina V, Melinda and Laura. I do not know what I would have done without you ladies. My sincerest thanks to all of you for putting up with me for the last two years and for making this journey so special.

To all of the police officers who offered their time thank you for making this project possible

To my extended family and friends thank you for continual love and support. Aunt Cindy and Uncle Regent thanks for always being there for me. Fred and Brenda thanks for all of your support, but an extra special thank you for letting me turn your basement into my office for the last month.

To mom, dad, Nigel, and my future sister-in-law words cannot express what you mean to me. Thanks for your everlasting patience. Without your continual love and support this degree would not have been possible. You have given me the opportunity to follow my dreams and for that I am forever grateful.

Finally, to Amanda you have been my inspiration. Without your eternal love, support and patience this project would not have been possible. You are my rock, thanks for listening when I needed you to listen, giving me a shoulder to cry on and making me laugh when I needed to laugh.
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Chapter 1- Introduction

*Journal Entry One- “Heroes“:*

It was 11:55 P.M. five minutes before the end of shift when I saw her standing there on the porch; she was six or seven and dressed in an oversized shirt that hung to her feet. As I approached her she said "My mommy and daddy just had a really big fight and now mommy won't wake up." I instantly called for backup and kicked open the door, cuffed the man and began doing CPR on the lady. It was then I heard a small voice from behind me, "Mr. Policeman, please make my mommy wake up." Despite my efforts to revive her she was dead. As I walked the man out to the car in handcuffs, I saw that little girl again but this time she turned away from me. In the five minutes that had passed, I went from hero to monster. Not only was I unable to wake up her mommy, but now I was taking daddy away too. As I sat in the locker room after shift, tears streaming down my face, I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard that all too familiar question again, "Well, hero, what do real police officers taste like?" I knew now the answer: TEARS. He looked at me and said "You know, there was nothing you could have done differently...sometimes you can do everything right and still the outcome is the same. You may not be the hero you once thought you were, but now you ARE a police officer."¹

In a number of ways the above excerpt illuminates the complexity of the police role. There are few professions that require one individual to play so many conflicting roles in one shift. Drawn to the formal uniforms, marked cruisers, and the lights and sirens I have always been fascinated and, admittedly, slightly intimidated with what the men and women in blue do. Over the course of the last seven years my interest in the police profession has even inspired me, from time to time, to pursue a career in the field. For me, police officers have a kind of celebrity status, albeit they are celebrities you would rather not meet given the type of autograph they offer usually comes in the form of a ticket and/or a charge of some sort.

¹ Please note that I have modified the original excerpt but it was adapted and inspired by Rick Monticello from the Somersdale Police Department in New Jersey (accessed 06/01/11 from: http://forums.officer.com)
I can still remember my very first encounter with an officer; it was a warm sunny day, I was 11 and my cousin was 12 and we were caught for failing to cross the street at a designated cross-walk by an officer who thought it was necessary to use lights and sirens. My stomach sank and my eyes welled up with tears. A young female officer stepped out of the cruiser and placed her hand on my shoulder. With a look of disappointment she looked my cousin and I in the eye and explained what we had done wrong. She informed us that this time we could get off with just a warning providing that we had learned our lesson. At 11 years old I can remember wondering how this was part of her job. I had always thought police officers were out doing “cool” and dangerous things, like catching bad guys, not stopping 11 year olds on the side of the street for an illegal street crossing. My second interaction with a police officer was not nearly as pleasant; in fact, this time I was the lucky recipient of a “real police autograph,” as tears streamed down my face the O.P.P supervisor, seemingly unaffected by my emotion, lectured me rather aggressively about my wrong doings (I rolled through a stop sign) and handed me a ticket. Needless to say, my second encounter left me angry, frustrated and annoyed and these feelings lingered for quite some time. However, I had to laugh when I caught myself thinking the exact same thing I thought at the age of 11, “doesn’t he have better things to do?!?” I would imagine that I am not alone in this sentiment. Generally speaking, the public seems to share a love/hate relationship with police officers. Yet, at the end of the day, whether you love them or you hate them, chances are good you will admit that, in some shape or form, we need them to be around. The nature of police/public relations and the complexity of the police role have interested researchers, particularly sociologists, for years.
Within sociology, policing has been a topic of interest for decades. Scholars have focussed on numerous subjects including police functions, police roles, and police culture. When I began this paper I elected to focus on what has always interested me the most, the police role. Popular culture suggests that the role of police is clear; they are depicted ultimately, as heroes in constant danger, responsible for fighting crime, protecting the innocent and serving justice. Yet, an abundance of literature suggests that this depiction is far removed from the reality of what police do (c.f., Ericson, 1982; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). In fact, research has long suggested that police officers face an impossible mandate (Manning, 1999). Moreover, scholars have argued that in reality officers’ role is rather mundane and fragmented insofar as they are required to solve myriad social and interpersonal problems and act as service providers and social workers (c.f., Ericson, 1982).

Within the literature there have been numerous attempts to define the role of police (c.f., Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Gordon, 2006; Murphy, 1998). For the most part, researchers have elected to analyze officers from an external and macro-level social systems perspective. In particular, the police role has been conceptualized and explained in terms of risk society (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), and radical theory and capitalism (Gordon, 2006); the research has provided valuable insight as to how police perform their role in society. However, many scholars have failed to acknowledge how officers’ understand their role and, thus, they have been inclined to infer police officers’ sense of their life-world. As a result, officers’ intimate constructions of reality remain marginalized. This gap in the literature is problematic given that, according to Reiner (1985), “An understanding of how police officers see the social world and their role in it is crucial to an analysis of what they do and their broad political function” (pg.
To address this gap in the literature, this research seeks to shed light on officers' institutionalized construction of reality, focusing specifically on how they phenomenologically define and conceptualize their role, while acknowledging the possible contradictions and tensions that characterize this role construct. I contend that because self-conception is intimately connected to action and sense of self, in order to fully grasp the role that police play in society it is necessary to understand how they conceptualize and construct their role. Thus, it is crucial to hear their voices.

I begin this research asking how public police officers construct and conceptualize their role. I also examine what role, if any, public perceptions and the mainstream media play in that construction. Finally, on a practical level I intend to elucidate the extent to which an understanding of officers’ role constructions might help inform/improve management practices and policies within police organizations. The present research draws largely from an interpretive paradigmatic approach and constructionist epistemology, as such, to analyze how officers construct their role and define their reality phenomenologically I use in-depth semi-structured interviews. This research offers a valuable contribution to the literature insofar as it is one of the few studies to examine the role of the public police from a phenomenological perspective and, thus, will challenge and add depth to the social-systems models that have been adopted thus far. This paper argues that officers define their role in terms of an ideal construct that is oftentimes at odds with their lived reality. Moreover, the data from this research suggests that there is a discontinuity between officers’ definition of reality, the nature of their lived experienced, and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the
media, the public and the courts which, ultimately, fosters feelings of powerlessness among the officers in this study.

**THESIS OUTLINE**

In the following chapter I provide an extensive review of the relevant literature and establish the theoretical framework that guides this research. I begin the chapter by examining how police roles have been conceptualized in terms of risk society (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), and radical theory and capitalism (Gordon, 2006). Additionally, I discuss the ways in which the subcultural literature has been used to explain how police perform their role. I also illuminate the ways in which the present literature falls short in explaining the police role. In the final section of the chapter I discuss the theoretical framework that I adopt to analyze how police officers construct their role. Specifically, I draw from phenomenology as it has been applied within a sociological framework drawing heavily from the social phenomenological theory established by Schutz (1966) and Berger and Luckmann (1967). I conclude the chapter by explicating how my research contributes to the broader literature on police and society.

In chapter three I provide a detailed outline of my methodological approach. In the first portion of the chapter I discuss the methods and methodologies that have been used in the police literature. I then illuminate how my epistemological and ontological concerns inform the method used to conduct the present research. In the second portion of the chapter I discuss the research sample and articulate how in-depth semi-structured interviews can be used effectively as a means of explicating how officers construct their roles and realities. I also examine the role of rapport and researcher reflexivity and provide an outline of the interview structure. In the final section I elucidate the data analysis procedure.
Chapter four offers a detailed discussion of the research findings, revealing how the officers in this study conceptualize and construct their role and reality. In the first section of the chapter I explicate how officers define their role in terms of an ideal construct that emphasizes crime fighting, order maintenance and societal protection. I also explain that this role construct is sedimented and take largely for-granted. In the second section, I articulate how this role construct is oftentimes at odds with the reality of the job. I discuss how officers admit, on several occasions, that in reality most calls for police service rarely involve crime fighting, but rather, more mundane activities including problem solving and tasks similar to social work. I explain further, that the officers in this study reject vehemently that problem solving and social work are part of their job description or responsibility. In the final section I discuss who the officers believe that they serve, police/public relations, and how public expectations influence the way officers construct their role.

Chapter five builds on the finding that officers' life-world is seemingly conflicted by analyzing the ways in which officers construct and experience various sources of powerlessness. I explain that officers' ideal role construct is undermined constantly by clashing definitions of reality. More specifically, I discuss how the disconnect between officers' personal and institutionalized constructions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the public, the media and the courts actually leaves officers feeling relatively powerless. Moreover, I articulate the various ways in which increasing demands for accountability allegedly undermine officers' role construct, I discuss how officers feel alone in the fight against crime, and that their job ostensibly places them in “no-win situations.” I also explain how the hierarchical structure of the police organization cultivates feelings of
powerlessness. I conclude by examining how officers experience difficulty separating institutionalized definitions of reality within their job from institutionalized realities outside of the job.

In chapter six I reiterate the findings and significance of this research. In the first section I offer a number of explanations as to why officers’ ideal role construct persists despite its clash with their lived realities and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused around them. Specifically, I reveal how the depiction of police officers in popular culture, the training recruits receive at the police academy, the values and beliefs of the police culture and the ways in which the police organization legitimates its existence can explain the current existence and future promotion of officers’ ideal role construct. In the second section of the chapter I discuss the implications of perpetuating this occupational identity, which are of concern not only for the police organization, but also, for the public. Additionally, as a means of addressing these implications I offer two potential policy initiatives.

I conclude the paper with a discussion of the limitations of the present research and directions for future research. I also highlight my effort to obtain officers trust in order to elicit honesty. To begin a review of the relevant literature is necessary.
Chapter 2- Theory and Literature Review

This research examines how public police officers conceptualize and construct their role in society. Within the academic community there have been many attempts to define the role of the police (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Gordon, 2006; Murphy, 1998). Much of the research has examined the role police “are playing” or the role police “should be playing” from a macro-level perspective. As such, in order to establish the context and theoretical framework for the current research it is necessary to draw from a number of different bodies of literature.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it will provide an outline of the research conducted on the role of the public police in society. Particularly I will focus on how police roles have been conceptualized in terms of risk society (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997), and radical theory and capitalism (Gordon, 2006). Moreover, I will provide a brief outline of the subcultural literature and how it has been utilized to explain how police perform their roles. Within this section I will also highlight the shortcomings of these perspectives in explaining the role of police. Secondly, I establish the theoretical framework that I will use to examine the role police play in society. Specifically, I will explicate the literature pertaining to phenomenological theory and how it has been applied within a sociological framework. Of primary importance within this section are the theoretical contributions offered by Alfred Schutz (1966) and Berger and Luckmann (1967). Finally, I will conclude the chapter by elucidating how my research will contribute to the broader literature on police and society.

Risk Society

The role of the public police is becoming increasingly ambiguous while progressively more challenging. Within popular discourse the media equate police work first and foremost
with crime work (Ericson, 1982; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). However, in reality, research has demonstrated that very little of police work involves crime fighting (Ericson, 1948; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Johnston, 1979). In fact, a more comprehensive analysis suggests that beyond the typical crime fighter image the role of the police is fragmented. Indeed, the public police are required to play many roles some of which include, order maintenance, peace keeping, problem solving and crime fighting. Additionally, officers are required to act as service providers and act in roles which resemble “social work.” As such, answering the question as to exactly what the role of the police is in the 21st century proves quite challenging. With their influential text titled *Policing the Risk Society*, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) transformed the way in which the role of police had been traditionally theorized. Drawing largely from the work of Ulrich Beck, they conceptualize the role of police as entirely dependent on risk ideologies. Thus, before proceeding, it is first necessary to highlight how risk society has been conceptualized and understood within the literature.

In *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, Beck (1992; 2003) argues that scientific and industrial development has resulted in increased ecological and technological risk hazards that span across both time and space. Risks, as defined by Beck (2003), are “…consequences that relate to the threatening force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt” (pg.21). Through the juxtaposition of risk society with industrial society, Beck suggests that industrial society, characterized by the distribution of goods, has given way to risk society which is typified by the distribution of dangers. Notions of risk have come to transcend moral and geographical boundaries in that society is no longer governed by ideologies that seek to prevent or avoid poisoning individuals. Instead, modernity involves an increased emphasis on
determining and measuring what are deemed acceptable levels of poisoning or acceptable risks. Troubling to Beck is that we rely on the same institutions that have created the risks we encounter to ultimately define and determine what is deemed acceptable. This is extremely problematic because as Beck writes, “so long as risks are not recognized scientifically, they do not exist, at least not legally, medically, technologically, or socially and they are thus not prevented, treated, or compensated for” (pg.71). As a result individuals are becoming increasingly more cognisant of the very real risks they face.²

Risk society therefore, has pushed us into a state of reflexive modernization, insofar as we have entered a state of risk consciousness that has stemmed from the elucidation of a scientific history fraught with mistakes, misjudgements and minimizations (Beck, 2003). Increased risk awareness has generated a sense of distrust in modern institutions and their experts. However, Beck remains optimistic, suggesting that mounting resistance to scientific rationality has the potential to lead to social change.³

Although Beck (2003) refers specifically to ecological and technological risks, it can be argued that the notion of risk consciousness has penetrated all aspects of our lives in the modern world. For example, arguably there is an increasing tendency to understand crime and its management in terms of risk society. From this perspective, crime is conceptualized as a measurable, manageable and preventable risk (Anderson and Brown, 2010; O’Malley, 2010). In fact, within the criminological literature it has been argued that risk ideologies have a long

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² In defining risk as “real” Beck is suggesting that many of the risks we now face are real in the ontological sense as opposed to being socially constructed as such. For example, many scientific developments cause irreversible pollution to the environment, and pose real health problems for individuals. To suggest another example, the use of nuclear power facilities poses the real risk of nuclear warfare.

³ Social change in the sense that modern institutions and the experts within those institutions will be held more accountable and individual's will possess a greater degree of agency to potentially avoid and deal with risk(s).
history; according to Anderson and Brown (2010), the issue of risk is implicit in the work of classical criminologists in terms of their tendency to define the offender as a rational actor and thus favour punitive forms of governance and punishment. In a similar vein, modern ideologies of risk have also had a profound influence on how governance is understood. According to O’Malley (2010), society is predominately governed by risk which is intrinsically linked with myriad techniques of governance.

Within sociology, theories of governance have been influenced by the work of Foucault (1994), who rejected the notion that governance is exclusively a product of state rule, rather, he maintained that the act of governing involves a number of different organizing practices (including for example mentalities, institutions and techniques). According to Foucault, advances in industrialization and modernization have resulted in a pluralistic form of governance that is rational, calculated and scientific (Foucault, 1994; Garland, 1996). As such, governance cannot be conceptualized as a one-dimensional and cohesive ruling method; instead it must be understood as a multitude of organizing practices that generate regulatory power (Anderson and Brown, 2010). The art of governance, according to Foucault, involves managing populations of individuals. Thus, he emphasized the importance of, “...local, (and) fragmented conceptions of power that incorporate notions of discipline and surveillance” (Rigakos, 2002: 14). Moreover, governance according to Foucault takes place largely at a distance and involves the “conduct of conduct;” insofar as through the “conduct of conduct”

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4 See for example the work of Beccaria’s (1764) essay on Crimes and Punishment and the later work of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990).

5 It is important to note that as society advances techniques and technologies of governance are also advanced. Thus, although ideologies of risk have influenced governance dating back to classical criminological theorizing, the techniques used to govern today are markedly different.
the government attempts to shape aspects of our behaviour on the basis of particular norms and for a variety of ends (Dean, 1999). As time progresses Foucault suggests that individuals begin to self-govern, ultimately enjoying a type of “regulated freedom” (Dean, 1999). It is important to recognize that within the criminological literature issues of risk and governance often converge (O’Malley, 2010). Below I will demonstrate how theories of governance have been shaped by theories of risk.

**Crime and Governance in Risk Society**

Notions of risk have fostered a new type of governance of all types of social problems (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O’Malley, 2010; Rigakos, 2002). According to O’Malley (2010), near the end of the twentieth century ideas of risk and risk management began to dominate political discourse to such an extent that prevention was ultimately favoured over cure with respect to the governing of all problems.⁶ Governing through risk, according to O’Malley involves, “the use of predictive statistical knowledge linked to techniques of harm prevention” (2010; p. 3). In risk society, governing techniques emphasize strongly rational processes of risk management and risk assessment (Rigakos, 2002).

Further, according to Rigakos and Hadden (2001), risk ideologies are shaped by bourgeois thought and rooted in the expansion of capitalism. Within risk society, the need to classify, order, and ultimately manage populations fosters a reliance on the mathematics of aggregate statistical data (Simon, 1988; O’Malley, 1996; 2010). As Rigakos (2002) suggests,

The modern institutional response to risk relies heavily on the production of knowledge about ‘dangerous’ populations. This knowledge is based on actuarial

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⁶ For example police organizations began to adopt practices that moved away from reactive policing towards more preventative policing techniques.
practices, and seeks to make risky populations known through the disciplining practices of surveillance (pg.24).

As such, in order to manage and avoid the outcomes of risk, society has become dependent on institutionalized risk knowledge and the dispersal of risk knowledge (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Rigakos and Hadden, 2001).

Theories on risk and governance highlight processes of surveillance and discipline that are characteristic of modern capitalist social order (Rigakos, 2002). Indeed, this has influenced significantly, practices within the criminal justice system. As Anderson and Brown (2010) write, “the omnipresent risk awareness and the lack of trust in social institutions for managing risks have dramatically influenced the organization of criminal justice and policing in risk society” (2010: 546). Moreover, O’Malley (2010) argues, “Prevention and risk spreading (e.g. insurance) become more central than detection and correction” (pg. 190). In many ways then, the state is less responsible for protecting individuals from crime. In fact, some argue that the main task of police and other professional agencies (i.e. health, insurance etc.) is to provide individuals with knowledge about crime; yet, ultimately, the individual is responsible for managing their own risks (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O’Malley, 2010; Rigakos, 2002). In order to manage risk, technologies of governance that reduce uncertainty, enhance self-regulation and prevent loss are increasingly utilized (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997: 53; O’Malley, 2010).

The shift toward individual responsibilitization has fostered support for programs and policies based on the regulation of behaviours and their consequences. For example, actuarial/insurance based techniques are increasingly favoured as a method of governance, especially within the criminal justice system (O’Malley, 1996). Actuarial techniques sort and classify individuals into particular categories (be they medical, criminal, financial etc.) based on
differing levels of risk (O’Malley, 2010; Simon, 1988). According to O’Malley (2010), actuarial
techniques embody and are aligned with putative and disciplinary technologies that eschew
collective risk management in favour of an individual, responsibilization of risk management
(O’Malley, 1996). Implicit in these techniques is the view that individuals have control over their
own lives and that they possess the ability to make reasoned choices and can take steps to
change their behaviour (McCarthy, 2010). Individuals are presumed to be morally responsible
and rational, and crime is understood as an inevitable set of risks that can be predicted and
managed at least to some extent (O’Malley 1996). Likewise, offenders are considered rational
insofar as they are presumed to weigh the potential costs and benefits of engaging in criminal
activities.

According to Reiss (1989), organizations have devoted significant attention to risk
assessment and risk management practices, thus knowledge about risk has become largely
institutionalized. In other words, large institutions now organize themselves on the basis of risk
knowledge. Not only does the centrality of risk in modern society influence the way in which
institutions function, but it also affects directly how individuals are perceived and managed
within society. Indeed, a significant part of expert thinking and public discourse is made up of
risk profiling and classifying (Giddens, 1991) and according to Ericson and Haggerty (1997), the
construct of risk:

...turns people, their organizations, and their environments into myriad
categories and identities that will make them more manageable. It makes up
people and their organizations according to its own internally referential systems
of rationality, rather than in terms of extrinsic moral questions and issues (pg.
39).
Additionally, drawing from Foucault’s theorizing, O’Malley (2010) maintains that risk cannot be understood as a unified or a neutral technology of government. In fact, he argues that risk techniques are politically charged and directly shaped by neo-liberal ideologies which favour economic rationality as the ultimate form of good governance. The neo-liberal agenda renders governance contingent on the regulation of all behaviours not only those defined as criminal. For example, O’Malley argues that credit cards and drivers licenses are used as, “… the perfect risk managing collateral in a consumer society that is also a society permeated by risk consciousness” (pg.21). Indeed, risk ideologies have influenced how society is governed and this filters into all levels of the justice system; in particular, this affects the role of police, as O’Malley writes, “the informational characteristic of risk, the centrality of security information and its linking to prevention transforms the police role” (pg.30).

By the 1970’s politicians and external institutions were pressuring the public police to develop a professional and business-like mentality, focussed on preventative measures, to deal with crime (O’Malley, 2010). Moreover, police agencies were faced with extreme pressure to provide information to insurance companies with vested interests in risk management and loss reduction. This pressure, coupled with a society permeated by risk, has ultimately led to the restructuring of the police role (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O’Malley, 2010). Like O’Malley, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) conceptualized police practices within the context of a broader institutional network of governance in risk society. The focus of the chapter will now turn to the explication of Ericson and Haggerty’s theorizing on the role of the public police in risk society.

Policing the Risk Society
Ericson and Haggerty (1997) contend that the role of police is defined by the knowledge work they are required to do and by the risk communications they exchange with multiple institutions including, insurance companies, regulatory agencies, financial institutions, health organizations, welfare agencies and motor vehicle agencies. The police are considered essential to the interinstitutional networks that develop risk profiles later dispersed to other interested agencies (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997).

Ericson and Haggerty (1997) suggest that policing realities are predominately defined by the, “risk communication rules, formats and technologies relevant to institutions, populations and events the police officer encounters” (pg.21). Indeed, the centrality of risk consciousness in modern society necessitates that the police play a primary role in defining, compiling and disseminating knowledge about risk (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). Through the collection and dissemination of information, populations can be classified and made “knowable” (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O’Malley, 2010; Rigakos, 2002; Rigakos and Hadden, 2001). Moreover, all populations are subject to police surveillance because every action is perceived to have the potential to lead to loss (O’Malley, 2010). As such, all individuals are assumed guilty until the risk profile proves otherwise (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; O’Malley 2010). Even the police are subject to surveillance practices in the risk society.

Ericson and Haggerty (1997) also reject the traditional research focus on police and public order which adheres to the consensus model characteristic of structural functional theorizing. Particularly, they reject the functionalist assumption that social institutions are

Please note that Neo-Marxists and critical Marxists also criticize structural functional theorizing on the police. See for example Tony Platt’s (1982) book titled the Iron Fist and Velvet Glove: An Analysis of the U.S. Police. Platt’s (1982) work is discussed in the proceeding section of the chapter which examines critical theorizing on the police.
organized around a single cohesive notion of order. Instead, they contend that multiple institutional orders exist. Each institutional order possesses its own unique definition of risk and thus, different logics for dealing with risk as it is defined (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). The role of police is fundamentally influenced by “the risk logics of external institutions, and the classification schemes and knowledge requirements they entail...” (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997:17).

Further, Ericson and Haggerty argue that risk ideologies also influence the criminal justice system in that criminal law must also adhere to the risk communication rules, formats and technologies of other institutions (see also Ericson, 1994). As such, the goals, principles, and procedures of criminal law are fundamentally influenced by compliance based law enforcement and actuarial justice (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Reiss, 1989; Simon, 1988). Additionally, Ericson and Haggerty critique the traditionally accepted binary model of crime control and due process, suggesting that this model fails to reflect the reality of the criminal justice system. Instead, they argue that the criminal justice model is premised on surveillance which has direct implications for how police perform their role.

Police are involved in surveillance practices which include the classification of populations, through data gathering processes where the objective is to frontload the system with knowledge that can be sorted and distributed to interested institutional audiences (Erickson and Haggerty, 1997). Indeed, officers spend considerable time producing and distributing data that are technologically mediated and bureaucratically formatted for multiple

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8 Knowledge gathering tasks include mundane activities such as writing up criminal and incident reports and entering information in the police database (CPIC).
security organizations.\(^9\) Beyond producing data that can be used later for insurance purposes, the data are also used to set acceptable standards of risk (Erickson and Haggerty, 1997; Ericson, 1994), to identify potential threats against institutions, and to manage the threats that might compromise the functioning of an institution. According to Ericson (1994), the officer becomes a knowledge broker who serves as both an expert advisor and security manager to other institutions. As such, the officer is rather disengaged from the public and becomes a “faceless bureaucrat” or “iconocrat” in that knowledge work rarely involves face-to-face contact (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997: 45).

Moreover, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) are critical of the policing literature, maintaining that in explaining the role of police, researchers have adopted frameworks consistent with popular perceptions of policing while ignoring the risk communication systems within which police operate (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). In particular, they criticize the commonly accepted militaristic view of officers as crime fighters, and the notion that protection is enforced through strategies and tactics of criminal law enforcement, order maintenance and service provision. Although Ericson and Haggerty (1997) agree that such elements are part of policing, they believe this focus overlooks the police’s contribution to broader political functions including, regulation, governance and security. Policing, they argue, “consists of the public police coordinating their activities with policing agents in all other institutions to provide a society-wide basis for risk management (governance) and security (guarantees against loss)” (pg.3).

According to Ericson and Haggerty (1997), institutional demands for knowledge of risk directly

\(^{9}\) To support the idea that the paperwork completed by officers is formatted to meet the needs of other institutions Ericson and Haggerty (2002) highlight the fixed-choice risk classification format that is characteristic of occurrence reports.
influence how police think and act. In essence, within risk society, the police mandate is no longer about deviance, control and order, instead officers are “knowledge workers” and their focus is on risk, surveillance and security (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997).

It is precisely this notion of providing risk knowledge to external organizations that has led other scholars to suggest policing has become a commodity and that the police role is to provide services to various competitive clients (Murphy, 1998; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). Indeed, according to Murphy (1998), the postmodern era has fostered dramatic shifts in the way that public police perform their role; while no longer the sole providers of crime control, they now engage in indirect surveillance, information acquisition, and risk analysis.

Further, Murphy maintains that fiscal problems characteristic of welfare states such as Canada, have resulted in the tendency for governments to search for more cost effective methods of security. As such, Murphy argues that the modern conception of public police roles must be reconceptualized and reconstructed to, "redefine the nature and scope of the public police service, diminish and shift government policing responsibility and redefine policing and security as a marketable commodity" (pg.14). As a commodity, public policing becomes marketable and can be sold by a number of competitive producers. In essence, police officers become service providers for their many customers. Similarly, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) have argued that there has been a shift towards commodifying police functions. For instance, they argue that the knowledge work of officers has become commodified in that external institutions actually pay for reports (e.g. occurrence reports and reports for insurance), and for officers time and services (pg.30). In sum, risk theorizing has helped explain the changing role of police in modern society however we must also recognize the limitations of these perspectives.
Critiques of Risk Theories

Ericson and Haggerty’s (1997) work provides valuable insight as to how police perform their role in society, nevertheless they have been criticized on a number of grounds. For example Rigakos and Hadden (2001) criticize risk theorizing more generally suggesting the claims espoused by risk theorists are indefensible in terms of the contingent history, the end of class, and the totality of surveillance mechanisms they purport. Further, Chan and Rigakos (2002) argue that the risk literature ignores the fundamental role played by gender, race, and class conditions “in the very definition and practice of risk” (pg.756).

Another weakness of their position is that they offer an external social-systems perspective of the police role. The risk model suggests that the police perform their role in a very rational and almost entirely cohesive manner. Indeed, the macro focus of their analysis neglects possible complexities of how the role of police might be understood, constructed and performed by officers at the micro level.

Additionally, Ericson and Haggerty (1997), make grandiose claims in suggesting that institutional demands for knowledge of risk directly influence how police think and act. It is difficult to determine exactly how officers “think” or “act” without examining their role from a micro perspective. Ericson and Haggerty’s methodology does not incorporate in-depth interviews to examine how police understand their role, thus these authors fail to acknowledge the agency that police officers possess. This is problematic as it fosters the false conception of deskill ed officers with limited decision making power (Rigakos, 2002) and paints an incomplete picture as to the role police play in society. As Rigakos (2002) argues, within risk theorizing
police officers are constructed as, “automatons enslaved by risk information demands” (pg.17) and they are ultimately reduced to data collectors.

Further, critical theorists are particularly reluctant to accept the claims espoused by risk theorists. For example, Gordon (2006) challenges the panoptic literature on policing which includes the theoretical contributions offered by Ericson and Haggerty (1997). He faults the panoptic literature for its failure to heed attention to the role of the state and social class. Panoptic theories, in Gordon’s view ignore the complexities that are inherent in policing the capitalist system. According to Gordon, panoptic theories are based on three premises: The first is that policing practices may be understood as a form of surveillance of populations that is accomplished at a distance (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; McCahill, 1998). Secondly, panoptic theories suggest policing favours equality in the sense that regardless of race, social class, or gender all populations are subject to surveillance (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). Finally, panoptic risk assumes the state’s role is minimized.

Gordon (2006) critiques the panoptic proponent’s tendency to overemphasize the importance of electronic surveillance while blatantly ignoring the existence of coercive expressions of police violence and brutality. He maintains that policing is far from being class, race, or gender neutral; specifically he cites cases of violence faced by aboriginals and blacks as a result of zero tolerance policing initiatives (Gordon, 2006). Lastly, Gordon argues that policing must always be understood in relation to the state because police power is essentially derived from the state.\textsuperscript{10} The extensive focus on technologies and at-a-distance policing ignores the deeply rooted social relations characteristic of policing. Drawing on these critiques, a number of

\textsuperscript{10} For example Gordon argues that the extensive training and the high pay that public officers receive is indicative of the state’s direct interest and involvement in maintaining a competent police force.
scholars have argued for a more critical analysis of the police role therefore challenging
functionalist and panoptic views. The focus of the chapter will now turn to an overview of how
the role of the police has been conceptualized in terms of radical theory and crime and
capitalist theory.

**Crime and Capitalism**

According to Pope and Weiner (1981), law enforcement agencies are a reflection of the
society that has produced them and police are therefore responsible for maintaining society’s
social fabric and value system (pg.7). This suggests that police organizations do not exist or act
independently, rather, they represent and enforce the state’s interests. Indeed, critical
theorists argue, the state is afforded significant power to influence and ultimately control police
practices (Gordon, 2006, Pope and Weiner, 1981; Skinns, 2008). For example, according to
Skinns (2008), contractual arrangements between the police and the state, “...place the state in
a strong position to carefully specify their requirements...setting key performance indicators,
minimum standards and/or financial incentives” (pg.316). As such, it is argued that in many
ways the police role reflects state interests.

Platt (1982) argues that changes in the mode of production, from an agricultural to an
industrial economy, have altered the forms of policing in society. However, Platt argues that
over time the public police have consistently engaged in repressive class control functions
within the capitalist state. Platt (1982) maintains that the expansion and increased
sophistication of the state has forced police departments to modernize and professionalize,
while strategic and ideological developments within police departments have fostered the
advancement of new technologies and paramilitary policing units. Within the capitalist state
the repressive apparatus of the police is sustained through a number of different practices incorporating the iron fist (i.e. SWAT practices and political surveillance methods) and the velvet glove (i.e. female officers and team policing practices) (Platt, 1982).

Similar, to Platt (1982) many scholars have explained the role of public police within the context of crime and the capitalist state (Gordon, 2006; Herbert, 2001; Skinns, 2008; Young, 2007). This approach frames the police role within the broader political framework of neoliberalism, suggesting that a neo-liberal agenda has fostered a number of different policing and crime control initiatives focused on controlling and punishing marginalized populations (Gordon, 2006; Beckett and Herbert, 2008; Herbert, 2001; O’Grady and Bright, 2002; Young, 2007).

**Neoliberal Politics and Police Organizations**

Within capitalist societies the fall of Keynesian-based welfare polices resulted in dramatic political and economic changes which ultimately led to the emergence of the neo-liberal state (Gordon, 2006; O’Malley, 1996). Neo-liberal policies emphasize economic restructuring, increasing privatization and tough on crime political mandates (Parnaby, 2003). Indeed, responsibility for crime is not considered a function of systemic disadvantage, but rather, a function of individual decision making (O’Malley, 1996). The neo-liberal emphasis on rational, responsible and self-regulating individuals means that crime is understood and explained in terms of a calculating, free thinking offender (O’Malley, 1996). Further, as Herbert (2001) suggests, within a neoliberl framework, “…disadvantaged communities are defined as sites of trouble not tribulation” (pg.447 italics added). The neoliberal agenda has shifted our conceptualization of crime away from welfare based models which view the offender as a
victim, instead the offender is assumed to deserve punishment therefore tough on crime mandates have become increasingly popular and justifiable (O’Malley, 1996). Indeed, a number of policing practices including broken windows policing (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) and zero tolerance policies are believed to enhance order and security and have been attributed to the broader neo-liberal agenda (Beckett and Herbert, 2008). Some scholars have even suggested that neoliberal political ideologies actually reflect police ideals and values. For example, the professional model of policing received considerable attention within police organizations by the 1950s (Herbert, 2001; Johnson, 1976). Under this model, police organizations were encouraged to adopt legal and bureaucratic practices, tighten organizational controls over police officers, and establish clear boundaries between the police and the public (Herbert, 2001; Johnson, 1976). The model was widely accepted within police organizations because it closely reflected values characteristic of the police subculture including an emphasis on machismo, crime fighting, and strong adherence to an us (the police) vs. them (the public) worldview (Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Rabe-Hemp, 2007; Skolnick, 1966; Waddington, 1999: 287). Indeed, Herbert (2001) contends that the neo-liberal agenda and the resultant policing initiatives reflect the professional model of police organizations, as well as the broader subcultural ideologies characteristic of police culture (Herbert, 2001). The professional model within police organizations is conducive to a number of policing practices which emerged under the neo-liberal agenda.

**Policing Initiatives**

One such initiative that emerged under the neo-liberal agenda is broken windows policing (BWP). According to supporters of BWP, neighbourhoods that fail to fix broken
windows, or to address other forms of social disorder, convey a lack of informal social control which consequently invites serious crime into the neighbourhood (see for example, Wilson and Kelling, 1982 and Kelling and Coles, 1996). Under BWP mandates, Beckett and Herbert (2008) argue, governments and the police are, “...offered a broad and flexible means of regulating public spaces and removing those deemed disorderly” (pg.8). BWP initiatives provide the police with legitimate authority to criminalize a number of misdemeanour offences including, public drunkenness and panhandling (O’Grady and Bright, 2002).11

Further, according to Gordon (2006), the emergence of law and order policing can be attributed directly to a neoliberal restructuring of the working class. Law and order policing, combined with numerous cuts to social programs, has been central to the neoliberal agenda that aims to limit the wages and expectations of lower class individuals (Gordon, 2006). The aim of these programs is to target all forms of wage earning activity considered outside the realm of normative wage earning behaviour. Essentially, these initiatives have fostered a war against displays of public disorders including street level activities such as, begging, squeegeeing, hanging out in public places and sex-trade work (Gordon, 2006; Parnaby, 2003).

It has been argued the police are well aware of the political motivations that inform policing practices (Rigakos, 2002). In fact, although the police portray themselves as neutral arbitrators in law enforcement, Rigakos (2002) suggests they consciously disguise the political motivations behind law enforcement. Moreover, according to Bonefeld (1993), the police have been consciously aware and active participants in carrying out state mandated interests. He

11 Not all scholars have supported the premises of BWP initiatives for example, in his book titled, Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing, Harcourt (2001) thoroughly criticizes BWP initiatives.
argues that law and order policing can be understood as, “the other side of a policy of state austerity,” (Bonefeld, 1993:158); essentially a blatant targeting of particular forms of behaviour.

In order to transform the working class into a cheaper and more flexible labour force state officials and police organizations have strongly supported the enforcement of anti-vagrancy laws, zero-tolerance policing and community policing initiatives. Within larger urban jurisdictions, Gordon (2006) argues that provincial legislation, municipal bylaws (including the Safe Streets Act) and police practices have been utilized effectively to criminalize vagrancy. For example, research completed by O’Grady and Bright (2002) and Parnaby (2003) has highlighted how the Safe Streets legislation rendered squeegee kids deviant; as a result they were vehemently targeted and criminalized by Toronto police officers. According to Parnaby (2003), through the use of disaster rhetoric anti-squeegee claimants suggested that squeegee men were, “indicative of rising crime rates and the overall deterioration of urban living conditions” (pg.288). As such, squeegee kids were successfully constructed as a social problem that necessitated a law and order resolution and direct police targeting. In fact, the problem garnered so much public outcry that it was ultimately, “..addressed through putative measures of social control backed by consonant legislation” (Parnaby, 2003: 283). This legislation provided Toronto officers with the authority to target and criminalize those deemed to belong to the squeegee culture. Thus, within the crime and capitalist framework the police role is influenced by state interests. Serving as the ultimate form of authority, officers are afforded the ability to exercise coercive power to maintain a sense of state defined order and as Gordon

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12 See also O’Grady, Bright and Cohen (1998).
argues (2006), “the so-called ‘thin blue line’ is a buffer not from a world of lawlessness but from one of state defined disorder” (pg.44).

In his book Cops, Crime and Capitalism, Gordon (2006) advocates for a critical reconceptualization of the police role that considers class struggle and the role of the capitalist state. He maintains that historical developments of police organizations in capitalist society have shaped how police perform their role in the present. Historically, he argues, the police mandate has been broad and has been shaped by the promotion of particular moral values. As such, the history of policing has been characterized by the criminalization of the working class in particular targeting women, people of colour, immigrants, and Aboriginals. Gordon suggests that policing has little to do with criminal law enforcement, but instead it involves the criminalization of public-order offences. Further, Gordon (2006) suggests that, “in its day to day functioning policing is aimed not merely at the repression of the working class but at the fabrication of order... policing has evolved historically into the key means by which the state produces the working class and responds to its day-to-day struggles against the social order” (pg. 39).

Likewise, Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2003) argue that the police may be seen as “… producers of values and character that embody mainstream notions of moral worth and productive membership in society” (pg.94).

In sum, the role of the police as suggested by many critical theorists (Bonefeld, 1993; Gordon, 2006; Maynard-Moody and Musheno, 2003; Rigakos, 2002) has been to search for and destroy any incentives to avoid wage labour and in the process to criminalize working class

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13 In particular Gordon believes that the Protestant work ethic has been emphasized.

activities. Ultimately, through law and order policing practices officers willingly target the everyday signs of disorder that pose a threat to the wage labour in the capitalist society.

Like Gordon (2006), other scholars have argued that police agencies are influenced and manipulated by the state to maintain existing economic and political structures of inequality (Hodgson, 2001). Moreover, Luttwak (1999) argues that the rapid advancement of capitalism has fostered an insecure middle class which consequently increases prison rates, creates a society obsessed with punishment, and therefore, justifies the policing of lower class individuals. Further, policing activities including CCTV and the expansion of gated communities also fosters a paranoid society (O’Malley, 2010). Indeed, the increasing desire to punish and prohibit was remarkably clear in the war against drugs, as Luttwak suggests, “From the quasi-criminal to the politically incorrect, all manner of behaviour, attitude and gesture is subject to taboo and control. The always criminal becomes more criminalized [and] the quasi-criminal becomes criminal” (pg.16). In essence, an insecure middle class is, in many ways, indicative of an intolerant middle class and thus necessitates the direct targeting of lower class individuals. The police are the social actors afforded with state mandated tools to target and criminalize lower class individuals, ensuring that dominant class interests are protected and reinforced (Johnson, 1976).

For example, one such tool used by the police to maintain order is contractual injunctions. McCarthy (2010) examined how police utilize and enforce contractual injunctions (e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) in the United Kingdom, suggesting the police target and criminalize the behaviour of certain marginalized groups deemed problematic. In essence, he found the injunctions were used by the police to criminalize and enforce compliance among the
marginalized, including the substance abusers, the homeless, and the mentally ill. Further, he found that because police defined these individuals as “irredeemable” or unchangeable they enforced contractual injunctions more often than not to moderate their behaviour and remove them from public spaces to areas where they would be less viewable (see also Davis, 2006).\(^1\)15 Thus, in implementing the injunctions the role of the police according to McCarthy (2010) is, “to moderate- to structure the individual’s use of space and lifestyle... [this enables] methods of banishment to conveniently bypass the complexities of socially marginal groups by removing them from the area” (Pp.905-906).

**Critiques of Critical Approaches**

Like the perspective offered by Ericson and Haggerty (1997) critical perspectives analyze the police role at a very macro-level. The police are constructed in a mechanistic fashion and portrayed as aggressive individuals, with very little agency. However, it is rather simplistic to assume that police officers understand and perform their role in such a thoughtless, unitary and simplistic fashion. Indeed, Johnston (1976) argues, the police cannot be considered to exist as a unitary organization of justice because, “... no social system is perfectly integrated, and propositions which suggest so (e.g. the law serves the ruling class) are as likely to mislead as illuminate” (p. 90). Thus, like the risk ideologies, critical perspectives fail to acknowledge the possible complexities and contradictions inherent in the role played by police.

Within the framework suggested by many critical Marxists, officers’ agency is completely ignored. Inherent in this theoretical position is the underlying assumption that

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\(^1\) In his book titled *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* Davis (2006) discusses the restructuring of public spaces in Los Angeles, particularly the elimination of “decent” public spaces, in an effort to displace poor and marginalized people and to attract desirable and respectable people to those areas. In addition, Davis also discusses how the LAPD have been pioneers in activities involving any form of urban repression.
officers unquestioningly accept and enforce state mandated interests. Yet, research has shown that the way in which police perform their roles may not be so straightforward. For example, police officers have been found to use considerable discretion in enforcing the law (Mastrofski et al, 1987; Terrill and Paoline III, 2007; Waddington, 1999). Thus, I argue that to better inform the literature it necessary to examine the police role using a more nuanced approach that moves away from macro-level analyses of the police role towards a more comprehensive and complete micro-level understanding. It is imperative to examine how police officers construct their own role from their own perspective.

Before proceeding to explain the theoretical framework that will inform this research it is first necessary to acknowledge research that has attempted to examine the police organization at a more micro-level. The literature on police subculture represents the limited body of scholarship that has examined public police officers at a micro-level. In the section that follows I will provide a brief overview of the subcultural literature. I will then address where this body of literature falls short in explaining and understanding the police role. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with an explanation as to how I plan to address the current gap in the literature using a phenomenological perspective.

**Police Culture**

The police culture has received extensive attention within the literature (see Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Paoline, 2004; Reiss, 1971; Skolnick, 1966; Waddington, 1999) and is among the limited research that examines the role of public police officers from a micro perspective. The subcultural literature has focused mostly on how officer’s views can explain or be explained by the police subculture (Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Paoline, 2004; Reiss, 1971).
The notion of a distinct police culture stems from the recognition that the police role demands a strong sense of loyalty, companionship, solidarity and secrecy (Conser, 1980; Johnson, 1976). Additionally, unique occupational factors characteristic of policing are believed to condition the police community (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 1974). Indeed, the occupational nature of policing is considered unique because of the varied and often long working hours and more specifically, due to the fact the job requires officers to regularly engage in discretionary practices when enforcing the law (Waddington, 1999). As such, it has been argued that the everyday practices of officers are informed by sub-culturally shared beliefs and values (Waddington, 1999). The values shared by police culture are believed to be instilled in recruits early in the training process (van Maanen, 1989). Socialization occurs to such an extent that according to Blake (1981):

[the police]...become a closed society, with its own values- and the public is the enemy. Right and wrong become black and white and those who break the law (regardless of the seriousness of the offence) are “bad” and hence must be apprehended (pg.81).

In particular, police culture is characterized as hyper-masculine, overtly discriminatory (Conser, 1980; Rabe-Hemp, 2007) and real police work is defined as crime work (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Manning, 1977). Moreover, subcultural ideologies tend to glorify violence, value dangerous and thrilling work, adhere to a particularly stringent Us versus Them conception of the social world and embrace a heightened sense of morality (Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Hodgson, 2001; Johnson, 1979; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Skolnick, 1966; Waddington, 1999: 287). Most scholars agree that these subcultural values exist to some degree; however, there is little agreement as to the ultimate purpose and functionality of this culture (Rabe-Hemp, 2007).
Some researchers argue the police subculture is detrimental to police-public relations because it negatively influences how police perform their job (Skolnick, 1966). For example, Skolnick (1966) argues that police culture cultivates a “working personality” among officers which values danger and authority. When this working personality is coupled with prevailing pressure to be efficient, Skolnick (1966) believes it may actually undermine police relations with the public. Officers’ “working personality,” characterized by a preoccupation with violence, results in increased suspicion towards the public which fosters increased citizen isolation, and as a result, further police solidarity. Further, Conser (1980) suggests that traditionally police-citizen relations have been characterized by mutual suspicion, hostility, resentment, distrust and fear. The police subculture, he maintains, comes to dominate and negatively influence police-citizen relations. Some scholars have even suggested that sub-cultural values may encourage officers to engage in different forms of misconduct (Barker, 1977).

Further, as a profession traditionally dominated by males the police culture values and celebrates masculinity. As such, it has been well documented that female officers are often faced with grave difficulty in achieving acceptance within the occupation (Harr, 1997; Herrington, 2002; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Capponi, 2000). In many instances subcultural ideologies have been found to encourage overt discrimination towards female officers often resulting in blatant forms of sexual harassment and sexism (Harr, 1997; Hunt, 1990). Indeed, Hunt (1990) argues that sexism is deeply entrenched within every aspect of the policing world. However, some research suggests that instances of discrimination may actually taper off as female officers advance in their careers. For example, Rabe-Hemp (2007) found that although female
officers experienced sexual harassment, discrimination and disrespect early on in the job, once tenured they gained more acceptance in the police culture.

At the other end of the spectrum, scholars have argued that the police culture may actually be functional for officers (Herbert, 1998; Manning, 1992; Waddington, 1999). For example, Johnston (1976) maintains that because police culture consists mostly of white working class individuals, the police actually share a close relationship with white middle class individuals. As a result, “The crucial social basis for the relative freedom from top-down administrative control enjoyed by the police today is the close and cooperative relationship...the police have with the white working class community” (pg.103).

Moreover, Waddington (1999) maintains that police culture should be understood within the context of the “canteen” suggesting that researchers should aim to distinguish between what officers say in the privacy of their cars or over drinks with friends and what they do when on the job. Waddington (1999) suggests that police culture is rhetorically functional in that it renders experiences meaningful while allowing officers to maintain a sense of occupational self-esteem. Similarly, Herbert (1998) has argued that police subculture has been misunderstood. He believes that police subculture is best understood as a collection of six normative orders including, law, bureaucratic control, adventure/machismo, safety, competence and morality. Herbert (1998) defines normative orders as, “…a set of generalized rules and common practices oriented around a common value” (pg.347); they serve to promote safety, adherence to the law and respect for authority. Normative orders are functional in that they provide officers with ways of understanding, enacting and valuing situations characteristic of the job (Herbert, 1998: 347). In sum, a number of researchers have argued that subcultural
ideologies and values influence police behaviour at least to some extent. As such, for the purposes of this research it is necessary to consider the degree to which the police subculture influences officers’ role constructions. Although the subcultural literature is oriented more towards the micro-level, it falls short in the same vein that risk and crime and capitalist theories do, in that it fails to provide an adequate analysis as to how police officers construct their reality, particularly at the phenomenological level. Although, some researchers have attempted to explain the subculture from the officer’s perspectives (see for example Herbert, 1998 and Waddington, 1999), generally speaking research in this area is weak.\textsuperscript{16} To enhance our understanding of the role of police research must move towards an analysis that aims to discern how officers construct and conceptualize their reality.

A general overview of the literature within policing suggests that the role of police necessitates further investigation, particularly from a micro perspective. The existent research has provided valuable insight of the role that police play in society but a gap in the literature remains because officers have not been given an opportunity to define how they see their role. It is important to recognize that self-conception is intimately connected to action and sense of self\textsuperscript{17} (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Schutz, 1966) thus, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role that police play in society we must understand how they conceptualize and construct their role. To achieve this I will examine the police role from a phenomenological perspective.

**PHENOMENOLOGY**

\textsuperscript{16} Weak in a phenomenological sense.
\textsuperscript{17} I contend that this is something that has been greatly overlooked within the current literature on police.
Phenomenological theory refers to the systematic reflection and analysis of consciousness (Husserl, 1901). Phenomenological analysis places importance on questions pertaining to the ontological and epistemological nature of human consciousness and reality construction processes. What is more, phenomenological sociology rejects the notion that “the social world, constitutes an object world divorced from the interpretive procedures of members […] rather, the social world is treated as the product of human activity, interpretation and intention, as a subject world” (Smart, 1976: 75). Indeed, the aim of social phenomenology is to interpret and explain human action and thought (Schutz, 1964; Berger and Luckmann, 1967) by examining the taken for granted nature of social reality, “wherein everyday accounts take on a natural appearance and situations are constructed such that it appears that they could not be otherwise” (Smart, 1976: 76). Phenomenology provides researchers with a lens to examine and interpret that which is taken for granted in individuals’ everyday lived realities (Schutz, 1964). In essence, social phenomenology can be understood as,

... an uncompromising interpretive enterprise focused on everyday subjective meaning and experience with the goal of explicating how objects and experiences are meaningfully constructed and communicated in everyday life (Holstein and Gubrium, 1994: 264).

From within a sociological framework phenomenological theory was significantly influenced by Alfred Schutz (1966) who was interested in understanding how social actors construct and maintain reality. According to Schutz, individuals are constantly involved in processes of interpreting their common sense experiences. Or, more succinctly, the world of our common-sense experience and daily life is an interpreted world which possesses meaning for us. Our interpretation of reality is socially derived and, as such, the world “out there” and our understanding of that world is taken largely for granted. Thus, the aim of social scientific
research is to examine the ways in which the life world or, the taken for granted experiential world, is produced and experienced by social actors.

Phenomenological theory was also greatly influenced by the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967). Inspired by Schutz (1966), their book titled, *The Social Construction of Reality* examines how reality is constructed and maintained across time and space. They argue that through the dialectical interplay between the individual, significant others, and larger social structures reality is objectified and subjectively maintained. The perpetual reinforcement of subjective interactions over time leads to a taken for granted life-world which is seemingly objective to social actors.

It is through experience that individuals come to “know” themselves (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966); experience provides individuals with an empirical self-consciousness, a self that we can refer back to and remember. Through an awareness of ‘self – consciousness’ social actors are able to make sense of their world, as Schutz writes, “By analogy to previous experiences, to previous forms of behaviour and their motives I expect to behave a certain way in the future” (pg.33). As such, individuals learn to act on the basis of typicalities which allow them to make sense of their everyday realities while rendering reality fluid and predictable; typicality forms not only the basis for individual expectations of future behaviours but also expectations of others behaviours (Schutz, 1966). Typificatory schemes make it possible for social actors to communicate effectively with others (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). In essence, we act on the basis of typificatory schemes and fundamentally, reality is sustained because we are able to understand one another’s motives in typical terms; our social world thus makes sense to us (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Luckmann, 2008; Schutz, 1966).
Furthermore, typifications are crucial because they produce the opportunity for social actors to internalize and objectify roles (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). The acting self and acting others are understood not as unique individuals, but as types. As Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue, through role playing processes the individual participates in the social world. Take for example, the doctor-patient relationship. When the doctor and the patient interact each of these individuals has certain expectations of one another and therefore each individual is expected to play a certain role and this allows the encounter to run smoothly. Further, by internalizing roles, the social world becomes real to the actor and thus easier to navigate because the ontological reality of his or her world remains stable.

Typifications are eventually objectified to such an extent that they are taken for granted, a process Berger and Luckmann refer to as intersubjective sedimentation; through this process normative expectations surrounding conduct are objectified and internalized as naturally occurring, so much so, that in certain typical contexts we cease to have to think about our actions. In essence, our actions become habitual, but perhaps more importantly, our actions and understandings are thus institutionalized. The process of institutionalization is rendered possible when a group of social actors accrue shared intersubjective definitions and understandings of reality. Indeed, Berger and Luckmann (1967) contend, institutionalization occurs “whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors...[but] What must be stressed is the reciprocity of institutional typifications and the typicality of not only the actions but also the actors in institutions” (pg.54). That said, any given institutional order defines clearly that actors of type X will perform actions of type X (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). For example, the institutionalized definitions of reality held by the police
organization might posit that police officers’ fight crime, or conversely, crime fighting is what police officers do. In a sense then, by illuminating predefined patterns of conduct institutions possess the capacity to control human conduct (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). The phenomenologist must recognize that eventually the institutional order is reified, that is to say, the institutional order is experienced as possessing a reality of its own, “a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; 58) As such, we objectify that which we have subjectively created.

Furthermore, the phenomenologist also recognizes that social reality is largely a product of one’s stock of knowledge (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966). The social stock of knowledge includes a history that is passed on to an individual by significant others. Most of this knowledge is acquired through social interaction and personal experience and, as such, it is never complete. Moreover, the social stock of knowledge includes knowledge about our own situation and conversely the situations of others. Interactional processes are thus constantly shaped through common participation with the available social stock of knowledge. Indeed, the social stock of knowledge forms one’s frames of reference, interpretations and orientations for one’s existence in the taken for-granted reality of everyday life. It includes language and the numerous typifications embedded in language, as well as the pragmatic rules for handling and manipulating things. More specifically, the social stock of knowledge includes socially accepted modes of conduct, behaviours, and actions in typical situations and it facilitates reciprocal interaction (Scutz, 1966). Encompassed in the social stock of knowledge is complex and detailed

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18 For example Berger and Luckmann use the example of a poor individual. By virtue of knowing that he is poor he cannot expect to live in an upper class neighbourhood moreover, those who live in upper class neighbourhoods know that he is poor and recognize that he cannot live in their neighborhood.
information relating to sectors of everyday life that the individual encounters (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). However, some knowledge is given precedence, for example the knowledge an officer has of his occupational world is specific and extensive, unlike the knowledge he possess of other occupational worlds (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966).

In addition, social actors have goals and an innate drive to pursue those goals (Schutz, 1966; Berger and Luckmann, 1967). To achieve any given goal with relative ease individual’s act pragmatically. In fact, the pragmatic motive encourages individuals to internalize typical means which allows them to obtain typical results (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966). As such, when any given action allows a social actor to obtain his or her goal or desire, it is internalized and performed repeatedly (Schutz, 1966; Berger and Luckmann; 1967). For example, an individual knows how act if she wishes to buy a coffee from a local coffee shop. She knows from past experience that she must enter the coffee shop, wait her turn in line, order what she wants, pay for it and ultimately receive her cup of coffee. Typical actions are internalized to such an extent that they remain unquestioned unless desired results are not obtained (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Scutz, 1966). In sum, our actions are determined largely by the pragmatic motive, and our “recipe knowledge” which Berger and Luckmann (1967) define as “knowledge that is limited to pragmatic competence on routine performances” (pg. 42). Pragmatic motives are thus given prominence in the social stock of knowledge.

Berger and Luckmann (1967), also pay considerable attention to the pragmatic use of language in the everyday world. Language encompasses the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of a given society and it provides a collection of meanings available to the social actor which permits the organization and ordering of social experiences (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). For
example, linguistic objectifications relating to the semantic field of one’s occupation provide routine and daily events with a sense of meaning (pg.41). Semantic fields make it possible to objectify, retain and accumulate biographical and historical experiences. According to Luckmann (2009), “…all experiences impress themselves on memory and all experiences are sedimented in subjective structures of meaning according to their typicality and relevance” (pg.287). The accumulation of this information is largely determined by particular semantic fields; in essence these determine what is retained and what is forgotten. Through the process of accumulation a social stock of knowledge is thus established. Not only is the social stock of knowledge available to the individual in everyday life but it is also passed on from generation to generation.

Phenomenological theory has, to some extent, also influenced the criminological literature. Smart (1976) suggests that a theory of phenomenological Marxism was developed by Paci (1972). According to Paci (1972), phenomenology and Marxism are intrinsically linked as he explains, “the crisis of the sciences is the crisis of the capitalist use of the sciences, and, therefore, the crisis of human existence in capitalist society” (pg.323). This crisis can be attributed to the reduction of man in science and the reduction of production in capitalist society to the status of an object, or commodity; as such, reality has been objectified and, “science has lost sight of the fact that what is objectively valid is subjectively constituted is a product of intersubjective activity” (Smart, 1976: 134). As such, Smart maintains that Marxian

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19 In particular, the social constructionist literature which examines the subjective nature of social problems has been greatly influenced by phenomenology.

20 As cited in Smart (1976) pg. 134.
and phenomenological analysis share a common point of reference in their return to the “concrete subject” (pg.135).

Other attempts have been made to associate phenomenological analysis with criminology. It has been argued for example, that Matza’s (1960) theory of naturalism which led to the formulation of Techniques of Neutralization was phenomenological in nature (Taylor et al., 2003). Indeed, Matza (1960) recognizes that man is a subject and not merely an object and in his analysis he is committed to, “...phenomena and their nature and not to science or any other system of standards” (pg.3). Through his theory of naturalism Matza (1960) sought to understand the way in which the deviant actor views his own situation (Beyleved and Wiles 1975). According to Taylor et al (2003) Matza’s theory is phenomenological in its “...back to the phenomena insistence on telling how it is” (pg. 193). Taylor et al., (2003) go on to argue that there are two general methodological imperatives built into phenomenology, first, to “give a correct representation of the phenomena under study,” and second, to show how the “phenomena is constituted or built up” (pg.193).

Although it is important to recognize how phenomenology has influenced other theoretical frameworks it is crucial to remember that phenomenological analyses are deeply committed to the elucidation of the most micro level of social interactions including the everyday mundane realities of individuals. Moreover, it is important to resist the tendency to simplify the aim of phenomenological analyses to the illumination of the subjective. There is a tendency within the literature for scholars to claim they have conducted phenomenological
research despite that their analyses are not methodologically committed to phenomenology and they generally lack depth (c.f., Karlsson and Christianson, 2003).\textsuperscript{21}

Within a phenomenological framework it is crucial to assess and understand even the most pragmatic and mundane aspects of an individual’s lived reality and ultimately, how reality shapes his or her role construction and understanding of the social world. The significance phenomenology has for our understanding of the world has been articulated by Natanson (1970):

Phenomenology is a way into the common source which unites philosophy and social science; its fulfilment would mean the illumination of life by thought. The refusal of philosophy will fault the ultimate effort of social science to understand men as mundane being, for when common-sense assumptions are uncritically admitted into the apparatus of science, they have a way of taking their revenge (pg.121).

Presently, the police literature falls short insofar as it has offered a rather macro-level explanation of the role police play in society. It is my contention that a phenomenological approach to understanding how officers construct and conceptualize their roles will produce a more nuanced understanding of the role of police in society.

**Pitfalls of Phenomenological Inquiry**

The tenants of phenomenological inquiry have proven markedly influential in establishing ethnomethodological, social constructionist and symbolic interactionist approaches within the social sciences. However, as with any theoretical position it is important to recognize not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of such orientations. For example, phenomenological approaches have been criticized because they possess the, “capacity for

\textsuperscript{21} Although Karlsson and Christinason’s article is titled “The Phenomenology of Traumatic Experiences in Police Work” the essence of their article actually has nothing to do with phenomenology.
boundless confusion and deception about the nature of social problems” (Harris, 1979: 320). In fact, according to Harris (1979) phenomenological idealism blatantly denies the causes of poverty, sexism and other central problems of human social life. Harris (1979) goes on to argue that in, “reducing and confining sociocultural events to the motivations and plans of immediate experience and communal consensus,” (pg.522) phenomenological analyses ultimately deny the existence of socioocultural systems and the universal aspects of such systems (e.g. infrastructure, structure or superstructure). Moreover, Harris (1979) maintains that theoretically, phenomenologists outwardly dismiss such things as ruling classes, imperialist powers, capitalism or socialism, as reifications (pg.322). For a phenomenologist these entities have no existence apart from the communities of participants who believe in them (Harris, 1979).²² Likewise Smart (1976) argues that phenomenological theory neglects questions related to action, or what people do and as such, phenomenological analyses fail to address issues related to power, force, stratification and structure.

Additionally, the work of Schutz has also been criticized. According to Nathanson (1970) Schutz’s work can be criticized on two grounds: first, concerning the phenomenological method and second, concerning the nature of intersubjectivity. Nathanson (1970) argues that in applying phenomenology to the study of social reality, Schutz’s analysis is inconsistently applied at the transcendental level; in other words, Schutz analyzes some phenomena but not all phenomena at the transcendental level. For example, according to Nathanson (1970) the social self is in need of transcendental investigation. Particularly, Nathoson is critical of Schutz’s

²² It should be noted that Harris (1979) fails to acknowledge the fact that Berger and Luckmann (1967) clearly argue that there are in fact, “things” that ontologically exist in the world. Moreover, they do not deny that things like inequality and suffering are real in the ontological sense.
(1966) position which renders the initial point of analysis of the intersubjective world (or the social self) as the We-relationship. The We-relationship is defined as the relationship that an individual possess with other individuals who they share face-to-face contact with. Schutz (1966) refers to these individuals as face-to-face consociates. In taking this position Schutz unquestioningly assumes that the We-relationship is a fact of life. Thus, he fails to examine the We-relationship to the full extent of the transcendental level (Nathanson, 1970). According to Nathanson, from the transcendental attitude it is necessary to assess how it is possible that such a structure (i.e. We-relationship) exists.

Secondly, Nathanson (1970) criticizes Schutz (and phenomenological theory more generally) for his epistemological position on the issue of intersubjectivity.²³ Within the common sense world intersubjectivity is taken for granted by individuals. Thus, Nathanson argues, that in describing the intersubjective world the social scientist is dealing with data that are already charged with intersubjective intent. As such, some academics, especially those who adhere to the traditional scientific method would argue that phenomenological analyses can never really attain a truly objective analysis of reality. As a social actor interpreting other social actors, the phenomenologist is essentially engaging in the interpretation of that which is already interpreted. However, it is important to note that Schutz (1966) himself was well aware of this fallacy, which he referred to as the nature of second order constructs. He cautioned researchers to be aware that within the social sciences when constructing models, reality has already been understood and interpreted by the individuals under investigation (Knudson, 2004).

²³ Intersubjectivity is defined as experiencing another person as a subject rather than just an object and additionally as experiencing oneself as seen by the other (Nathanson, 1970).
It should be recognized then that most of these critiques offer little credence to the phenomenologist. The early aim of phenomenological inquiry was to establish a division between the methodological position of the natural sciences (objectivism) and the socio-cultural world (subjectivism). In challenging positivism, the phenomenologist is committed to the explication of “lived experience” (Harris, 1979). Thus, it is accepted that the observer cannot be separated from the observed and, “observation itself must be approached as a lived experience in which the subjective meanings of both observer and participant are constantly reflected on” (Harris, 1979: 323). The phenomenologist accepts that they will never obtain the truth of the lived experience because truth is always considered relative and social (Harris, 1979). The task of the social scientist is not to obtain objective truth but to penetrate and expound the symbols and meanings that help to construct our sense of reality.

**CONCLUSION**

The role of police has been conceptualized predominately at the macro-level. In particular, researchers have examined the role of police, in terms of risk society and broader themes of crime and capitalism. Although, these theories have been insightful I contend that many scholars have been inclined to infer police officers’ sense of their life-world, and thus, officers’ intimate constructions of reality remain marginalized and relatively unacknowledged. This is problematic in that this macro-level approach causes researchers to make unwarranted assumptions about how police officers think and act on the basis of larger structural ideologies. In essence, these grandiose theories fall short in their failure to capture officers’ lived realities. Moreover, these structural theories fail to acknowledge the possible contradictions and tensions that characterize how officers construct and conceptualize their roles. Although
the subcultural literature has provided a more micro-level analysis of the role officers play in society, from a phenomenological standpoint research in this area is relatively weak.

I argue that to attain a complete understanding of the role police play in society we must understand how they construct their role at the micro-level which can be achieved by examining officers’ role construction phenomenologically and theoretically building upward. Indeed, the theoretical orientation offered by Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Schutz (1966) will provide the necessary framework to examine and understand how officers construct their roles.

This research will contribute to the literature in the following ways: it will be the first study to examine the role of the public police from a phenomenological perspective and as such will challenge and add depth to the social-systems models that have been adopted thus far. In essence, this research will produce a more nuanced understanding of the role police play in society. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), the analysis of roles is of crucial importance to the sociology of knowledge because, “…it reveals the mediations between the macroscopic universes of meaning objectivated in a society and the ways by which these universes are subjectively real to individuals” (pg.79). Additionally, on a more practical level it is my goal to use this research to inform the management practices within police organizations. To do this, I argue, it is absolutely necessary to understand how officers conceptualize their role; this will provide the opportunity to develop management strategies that will be more likely to resonate with officers.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Throughout the research process, it is crucial for researchers to understand the relationship between methodology and methods. In most academic writing this relationship is often taken for granted and is rarely explicated. A researcher’s methodology entails his/her epistemological and ontological assumptions about the world. Thus, one’s methods reflect one’s methodological stance (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004; King and Horrocks; 2010). Indeed, methodological questions “address how a researcher can ascertain information believed to be knowable” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004: 7), and according to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004), methodology bridges the gap between one’s epistemological position and his or her research methods.

In this chapter I provide a brief discussion of the methods and methodologies that have been used in the police literature. I also elucidate the methodology and methods that guide this research on how the police construct their role in society. Moreover, I discuss the research sample, and rapport and reflexivity. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a detailed outline of the data analysis procedure.

Methods and Methodologies in Police Research

Scholars have used different methods to study police officers. Especially popular has been the use of field-work which was adopted first by Black and Reiss (1970) in their study of police discretion. Similarly, in his examination of the police subculture Herbert (1998) spent time in the field with officers from the Los Angeles Police Department. His field work included ride-alongs and the direct observation of specialized units. Other researchers have adopted

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24 Ontologically I am referring to the researcher’s ideas regarding the existence and nature of a real and objective world. Epistemologically I am referring to the researchers ideas about how we can know this world.
similar methods including, Blake (1981) in his early work on the function of the police in Canada, Hodgson (2001) in his research on police violence in Canada and the United States, and van Maanen (1989) in his examination of police training methods. Methodologically researchers who adopt field work methods contend that reality is actively constructed and rendered meaningful through processes of social interaction (Miller and Holstein, 1993). Thus, field work methods entail the explication of the ways in which individuals “…descriptively construct and assign meanings (including intentions)” to their social worlds, and the focus of research is on the analysis of talk and interaction in social settings (Miller and Holstein, 1993: 11).

Moreover, academics have relied on other qualitative methods such as interviews to study the police. Some scholars have used more structured interview formats (c.f., Ford, 2003; Goldschmidt et al., 2008), while others have relied on in-depth and unstructured or semi-structured interview methods. Rabe-Hemp (2007), for example, conducted in-depth interviews to explore how the police sub-culture impacts female officers. Likewise, Satzewich and Shaffir (2009) conducted interviews to understand racial profiling practices among Hamilton police officers. Further, in their research on the police role in risk society, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) used a combination of methods including extensive field-work and in-depth interviews (see also Mastrofski et al, 1987; Hoggett and Stott, 2009).

Thus, qualitative methods within the police literature allow researchers to obtain deeper and more nuanced understandings of many different aspects of the police and the organizations within which they work. Through field work and qualitative interview methods researchers have obtained data that accurately captures and reflects police officers’ realities (Klenke, 2008).
Conversely, some researchers have used quantitative methods to study officers. Sobel (2009) for example, adopted quantitative interview methods to examine the social ecology of police attitudes, while Hawkins (2001) relied on survey data to identify factors leading to police officers’ burnout. Similarly, Crank et al., (1995) used survey data to identify the institutional and organizational factors that lead to role stress among police executives. Although this research has contributed to the literature, the use of quantitative methods to measure complex social constructs including police attitudes, working personalities and worldviews is contestable insofar as quantitative analyses often fail to capture the complexity of police attitudes and experiences. I argue that it is more effective to study such complex elements of police experiences with qualitative methods.

In sum, within the literature various methods have been used to study the police. The methods adopted are informed by the research questions posed, but more importantly, methods are derived from the researcher's epistemological and ontological assumptions. I contend that in order to understand complex elements of police experiences, such as how they conceptualize their role in society, qualitative research methodologies and methods prove more effective. Indeed, as I will explain throughout this chapter, qualitative methodologies and methods are most suitable for the present research study which is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do public police officers construct and conceptualize their role within society?
   
   1.1. What role, if any, do public perceptions and the mainstream media play in that construction?

2. To what extent can an understanding of officers' role constructions help inform/improve management practices and policy within police organizations?
METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PARADIGMS

According to King and Horrocks (2010), a clear understanding of how theory, methodology and methods fit together is fundamental to quality research. Indeed, a researcher’s paradigm must be ontologically and epistemologically consistent with his or her methodological orientation (Grbich, 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004). As such, prior to discussing the methodology that informs this research, it is first necessary to provide a brief discussion of the paradigm from which the present research draws. Within sociology research approaches can be divided into three distinct paradigmatic positions including positivism/empiricism, interpretivism/constructionism, and critical/ma rxist approaches; each has a different ontological and epistemological orientation to the social world and therefore each relies on different research methods to acquire knowledge (Berg, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004; Neuman, 2007).

The present research draws largely from an interpretive paradigmatic approach and thus begins with the assumption that social life cannot be comprehended through the methods commonly used in the “hard” empirical sciences (Neuman, 2007). Interpretive approaches encourage researchers to examine the interpretation and meaning of human experience (King and Horrocks, 2010). Interpretivists seek to understand social phenomena (Grbich, 2007; Klenke, 2008), human nature, and the motivations that drive human behavior (Porta and Keating, 2008). From this perspective the researcher is primarily interested in examining the

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25 Debates’ surrounding which paradigmatic approach best informs and guides research possesses a long history that is well documented in the literature (Grbich, 2007; Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Neuman, 2007; Porta and Keating, 2008). Although the debates are extensive, they are beyond the scope of this paper.
complex meanings that people give to their social existence (King and Horrocks, 2010; Klenke, 2008).

Methodologically, interpretive researchers adhere to a constructionist conception of social reality, suggesting that the meaning of social life is reflected in the ideas, beliefs and perceptions that people possess about reality (Klenke, 2008; Neuman, 2007). Knowledge stems from “abstract descriptions of meanings and is constituted through a person’s lived experience” (Klenke, 2008: 21). In other words, all knowledge is constructed through social interaction.

Further, from an interpretive perspective the researcher and reality are inseparable (Klenke, 2008). The notion that researchers can remove themselves from the active process of knowledge production is therefore rejected (King and Horrocks, 2010). In fact, Smith (2004) argues that in order to understand reality researchers must immerse themselves “in information about the actors in question, and use both empathy and imagination to construct credible accounts of their senses of identity” (pg. 43). Interpretivists also recognize that the world must be understood as a “series of interpretations that people within society give of their position” and that the social scientist interprets those interpretations (Porta and Keating, 2008: 25; Schutz, 1966).

As is the case with any method of social inquiry, interpretive approaches have their limitations. For instance, interpretivist research focuses disproportionately on micro-level human interaction; therefore, the tendency is to overlook the interplay between micro and macro structures. For example, although conversation analyses, such as Maynard’s (1991) examination of doctor/patient relations and Pilnick’s (1998) research on pharmacists produce rich accounts of the microdynamics of human interaction, this research often overlooks
structural influences on forms of interaction. According to Parnaby (2009) conversation analyses often “become so thoroughly rooted in the world of communicative exchange that structural considerations are not integrated effectively, and the effects of power and control appear limited to the immediate interactive context” (pg.1067). When dealing with an organization like that of the police it is crucial to consider structural issues, as well as the effects that power and control have on larger social processes, beyond the immediate interactive context.

Further, interpretive approaches attempt to alter the inherent power imbalances in positivist/empiricist research methods by shifting the role of the “expert” from the researcher to the researched.26 As a result, interpretivist research has the potential to overlook the influence that researcher/researched power dynamics have on the research process; this is particularly problematic when “researching up” which involves research subjects who inhabit or represent professional or powerful places (e.g. police officers) (Neal and Mclaughlin, 2009). Indeed, according to Desmond (2004) when researching up researchers must recognize how power dynamics infiltrate their research because “working in an elite field poses major difficulties which stem from the challenges of researching up, which are quite different to those encountered in studying down” (pg.262 [as cited in Neal and Mclaughlin, 2009: 695]). Moreover, individuals with a degree of social power often have more control over the research (Reeves, 2010), and any attempt on behalf of the researcher to develop a “flatter” research relationship is difficult or in many cases inappropriate (Neal and McLaughlin, 1995: 695). As

26 Most research assumes that the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched is in favour of the researcher, however this is not always the case as Smart (1984) found in her research on the constitution of marriage which involved interviews with magistrates.
such, it is important for researchers to practice reflexivity in order to recognize how individual power relations shape the research.\textsuperscript{27} As is explicated later in this chapter qualitative research methods encourage researchers to engage in reflexive processes.

\textbf{Quantitative versus Qualitative Research Methods}

One’s research paradigm and/or methodological position can also determine partially whether a qualitative or quantitative research design is used (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008). Qualitative and quantitative research approaches represent very different ways of examining the social world (Holliday, 2002). Quantitative methods involve sophisticated data analysis (Porta and Keating, 2008) and are concerned with, “measurement, precisely and accurately capturing aspects of the social world... [later to be expressed] in numbers- percentages, probability values, variance ratios etc” (King and Horrocks, 2010: 7). Quantitative methods are most often associated with the positivist/empiricist research paradigm (King and Horrocks, 2010; Neuman, 2007; Porta and Keating, 2008). Conversely, qualitative approaches encompass a variety of different methods to examine the social world but do not rely on numbers as the unit of analysis (King and Horrocks, 2010; Neuman, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative research as:

\begin{quote}
... an activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (pg.3).
\end{quote}

Thus, qualitative approaches are methodologically consistent with the interpretive approach (King and Horrocks 2010; Neuman, 2007; Porta and Keating, 2008).

\textsuperscript{27} In the rapport and reflexivity section of this chapter I offer an explanation as to how power imbalances between myself and the officers influenced the current research.
In sum, I have provided a discussion of the methodology and methods that have been used in the police literature. Additionally, I have revealed how methodology informs the present research, and discussed the assumptions inherent to interpretive research approaches. The remainder of the chapter will provide an outline of the research sample obtained, and also explicate the method used to examine how police officers construct their role. I will conclude the chapter with a detailed discussion of the data analysis procedure.

**SAMPLE**

The research sample included ten police officers from the greater Toronto area. Officers interviewed had varying years of experience, ranging from two to 37 years of service, and were from two different ranks within the organization; in total there were six constables and four detectives. Nine of the participant’s interviewed were male and one officer was female. Table 1 provides information pertaining to participants’ years of service, their rank within the organization, and the bureau to which they belonged.

Traditionally, the police have possessed a paramilitary and hierarchical organizational structure. Police organizations are also well guarded and are often reluctant to let outsiders in; thus, gaining access can prove difficult for researchers. According to Berg (2009), in order to gain access to most organizations researchers must first mediate with key gatekeepers. Reeves (2010) maintains that gatekeepers can help or hinder the research depending on their opinions

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28 In order to protect the identity of participants anonymity was guaranteed. As such, for the remainder of the paper pseudonyms are used to refer to the officers and the organizations involved in the study.

29 The uneven ratio of men to women is not surprising given that policing remains a profession dominated by males. Moreover, it is possible that in such an environment female officers may have been more reluctant to speak out and thus to participate in my research.

30 Given my methodological adherence to a constructionist ontological and epistemological position it was unnecessary to obtain a random sample of police officers.
about the validity and value of the research (Reeves, 2010). Establishing positive relationships with gatekeepers is crucial because they provide researchers with a necessary link to participants (Berg, 2009). For the present research Public Relations Officers (PROs) were the primary gatekeepers.

Some research suggests that being female may facilitate efforts to access guarded organizations. According to Gurney (1991), female researchers often have less difficulty gaining access to male dominated environments because they are perceived as less threatening than men. It is, however, difficult to say whether my experience with the police organizations supports this contention. Although I was seemingly trusted by the PRO officers I cannot say for certain that this was attributed to my gender, rather I may have been trusted simply because the PRO officers did not view my research to be threatening to the organization in any way.31

To initiate the research process I was required to send an e-mail outlining my proposed research to the PRO officers at two different police organizations (see Appendix A). The PRO officer from the first organization contacted me within two days of receiving my initial e-mail. He informed me that my request for participants had been sent to the Chief of Police who had to clear the research project before permitting officers to participate. I waited a month and a half for the Chief to clear my research request. Once the research was cleared, the PRO officer notified me that my request for participants would be posted on the electronic employee bulletin board and that interested officers were required to contact me directly by phone or e-mail. Within a few days of the posting, I received seven e-mails from officers willing to participate. Interviews with five of the seven officers were scheduled through e-mail

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31 When I spoke with the PRO officers I informed them that the aim of my research was to understand how police officers conceptualize and construct their role in society.
correspondence. Upon meeting with the participants I explained clearly my research and provided them with the necessary consent forms (see Appendix B).

In order to obtain additional participants, I utilized a traditional snowball sampling method (Berg, 2009). I asked each of the five officers to refer me to other officers they knew, who might be willing to participate in my research. The snowball sampling technique allowed me to attain three additional participants. Three weeks after the research project had been posted on the employee bulletin board, two additional officers contacted me via e-mail and expressed their interest in participating; their interviews were arranged over the phone.

Conversely, my experience with the second organization was not as successful. When I spoke with the PRO officer from this organization he expressed interest in participating in an interview. I met with him a week later and conducted the interview; unfortunately, however, I encountered technical difficulties insofar as the audio recorder only captured four minutes of the entire interview and as such, the data was omitted from the research. The officer provided me with the e-mail addresses of four officers from within his organization. I made three attempts via email to contact the officers however nothing materialized. Due to the perceived lack of interest from participants and the time restraints I faced I was unable to access additional officers from this organization.

### Table 1: Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer Name</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Organizational Rank</th>
<th>Bureau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Internal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Patrol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32 Please note two of the officers did not respond to my follow up e-mail which requested to set up a meeting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer Name</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Organizational Rank</th>
<th>Bureau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lusty</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Training officer/Regional Canine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Child Pornography/Fraud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Homicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Constable</td>
<td>Riot Squad/Break and Enter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**METHOD**

Methods are the ways in which data are acquired (Porta and Keating, 2008). The method or methods selected by a researcher must be consistent with his or her ontological and epistemological assumptions (King and Horrocks, 2010; Klenke, 2008; Porta and Keating, 2008), and must address adequately the research questions (Berg, 2009; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004; Roulston, 2010).

The purpose of this research is to examine how public police officers conceptualize and construct their role in society from a phenomenological perspective. As such, methodologically, the research is guided by relativist ontology in so far as reality is rendered meaningful through social interaction (Schutz, 1966; Berger and Luckman, 1967; King and

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33 Please note I am adopting a social phenomenological perspective which was outlined clearly in the previous chapter on theory.
Horrocks, 2010). Therefore, epistemologically, this research is guided by the contention that knowledge is also socially derived (Schutz, 1966; Berger and Luckman, 1967). In essence, we learn through processes of social interaction and experience. Thus, in accordance with Roulston’s (2010) argument that “interviews must be used in ways that are consonant with the epistemological and theoretical assumptions underlying a study’s design” (pg.204), the decision was made to use in-depth semi-structured interviews as a means of explicating how officers construct their social roles and realities. The qualitative interview “...situates the methodology and method deliberately within the qualitative domain where a broad and holistic approach is taken to study social phenomena” (King and Horrocks 2010: 7). Perhaps most importantly, participants become “the experts” insofar as they decide not only what to tell but also how to tell it, and their perspectives are valued highly (Klenke, 2008).

Within the social sciences interviewing is one of the most widely used methods (Berg, 2009; Gubrium and Holstein, 2002; Hermanowicz, 2002; Klenke, 2008; Roulston, 2010). By providing participants with the opportunity to talk about and reflect on their lived experiences, qualitative interviews produce detailed information about the social world (Klenke, 2008; Roulston, 2010). A major strength of the qualitative interview, according to Seidman (2006), is that it allows researchers to examine the context of people’s behaviours while providing the opportunity to understand the meaning of that behaviour. Likewise, Miller and Glassner (2004) argue that interviewing affords researchers the ability to collect and rigorously examine individuals’ accounts of their lived realities. Ultimately, the interview serves as a construction site where knowledge can be built (Kvale, 1996) and it provides researchers with access to the ways in which individuals develop and understand notions of rationality, morality and social
order (Baker, 2002). According to Hermanowicz (2002), there are identifiable characteristics which set outstanding interviews apart from good interviews. In using the analogy of sleeping with your participants, he suggests researchers should, “...bed our subjects more often—we should be more forward, direct, candid, and adventuresome in ways that show the flesh of the people behind all the garments they wear in everyday social life” (pg.480). However, Hermanowicz (2002) acknowledges that “getting to the core of people” is not an easy feat for any researcher (pg.481). He maintains that great interviews involve focusing on what the interviewee has to say, eliciting conversation, and practicing deep listening.

According to Rapley (2001), the interview is an inherently social encounter. Moreover, drawing from Goffman’s (1967) dramaturgical theory, Berg (2009), maintains that the process of interviewing actually involves a social performance by both the interviewer and interviewee. Within this context, the interviewer and the interviewee are collaboratively involved in the process of knowledge and reality construction (Holstein and Gubrium 2004; Silverman, 2001). Through interview discourse the social construction and apprehension of meanings about the world can be examined (Berg, 2009). This involves an “active interviewing” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004; Hathaway and Atkinson, 2003) approach, where the goal of the researcher is to construct meaning and interpretation in the context of conversation (Kvale, 1996). Active interviewing techniques, as suggested by Hathaway and Atkinson (2003), “…resemble the informal structure of everyday talk with the aim to build and explore intersubjective understandings of social reality” (pg.164). According to Roulston (2010), this “romantic” conception of interviewing requires the researcher to establish rapport and a sense of
empathetic connection with the interviewee which allows for the production of in depth data that accurately reflects participant’s lived worlds.

Although active interviewing techniques allow researchers to obtain rich understandings of participants’ realities, this style of interviewing also poses the risk of producing a co-constructed reality; one that is constructed not only by the interviewee but also by the interviewer. One way to avoid this is for the researcher to practice reflexivity throughout the data collection process. In essence, the researcher must engage in an “internal dialogue” to assess not only what they know but also how they came to know it (Berg, 2009: 198). A more detailed analysis of researcher reflexivity is provided in the rapport and reflexivity section of this chapter; first, however, I provide a discussion of two interview structures used in the social sciences.

**Semi-Structured vs. Structured Interviews**

Although a number of different approaches to conducting interviews exist, the semi-structured and structured interviews are two of the most commonly used methods in the social sciences (Berg, 2009). The epistemological and ontological assumptions of the researcher determine the most suitable interview structure for any given project. For instance, researchers who utilize structured interviews usually adhere to a positivist epistemological position. Structured interviews follow a rigidly guided format; thus, the researcher is required to develop a sequence of close-ended questions, often with pre-determined answers, and each participant is asked the same questions in the exact same order (Berg, 2009; Klenke, 2008). This type of interview produces what Suchman and Jordan (1990) refer to as “good hard data - the stuff of

34 Prescribed questions with a limited set of response categories are used (see Klenke, 2008).
The data obtained from structured interviews is numerically coded and amenable to statistical analysis.

One advantage of the structured interview is that it can be used, with relative ease, on large sample sizes. Additionally, structured interviews allow researchers to obtain detailed information and generate data that can be generalized. However, a major disadvantage of this method is that it may prevent the interviewee from sharing information relevant to him or her and from expressing different or competing views (Klenke, 2008). Further, structured interviews offer limited flexibility; consequently, even when new ideas emerge, researchers do not have the opportunity to explore them (Klenke, 2008).

On the other hand, researchers who draw from an interpretive paradigm and constructionist epistemology rely often on the semi-structured interview. This type of interview utilizes both open-ended and close-ended questions (Berg, 2009; Klenke, 2008). In contrast to the structured interview, the wording and ordering of the questions is not fixed. Moreover, the interviewer is able to add or remove questions while seeking additional information as new ideas emerge (Klenke, 2008). Indeed, Sampson (1972) argues that the semi-structured interview’s open format produces an opportunity for unexpected ideas and attitudes to emerge and thus be examined. A major strength of the semi-structured interview, according to Hermanowicz (2002), is that “...if executed well, [it] brings us arguably closer than many other methods to an intimate understanding of people and their social worlds” (pg.480). Further, semi-structured interviews require researchers to develop strong rapport with participants, and to practice reflexivity throughout the research project (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004).

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35 As cited in Klenke (2008) pg.123
Rapport and Reflexivity

The need for researchers to establish rapport with participants has been highlighted throughout the literature (see for example, Berg, 2009; Hathaway and Atkinson, 2003; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004; Hermanowicz, 2002; Klenke, 2008; Roulston, 2010). Developing rapport is crucial in order for researchers to establish a sense of trust with participants and thus, to elicit accurate responses, with a degree of depth (Berg, 2009; Klenke, 2008). Indeed, Roulston (2010) argues that establishing rapport is necessary to obtain a degree of empathetic understanding from participants. Hathaway and Atkinson (2003) actually encourage researchers to express involvement with, or personal interest in the research project in order to, “establish a context of mutual identification” that will ultimately facilitate in-depth conversation (pg.170).

However, researchers must exercise a degree of caution when establishing rapport with participants; Hathaway and Atkinson’s (2003) strategy in particular may cause researchers to “go native” or in other words, to get too close to the research subjects and thus risk losing objectivity. This is problematic insofar as some degree of objectivity is imperative when the aim of the research is to understand our subject’s understandings of reality. As such, to avoid losing objectivity it is important for researchers to continually reflect on their positionality in the research (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004) and to maintain at least to some degree, the boundaries between the role of the interviewer and the role of the interviewee.

Establishing rapport with a guarded organization (e.g., the police) can prove challenging. To establish rapport, I began each interview by disclosing personal information about myself,

36 I am not using the term objectivity as it is conceptualized in the positivistic sense; rather objectivity refers to the recognition of the ways in which researcher biases might influence the interview process
such as my admiration for the policing career and my interest in working as an officer. I indicated that I had some degree of familiarity with the job, insofar as a number of my friends, including my ex-partner, currently work or have worked for the police department in the Waterloo region. Finally, when outlining the purpose of the research project, I emphasized clearly that I had a lot to learn from them and was very interested in what they had to say about their role in society. According to Hathaway and Atkinson (2003) by playing ignorant the researcher is often able to attain responses with a greater degree of depth from participants. Additionally, to ensure that participants felt at ease during the interview they were given the opportunity to decide where they wanted to be interviewed.

Interviewing within an interpretive framework also requires researchers to be reflexive throughout the research process. According to Bott, (2010), “central to maintaining reflexivity is the need for researchers to constantly locate and relocate themselves within their work, and to remain in dialogue with research practice, participants and methodologies” (pg.160). Reflexivity helps researchers recognize how their positionality contributes to the construction of meaning (King and Horrocks, 2010). Indeed, reflexive practices allowed me to recognize how the underlying power dynamics between myself and the officers shaped the research. In many instances the officers held more “social power” insofar as the majority of the officers interviewed were older than me and had equal if not higher educational credentials. The power imbalance between myself and the officers was apparent at two different points during the research. Most crucial was the power the organization had to control who could participate in the research. In essence, the PRO officer had complete control over who would be exposed to
my research request and I also learned from several officers that in order to participate in the interview they were required to request permission from their immediate supervisor.

The second instance which signified the power imbalance between myself and the officers was apparent in my efforts to establish rapport. According to Reeves (2010), “The ability of researchers to gather rich and detailed data depends upon the establishment and maintenance of positive relationships” (pg.321 italics added). As such, participants possessed control over the research to the extent that their trust in me was crucial because it influenced not only their choice to participate but also, their decision to be open, and honest with me.

Further, Berg (2009) maintains that the interviewee’s conception of the interviewer is determined by aspects of appearance and demeanor. I recognized very early in the research process that my status as a young, white and educated female might influence the responses I received from the participants given that nine were male. As such, I attempted to reduce the significance of my femininity by dressing in a semi-casual manner which included a relatively loose fitting pair of jeans and a Toronto Maple Leafs t-shirt.\textsuperscript{37} Moreover, when introducing myself I emphasized my interest in sports (particularly hockey); in order to relate to “the boys.”\textsuperscript{38} I also elected to play down my status as a well-educated female by making few if any references to my formal education. I wanted the officers to feel like the experts and to feel that I valued what they had to say. I was also aware that despite my fairly decent understanding of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[37] According to Seymour (2001), instant judgments are made on the basis of an interviewer’s appearance and dress (as cited in Klenke 2008).
\item[38] It should be noted that I am not suggesting I agree with this notion; I simply recognize this behaviour to be consistent with culturally prescribed ideas of what it means to be a male in North American society.
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I have never experienced firsthand what it is like to be an officer. As such, throughout the data collection process I reminded myself that my positionality had the potential to influence the way in which I interpreted and ultimately understood how officers constructed and conceptualized their roles in society.

**Interview Structure**

At the beginning of every interview I reviewed the consent form with participants and asked for their signatures. Participants were then asked if they had any questions. Initially, when I requested to record the interviews most officers appeared quite reluctant. However, following my introduction and my guarantee of anonymity, all participants willingly agreed to have their interviews recorded. Three of the interviews were conducted in coffee shops in the GTA and one interview was conducted in a coffee shop in the Guelph area. A total of five interviews were conducted in conference rooms located at the officer’s division, and the remaining two interviews were completed in interrogation rooms also located at the division.

The semi-structured interviews followed an interview guide which included 19 questions (see Appendix C). The semi-structured interview format afforded me the flexibility to explore themes as they emerged from the interview (Klenke, 2008; Berg, 2009). Depending on the interview’s flow, the order and nature of the questions varied. The open-ended format provided respondents an opportunity to provide detailed and rich responses. In order to elicit more in-depth responses I used silence as a probe (Berg, 2009; Hermanowicz, 2002; Klenke, 2008; Kvale, 1996). Specifically, I would remain silent for approximately 10-30 seconds after participants finished answering the question. According to Klenke (2008), silence is often the

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39 To the extent that I have spent time reading the literature on policing, have many policing friends, and once possessed a desire to become an officer.
best probe because it encourages participants to continue the conversation. Indeed, more often than not, after about 10 seconds of silence the respondents would continue talking, providing richer responses to the questions posed. The overall length of each interview varied depending on the participant. The shortest interview was about forty minutes long and the longest interview was just over an hour and a half.

Participants were reminded of their right to choose not to answer questions at any point during the interview; however, none elected to exercise this right. Interestingly, one participant requested that I turn off the recorder for a period of about five minutes during his interview. Following this, he asked me to omit what was said while the recorder was off from the research. After each interview I recorded key ideas and themes in point form.

**Data Analysis**

Analysis occurs throughout the duration of the data collection process (Charmaz, 2008; Neuman, 2007). According to Berg (2009), analysis begins when the data, “...indicate the necessary categories and codes to use and as these elements begin to form patterns and conceptual realities each time the researcher reads and re-reads a transcript...” (pg.356). Once each in-depth interview was completed the audio recording was transcribed verbatim and hard copies of the completed transcripts were printed. Further, to assist with data analysis, I used the computer-based qualitative data analysis program NVivo 8.

The analysis was rooted in the principles of grounded theory which, according to Charmaz (2008), consists of “a set of inductive strategies for analyzing data” (pg.497). These methods involve beginning with individual cases and working to develop more abstract conceptual categories which are then used to understand and explain emergent patterns in the
data (Berg, 2009; Charmaz, 2008). The analysis involved a thematic content analysis of the transcribed interviews. Weber (1985), defines content analysis as a “...methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (pg.9). Moreover, content analysis involves, “a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation [of material] in an effort to identify patterns, themes biases and meanings” that emerge from the research (Berg, 2009; 338). A major strength of content analysis is that it allows researchers to identify participant’s intentions, emotions and attitudes (Grbich, 2007). Data were coded using a three step process: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (see for example, Berg, 2009, Charmaz, 2008; Neuman, 2007).

The first phase of analysis involved a form of open coding (Berg, 2009; Neuman, 2007) where the researcher identifies themes and develops initial codes to sort the data (Neuman, 2007). Further, coding of the data was shaped by the guidelines proposed by Strauss (1987; p. 30): as cited in Berg (2009; p. 354). (1) the data were analyzed by asking a specific and consistent set of questions based on the research questions posed, and (2) the data were analyzed meticulously and openly. This involved line by line coding to determine the relevant concepts and themes that emerged from the data (Berg, 2009; Charmaz, 2008). According to Charmaz (2008), “line by line coding forces the researcher to interact with the data” (pg.164). Relevant and recurring themes were colour coordinated and notes were made in the side margins of each transcript.

The second stage, axial coding, involved the development of specific coding frames and themes (Berg, 2009; Charmaz, 2008). Moreover, this stage also involved making sure that the categories/themes were as mutually exclusive as possible. According to Neuman (2007), during
axial coding the researcher must ask about, “causes and consequences, conditions and interactions, strategies and processes” (pg. 331), and must identify the, “categories, themes and concepts that cluster together” (pg.331). Thus, the themes identified in the open coding stage were further condensed and used to organize and synthesize the data into more specific categories (Charmaz, 2008). In NVIVO 8 the coding frames were developed into nodes. Data were then systematically sorted into the relevant analytic categories. The final stage of coding involved one final look at the data. During the selective coding process, the themes developed in the open and axial coding stages were used to guide my reading of the transcripts (Neuman, 2007). At this stage specific themes were reorganized and when necessary elaborated (Neuman, 2007).

**CONCLUSION**

Throughout this chapter I have provided a brief discussion of some of the methods that have been used to study police officers. I have also explained how the methodological orientation of this research informs the method I elected to use. Drawing from an interpretive framework, and more specifically, a constructionist epistemological position, knowledge is presumed to be socially derived and is rendered meaningful through processes of social interaction and experience. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were adopted in order to understand how police officers conceptualize and construct their roles. Additionally, this chapter has also outlined the research sample, the interview format followed and the need for researchers to develop rapport and practice reflexivity throughout the research process. Finally, I have also discussed the data analysis process.
Chapter 4- Police Officer Role Construction and Conceptualization

Within the literature researchers have elected to analyze the police from an external and, largely, social systems perspective. As a result, many scholars have been inclined to infer police officers’ sense of their life-world, and thus, officers’ intimate constructions of reality remain marginalized and relatively unacknowledged. To address this gap in the literature, the current study seeks to shed light on officers' institutionalized construction of reality, focusing specifically on how they define and conceptualize their role, while acknowledging the possible contradictions and tensions that characterize this role construct. The present research suggests that police officers construct their role in a manner that is oftentimes at odds with the reality of their job.

Officer Ideal Role Construction

Experiences are sedimented in subjective structures of meaning on the basis of their typicality and relevance (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). According to Schutz, (1966), “it is the interests of the subject and his particular vantage point which defines the borderline between that which he [sic] takes for-granted and that which is problematic for him” (pg. 216). The police officers in this study clearly typified their role in terms of their ability to enforce laws and provide protection. Thus, experiences related to law enforcement and protection are deemed relevant and are therefore sedimented in officers’ subjective structures of meaning, ultimately forming part of their ideal role construct. Moreover, the sedimentation of these particular experiences leads to an idealized role construction which is taken largely for-granted. In fact, officers’ role construction is taken for-granted to such an extent that it remains intact despite that the reality of the job rarely requires them to engage in tasks reflecting their ideal role.
construct. In the following sections I will explicate the ways officers conceptualized and constructed their role in terms of “law and order maintenance” and the “protection of society.” Officers’ idealistic role construction suggests that power and authority are not only important but also necessary aspects of their role construction.

**Law and Order Maintenance**

A number of researchers have found that within police culture real police work is most often defined as crime work (Conser, 1980; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Manning 1977; Herbert, 1998; Hodgson, 2001; Johnson, 1979; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Skolnick, 1966; Waddington, 1999: 287). The officers in the present study support this contention. Indeed, each of the ten officers I interviewed constructed their role largely in terms of law enforcement while emphasizing the need to catch “bad guys” in order to preserve social order; as such, officers draw attention to the powerful status of their role. For example, Bill, an officer with 25 years of experience on the job, stated:

My basic reasons for getting on or wanting to get on [the police service] um fairly simple I-I think we as a society uh need law, laws have to be enforced um I think that each citizen of our society should be able to, to live their life in a fairly decent environment and the laws provide that decent environment and I think it was a worthwhile life goal. I mean what I always wanted to do as a police officer what I think most police officers wanna do is they wanna go after the bad guy and get that person off the street.

Interestingly, Bill constructs social order as entirely dependent on the presence and enforcement of laws, insinuating that without them the “good guys” would likely be victimized by the “bad guys.” Similarly, Amy, an officer with two years experience, defines her role in terms of her ability to proactively enforce laws by making arrests, commenting:
If you’re busy [with domestics or filling out paperwork] you’re not able to you
know proactively drive around and watch people making traffic offenses, you
have your tickets, you have your arrests and not just arrests from calls you go on
but proactive ones that you’re finding like I’m actually seeking out so finding the
impaired driver... whether it’s for drugs, impaired driving, assaults...

Other officers conceptualized their role more clearly in terms of “catching the bad guys.” In
fact, according to Nick, an internal affairs officer with 22 years of experience: “We like going out
and catching bad guys and charging them!” Like Nick, Edward, a canine officer with 16 years of
experience, expressed clearly that his role as a “good guy” involves catching bad guys.
According to Edward: “You’re one of the good guys you wanna go out and help people, catch
bad guys, solve crimes... that’s my primary function is to go out and search for people, search
for evidence uh, concealed narcotics. I am the old guy in the dog unit now but ev-everybody
sees me still as doin’ the job properly- like I still catch as many bad guys as the youngest guy in
the unit!” Edward’s account suggests that both he and fellow officers recognize that “doing the
job properly” entails catching criminals. Similarly, Jason argued that good police officers do, in
fact, catch bad guys as he revealed, “That’s how policemen become good policemen is they find
bad guys and then they keep finding bad guys and all their bad guys’ right...” Further, Jason
informed me that he found his role as an officer rewarding insofar as, “the reward I get is-is um
fighting bad guys and catching them and-and taken them uh before the courts.” Finally, Lusty a
detective with 32 years on the job, conveys clearly his responsibility as an officer is to catch bad
guys, conceptualizing his role in the following way, “It is my job to work hard, look after them
[referring to his neighbours], protect their children place them uh place the people that [...] 
should be incarcerated awa-uh-away from everyone else so that they can’t cause harm.”
As I have explained, officers define their role primarily as crime fighters; as such, they also tend to conceptualize their role as dangerous and uncertain (c.f., Conser, 1980; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Manning 1977; Herbert, 1998; Hodgson, 2001; Rabe-Hemp, 2008). For example, according to Tim, an officer with nine years experience, danger is an inherent part of the job: “we carry guns we’re allowed to shoot people if the circumstances dictate it right?” Tim draws attention to the power he possesses as an officer by referring to his gun while at the same time emphasizing that possession of a gun also signifies the potential for danger. Moreover, in an exchange about popular cultures’ portrayal of police being in constant danger, Greg had this to say:

Sonya: what do you think about popular culture’s portrayal of police officers?

Greg: you know I don’t mind it I mean uh, a lotta those shows do portray police in a pretty positive light...

Sonya: What about the image, I think the most common image that is sort of in those shows is the idea that officers are essentially crime fighters in constant danger, how do you feel about that image?

Greg: Um you know what it does depend on- on where you’re working like um.. because there is certain units where realistically it’s-it is kind of like that is quasi-realistic like when I was working in the gang unit I wouldn’t say that you’re in constant danger but ya know you’re you are dealing with some bad- bad dudes like and you’re doin’ search warrants on their houses [...] and kickin’ in doors [...] you’re going in knowing that there’s a guy back there who’s killed a couple people and has guns in the house or whatever so there is sorta that uh, danger aspect to it [...] you are sorta trained to constantly- like you’re training goes back to constantly thinking all the time that you’re kind of- are in danger so just for safety purposes I guess.

Greg is reluctant to challenge popular culture’s portrayal of police being in constant danger. Instead, he argues that his role is dangerous because he is often dealing with “bad dudes” or

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41 It should be noted that some crime is considered more important than others, for example catching drug dealers is considered more important than dealing with domestics or shoplifting.
guys who have “killed people.” Moreover, he also reveals that during training officers are encouraged to adopt the mindset that they are always in danger (see also Birzer and Tannehill, 2001). When I posed the same question to Jacob, an officer with 11 years of experience, he stated, “Reality is there, but does it happen like that every day? Absolutely not um, but it is something that in your mind you really have to be thinking of it every time we stop a guy for speeding because scenarios have proven that that can go bad in half a second [emphasis added].” Like Greg, Jacob highlights the potential for danger to arise while at the same time emphasizing the importance of conceptualizing the police role as dangerous. Jason also highlights clearly the potential for dangerous situations to arise on the job in the following statement:

Within a hundred square miles-uh here there’s ten almost ten million people population, outta those ten million people even if ya take that one percent that are bad people or habitual offenders well what’s one percent of ten million? Uh hundred thousand? so, and this is just a rough estimate, quick math but so within the entire GTA there’s a hundred thousand people who if given the chance would like to see me dead or would like to do it themselves.

Of course, Jason’s assertion suggests inaccurately that nearly one third of the Canadian population lives in southern Ontario. Nevertheless, his exaggeration with respect to the number of people who might be willing to kill an officer reveals clearly that he conceptualizes his job as dangerous. Perhaps even more telling, Edward glorifies the dangerous aspects of the job and maintains that dangerous calls are, in fact, the “best” calls: “I go to all the best calls that happen the best calls for service, where dogs go-we’ll go out to high risk stuff, pursuits, foot chases, bank robberies, shootings, we go to all of those [...] in terms of uh, the adrenaline factor uh, and a lotta guys like that [emphasis added].” It appears that the conception that police work is dangerous is sedimented in the consciousness of police officers.
Finally, in addition to law enforcement and catching bad guys, encompassed in the officers’ conceptualization of their role is the ability and responsibility to maintain social order. For example, Matt states: “We’re necessary to keep the balance...that’s what we’re there for I think to try and keep that balance so that society functions.” Matt insinuates that in order for society to function adequately the police are absolutely necessary to maintain a sense of balance. Similarly, for Lusty, the role of police is to address the lack of order in society, as he remarks, “the police are the guys you go to when things are going pear-shaped uh they’re guys that are gonna make things better.” Moreover, Tim argues, “I find that we as police are kinda the end of the line so if everybody else has failed we end up (laughs) we end up dealin’ with uh with the people.” In sum, many of the officers I interviewed constructed their role in terms of their ability to enforce the laws, catch bad guys and maintain social order. Officers also conceptualize their role as dangerous and powerful, and this conception appears fully sedimented and thus taken largely for-granted. In addition, the responsibility to enforce laws, maintain social order and face dangerous situations also meant that officers often constructed their role as the ultimate protectors of society.

**The Ultimate Protector**

The slogan “To serve and protect” is displayed clearly on the side of police cruisers within the Greater Toronto Area and it seems many officers internalize this message, conceptualizing protection as an important dimension of their role. Indeed, the majority of officers I interviewed (especially senior officers) argued their role involves some form of societal protection. For example, when I asked Edward, a canine officer with 16 years experience, if he was the officer that he wanted to be, he responded that he was and then went
on to explain that most of his job satisfaction stems from his ability to protect people. Edward commented:

Winston Churchill said- and I don’t know the context of the quote but it says “good people sleep soundly in their beds at night because rough men are prepared to do violence on our behalf” [...] at the end of the day the whole organization exists for the whole community for the society at large right? That’s why we exist so like-good people can feel safe on the streets, safe in their homes and ya know feel safe with respect to their property that’s why we exist.

Thus as Edward explains, the entire police organization exists to accomplish one thing, the protection of people. Likewise, when I asked Lusty, a fraud detective with 32 years experience, the same question he revealed the following:

The need to um, protect people and ordinary decent, law abiding people living their lives from crime and violence that’s how I got into policing I don’t regret it for a moment... I have been extremely lucky in being able to live through this period of policing and have been given the opportunity afforded the opportunity to do the things, work on the cases, put in jail, the people, that need to be put there to protect the members of society that I’ve sworn to protect. [emphasis added]

According to Lusty, he elected to be an officer because the job offered him the opportunity to protect people; moreover, Lusty experiences a sense of fulfillment in his role as an officer because he feels he has protected adequately the people he has “sworn to protect.” Similarly, Jason, a constable in the fraud division, defines not only his role, but the role of all police organizations as involving the protection of society: “Um, bein’ a policeman in Peel or in Vancouver or in Edmonton, the job’s the job you’re protecting society you’re protecting ya know you’re the last line of defence type a thing right? So the job is the job is the job.” Jason conceptualizes his role clearly, in terms of his ability to protect society. Moreover, Jason’s statement, “you’re the last line of defence type a thing right?” reinforces his ideal role
construct as the powerful protector of society—the ultimate defender.

Further, although both senior and rookie officers constructed their roles as involving law and order maintenance and the protection of society, senior officers were more likely to justify their role, and ultimately their existence, as officers in terms of these ideal role constructs. For example, Bill, a fraud detective with 25 years experience, understands and justifies clearly that his role is to enforce law, maintain societal order and protect people as he remarks:

[...] we serve the public that’s why we exist um so again back to what we spoke about much earlier is to enforce the law, it-it’s not particularly difficult but uh, not a difficult concept to grasp and uh the public wants the law enforced so that they can carry on with their lives and they should be able to carry on with their lives people should be able to walk down the street without fear of being assaulted or robbed. [emphasis added]

In the above account Bill justifies his role explaining that in order for people to “walk down the street without fear of being assaulted or robbed” police officers are needed to enforce laws and provide protection to the public. Moreover, Tim, a constable with nine years experience, maintains a Hobsian conception of the world in so far as he informed me, “you hafta give people a recourse to deal with their disputes so uh you don’t want them taking the law into their own hands otherwise (laughs) you have anarchy if uh- you-you need to give people some type of recourse.” Although Tim is more subtle than Bill when justifying his role, his argument is rather clear: without police to enforce the laws an anarchist society is likely to emerge. Edward also warns of impending mayhem: “it’s—it’s just like even doin’ traffic enforcement like ya gotta do it or else there’d be mayhem on the roads!” Like Tim, Edward appeals to a taken for-granted Hobsian construction of the world which subsequently justifies, necessitates, and glorifies the police role in society. Likewise, Matt, a detective with 37 years experience, shares a similar sentiment informing me that, “you need traffic cops as much as you hate them and if you’re not
gonna have some complete like anarchy society, you’ve gotta have somebody to deal with the problems and to also protect.” On the other hand, Lusty is more candid in his opinions about why the police exist:

To have a productive life without the rule of law and without that confidence in a professional police service, that won’t happen look at any society where there isn’t the rule of law and there isn’t a professional competent police force...you have corruption you have poverty you have yea- I mean you have mayhem where-where people are victimized randomly, their victimized economically.

According to Lusty, without the police to enforce the laws society as we know it would slide into a state of mayhem and violence. Thus, it seems that as a means of further solidifying and internalizing their ideal role construct senior officers justify their existence and their role in terms of law and order maintenance, and their ability to protect society. In fact, many of the officers conceptualize this role as absolutely necessary to sustain order and prevent the “bad guys” from running amuck.

In sum, officers’ institutionalized definitions of reality define clearly their role as crime fighters, defenders of the public good, and as the barricade against chaos. This occupational identity is sedimented in their subjective structures of meaning to such an extent that it is taken largely for-granted; it is “reified,” and thus, experienced as a self-evident reality that confronts them as an external and coercive fact (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 58). Interestingly, however, most research suggests that the reality of policing is not consistent with officers’ ideal role construction (c.f., Birzer and Tannehill, 2001; Ericson, 1994; McKenna, 1998). Indeed, as I will explain in the next section, a deeper analysis of the interview data suggests that the way in which police officers construct their role is actually at odds with the more mundane reality of
their job which oftentimes involves problem solving and tasks similar to social work (see also Ericson, 1994; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Murphy, 1998).

**The Reality of Policing**

One of the leading contributors to high turnover rates among police officers is the disconnect between recruits’ expectations of the job and its reality. (c.f., Harris and Baldwin, 1999; Lipson, 1987; Mcdowell, 1971; Moriarty and Field, 1994). Young officers find themselves fulfilling unexpected roles and, consequently, become frustrated and dissatisfied with their job. Indeed, as the present research suggests, most calls for service do not encompass any form of law enforcement and rarely involve catching bad guys. Rather, officers are, more often than not, required to solve myriad forms of interpersonal problems (c.f., Birzer and Tannehill, 2001; Ericson, 1994; McKenna, 1998). In fact, many of the officers I interviewed implied reluctantly that most of their work involved solving people’s problems or dealing with low-level social problems including alcohol and drug abuse. According to Jason, for example: “I mean the old saying is if it wasn’t for booze we’d be out of a job because that’s-that’s pretty accurate! Most calls as a, you know from an officer on the road you go to someone’s drunk and actin’ stupid.” Indeed, when officers discussed their daily routines with me, rarely did they ever mention dealing directly with crime or offenders.

**Social Problems and Problem Solving**

To gain a better understanding of how the officers in this study constructed their role I asked them to define the types of social problems they encountered most frequently. The responses I received suggested their role very rarely involves enforcing laws or dealing directly

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42 As cited in Harris and Baldwin (1999).
43 I should point out that most officers in this study used the terms “social problems” and “crime” interchangeably.
with crime. For example, when I asked Jacob what types of social problems he dealt with on a daily basis he stated the following:

You’d be looking at alcohol and drugs being your common addictions um and that tend to filter into a lot of stuff, which would be your domestic calls um at the heart of a lot of that is sub-usually substance abuse of some sort, be it ya know commonly sold alcohol or addiction to drugs which then results in financial crisis for the family and things go downhill from there and so those would be the, probably your predominant ones...

Similarly, Nick had the following to say about the social problems officers encounter most commonly:

Oh god there’s a range of, I mean different social economic issues uh, I mean it all started within the family structure right you’ve got single parents scenarios, uh you’ve got issues within the home with whether it’s alcoholism or drug addiction, um, you’ve got parents that don’t know how to parent very well and just getting by, by the skin of their teeth basically umm, (sighs) you’ve got issues dealing with culture you’ve got cultural people that come from other countries that have um, a way of dealing with things that aren’t really in sync with how we do things here so we got a lot of domestic type issues... um, and just ya know unemployment, uh people getting by day to day type things and those pressures that that creates within the family so ev-everything for the most part started within the family structure and how that impacted on ya know their jobs and etcetera from there.

Finally, Tim remarked: “We are most often dealing with things like bad parenting or poverty that kinda thing.” Thus, as most research suggests, it seems that in reality policing rarely involves crime fighting but, instead, involves solving a wide range of social problems (c.f., Birzer and Tannehill, 2001; Ericson, 1994; McKenna, 1998). Nevertheless, many officers did not appear to incorporate problem solving into their idealized role construction. For example, according to Edward:

Well we are crime fighters-like we’re not superheroes ...like a uniform officer might do a whole shift goin out and solvin problems and never once was a crime ever broken but ya know or he’s not actually combating crime... but ya know when he catches someone committing a crime, and gets to chase em down, and
catch em well yeah it’s-it’s fun and then but- then all that other stuff, the other 95 percent of the job you put up with it so!

The disconnect between Edward’s role construct and the reality of his role is apparent. Although Edward admits that officers often spend entire shifts without combating crime, he is seemingly reluctant to define his role as a problem solver; in fact, he reinforces his ideal role construct by stating initially, “Well we are crime fighters.”

Many of the officers I interviewed indicated clearly they do not consider problem solving part of their job description; rather they regard it as something that is expected of them. For example, when I asked Amy what types of social problems she encountered daily she admitted that, on average, 80 percent of the calls she attends are domestic disputes where people “expect her to solve their problems.” Moreover, she had the following to say: “I mean most of my job I’m essentially a referee which is interesting to me.” When I asked her to explain how she felt about her role as a “referee,” seemingly frustrated she responded:

I’m essentially spending half an hour after that call putting a report out explaining why I went to referee an argument over nail clippers or someone forgetting to turn on the AC in the summer, or something simple as that so that small little problem becomes an hour and a half of my day... I-I don’t really know what possessed them to think that we can help solve that problem! How is that part of my job? [...] to me that was like, it has nothing to do with policing like I wanna go lights and sirens to something (laughing) you know what I mean? [emphasis added]

Amy’s comments illustrate her frustration with the wider expectation for police to solve people’s problems. Additionally, by making the following comment, “...it has nothing to do with policing like I wanna go lights and sirens to something (laughing) you know what I mean?” Amy reinforces her ideal role construction, conveying that problem solving is not real police work; rather, real police work involves attending serious calls with lights and sirens. When I posed the
same question to Edward he noted people’s unrealistic expectations of the police, commenting: “Some people they-they want us to solve all their problems an-and to the point where it’s unreasonable like I’m not gonna make your kid go to school I can’t do that, I can’t make your kid listen to you!” According to Jacob, “I think they [general public] expect us to deal with what they view to be an offence, I mean they want us, even the bad guys call us, when they are getting assaulted or somebody took their money they call us and they expect us to regardless of their background deal with the problem!” [emphasis added]. Jacob reveals his frustration with the fact that people expect police to deal with everyone’s problems (even the bad guys). The officers in this study expressed clearly they do not consider problem solving as their responsibility.

Further, being involved in various forms of problem solving also means that, in reality, officers engage in different forms of social work (i.e., counseling, making people feel better etc.). That said, officers reject vehemently the notion that they are social workers. Greg’s comments are particularly telling: “You do kinda constantly feel like um, the police are everybody’s bitch for lack of a better word!” Despite reluctance to accept their role as involving social work, it seems that the nature of the calls officers attend, coupled with public expectations often require police to engage in different forms of social work. For example, when Nick was asked if he thought his job involved a lot of social work he answered, “It does, I mean you can’t get around it um, problem solving, ya know.. amateur psychiatrists (laughs)!” Nonetheless, the officers expressed clearly they do not accept social work as part of their job description or responsibility. In fact, Matt, the most senior officer in this study, strongly rejected the notion that police engage in social work when he said: “I mean we’re not social
workers and I wouldn’t ever pretend that we are!” Like Matt, Amy is forthright about her feelings regarding the expectation to act as a social worker, as she laments, “there is a huge expectation that we made an effort to make that person feel slightly more at ease even though that might be very frustrating to us, as to why the heck am I wearing this police uniform?” By asking why she is wearing a police uniform to make people feel better, Amy articulates that she does not equate police work with social work. Similarly, Jacob explains his frustration with the public’s unrealistic expectations:

People expect us to be there for them really, they expect us to respond when they call us, um, from a road experience they expect us to be social workers at times, they expect us to raise their children when they aren’t um, they expect us to get their money back when it’s been wired transferred over to some overseas location.

Thus, the comments offered by Matt, Amy, and Jacob suggest that not only does the public expect police officers to perform tasks consistent with social work, but the nature of the calls they attend and the social problems they encounter require them to engage in different forms of social work. Yet, it remains clear that officers want little, if anything, to do with such tasks.

Further, despite the fact that officers conceptualize and construct their role as dangerous and uncertain, research suggests that most of what they do is rather mundane (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Ericson 1982). Indeed, the present research supports this contention. When I asked officers to explain what a typical day on the job entailed, their responses highlighted its mundane and bureaucratic nature (see also Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Murphy, 1998). For example, Jacob informed me that the reason he wanted to be an officer was because he, “didn’t really wanna sit behind a desk all day and this [policing] seemed more interesting, so I’m currently in fraud so I’m still doing the same thing anyway (laughs).” In
fact, most officers told me they spent the majority of their day at a desk or in front of a computer screen filling out paperwork, completing work lists, answering e-mails, and responding to disclosure requests. According to the officers, anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of their day is spent filling out paperwork. One officer even equated his work of filtering through cases in the fraud bureau to a silo.

The notion of a typical day appears difficult for some officers to accept and, at times, they were seemingly reluctant to admit to the mundane nature of daily police work. For example, according to Lusty, “I don’t have a typical day and that’s-that’s a-a hallmark of policing..” Yet, moments later Lusty contradicts his initial statement when he says: “When you come to work in the morning you have your day planned and I usually plan it the day before and I’ve got a diary” [emphasis added]. Conversely, when I asked Amy what a typical day on the job looks like for her she said:

On a twelve hour shift I would say, sixty percent of my day is paperwork, so very, very small minority is actually with the people that you’re doing the calls with. You might only be there for fifteen [to] twenty minutes but you’re doing an hour of paperwork when you get back! [...] the mundane things we do (laughs) that-the neighbour disputes, the simple shop theft over a five dollar item that’s most of our day!

Here Amy expresses that, in reality, most of her work involves paperwork which she considers boring and time consuming. Moreover, she states implicitly that neighbour disputes and “simple” shop thefts are boring and do not really constitute what she considers to be real police work. Similarly, senior detective Bill states that his work is mundane in that it involves a large amount of paperwork:

As an investigator you are, working a lot just with paper you’re following a paper trail all the time and building a case that way so it’s much more intensive that way. Most of our job is actually uh pretty boring [...]It-it’s not sexy, it’s not flashy
it’s the guy spending hours and hours going over reports feeding it into a computer system of some, uh nature to try and tie these pieces together and as our society’s become more complex criminal activities become more complex.

However, unlike Amy, Bill is forthright about his opinions regarding the mundane work policing entails when he states: “Officers now spend a lot more time just writing reports instead of doing actual policing [...] If I’m doing paperwork a lotta paperwork I’m not out on the road type a thing” [emphasis added]. As Bill makes clear, writing reports does not constitute what he defines as real or “actual” police work. Moreover, according to Tim, in reality policing is:

[...]not all gun battles, and car chases and uh there’s a lot of drudgery and we see it probably more than anybody working in the fraud bureau just cause our cases are paper cases [...] I tend to like um, lo-looking for- identifying the person then putting the case together as opposed to having it served to you and then you gotta do all the drudgery of paperwork and everything to-to prosecute it.

Interestingly, Tim admits that much of policing involves the drudgery of paperwork; however, he then goes on to reinforce his ideal role construct by reiterating the fact that he prefers to “look for the person and put the case together” himself, as opposed to having it served to him.

Finally, when I asked Nick what a typical day looked like for him he remarked: “in reality most of the stuff we do is pretty mundane, report type stuff, uh, there’s always the potential for stuff to happen when you get volatile situations, whether they’re domestics or whatever else.”

Although Nick admits that most police work is mundane, he reinforces his ideal role construct when he concludes his statement by reiterating the potential for danger to arise as well as the high degree of uncertainty that characterizes the calls officers attend.

**Qualities of a Good Officer**

In order to further understand officers’ constructed role I also asked them to define what makes for a “good” police officer. Interestingly, the responses I received were, for the
most part, consistent with the reality of policing which requires officers to engage in problem solving and social work. For example, according to many of the officers, communication skills are paramount (see also McKenna, 1998; Birzer and Tannehill, 2001). However, it also became apparent that although many officers highlighted qualities consistent with the reality of their job, they nonetheless appealed to their idealized role construction. For example, Greg maintained that the following makes for a good officer:

Um, bein’ able to talk like, just basically talkin’ outta your ass just sayin, like talkin to anybody it doesn’t matter the situation it doesn’t matter who you’re talkin to like bein able to have a conversation with a guy who just got outta doing 20 years in Joyce Ville or you know a grandmother on the street, just bein’ able to to talk to everybody because at the end of the day like.. (sighs slightly) there is the opportunity out there almost daily you could get in a fight but it’s not really worth it just bein’ able to talk everybody down and just resolve every problem that you can deal with just by getting’ everybody relaxed and stay calm and talk so.

Greg acknowledges the importance of communication skills; however, he also refers to the potential for danger when he states, “… at the end of the day like… there is the opportunity out there almost daily you could get into a fight.” Likewise, according to Amy:

...communication skills are huge, just-just listening and I think conversing with people... I really a hundred percent I truly believe that communication skills will outweigh the tactical skills anytime, if you can deal with people, it very rarely comes down to being physical or- I mean those skills are good to have cause sometimes communication skills don’t always work but- I still think I would say communication skills are-are huge, yeah. [emphasis added]

Amy recognizes the importance of communication skills, but like Greg she also acknowledges the potential for danger by suggesting that physical skills are good to have because there are times when communication skills will not work. Finally, according to Jason, “You can’t teach common sense, but it’s a common sense job- if you have good common sense and a good gift of the gab you’ll be a good policeman.” Thus, for Jason good officers possess common sense but
also have a “good gift of the gab.” Although the officers tended to recognize the importance of skills consistent with the reality of their job, it is important to recognize that officers constantly try to emphasize their ideal role construct and thus it remains paramount and intact. Further, the disconnect between officers’ ideal role construction and the reality of their job can also be inferred insofar as many of the younger officers informed me their expectations of the job were not met (c.f., also Harris and Baldwin, 1999).

REALITY AND ROOKIE OFFICERS EXPECTATIONS

The disconnect between officers’ role construction and the reality of their job was further illuminated by the rookie officers in this study. For example, Amy states:

“I wanna mention domestics just because I never thought it would be that big of a part of the job... I definitely thought domestic related issues would be a large part of the job but I would assume only if it had caused some kind of hardship like assault or injury or ya know some kind of custody issue... I wanted to go into social work so I don’t mind it’s not like it’s something that I’m disgusted by but I didn’t realize it’d be that much of a part of the job on a daily basis (laughs) [...] I never expected that I’d be going to that, or barking dog, why am I going to that? (Sonya: ok) but still, like you’re knockin’ on people’s door four in the morning “please keep your dog quiet” (Sonya: [laughs]) because you have to make (bangs on desk) people happy!

Here Amy admits that the reality of the job did not meet her expectations. Moreover, by stating, “I would assume only if it had caused some kind of hardship like assault or injury or ya know some kind of custody issue” Amy reinforces the ideal construction of the police role which involves law and order maintenance and protection and she reiterates that although people expect her to make them happy, she does not constitute this as part of her job description or responsibility. Essentially, Amy defines real police work in terms of dealing with serious issues such as assault (appealing to her role as a crime fighter), injuries and custody issues (appealing to her role as the protector).
Tim, who has nine years of experience as an officer, admits that as a rookie he thought the job would be dangerous but in reality his expectations have not been met. He remarks:

*I thought it’d be a lot more physical and a lot more um, dangerous (laughing) in terms of uh like you know physical danger* but I find the... and I don’t know if it’s just me or other people but uh the paperwork and um building a case is probably the hardest part of the job... you have to build your evidence through uh bank records and financial statements and contracts *and like I had no idea about that when I started and I was interested in policing as a field* [emphasis added].

Moreover, according to Greg, a constable with eight years experience, young officers have the most difficulty coming to terms with the paperwork they are required to complete. In fact he revealed, “The paperwork doesn’t bother me, anymore when I first started like it’s you can drown in it no problem like everybody who I know I mean the first six months they wanna quit because it’s just so much stuff that you hafta do, once ya get used to it it’s fine.” Here Greg insinuates that most officers do not realize, or anticipate, the large amount of paperwork the job entails. Nonetheless, despite younger officers’ admittance that the reality of the job has failed to meet their expectations, their ideal role construction remains intact.

Thus far I have discussed how police officers construct their role in an ideal sense emphasizing that they are crime fighters, defenders of the public good, and the bulwark against chaos. Moreover, I have also discussed how officers’ conceptualization and construction of their role is inconsistent with the reality of the job which requires them to solve people’s problems and to engage in various forms of social work. In order to gain a more complete understanding of how police construct their role it is also necessary to examine how their role is shaped by their relationships with the public.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS
As social actors we do not live in isolation; rather, we live in a world inhabited by others; a social world deemed meaningful through subjective and intersubjective experiences (Schutz, 1996). Through the dialectical interplay between the individual and significant others reality is objectified and subjectively maintained (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Schutz, 1966). As such, in order to understand how police construct their role it is crucial to examine how they believe their role is shaped by the significant others they encounter. First, however, it is necessary to establish who the police believe they serve.

**Public Servants**

A key argument offered by many instrumental Marxists is that police organizations exist to represent and enforce the state’s interests (Pope and Weiner, 1981; Platt, 1982; Rigakos, 2002; Skinns, 2008; Young, 2007). For example, critical theorist Rigakos (2002) has argued that the police consciously disguise the political motivations behind law enforcement. The present research sought to examine the ways in which officers construct the interests they feel they serve. That said, the issue at hand is not whether police do serve political ends but, rather, how officers’ conceptualize police/state relations. The data seems to suggest that the idea of serving political/state interests is not incorporated in officers’ typificatory schemes or in their institutionalized definition of reality. In fact, many officers suggested that they dislike “political/state interference” in policing.44 It is important to recognize, however, that officers seem to possess a rather simplistic understanding of police-state relations insofar as at the level of their taken for-granted reality, they recognize only obvious police-state connections. On the other hand, the officers do appear to maintain a largely taken for-granted sentiment that their

44 It should be noted that in the given context, what constitutes as “political/state interference” is a matter of subjective definition for each of the officers in this study. They were not asked to define this term.
role is to serve public interests; this is not surprising given that this construct is commensurate with their ideal role construct involving law and order maintenance and the protection of society. For example, according to Bill, his role is to serve the public but he also argues his role can be manipulated to serve external interests as he remarks:

So well on one level I think I as a police officer yes- see myself as who am I serving, I’m serving the public [...] but things can be manipulated that I am serving the political masters who- they sorta would not be my uhh... ... what’s the word I’m looking for, my first choice of-of wanting to serve be it for different goals that they may have.

When I asked Tim directly if he felt like he served political interests he responded with the following, “No-no I don’t think so I think uh the only time that we’re asked to put a rush on a case or is if uh a member of the public calls a councilor and the councilor calls us, so essentially it’s-it’s still working in the interest of the public it’s just it’s getting to us through a different route. [emphasis added]” Further, in the following exchange, Greg expresses frustration with “political interference:"

Sonya: Do you ever think about you know whether or not you serve political interests?

Greg: oh-for su-for sure um, because and-it it bothers us cause we’re supposed to be a non-partisan organization right? But yet, if we get a complaint from an MP or an MPP then we’re all over it- whereas if it’s just Joe citizen who’s had the exact same thing happen to them then we treat it like anything else but if it comes from somebody higher up then all of a sudden it comes down to ya know the chief gets a letter from the mayor who then sends it down to our superintendent who sends it down to us and we have to be on that one right away, whereas really why is their complaint any more important than anyone else’s but, and it’s politics right so...

Sonya: so do you feel like you serve the public?

45 I wish to recognize that who the officers in this study define as constituting the “public” is not entirely clear. It seems that for the most part the “public” includes individuals who are: “good, hardworking and generally supportive of the police.”
Greg: yeah I mean and generally, you do like um, what I’m doing we still uh I still think you do so [...] um, generally speaking you do work for the public um... it- ya know what I-I think that’s up to each individual officer who you serve, though really. [emphasis added]

Although initially Greg discusses a blatant police-state connection he concludes the dialogue by emphasizing that his role is to serve the public. Notice that Greg also seems to contradict his initial comments that police organizations serve political interests and officers “have to be on complaints from MP’s or MPP’s right away” when he concludes his account by stating, “I think it’s up to each individual officer who you serve.” Similarly, when I asked Nick if he ever thought about the interests he serves as an officer he had the following to say:

Yeah, I think, um, I think primarily most of the guys believe that they are serving the public, but, certainly especially when it comes to investigating accidents traffic accidents, a lot of the report writing we do is for statistical purposes and for insurance companies and I know I’ve heard guys mention that, you know why are we doin’ this for the insurance companies? that’s-that type of thing, um, and there’s also that argument that you know traffic tickets and whatever, that’s just a mode of income or you know money for whether it’s municipal or provincial um, yeah but for the most part I think most of the guys feel that we are there ser- to serve the public...yeah I think so...

For Nick despite the fact that many officers question who they are writing reports or tickets for, at the end of the day most officers maintain they exist to serve the public.

Other officers were more candid about their role as public servants. Consider, for example, the following exchange with Edward:

Sonya: what about.. politically- do you ever think about you know whether or not you work for a political purpose?

Edward: I don’t- absolutely not!!

Sonya: what about the organization?

Edward: nope!! why-why why do the politicians even exist? Really, I mean
they’re supposed to be there as elective representatives of the people.

For Edward, police clearly exist to serve public interests. Moreover, according to Tim, “I think definitely we serve the public and I-I I don’t feel like I serve anybody else.” Likewise Matt commented, “Well you serve the concerns of-of the public...the interests of the public you know it’s- you do I mean you do it’s fair to say that you do but you do it in an independent manner you know?!” Finally, according to Jacob, “I don’t object to the concept that I’m a I-I am a civil servant, I serve the public.” In sum, many of the officers in this study internalize their role as involving public service which ultimately reinforces and sustains their sedimented role construct as noble crime fighters and protectors. In the next section I will provide a discussion about police/public relations and how public expectations influence the way officers construct their role.

**Police/Public Relations**

In order to make sense of the social world, individuals construct and internalize typologies (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966). Through the typification of our own and others’ actions, social actors are able to communicate and interact with one another while rendering reality fluid and predictable (Schutz, 1966; Kwang-ki and Berard, 2009). Moreover, typifications allow actors to internalize and objectify roles (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Schutz, 1966). Thus, in order to examine how the relationship between the police and the public influences officers’ role construction, it is first necessary to understand how police typify the public.

Within the current literature police-public relations are, for the most part, characterized negatively; allegedly undermined by mutual suspicion, hostility, resentment, distrust and fear
(Skolnick, 1966; Conser, 1980). Further, it is argued that police-public relations are weakened severely because officers adhere to a binary moral order and an uncompromising *Us versus Them* conception of the social world (Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Hodgson, 2001; Johnson, 1979; Rabe-Hemp, 2008, Waddington, 1999). The present research suggests that officers’ conception of, and relationship with, the public is perhaps more nuanced than the literature suggests. Specifically, officers seem to possess a series of conflicted typifications; at times, the social world is typified in binary terms, while, other times it is not. In fact, a number of officers indicated clearly they do not always typify the world in a black and white fashion. For example, while reflecting on the nature of her job, Amy had the following to say:

> There’s so much grey in our job it’s not always black and white so sometimes it’s making that decision that might not get you the statistic but might get you some information or just makes more sense for that person’s well-being in the long run [...] If I see someone with a criminal record I don’t just assume yeah they’re at fault (laughs) for this you gotta talk to them, sometimes they have good information an-and they’re people too right? People make mistakes that’s how you get a criminal record (laughing) pretty much what it boils down to.

Likewise, Matt maintains “it’s not just right and wrong but there’s gray in between ya know I- I don’t subscribe to whether it’s black or it’s white it’s not there are shades in between and you gotta take those shades into account.” Finally, according to Jacob, an officer with 11 years experience, the most challenging aspect of the job for him was learning how to deal with the grey areas, as he reveals:

> Um though they send you to the police college and you learn the law and the basic criminal offences that you’re gonna be looking at on a regular day-day to day basis which was critical, with anything there’s the practical application of it and then there’s the grey area in between where things don’t fit and you have to be able to filter that out and decide how to deal with it and you have to be able to navigate the system, to, make it work um, unfortunately the criminal code is not black and white and case law, is almost more deciding then the actual criminal code and that’s constantly changing which kinda makes life confusing
for things if you’re not on top of the case law.

As Jacob explains, although at Police College officers learn to typify the world as black and white, experiences on the road reveal that aspects of the job are too complex to be understood in binary terms, as such, officers must learn how to navigate the system appropriately in order to “filter out the grey areas.”

On the other hand, during the interviews it became apparent that, at times, the officers did possess a segmented understanding of the public. Specifically, a number of officers distinguished between a population of habitual offenders (i.e., “bad guys”) whom they deal with on a regular basis, and the rest of the public comprised of “good, hardworking citizens.” According to Jason, for example: “well the bottom line is, um... 98/99 percent of the public never have any dealings with the police, so by and large we deal with one to two percent of the public over and over and over again. We keep targeting that one to two percent of people who are habitual offenders you know?!” Similarly, Greg stresses: “just because we’re dealing with ya know the, for lack of a better term the scum of the earth it doesn’t make everybody a bad person ya know what I mean? Most of the people you deal with on a day to day basis are good decent hardworking people.” Greg clearly segments his conceptualization of the public into two separate categories; although he typifies the bad guys officers encounter as “the scum of the earth,” he acknowledges they do not represent the majority of people in society. Further, the following exchange with Greg provides a more concrete example of how police segment the public as he reveals the following about his experiences on patrol during the 2010 G-20 summit in Toronto:

Sonya: Did you experience a lot of hostility from the public when you were policing at the G-20 summit?
Greg: um.. (sighs) yeah, I mean but-but like I was... not from the public I guess but the protestors I gue- like you sort of almost separate them.
Sonya: What do you mean you “almost separate them?”

Greg: um... ok there’s just the people who live in this town-house complex that had nothing to do with the protest- they were just sorta generally watching it and they were comin’ over and givin’ you bottles of water and thanking you for what you’re doing, so that’s who I would consider to be the general public [...].um we go for a coffee on the Sunday morning and the general publics sittin’ there shakin’ your hand and clapping and whatever right so, like the general publics very appreciative of what we did [emphasis added].

Conceptually, Greg separates the “general public” from the protestors who caused trouble at the summit. Finally, Jacob explains: “You have to remember that’s [the bad guys] one to five percent of the population that you deal with regularly and it’s not consistent with the 95 percent of the population that you’ll deal with in the real world.” In sum, the above accounts suggest the officers in the present study segment their conceptions of the public, forming clear distinctions between those whom they typify as the “bad guys” and the remainder of the population who they typify as “good” and “hardworking.”

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the officers also emphasized the value of sharing positive relationships with the public, signifying the importance of police-public partnerships. In fact, many of the officers suggested they do, in fact, need the public to be on their side. Jacob, for example, revealed: “It’s making sure you have a positive interaction with the public whenever you deal with them cause then that will feed back to you later in getting witnesses in a case um, if people have a good perception of us that we’re doing a good job, they’re more inclined to call us.” For Jacob developing a good relationship with the public translates into obtaining public support (i.e., gaining witnesses, people reporting crimes etc.) and thus helps
officers solve cases. Likewise, in discussing community policing initiatives Tim highlighted the
importance of developing positive relationships with the public, he commented:

I think if-you’re like the neighbourhood policing unit’s obviously gonna be really effective if they develop relationships with kids that-even with the ones that they arrest you know if you treat em right uh you’re just doing your job uh ya know try to set em on the right path I think you can develop relationships and from that the information will flow better so if you need information about a homicide the kids are more uh willing to come forward and speak to you even if they don’t speak to the actual investigators and then you can relay that information I think it’s-it’s good.

For Jason it is absolutely crucial to develop positive relationships with the public because the police need the public on their side:

You hafta make sure that at the end of their [referring to the public] meeting with you, that you still have them on your side ultimately because on-on a particular dark lonely night if you’re out at a traffic stop and you’re dealing with some real live bandits and guns start comin’ out and some sort of incident happens or there’s a fight at the side of the road where I’m by myself and my back-ups are still not there yet, well if that same Joe Q citizen is drivin’ down the street who’s had very limited interaction with the police but respects the police, they’re gonna take it upon themselves to get out and assist us and perhaps save my life if that same citizen was jacked up two weeks ago, well they’re just gonna say “looks good on ya” and keep drivin that’s in a nutshell we-we need the public on our side right?

In the above statement, Jason appeals to officers’ ideal role construction noting the potential life and death situation he may be faced with while at the same time emphasizing the importance of positive police-public relations. According to Jason, officers have to share a positive relationship with the public because one day he might need them to help save his life.

Finally, according to Edward the police must gain public trust in order to do their jobs effectively:

People have to see us as trustworthy um, ya know we-we have to be believed if we don’t have our credibility and can’t be believed we can’t, do our jobs. The way we really find stuff out is people tell us stuff, so we gotta go out and talk to
enough people till we talk to the people who know the stuff we need to know, and get them to tell us, um, so when your-you’re not trusted or believed and a lot-a lotta people especially depending on where in the world they came from, if the police couldn’t be trusted or believed, but a lotta times we need them to tell us the stuff we need to know, to solve crimes and solve problems... I’m not gonna scare your kid cause he skipped school uh, cause I don’t want him to be afraid of the police cause someday he might know something I need him to tell me, I want him to like the police, ya know!?!?

Thus, police officers in this study appear to typify the social world in an ambiguous manner that is not always black and white. Further, as I will explain in the next section public expectations influenced significantly the types of typifications officers developed.

**Public Expectations**

Social actors objectify a segment of the self drawing from socially available typifications, this segment becomes the truly social self, “which is subjectively experienced as distinct from and even confronting the self in it’s totality [...] the actor identifies with the socially objectivated typifications of conduct in actu, but re-establishes distance from them afterward (Berger and Luckman, 1967: 73). This phenomenon was apparent in officers’ construction of their role particularly when they had to deal with public expectations that contradicted their sedimented role construct. That said, as a means of protecting and managing their role construct, officers segment institutionalized definitions of reality, held by the public, that conflict with their own definitions of reality. More specifically, when public expectations of police were consistent with the officers’ definitions of reality, officers formed positive typifications. Conversely, officers’ formed negative typifications when public expectations were inconsistent with their role construct.

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46 Please note the topic of segmented institutional realities and how these affect officers role construct will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.
The officers in this study typified the public positively when their expectations were consistent with officers’ ideal role construction of law and order maintenance and the protection of society. For example, according to Lusty, “I think the vast majority of people, ordinary straight forward law abiding people, uh see the police as the people that you call when when you’re in danger or assaulted or-or abused” [emphasis added]. For Lusty, good citizens (i.e., “ordinary straight forward law abiding people”) know the police are around to deal with dangerous situations. Tim reveals that he conceptualizes the public’s understanding of the police in the following way:

Um I-I think they see police officers as authority figures um for the most part um, uh people to go to in case of emergency that that kinda thing, I think all-for the most part um the public views police officers in that way um ... yeah I-I- in terms of expectations I mean I think they expect us to be good people and trustworthy and honourable and um, I agree with that I mean I think-I think we should be.

Tim appeals to the role of the protector, particularly in emergency situations. Moreover, he emphasizes the authority and status the police possess which he believes the public respects. Likewise, Jason, agrees with Tim noting: “I think they expect us to be there when we need them [...] I mean the public perception in general- good, honest hardworking Canadians, they expect us to be uh, fair and honest and impartial and courteous and professional and which we all are all of that” [emphasis added]. Jason respects the expectations held by “good, honest, hardworking Canadians” because as he argues the police “are all of that [honest, impartial, courteous and professional].” Finally, according to Edward the public expect the following from police: “ya know the obvious stuff like somebody’s car gets stolen they want us to find it, ya know somebody’s grandmother gets uh, ripped off for a couple thousand dollars I mean that’s obvious if-if somebody has broken laws, those people are victims so those are the obvious
ones, of course people expect us to do that.” Edward’s comments suggest clearly that the public’s expectations for police to address law and order matters are obvious and he has no issue with these expectations because they are consistent with his ideal role construct to enforce laws, maintain order and protect people.

Conversely, when police conceptualize the public’s expectations as inconsistent or at odds with their role construct they form negative typifications; as a means of protecting their idealized role officers emphasize the public’s naivety. In fact, a number of officers informed me that some public expectations were problematic and essentially impossible to meet. Bill for example reveals,

Um there’s various levels of understanding [...] unfortunately I think the public has higher expectations for what the police should be able to do, can do then is the reality...I think there’s a real disconnect between [...] the public s [...] perception of the justice system and what the justice system actually is I think if they somehow become involved in a case a lot of em are fairly disillusioned by the time they get out of the other end. They think something (sighs) should be [...] investigated in a fairly short order um, charges laid and a conviction registered in a relatively short period of time, the reality is uh it can take years um... whether they’re influenced by television shows and different movies, and just a desire to see swift justice they think that, we should be able to pick up someone off of the street take em into an interview room uh pressure a culprit into providing a statement [...] where the actual fact is we really can’t do any of that stuff.

According to Bill, there is a large disconnect between the publics’ expectations of police and what the police are actually able to do. Moreover, when I asked Amy if she thought the public held realistic expectations of the police she had the following to say:

What the public doesn’t understand is I’m involved in uniform so I’m just responding to calls and the little time I have is proactive stuff but when you go to a call I think people are expecting- [...] I’ve got a million other things going on and I think they almost do expect you to be a councilor [...] My-my biggest frustration, even in a neighbour dispute they don’t realize there’s bigger fish to fry [...] I’m sitting there going, no on the priority list if I had to figure out how
much time in my day I’m supposed to be devoting to this neighbour dispute it’s like five minutes (laughing) [...] um but they’re really thinking you have nothing else to do and they don’t understand that priority aspect of it [...] so yeah I guess they just really don’t see it from a uniform perspective we don’t have time to sit down and do follow up we’re just call to call to call to call [...] Ya know the public doesn’t realize the shoes we’re in sometimes we have to make a split second decision to keep people safe, and if they had to do it could they make that same decision? It’s tough decisions I guess and people don’t understand that. [emphasis added]

Amy expresses clearly that the public does not understand the role of police. The expectation placed on her to deal with neighbour disputes and to act as a councillor is not consistent with her ideal role construct and for her this is a source of frustration; as such Amy emphasizes repeatedly the public’s naivety: “they don’t realize there’s bigger fish to fry [...] they just don’t see it from a uniform perspective [...] the public doesn’t realize the shoes we’re in sometimes.”

For Greg popular culture police shows have fostered unrealistic expectations among the public:

I don’t wanna say that you know that the general public are-or people that read the media are naive but I mean I was the same way like you think cause it’s everything that’s reported is a certain way, but now having been on the other side of it having been in-involved in sorta cases or things that are front page news [...] but again it they make unrealistic expectations, um, only because every case gets solved- every uh, ya know like CSI’s a perfect example where they have access to so much stuff that doesn’t even actually exist it makes it impossible for- when you’re dealin’ with the public that they actually think that you have access to all this stuff whereas you don’t really uh, obviously like- we aren’t gonna be able to come up with a satellite image of what’s going on right here right now all the time so..

Although Greg is reluctant to outwardly state that the public is naïve, ultimately, he suggests that one can not possess a good understanding of policing until you have, “been on the other side of it.” Matt was more candid about his opinion regarding the unrealistic expectations the public have of the police:

People have an issue they didn’t get a product or they uh, they think they’re entitled to money so-from a transaction or deal an investment they didn’t get it
so they say that it’s a fraud I didn’t get what I was entitled to they phone up and people are pretty a-humiliated, angry, frustrated cause they don’t know who to turn to-to get this issue resolved uh we have to sometimes be the bearer of bad news to say it’s not our problem it’s your problem you need to resolve it civilly they expect it done instantly, when things go sideways they expect, you know-you to be there and do the thinking for them when there’s problems and to be able to resolve the issues that they have that-if they think it’s a police issue they expect you to be able to resolve it. [emphasis added]

Matt’s comments suggest that public expectations are unrealistic in the sense that police are expected to solve all problems even when they are not police related issues. Matt’s frustration with these expectations is not surprising given that, as I have explained, the problem solving role is not consistent with officers ideal role construct. Finally, Edward was more candid in his opinion about the unrealistic expectations the public have of the police he lamented:

Some people like ya know like their dog’s lost, well call animal control, “well they don’t come out for that” well, neither do we! You know there’s a number of times like I had a guy once cause we take the police cars home in canine, knock on my door on a Sunday morning, had been at-at a bush party near my house and said “can you drive me to Orangeville” and I said like excuse me? But some people they just figure like, “hey you’re a good guy you’ll give me a drive to Orangeville” off duty! Like I wouldn’t do it on duty!

Thus, police officers in the present study formed positive typifications of public expectations when the expectations were consistent with their ideal role construct to enforce the law, maintain order and protect society. On the other hand, as a means of protecting their definitions of reality, when public expectations are inconsistent with officers’ ideal role construct officers express frustration and form negative typifications, ultimately emphasizing the naivety of the public.

CONCLUSION
This research is unique insofar as it presents an inductive analysis of the police role allowing officers to construct and articulate their own lived realities. This chapter has
expounded clearly that the officers in this study construct their role in terms of law and order maintenance, and the ultimate protection of society. These findings are largely consistent with the literature on the police role. As I have discussed, officers construct their role in a manner that is inconsistent with the reality of their job. Interestingly, officers’ occupational identity seems to persist despite admittance, on several occasions, that in reality most calls for police service rarely require any form of law enforcement, rather more often than not officers are required to engage in problem solving activities as well as a number of different social work roles.47

Further, the present research also suggests that officers in this study construct their role as involving public service while the idea of serving political interests does not appear to be incorporated in their typificatory schemes and, thus, their definition of reality. Moreover, an examination of the way in which police officers conceptualized their relationship with the public revealed that the officers in the current study typify the social world rather ambiguously; although, at times, they adopt binary typifications this is not always the case. Interestingly, a number of officers highlighted the importance of forming positive relations with the public in order to do their jobs effectively. Further, the officers in this study typified public expectations positively when the expectations were consistent with their ideal role constructions and conversely, when public expectations were inconsistent with officers’ definitions of reality officers formed negative typifications highlighting the naivety of the public. In sum, the data from this study suggests that officers construct their role in a manner that is oftentimes at odds

47 This is not to ignore the fact that on occasion officers do apprehend “bad guys.” Moreover, I wish to recognize that officers’ ideal role construct might be closer to the reality of their work depending on what line of police work they do (for example officers in the drug squad versus officers in the traffic unit).
with the reality of policing. Remarkably, officers seem to hold, relentlessly, onto this occupational identity despite the disconnect inherent in their life-world and despite, as I will explain in the next chapter, a prevailing sense of powerlessness.
Chapter 5 - Powerlessness

The primary objective of this research is to understand how police construct their role identity in society. As explained in the previous chapter, officers’ construction of their life-world appears to be somewhat at odds with the reality of their job. In essence, the officers in this study see themselves as crime fighters, defenders of the public good, and as the barricade against chaos. This role construct imbues a significant degree of power and authority; thus, one would assume that power and authority are crucial aspects of their role construction. However, as I will discuss throughout this chapter, the discontinuity between officers’ personal and institutionalized constructions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by the public, the media, and the courts actually leaves officers feeling powerless. In essence, these conflicting realities constantly challenge officers’ role construct, fostering, at times, feelings of frustration, stress, vulnerability and helplessness.

Within the current literature, police experiences with powerlessness are relatively unacknowledged. As such, the present research makes a valuable contribution to the literature by elucidating officers’ experiences with powerlessness. Examining the various dimensions of police powerlessness can prove challenging; in that, the majority of officers in this study were reluctant to admit a sense of powerlessness which is not surprising, given that

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48 Within the context of the present research power is defined in terms of the following: agency: the ability to do or act on one’s own accord; capability of doing or accomplishing something; a sense of control or command over others; authority.” http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/power (access date: 04/15/2011). However, I would also like to recognize that power can be symbolic. Bourdieu (1991) for example considers symbolic capital (e.g., prestige, honour, attention) a crucial source of power.

49 Powerlessness is defined in terms of the following: vulnerability, a sense of helplessness; inability to control the outcome of any given situation on one’s own accord; a perceived lack of power to act; a lack of agency

50 With the exception of the literature that has examined police officer burnout and stress (see for example, Crank and Regoli, 1995; Hawkins, 2001; Jackson and Maslach, 1982).
doing so would potentially challenge officers’ taken-for-granted conception of their world. Thus, in order to understand officers’ experiences of powerlessness it is crucial to acknowledge the indirect and subtle ways in which they experience and express such feelings.

This chapter is divided into five sections. First, I explore the various ways in which increasing demands for accountability allegedly undermine officers’ role construct and subsequently lead to feelings of frustration, stress and a sense of powerlessness. Second, I discuss how officers feel *alone* in the fight against crime, and in the third section, I examine the ways their job is perceived to place them in “no-win situations.” Fourth, I discuss how the hierarchical structure of the police organization helps cultivate feelings of powerlessness, and in the final section of the chapter I explore how officers experience difficulty separating institutionalized definitions of reality within their job from institutionalized realities outside of the job.51

“**Dot Your I’s and Cross Your T’s:** Increasing Accountability

Risk consciousness has penetrated all aspects of our lives in the modern world (Beck, 2003; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997); consequently, organizations are forced to contend with escalating demands for accountability. Ericson and Haggerty (1997) were among the first scholars to acknowledge that increasing demands for accountability, particularly by external organizations, characterizes the role of police. Although Ericson and Haggerty’s work has influenced greatly our understanding of the police role, a methodological weakness in their work remains in that they tended to infer the ways in which accountability influences how police think and act. Therefore, their approach marginalizes officers’ own intimate experiences.

51 Please note the concept of institutionalization was explained clearly in chapter 2 on page 30.
understandings as to how increasing demands for accountability impacts their role. The present research attempts to address this methodological weakness.

**Accountability and Powerlessness**

As I explained in the preceding chapter officers conceptualize and construct their role in terms of their ability to enforce laws, maintain order, and protect the public. In a sense, it can be argued that because officers conceptualize their role as noble, they ultimately perceive increasing demands for accountability as detrimental to their role construct which subsequently leads to feelings of frustration and stress. Indeed, the officers in this study appear to suggest a connection between heightened accountability and a sense of powerlessness which stems from feeling unable to do their job. Demands for accountability are equated primarily with three factors. Firstly, demands for accountability are intrinsically associated with added paperwork; this is problematic for officers because mundane activities like paperwork are not incorporated in their ideal role construct. Secondly, accountability is equated with increasing levels of surveillance and many officers suggest their actions are scrutinized too closely and, as such, they feel increasingly constrained, vulnerable, and obligated to monitor regularly their conduct. Finally, increasing demands for accountability are thought to be at odds with officers’ constructed reality where unpredictability requires and demands discretionary power.

Although I did not include initially any questions related directly to accountability in the interview guide, it became rather clear officers felt forced into complying with demands for accountability which, they maintain, undermines their agency and ability to fulfill their role effectively. For example, Amy reveals:

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52 As they feel it should be done (i.e., fighting crime, going after bad guys).
We’re accountable to the citizens a hundred percent [...] I can’t tell you how much of my day is spent for disclosure requests where they’re [external and internal organizations] asking for my notes and sending copies of my notes, sending copies [...] reports I’m writing because we have to account for everything we do, and because of that there are directives I have to follow...on exactly how I’m supposed to act.. how to deal with things there’s very little freedom in who I have to notify, what has to be in my report, what information I have to collect from people, nothing is freestyle in policing like there are so many, so many rules of exactly what has to go in a report it’s not just a narrative of what happened, there’s certain information I have to pull from every person that I go to a call I need certain information I have to keep statistics. I mean really, at the end of the day it’s a lot of stress.

For Amy, increasing demands for accountability, both from the public and external institutions, comprises a large portion of her day. Amy finds accountability stressful and also maintains that it undermines her sense of agency stating, “nothing is freestyle in policing” and there are “so many rules of exactly what goes in to a report.” Jacob adopts a similar point of view in the following exchange:

Jacob: Every call that we deal with we have to realize that we can be called on it later, uh be it a public complaint or what not, it’s hard...so everything we do has to be um, tracked recorded, written down it’s frustrating sometimes.. uh, ya know I remember workin the days of retail punchin a time clock and I thought that was absurd and then I get this quote un-quote career, where I am writing down minutes of what I’m doing, ya know at 9:01 I did this, 9:02 I did that and it-it’s just, that’s what you have to do! [emphasis added]

Sonya: Is that difficult to do?

Jacob: yeah I mean it’s tough it’s kind of like-you feel like we’re not trusted anymore.. uh it can be stressful because um ya have to be careful I mean ya just can’t miss anything ya really have to just write down everything.

Jacob suggests that heightened accountability makes officers vulnerable insofar as they have to account for everything they do or risk being “called on later.” Jacob also contends that accountability undermines trust in the police. Like Amy, it seems that for Jacob, heightened
accountability is a source of stress. Moreover, according to Tim, the biggest challenge he faces as an officer is: “Accountability! I can’t believe the amount of disclosure and evidence we have to produce... to put it in a package that a lawyer or a crown attorney can understand and prosecute! It’s stressful I mean it’s just not realistic.” For Tim, increasing demands for accountability are stressful because they generate unrealistic expectations of officers. In sum, it is clear that heightened accountability is perceived to impact dramatically how officers perform their role; it fosters feelings of stress, frustration, and vulnerability. In the next section I will explain how these feelings appear to be amplified by the fact that officers associate accountability with paperwork.

**Accountability = Paperwork**

As one officer explained, increasing demands for accountability are associated with the “drudgery of paperwork.” It seems that being held more accountable means they have to articulate, on paper, everything they do. Lusty for example asserts: “When I wrote my first search warrant in 1988 it was a three page document today it’s uh a ninety page document... because I would not receive judicial authority to search a dwelling, today unless I um, outlined all of the investigation all of my grounds how I got that how I got there and why I believe it’s correct- that’s because now we’re more accountable.” Although Lusty exaggerates clearly the number of pages in a search warrant today, his statement suggests how policing has changed in order to address increasing demands for accountability. Similarly, in the following exchange Edward explains the association between accountability and paperwork:

Edward: the degree of accountability expected of us is huge!! There’s so much paperwork.. like daily I have to respond to e-mails, uh, could be court disclosure requests that have to be complied with, could be reports to write on searches that I’ve done on previous shifts, uh could be reports to write if there’s been use
of force, so there’s reports to write on all that, so there’s uh a lotta
documentation and a lotta accountability that goes with it and it’s really
frustrating.

Sonya: do you find it stressful?

Edward: oh yeah at times it can be very stressful we have to be, we-we’re held
almost to a higher level of responsibility-we’re held to a higher standard we have
a lot of expectations, but we’re not perfect we make mistakes.

Edward contends that because officers are held to a higher degree of accountability they have
to complete more paperwork and are held to “a higher level of responsibility” and “a higher
standard” as such, he suggests officers are expected to be perfect, which causes him stress.

Further, Tim informed me that the degree of accountability expected from him is overwhelming
at times: “a lotta times uh you’ll been inundated with paperwork [...] we have to articulate
everything..every little thing we do, it’s stressful [...] (laughs) we can’t even pee without writing
it down!” Like many of the officers interviewed Tim explains the stress caused by increasing
demands for accountability and the expectation for officers to articulate and record
“everything” they do. Given that mundane activities like paperwork are not consistent with
officers’ role construct, it is not surprising that increasing demands for accountability, and the
subsequent paperwork involved, leaves officers feeling stressed and frustrated; this is rather
clear in the following excerpt from Bill:

As far as uh filing paperwork um, the departments I think have become a lot
more accountable to the public to society however you wanna phrase that I can
think of all sorts of things that we used to deal with uh in the eighties and the
nineties that we would not even file a report about that officers do file reports
about now, now there’s a flip side to that um in that officers waste so much time
writing reports instead of doing actual policing... [emphasis added]

As Bill explains, because officers are now required to file reports they never would have
generated in the past, they are less able to perform their role. Bill separates clearly “real police
work” from paperwork as he remarks: “officers waste so much time writing reports instead of doing actual policing.” As such, Bill contends implicitly that accountability prevents officers from fulfilling their role.

In sum, for the officers in this study it seems that external demands for paperwork are inconsistent with their role construct, resulting in feelings of frustration, stress, and powerlessness. Moreover, demands for accountability seemingly undermine the logic of officers’ ideal life-world. As such, officers’ sedimented and taken for-granted ideal construction of reality is in a sense threatened by increasing demands for accountability. Indeed, as I will explain in the following sections on surveillance and discretion, officers’ role construct appears to clash with the institutionalized definitions of reality held by those seeking more accountability.

**Surveillance: They’re out to get us!**

Within risk society surveillance is instrumental in the prediction, management and avoidance of potential risks (O’Malley, 2010; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997); all populations, including the police, are subject to surveillance practices (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). According to some officers, increasing demands for accountability are, in fact, directly associated with heightened levels of surveillance which they argue is problematic insofar as they feel some individuals are “out to get them.” As such, while officers feel compelled to monitor their actions and decisions very closely, they also feel a sense of powerlessness.\(^{53}\) For example, when I asked Jason how his job has changed over the years he explained:

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\(^{53}\) Within the literature it has been argued that the perception of being watched often leads to a degree of self-governing or self-monitoring behaviour (see for example, O’Malley, 2010).
We’re under the microscope even more then we always have been now there’s more accountability...we’re more in the public eye now [...] and news flash a lotta people don’t like the police right? so people will put themselves in a position where when we show up at an investigation or something, they may not even have anything to do with it but they’ll just start video tapping and uploading to YouTube and things like that, so like we have to be very-very careful of our surroundings, more so then ever um, cause we can get into trouble quickly because of, video and YouTube and uh the internet and everything else, we’re under a huge microscope, huge microscope and yeah I mean- it-it’s stressful-think about it- your attention is immediately drawn to a police car isn’t it? You’re always watcin’ what the police are doin’ that’ll be like that for a million years, I mean everybody sees a cop everybody looks at the cop right? We have to be aware of that constantly.

From the above excerpt it seems the conception of “always being watched” by the public is a sedimented aspect of Jason’s taken for-granted reality. Jason alleges that the need for officers to be accountable places them under the microscope more than ever before. Moreover, we can infer his sense of vulnerability when he explains that officers have to be “very very careful of their surroundings more so than ever” because “they can get into trouble quickly.” Jason’s vulnerability and stress appears to stem from his perception that “not a lotta people” like the police and thus, he feels that being “under a huge microscope” amplifies the potential for him and other officers to get into trouble. Similarly, when I asked Greg to explain if/how his job has changed over the years he commented:

The one thing that’s changed, the amount of um, focus on you and specifically like cameras everything you do could be on camera [...] I um, was downtown workin’ the G-20 and you know they keep hammering into your head, listen no matter what you do, you’re gonna be on camera 24 hours a day so it does change the way you interact with people um, only in that anytime like you have a camera or somebody watching you’re gonna be a little bit different a little bit more sorta political then necessarily you should be or that you’ve been in the past. [emphasis added]

Greg’s account also seems to allege the importance for officers to incorporate into their social stock of knowledge the perception and the risk of always being watched. Like Jason, Greg
maintains that officers are in the public eye more than ever before. For Greg, every action officers engage in has the potential to be recorded, thus he feels he has to continuously monitor his actions. Greg also seems to suggest that surveillance undermines officers agency in the sense that they are forced to act “more political than they necessarily should be, or have been in the past.”

For other officers, growing demands for accountability render them increasingly susceptible to public scrutiny. For example Amy reveals:

I can’t tell you how many complaints I’ve got.. we have a new complaint system that makes us more accountable– actually which is interesting for third parties, where if there’s a third party who’s not even involved in what you’re dealing with but don’t like how you’re acting they now have FULL-FULL ability to complain about you um, so you really have to be careful how you’re perceived! yeah... we’re, we’re watched like hawks, that’s-that’s for sure you put someone in a marked cruiser and you’re a target, like you’re on your best behaviour- you know what I mean? What people can get away with on a daily basis when you’re in a marked car it’s uhh, even [with] cell phone laws even though we’re exempt you just can’t do it because in the public eye it just looks bad [emphasis in original].

Similar to Jason and Greg, it seems that for Amy the sense that officers’ actions are under constant surveillance, has been fully incorporated into her social stock of knowledge and thus her definition of reality. As Amy explains the new complaint system allegedly makes officers more accountable; however, she contends the system is problematic because it makes her increasingly susceptible to complaints from people who “aren’t even involved in what you’re doing.” The perception of always being watched appears to make Amy feel increasingly vulnerable. Like Greg, Amy suggests that the fear of being watched undermines her agency insofar as public perceptions determine unduly her professional conduct.

Thus, Jason, Greg and Amy appear to express a dichotomy between officers’
institutionalized definitions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by members of the public who demand more accountability; this ultimately leaves officers feeling stressed and vulnerable. In the next section I discuss how heightened demands for accountability also seem to leave officers feeling like their decisions are under constant scrutiny.

Policing is Not a Science: Unpredictability vs. Accountability

According to a number of officers, the degree of accountability expected of them is unrealistic and at odds with the requirements of their role. In fact, many officers argue that because the “reality” of their job is unpredictable, intense, and characterized by high pressure, split-second decision making, meeting rising standards for accountability is difficult, if not impossible, at times. As such, accountability allegedly undermines officers’ ability to make decisions which fosters a sense of powerlessness. For example, in the following excerpt Matt reveals how demands for accountability can be problematic for officers:

We’re a lot more accountable now! We’re more answerable but uh, probably a good thing ...but then people keep wratiching up the expectation and the job we do is not an exact science and sometimes shit’s gonna happen ya know? Shit we can’t control! [emphasis added]

Although initially Matt seems to suggest that accountability is “probably a good thing” he quickly recants this statement emphasizing that increasing demands for accountability have fostered unrealistic expectations. Matt reinforces the police role as uncertain and dramatic when he explains that policing is not an exact science and “sometimes things’ll happen that you don’t want to happen.” As such, Matt’s comments imply that the reality of his role is not conducive to the type of accountability structure currently in place. Further, when I asked Matt what he finds most challenging about his role as an officer he explained:
Um accountability that’s a pretty large challenge.. um and I think we have to articulate that when things happen that people aren’t necessarily comfortable with and they’re quick to second guess we always have to be in the position where we can articulate why it happened and as I said before it’s not an exact science and sometimes things’ll happen that you don’t want to happen [for example] it’s like the pursuit that has to take place and the mother with the cram is crossing the road and gets smocked, you know does anybody want it? God no but you know it’s gonna happen and it’ll happen again, but the pursuit will be righteous but it’s the perception sometimes that well this isn’t the bad guys fault this is the fault of the police cause they shouldn’t have been doing that you know they expect there to be some pass or some magic (hits the desk) way of stopping this from happening but there isn’t you know you have to get that person uh before he does something else again that’s so serious that you can’t wait till next time. [emphasis added]

From the above excerpt we can see the disconnect between Matt’s sedimented construction of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality held by the public. Matt contends that the public fails to understand the job is often unpredictable and that, inevitably, bad things will happen. According to Matt, the public has difficulty coming to terms with this reality and, because of increasing demands for accountability, officers are expected to articulate why “bad” things happen. In essence, Matt feels that officers are held accountable for situations outside their control and that this leaves them feeling helpless. In a sense, it seems that the disconnect between officers’ and the public’s life-worlds leaves officers feeling like “bad guys” for doing what they “have to do,” as Matt laments, despite what the public might think, there is no “magic way” of preventing bad things from happening. Similarly, in the following excerpt Greg describes how increasing demands for accountability are unreasonable given the “reality” of the job:

Accountability is a real challenge like any little mistake- like part of the problem is everything you’re doing it’s instant- ya have to basically make your decision right away and then ya know it can be dissected down the road in court or, by the media who have months and months to sorta dissect every little decision like about what you did and-and criticize it right so, having everything like that, it’s
really stressful- making that decision that's gonna be questioned and criticized it’s hard always thinking you’re going to be in trouble for your decisions and actions.

Like Matt, Greg suggests that most police work is characterized by uncertainty and decision making under pressure, which makes meeting accountability standards difficult. Similar to Matt, Greg alludes to the disconnect between officers’ sedimented construction of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by the media, the public, and the courts; Greg contends that officers’ decisions are vulnerable to criticism, mainly because the courts, the public and the media have “months and months to sorta dissect” and critique every little decision made, whereas officers do not have the liberty of “time.” This appears to undermine Greg’s role construct leaving him feeling stressed. Finally, like Greg, Tim emphasizes the nature of split-second, high pressure decision making on the job while also explaining that the nature of the policing profession renders accountability problematic:

I mean uh I- I think we should be held accountable the same way that teachers or doctors or lawyers are held accountable, but accountability is a problem for us because we don’t have a lot of time to make decisions [...] and with uh police- I think it’s a sexy profession so it makes good headlines and um when someone gets in trouble or makes a mistake it’s splashed all over the newspaper and I think that might feed into the public perception or the small uh percentage of the public that views police in a negative light.

In sum, Matt, Greg and Tim share a sedimented and thus taken for-granted conception of their role as unpredictable, dramatic and characterized by high pressure, split-second decision making. It appears that this sedimented construct is somewhat at odds with the institutionalized definitions of reality held by those seeking more accountability from police organizations. This disconnect leaves officers feeling that it is impossible to meet increasing standards of accountability. Moreover, as I will discuss in the next section, accountability
allegedly undermines officers’ ability to exercise discretion and thus, fosters further feelings of frustration, stress and powerlessness.

**Accountability and Discretion**

Within the literature it is well documented that officers exercise discretion when enforcing the law (c.f. Mastrofski et al, 1987; Terrill and Paoline III, 2007; Waddington, 1999). Discretion entails the ability and freedom to act on one’s own accord, as one sees fit, and according to Stansfield (1996), “an implicit feature of this definition is that discretion is power and, in particular, it is the power to choose. It follows that police discretion is *the power police have to choose*” [italics in original] (c.f., also Ericson, 1981). That said, a number of officers in this study seem to suggest that accountability actually limits their use of discretion, and thus compromises their sense of agency fostering a sense of powerlessness. For Nick, officers rarely possess decision making power:

Definitely there’s a lot of accountability -you’ve got a lot of times politics entering into decision making, so it’s frustrating you know there’s nothing you can do..it’s not always well what’s the best idea for the situation, there may be other competing forces that determine how that decision’s gonna be made whether it’s local politics or higher politics or whatever it might be so...

As Nick explains with frustration, demands for accountability, coupled with political interference, limits officers’ decision making power. Nick explains the frustration in “knowing” that decisions are made that are not always in the “best” interests for the situation at hand, yet, feeling unable to do anything about it; thus, from this account we can infer a disconnect between officers’ stock of knowledge and definitions of reality, and external sources of institutionalized knowledge. Further, in the following account Bill reveals how increasing demands for accountability have dramatically and negatively impacted how police perform
their role. In fact, Bill argues that officers are no longer able to do their job as effectively as in
the past:

I think some of the discretion that officers used to have has been taken away
from them in that [...] the degree of accountability um-certainly I think when I first
started the job officers had a lot more discretion uh about how to deal with
things um, I think that has been greatly reduced as the years, have gone by
[emphasis added].

Bill’s account signifies that the importance of discretionary power is sedimented and taken for-
granted within officers’ stocks of knowledge and definitions of reality. I then asked Bill if he
could explain further the extent to which accountability has limited officers’ use of discretion:

Unfortunately now I think that everything uh an officer does, has to be recorded
someplace um, which detracts from the time they’re actually doing their job [...] um so instead of the officer being out on the road doing a patrol officers job
they’re back [...] at the station writing up reports [...] when I first started I think
you had a bit more discretion about how you were going to deal with things, um I
think that uh society in general wants that accountability and I guess it, what we
as an organization uh and what society wants to be protected from is the bad
officer, the officer that’s not doing his or her job properly is-is uh perhaps uh
abusing their authority uh, so I understand all that but uh, unfortunately I think it
detracts from the officer’s ab-ability to do things sometimes as well. [emphasis
added]

Bill alleges that accountability undermines officers’ ability to fulfill their role preventing them
from doing what they should “actually” be doing on patrol. Finally, according to Edward,
accountability not only compromises officers’ ability to use discretion but also undermines their
credibility:

The expectation.. the bars been raised ya know? the standard uh I think is higher
now than it used to be. I think now um there’s more paperwork, there’s more
documentation and less discretion and it’s because we’re more accountable than
we used to be, we used to be uh, believed and accepted-our evidence for
instance was accepted just cause we said so and now it’s well that’s not good
enough you know you need supporting documentation, like we’ve always kept
notes but the level of detail that’s required in our notes now to be accepted as
evidence is much greater than it was even 10/15 years ago when I started, ya know sufficient point form notes, just to refresh your memory was good enough but now it’s like no, if you don’t write it down in your notebook it didn’t happen, and it’s a problem cause if we don’t have our credibility and can’t be believed we can’t, do our jobs...

Like Bill, Edward alludes to a sense of powerlessness caused by increasing demands for accountability which leave him feeling unable to perform his role effectively. As he explains, when officers lack credibility “and can’t be believed” they are unable to do their jobs. Similar to the comments offered by Nick, Edward’s account signifies the disconnect between the police organizations’ institutionalized stocks of knowledge and the institutionalized stocks of knowledge maintained by the courts. For Edward, the degree of accountability expected of officers is unrealistic. Matt, had a similar view, commenting: “Years ago we weren’t really accountable to anybody you know if the police said this happened, this happened and that was so, and we weren’t prepared to take any dissent and if people didn’t like it- let’s get on with it you know too bad that’s the cost of doing business and that’s what we do don’t complain and there was no real accountability per say.” Like Edward, Matt appears to connect heightened accountability with less credibility.

In sum, the officers in this study appear seemingly ambivalent toward accountability; to some extent they admit they understand why it is necessary; however, at the end of the day they perceive it as a detrimental and imposed obstruction that undermines their ability to fulfill their role. In essence, it seems that officers’ sedimented construction of reality is at odds with the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by those seeking more accountability. These conflicting realities allegedly undermine officers’ agency and hence their use of discretion, thus challenging their role construct and leaving them feeling frustrated, stressed
and powerless. However, accountability is not the only aspect of their job that allegedly led to a sense of powerlessness. As I will explain in the next section, officers feel they are alone in the fight against crime.

**ALONE IN THE FIGHT**

Interestingly, many officers in this study contend they feel relatively alone in the fight against crime and also in the fight to uphold justice. For the most part, officers allege the justice system\(^5\) is not invested in the fight against crime in the same way that police organizations are. In fact, according to Jacob: “the justice system-the courts however you want to put it-operate on a completely different page than we do!” In many ways, the officers express feeling stressed and frustrated as a result of dealing with what they perceive to be an inadequate and unfair justice system. What is more, dealing with the justice system becomes particularly problematic for officers when they consider a case to be unsuccessful in court (i.e., charges are dropped, a settlement is reached, lesser punishment is given etc.) When this happens officers’ role construct is undermined which cultivates feelings of stress, frustration and in some cases powerlessness.

**Not Tough Enough**

Several of the officers argued the courts have made it increasingly difficult to prepare cases for trial and to obtain successful convictions (see also Parnaby and Leyden, 2011). For example, Lusty states: “the courts have changed-have increased the professional conduct of criminal investigations since the early eighties in that they have consistently required higher standards in interviewing, uh evidence collection, evidence examination uh and I’d say uh

\(^5\) In this context the justice system includes: the courts, judges, lawyers, juries etc.
they’ve made it much more difficult for us.” Nick is slightly more candid as he maintains the courts’ perception of crime is quite disconnected from officers’ knowledge of crime: “There’s a lot more organized fraud stuff now it’s just not looked at by the courts the same way as other types of crime.. it’s frustrating because even though we know it’s a huge issue- the bad guys tend not to get penalized very heavily and it just doesn’t get-doesn’t get the attention it should!” Moreover, when I asked Nick if there are elements of the job he dislikes he revealed the following:

Um, our legal system!! (laughs) the court system they just don’t get it.. there’s a lot of unreal expectations in terms of disclosure [...] and, the amount of work you have to do to prepare a case[...] and what’s demanded of you with respect to closure, as a young officer you learn pretty quick the reality of how our court system works, you think you’re gonna go to court and justice is gonna be served, but the reality of court is sitting around all day and, your case probably not being reached or a settlement being reached- a lot of our cases are just thrown out... and the reality of dealing with the courts is you’re the one responsible for the victims and dealing with the witnesses that show up it’s not the judge, [or] the crown attorney, it’s the officer [...] that’s gotta deal [...] you’re left picking up the pieces afterward and explaining to the victim or witnesses why the case failed or why they have to come back

Sonya: is that stressful?

Nick: absolutely yeah.. it’s very stressful [...] ya know our job is-we want the bad guys convicted and when it doesn’t happen well yeah it’s stressful for us.

Nick laments, the courts just “don’t get it,” and the expectations and requirements to prepare cases for court are unreasonably high. Similar to Lusty, Nick’s disillusionment with the courts seems to signify the segmentation of institutionalized realities between the courts and the police insofar as the court’s demands and expectations of officers are at odds with what officers consider acceptable. Moreover, Nick’s role to convict the bad guys, is clearly, sedimented and
part of his taken for granted reality, thus when a case is “thrown out of court,” Nick’s ideal role construct is seemingly undermined.

Further, a number of officers also expressed feeling as though members of the justice system including, lawyers, judges and jurors fail to hand down adequate sentences. As a result, officers feel alienated in the fight against crime and experience a sense of powerlessness. For example, Tim commented:

What’s stressful for me is I think a lotta times we’re hand-strung in terms of our investigations and uh it’s a high mountain to climb to uh meet the threshold to get a conviction and uh rightly so I mean ya don’t wanna convict innocent people but I think at the same time I think the pendulum has swung too far the other way um and it’s resulting in uh either people not pursing cases or not reporting to police or um uh cases not getting prosecuted properly I think that’s the tough-the part of the job that I have the toughest it’s the toughest to deal with for me[...] It’s very stressful there’s no use in laying a charge if you can’t get a conviction – it’s just a complete waste of time and energy on our part.

Tim’s statement that “it is a high mountain to climb to uh meet the threshold to get a conviction” and his use of the pendulum analogy illustrates the existent disconnect between officers constructed realities and the institutionalized constructions of justice adopted and maintained by the courts. Similar to Nick, Tim seems to emphasize how crucial it is for a case to be successful in court as he explains, “there’s no use in laying a charge if you can’t get a conviction.” Again we see how officers’ ideal role construct as crime fighters is allegedly undermined by the courts when officers deem a case as unsuccessful. Likewise Matt commented:

I’ll tell ya what causes me stress..we don’t need a whole bunch of hanging judges.. but we need to turn around some of what we do where I work is a prime example you know a fraud conviction is given away with a cup of coffee and some small change ya know? And the bad person is thanked for coming to court its like get a grip you know? The bad guys aren’t stupid they realize that it’s a great way of making money for furthering other quarters drug deals, terrorist
financing and they know that they get a kiss if they get caught that needs to be addressed- it’s frustrating.. in terms of the judiciary I think fifty percent of them do a terrible job and I mean the cynic says they need to be victimized by some of these crimes that we bring to them, that they believe are beneath them or as trifling, well they need to be on the receiving end of some of them and then see if it’s really trifling!

Matt’s account is more forthright than Nick and Tim’s; however, the underlying sentiment is similar, in that he believes the courts’ understanding of crime is completely disconnected from officers’ knowledge of crime, as such he argues that most convictions are not severe enough.

Like Matt, Lusty was rather candid about his opinion regarding the judiciary:

I find it quite unpalatable that the judicial system won’t support what we’re doing you know we can work as hard as we like but they will often just give the stuff away!” [for example] There are bad guys out there that take people hostage... and we’ve dealt with I have literally negotiated the same guy twice out of not killing a hostage he’s taken a hostage twice in his criminal career and the courts have not um dealt with him in an appropriate fashion. [emphasis added].

Similarly, Lusty suggests that members of the judiciary possess an inaccurate understanding of crime and thus fail to prosecute offenders adequately. Lusty’s comments seem to suggest a lack of shared intersubjective understanding between the courts and officers, thus leaving officers believing the judiciary does not “support” what they do. In fact, according to Lusty officers “can work as hard as [they] like” but their cases are often just “given away.” Similarly, Amy discusses her frustrations when dealing with the courts:

I would say, all the domestic violence matters that I’ve gone to court for, the end result has been a one year peace bond which is essentially- it means the case is thrown out as long as it doesn’t happen again and it’s very frustrating when it’s something severe where you see the female and she’s injured she’s crying, you see how scared she is and then all of a sudden the courts are allowing them to be back together, and you know it’s only gonna be a matter of time before you’re back there again and you’re seeing this woman in the same spot and her small children that live in that house. So it’s frustrating that, in the severe instance nothing gets done but even in the most minor incidents we have to step in and charge when it’s not necessarily appropriate.
Like Lusty, Amy’s perceptions of crime and prosecution are at odds with the courts’ perceptions, as she expresses her frustration with the fact that the courts fail to recognize the severity of many domestic cases (see also Parnaby and Leyden, 2011). As such, she feels most cases are not prosecuted “effectively.”

Other officers were more forthright about how the justice system makes them feel alienated. Note the following exchange with Edward for example:

Edward: I’m not a big fan of the legal process [...] it’s not a justice system it’s a legal system... and I’ve seen too many trials turn into what I’ll call “a legal academic exercise” as opposed to a true proceeding to determine what happened did person A do X Y Z? [...] defence lawyers, will literally argue if you don’t say that water’s wet, they’ll tell ya it’s dry if you don’t write it down [...] ya know to create doubt, or to attack your credibility [...] so they’ll make you look um, not worthy of uh, being considered credible they’ll do anything to attack your credibility, even if there’s nothing there (sighs) ... so all of a sudden we’re not worthy of being trusted now and somebody gets off “I have some doubts” the judge said well that’s bullshit.

Sonya: hmmm... that’s interesting... Does it cause you stress?

Edward: oh yeah-the legal process causes me stress uh, because when you take a case to court it’s not necessarily you’re accused person on trial, and again this comes back to the frustration, it’s your investigation-it’s you that’s on trial like the level of cross-examination and scrutiny that you’re under is much more significant than what the accused person is under ya know and only if you pass scrutiny and your investigation passes that legal scrutiny, then buddy might get convicted. I don’t wanna make a mistake in a very public form ya know I don’t want to look foolish or incompetent and that’s what they’re [defense lawyers] trying to do, no matter how careful you are you cannot anticipate, and you try to anticipate em as much as you can, every question you might be asked in cross-examination, and the defense lawyers goal is of course to get his client off um, and if making you look uh, not trustworthy or incompetent accomplishes that, he will do it.

Edward’s account signifies clearly how difficult it is for officers to reconcile opposing institutionalized constructions of reality with their own. Indeed, for Edward opposing
institutional orders are detrimental to his credibility and authority insofar defense lawyers are “out to get him,” in order to make him look “foolish and incompetent.” As such, like many of the officers in this study, Edward feels that regardless of how good of a job he does, he is fighting a losing battle in court.

Thus, officers’ constructions of reality, in particular their perceptions of justice and their role in its administration, appear to be at odds with the institutionalized constructions of reality held by the courts. For the officers in this study, these institutionally segmented realities makes legitimating their own conduct difficult (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; 84). As such, officers feel relatively alone in the fight against crime. As I will explain in the next section, these same issues are apparent when officers discuss their relationship with other external agencies.

External Institutions

There appears to be further discontinuity between officers’ constructions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality held by external organizations other than those comprising the criminal justice system. Indeed, many officers maintain that external institutions such as the banks and insurance companies fail to provide them with adequate support, leaving them feeling alone in the fight against crime. A number of officers expressed frustration with the fact that these institutions demand information yet are unwilling to provide officers with assistance. For example, several officers in the fraud bureau explain their frustration with the fact that the banks are not on their side. As Jason reveals:

We-we’re fighting an uphill battle! It’s not a quick pro quo type thing, if we need the banks to assist us in identifying other victims of crime, well then they tell us to go pound salt and go write a 25 page search warrant and then we’ll give you the information, well that’s not a very good um, relationship to have-certainly doesn’t help with our investigations.
According to Jason, although the banks expect information from the police, they are unwilling to assist with investigations. Likewise, Bill commented:

Twenty years ago, I could call up a branch of the CIBC and say hey I’m investigating so and so can you give me their home address, their telephone information their employee information they probably woulda given me the stuff once they were satisfied that I was who I said I was whereas now... depending on the situation and what information I’m asking for, either they won’t give my any information unless I get a production order for it, they might confirm that yes uhhh Bob Smith is a customer but no we can’t give you his address and we can’t give you his phone number or his account information it’s like are you serious!?! I’m trying to protect you from the bad guys.

Further, echoing Bill’s sentiments, Matt maintains that the banks operate on an entirely different page than officers and are unwilling to co-operate or accept advice from the police as he states: “The problem we have is banks not carrying out due diligence um.. then they come running to us and we say we’ve told you what to do it’s like leaving your front door unlocked three times in a row and you get broken into every time we’ve told you (sighs).” According to Lusty, external organizations' knowledge of crime is quite disconnected from officers.’ Lusty commented, “We deal with large financial organizations banks, insurance companies and their mind set in relation to crime is often very different from how police organizations views crime and they can make our job very difficult.” Lusty explains further:

We deal with issues that are um, a function of uh an inadequate uh health service for the mentally ill inadequate funding and inadequate resourcing um of the treatment of mentally ill people [...] how we deal with people with mental illness within Ontario uh is utterly inadequate and um, it’s a structural issue within our society views people with mental illness and how our successive government fund it and resource it and that impacts my work... our work here within policing is um... greatly impacted by the protocols and procedures and what the political elite of Ontario believe is appropriate. The failure to recognize and to deal with... ... to properly assess why crime is happening and honestly address the root causes, causes me stress, until we do that we will continue to plot along dealing with the results of an inability or a lack of desire to address the real issues in our society. [emphasis added]
Lusty contends that most of what he deals with on the job is beyond the police’s control. In fact, he maintains officers are forced to, “plod along dealing with the results of an inability or a lack of desire to address the real issues in our society.” Lusty’s account signifies how institutional segmentation and differentiated stocks of knowledge leave him feeling unaided in the struggle to uphold justice.

In sum, the officers in this study express clearly that they feel alone in the fight against crime which leaves them feeling frustrated, stressed and powerless. Indeed, the logic of officers’ life-world, particularly their role construct, is at odds with the institutionalized definitions of reality held and promoted by the courts and other external organizations. Moreover, police organizations’ institutionalized definitions of reality appear to be reified and taken for-granted to such an extent that it is seemingly impossible for officers to integrate their life-world with the institutionalized realities held by external organizations. The focus of the chapter will now turn to a discussion of how different experiences on the job allegedly make officers feel they are placed in no-win situations.

**Damned If You Do Damned If You Don’t: Helplessness in No-win Situations**

A number of officers seem to suggest that the nature of their job, specifically the decisions they have to make, often place them in what appear to be no-win situations: officers contend that it is impossible to satisfy everyone. As Tim reveals: “Unfortunately not-ever-not everybody’s happy when uh with the result of our investigations and yeah it’s frustrating-there’s nothing we can do about it but like I said sometimes um, the evidence just isn’t there!” Similarly, Greg lamented, “at the end of the day like no matter how good of a job you do people are still not gonna trust you just cause of what you do for a living so it’s tough.” Indeed, for
some officers the public will always construct them as the “bad guys.” Amy reveals, for example, “I think- you’re kinda always seen as the bad guy in policing!” Likewise, Bill maintains, “we’re gonna be the ones that are hated at the end of the day because we’re the ones that arrested grandpa for touchin’ little Nancy ok? So now we’re the pricks... (slams desk) and ya know nothing is fixed necessarily by what we do.” Furthermore, for some officers it seems their role to enforce laws is rather problematic, often placing them in no-win situations as Jason explains:

We’re forced... the unfortunate part [is] it’s often a no win situation for us- if I stop Sonya’s mom and dad who are probably very nice, hardworking, taxpaying Canadian citizens, and that’s the only interaction they’ve ever had with a Peel police officer in their life is that one traffic stop where I happen to pull em over for blowin’ through a stop sign or a yellow light or somethin like that, that one interaction that one dealing with them is gonna determine the way they think about the police (bangs on desk lightly) until their next interaction which may not be for twenty years um, and a lotta the time that becomes negative because if I give you a ticket instead of letting you go then what are your um, thoughts about the police gonna be? it’s gonna be from a negative standpoint right?

It seems for Jason ticketing “very nice, hardworking, taxpaying Canadian citizens” challenges his ideal role construct; in fact, he explains he feels “forced” to give “good” people traffic tickets. This is not surprising given that, as I explained in the previous chapter, officers construct their role in terms of fighting the “bad guys” while protecting the innocent. Further, it appears that Jason’s knowledge and understanding of the world is polarized (i.e., good versus bad, those who like the police and those who do not etc.) and Jason is reluctant to affect this polarization by giving good people tickets. Similarly, Amy discusses how enforcing traffic laws can be difficult:

You’re-it’s sometimes there’s kind of polar opposites you’re expected to enforce traffic laws for example, but you’re givin’ people tickets and they’re, usually pretty good citizens that now you’re jamming up with fines and they’re in traffic
court, so yeah you’re expected to do traffic enforcement, but does that necessarily give the public a good perception of what we’re on the road doing by jamming them up with tickets [...] Now you’re the bad guy and now you’re makin’ the decision that you can’t make everyone happy, I think that’s what I’m tryin to get at so you’re never gonna make everyone happy, and that’s hard because, I think maybe that’s how I grew up (laughs)...

Like Jason, Amy’s life-world is polarized somewhat, consisting of a distinction between good and bad citizens. Amy’s subsequent feelings of powerlessness are perhaps illuminated clearly in the exchange below:

*AMY:* [...] *You’re really you’re caught between a rock and a hard place* because [referring to domestics] you’re making people feel happy at the time they feel most vulnerable and unsafe and *I think you feel kind of torn, you feel like you’re doing the right thing at the time and then when they tell ya how hard it is now that they are apart from that person and then down the road they’re angry with ya* because now they have no contact with that person, that’s helping them live and they’re like “I can’t afford to put clothes on my kids back” so it’s hard... *you feel like you’re making the right decision when you have to* but the repercussions of that where people start phoning you and telling you all the- uh, the impact this has had on their life, you kinda feel bad... it’s really stressful like you start second guessing yourself [emphasis added]

*SONYA:* what makes it stressful for you?

*AMY:* well... aside from that one moment where you’re makin’ people feel safe in the heat of the moment because someone’s you know um beating them up, or another example you know, breakin’ into someone’s house..when we get called and we can make that person feel safe again yes we’re hero’s (laughs) so, but when they start figuring out what’s missing in their house and that the chances of us recovering them you’re now the bad-“well what do you guys do then? What’s your-what’s your purpose?” ya know? [emphasis added]

In the above excerpt, Amy conveys that her role as the protector often leaves her feeling like she is, “caught between a rock and a hard place.” It seems the public’s recognition of the limits of her ideal role construct leaves Amy feeling like she has to legitimate her actions constantly.

Bill argues that policing the G-20 placed officers in what he constructs as a no-win situation:
We can just look at the G-20 conference the police were used. were placed in a position perhaps is a better word, it’s a no win situation for the police uh they’re expected to maintain law and order uh, you have legitimate protestors that have legitimate things to protest about, you have a small group of uh anarchists that are tryin to create problems.. the police are placed in a position where they’re tryin to do all- deal with all of these things and as a result of their actions or inactions as the case may be a lot of departments are being sued [...] it’s a difficult job to do and anybody with half a brain can stand back if they’re mature enough to say you’re damned if you do damned if you don’t sometimes. This it’s not a perfect world and by the nature of the job you’re always gonna be open to criticism [emphasis added].

In the above account Bill contends that the task of enforcing laws and maintaining order amongst competing public interests is impossible at times. Again, it seems that discrepancies between the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by the public, politicians and the police leave officers feeling stressed, insofar as officers feel they are expected to contend with exceedingly unrealistic expectations and such demands set them up for failure. As Bill explains, regardless of what the police did at the G-20 their actions and decisions were/are scrutinized.

Likewise, Greg who worked on a patrol unit at the G-20 contends:

> Everybody who’s down there [at the G-20 summit] had the same objective about doing what they thought was right, nobody was suspending anybody’s rights because they’re an asshole and that’s what they wanted to do it was because everyone was trying to do what they thought was the best decision to make this go off successfully and um, I think that now that these decisions are being dissected, months after the fact, that yeah there’s gonna be mistakes that were made [...]People expect you to, always constantly make that right decision- even if you make the wrong decision with the right intentions that’s not acceptable I don’t think.. and like on the Sunday what police were doing-the decisions that were made was getting torn apart- getting ripped apart, people were delving into every little decision and making us look bad, and it was stressful ya know ‘cause there’s nothing you can do to change it.

So for Greg at the G-20 summit officers were placed in no-win-situations. Like Amy and Bill, Greg expresses feeling stressed and frustrated.
Thus, for the officers in this study it appears as though conflicting constructions of reality—specifically the constructed typologies of officers and their roles—held by the public, politicians and the media, leave them feeling like they are forced to deal with no-win-situations. As such, the integrity of officers’ role construct is constantly, being challenged.

**Organizational Powerlessness**

For the most part, the officers in this study were reluctant to admit outwardly that they experience a sense of powerlessness. However, a number of officers did suggest the ridged structure and strict regulations and policies within the police organization foster varying degrees of individual powerlessness. According to Greg, for example, the paramilitary structure of the police organization undermines his agency:

> At the end of the day it’s it is a paramilitary organization, like, *you have no choice but to take orders sometimes* whether you agree with them or not! [...] *you don’t have a choice like the higher the person is that makes the order you hafta do it* so ya know there’s certain things that happened at the G-20 um, there were certain arrests that were made I didn’t want any part of them, I wanted nothin’ to do with ’em I didn’t think that they were right, *but I still had to carry out my job whether I agreed with it or not* and [...] it does make it hard on you because you could be the one getting the lawsuit and yet [...] I can’t then turn around and say “well it was an order” because then they might say “well you knew that order was wrong” or “you didn’t agree with that order you shouldn’ta done it” [...] well you passed legislation saying I hafta do it so it uh it does make it tough sometimes I guess..

Greg argues he often feels forced to act in particular ways and make decisions he otherwise would not have made, alluding to feeling powerless, Greg explains that because of the police organizations hierarchical structure: “whether you agree with something or not you hafta do

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55 Many scholars have actually found that organizational stress is one of the leading factors that results in high turnover rates among police officers (see for example, Jackson and Maslach, 1998; Hawkins, 2001).
it.” In essence, Greg’s feelings of powerlessness seem to reveal the psychological cost officers pay when they fail to internalize and accept institutionally defined rules of conduct.

In addition to policing’s hierarchical structure, it seems politics and nepotism within the police organization also cultivate feelings of powerlessness. Consider the following exchange with Jason:

Sonya: That brings us to the final question and it’s are you the officer that you wanna be?

Jason: no

Sonya: no? can you explain?

Jason: nope... uh I’m capable of being who I wanna be um, however external um rank and external people within the organization have a direct control over who I wanna be and where I wanna go as a police officer and that all goes back to politics and nepotism and everything else, I’ve just been through it...no I’m not the cop I wanna be because I’m not being, I’m not allowed to go to the places I wanna go... I think 99% of my stress if I have any from work, is due to uh, internal um, an-and I already have touched on-on politics an-and everything else [emphasis added]

Jason argues that the police organization has not allowed him to move up the ranks; ultimately, denying him the possibility of becoming the officer he wants to be. Moreover, Jason maintains that 99% of the stress he experiences is caused by the organization. Likewise when I asked Matt the same question he revealed:

I think I could have done a whole bunch better but [...] I still wanted to look at myself in the mirror and I wasn’t prepared to play the games that were getting’ absolutely stupid um, so I woulda been happier I know I could have gone up higher [...] so in that point, that’s a disappointment [...] so am I relatively content with what I’ve got? Yes uh, eight years ago I realized it’s a job and not a career and when you realize you’ve kind of plateaued career wise it’s a bit disappointing (sighs) but with that gold plated pension you don’t exactly (laughs) wanna walk away from it at that point so it’s a case of uh, sucking it up and moving on and you can either be bitter for the next ten years or you can get on and try and be productive, I’d like to think I’ve done the latter.
Like Jason, Matt seems to suggest that the police organization has prevented him from moving up the ranks and becoming the officer he wants to be. Although Matt is less candid than Jason, his comments signify a degree of powerlessness in the sense that he admits he has settled in his role and he is not as happy as he could be.

At the phenomenological level it is important to recognize that institutions provide actors with bodies of “recipe knowledge” that define institutionally appropriate rules of conduct and “all situations falling within them” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 65). The conduct and roles to be played in the context of any given institutional order are hence controlled; conduct is eventually sedimented and subjectively taken for-granted, legitimating further the institutional order and marginalizing any alternatives to prescribed “institutional programs” (i.e., the institutional order is resistant to change) (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 62). As the excerpts above suggest, in the context of the police organization, institutionalized definitions of reality often claim authority over the individual, “independently of the subjective meanings he or she may attach to any particular situation” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 62). Thus, when officers struggle to internalize and accept certain aspects of the institutionalized order which conflict with their own personal definitions of reality they experience feelings of frustration, stress and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness.

**SEPARATE REALITIES**

The officers discussed one final aspect of their job which cultivated feelings of stress and a sense of powerlessness: the struggle to separate their constructed life-world into two separate realities (i.e., the police world versus the “real world”). In other words, officers
express difficulty separating definitions of reality within their job from definitions of reality outside of their job. It seems for most officers this task is rather difficult, if not impossible. For example, a number of officers explained that one of the most stressful aspects of their job was dealing with death. Nonetheless, officers emphasized the importance of leaving these experiences at work. Lusty reveals for example: “I’ve had people jump off the balcony after talkin’ to ‘em for two hours, askin’ ‘em not to, that’s a *little* stressful when I see them bounce off the pavement- but you just can’t take that home with you- can’t let it affect you I guess it’s hard not to at times [emphasis added].” Likewise, Bill stated: “uh the most stressful aspect of the job for me is giving death notifications or dealing with the person whose loved one has just passed away...not that I wanna make it sound as though it affected me-affected me like hugely negatively-cause you just can’t let it [emphasis added].” Although Bill admits that death notifications are “the most stressful” aspect of his job, he is quick to emphasize he does not let it affect him.

Further, it seems that for most officers it is not only a stressful but constant battle to segment work from their personal feelings. According to Jason for example:

*The toughest thing about this job is you have to be able to um, differentiate um, this is my job and you have to try your best to isolate work at work and not bring it home with you.. but sometimes ultimately you have to bring the job home a little bit right?! It’s stressful like I mean we go to calls where people are seriously injured or dead- like how do you just forget that?*

So as Jason explains, it can be rather difficult at times to separate his experiences on the job from life outside of the job. Likewise, note the following exchange with Amy:

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56 This is particularly interesting because the reality and experience of “death and dying” is something that is seemingly taken-for-granted in the day to day realities of most people (until, of course, someone close to them dies). However, the nature of the police role requires them to encounter death more often than the average person might.
Amy: I saw my first dead body within the first few shifts on the job and taking that home when you’re not used to seeing it and trying not to have it affect your personal life is a big issue... you’re seeing violence to see it in real life and how it really affects people it’s hard to separate goin’ home and tryin’ to be happy after you just saw so much (laughs) trauma it’s just hard as a police officer you get biased I don’t know maybe that’s just cause I’m new and I’m still a little sensitive and I’ve been told that I have to get a thicker skin (laughs) and not to let this bother me because really it has NOTHING to do with me.

Sonya: is that difficult for you to do?

Amy: yeah for sure-I guess your personal outlooks on life really affect you-you hafta be so... insensitive almost as a police officer at times you really do hafta have a thick skin you’re like I understand I’m gonna make a lotta people angry with this but this is my role as an officer and I have to do that but juggling those kinda feelings like personally how do I feel about this versus what do I have to do in my job that’s-that’s hard...

Amy emphasizes the importance of segmenting her job from her home life maintaining that as an officer you have to be so “insensitive.” Like Jason, Amy maintains that separating her personal feelings from her role as an officer is a constant struggle. When I asked Greg what causes him the most stress as an officer he had the following to say:

On like a personal level like you can get really involved where the uniform and your role in that uniform becomes your whole life and anything outside of it like family and friends and everything becomes secondary and I think that’s why you see so many cops that get divorced and everything like that because ya know your spouse or whoever is lonely at home- and that does sorta it would cause you stress right- but at the same time you have all this stuff that you hafta do at work it’s not a job where you could sorta just leave at the office and go home and forget about it, so it is sorta stressful that way if that makes sense...the one key to doing that I think is ya hafta have friends that are outside of the job um like I still hang out a lotta the time [with] buddies that I went to highschool with none of them are cops ya know?

According to Greg it is crucial to separate the job from your home life, but he also explains this task can be daunting given that he feels it is difficult to “just leave the job at the office.” In sum, the above excerpts seem to suggest that many of the officers in this study struggle to separate
their constructed life-world into two distinct realities resulting in feelings of stress and powerlessness.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the ways in which officers construct and experience various sources of powerlessness. Specifically, I discussed how officers’ ideal role construct appears to be at odds with the institutionalized definitions of reality held by those, who they stated, seek more accountability. I also examined how officers’ sedimented construction of reality clashes with the institutionalized definitions of reality maintained by the courts, the public, and the media. These conflicting realities constantly challenge officers’ ideal role construct, leaving them feeling alone in the fight against crime, while being forced to contend with no-win situations. Further, I explained that when officers struggle to internalize and accept certain aspects of the police organizations’ institutionalized order which conflict with their own personal definitions of reality they experience feelings of frustration, stress and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness. Finally, I discussed the ways in which officers express difficulty separating their life-world into two separate life-worlds.

Thus, I would argue officers struggle to integrate and accept institutionalized definitions of reality that conflict with their own constructions of reality which are rooted in an idealized construct. These conflicting realities appear to leave officers feeling frustrated, stressed, and powerless. This finding is rather interesting given that it appears to contradict officers’ ideal role construct as crime fighters, defenders of the public good and as the fine line that divides order from chaos. Indeed, officers’ life-world is characterized by contradiction, their feelings of powerlessness being symptomatic of the disconnects in their socially constructed life-world.
The next chapter will explore in greater detail why officers’ ideal role construct persists despite its apparent clash with their lived realities (i.e., what they really do) and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused around them. Moreover, I will discuss the implications of embracing this ideal role construct, mainly the potential it has to negatively impact officers’ role performance and the police organizations’ ability to serve society. I will also discuss the implications this has for officer retention.
Chapter 6- Discussion

This research sought to examine how public police officers phenomenologically construct and conceptualize their occupational role. Although the literature that examines the police role is extensive, most researchers have adopted macro-level social systems perspectives. As such, officers’ intimate constructions of reality have been overlooked. The present study addresses this gap in the literature insofar as it presents an inductive analysis of how police officers define their role, capturing officers’ intimate constructions of their life-world, while acknowledging the contradictions and tensions that characterize this role construct.

On the basis of the data presented in the previous two chapters, it is clear that officers’ phenomenological reality is defined in terms of an idealistic role construct that is often disconnected from their lived reality (i.e., what they really do). In many ways officers’ life-worlds are characterized by contradictions that constantly undermine their taken for-granted definitions of reality, thus leading to feelings of frustration, stress and powerlessness. Conceptually, officers’ define their role in terms of three main functions, each reflecting the power and authority that characterizes their role construct, including: law enforcement, order maintenance and the protection of society. This occupational identity is sedimented in officers’ subjective structures of meaning and experienced as a self-evident reality that confronts them as an external and coercive fact. The officers in this study uncompromisingly subscribe to this ideal role construct despite admittance, on several occasions, that most calls for police service rarely involve crime fighting. In fact, although the mundane “reality” of their job often involves
problem solving and tasks similar to social work, officers nonetheless, deny vehemently that problem solving and social work constitute part of their job description.

Although officers define their role in a manner that denotes the power and authority they believe they possess, the data indicates that the disconnect between officers’ personal and institutionalized constructions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the public, the media and the courts actually leaves officers feeling relatively powerless. In essence, officers’ ideal role construct is undermined constantly by conflicting definitions of reality. Specifically, increasing demands for accountability allegedly undermines officers’ ability to effectively fulfill their role fostering feelings of frustration, and stress. In fact, heightened accountability is equated with three factors that cultivate feelings of powerlessness: firstly, added paperwork, increasing levels of surveillance (therefore, officers’ contend their actions are scrutinized too closely leaving them feeling vulnerable) and diminished discretionary power.

There is, then, a discontinuity between officers’ definition of reality, the nature of their lived experienced, and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the media, the public and the courts. This research begs the question: why is it that this ideal role construct persists despite its apparent clash with officers’ lived realities and the institutionalized definitions of reality being espoused around them?

To answer this question it is necessary to consider the following four elements: the depiction of police officers in popular culture, the training recruits receive at the police academy, the values and beliefs of the police culture and, lastly, the ways in which the police organization legitimates its existence. I argue that in various ways these four elements can be
used to explain the current existence and future promotion of officers’ ideal role construct. That said, it is important to recognize the synergistic nature of the relationship between these elements and the way in which officers’ construct their role. (see Figure 1 for an illustration of this relationship).

**Popular Culture**

The inaccurate portrayal of police in popular culture provides one explanation as to why the ideal role construct persists. Conventional wisdom defines police work as crime work and this idea is perpetuated by the media and the police themselves (Ericson, 1982). Parnaby and Leyden (2011) suggest that the crime-fighting image is “reinforced vigorously through myriad institutional arenas” and successful policing is indeed equated with crime fighting (p. 5). Our fascination with crime and law enforcement has led to an obsession with crime dramas which are becoming more prevalent and increasingly popular (Souliere, 2003; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). In fact, for the past four decades police dramas have consumed a significant proportion of television programming (Souliere, 2003) including shows such as *Blue Bloods, Cops, Criminal Minds, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Law and Order, NYPD Blue, Rookie Blue* and *Hawaii Five-O*. According to Rapping (2003), in order to secure viewership, producers tend to create programs that represent culturally shared beliefs and sentiments about crime, the justice system, and the police; therefore, more often than not, police work is equated with crime work (Ericson, 1982; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). This is not entirely surprising given that mundane and routine police work are not considered entertaining; therefore, most crime dramas focus on unusual and or dramatic occurrences providing viewers with largely unrealistic accounts of police work (Barlow, et al., 1995; Cavender and Deutsch, 2007; Robinson, 2000;
Soulliere, 2003). According to Sacco and Fair (1998), news coverage of the police is often “disproportionately positive” insofar as officers are usually shown pursuing and arresting suspects. Similarly, Cavender and Fishman (1998) contend that in “reality shows” like Cops police organizations control what the public sees, therefore, officers are usually framed in heroic terms and the extent to which they make arrests is exaggerated.57 Finally, research has shown that while crime dramas routinely portray police officers in a positive light, they also misrepresent the extent to which crimes are cleared by arrest (Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011).

Most crime dramas depict binary notions of good and evil (Jewkes, 2005; McLaughlin, 2005) while showing officers pursuing relentlessly high risk offenders into alleyways, “hanging from helicopters and racing through city streets in a desperate bid to fight crime” (Parnaby and Leyden, 2011: 5). The synopsis of these shows resembles something like the “happily ever after” ending purported in most childhood stories; officers are called to investigate a serious crime, or series of crimes, and through the use of myriad, yet highly unrealistic, methods and technologies they solve the crime, apprehend the “bad” guy, protect the victim, restore order and achieve justice without ever entering a courtroom (Cavender, 2004; Rapping, 2003). While glorifying the dramatic and dangerous aspects of policing officers are constructed as the ultimate heroes and lawyers are depicted as villains who hinder officers’ noble pursuit for justice (Cavender and Deutsch, 2007). Beyond dealing with crime, contemporary police dramas devote more attention to the police sub-culture and the personal lives of officers (Wittebols, 2004). Moreover, researchers have found that there is a tendency to link crime dramas with

57 Please note police organizations have control to the extent that these shows depend on the “live” footage provided by the organization. Obviously this footage can be edited, at least to some extent, by the show’s editors.
crime news and reality television; thus, the boundaries between reality and fiction are blurred (Cavender and Deutsch, 2007; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). As such, it is becoming increasingly difficult for viewers to distinguish that which is real from that which is fictional (Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). Nonetheless, these programs are compelling to the public because they, “offer mutually validating cultural images of crime and the police” (Cavender and Deutsch, 2007: 70).

To some extent, these findings might offer support for research which suggests that the police and the media reinforce each other’s organizations (Kasinsky, 1994). Although the majority of crime shows fail to portray accurately the reality of policing, some scholars argue that the image of police as crime fighters (an activity that occupies very little of their day-to-day duties) is depicted deliberately by the media because it is in the best interest of the police organization and, thus, in return officers will be more likely to share openly information with reporters (Grochowski, 2002; Kasinsky, 1994; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). Police permit this distortion largely because it is constructive for their crime fighter image, and effective when it comes to cultivating public support (Andersen, 1994; Fishman and Cavender and Fishman, 1998; Grochowski, 2002).

In the context of the present research it is important to recognize that although these melodramatic constructions of police work are highly inaccurate, they do tend to reflect, rather closely, officers’ definitions of reality; specifically the importance of crime fighting, order maintenance and societal protection. That said, popular cultures’ portrayal of the police role may help explain, to some extent, the origins of officers’ phenomenological identity and why it appears to persist over time. Given that, traditionally, police organizations have been well
guarded, shrouded in secrecy and thus, reluctant to share information with “outsiders,” it can be argued that much of what we really “know” about police officers and the organizations within which they work is derived from culturally prescribed stocks of knowledge, (i.e., popular culture. c.f., Jewkes, 2004; Soulliere, 2004; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). Moreover, most people rarely have any direct contact with police officers. If contact is made it is often because of minor infractions (e.g., traffic tickets, accidents, property crimes etc.). Surette (1992) maintains:

> If most of us get our knowledge of crime and criminal justice from the news media and TV programs, which tend to cover or portray only the most sensational kinds of crime and criminal justice activities, it is no surprise that many of us develop perceptions that may not reflect what is really happening in the world of crime and in the various stages of the criminal justice system (pg. 296).

Additionally, it can be argued that because police recruits are also members of society a significant portion of what they know about policing is influenced initially by, and learned from, various forms of media. Therefore, many recruits apply to the police force with largely unrealistic expectations and understandings as to what the job actually entails. In fact, research suggests that when recruits are asked what motivated them to join the police service many of them cite the adventure, risk, challenge and excitement of the job, while also emphasizing a desire to help people, enforce the law and work in a profession that is perceived to be “important” (White et al., 2010; Ranganella and White, 2004; Van Maanen, 1973). Indeed, as demonstrated in this study, there are important parallels between popular culture’s

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58 Unless of course, the recruits are from “police families” I will address this in the next section on police subculture.

59 Interestingly, some literature suggests that individuals who possess authoritarian personalities and an interest in seeking power, authority and control, are more likely to be drawn into policing (Foley et al., 2008; Lester, 1983; McNamara, 1967; Niederhoffer, 1967)- as cited in White et al., 2010
depiction of the police role, the motivations that drive individuals to become officers, and officers’ ideal role construct. As such, it is plausible to argue that the depiction of police as heroic crime fighters in popular culture facilitates a preconceived understanding of the police role that reflects closely what will eventually become their idealized role construct (see also Parnaby and Leyden, 2011). At the same time, police officers permit popular culture’s depiction of the police role because it not only reinforces their construction of their life-world but it is also effective in sustaining their crime fighter image in the public eye.

**Police Training**

While the portrayal of police in popular culture might explain recruits’ initial internalization and objectification of their role, this alone cannot explain why these ideas persist despite their disconnect from officers’ lived realities. The training officers receive at the academy might help to explain how the ideal role construct is sustained and reinforced. In fact, I contend that the training recruits receive at the police academy institutionalizes many of the misconceptions about the police role that are constructed and defined, initially, in popular culture. Therefore, the stocks of knowledge constituted by popular culture are confirmed and reinforced at the police academy. Further, as potential performers of the “police officer role,” training contributes to recruits’ stock of knowledge by *defining* the occupational standards of this role performance (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Through training processes, historically held values and norms within the police organization are confirmed and reinforced (Karp and Stenmark, 2011). As I will explain, training methodologies and methods encourage recruits to conceptualize their role in terms of heroic crime fighters; by the end of training, the ideal role construct is well on its way to being sedimented.
At the training academy recruits learn the institutionalized definitions of reality held by the police organization; this includes the formal beliefs, goals, and rules of the organization as well as the informal ideologies, sustained by the occupational culture, as to what the ultimate purpose of police work should be and how this work is to be performed (Karp and Stenmark, 2011). Yet, research suggests that training academies do not prepare officers for the reality of the job, nor do they provide them with the problem solving, communication, or community building skills necessary to effectively fulfill their role (Birzer and Tannehill, 2001). For the most part, police academies utilize a paramilitary approach to training which focuses heavily on law enforcement and tactical skills development (e.g., defensive tactics, investigative procedures, firearms training etc.); as a result, officers are prepared for only the “mechanical aspects” of police work (Birzer and Tannenhill, 2001; Dunham and Alpert, 1993; Haar, 2005). In fact, Birzer and Tannenhill (2001) contend, “…police officers graduate from the academy and report for police duty with a robot, soldier-like mentality that has been perpetuated in the training classroom” (pg. 237). The paramilitary approach to training and the emphasis placed on law enforcement and tactical skill training reinforces perceptions of the police role as dangerous, and adventurous, thereby promoting a kind of hyper-masculinity and the sense that real police work is crime work (Birzer and Tannenhill, 2001; Conti, 2001). Paramilitary training methodologies prepare recruits to internalize and eventually purport the characteristics of the idealized cop (i.e., strength, bravery, and morality) (Conti, 2011). Recruits are told repeatedly that these qualities are crucial in order to deal with the potential dangers of the occupation (Conti, 2011). If recruits are unable to prove they are physically capable they are deemed too weak to do the job, and therefore, considered a liability to themselves as well as other officers
(Conti, 2011). In essence, the emphasis placed on physical and tactical skill training sediments recruits’ preconceived definitions of the police role as crime fighters, while other aspects of their role, including social service activities are stigmatized and, thus, rendered deviant from the norm (Garcia, 2003).

Further, the instructors at the training academy play a crucial role in confirming recruits’ definitions of reality. As experts in the field, instructors possess the recipe knowledge, experience, cultural capital, and symbolic capital that recruits aspire to (c.f., Bourdieu, 1984; Karp and Stenmark, 2011). Instructors convey their first hand experiences and knowledge of the police role to recruits and, in the course of their socialization into the policing world, recruits learn this knowledge as objective truth, and thus, it is internalized as a self-evident reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1966). Indeed, by the end of the first semester recruits begin to talk about themselves not as recruits but as police officers (Karp and Stenmark, 2011).

In essence, in transmitting their knowledge of the police role to recruits, instructors confirm, and reinforce notions that the role of police is defined entirely in terms of crime fighting, order maintenance and societal protection (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). While the training methods utilized at the academy fail to prepare officers for the reality of their job, it confirms the pop cultural depiction of police officers as heroic crime fighters and, thus, reinforces the preconceived definitions of reality that motivated recruits to become officers in the first place. The knowledge obtained at the academy therefore parallels understandings derived from popular culture.

In sum, recruits’ initial construction of the police role are influenced by popular cultures’ rather inaccurate portrayal of police officers as heroic crime fighters. Moreover, the training
recruits receive at the academy solidifies this depiction. Interestingly, it seems that recruits’ preliminary, and largely misguided, conception of the police role remains un-challenged by the end of training at the academy. As such, officers’ have little reason to question the occupational identity that is now objectified in their subjective structures of meaning. In fact, by the end of training, officers’ definition of reality has been sedimented, thus, they exit the academy with a largely, taken for-granted conception of their role.

**Police Subculture**

Thus far, I have suggested that officers’ ideal role construct is acquired and largely sedimented by the time recruits complete their training at the academy. As such, officers’ definitions of reality are not really challenged until rookie officers’ enter the field and confront the reality of the job. New officers learn quickly that rather than fighting crime, the majority of their day is spent dealing with service related calls. That said, the question remains as to why this ideal role construct persists despite its disconnect from officers’ life-world: the police subculture offers a plausible explanation. Indeed, a review of the literature indicates that the values and beliefs that characterize the police culture are largely consistent with officers’ role construct. In fact, Manning (1999) suggests that professional identity and occupational culture are intrinsically linked through the notion of an idealized police officer. He contends:

> The policeman’s self is an amalgam of evaluations made by many audiences before whom he, as a social actor must perform ... His most meaningful standards of performance are the ideals of his *occupational culture*. The policeman judges himself against the ideal policeman as described in police occupational lore and imagery. What a ‘good policeman’ does is an omnipresent standard. The occupational culture, however, contains more than the definition of a good policeman. It contains the typical values, norms, attitudes, and material paraphernalia of an occupational group (p. 99).
Although the relationship between police culture and officers’ construction of their role is largely bidirectional, I argue, the police culture plays a fundamental role in substantiating officers’ definitions of reality. The values and beliefs that characterize the police culture are institutionalized; defining clearly, specific ideologies regarding the ultimate purpose of police work. Additionally, this institutionalized reality is supported by a “canopy of legitimations,” that provide “a protective cover of both cognitive and normative interpretations” of the police role (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; 62). Thus, in a sense, the values and beliefs that shape the police culture reinforce and confirm officers’ constructions of their life-world serving a practical, but also imperative purpose. When officers’ definition of reality clashes with their lived reality, subcultural ideologies help to restore and reinforce their role construct. In particular, the police culture values machismo, crime fighting and the danger of the job.

The data from the present study suggests that notions of masculinity underlie officers’ idealized role construct. The officers in this study emphasize the power and authority that characterizes their role as crime fighters and as the ultimate defenders of public good. As a profession traditionally dominated by males the police culture not only values but also celebrates masculinity (Conti, 2011; Rabe-Hemp, 2009). In fact, masculinity is valued to such an extent that female officers have difficulty achieving acceptance within the occupational culture (Harr, 1997; Herrington, 2002; Rabe-Hemp, 2008; Capponi, 2000).

Further, the sub-culture defines for officers a set of assumptions commonly held about police work known as a code; this structures police officers’ attitudes and influences their decisions on the job (Schulenberg, 2006). One such attitude within police culture is that real

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60 These characteristics signify how culturally prescribed ideas of what it means to be a male in North American society are highly valued.
police work is defined as crime work (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Manning, 1999). In fact, Herbert (2001) contends that within police culture the masculine ideal of a hard charging crime fighter is juxtaposed against a social service oriented station queen. This type of juxtaposition allows officers to segment real police work from the social service roles they engage in. Indeed, responsibilities in line with social work are feminized (Rebe-Hemp, 2009). That said, it is not surprising that the officers in this study construct their role in terms of crime fighting, yet, fail to incorporate problem solving, or tasks related to social work; police culture, therefore confirms and reinforces constantly these ideas and beliefs.

Moreover, the officers in this study defined their role as dangerous and the nature of the job as highly uncertain. Research has shown that subcultural ideologies tend to glorify violence, value dangerous and thrilling work, and embrace a heightened sense of morality (Conser, 1980; Hodgson, 2001; Johnson, 1976; Rabe-Hemp, 2009; Skolnick, 1966). Skolnick (1966) suggests that police culture cultivates a “working personality” among officers which actually values danger and authority. Through “war stories” officers convey to one another how the nature of their job is extremely dangerous, risky, and thus, highly uncertain (Ford, 2003). As such, in high risk situations it is believed that only those officers with warrior hearts will survive (Conti, 2011). This may explain further how the crime fighter role is reinforced constantly, while problem solving and social work roles remain completely unacknowledged.

Thus, it can be argued that subcultural ideologies and values help officers to maintain a sense of ontological order; their ideas and beliefs about police work are validated, and thus, remain intact. At the same time, it is important to recognize that officers’ ideal role construct confirms the legitimacy of the police cultures’ beliefs and values. Beyond validating sub-
culturally held values and beliefs it can also be argued that officers’ definitions of reality also legitimate the existence of the entire police organization.

**Historical Legitimation**

Ericson (1982) contends that “the construction of policing involves much more than technical questions related to the production and control of crime” (pg. 203). In fact, Ericson maintains that the police justify continually their resources in terms of crime control, and most legislation within the organization is formulated and justified in terms of the “war on crime.” As such, it is not surprising that the police officers in this study maintain a relentless hold on their ideal role construct; it can be argued that officers’ taken-for-granted definitions of reality are functional in that they actually serve to legitimate the existence of the police organization.

Additionally, Berger and Luckmann (1967) contend that “roles represent the institutional order” (p. 74); therefore, if the police organization exists both presently, and historically, to legally and coercively enforce laws (Bittner, 1970), and to maintain a sense of order while providing the public with protection, then it is absolutely crucial for officers to conceptualize and construct their role in terms of these functions. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), “the institution with its assemblage of programmed actions,” is comparable to “the unwritten libretto of a drama” (p. 75). The realization of this drama is dependent on the “reiterated performance of its prescribed roles” by social actors (pg. 75). Indeed, a number of officers in this study justified their role and ultimately their existence as officers in terms of their idealized role construct. In the context of the present research, police officers’ embody these roles and “actualize the drama” of the police organization by representing it on the given stage (pg. 75). As a result, the police organization is manifested in actual experiences and
constructed in an objectively “real” sense. It can be argued then, that officers’ construction of reality is functional insofar as it serves to legitimate not only the existence, but also, the ultimate purpose of policing’s entire institutional order. More specifically, the perpetuation of officers’ ideal role construct may be functionally imperative in a democratic society where it is essential for the public to regard the police organization as legitimate (Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). The organization is conceivably legitimated when public trust and confidence in the organization are high. The organization attains legitimacy when the public perceives that the police are fighting crime—regardless of whether or not this is the reality of what the police are doing. These ideas of “effective policing,” and thus, legitimate policing, as I explained earlier in this chapter, are influenced, largely, by popular cultures’ constructions of police officers as heroic crime fighters (Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). That said, it is crucial for police officers’ to maintain this idealized image in order to sustain a degree of legitimacy in the public.

In addition, it can be argued that officers’ relentless hold on their idealized role construct may actually be utilized as a coping mechanism to deal with the impossible mandate they face (Manning, 1999). In fact, Conti (2011) suggests that police officers are faced with two, long standing, “essential realities within the profession” (pg.11). One such reality is the impossible mandate they face which renders officers responsible for efficient crime control in a democratic society (Manning, 1999) and secondly, their role is defined by their capacity to use legal coercive force to maintain social order (Bittner, 1970). As a means of coping with their inability to effectively fulfill this mandate, officers stress the potential for danger and violence valuing all forms of hegemonic masculinity (Conti, 2011).
Thus far, I have offered a number of explanations as to why officers maintain a relentless hold on their definitions of reality despite that they are oftentimes at odds with reality of their job. I have argued that popular culture, the academy training methods, police culture and the need to legitimate their existence contribute to the existence and perpetuation of officers’ idealized role construct. The focus of this chapter will now turn to a discussion of the implications of this.

**IMPLICATIONS: PUBLIC SERVICE**

I contend that the implications of perpetuating officers’ taken for-granted definitions of reality are of concern not only for police organizations but also for the public. Arguably, officers’ relentless hold on their role as crime fighters has the potential to influence negatively their relations with the public. In fact, the data from the present study suggests that officers’ actually evaluate the public negatively when they are expected to engage in roles that are not consistent with their definitions of reality. Indeed, a number of officers’ expressed feeling agitated and frustrated when expected to deal with non-criminal matters. These types of feelings are likely to increase the tensions between the public and the police, exacerbating further, the *us versus them* mentality that has been well documented in the literature (Conser, 1980; Herbert, 1998; Hodgson, 2001; Johnson, 1976).

Given that as most research suggests, and the officers’ in this study outwardly admit, the majority of their day is spent dealing with a range of different social problems, officers’ failure to consider these tasks to be part of their job description or responsibility raises concerns as to how these occurrences will be dealt with. For instance, officers may neglect to take these types of calls seriously and therefore, are likely to be slower to respond, and more
likely to be disengaged and apathetic when responding. In fact, Herbert (2001) found that officers are reluctant to engage in tasks that deemphasize their role as crime fighters. Thus, we must seriously consider that officers’ failure to define this work as part of their role might actually impede their ability to provide the public with adequate and professional service.

Officer disengagement raises further concerns relating to police deviance. For example, the “bored” officer may be more likely to go out and actively search for trouble, or to act aggressively when such behaviour is unwarranted. In other words, as a means of living up to their crime-fighter ideal officers’ may engage in various forms of misconduct. Indeed, drawing from Merton’s theory of social structure and anomie, Paranby and Leyden (2011) describe the “innovator” in police organizations, as the officer who engages in a form of noble cause corruption.

Furthermore, the disconnect between officers’ ideal role construct and their lived reality has implications for officer retention which is a major concern for police organizations considering that high turnover rates are costly (Drew et al., 2008). A review of the literature suggests that low levels of job satisfaction lead to high turnover rates (Deley, 1984; Harris and Baldwin, 1999). Moreover, low levels of job satisfaction may affect job performance and negative attitudes may also affect the public’s attitudes towards law enforcement (Hoath et al., 1998). Given that officers enter the field with unrealistic expectations as to what their role is, when they realize these expectations will not be met they are likely to feel dissatisfied with the job. Indeed, research suggests that one of the leading contributors to high turnover rates among police officers is the disconnect between recruits’ expectations of the job and its reality.
(cf., Harris and Baldwin, 1999; Lipson, 1987; Mcdowell, 1971; Moriarty and Field, 1994).\textsuperscript{61} As Sparger and Giacopassi (1983) explain, recruits often have difficulty adjusting to the job when they find that their ideals of service and academy training actually conflict with the reality of their job. These experiences result in a degree of cognitive dissonance—“a psychologically painful experience that occurs when the officer has contradictory perceptions or beliefs about his or her role as an officer” (Skolnic, 1975).\textsuperscript{62}

Moreover, the data from the present study suggests the discrepancy between officers’ construction of their life-world and reality leads to feelings of frustration and stress. The officers in this study illuminate, on numerous occasions, experiencing feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability. Research supports these findings suggesting that senior officers experience high levels of stress, which might be explained by a “reality shock” the realization that police work is significantly more frustrating and stressful then they imagined (Violanti and Aron, 1995).

Feelings of stress and frustration are likely to be exacerbated when officers find they lack the necessary communication, problem solving, and community building skills to deal with the myriad interpersonal and social problems that take up much of their day. This, in combination with the fact that officers rarely engage in crime fighting, may result in a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Indeed, the belief that “nothing is accomplished by their work” was a sentiment articulated by many of the officers in this study. These types of feelings may potentially lead to burnout which is caused by feelings of emotional exhaustion and

\textsuperscript{61} As cited in Harris and Baldwin (1999).

\textsuperscript{62} As cited in Sparger and Giacopassi, (1983).
depersonalization, that is, “negative, cynical feelings and attitudes about one’s clients (Hawkins, 2001; 342); these experiences may consequently result in poor job performance. That said, this has serious implications for both the public and police organizations. Officers experiencing burnout are more likely to suffer from insomnia, view the public negatively, have trouble in their personal lives and adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms including alcohol and drug abuse (Jackson and Maslach, 1998; Hawkins, 2001). Moreover, according to Jackson and Maslach (1998), when officers’ experience burnout it is likely to lead to a deterioration in the quality of services they provide to the public.

**Policy Initiatives**

This chapter has offered a number of explanations as to why officers’ role construct persists despite being at odds with reality. Given the implications this has for both the police organization and the public, it is imperative to consider policy initiatives. The construction of police officers as heroic crime fighters is perpetuated in popular culture, reinforced at the academy, sustained by police culture and ultimately, used to legitimate their existence in society both historically and presently, as such, reformation of this idealized construction proves to be a rather daunting task. The relationship between these elements and the existence and promotion of the police role is dialectical in nature (refer to Figure 1) thus, the transformation of one element does not necessarily result in changes to the other interconnected elements.63

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63 This is not to suggest that the strength of all four of these bi-directional relationships is equal.
FIGURE 1. The Cyclical Nature of Perpetuating and Reinforcing Officers Ideal Role Construct

I offer two potential policy recommendations that may assist in deconstructing officers’ definitions of reality. First, it would be helpful to address many of the misconceptions that are promoted and reinforced perpetually within popular discourse. Indeed, it is absolutely crucial to find ways to deconstruct the image of police officers as heroic crime fighters (Parnaby and Leyden, 2011). One way to accomplish this is develop a widespread campaign that seeks to educate the public and media about the realities of criminal activity, as well as the realities of policing. This type of campaign is likely to be most successful if executed by police officers; experienced officers could visit schools, beginning at the elementary level (grade 2 or 3 would likely be a good place to start) and provide students with information about what police officers do on a day-to-day basis, focusing particularly on the service side of the job. This type of education should also be offered at highschools and may even be effective if offered at colleges and universities. The classes need not be long, an hour or so would likely suffice, and should be offered in schools once a year. These types of classes would also be effective in establishing
positive relationships between the police and the public and providing young students with positive role models.

Second, the ever-present need to reform the training methods utilized at police academies needs to be taken more seriously. Indeed, scholars have long advocated for reforms to be made to traditional training practices (c.f., Birzer and Tannenhill, 2001; Dunham and Alpert, 1993; Haar, 2001). The idealized image of the police role needs to be dismissed and the realities of police work must be illuminated (see also Sparger and Giacopassi, 1983). This should begin during the recruitment process and continue throughout training at the academy. Further, training methodologies and methods should be directed more towards the service side of the job as opposed to the tactical side of the job. Although tactical skill training is of necessity recruits should leave the academy prepared to deal with the service side of the job. Particular emphasis should be placed on teaching the necessary communication, problem solving, and community building skills so that officers are able to effectively perform their role. In essence, officers need to be educated about the service side of the job regardless of how mundane they consider this to be. It may also be necessary to offer “refresher” courses on a yearly or bi-yearly basis that focus on promoting the service side of the job. In order to elicit participation in these programs incentives for successful completion of the courses should be provided, for example officers could be offered vacation hours, special certification (perhaps this could be considered when applying for promotions) or payment for attending the courses.

In conclusion, this chapter has offered a number of explanations as to why officers’ ideal role construct persists despite its clash with their lived realities and the institutionalized definitions of reality promoted around them. Specifically, I discussed how the depiction of
police officers in popular culture, the training recruits receive at the police academy, the values and beliefs of the police culture and the ways in which the police organization legitimates its existence can be used to explain the current existence and future promotion of officers’ ideal role construct. I also explicated that the implications of perpetuating this occupational identity are of concern not only for the police organization, but also, for the public. Finally, to address these concerns I argued it would be wise to initiate a widespread campaign to educate the public about the realities of crime and policing. I also emphasized the importance of altering the training methods and methodologies adopted at police academies. In the next chapter, I discuss the limitations of the present research and directions for future research.
Chapter 7- Conclusions

On Wednesday June 22\textsuperscript{nd} in the midst of a drug raid that turned violent in Lindsay Ontario, Peterborough Lakefield police constable Keith Calderwood was rushed to hospital after being shot and wounded. Following the shooting staff sergeant Dan Smith told media reporters, “Unfortunately, it’s one of those things in policing we have to deal with on a daily basis” (Lindsay Post 23 June 2011: online). Peterborough Lakefield Community Police chief Murray Rodd told reporters. “It’s a bad day for our service- this is another reminder of the difficult and dangerous job our men and women do every day” (The Star.com Jun 22 2011: online). On Tuesday June 28\textsuperscript{th} only six days later, police constable Garrett Styles from Oshawa was killed following a routine traffic stop that took place in Newmarket Ontario. The local press emphasized that Garrett was a “young father of two” a “dedicated, professional, and hardworking officer who always had time for others and remained stoic to the end” (Kitchener Record 28 June 2011: online). In the press release following Garrett’s death York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe lamented, “Police officers put their lives on the line each and every day when they leave their families to protect others” (CBC News 28 June 2011: online). Matt Torigian of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police shared a similar sentiment commenting to reporters: “Policing is a dangerous job but it’s something that each one of us does because we want to be part of something that’s bigger than ourselves. The nobility of policing is what brings us to our jobs every day, and we don’t lose sight of that” (Kitchener Record 28 June 2011: online). For the most part, media reports constructed the aforementioned officers in heroic terms while emphasizing the inherently dangerous nature of policing. In essence, these reports illuminate clearly how the media constructs the police role in a manner consistent with
the idealized role construct I have discussed throughout this paper. To be clear, I am not in any way denying the nature of these tragedies or the devastation they have caused. Rather, I am elucidating the practical relevance of the present research which has articulated that this idealized depiction of the police role is, oftentimes, at odds with the reality of their job; nevertheless, there are limitations worth considering.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the most significant limitations of this research is the small sample size. Ideally a wider variety of officers would have been preferred; however, time constraints in combination with the difficulty I had obtaining participants required me to work with fewer participants. Additionally, the sample was not diverse in terms of race or ethnicity and I experienced significant difficulty obtaining female participants. The latter is not surprising, however, given that policing remains a profession dominated by males and, as such, females may have been more reluctant to participate in my research.

A second limitation is perhaps methodological. Given my epistemological and ontological orientations, in-depth semi-structured interviews were utilized as a means of analyzing how officers’ construct and conceptualize their roles and realities. Although this method proved effective, the data could be enriched further by engaging in participant observation (i.e., ride-alongs with officers). This method would be more in line with an ethnomethodological approach which would likely include the use of both participant observation and semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Miller and Holstein (1993) describe ethnomethodology as “a radically social approach to everyday life focusing on the ways in which actors descriptively construct and assign meanings (including intentions)” (pg. 11). This
approach emphasizes the ongoing practices of reality construction and maintenance while treating the construction of social realities as an ongoing accomplishment (Miller and Holstein, 1993). From this perspective, the focus of research is the analysis of talk and interaction. Although the combination of methods would elicit more comprehensive data, this was not possible given the scope of a Master’s thesis and the relatively closed nature of the police organization. As such, for future research on how officers’ construct their role a combination of methods would prove beneficial.

In addition, future research should explore the claims-making capacities and activities of media relations officers. As the primary claims-makers within the police organization, media relations officers play a crucial role in shaping how the organization and its members are presented in the media and how problems become constructed in popular discourse. In chapter six I discussed how popular culture perpetuates deliberately officers’ ideal role construct. In fact, research suggests that police permit this distortion because it is substantiates their crime fighter image and helps maintain public support (Andersen, 1994; Fishman and Cavendar, 1998; Growchowski, 2002). Given that little to no research has been conducted on media relations officers and their claims-making capacities, future research in this area is warranted.

A final limitation of the current research can be attributed to my positionality as a female researcher having conducted research in an organization dominated by males and characterized by a subcultural milieu that values and celebrates masculinity. According to

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64 At the outset of this research I planned on using both methods; however, when I learned about the difficulty of obtaining consent to engage in field research within the police organization I realized it was well beyond the scope of a Master’s degree.
Gurney (1985), when conducting research in male dominated environments there is the potential for female researchers to:

...overlook or even deny difficulties she experiences in the field to avoid having her work appear unsound. [...] Any lapse in rapport with setting members may cast doubt on the information she received from them. [...] There is also the added embarrassment of acknowledging that one’s status as a female overshadowed one’s identity as a researcher (pg. 44).

As such, I believe it is important to openly acknowledge that my gender may have impacted the responses I received from the officers. The difficulty of researching up, coupled with my gender, was overwhelming at times. Admittedly, I can recall a number of times throughout the interview process where I felt relatively powerless. For example, some officers’ criticisms regarding the nature of my questions left me feeling embarrassed and speechless. According to Horn (1997), "It may be that women researching the police are particularly likely to be 'tested' by male police officers, and their responses may determine the extent to which they are accepted" (pg. 301). There were indeed times when I felt as though the officers were testing me and my credibility as a researcher. As I explained in chapter three, I went to great lengths to downplay my femininity; however, at the end of the day it was not possible to change the fact that I was female and conducting interviews with male police officers. My gender may have rendered me untrustworthy in the eyes of the male participants and it is also possible the officers were not completely comfortable with me. As a result, they may have answered the questions differently than they would have had I been a male researcher. Despite

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65 Please note I discuss the difficulties of researching up in chapter three of this paper.

66 For example in the interview with Matt he asked for clarification on one of the questions asked and then made the following remark in a snide tone, “Wow these questions are broad! Did you do that on purpose?”
these challenges, however, I do feel that overall I was able to successfully obtain the participants trust and, thus, elicit sufficiently honest responses.

GAINING OFFICERS TRUST AND ELICITING HONESTY

In the methodology and methods chapter I pointed out some of the difficulties I encountered while attempting to establish rapport with the officers. Admittedly one of my major concerns was that I would fail to gain their trust and, as a result, would obtain falsely constructed responses. Initially, the reluctance I sensed from the officers was obvious; for example, during the first few minutes of my interview with Jason he asked me at least three times if I was the only person who would listen to the recording:

Jason: ... anyone else listening to this? Or is this just for you?

Sonya: just me-

Jason: just you and writing your thesis?

Sonya: yup, just me completely, nobody else will hear it so!

Jason: policemen are a little uh- paranoid (Sonya: laughs) I’m sure you’ve uh, found this out already

Despite the initial feelings of reservation and apprehension I received from the officers, as the interview process continued I managed to successfully gain their trust and, thus, elicit honest responses. Moreover, all ten of the officers I interviewed freely criticized the media and press while referring to particular anti-police news sources. Thus, I contend that despite any initial reluctance I may have received from the officers once I established their trust, and maintained credibility as a researcher who was interested in what they had to say, I was able to elicit honest and sincere responses.

THE POLICE ROLE: INFORMING THE EXISTENT LITERATURE
Within the literature the role of police has been analyzed largely from macro-level social-systems perspectives. In particular, researchers have examined the role of police in terms of risk society and broader themes of crime and capitalism (see Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Gordon, 2006). This research has proven invaluable to our understanding of what police do; however, I contend it falls short insofar as many scholars have been inclined to infer police officers’ sense of their life-world and, thus, officers’ intimate constructions of reality remain marginalized and relatively unacknowledged. This is problematic in that it has caused researchers to make unwarranted assumptions about how police officers think and act on the basis of larger structural ideologies. Moreover, these structural theories fail to acknowledge the possible contradictions and tensions that characterize how officers construct and conceptualize their roles.

The present research offers a valuable contribution to the literature by analyzing how officers construct their role at the micro-level from a phenomenological perspective. This research provides officers with a voice acknowledging their intimate constructions of reality and, thus, informs the literature by challenging and adding depth to the social-systems models that have been adopted, ultimately producing a more nuanced understanding of the police role. Additionally, on a practical level this research can be used to inform the management practices within police organizations.

CONCLUSION

The data from this research elucidates clearly that officers’ phenomenological reality is defined in terms of an idealistic role construct that is often at odds with their lived reality. Officers construct their role as involving law enforcement, order maintenance and the
protection of society and this occupational identity is sedimented and experienced as a self-evident reality that confronts them as an external and coercive fact. In fact, the officers in this study uncompromisingly define their role in these terms despite admittance, on several occasions, that most calls for police service rarely involve crime fighting; rather, more often than not the mundane “reality” of their job involves problem solving and tasks similar to social work in addition to paperwork. Furthermore, the data reveals that officers’ construction of their life-world is undermined constantly by conflicting definitions of reality. The existent disconnect between officers’ personal and institutionalized constructions of reality and the institutionalized definitions of reality espoused by the public, the media and the courts actually leaves officers feeling relatively stressed, frustrated and powerless. The implications of sustaining and perpetuating this ideal role construct are of concern not only for police organizations but also for the public. Therefore, in order to ensure the psychological well-being of officers’, improve retention rates within police organizations, and attain adequate and professional public service from police officers it is necessary to find ways to reform officers’ role construct so that it reflects more closely the reality of their life-world.
References


Horn, R. (1997). Not 'one of the boys': Women researching the police. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 6, 297-308.


Greetings,

My name is Sonya Buffone and I am a Master’s student at the University of Guelph in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I am now conducting research that involves interviewing police officers about their job. I am primarily interested in how officers understand their role in society and how that shapes their personal experience as an officer.

As such, I am currently looking for volunteers who would be willing to participate in a short one-on-one confidential interview (approximately 30-40 minutes in length). This interview would take place at an agreed upon location that is convenient for all and need not take place on company time or property. A more detailed outline of the research is attached to this letter.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in participating please feel free to contact me by email (sbuffone@uoguelph.ca) or by phone (519-241-8993).

Sincerely,

Sonya Buffone M.A. Candidate
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Guelph
6th Floor, Mackinnon Building
Guelph, Ontario
Canada N1G 2W1
APPENDIX B: Consent Form

LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

“GIVING OFFICERS A VOICE: EXPLORATIONS OF POLICE IDENTITY”

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Patrick Parnaby and Sonya Buffone from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. The results of the study will be contributed to Sonya Buffone’s Masters of Arts thesis project.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Patrick Parnaby at 519-824-4120(53941)
Email: pparnaby@uoguelph.ca
Or
Sonya Buffone at 519-241-8993
Email: sbuffone@uoguelph.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding as to how officers see their role in society.

PROCEDURE

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Semi-Structured Interview: Participants will be requested to participate in 1 one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interview will take place at an agreed upon location (either at the participants place of employment or an alternative location of the participants choice). Throughout the interview participants will be asked questions related to how they understand their role in society. It is expected that the interviews will take between thirty to forty minutes to complete. Each interview will be audio recorded. Research findings will be made available to participants upon request. Participants will be informed as to how they may obtain all academic material when it is completed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This research study does not foresee any potential risks, discomforts or inconveniences for the participants involved.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants will not benefit from this study, aside from enjoying the experience that someone is interested in their line of work and how they construct their role as police officers.
PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any payment for participation in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. All subsequent information including reports and documentation will consist of pseudonyms when referring to participants. Additionally, places of employment and any other affiliations will be given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Digital tapes and transcriptions will be stored in a locked cabinet in the student investigators residence. Once the audio recordings have been transcribed they will be destroyed. Upon request, participants will be given the opportunity to obtain a full transcript of his or her interview. All information obtained will be used strictly for academic purposes.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don’t want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator
University of Guelph
437 University Centre
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1

Telephone: (519) 824-4120, ext. 56606
E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca
Fax: (519) 821-5236
SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I have read the information provided for the study “GIVING OFFICERS A VOICE: EXPLORATIONS OF POLICE IDENTITY” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_______________________________________
Name of Participant (please print)

_______________________________________
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_______________________________________
Signature of Participant or Legal Representative	Date

_______________________________________
Name of Witness (please print)

_______________________________________
Signature of Witness	Date
APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

1. How long have you been an officer?
2. Why did you want to become an officer?
3. Do you enjoy your job?
4. Have you worked for other departments in the past?
5. What’s your current rank? How long have you been in that rank?
6. What’s a typical day like on the job?
7. Here are a few questions about how you see your role in society
   a. What types of social problems keep you busy during your day-to-day work?
   b. To what extent do social problems have an impact on your job?
   c. Has your job changed over the years? (If so how?)
8. What do you think the public’s expectations are of officers?
   a. Are they appropriate?
9. What are the biggest challenges facing you as an officer today?
10. What makes for a good police officer? (What are the qualities)
11. What are the characteristics of an officer who is not doing a good job? (What are the qualities)
12. Do changes in policy alter the way you see yourself?
13. Can you address the significance of community policing?
    a. Does community policing play a real role in your day-to-day duties?
    b. Does your department stand behind it as a method of policing?
14. Are there any elements of policing that you dislike? If so what are they?
15. Can you speak to the public’s understanding of what policing is all about?
16. Does the media affect how you see yourself as an officer (how so?)
17. When you’re working, do you ever think about the different interests you serve?
    a. Many would argue that police officers work for the public. Do you agree with this statement if so can you explain why? If not can you explain why not?
18. In popular culture (in the media in particular) police officers are depicted as crime fighter's in constant danger. Do you feel that image is accurate?
19. How long does it take you to do paperwork on any given day?