Northumbria Research Link

"Happy Ever After? Making sense of narrative in creating police values"

Abstract

This paper explores how New Zealand Police used story-telling as a crucial driver of co-creation in order to affect a major culture change. Using evidence from over 240 semi-structured interviews, our research challenges current thinking about police cultures and shows how allowing members of an agency to develop and share reflective narratives can promote attachment to new cultural values, through sensemaking. In so doing it extends current literature on co-creation and co-production, and the impact of story-telling on power relationships in organizational culture. It suggests that the crafting and sharing of stories enables value-attribution in a co-creative environment.

Once upon a time

In 2004 the *Dominion Post* newspaper and TVNZ reported allegations that police officers had been involved in the 'pack rape' of a teenage girl in the town of Rotorua, New Zealand. Within a matter of days of the 2004 media reports the government announced a Commission of Inquiry (CoI) into the events surrounding the original allegations of sexual assault and the subsequent investigations. Over a period of several years the Inquiry took evidence from a wide-range of witnesses and victims, investigated case files, and heard expert testimony from oversight agencies, and criminal justice practitioners. The CoI report identified organizational, managerial and cultural problems that had contributed to an environment that precipitated the abuse of vulnerable people and inhibited effective oversight and investigation of malpractice.

In 2007 the CoI into Police Conduct made 60 recommendations for change, and New Zealand Police (NZP) had responsibility for 47 of those. A 10-year time frame was set in which to embed the recommendations, during which the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) periodically reported to Parliament on progress.

The decade of oversight concluded in 2017 and in anticipation of a final audit by the Office of the Auditor General, NZP commissioned the authors of this paper to review progress. The central remit of the research was to consider, in broad terms, the extent to which NZP had met the 'spirit and intent' of the CoI report and recommendations, which was understood to apply to two broad (and somewhat related) themes: adult sexual assault investigations, and culture change within police.

In terms of adult sexual assault investigations, reforms relating to improved training, more robust supervision of investigations, and more appropriate communications with complainants, were identified as central to providing a more professional response that more effectively meets the interests of victims (Rowe and Macaulay, 2019). In relation to the culture of NZP, the CoI identified significant problems stemming from, among other things, a prevailing macho culture that had a negative impact on women within policing. This was combined with a lack of effective management, policy and process to respond to inappropriate behaviour, and a lack of progress in terms of recruiting a diverse workforce. For the purposes of this paper it is the overarching need to develop cultural change that is the key focus.

Our research question, then, is 'to what extent has the use of narrative techniques helped in the co-creation of police values'? We argue that one of the key mechanisms for culture change was the creation of new organisational values, which was achieved through the deliberate use of story-telling and narrative in a co-creative process. We do not suggest that this has definitively achieved significant change, as such change is an ongoing process and will require ongoing evaluation, but we argue that significant progress can be identified. Furthermore we suggest that our research answers a specific gap in the literature on value creation in terms of charting the efficacy of narrative as a sensemaking process in which to embed culture change. In so doing we hope to advance discussion around the use of narrative in value creation, as well as sensemaking in police organisations.

Literature review: Sensemaking, storytelling and value creation

Sensemaking, defined literally as the 'making of sense' (Weick, 1995: 4) is a well-known area of organizational psychology that has been used to explore a range of different research questions. Weick (1993, 1995) has used sensemaking to chart both managerial decisions and organizational restructuring.

It has been used as a framework to explore a range of organizational issues (see, for example, Kauer, 2008 or O'Connell and Weick, 1998) as well as a number of normative perspectives: including ethical decision making (Thiel, et al, 2012); trust building (Fugslang and Jagd, 2015); and organizational justice (Lametz, 2002). As Maitlis et al (2013) show there is a strong emotional underpinning to sensemaking, not only in the individual emotions of those involved (whether positive or negative) but in mediating the likelihood of sensemaking being a solitary or collective endeavour. Emotion is argued to be the 'fuel' that feeds the sensemaking process.

Maitlis et al's work is particularly important as sensemaking has long been identified as a social activity, which Weick (1995) argues is one of its seven key characteristics. Although sensemaking is ultimately retrospective it is an ongoing activity that values plausibility over accuracy and "enacts sensible environments" (Weick, 1995). That is, sensemaking is a tool for which to create a sense of order in a complex or chaotic environment (Weick, 1993: 629). It can also be used to develop a sense of collective identity and organizational membership (Lametz, 2002) through the extraction of experiential 'cues' from those who are involved in such activity.

There has been a small but interesting literature exploring sensemaking in relation to police forces. Lindberg et al (2017) apply a sensemaking frame to managerial decisions during the restructuring of the Swedish police. Others have adapted sensemaking in order to investigate various forms of co-ordinated police activity, either with civilians (Giebels et al, 2017; or between various police agencies (Schakel et al, 2016). In addition there have been a limited number of studies on specific incidents, including two articles on the sensemaking that evolved following the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes by British anti-terrorist police in 2008 (Cornellison et al, 2014; Colville et al 2013).

Strongly aligned with sensemaking is the notion of story-telling and narrative, which is well established as a crucial component of organizational culture development, from Schein's (2010) framing of organizational culture as *artefacts* (symbols, language, processes), *espoused values* (strategies, codes of conduct) and *underlying assumptions* (tacit knowledge, implicit beliefs), through to Johnson and Scholes' (2016) *cultural web*,

Narrative and the use of stories have long been recognised in public policy and management. They have even been used in research on the police, for example Van Hulst's (2013) work on the ways on which stories of police work help officers to make sense of their roles and even their professional identity. The idea of narrative as sense-making is very much in line with that of Bevir and Rhodes' (2006) radical interpretivist view of public policy as constructed (and often) competing narratives. Story-telling is crucial into framing histories of an organization, along with projected futures for how an organization can be. Kaye (1995) argues that the ability to tell convincing stories is crucial to the perceived credibility of a leader, whilst others argue that it is a crucial way of mediating power relations within organizations (Smith and Keyton, 2001).

Like sensemaking, narrative has also been linked with *ethical* culture as it allows for individual and collective *reflection*. Kaptein (2008) demonstrates that 'discussability', the capacity to share narratives openly, is a key component of ethical culture. Kaptein (2011) further found that reflective cultures are closely aligned with positive experiences in people speaking up in organizations. Reflection has also been closely aligned to ethical leadership and culture. Pennycook et al (2017) argue that an inability (or unwillingness) to reflect is linked to the cognitive bias known as the Dunning-Kruger effect, under which people over-estimate their own abilities and achievements. At the organizational level a lack of reflection brings up cultural barriers, which can create toxicity. An unreflective organization encourages silos and distrust within its internal structures, and an antipathy towards external views: frequently portrayed as "us versus them". This is widely noted within the literature on police occupational culture. Police work requires officers to perform roles that Skolnick (1966) argued are characterised by 'authority', 'danger' and 'pressure for efficiency', and these shape a perception among frontline staff that they are the 'thin blue line' separating mainstream society from threats of crime and disorder (Cockcroft, 2013; Chan, 1997). Previous work identifies that co-creating narratives and stories can build innovation and sustainability into organizations (Snyder, et al, 2017) and it can also develop adherence to shared values (Lawton and Macaulay, 2014).

The literature on sensemaking and narrative is much more lacking, however, in the extensive fields of co-creation and co-production.

Co-production, 'currently one of cornerstones of public policy reform across the globe' (Osborne et al, 2016), is intrinsically linked to theories old and new from public value (e.g. Alford and O'Flynn, 2012) to public service-dominant logic (Osborne, et al 2016). Indeed many commentators view co-production as an inevitable aspect of much public management (e.g. Vargo and Lusch, 2004), even though it is argued that '[the] number of citizens, politicians, and professionals [who] willingly embracing coproduction practice is still small' (Bovaird et al, 2017: 364). There is a sense, therefore, in which co-production is partly aspirational, and is regarded as something public managers, and others, should still be collectively striving to achieve (Alford, 2016), rather than just being part of accepted practice.

Co-production is, of course, multi-dimensional. Harris and Boyle's (2009) highlighted co-*delivery* as a key component. Voorberg et al (2015) identified 122 different studies on co-production and co-*creation*. Bovaird's (2007: 847) seminal discussion on co-production argues two axes of co-production: *design* and *implementation*. Using a series of case studies Bovaird showed that the extent to which citizens and professionals are involved in both delineates the extent of co-production. His work developed a framework of nine different degrees of co-production (Bovaird, 2007: 848).

Recently, Loeffler and Bovaird (2016: 1009) have prescribed six specific forms of co-production all of which are underpinned by mutual participation in the process. More broadly, Bryson et al (2017: 649) suggested that many questions around co-creation of public value remain open and requires 'an understanding of the differences actors, levels, spheres, sectors and logics make'. In particular they advocate continued research into the conditions needed for actors to (a) agree on what value can be co-created; (b) map out spheres of legitimacy and authorisation; and, (c) develop capacity for co-production. We found, and discuss further below, that police officers, staff and other internal and external stakeholders were mutual participants, with senior police leaders, in developing a new cultural model in NZP.

Loeffler and Martin (2015) further distinguish between co-production and public *consultation* due to the intensive nature of the former and the more one-way approach of the latter. Loeffler and Bovaird (2016:1007) further argue that co-production should be regarded as distinct from generalised forms of partnership and collaboration 'since these terms, in themselves, capture such behaviours quite adequately, so the phrase "co-production" is superfluous'. Similarly, co-production is much more than self-help activities or self-organising community work, as these omit the public sector side of design and delivery. Their assertion that 'public consultation involves mainly listening' (Loeffler and Martin, 2015) is challenged, however, by Nabatchi and Leighninger (2015) who identifies public participation as a spectrum ranging from 'thin' variations of simple one-way communication and information-sharing; to 'thick' forms of consultation and participation that involve deep reflection and decision making.

Within this spectrum there is little (if any) exploration of sensemaking and narrative, despite attempts to explain the phenomena of value creation within co-productive activity. Osborne et al's (2016) 'service management' view of co-production., for example, posits that all interactions between services and service users are essentially co-productive. No matter how the service user chooses to engage (or not) with a particular service, they are always essentially involved an act of co-production through the ascription of *value*:

> *Service users do not choose to co-produce or otherwise – it occurs whether they choose to or not, whether they are aware of it or not, and whether the public service encounter is coerced or not. Indeed, resistance to service delivery, especially in the more coercive areas of public services such as the criminal justice system or mental health, is as much a form of co-production as a voluntary and conscious willingness to co-produce* (Osborne et al, 2016: 641).

This view is challenging, particularly the notion that co-production could actually be through a coercive act. An example could be fairly benevolent, such as children in a school classroom, who have no choice in having to attend school, and (for the purposes of this example) very little say in what is being taught in a particular lesson. Despite this homogeneity in service delivery, though, each child will potentially

find a different level of value to the lesson. This value could manifest itself in enjoyment and enthusiasm, or the revelation of new knowledge, etc. But it is the child who ascribes value and, in so doing, co-produces the value of that service to her or him. Alford and O'Flynn (2012) identify the role of the citizen here as one of *obligatee*, a person who has no choice in having to receive the service but who definitely exercises a judgement in how valuable they find it.

Osborne et al's (2016) work presents many possible avenues for research, not least of which is what mechanisms can be used to develop a non-coercive sense of co-created value?

Sensemaking is itself a creative activity being the "invention that precedes interpretation… a higher level of engagement by the actor" (Weick, 1995: 14). The remainder of this paper, therefore, will attempt to explore the gap between sensemaking and co-production, through exploring the use of narrative-creation in the development of police values. It will chart the current state of NZ police organizational culture, and will not how that, too, extends to Weick's seven-fold characteristics of sensemaking. As stated in the introduction we are not making any definitive conclusion about culture as a static, end point: there is no such state. We do suggest, however, that current sensemaking suggests a shift in how NZ police culture is evolving, and that this was partly due to the development of narrative.

Methodology

Our research consists of a single organization case study, New Zealand Police, which draws on a long lineage of similar case-based explorations of organizational cultures, in the police and across multiple sectors. Our goal was partly to unearth new discoveries (Jensen and Rodgers 2001) but also to help to extend and build theory (Siggelkow, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989).

Our case utilized a mixed methods approach to create the "chain of evidence" needed for a suitable case study (Yin, 2009). Most of the findings are taken from a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants from NZP staff in a wide-range of positions in terms of both the rank hierarchy of the organization as well as in relation to various specialist and general roles. These have been supplemented with interviews with those from external agencies across New Zealand. More than 240 unstructured interviews with police officers, civilian staff, victim advocates, Crown Prosecutors, defence lawyers,

doctors and staff from victim specialist support agencies were conducted between June and September 2016. 215 of these involved police officers and staff in their workplace, most often they were informal and naturalistic conversations, akin to what Westmarland (2011) describes as 'ethnographic conversations'. These interviews were held in nine of the 12 police districts across NZ and included a broad range of metropolitan and rural areas: from large urban policing environments to very small police stations in rural locations.

Time was a limiting factor in our study, and we could not engage in longitudinal research but taking the lead from a number of authors (e.g. Huby et al, 2011; Wond and Macaulay, 2011; more recently Capellaro, 2017), we extended the ethnographic approach. During a six-week period of fieldwork the first-named author was immersed in the policing environment and was able to observe extensive interactions among police officers and staff and between them and the public and other professional colleagues. This provided rich opportunities for appreciative enquiry of the working culture and environment of policing and to better understand the dynamics of the workplace. These were incorporated into the fieldwork notes alongside the content of the unstructured interviews. In addition, extensive documentary analysis has been undertaken, including a review of policy and management information, background papers, procedural models, and a range of relevant data.

The selection of staff combined purposive and opportunist sampling methods. Some participants were selected based on their specific roles (e.g. district crime managers, specialist investigators, diversity managers, or professional conduct staff). Others were recruited randomly as the researchers visited police stations and recruited participants on an opportunist ad hoc basis. Purposive recruitment was used for interviews with external agencies and informants, some of which were conducted via phone.

The researchers were slightly constrained in that we were not able to conduct primary quantitative research. Given the nature of the subject matter and its emotive origins, however, we suggest that qualitative work is far more useful anyway to be able to probe the nuance of the issues engulfing NZP. Conducting research with police requires particular skills and experience, particularly in relation to

sensitive topics (Brunger et al, 2016). Furthermore the exploratory nature of this study makes qualitative data far more preferable in order for us to attempt to build theory for future testing.

Inevitably it is not possible to discount that participants might have been keen to present accounts of police culture that they felt were 'acceptable' or reflected the 'company line'. This risk was minimised by including a large number of participants from different points of the vertical hierarchy (from new recruits to the Commissioner) and across the horizontal structure: from highly metropolitan urban Auckland to isolated one-person rural stations. The interviews were not recorded, largely for practical reasons and for fear that this might make participants less forthcoming. Instead substantial fieldnotes were generated and subsequently subject to thematic analysis, discussion and review between the two authors through open coding. Adopting Emmerson et al's (1995) techniques, it began with the careful reading and re-reading of fieldnotes to create a wide range of coded categories, which led to the collaborative creation of integrated categories and the development of themes that are linked to the overarching concepts relating to the field of study.

We attempted, therefore, to retain theoretical flexibility in our approach and have consciously selected our sample based on this theoretical consideration rather than randomly. We have also embraced Eisenhardt's (1989) suggestion to utilize opportunistic methods to enable an exploration of emergent data. That this might not create an objective set of results that could not have been interpreted in other ways is a reflection of the messy subjectivities of the lived realities explored in this paper. In his powerful advocacy of ethnographic approaches, Willis (2000: 116) addressed the centrality of the difficulty of writing and analysis and noted that 'reality itself, in the life world of agents, is composed of the fluid relation between representations, practices, juxtaposition of expressive forms, circumstances, and experiences – there is hardly a 'solid original' to reflect!'.

Findings

Cultural change within NZP was identified by many respondents as being fundamental and irreversible. The findings below focus on how cultural change had been approached and the sensemaking that participants have engaged in around its impact.

Using Narrative to Create Value

Police executives suggested that key to their strategy of cultural change was the promotion of a clear set of organizational values[1], something that the Commissioner noted had never previously been codified or articulated within the organization. Since 2015, when two new organizational values (empathy, and valuing diversity) were given formal recognition, NZ Police's values have been denoted by the acronym PRIMED: Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, commitment to Māori and the Treaty, Empathy, and valuing Diversity.

These organizational values were created through telling stories and developing narratives. Workshops were established to try and create a new understanding of values, but instead of open discussions these were ran as writing workshops. Eight groups, including Area Commanders, were created. Each participant was asked to tell the others a true story about an incident in their lives which had profoundly affected them, and to name a particular value that they had taken from that incident. Each group then chose one particular narrative to relay back to the others, all of which were collected and collated to help inform the final values. Participants were encouraged to tell stories about any aspects of their lives, not just their professional careers, and importance was placed on being able to contextualise the value within the narrative. From these workshops and the resulting discussions the PRIMED values were codified.

Even superficially it is clear that these values signal a shift away from a more traditional view of policing to one that focused on helping victims of crime. The two newly-minted values of 'empathy' and 'valuing diversity' were seen as especially important in order to change mind-sets towards a more

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[1] Accessible online from: http://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/our-values.pdf

caring view: 'shifting from an offender focus to victim-centric'. In creating narratives there is a sense of embodiment: sharing stories and contextualising values fosters a sense of empathy, and the emphasis on non-professional incidents diversified the pool of stories. The creation of PRIMED was thus one driver of cultural change but, equally, the result of a cultural shift in the use of narrative.

Importantly the use of narratives extends beyond the creation of PRIMED values towards the broader public. TV recruitment advertising had been changed to reflect the values, using a scenario with members of the public stepping over homeless people on the street, with the strap-line 'do you care enough to be a cop?' This replaced the previous campaign that used highly action-orientated portrayal of policing as crime-fighter and a slogan 'get better work stories'. In effect it tells a story of what the police do, but how they are an organization equally involved in social care as they are with law enforcement. This shaped the presentation of police values and culture to the wider public and putative entrants.

At other levels, police leaders were encouraged to communicate to their staff in language that drew on the transformational PRIMED values: in essence to tell new stories. A civilian staff member interviewed recalled that he had received an email from his line manager praising him for taking action when off-duty to help a member of the public in distress in the street. His manager had told him that his intervention demonstrated commitment to the values of empathy and being victim-focused: which, he suggested, made him think that the inspector 'walked the talk'. Similarly a District Commander reported that 'promotion [of values] has to be authentic, I have to be genuine. I try and link low-level feedback to staff to our values when I promote good news stories'. At a rung lower on the hierarchy, an Area Commander was wary that:

> having to "sell the values" might be seen as gimmicky crap, but we got staff talking
> about them … in the past they wouldn't even have known what the values were. I
> try and subtly insert the values into professional conversations, and I've seen that
> moving down the line management chain.

This quote indicates again the importance of narrative approaches in creating an emotional bond to encourage sincerity and authentic reflection. Not only was it evident that officers and staff could identify and understand the values promoted within NZP, it was also apparent that these were frequently linked to positive cultural change within the organization. Crucially when we asked about the broader impacts of change, respondents phrased responses that demonstrated the key characteristics of sensemaking.

Creating new narratives? Sensemaking and cultural change

For example, many respondents discussed culture change in terms of creating a new police identity (weick, 1995; Lametz, 2002). The traditional identity - hierarchical, authoritarian, masculine – whach was identified as problematic in the CoI report, was widely perceived to be changing into a more open, diverse and reflective approach. Crucially the old identity has not yet been wholly replaced. A group of women officers, for example, spoke of instances of sexist talk and cited examples of poor practice. However, they still made it clear such behaviour stood out as being outside of normative standards, unlike – some longer-standing members of the group noted – earlier periods when it was common and largely unquestioned and unchallenged.

Traditional macho, sexist, police cultural identity identified by the CoI report was often linked to a drinking culture, which our respondents also suggested was eroding with the demise of police bars. An Area Commander reported that:

> *You can't compare the culture with that of 10 years ago. The banter around women – even from 5 years ago – would be completely unacceptable. Policing have done a good job [sic], but part of that is the same as society. Same with alcohol. We still have the police bar upstairs and it would have been packed on a Friday night – the jug session – but it is hardly used now. We would get more profit from a coffee machine. It's a cultural shift.*

Another male officer, from a different district, observed similar changes and noted that there has been a deliberate move away from the traditional (again often regarded as typically male) drinking culture to

try and develop a healthier working environment. His perspective illustrates how tackling a problematic culture is intertwined with a more diverse working environment:

> *I've been in the old police culture that led to the CoI. The lack of bars and canteens is a positive thing, there's been a remarkable improvement in drinking culture. The binge drinking, work hard/play hard environment [has gone]. People are not prepared to dedicate their whole life to the job, now there's a life and family focus, leave the cell phone at work and switch off. There needs to be a balance. Police bars were like nightclubs. I was treasurer of the police club in [.], we took $108k in a year and it was packed from 4pm until the early hours. I'm very glad all that culture's changed – I hated it, it was an unhealthy culture. Young women in those bars were perhaps groupies for police. It resulted in marriage break-ups. That bonding process among police can be problematic.*

Such changes also reflect Weick's understanding that sensemaking is social and ongoing; altering the social environment results in new sense environments (Weick, 1995).

Some respondents suggested that previous environments had been characterised by the development of group loyalties that promoted the cover-up of malfeasance. A small number of those interviewed had some direct experience of working with the group of officers whose behaviour had led to the CoI in the first instance. In separate interviews, they recalled a working environment characterised by bullying and intimidation, such that misconduct was widely known about but could not be challenged. One of those officers was described as an 'officious crude bully, he split the station and you were either a sycophant or an outsider. I would hope that couldn't happen again, with an increasing emphasis on organizational values'. This capacity to challenge unacceptable behaviour has obvious implications in terms of confronting corrupt and criminal activity but cultural change to question senior colleagues was more commonly discussed in more routine terms of operational decision-making.

Arguably this leads to new extracted cues being developed (Weick, 1995) as experiences evolve, Evidence for this can be found in changes to language that is used and found acceptable. A long-serving

detective, who managed a specialist squad investigating adult sexual assaults in an urban area argued that:

> *There's no tolerance of poor language … 'prostitute', 'false allegation', 'piece of shit' … it seeps out to junior officers, its contrary to our values and is just not acceptable. There's been a huge cultural shift in terms of breaking down hierarchy and the culture of deference. Now, 'challenge and contribute' [is the norm].*

It is worth noting, perhaps, the detective explicitly drew a direct link back to the PRIMED values here, which suggests that they have become embedded in the sensemaking around culture change.

The decline in the command-and-control hierarchy was seen by several respondents as redolent of broader societal trends. Certainly more experienced officers often contrasted the contemporary environment sharply with that they had encountered when more junior in career, which corresponds to Weick's framework of retrospective sensemaking (1995). An officer in charge of a small rural station identified operational benefits from a transformed culture, describing how when he started as a junior constable, the …

> *… Station senior [sergeant] ruled the roost – you would do what you were told, more military rank-oriented. Now all are encouraged to participate and have input. We get better decisions and outputs.*

NZP is thus becoming more inclusive and collaborative in terms of leadership. Crucially this extends beyond the police as well, to highlight a more broadly co-creative approach. In another part of the country, the District Commander identified similar changes and suggested that part of the transformation stemmed from police working more closely with external partner organizations: 'the new professional model encourages critical reflection, and we are much more attuned to community perspectives'.

A more external focus is not new in police forces, of course, which has occurred across many other countries, and some key NZ informants identified continuing gaps in terms of the provision of collaborative services that met the needs of victims. Some noted a lack of continuity in police personnel hampered communications, alongside problems of inconsistent support and funding for partnerships. In terms of police culture, however, there was a very wide-spread consensus that positive changes had occurred. Some of those interviewed had been supporting victims of rape and sexual assault for long periods and clearly identified changes in police values, culture and attitudes. When asked to identify the most significant changes in recent times, staff from victim services noted improvements in the organization and management of investigations but also huge cultural shifts such that attending officers were more empathetic and victim-focused rather than concentrating only on the forensic investigation of the offence. Some of those interviewed noted that victims the agencies worked with often said that they had been pleasantly surprised by the quality of their encounters with police.

Improvements in inter-agency communication reflected internal changes in reducing barriers not only in terms of the hierarchical rank structure but also between civilian staff and support officers. The comments reported below, from an officer with over 20 years' service, are significant given that diversity of policing can be understood not only in terms of the demographic profile of staff but also in terms of the multiplicity of roles important to contemporary police work:

> *You can question and discuss, but we need some military hierarchy to make decisions in pressure situations. You can talk about it back at the station. There used to be some reluctance to seek advice, but now the invisible boundary between uniform and non-uniform has been removed. Lines are blurred between departments, it's less sectional and more approachable*

As well as creating an organizational culture conducive to more effective decision-making it was apparent that the move away from a command-and-control hierarchy also promoted innovation and managed risk-taking among staff. Fear of disciplinary 'comeback' or 'being put on paper' is a common feature identified in much of the literature on police culture that notes that avoiding 'in-the-job trouble'

is a major priority for officers (Young 1991). The Commissioner of NZP spoke of the need to ensure that officers were supported in their decisions and actions even if they had unintended or unwanted outcomes, providing the individual had acted in accordance the PRIMED values. Those interviewed who were responsible for professional conduct similarly spoke in terms of promoting a culture of learning from error (Shane 2013) as part of a culture of continual improvement. Inevitably, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which this principle was understood and embraced more widely but officers and staff spoke of their willingness to innovate. A female officer with around 15 years' experience noted considerable progress in recent years in terms of promoting gender inclusivity and commented more widely that 'the current period is one open to change and innovation – more so than ever before. It's an exciting period of my career'. Another officer, with similar length of service, working on his own in a single-crewed station offered a concrete illustration of his innovative practice, and linked this to his understanding of the organizational values. He also noted continuities in police work:

> *the longer you are in [the job], the more new challenges you discover. I set up a programme to educate the Chinese community around water safety [there had been a series of drownings across the greater Auckland area]. We had TV campaigns, signage at waterways in Chinese and Taiwanese. The force philosophy of prevention opened the gateway for me to do it … We were the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff [in earlier days]. Without the prevention model I probably wouldn't have got permission. Earlier in my career I'd have been hesitant to show innovation like that. We spent more time catching criminals – this still has a place. One guy here keeps reverting back to criminal ways. I got him a job at the mill, but he's gone back. We need to keep the balance between prevention and enforcement*

The findings reported above suggest that NZP has had some success in developing a values-based organizational culture, at least in the sense that staff and officers were aware of the PRIMED code of values and were able to relate those to the operational requirements of routine policing. It was widely perceived that this had led to a transition away from a hierarchical and deferential culture of command and control towards a more open environment. The capacity and willingness of staff and officers to

reflect upon their roles, to question decisions, and to innovate emerged from many of the fieldwork interviews. This cultural transformation was enabled, in part at least, by consistent leadership at many levels of the service, by articulating organizational values in terms of operational police work, and through engaging staff in the creation of those values in the first instance. It is not claimed that the cultural transformation has been complete or that problematic forms and expressions have been completely eliminated; and it is not possible to measure changes in objective or quantitative terms.

Discussion: the co-creation of value?

In exploring the NZ Police experience, our findings challenge two inter-related theoretical perspectives: (1) the place of narrative in helping to co-create organizational values; and (2) the way that sensemaking has framed on an ongoing culture change. Our data suggests that the two are closely aligned.

Participants reflected that values co-creation was an important element in NZPs transformation from a culture characterised by deference and hierarchical authority to one based on challenge, professionalism and innovation. In characterising the change in culture in this way it is important to recognise that it is not monolithic and that there has not been a complete move from one model to another. Instead, there is a continuum between the two poles, and elements of the 'original' form continue. This transformation is not complete, of course, and thus the need for continuing sensemaking is not likely to abate.

This sensemaking aspect becomes even more important when we appreciate that most previous police research on organizational change management offer many examples of programmes of change developed by senior executives that have foundered on the rocks of cultural resistance from more junior staff (Haake et al, 2017; Latta 2015).

While the chair of the CoI reported that she had deliberately imposed a lengthy timeframe for change, as a strategic way of avoiding superficial quick-fixes to deeply seated problems, it was recognised by many interviewees that this had meant that progress over the decade had gone through distinct phases. Inevitably, political and institutional priorities around policing had shifted at times. Many interviewees

pointed to particular periods under certain senior officers during which progress had faltered or, in the opposite direction, when new motivation had been brought to the programme. Sometimes the influence of external agencies (such as when the OAG published an interim report highlighting considerable progress was still outstanding) or the intervention of key individuals (such as high-profile victim advocates) was identified by senior staff as important instigators that pushed the CoI reforms back up the police agenda. Again, this reflects wider literature suggesting that cultural change can be driven by external actors (Wood et al 2008; Charman and Corcoran 2015).

Perhaps in recognition of that, embedding a co-creation approach (even in part) within the programme of cultural change developed in NZP appears to have aided reinforcement and integration at all levels within the organization. Multi-faceted leadership of cultural change was evident at various levels within NZP, , which reflects Sherman's (2015) view that powerful advocates are needed for reform to succeed, and Wood et al's (2008) finding that rank-and-file staff need to be nurtured as agents of change. Through the sensemaking capability of narrative, NZP staff continue to be involved in interpreting and embedding cultural change.

It may be argued that the use of narrative was not a true co-creation activity in the way that the literature portrays because it did not utilise members of the public. While that is true it was nevertheless perceived as at the very least a collaborative activity and was a key mechanism among broader, more traditional co-productive approaches. As mentioned previously NZP engaged with the public in a number of different initiatives and continue to do so. It should also be noted that the creation of new values was only one aspect of the culture change programme: we have not had time to discuss new training and development initiatives, for example, nor delve too deeply into recruitment processes.

Perhaps more importantly, however, our research offers insights into Osborne et al's (2016) work on the value co-creation through interaction whereby *any* service user is essentially a co-creator of the value of interactions with the public service. As their service-dominant logic suggests, the way in which a person interacts with a service is a judgement of the value in which she ascribes to it; and that ascription is ultimately something that is a co-creation of (a) the existence of the service; and (b) the

engagement with it. Value is only realised at that specific point of creation; until then it remains potential and unrealised value.

Our findings hopefully extend this notion by showing how narrative ascribes to the characteristics (Weick, 1995) and emotional pull (Maitlis et al, 2013) of sensemaking. The story-telling workshops allowed for a voluntary, and meaningful, sense of value to be created. It was a social activity that used both retrospection and extracted cues to develop a new sense environment. The new environment, as we have seen, permeated throughout respondents' views of the evolution of NZP culture so that story-telling co created the value that establishes a new sense of identity and membership to the organisation (Lametz, 2002).

The workshops had a substantial impact. First, the story-telling techniques used by NZ Police broke down traditional power structures through self-reflection that covered professional and non-professional aspects of people's lives. The workshops essentially stripped participants of their rank and status, at least for their duration. Second, the use of narrative changed the language of the organization, which is also known to be both a crucial component of organizational culture and also a key mediator of power. Sexist language has not been exorcized completely but our findings show it has become marginalized where once it was central; people are literally telling each other different stories. Third, these narratives have become outward facing with a significant emphasis on empathy and social care in terms of public facing work. Finally, the use of story-telling has helped to inculcate a significant emotional attachment to the values of the police; not in the surface level of acceptance but in terms of behaviour and lived actions.

Through using narrative, NZP enabled co-creation that allowed the attribution of value to be developed voluntary from multiple perspectives, in an iterative way. We welcome further research in this area across different agencies.

Conclusion: Happy Ever After?

For all of the reasons above, we suggest that our research shows the importance of narrative as a co-creative device for value creation and ongoing sensemaking. Crucial to the success of narrative for

culture change is that is both utilises and encourages a more reflective approach, which opens up culture to new perspectives and moves it away from traditional conceptions. For NZP story-telling was at the heart of co-creating new organisational values and continues to be so in terms of embedding and interpreting these values.

Value-attribution is itself not a standalone event, of course, and is an ongoing act of sensemaking. People can ascribe different value to experiences at different points in their life, both quantitatively and qualitatively. What may have been useful to us as youths may not quite be so in older age. It seems apparent, therefore, that is co-production is ascribed principally to the value ascribed a service, then there will be an iterative process that determines the relative success of failure of that co-production activity. Again our findings show that ongoing cultural change demonstrates a commitment to iteration and the ongoing evolution of value.

In making these arguments, we also hope that our research adds to the small body of literature on sensemaking in police agencies, but more importantly adds depth to current ideas on co-creation of value and value attribution. In addition, our work also affirms Kaye's (1995) findings on credibility, and also Kaptein's (2008) promotion of the value of discussion for organizational cultures.as well as strengthening Smith and Keyton's (2001) discussion on power relations in police culture. Future research is needed, to see how effectively these co-creative aspects can be in positively affecting cultural change in other organizations.

Our work also speaks directly to the three questions that Bryson et al (2017) framed for research into multi-actor co-creation activities. The deliberate use of narrative and story-telling built agreement over both *what* was to be co-created in NZP as well as *how*; the process legitimised the values that were ultimately adopted. The use of story-telling workshops also demonstrated how NZP developed the capacity and capability for co-creation.

Charting cultural change in any organization is inherently challenging and we acknowledge that this study has limitations in this regard. There is no single model of that culture that respondents could identify with, for example, and moreover, no quantitative measure of change was possible since there

was no pre-intervention data available from a decade or more earlier. Relatedly, as was noted above, the programme of reform was deliberately developed over a period of a decade and many participants explicitly noted that they had not been part of the police service prior to the CoI (in fact the researchers occasionally had to provide a background sketch to participants). For all of these reasons it is noted that the findings outlined here reflect respondents subjective perceptions of cultural change in NZP; it cannot be claimed that they represent a definitive picture or that alternative views have no validity. They are, themselves, stories.

In closing, we note that the events surrounding the NZ Police Commission of Inquiry have now been turned into literal stories; several books have been published around the case and the leading campaigner and survivor of the events has had a television movie made about her life. We feel that this is somewhat apposite. The NZ Police used story-telling to co-create values, to help change culture. This has been reinforced by story-telling approaches in recruitment and in training and development. It seems consistent to translate that now into stories by which the public can more readily co-create the value of their service.

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