Different ways of acting and different ways of knowing? The cultures of police-academic partnerships in a multi-site and multi-force study

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to add to the growing body of literature on police-academic partnerships, which has emerged over the last thirty years. Using a multi-force and multi-site study of 'good' police custody practices, as a case study, we examine the cultures of police-academic partnerships through the concepts of "ways of acting" and "ways of knowing" (Canter, 2004). In terms of ways of acting, we examine differences that arose whilst forming police-academic relationships and accessing multiple forces and custody facilities. In terms of ways of knowing, we examine differences in academic and police theorization about police-citizen relationships. It is argued that different ways of acting – rooted in the cultural, but also organisational and structural contexts of policing and academia – created challenges for the research and for police-academic relationships. By contrast, different ways of knowing contributed to helpful synergies between the two authors, helping the police author to see his work anew and aiding the academic author with the theorization process. One of the key lessons from this case study is that theory development should be seen as foundational to, and as strengthening of, police-academic partnerships.

Keywords: police-academic partnerships, culture, police-citizen relations

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1. Introduction

In the last three decades in the US, the UK and elsewhere, there has been growing openness to police-academic partnerships (Engel and Henderson, 2013; Marks et al., 2010; Canter, 2004).[1] This signifies a shift away from conducting research *on* the police to conducting research *with* the police (Goode and Lumsden, 2016; Lumsden and Goode, 2017), whereby research is undertaken as part of a collaborative relationship, in which the police are involved in the formulation and conduct of the research, as well as in the dissemination and implementation of the research findings (Innes, 2010). As McAra notes, though, this also has the effect of transforming expectations about the role of criminologists; they have been turned into "problem solvers" not just "problem raisers" (2017: 768). The growing momentum for research *with* the police is rooted in the coalescing of police and academic agendas in England and Wales. In academia, there has been a drive for social science research that makes a demonstrable impact on society;[2] for example, funders, such as the Economic and Social Research Council, have made it a requirement for researchers to consider how their research will do this. The research climate is, thus, one in which academics are increasingly encouraged to actively engage with citizens and other key stakeholders, throughout the research process, particularly during data collection, knowledge production and the dissemination processes.[3] This impact agenda has fused with the drive in policing to professionalise their activities, through organisations such as The College of Policing, as well as through the growth of evidence-based policing (EBP), in which police decision-making is seen as requiring the input of academic research evidence in order to deliver cost-effective solutions to crime and other problems encountered by the police. As Sherman (1998) says, EBP "uses the best evidence to shape the best practice" (Sherman, 1998: 4). Such changes to the police *modus operandi* has gained particular credence, following significant cuts to police budgets since 2010, which has created an imperative to do more with less.[4]

The merging of these police-academic agendas suggests that, in theory, police-academic partnerships are in something of a 'honey moon' period in which there

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[1] Police-academic partnerships may be more of a regular occurrence, but they are not common-place. For example, less than a third of American police agencies reported participating in some form of police-academic partnership in the five years up to 2010 (Rojek et al., 2012).

[2] Impact is defined as "an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia" it also includes "the reduction or prevention of harm, risk, cost or other negative effects" (REF, 2011: 26 cited in Guillaume et al., 2015).

[3] Such developments have been theorised through notions of 'public sociology' and 'public criminology' (Burawoy, 2004; Loader and Sparks, 2010).

[4] The Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010 announced a cut of central government funding for policing of £1.9 billion between 2010/11-2014/15, amounting to a 20 per cent cut in police budgets. Though it was announced in the autumn budget in November 2015 that there would be no further cuts to police budgets, this was questioned by the UK Statistics Authority who argued that the police faced a £160 million real-term cut in Whitehall funding in 2015-16 and 2016-17 (Travis, 2016).

are potential opportunities for collaborative police-academic partnerships.[5] Indeed, the burgeoning police-academic partnership literature is replete with ideas about the nature of these opportunities, as well as the pitfalls.[6] Of particular relevance to the present paper, though, are the discussions about the cultural divide between police and academia. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to this growing body of literature on police-academic partnerships. In particular, it provides a case study of the cultures of police-academic partnerships evident during an ESRC-funded study of 'good' police custody practices, the 'good' police custody study (GPCS).[7] We reflect on the challenges and pleasures of engaging in a *multi-site and multi-force*, project from the perspective of the police and academics. It is important to reflect on these contextual issues because of the additional complexities of such projects, as a result of "variations in local culture and practice" (Buerger, 2010: 141), but also because context is crucial to understanding the meanings ascribed to knowledge and action in police-academic settings (Woods et al., 2017). The central questions around which this paper revolves are what is the nature of police-academic cultures, particularly in a multi-site and multi-force study of police custody? What are the implications of these cultures for police-academic partnerships? These questions are explored using Canter's (2004) concepts of "ways of acting" and "ways of knowing" (which are described in more detail below). In terms of ways of acting, we examine the differences that arose whilst forming police-academic relationships and whilst accessing multiple custody facilities and forces. In terms of ways of knowing, we examine the synergy that arose from academic and police theorization. We examine this in relation to theories about police-citizen relationships. Throughout, the academic author, Layla Skinns, who is the principal investigator on the GPCS, offers her ideas about each of these matters and this is accompanied by the police author, Alan Greene, reflecting on these ideas from a police perspective, drawing on his experience as a former Superintendent for police custody in a large force in the North or England (2011-2014) and his work assisting the National Lead for police custody (2013-2015).

In order to examine these issues, we first consider the existing literature on the cultures of police-academic partnerships. Second we examine, the methodology of the GPCS so as to set out the multi-site and multi-force nature of the research, as well as considering the sources on which this paper draws. Third we examine, in turn, what the research showed about ways of acting and ways of knowing. To conclude, we return to the central questions about the nature of police-academic cultures and their implications in a multi-site and multi-force study, as well as

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[5]   Such honeymoon periods have been noted with regards other police partnerships. At one point, the community safety partnerships were described as being in a 'honeymoon period' (Phillips et al., 2002).

[6]   For other case study-based accounts of the pitfalls and benefits of police-academic partnerships, see for example, Guillaume et al. (2012); Foster and Bailey, (2010); Wuestewald and Steinheider (2009).

[7]   Police custody is where an arrested person is taken whilst their case is investigated and whilst a decision is reached about what should be done with the case, such as whether to charge, bail or take no further action against them.

examining the implications of the paper for the existing research and the embedding of research evidence in practice. In so doing, this paper makes an original contribution to the field of police studies, particularly to debates about the cultures of police-academic partnerships. As set out below, this is partly because the existing literature on the cultures of police-academic partnerships has tended to be either experientially derived or small in scale, meaning that by drawing on a multi-site and multi-force study, such as the GPCS, the present paper provides a new perspective on 'old' issues. Its original contribution also stems from one of its main conclusions, namely, that theory development is foundational to and as strengthening of police-academic partnerships. This is a matter which has become partially eclipsed by the policy-driven nature of research *with* rather than *on* the police.

2. The cultures of police-academic partnerships

Culture is a contentious concept and has been subject to considerable academic debate (Schein, 2004: 28). Schein (2004) emphasises the shared aspect of culture, defining the culture of a group as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (2004: 34). As such knowledge – as a form of shared learning that leads to shared taken-for-granted assumptions – is seen as a key component of culture. Drawing on Sackmann (1991), Woods et al. (2017: 5) say that "culture is built on, or from, knowledge" and also that knowledge is "fundamental to the collective cognition that constitutes culture." However, how fundamental knowledge is to culture is contentious; to see culture only as knowledge separates it from social action and prevents full consideration of its effect on social life. Hence Canter's conceptualisation of the police-academic divide is particularly useful.[8] He distinguishes "ways of acting" and "ways of knowing", with Canter arguing that there are fundamental differences between the police and academia with regards to both (2004: 11).[9]

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[8] The cultural divide between police and academia has also been conceptualised in other ways. For example, as a reaction to the Marxist conflict-driven police research of the 1970s and 1980s, MacDonald (1987) described this cultural divide in police-academic relations as like 'a dialogue of the deaf' and sought to promote a more collaborative approach. This 'dialogue of the deaf' concept has since been used in a number of publications to characterise continuing cultural differences (Goode and Lumsden, 2016; Buerger, 2010; Bradley and Nixon, 2009), albeit that some have also argued that police-academic partnerships have since moved on from such stark divisions and resultant misunderstandings (Engel and Whalen, 2010).

[9] Though Canter (2004) emphasises *inter*-cultural differences, it is also important to note the *intra*-cultural differences both within the police and academia. Reiner (2010: 116), for example, notes that police culture is not monolithic or unchanging and that there are many cultures within the police depending, for example, on individual outlook and personality, rank, role, career stage, history and context.

In terms of ways of knowing, Canter (2004) distinguishes data from evidence. The police search for *evidence*, which they see as almost sacred because of its potential to lead to conviction or acquittal. Researchers, however, require *data* with which they can test hypotheses. Data are less revered than police evidence, as there is always more data to be had and more questions to be asked. However, this expresses a narrow and not especially accurate understanding of what the police do, namely, as revolving around crime-fighting. Another way of thinking about this cultural divide, with respect to ways of knowing, is by considering the role that theory plays in police work and in academia. In an insightful piece, Tilley (2015: 141) argues that police work is, in fact, "washed through with theory", albeit that these tend to be folk theories and so the police do not necessarily understand them as theories per se and thus tend to see their work as at odds with academic work, in which theory plays a more self-evident role. Therefore, he argues that "if academics are to contribute to improvements in policing they can best do so by helping the police to recognise, refine, formalise and test their working theories, so that new and better ones can come to replace flawed older ones" (Tilley, 2015: 151). This suggests that, though it exists, the distinction between the police and academia with respect to ways of knowing is not as stark as Canter (2004) suggests, a point also made by Wuestewald and Steinhelder (2009).

Similarly, in terms of ways of acting, though present, the distinction between the police and academia is also sometimes not as stark as Canter (2004) suggests. Canter (2004) contrasts the reactive can-do culture, particularly of rank and file officers, with the more leisurely and deliberative pace of academia in which academic projects and publications can sometimes take years to complete. No doubt this clash of cultures can inhibit the embedding of research evidence into decision-making and practice: the police may want research evidence more quickly than academics can provide it. Such differences may also have intensified in a neoliberal era in which new public management oriented drives to count and quantify police activities have encouraged the police to be seen to do something, rather than make considered decisions based on robust research evidence (Goode and Lumsden, 2016). At the same time, as a result of a similar set of conditions, the pace of academia has also quickened. Lumsden and Goode (2017: 10), for example, note the pressures of "fast academia" in their knowledge-exchange partnership with the police, in which pressure to spend internal university funding meant they had to be to "ninja-like" in their productivity, which militated against "reflection, learning, knowledge production and the building of relationships with researcher users", as well as against health and well-being.

Our argument, thus far, is that police-academic partnerships have been plagued by cultural differences, such as over ways of knowing and ways of acting. Even though these differences may not be as stark as they once were, they still exist. Hence, the police-academic partnerships literature identifies a number of ways in which to mitigate the effects of cultural differences. Greene, for example, says that "the process of engaging in police research partnerships is highly anthropological, sensitive to context and culture" and he thus encourages researchers to understand the underlying rhythms of the police (2015: 117). What he means by this is that,

regardless of whether researchers are conducting an ethnography or not, anyone doing research with the police needs to be attuned to the beliefs, values, knowledge, organisational processes and structures that inform their day-to-day work. Equally, the police also need to demonstrate the same kind of anthropological approach in relation to understanding the culture of academics. Without an appreciation of such differences, this makes it impossible to bridge the cultural divide between academia and the police, as well as making it impossible for trust to flourish. Tompson et al say, for example, "[t]hat each partner's skills and experience are valued rests on a mutual appreciation that neither partner holds the monopoly of knowledge or experience, on the research topic. It requires an acknowledgement that each partner brings complementary strengths and contributions to the partnership ... If these factors are in place then a reciprocal relationship based on trust can flourish" (2017: 187).

This is not to say, however, that inter-cultural differences can nor, indeed, should be eliminated altogether. Laycock says, for example that "with the best will in the world, it remains difficult to serve two audiences with one research product. Academics like detail and their results usually have caveats; they don't like to speculate. Police staff want to know the answer, and quickly, and they will sometimes settle for an informed opinion. These are fundamental differences, which drive cultural norms and expectations and they have never really been addressed – perhaps we have to live with them" (2015: 55). In addition, to some extent, cultural differences *need* to exist so as to prevent the blurring of occupational boundaries and the undermining of the interdependent independent relationship that is necessary in order to sustain police academic partnerships (Brown, 2015; Crawford and Cunningham, 2015; Foster and Bailey, 2010; Rock, 1990: 39). After all, police-academic partnerships are not entirely benign entities; researchers who forego their independence run the risk of being co-opted into police agendas, thereby making them potentially a "servant of power" (Lumsden and Goode, 2017: 12). The dangers of this are all too apparent in Madensen and Sousa (2015), for example, who argue that academics should eschew academic interests in poverty and social injustice, which they see as being of little interest to the police, and instead, adopt ideologies consistent with police crime management efforts. If academics were to follow their advice, this would likely result in a 'cop-sided' approach to the research process.

3. Methodology

This paper is based on the GPCS, the overarching aim of which is to rigorously examine what 'good' police custody is, taking into account recent shifts towards civilianisation and privatisation in how police custody is delivered.[10] The research proceeded in three phases, the details of which are set out here in order to enable the reader to appreciate its multi-site and multi-force nature. In Phase 1 of this five year study (2013-2018), custody managers in 40 of the 43 forces in England and Wales

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[10]   See here for further details of the specific aims of the research https: //www.shef.ac.uk/law/ research/projects/police

were surveyed in order to explore contemporary patterns in the delivery of police custody (see Skinns et al., 2017a for details of what was found). In Phase 2, between March 2014 and May 2015, the research team observed and interviewed staff and detainees in four suites in four forces, using these data to develop preliminary ideas about the meaning of 'good' police custody (see Skinns et al. 2017b and Wooff and Skinns, 2017 for details of some of what was found).[11] In Phase 3, these initial theories were further developed through the administering of a closed-question questionnaire to nearly 800 staff and detainees in 27 custody suites in 13 forces between May 2016 and January 2017. These Phase 3 data will be used to devise a set of good practice benchmarks, which will be consulted on in 2018.

For the purposes of this paper the GPCS is treated as a case study. A 'case study' refers to in-depth investigation of one or more naturally occurring cases. A case may be a person, a small group, a community, an event or an episode (Platt, 1988). In the present paper, the GPCS and the various police-academic partnerships that it entailed, is treated as a case study in order to reveal social action and the development of knowledge at the micro-level. As such, it draws only on parts of the GPCS relevant to developing a contextualised understanding of police-academic cultures. In particular, it draws on some of the data collected in Phase 2 and 3, reflections on the research process by the research team noted down in collective and individual research diaries in Phases 1-3, as well as Alan's reflections on facilitating the research, especially in Phase 1. The research diaries were re-read by Layla, picking out themes relevant to this paper, including on accessing and forming relationships, as well as on discussions about police-citizen relations. If necessary, these were also discussed by Layla with some of the research team. The two authors also met and discussed these themes, before and after N8 Policing Research Partnership conference, *Working with the Police on Policing*, at which an earlier version of this paper was presented. These reflections and observation, though personal and individualised, give an insight into the research process and the cultures of those involved, across the different phases of the study. At the same time, they are also limited given that they represent only a single research project case study of the cultures of police-academic partnerships, which may not be generalisable to other settings.[12] A further limitation is that the case study primarily focuses on a narrow time period in the life of the GPCS (2014-15), during which Alan was supporting the national lead for police custody.[13] Layla has since gone on to form a new set of working relationships with the subsequent national lead and their staff, in which, for example, she is regularly invited to presents at events run by the national lead and has become involved in relevant working groups.

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[11] In total, the research team spent 532 hours observing and conducted 97 interviews (47 with staff and 50 with detainees).

[12] Difficulties with generalisability are one of the main criticisms levelled at case study research. However, the relevant question to ask is not whether one can generalise, rather to what one can generalise (Stake, 2000). If accompanied by 'thick descriptions' of context, it possible to infer whether a case study provides lessons for other similar settings.

[13] The national lead for police custody is usually a chief officer in a police force (with normal duties alongside the police custody portfolio) and they are typically supported by a staff officer.

4. Ways of acting: accessing and forming relationships with the police

The GPCS emerged from a set of lengthy and ongoing relationships with various police custody stakeholder organisations, as a result of a prior study of police custody documented in Skinns (2011), but also as a result of Phase 0 of the GPCS.[14] As such, underpinning the GPCS were a set of "slow burning" personal and professional relationships of the kind that Marks et al. (2010: 117) note to be important to bringing about "micro-changes" over time. Phase 0 took place prior to Layla submitting her grant application to the ESRC. It was explicitly used to consult with key stakeholders about the proposed research and about the kind of matters they would like to see included in the project. For example, a conversation with a representative of HMIC about the centrality of risk to police custody led Layla to incorporate this as one aspect of 'good' police custody to be explored in the study. During Phase 0, Layla had conversations and meetings with representatives from the National Police Improvement Agency (now defunct), the Home Office, the Metropolitan Police Service, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), the Association of Chief Police Officers (now defunct and replaced by the National Police Chief's Council, within which the national lead for police custody sits), The Police Federation and G4S. Layla also gave presentations of her research and shadowed an HMIP/HMIC inspection in 2011. Virtually all of these stakeholders subsequently wrote letters supporting the research, in principle, which were included in the application to the ESRC.

Because of these existing relationships, but also due to the multi-site and multi-force nature of the study, when the GPCS received funding Layla decided it important to continue to form strong links with all of these national-level key stakeholders, with representatives from the majority of these organisations eventually sitting on the GPCS's research advisory group. In building these relationships, aside from seeking feedback on the proposed research from key stakeholders and enabling access to these organisations, in the future, Layla was also mindful of ESRC requirements about impact. In this sense, these relationships were not rooted in the "happenstance" that some note to be the case, in which one-off encounters develop into an ongoing partnership and multiple projects (Foster and Bailey, 2010: 96; Wuestewald and Steinhelder, 2009). Rather, they were derived primarily from Layla's ongoing personal and scholarly commitment to the field of police of custody, but also from a degree of necessity. This suggests that the current impact environment has the potential to contribute to an unhelpful degree of instrumentalism amongst police researchers, which may not be conducive to police-academic partnerships if they are simply treated like 'research and run' opportunities. In the case of the GPCS, these ongoing relationships within and commitments to the area of study seemed

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[14]   The one relationship where there was a lack of continuity was with the National Lead for police custody, though this was primarily because, since Phase 0 of the GPCS, there have been three National Leads and also because Layla was on maternity leave in 2015.

to partially overcome any police-academic differences, at least in the early stages of the research.

It is also important to point out, though, that the organisational arrangements supporting police custody were another factor that worked in the favour of the GPCS. Had the research been in an area of police work, for which there was no defined national business lead within the police and, consequently, no established set of contacts, the study would have been much more difficult to arrange. Indeed, the relationship between the police's assignation of national business areas of policing and any subsequent scrutiny of the police service may be seen as problematic. It is of interest that if one were to look at the three areas in which the police are physically involved in the deaths of citizens (firearms, custody and driving i.e. pursuits and emergency response), whilst there are defined business areas for firearms and custody, there is no business area which deals with the issue of occupational road risk. Yet, more people either die or are seriously injured on the road in connection with police driving than the other two areas of police work put together (IPCC, 2014: 4). On a related theme, custody is struggling with its involvement in the large increase in detainees accused of sexual assault or exploitation with a concomitant rise in suicides after release (Phillips et al., 2016). One of the structural problems the police face is establishing a coherent policy across the different areas of policing. Academic scrutiny is likely to be inhibited if there is not a unifying business lead, in these ambiguous areas, who can help signpost them.

Once the GPCS began, after initially speaking to the national lead for criminal justice and then police custody, Layla was eventually put in touch with Alan in October 2013. By February and March 2014, Alan was fully involved in assisting the GPCS research team with the Phase 1 survey. Alan played a key role in the collection of these data by reminding the 43 forces in England and Wales to fill in the survey. Importantly, he did so in ways that were understandable to the police, for example, taking advantage of the largely hierarchical nature of police organisations (Bayley, 2008; Brodeur, 2010: 70; Canter, 2004; Elmsley, 1991: 25; Lustgarten, 1986: 13; Mawby and Wright, 2008).[15] In this regard, it was adventitious that Alan was relatively senior for a staff officer to a business lead and consequently enjoyed a large amount of discretion. It was his observation that, a more junior staff officer may well have been deterred from dealing with contacts in other forces who were more senior than them. In this way, Alan acted as an intermediary between the research team and the police, bridging any potential divisions between the two. At this stage of the GPCS, Layla and the research team were also in fairly constant contact with Alan. It was his reflection that the perseverance of the researchers caused him to persevere with forces, who were not responding, to the point of ringing up the last seven forces who had not responded until then. This is perhaps an example of where similarities, rather than differences, between Alan and the

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[15]   The hierarchical nature of police organisations has been linked in England to its history. Though the new police were considered to be an alternative to the military, some aspects of it were retained, such as its hierarchical structure, which was also a source of complaint (Brodeur, 2010: 70; Elmsley, 1991: 25).

research team enabled the research to progress. As a result of this combination of factors, the Phase 1 survey received a high response rate, with 40 of 43 forces in England and Wales providing most of the information requested.

Differences in police and academic ways of acting became more difficult to address, however, in subsequent phases of the research, in which the research team, had to build relationships with individual forces or "fiefdoms" (Johnston et al. 2008: 231), as well as with staff in individual custody suites. This met with varying degrees of success. This was evident, for example, in relation to data sharing and confidentiality agreements. Some forces, particularly in Phase 2, when the research team were requesting access to sensitive de-personalised police custody record data, engaged in lengthy data sharing negotiations. In one force, this delayed the data collection by over six months, such were the difficulties encountered with the finer details of this agreement. During these negotiations it did not feel like much of a partnership, particularly given the more powerful position of the police as 'knowledge brokers' and as the main custodians of police data (Crawford, 1997: 131; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997: 191; Tierney, 2001). In spite of this lengthy process and after repeated requests by various members of the research team to access the promised data, this force did not supply the data that had been agreed. Though a lack of resources was a key factor in this force's decision, it might also be construed as a breach of trust. Such breaches of trust are considered damaging to police-academic partnerships (Tompson et al., 2017; Laycock, 2015; Foster and Bailey, 2010; Marks et al., 2010; Wuestewald and Steinheider, 2010). Whether this would have been the case for the GPCS was never tested out, though, as the research team had limited dealings with this force in subsequent phases of the research.

These clashes in terms of police-academic ways of acting were also evident in Phase 3, in which staff varied in their cooperation with the research on the ground in the 27 custody suites in the research, irrespective of the fact that access had been formally granted by their managers. By and large, Phase 3 involved the administering of surveys via to staff and detainees in the custody suite. Some staff were helpful, whilst others would politely ignore the researchers. Some forces would allow paper copies to be administered in the cells, some would not. One would not allow iPads to be given to detainees to fill in the questionnaire themselves. They were concerned that it could be used as weapon against the researchers, therefore making it too risky, so the questions had to be read to detainees. The remaining forces were happy for detainees to use the iPads to complete the questionnaire. Some forces insisted on posting members of staff outside the door of consultation rooms, whilst detainees were filling in the questionnaire with the research team, and others did not. What was common to all forces, though, was the lack of resources when assisting with the research,[16] suggesting that difficulties with police-academic partnerships can be as much structural as cultural. Regardless, these different ways of acting meant

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[16]   The research team's perception that staff felt lacking in resources has since been confirmed by analysis of the Phase 3 data (Skinns and Sorsby, 2017b). Factor analysis of data on how staff reacted to working in police custody showed that workload and lack of support of managers were a major source of stress. This factor explained 36% of the overall variance in the data. The item that loaded most strongly on this factor was 'the lack of staff working in this suite'.

that it was incumbent on the research team to persuade often stressed and busy people to assist them with the data collection process (e.g. by bringing detainees from the cells to speak to the research team in consultation rooms). The research team found the almost constant series of negotiations with gatekeepers and with staff in each of 25 custody suites a challenge, as the staff probably did too.

One can see on a case-by-case basis the rationales for a different force to take a different approach to hosting and co-operating with researchers. Indeed, it seems a paradox that this process is actually hampered by the hierarchical nature of the police force. Rather than, as one may imagine, a senior person being able to smooth the way by *dictat*, the reality seemed that the discretionary nature of policing meant it more likely that any one officer could be a blocker in the chain of command required for a permissive decision (Canter, 2004). One can explain the difficulties in the GPCS by atomising each decision needed to facilitate access, but this does not address a more fundamental question. Is the police service open to research, scrutiny and question? Though there has been a growing openness amongst the police to collaborations with academia (Engel and Henderson, 2013; Marks et al., 2010; Canter, 2004), like most bureaucratic organisations they are also characterised by secrecy (Bittner, 1970: 64; Cain, 1973: 190-1; Canter, 2004; Harkin, 2015; Holdaway, 1983: 114-119; Leo, 2008: 35-6; Lustgarten, 1986: 156; Manning, 2010: 194; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983). Moreover, this secrecy can place them at odds with academics, who are duty bound, for example, to open up their work to public scrutiny, such as through academic publications (Canter, 2004). This clash of cultures can be illustrated by Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. All researchers will have experienced frustrations at getting responses from the police to what seem like simple requests.[17] As a police practitioner, often one can also feel the frustration of the FOI point of contact in the force too, as they run up against the same kind of obstacles that researchers on this project encountered. That is, difficulties with research access are partly the product of cultural differences (e.g. secrecy vs. openness), as well as individual discretionary decision-makers, all of which becomes more complicated in projects such as the GPCS involving multiple forces and sites.

5. Ways of knowing: breaking down the 'cultural divide'?

In this section, we now explore police-academic differences in terms of ways of knowing and their consequences for police-academic partnerships. We briefly examine this in relation to theories about police-citizen relations in police custody (for further details see also Skinns et al, 2017b). In many respects, custody suites appeared and were experienced by detainees as coercive. This was, in part, because they bear some resemblance to prisons, though without detainees facing the prospect of a lengthy spell inside, at least not inside the custody suite (Skinns et al.,

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[17]   Indeed, delays with FOI requests have been found to arise across governmental bodies and organisations who can be subject to such requests, at least in a minority of cases (Cabinet Office, 2016).

2017b). As with prisons, the physical conditions and the architecture – for example, in the case of custody suites, the subterranean feel, the elevated booking-in desks and extensive use of CCTV – contributed to a sense of isolation, powerlessness and helplessness for detainees. These feelings were added to as a result of how detainees reacted to being deprived of their liberty, autonomy and certainty.

To an extent, this was compensated for by staff using their authority 'softly' and quietly such that detainees sometimes did not even realise that power was being exercised over them. They did this, firstly, by building a rapport with detainees by creating a 'good' first impression in which custody staff differentiated themselves from arresting officers and encouraged the view that custody staff could be trusted, as well as through the use of humour and light-hearted conversation. Secondly, staff communicated respectfully with detainees by talking to them politely and by acknowledging and treating detainees as fellow human beings. Thirdly, 'soft' power manifested itself as information giving; some staff saw the value in providing regular and detailed updates to detainees, such as about what was going to happen to them either immediately or in the future, as well as providing information about decisions taken about them, and how and why that decision had been made. These forms of 'soft' power had a number of effects on detainee compliance. They seemed to make detainees less likely to challenge police authority and more likely to comply with police procedures such as risk assessments and with having their fingerprints and photograph taken, as well as making them more likely to accept their detention, more generally. In many respects, the 'soft power' that we found was somewhat similar to procedural justice (Skinns et al., 2017b).

Based on the Phase 2 data, we also concluded that this 'soft' power was a dynamic, processual matter, shaped in particular by the physical conditions of the suite, the uncertain and insecure nature of detainees' circumstances, as well as by the sense of disempowerment they felt as a result of being deprived of their liberty and autonomy (Skinns et al., 2017b). Furthermore, this context suggests that police custody may be the ultimate 'teachable moment'; it makes detainees' disposition such that interactions in the suite may have a particular impact on their understandings of the nature of their relationship with the police and their place in society (Skinns et al., 2017b). These theoretically-driven conclusions from the second phase of the GPCS offered a novel way of seeing things for Alan.

At the time of the research (though before the above conclusions were drawn from the Phase 2 research), Alan was helping draft a revised copy of Authorised Professional Practice documents (which are published by The College of Policing and provide good practice guidance to police custody staff) and had received over fifty responses to the consultation document. Most of the responses centred on the desire for greater clarity on regulation of behaviour of police staff or for more regulation, generally. A handful looked at the interaction between police and the detainee and these concentrated on the treatment of vulnerable detainees, most asking for some kind of regulation. It would seem that viewing custody through the quotidian interaction between the police and the detainee does not have any traction in police culture. Skills in this seem to be a by-product of another activity i.e. it is what is learned in practice to actually get the job done. Moreover, no other

agency was pointing out to the police the importance of their everyday interactions with detainees. Indeed, it could be argued the constant demand for more regulation, especially by the IPCC, was reinforcing a view of custody, as a place in which things can only go wrong. One could postulate that such a view of custody could actually inhibit good relations between police and detainees, in which staff retreat into official formality of laws, police procedures and rules to avoid any potential criticism.

Since writing this paper, Alan's theory about the emphasis that operational custody staff place on abiding by legal rules over and above how they interact with detainees has been provided with some preliminary empirical support by the Phase 3 data. In a recent presentation of these data at the bi-annual National Custody Forum (chaired by the current national lead for police custody and at which all forces and key stakeholders are represented), Layla and her colleague noted some important distinctions between staff and detainees in terms of how they view the authority and interpersonal treatment in the custody suites (Skinns and Sorsby, 2017a). For staff, acting according to legal rules was paramount. By contrast, for detainees, interpersonal treatment – particularly whether they were treated with kindness – was key and was strongly correlated with detainees' overall sense of satisfaction with how they were treated by staff.

This suggests one reason why police-academic partnerships matter; they can assist experienced police practitioners to see what they do anew through the conceptual lenses that academia offers. Similarly, police working theories can help academics to better theorise too, for example, providing initial hypotheses about what might be going on, which can be subsequently tested by the data. That is, there is a potentially helpful synergy that comes from police-academic partnerships which aids the development of theory in ways that our beneficial to both parties. What the foregoing discussion also suggests is that Tilley (2015) is correct to argue that police work is "washed through with theory", but also that operational staff, including police custody staff, may need some assistance in refining their theories, in their case, about the importance placed on legal rules over and above the interpersonal treatment of detainees.

6. Conclusion

In sum, in this paper we have explored difference in police-academic partnerships through the lens of ways of acting and ways of knowing (Canter, 2004). We have argued that different ways of acting – rooted in the cultural, as well as the individual-level, organisational and structural contexts of policing and academia – created challenges for the GPCS. This was less problematic in the earlier stages of the research, for example, when Alan was able to play a mediating role, such as during the administering of the Phase 1 survey, translating academic ways of working into something that was more understandable to police practitioners. These differences became more problematic, however, in the latter stages of the research when the research team found themselves in an almost constant series of negotiations about access to conduct the research with staff in multiple forces

and multiple sites. The context of the research was thus vital for understanding these sets of individual-level, cultural, organisational and structural differences. By contrast, different ways of knowing contributed to helpful synergies between the two authors. It helped Alan to see his work anew, encouraging him to reflect on the emphasis that his colleagues placed on legality rather than interpersonal relationships between staff and detainees. For Layla, Alan's working theories on this provided her with a framework with which to better understand and to some extent confirm some of the findings that emerged from subsequent analysis of the Phase 3 survey data. In sum, within the GPCS, partnership working in relation to ways of knowing seemed to do more to break-down differences than did partnership working linked to ways of acting.

These findings have a number of implications for the existing literature on the cultures of police-academic partnerships. They suggest that cultural differences are not the only factors which stymie the development of police-academic partnerships, organisational and structural conditions play a role too. This serves as important reminder that understanding police-academic partnerships comes about partly from situating them in their wider social context. Canter's (2004) analysis paints a fairly stark picture of the differences between the police and academia, which were perhaps rooted in the socio-historical conditions of the early 2000s. The present paper provides further evidence that police-academic partnerships have moved on since then and that these police-academic differences are not quite as stark as they once were. This may be, in part, a result of broader social forces, particularly the growth of the impact agenda in academia, the professionalisation of policing and also austere financial conditions, particularly for the police, which have served to bind the two institutions together. That said, Laycock (2015) is right that police-academic differences cannot and should not be entirely eliminated because such differences breed the interdependent independence necessary for researchers to develop their own perspective and to offer, sometimes critical, insights, as well as ideas about how police practices could be improved. In the context, of the GPCS, in which questions may be asked about whom police custody is 'good' for, this independence is likely to furnish the evidence-based 'good' practice benchmarks with a necessary degree of credibility and authority. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, one of the main conclusions of this paper lends support to Tilley's (2015) observations about the importance of theory to police work, not just academia, with academics potentially being in a position to assist the police with refining, formalising and testing their folk theories. The present research also suggests that the opposite is true too, namely, that the police can also assist academics with the development of theory (not just vice versa), helping with the framing, refinement and interpretation of academic explanations.

As noted in the introduction, this paper is oriented around two key questions. Firstly, what is the nature of police-academic cultures in a multi-site and multi-force study of police custody? Secondly, what are the implications of these cultures for police-academic partnerships? In response to the first of these questions, this paper has, perhaps unsurprisingly, demonstrated that there were important differences between the police and academia, within the confines of the GPCS case study. This

was particularly evident in terms of ways of acting, though less so in terms of ways of knowing. For example, there were cultural differences in terms of how detainees and the resultant risks they posed were conceived and understood, prompting the researchers and the police to propose different ways of surveying detainees in Phase 3 of the research. Police-academic differences in the GPCS were not just affected by cultural factors, but also by organisational and individual-level factors. As noted above, for example, the GPCS had in its favour a degree of organisational support, as a result of there being a national lead for police custody. Had this not been the case, it would have been even more difficult to access and form relationships with police forces, particularly in Phase 3 of the research. In terms of individual-level factors, on the micro scale, there were encounters with some police staff that could be demoralising. Even getting to the point of producing this paper required a great deal of perseverance and some luck. Alan would also argue it required what he termed a "humble belief" on behalf of the researchers. In its most basic terms this meant retaining confidence in the project, in the face of obstruction or being made to feel that research approach was naïve or based on ignorance of the subject.

This emphasis on persistence and belief in the project by the researchers and police practitioners, particularly key gatekeepers, provides a partial response to the second question that this paper has sought to address about the impact of police-academic cultures on police-academic partnerships. This second question can also be addressed by further examining the implications of the paper for the practice of police-academic partnerships. In terms of overcoming differences – to the extent that this is possible in a multi-force and multi-site study like the GPCS, as well as desirable because of the deleterious consequences of boundary blurring and academics being co-opted into police agendas – Greene's (2015) observation about the need for police researchers to be attuned to the inner rhythms of the police is apt. Researchers *should* take an almost anthropological interest in the workings of the police force(s) they are studying and vice versa. That said, no matter how studiously police researchers pay attention to the shared knowledge, practices and beliefs of the police force(s) they are researching, there will undoubtedly be individual-level, organisational and structural barriers which are also likely to stymie the research and the uptake of its conclusions. As noted above, research participants seemed to have one thing in common in Phase 3 of the GPCS, namely, a lack of resources to deliver custody services let alone assist researchers. No amount of mutual cultural appreciation is likely to overcome this problematic aspect of police research, especially in an austere policing climate. As such, police researchers' anthropological approach to understanding the police force(s) in their research should encompass as many of the individual-level, cultural, organisational and structural potential barriers to police-academic partnerships as possible.

With regards the practice of police-academic partnerships, a further set of observations are possible about the embedding of knowledge in police decision-making and practice. It is Alan's view that the potential to influence change is great because academia is one of the few disciplines that can scrutinise the police on its own terms, with its own schemas and concepts, as illustrated by the section above on ways of knowing. Similarly, police-academic partnerships are also an opportunity

for academics to examine police working theories, as well as to refine and expand them in the way that Tilley (2015) sets out, as well as vice versa. The present case study suggests that this is an area that is ripe for further development in the future, given that partnership relations linked to ways of knowing seemed to cultivate greater shared understanding between the police and academia (than did those linked to ways of acting). This suggests that theory development should be seen as foundational to and as strengthening of police-academic partnerships and is one of the key lessons learned thus far from the GPCS case study.

However, having a dialogue about shared theories and knowledge, though important as a starting point, is not the same as translating this into decision-making and behaviour. Indeed, this is one area of police-academic partnership working that the two authors had less direct experience of, which is also a limitation of the present paper.[18] As noted above, when Alan was updating APP guidance Layla's research conclusions on the importance of interpersonal relationships between staff and detainees over and above legality had yet to be developed. The lack of direct experience of putting shared knowledge into practice was also due to Alan's retirement, as well as the movement of the police custody portfolio to a new national lead. That said, at the time of writing, Layla continues to have a dialogue with the current national lead for police custody, as well as other key stakeholders, about how her research findings could be used to influence practice. From her perspective, a crucial issue is about whether the 'good' practice benchmarks that she originally envisaged as being one of the main outputs from the research for key stakeholders are likely to be of use and, if not, what else might be of use instead.

Translating these benchmarks into policy and practice is likely to be a large and complex task. As McAra notes, research findings are only "listened to and acted upon in very specific circumstances, namely, when there is an intersection between the aims of government or specific institutional leaders and the criminological evidence" (2017: 784). Hence, she highlights the need for "multi-level strategies of engagement", which enable "multiple points of entry into discussion and debate" (McAra, 2017: 285). These multiple entry points include politicians, institutional leaders, but also importantly practitioners on the ground who have the capacity to thwart or encourage policies emanating from higher up their organisations, as a result of their discretion or cultural working practices. The already multi-level nature of the GPCS provides a starting point for engaging in dialogue with a range of interested parties. In addition, findings from the research and the good practice benchmarks are to be the subject of discussions at forthcoming meetings of various national and local stakeholder organisations in 2017 and 2018, at national forums, working groups, strategy boards and one-on-one meetings with individual stakeholder organisations. Furthermore, the recent publication in October 2017 of an independent report into deaths and serious incidents in police custody may also provide a renewed focus on police custody amongst politicians and institutional leaders (Angiolini, 2017). This report has the potential to provide a further "point of entry" for the research into debate and discussion about how police custody should

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[18]   See also the methodology section where some of the other limitations of the paper are discussed.

be provided in the future. Nonetheless, there is a long and winding road ahead, if the research is to impact on the day-to-day practices and experiences of those who work in and are detained in police custody.

Acknowledgements

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