Swinging the Lamp: The Watch Manager's Career, Role and Occupational Identity within the Modernising Agenda of the UK Fire and Rescue Service

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Abstract

This research focuses on the career and work identity of watch managers in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). Their role is to manage firefighters who are infamously known in political circles to possess grass root cultures that remain resistant to forms of change and modernisation. Watch managers are not only tasked with leading emergency teams at incidents but they are also at the receiving end of a relentless stream of political pressure to achieve change. This research draws on qualitative data collected within two fire services consisting of thirty-nine face-to-face interviews, four focus groups and field observations, which in combination highlight various ways the watch manager becomes an important construct in relation to the momentum of organisational change.

Previous FRS research has explored the creation and enactment of masculinities in the watch and 'how' and 'why' the watch sustains highly masculinised images (Salaman 1986, Baigent 2001, Ward and Winstanley 2006). Despite Woodfield (2016) and Perrott's (2016) recent contributions focusing on women inhabiting FRS managerial and leadership roles, there has been limited emphasis in broader FRS research on how managerial work identities develop against watch cultures resistant to change, or in relation to male dominated 'informal' hierarchies in the watch. In order to manage their team successfully, watch managers show themselves to possess differing forms of managerial masculinities, and in so doing, draw on various combinations of charismatic, traditional and rational-legal authority. These phenomena highlight new understandings of the invisible and hidden processes by which watch managers attend to power tensions between them, the watch, and senior management. My findings suggest these power dynamics impact on the shaping of the watch manager's own sense of work identity and in reverse, the ways these tensions are handled also influence the way they are socially constructed as managers by firefighters and senior managers. Particularly revealing are the ways transformations of work identity develop as watch managers move from new to time-served firefighter, then upward to the watch manager role, and how differing identity-enabling resources are drawn from to manage and keep an equilibrium between firefighters and the watch they manage.

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ADC	Assessment Development Centre
BA	Breathing Apparatus
CCT	Compulsive Competitive Tendering
CFO	Chief Fire Officer
CFS	Community Fire Safety
CLG	Communities and Local Government
CMs	Crew managers
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
FA	Fire Authority
FBU	Fire Brigades Union
FFs	Firefighters
FP	Fire Prevention
FRS	Fire and Rescue Service
HMCIFS	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services
IPDS	Integrated Personal Development Standards
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Programme
LGA	Local Government Association
LGG	Local Government Group
LGMA	Local Government Modernisation Agenda
NAO	National Audit Office
NJC	Nation Joint Council
NPM	New Public Management
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PQA	Personal Qualities and Attributes
PIs	Performance Indicators

RTC   Road Traffic Collision

SM   Station Manager

VFM   Value for Money

WM   Watch Manager

Introduction

This research is about watch managers in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in England and brings a new perspective at a new time in relation to an important group of managers operating at the front line of service delivery. Analysis shows how watch managers' occupational identity becomes crafted, operationalised and sustained in and through the realities of managing on a day-to-day basis. A focus on the watch manager is of sociological interest for several reasons. First, because watch managers inhabit a public sector role that has been subject to reinvention in wider political plans in order to restructure public sector provision over the last three decades. Equally, now that New Public Management (NPM) and managerialist thinking has had time to establish and develop in public institutions, the ways shifting forms of identity emerge or resist in relation to transitions of change become important to review. Second, watch managers' institutional positioning between middle management and watch culture provides an interesting 'space' to focus attention because their role physically locates them within the watch whilst they are still expected to be part of the management structure. The puzzle that presents itself to this research is not just about how watch managers manage change, or that they occupy an ambiguous position, but also how these factors inform identity constructions and experience of career. More widely, this research contributes to sociological debates exploring connections between formations of gender that are operationalised within a male dominated 'culture', and the moral and emotional work invested in sustaining occupational identity. These issues resonate with a key debate in the sociology of work that discusses whether work continues to act as a means of securing 'identity', or marginalised in favour of a more consumerist approach to define the self.

Therefore, the ways the watch manager's work identity emerges in the day-to-day, and the types of issues that are easy and hard to manage in their role are important to this research, as are work relationships, dynamics between firefighters and their manager, and the resources drawn from to manage successfully. The range and significance of my research findings have exceeded my initial expectations. For example, my analysis highlights how spatial proximity

becomes utilised by watch managers to effect control and authority over the watch. Equally, the significance of role models to firefighters in early career is shown to shape future practices within managerial identities, as does the particular relevance of charisma. Resurrecting and applying Weber's theorisation of charisma as a two-way dynamic operationalising to affect managerial control and authority makes a significant contribution to on-going theoretical debates (Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013). In so doing, the analysis developed here demonstrates how charisma operationalises as a transient and relational concept both 'up front' and 'backstage' as an identity and authority-enabling resource, and comes to link with other themes (such as masculinity and emotional labour). Also emergent is how charisma operationalises as a carrier of specific types of communication that eclipse harsh realities, defends against routinisation, and comes to sustain its power.

The significance of the Fire and Rescue Service context

The FRS offers a fascinating work environment to study occupational identity because it has a history of being resistant to change and modernisation (Englander 1992, Bain 2002, Ewen 2010). For example, in spite of modernising initiatives and equal opportunity drivers, the FRS wholetime operational service remains a male dominated occupation (95% white male profile), with 23,989 wholetime male operational firefighters and 1,262 female firefighters (around 5%) (as cited in DCLG 2014/15), despite strategic approaches to balance the gender (and ethnic) divide. The FRS provides an example of the political drive to 'reinvent public services' through the incorporation of New Public Management (NPM) principles, which have continued to feature in the policies of successive governments since the Conservative Government of 1979.

Equally, fewer sociological contributions have surfaced since the Fire Minister (Bob Neill) proposed a seven-criteria formula for FRSs to use as a framework to plan and help meet budget constraints (LGG 2011). Although these are early days, what appears to be happening is that FRSs are becoming more individualistic in the way they organise and determine their own particularised strategies to make provision for risk. What is sociologically interesting

about this particular emergency service is that in spite of having its fair share of neo-liberal efficiencies and consequential strategic attempts to effect cultural change, it remains relatively slow to change.

Gaps in previous FRS research

Previous fire service research highlights how firefighters' identity is strongly bound with notions of masculinity where the two concepts appear as almost inseparable. Salaman (1986) argued that station officers/firefighters were likely to view their occupational role 'as a source of pride and achievement to incorporate it as a major element of their identity' (p.46). Identity is also developed through 'their due regard to the necessary competences and traits needed to perform their work fuelling essentially masculine or manly self-images' (p.46). Thurnell-Read and Parker (2008) suggest that firefighters' occupational identity and self-worth are primarily based upon 'physical, emotional, and technical competence and collective understandings of risk and responsibilities' (p.127) alongside proven ability to withstand the physical aspects of the job. In this way, masculine qualities form an intrinsic part of the value of work identities. Though Baigent's (2001) research casts firefighters as predominantly white male, heterosexual, and able-bodied workers, he also argues that inscriptions of a particular masculinised working class identity emerge through specific traits associated with hands-on work. In particular he links firefighters' masculinity with identity in the way firefighters subjectively judge themselves and 'others' through displays of competence on and off the fire ground. Baigent also draws links with strong connotations of working class masculinity where he views the informal firefighters' culture as 'a class in itself to protect the ways that they are currently doing their job and the dividends they [firefighters] get from doing it that way' (p.92).

This collective of FRS analysis ostensibly focuses on how a particular form of hegemonic masculinity becomes sustained through what Lipman-Blumen (1976) terms homosocial practices (passing down skills to others like themselves). From a watch perspective, Baigent, and Thurnell-Read and Parker show how firefighters' affiliations to specific types of work

and people operationalise to separate management (formal culture) and firefighters (informal culture) from each other. However, apart from the contributions of Childs, Morris and Ingham (2004), who explored the grunt of clean, white-collar (firefighting) work, and Yarnal, Dowler and Hutchinson (2004), who show how blurred dichotomies rise in relation to emotion, and what it means to be a man in the differing contexts of the firehouse and fire ground, research has tended to analyse firefighters through the theoretical lens of a hegemonic masculinity. This has unintentionally obscured a more complex set of research outcomes.

Though Baigent and Thurnell-Read and Parker are representative of a generalised view within current FRS research, arguably what is missing is a substantiated focus on how differing forms of power play out *within the watch* and an exploration of the more tacit resources watch managers draw on to sustain, control, and maintain levels of respect. As Hinds-Aldrich (2012) indicates, there is a need to 'avoid glossing over important distinctions and disagreements' and instead 'these issues need to be drawn out to develop understanding within and around boundary areas' (p.109). Few studies have made the watch manager centre stage, and although things have moved on since Salaman (1986), the impact of reform on identity becomes important to document. Salaman's research argues 'watch managers are horizontally and vertically estranged from other sectors of the organisation' (including upper management); are 'inextricably part of the watch' and 'have limited promotional aspirations' (pp.50-52). This could also link with class position and tensions they create. In particular, Salaman's study highlights a range of important findings from the ways firefighters and station officers sustain a sense of identity, to how protection of self-interest surfaces in relation to ways organisational change becomes resisted (at that time in relation to equal opportunities policy). In effect, for Salaman the introduction of women 'clashed with the station-officers' self-images as fire*men*' (p.48), a finding that Woodfield (2016) echoes in her research of women holding 'managerial responsibilities' or 'occupying leadership roles' in the contemporary FRS (p.251).

In response to Salaman's claims, I suggest that the more theoretically informed approach to masculinity that has been developing since 1986 can be fruitfully applied to understanding the

watch manager's identity. More recently, Woodfield's findings highlight that women's experiences of FRS management roles require 'a degree of corporeal manoeuvring not required of men' (Binns, 2010: 165). Woodfield's analysis shows how ways of overcoming 'otherness' (Watts, 2009: 515) and achieving 'invisible (wholly assimilated) bodily status' (2009: 517) are experienced in women's everyday work in a male dominated occupation. What becomes of interest from a gender comparative perspective is how in my research, predominantly men as managers experience 'otherness' as a consequence of their managerial position, and how their managerial presence or detachment comes to work for them in the shaping of work identity.

As I propose in chapter one, the benefits of using a qualitative research approach, open to a broader theoretical toolkit that incorporates emotional labour and morality, is that it allows space for a nuanced and situationally dynamic sense of watch managers' occupational identity to emerge. Building on watch managers' experiences from early career to present-day management role provides a sense of biographical narrative and allows access to the ways dramatic realisations or transformations take place in the ascendency from role to role.

The watch manager's place in the hierarchy

What is currently missing in the body of FRS research are investigations into how this management role operates given their ambiguous place within the organisation as part of management, yet physically located with the firefighters they manage. The watch manager's hierarchical position between management (as differentiated from the watch) and firefighters (as part of the watch) becomes of interest for two reasons. Firstly, previous research highlights an entrenched dichotomy between the watch and upper management (Baigent, 2001, Thurnell Read and Parker 2008, Allaway 2010), which highlights tension-filled attitudes towards those that leave the watch and take promotion above the watch manager level by firefighters. Secondly, given that Childs, Morris, and Ingham's (2004) findings that the non-operational aspect of the watch commander's role was thought 'most challenging', it is important to review these findings in the contemporary setting of the UK FRS. Developing from this is the pronounced need to identify the managerial challenges and pressures watch

managers encounter alongside the ways resources become deployed that have to date remained peripheral to analysis.

What becomes of interest to issues of identity and career choices are the ways watch managers' emotional attachments to specific types of work and other workers occur, and why this might be so. As such, it becomes important to deconstruct the ways watch hierarchies form, and how this affects the management-worker dynamic, to allow insight into ways power tensions, attachments, and forms of masculinities emerge. These issues hold significance because loyalties and attachments influence constructions of identity as markers of identification and parameters for 'othering'. Analysis extends beyond purely understanding dichotomies and differential senses of belonging to shed light on 'why', and 'what purpose' identification and otherness serve in sustaining particular preferences of managerial identity.

Watch managers and emotional labour

Previous fire service research has almost passed over emotional labour as a part of firefighters' role. Thurnell-Read and Parker's (2008) analysis highlights the strong underlying theme of emotional labour emergent from their research, yet chose to side-line this in favour of focusing on the ways firefighters' masculinity contributes to identity formations. Yarnal, Dowler and Hutchinson (2004) focus on the dichotomy of sites where firefighters display emotional labour within the watch, but scarcely separate watch management within their analysis. Scott and Myers (2005), though focusing on the 'emotional', do so in respect of how this links to the socialisation processes of new recruits. As such, there is a distinct lack of focus on the ways managerial roles differ from mainstream firefighters in relation to emotional labour. Interestingly, Childs, Morris and Ingham (2004) show that for fifty per-cent of watch commanders that political acumen and people management skills come to be of critical importance to managing effectively on a daily basis. Departing from these insights, this research extends present knowledge by focusing on how forms of emotional labour become utilised as a resource by watch managers to manage, and how they separate their work identity from firefighter roles and others in the FRS.

Operationalising power and control

Whilst attempting to deconstruct the layers in the watch, this research also explores how watch managers' control is *actually* legitimised and the various types of resistance, solidarities and divisions that cluster around the watch manager's position. Reminiscent of managerial/supervisory literature in the 1960/70s the watch manager's role captures debates around managerial forms of control (Burawoy 1979, Edwards 1979, Brown 1988). Equally, moving away from gender-neutral accounts Collinson and Hearn (2005) argue what cannot be ignored in the study of work, organisation and management, is that masculinities shape managerial identities (and vice versa). As such, attention should be focused on the ways workplace power relations become shaped by masculinities. As Collinson and Hearn (1996a) argue, 'gendered power, subjectivity and agency' highlights both 'male power' and 'the material and symbolic differences through which that power is reproduced' (p.10). The term 'power' refers to the way one person/group/institution renders authority, control, and ascendancy over others[1]. In Weberian terms 'traditional', 'charismatic' and 'legal rational' authority become cast as different appeals to the legitimacy of power. Though, Weber (1968) rejects Marx's idea that power is exclusively tied to class, he goes on to argue that 'without exception every sphere of social action is profoundly influenced by structures of dominancy' (Weber 1968: 141).

Career, identity and watch managers

When reviewing FRS literature around themes of career and identity what particularly stood out in both Hinds-Aldrich (2012) and Desmond's (2007) research is that they begin their study with a firefighter's funeral. This is likely to immediately connect with the readers' own emotional attachments and engagement with traditional firefighting imagery. This context does much to highlight the serious nature of the risk factors (including at the extreme, the sacrifice of life) that accompany the work of firefighting, and why this might be a person's career choice. Challenging the reality of the heroic model, Baigent (2001) suggests firefighters are so skilful that they can balance their work on the safe side of danger (p.51)

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[1] In the FRS, this can relate to formal power (provided by the fire service hierarchy) and informal power (social power) through which an un-appointed peer group leader exerts control over other firefighters, and frequently, their managers.

(see also Desmond 2007). Yet, firefighters are able to maintain a particularised occupational image embodying a form of working class hegemonic masculinity that works to support their publically renowned identity (Chetkovich 1997, Thurnell-Read and Parker 2008).

Making further connections between firefighters' choice of career and emotional ties, recent press articles running stories of station closures highlight firefighters' attachments to each other and their particularised places of work (Duell 2014). Engaging with political and moral arguments in respect of cuts, these public images taken 'in the moment' of leaving their station for the last time, capture firefighters' emotion to show the depth of loss and grief (see Gander 2014). What are made public are firefighters' subjective emotions visibly emerging from their masculinised identity – emotions that simultaneously provide an example of how careers become interrupted due to factors outside of workers' own volition. These moments highlight the depth of male attachment and subjectivity, revealing a pronounced sense of meaningfulness in work the group does 'together', and how forced change comes to be seen as an attack on collective work identity and solidarity.

Building on the combined issues discussed in this introduction, the research presented here places the watch manager centre stage to focus on transitions of identity from firefighter to watch manager over the course of a career. Whilst reviewing the broad landscape of work identity presented within the narratives, I began to realise how my analysis linked with Hinds-Aldrich and Desmond's opening context. My analysis of narratives indicates how, from station manager through to firefighter levels, a type of 'metaphorical death' surfaces in relation to how important their role is to them, and to the way some managers and firefighters seek sanctuary from change in traditional forms of occupational identity. Reaching beyond previous research findings that assert firefighters dislike change (see Baigent 2001, Allaway 2010), my analysis looks more deeply into why resistance to the loss of the traditional organisation of their fire service occurs. In many cases, and in many different ways, a 'preservation order' appeared to hover around particular ways of being and traditional practices. At the same time for watch managers, new forms of becoming and imagining identity sit alongside the traditional image. Although hybrid identities from two eras become

an option for some, other forms of crafting an identity surface that either allow positioning as if impervious to change, or transformations of identity become grounded in the ethos of the new era. As this thesis develops, the significance of these insights heightens as the watch managers' career journey and their shaping and reshaping of work identity unfolds.

Research contribution

This research links to Nichols and Benyon's (1977), and Gouldner's (1954) notion of the 'foreman', and offers a historical and comparative contribution to literature in this area. My analysis adds to wider sociological debates about whether 'meaning' and 'identity' can still be found through work (Beck 1992, Bauman 1998, Gorz 1999, Strangleman 2007), and 'the place of power in sustaining and organising culture' (Calhoun and Sennett 2007: 6). The watch manager's position also offers opportunities to understand the impact of New Public Management (NPM) *principles*, which bring new types of pressures, and new forms of power that together work to effect 'culture change'. Now that neo-liberal processes and outcomes have had time to mature, this analysis will provide a contemporary perspective towards a group of managers who are in the front line of leading operational teams *and* making organisational change happen in relation both to Hart's (1982) conception of a colonised fire service culture and to Baigent's (2001) notion of a dichotomy between cultures. More widely, this research provides an insight into what Battersby (2011) terms the 'squeezed middle'[2]. Whilst the benefits of this research project have much to contribute to the sociology of the FRS, they also have relevance to similar front-line management in a diverse range of workplace environments.

This research also adds to Halford and Leonard's (2010) analysis of how managers in other public sector services, including education, health, and social services, have responded to organisational change through the reshaping of management posts and managerial responsibility. According to Berg (2006) these changes have led to public servants 'responding in different ways to new management systems and organisational forms, and new

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[2] The full OED definition reads: Squeezed Middle: the section of society regarded as particularly affected by inflation, wage freezes and cuts in public spending during a time of economic difficulty, consisting principally of those on low or middle incomes (Battersby 2011).

identities are emerging' (p.556). This research contributes to these analyses by asking 'if' and 'how' these changes have affected identity and watch managers' sense of self. This leads us to enquire more fully whether transitions effected by FRS organisational change alter the ways workers view and feel about themselves and shift constructions of who they are. This focus also becomes important to the sociological analysis of women in male dominated occupations, insofar as my analysis explores what Woodfield (2016) describes as fire service identity to be 'marked by strong, male, worker identity'. An identity Woodfield describes as 'the powerful centripetal pull to the norm that women experience in organizational cultures' (p.15). Therefore, this focus becomes all the more pressing to deconstruct in terms of wider equality agendas and consideration of the way gender produces similar or differential experiences in the context of managerial identity in the workplace (Currie 1982, Yoder 2015).

Research questions

Having framed research focus, aims and objectives, five important areas of questioning emerge to direct research focus:

- In what ways do watch managers construct, maintain and operationalise their occupational identity?
- How do career trajectories impact on occupational identity and negotiations of power?
- What are the realities and the experiences of the watch manager's role?
- What types of relationships and resources do watch managers draw on to manage?
- How do workers in other roles view watch managers?

Synopsis of chapters

Chapter one provides a conceptual grounding for the thesis analysis centring attention on notions of 'career' and 'identity', particularly honing in on why culture change becomes important to organisational change. Discussion also focuses on distinguishing between formal and informal aspects of culture and the significance of the managerial identity as to drive organisational change. As such, a theoretical overview is presented to outline ways these themes have been conceptualised sociologically. Given that the FRS is representative of a

male dominated occupation, the operation of gender becomes crucial to review alongside sub-themes of emotional labour, morality, and charisma. Despite making fleeting appearances in previous FRS research, these particular themes remain relatively underdeveloped. Chapter two provides an account of the research plan and outlines the rationale behind the choice of methods used to collect data, ethical considerations and a reflexive evaluation of the research process. The latter section reviews more fully how the research progressed theoretically, types of difficulties encountered and overcome to arrive at the presentation of the final analysis. Chapter three provides an overview of contemporary FRS change since the Bain Report (2002), and a backdrop of understanding to contextualise data analysis. This develops towards showing how the watch manager's role fits into the overall organisation of everyday work.

Chapter four is the first to introduce data analysis of the changeover from rank to role. This provides an insight into the 'lived experience' of transformational change for different hierarchical sectors of the organisation (senior management, middle management, WMs, CMs and FFs). Chapter five draws exclusively on watch managers' narratives as new firefighters in early career, and on the ways role models have come to influence the shaping of watch managers' identity and career. Narrative analysis deconstructs the role model/follower dynamic and introduces links to Weber's (1946) archetype of the charismatic leader. Having reviewed the impact of early influences the chapter then moves to analyse differential ways these watch managers have navigated within and through FRS promotional systems.

Before we can fully appreciate how watch managers' identities become shaped by their responsibilities and experiences of work, it is important to first analyse emergent themes surfacing from the station managers' narratives about the job they perform so as to differentiate this from other roles. Of particular interest in chapter six, is how station managers come to experience their relationship with the formal culture, and how the demands of the bureaucratic systems influences their role. This relationship is important to analyse because it is shown to impact on the station manager's outlook, and (by default) becomes influential in the dynamic between station managers and the watch managers they manage.

Whilst previous chapters work to build up a composite picture of identity and career around the watch manager role, chapter seven hones in on the watch managers' data to primarily focus on how they make sense of their work environment and forces of change. Attention then turns to the ways watch managers 'think about' and 'engage' with the job they do, and 'identify with' or 'detach from' specific types of people and work. These issues provide a path to illuminate how formations of work identity emerge and how boundaries come to be drawn between self and others (Lamont 2000). As a consequence, various presentations of 'managerial selves' emerge, each holding a particular relationship with the organisation, the watch, and institutional change initiatives. This chapter highlights differing resources that watch managers draw on to manage, and thereby shows how power, authority and control become sustained within specific forms of managerial identities.

Adding final perspectives, chapter eight first examines how crew managers understand their role to differ from firefighters and watch managers, and then analyses how relationships with their watch manager and firefighters emerge in the daily routines of work. Crew managers' narratives are particularly insightful in revealing how disparate forms of masculinities emerge within the group that facilitate strategic positioning within the watch culture, in order to be able to exert influence and power. These foci illuminate types of (cultural) boundary markers within watch culture to provide another perspective on the shaping of the watch manager's work identity, and the ways both managerial roles (CMs and WMs) fit in the management chain at ground level. Chapter nine draws on firefighters (watches) focus groups to analyse firefighters' relationships with the wider organisation, and the types of attachments and detachments at play between each other and their watch manager. Offering 'lived experiences' of 'being managed' these firefighters come to share their views on what constitutes the dichotomies of good/bad strong/weak watch managers, and the ways respect becomes 'earned'. Given that the watch manager manages firefighters as individuals, as a group and inevitably *their* (informal) culture, what begins to materialise is a sense of how the push and pull of informal power within the confines of the watch takes place.

Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature that conceptually engages with research focus (career, identity, masculinity, and culture). These themes further extend to include emotional labour, morality and charisma. This broad scope of themes allows for a wider sociological tool kit than previously adopted in FRS research to push analysis beyond present boundaries of FRS research understandings. I limit material to focus on contributions that provide examples of how developmental, contrasting and critical appraisals occur that offer a conceptual framework best suited to engage with the research enquiry. What this chapter is able to highlight are differing ways themes have been theorised, and importantly, how intersections between them occur.

Careers

A primary aim of the research is to hone in on ways watch managers construct, maintain and operationalise their occupational identity within the context of career and organisation, and review ways careers have sociologically been imagined 'to happen'. In the organisational setting, a career became thought of as 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur, Douglas and Barbara (1989: 8), traditionally signifying a sense of order, predictability with upward mobility often incorporating increased responsibility, status and authority (see Wilensky 1961). As such, ladders, steps and stages have featured to describe the idea of a career trajectory. In the wider context, careers have connectivity to a particular occupational history where individuals are holders of certain types of specialised skills and activities, and simultaneously identify with a specific set of internalised cultural values (Hughes 1945, Hughes 1994). Although careers have traditionally been conceptualised in terms of upward mobility to denote success, Hughes (1994) points out some individuals choose to become more skilful at the basic level - 'attaining reward in either economic or

social terms operationalised through elevated prestige in the eyes of work group' (p.34). Gunz's (1989) notion of a climbing frame moves away from imagining a career solely in terms of an upward trajectory, whereas Brown (1982) draws attention to a wider framework of possibilities where careers are either opted-out of or become subject to interruptions or obstruction. These ideas are important to broaden our sociological lens, allowing us to capture how careers develop and become meaningful for different workers in diverse work environments.

Taking an evaluative stance, Cuzzocrea and Lyon (2011) suggest the 'concept of career and how careers 'happen' remain under-elaborated' (p.1030), directing pronounced focus to ways people navigate 'within' and 'in relation to' both institutional processes and opportunity structures. These authors argue that 'agency' has become overstated in academic literature and encourage researchers to find ways to capture how the tensions between structure and agency occur. Arthur, Douglas and Barbera (1989) suggest for researchers to focus on discursive elements within the work environment arguing, 'it reflects the relationship between people and the providers of official positions, namely institutions and organisations' (p.9). These authors raise important points (similar to Gouldner 1954) because 'inherent tensions' or 'syncs' within the relationship between worker and organisation tell us something about premises on which work identity becomes founded, and indicates how differential experience of careers occur.

Importantly, Brown (1992) highlights distinctions between 'organisational careers' (where advancement is achieved with a single-employing organisation) with 'occupational careers' (where, by contrast, employees move from employer to employer in developing their careers). Within the career structures (posts and employment terms and conditions) are career routes (in these cases employees are the units). Brown suggests these approaches to be problematic, taking little account towards actions of individuals as career builders and their inter-relation with the system-structures. Brown proposes that limiting focus to structural phenomena renders 'structures to become real in their consequences' (reification), which fails to recognise how structures influence individual strategies. Equally, limiting focus to upward mobility as a means to implicate 'success' only produces a one-dimensional view (see Hilsum and Start

1974) where 'success' becomes defined through the eyes of the institution (organisations structures) and the locus of the individual within the hierarchy. This approach singularly weighs success against bureaucratically defined power; it favours particular types of knowledge, provides scarce recognition of the subjective agency of individuals or differing notions of success to emerge within the career context.

Theoretical developments towards career theory

Whilst the 1970s witnessed researchers becoming attuned to integrating dimensions of action, and system as career structures became viewed as the outcome of individual career strategies (Kamenou 2002), throughout the following decade Giddens' (1979) dual operation of structure and action 'structuration' emerged. Giddens conceptualises 'structure' (rules and resources) to structure actions, which work simultaneously to produce the same actions. In this way, structures and systems are thought to have properties, which present individuals with a series of choices. However, critics debate the extent to which agency becomes experienced in differential contexts of work. Nevertheless, for Giddens the self is cast as 'a reflexive project' in the continual process of 'becoming', where individuals possess the capacity to create, transform and operationalise agentic power. To Giddens' mind, 'it is not what we are but what we make of ourselves' (Giddens 1991: 75). Alternatively, for Grey (1994) an individual's pursuit of a career can marginalise all other goals, values and relationships where, for some, work is not 'just a job', but becomes an entrepreneurial project of the self – a place where the self can 'become' in a constant process of transformation, striving to achieve the desired goal. In order to realise self-potential, individuals enter into 'a process of achievement', offered 'to' the organisation by the individual, and offered 'in' organisations as 'career'.

Careers and gender

Whilst Grey's research neutralises links between gender and career, and focuses more on cultural scripts within a professional culture, gender continues to be cast as a powerful controlling force in working lives, work cultures, and formations of work identity. For

instance, both Roper (1994) and Kanter (1977) evidence male careers based on strong emotional bonds rather than pursued exclusively on a rational and instrumental basis. A commonality of their findings is that men and women experience career practices differently. Equally, Gilligan's (1982) research findings indicate that feminine work cultures stress collegiality (rather than hierarchy), caring sensitivity in relationships (rather than authority), affiliation and co-operation (rather than individual competition), in a stark contrast to analysis from studies of male cultures (see Bird 1986, Collinson and Hearn 2005).

In terms of developing a wider theoretical approach to 'careers', these types of findings begin to push at the boundaries of thinking and perceptions of how work is carried out inside the organisation and across worker/client boundaries. Consequently, there has been a shift in focus away from women's deficiencies and more towards the strengths women bring in career terms. These developments have continued to prompt an abundance of debate in respect of (gendered) organisational cultures. Dimensions that link culture and gender have focused on multiple levels, for example: discursive behaviours that act as signifiers of gender (Willis 1977, Mac an Ghaill 1994, Westwood 1984); notions around work/life balance (Hochschild 1996); 'ideals' of masculinity (Connell 1987, Jefferson 1996); ideations of femininity (Hochschild 1983); culture of work organisations (Collinson and Hearn 1996b, Strangleman and Roberts 1999); and the gendered aspect of management (Hollway 1996, Kerfoot and Knights 1996). Therefore, cultural analysis in sociology has tended to centre on the gendered aspects and attributes of the processes in work organisations themselves.

Career as craft

Sennett's (2008) notion of craft adds an alternative dimension to experiences of career. Sennett highlights practices of work and the ways craft skills emerge – learnt by experience through repetition and practice. For Sennett, a central construct of skill is 'experience' alongside knowledge and an intimate attachment to tools where the craftsman intuitively appreciates how each tool becomes fit for purpose (p.195) – an extension of the body in which 'practice' creates a synthesis whereby the craftsman 'uses solutions to uncover new territory;

problem solving and problem finding' (Sennett 2008: 11). This is similar to Kondo's (1990) artisans possessing the artisanal spirit totally identifying with their work having 'polished the heart and arm through learning new techniques, in a variety of establishments having acquired in the process a certain confidence and pride in his work' (p.239). More recently, Holmes (2015) challenges Sennett's conceptualisations of craft as something that only produces a stabilised product towards encompassing a model that is 'materially intangible, the transient, and the temporary' (p.480). Holmes shows how Sennett's craft model (encompassing training, trust, a hierarchical structure and the use of tools) links with often invisibly held skills of hairdressers – something that requires highly skilled craft labour and the transitory nature of the body 'always becoming', which guarantees its repetitive crafting. As such, she argues craftwork often occurs at the hands of what others may think of as menial low-skilled work (such as hairdressers, dentists and beauticians), or professions that engage in bodywork. In these occupations, though tangible results occur, they are made and remade over a period of time (in a process of transience). Whilst Holmes deliberately steers away from emotional aspects of service work to redirect focus towards other skills less appreciated and overlooked in analysis (cognitive, technical and organisational), the reverse approach constricting male aspects of craft work in the FRS could fruitfully be applied to watch managers in the male dominated arena of work. However, amongst these broad discussions of how career might be sociologically imagined to be 'in the making', there is a need on the one hand to evaluate the idea that careers shape work identity, alongside an assessment towards the extent that shaping a particular work identity influence the experience of career.

Identity

Identity is a main construct of this research, therefore, it is important to get a sense of how identity is theorised before we hone in on the particulars of occupational identity. As a concept, Leidner (2006) suggests the notion of 'identity' has a dual meaning: first, it refers to individuality (life history and set of social relations that constitute the person); secondly, shared identifications (collectivity). If the self is socially constructed as sociologists claim, then individuality and collective identity are potentially both paradoxical and bound together. If so, how does this play out in the world of work and how important is work as an axis to

contribute and sustain notions of identity? Before discussing these questions, we first explore the ways identity has been taken forward over a variety of disciplines, and highlight contemporary debates theorists continue to discuss.

Moving away from fixed notions of identity, Hall (2000) leads us to think 'in the margins' and employ the use of 'identification' over 'identity', to shift focus on to processes (of identification) rather than a fixed stable 'entity'. Identification refers to a constant set of processes in action on a day-to-day basis operating through and 'across difference', and substantiated via binding and marking of symbolic boundaries marking an 'outside', which work to consolidate the process. Hall suggests:

> Identification is constructed on the back of the recognition of some common origin or shared characteristic with another person or group, or with an ideal and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiances established on this foundation. (Hall, 2000:16)

Hall then suggests from the social subject's position, specific modes of power operationalise in a way that sustains notions of difference and exclusion rather, than all-inclusive sameness without internal differentiation.

Taking a different perspective and following Leidner's position that identity emerges both from the individual and group, Goffman's (1959) work explores the ways identity emerges from and within various social interactions. Goffman does not believe in a 'self' in the traditional sense, arguing that people's selves are not detached from their social situations or some sort of autonomous agent. Rather, Goffman sees the social actor in a relationship to the social whole with the self *'emergent'* as a product of performance rather than the cause of it. Goffman then redirects focus away from an individual's character towards notions of the team as performances of self in the everyday setting. To maintain their performance, members and individuals possess a moral obligation or 'dramaturgical loyalty' to protect the secrets of the

team through 'dramaturgical discipline' and 'dramaturgical circumspection'. In this setting, a variety of performances take place involving a two-way dynamic between actor(s) and audience(s). Through the ritual of interaction, the creation and manipulation of symbols emerge with moral force where dramaturgical performances 'serve to create, maintain and deconstruct common understandings of reality by people working individually and collectively to present a shared and unified image of that reality' (Kivisto and Pittman 2008: 272).

Work identity

The types of work that people do can also be central to their self-identity and the identity markers others ascribe to them. Goffman allows a perspective that recognises that workers have the means to construct, present and defend a chosen identity using their own evaluations and subjectivities, and from the way that 'others' see them. Constructing an identity in this way can be what Hughes (1976) terms the 'social drama of work' – where workers strive to gain a sense of dignity and self-respect founded on their assumptions about the type of qualities that individuals require to 'do' particular types of work. In some cases, identity forms through seeing work as a 'calling' (Weber 1971), where identity is created to prove oneself as capable through the love of labour, or as Bolton (2009) argues 'labours of love' as different to labour power (Bolton 2009: 557). On the other hand, individuals undertaking work that carries stigma (physical, moral or social) may use taint management strategies to provide counter interpretations and moral justifications towards the work they do. Taint management strategies include reframing, recalibrating, refocusing, depersonalisation and distancing techniques - aspects orginally theorised by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999).

The formation of identity in the work environment become a topic of interest from a variety of angles, and through the assimilation of analysis from a range of theorists three broad areas begin to emerge. First, work identity is characterised through traits and qualities associated with particular types of work, including subjective judgements of craft and competency (Albert and Whetten 1985). Second, work identity links to the induction and participation into

an occupational culture. Within this, the worker becomes subject to rules of interaction where notions of identification and otherness surface (Yoder and Aniakudo 1997). Third, we see the emergence of a variety of discourses where the discursive subject leans to and away from particular types of work and people (Tracy and Trethewey 2005).

Equally, Leidner (2006) asserts that identity derived from individuals' participation in occupational culture comes to involve an explicit reframing of self-identity to 'internalise their occupational ideology, ethos, traditions and norms including criteria for judgement craft pride and rules for interacting among themselves and various others' (p.436). Links between work and identity become subject to processes where workers come to internalise group values and behaviours. This learning, when practiced, works to form cultural boundaries of in-groups and out-groups that reinforce shared values and define loyalties. However, occupational cultures are also frequently gendered environments of work, providing a stage for gendered identities to emerge often through competing discourses attempting to secure or defend hegemonic power.

Conceptually, occupational identity provides routes to examine: patterns of interaction and daily struggles over status and autonomy (Leidner 2006); types of control and resistance (Hodson 2001); discursive behaviours relating to gender (Collinson 1992); emotional labour (Hochschild 1983); class (Nichols and Benyon 1977); morality (Lamont 2000); race (Westwood 1984); contradictions (Erickson and Turner 2010); notions of insiders and outsiders (Becker 1996); self-interest (Ackroyd and Thompson 1999); and the ways that technical and moral control over the labour process are set in action (Strangleman 2004). Nonetheless, the sustainability of identity derived from the types of work people do has in contemporary times come under the focus of much debate. For example, Sennett (1998) suggests that with the emergence of 'flexible' capitalism, the ability to sustain an occupational identity in the workplace has come under attack via a new spirit of capitalism. Sennett argues this has come to influence how people think about work, and the values that they have to adopt to survive (be open to change and be flexible). Through arguing new forms of deceptive control emerge, Sennett argues that this impacts on identity, as loyalty and trust become

corroded, and morals and personal values become compromised among workers, and between workers and the institution. Whilst these claims appear to link with the demise of the moral subject, less attention (if any) focuses on gender issues.

Emotional Labour

Focusing on the part emotion plays in organisations and the ways emotional labour operationalises in differing contexts, provides the ability to explore a relatively new dynamic in fire service literature appearing either overtly (Yarnal, Dowler and Hutchinson 2004) or in a by-the-way manner (Thurnell-Read and Parker 2008). Grandey (2000) argues that traditional approaches to the study of organisations were strongly associated with notions of rationality, and 'emotions' were largely ignored, marginalised and seen as a means to get in the way of 'sound judgement' (and presumably effective 'decision making').

Hochschild's (1983) seminal piece *'The Managed Heart'* brings a new and different dimension through her conceptualisation of emotional labour, highlighting another aspect of the processes by which work identity forms and operationalises. This becomes crucial in building our conceptual framework towards analysis of identity when exploring possible resources watch managers draw from in the day-to-day experience of work. Hochschild explores the restrictions and the limited choice workers have over the labour process, with no choice but to choose what employers have explicitly prescriptively predetermined them to be, think and feel. Hochschild shows ways workers attitudes, thoughts and behaviours become consolidated through cultural conformity.

Hochschild first coined the term 'emotional labour', which refers to 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'. However, this stance emerges alongside her view that 'emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value' (p.7). Hochschild's study explores the day-to-day working experience of flight attendants and debt collectors striving to compete in a large capitalist industry, and analyses the processes that operationalise to colonise and control 'emotion' through emotional

labour in the workplace. The strength of her work shows employees' emotions become subject to ownership by management through prescriptions of control, which then become commodified into specific types of interactive responses (feeling rules) prescribed by management. For employees every unit of emotion management and successful performance of prescribed responses come under scrutiny by co-workers, self and management. Hochschild argues the giving and withdrawal of emotional feeling; moods and displays 'become more to belong to the organisation than they do to the self' (p.198).

There are two ways that management of employees' emotions can be recognised as emotional labour. First, surface acting occurs where superficial responses are enacted, and second, the concept of deep acting occurs when workers internalise a whole set of roles. As such, Hochschild suggests individual identity comes under threat as the real 'authentic' self becomes subsumed by the dominant organisational personality under the control of feeling rules. Therefore, 'feeling rules' become central to the process of emotional labour and ways the employee inspects their own feelings and how others assess our emotional display.

Since Hochschild's contribution, other ways of conceptualising emotion in the workplace have evolved. For example, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) downplay emotional labour in terms of internal management towards emotion management as an *observable* behaviour, focusing on broader factors that may affect the emotional expression of employees. These authors propose emotional labour should be seen in upbeat terms rather than a source of stress - arguing emotional labour often occurs routinely and effortlessly, providing authenticity is seen to co-operate during interaction. By contrast, Bolton (2005) suggests of the need to extend Hochschild's framework to capture the range of different sites around which 'feeling rules' occur. Bolton proposes a quad-part framework capturing different types of interaction (pecuniary, prescriptive, presentational and philanthropic) over different sites. Further separations with Hochschild occur in the way Bolton criticises Hochschild's deterministic outlook, leaving little acknowledgement of how forms of resistance surface from workers. As such, Bolton views that individuals are 'multi-skilled emotion managers' (Bolton and Houlihan 2005: 556), and whilst Hochschild's approach explores emotional labour from

margins over the service counter, Bolton allows the space to explore emotional labour within institutional boundary lines.

However, the conceptual value of Hochschild's work offers a twofold dimension: on the one hand it offers a valuable framework to define and identify aspects of emotional labour, and on the other, it enables provision of understanding processes that allow shifting forms of identity to occur. Hochschild's theorisations and conceptual breakdown can be applied to the organisational setting, in order to explore the worker/supervisory management relationship within the watch during the performativity of the management role. Of equal significance is whether the outcomes that Hochschild identifies as negative consequences are reproduced in a different setting (the fire service), or if employing emotional labour deepens the connection between the watch manger and the watch. Apart from exploring 'if' emotional labour operationalises as a managerial resource, what also becomes important to gauge is whether the use of emotional labour gives watch managers more or less control over the labour process. Although these developing theorisations are conceptually tied to notions of identity, it is striking that, as issues around power and control emerge within the concept, less substantial account is taken towards the influence of gender.

Masculinity and emotional labour

Linking ideas of men, management and emotional labour, Roper (1999) highlights how classic management accounts traditionally cast 'organisational man' in 'non-emotional' terms. Simultaneously, Roper makes connections with Pringle's (1989) research that argues Weber's model of rationality could be thought of as 'a commentary on the construction of a particular kind of masculinity based on exclusion of the personal, the sexual and the feminine' (p.161). This appears to counter Weber's definition of rationality. Roper highlights how Hochschild (1993) has later come to extend her theory, showing ways that emotion and rationality co-exist declaring 'emotions do not sit on top of an emotion-free machine but are a part of their inner wiring' (Hochschild in Fineman 1993, x). Whilst Roper maintains Hochschild's (1983) *'managed heart'* ostensibly refers to 'a woman's heart', less clear is how this relates to men,

management, emotions, and their performances of emotional labour. Roper rhetorically questions 'if' there are connections, and if so, how do they emerge? (p.211). Equally pertinent to find answers to is: do men draw from the resource of emotional labour, and if so, does this relegate them to a subordinate position as women are cast to do? This raising of the bar does much to aid the alignment of analytical review, allowing the research to engage more deeply between connections of gender and emotional labour and direct analytical thinking to the margins.

Roper's argument that the pervasive non-emotional vision of managerial masculinity continues to obscure intimacies between men leads him to also suggest researchers should acknowledge both the discursive positioning of male managers as 'rational', and also reflect on their emotional relations. Roper proposes that this has been difficult to date because of the inadequacies of language (and appropriation of terms) that have been unable (or unwilling) to capture language indicative of all male intimacy. Whilst I argue that there has been a reluctance to appropriate feminine language to highly masculinised sites, Kanter's (1977) seminal piece goes some way to explain the way intimacies between men occur in the work environment. Kanter adopts the term 'homosociality' to refer to men's networks of power and the process by which men pass skills to people like themselves. Equally, Kanter's expression of 'homosexual reproduction' is adopted to describe the process in which, men reproduce themselves in their own image (and similar backgrounds), and the means by which successors come to be 'chosen' to secure business success for the future. However, within these types of processes where men's intimacies and desires often surface, Roper argues 'seduction has an unacknowledged place in the story of how power passes from one generation of male managers to the next' (p.213). These types of questions innately possess connections with Weber's charismatic phenomena discussed further on in this chapter.

As this research focuses on the watch manager's role, performativity and experiences of managing, it is important to analytically review if sites emerge in the narratives where forms of emotional labour operationalise. Engaging with Roper's dilemmas relating to emotional labour and masculinity, a number of questions surface and the FRS provides an interesting

context to engender such debates. For example, does the watch manager draw on strategies of emotional labour as a part of their everyday work? If so, why? Moreover, in what context is this likely to occur? Whilst Hochschild's work is more weighted towards the power of management in creating and policing forms of work identity for women in a female dominated occupation, less foci were afforded their male counterparts in the debt collecting department. Taking Roper's valid points forward, it is to the specificities of gender that the following section now addresses.

The Operation of Gender

As previous research has cast 'masculinity' as a dominant construct of firefighters' identity, there is a need to revisit a broad scope of classical and contemporary developments within gender disciplines. From the outset, adopting the term 'masculinity' in a way that does not exclude the presence of women in the male dominated FRS becomes important to resolve. Kerfoot and Knights (1996) propose the term 'masculine subjects' aiding to avoid binary gender dualisms recognising both men and women can be masculine. At the same time, the terms 'masculinity/ies' can be conceived of as 'elevated' and 'privileged', signifying a range of behaviours and discourses over a range of sites of social interaction for many men. Moreover, 'masculinity' can be thought of as a way of *being* where differential discourses become signifiers of what it is to be a man at any one given time or context (Kerfoot and Knights 1996). These issues become important to grasp because as West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest gender is in the 'doing' - emerging through interactions and behaviours that are socially dominant in any particular social environment.

Theoretical developments

Building on the foundations laid out in Carrigan, Connell, and Lee's (1985) contribution, criticising the ineptness of sex role theory, provides a good starting point to review theoretical developments because their work provides an example of a time frame when new trends of thought emerged towards theorising gender. They theorise for gendered practices and social processes to create or work to affirm a specific gendered identity. Within gendered practices

and processes, an array of masculinities and relationships between masculinities emerge in a hierarchical ordering. The gender regime (ostensibly referring to the division of labour) creates, supports and sustains the 'gender order', allowing observations of the overall pattern of power relations to emerge between men and women that become influenced and shaped by the gender regime. At the top of the gender order framework, these authors apply the Gramscian concept of hegemony under which they propose 'complicit masculinity' (bringing benefits of patriarchy to other men: without effort). The next devolving tier proposes 'masculinities subordinated by gender related relations' (for example gay masculinity and masculinities that are marginalised either through class or race or through being women). This framework shows ways power relations occur between the tiers and between masculinities that were further developed in Connell's (1995) research *Masculinities.* Though hegemonic masculinity refers to a form of culturally dominant masculinity (at any one time) this is open to challenge from those lower down the gender hierarchy. For these authors, masculinities become constructed via power relations and ways they intersect with 'division of labour and with patterns of emotional attachment' (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985: 591). For Donaldson (1993) hegemonic masculinity revolves around the winning and holding of power, from which an internalisation of taken-for-granted assumptions occurs within day-to-day perspectives. This renders particular ways of thinking and behaving to become a cultural norm, which comes under further intensification through constructions of 'ideals', imbued with a form of moral currency (Donaldson, 1993: 645).

Masculinity and emotional attachment

Building on Kanter's (1977) theorisation that the power of men as managers becomes reproduced through emotional attachment and homosexual reproduction - what is also argued is that hegemonic masculinity becomes sustained via the processes of homosociality. Bird (1986) outlines three main strands of homosocial practice: emotional detachment, competitiveness[3], and objectification of women, who men view themselves to be 'different from' and 'better than' (p.121). A crucial element of homosociality is the way these practices separate men from each, and the ways men pass skills on to those who are like themselves. In

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[3] This is constructed and maintained through relationships with other men (where simple individuality becomes competitive individuality).

effect, homosociality maintains patterns of exclusion through the containment of skills within a particular body of men, and also works to sustain control over particular skills (Cockburn, 1991).

Signifying practices

For Barrett (2001) masculinity/ies are crucial to processes of identity work, and can be drawn upon and observed as a way that men express their gender (and sense of identity). Masculinities take the form of a fluid self and signify socially dominant ways of being a man within particular groups or cultures. In the quest to gain a sense of belonging, particular individuals are allowed access to male groups, and emergent from 'masculine performances', gender is created, and an individualised sense of self and 'identity' (see also Goffman 1959). As such, the masculine subject can be seen as a skilful creative actor, albeit within the rules and confines of varying cultural scripts. Displays of masculinity are enacted via performances of (social) competence to 'get by' or advance in a particular hierarchy. The relevance of 'fluidity' becomes further echoed in Collinson and Hearn (1996b), and Connell's (1987) contributions suggesting masculinities are adept in taking on multiple forms, that replicate and adapt through culture sustaining particularised forms within institutions. In particular, Collinson and Hearn suggest that in the pursuit of a masculine identity, men draw on resources, discourses and practices in a recurrent process or project of the self. Interestingly, Collinson's (1992) study shows how men in the work environment simultaneously collaborate, cooperate and identify with each other, and conversely are separated through competition, conflict and self-differentiation. These types of paradoxes are important to identify as they work to highlight and intensify differences and divisions, which are important to grasp when producing analysis towards forms of work identity. Similar to Hall (2000), Collinson and Hearn (1996b) argue identities 'have to be consistently constructed, negotiated and reconstructed in routine social interaction in the workplace and elsewhere through processes of identification and differation' (Collinson and Hearn 1996b: 72).

Practicing gender

Adding to these debates, (Butler 1990, Butler 1993) views gender as 'a doing' rather than something that 'is' (an essence). Butler argues 'performing as a doing that constitutes a being; an activity that creates what it describes' (Butler, 1990: 33). Interestingly, she argues that performativity (a stylised repetition of acts) works to reify and naturalise binary categories of gender and sex, which then produce the *illusion* of a core essence. To extend understandings, Butler proposes renewed focus to centre on the types of performance enacted, and if enactments of alternative performances (gender trouble) possess abilities to change the dominant gender order. Moving debate on further, Yancey Martin (2006) examines gendering processes in organisations represented through a two-sided dynamic: gendering practices and the practising of gender. Yancey Martin's notion of 'practising gender' refers to:

> A moving phenomenon that is done quickly, directionally (in time), and (often) non-reflexively; is informed (often) by liminal awareness; and is in concert with others. (Yancey Martin, 2003: 342).

Widening the identity theoretical framework, Davies and Harre (1990) view gender to occur through linguistic practices emerging from social interaction and conversation. These authors suggest gender identities are constructed through comparisons where male and female become perceived (and positioned) as alternative categories, whereby gendered identities come to be constructed through difference. Applying these ideas to the organisational setting, Gherardi and Poggio (2001) argue that men and women collude in the organisational construction of gender through a process of 'reciprocal positioning' or 'a dance', where the positions and figures assumed by the dancers reflect the gender power relations in the organisation. This echoes Kondo's (1990) thinking that gender identities are performative assertions, 'constructed appositionally and relationally . . . which we narrate and perform for each other' (p.307). Kondo's contribution highlights how on the one hand, we have a kind of fixity and essentialism of narrative conventions, and on the other, contradiction, ambiguity and subversion. This indicates a complex milieu of happenings within the gender identity construction process.

Management, masculinity and morality

Central to Kerfoot and Knight's (1996) theoretical approach, exploring the dynamics of masculinity and management, is that men become preoccupied with their own and others' judgements of themselves in relation to *their* competence, and being 'on top of' and in control of situations. Managers find themselves having to work at being 'masculine' and constantly find ways to marginalise personal fears and weaknesses for fear of competence becoming subject to question. Not only are managers' striving to operate under the *moral* imperative 'to do the right thing' (p.90), but at the same time, the combinations of masculinity and management work to convert all relations into practices of instrumental control. Where control is difficult, this can give way to displays of feigning, disinterest or distancing. However, in the quest to achieve objectives the masculine subject finds themself in constant need of affirmation and validation from approving others, and often leads to the repetitive re-enactments of new conquests and struggles. Similar to Giddens, these authors view the self as a project:

> To be worked on, policed for weakness, fought against, pushed and honed to meet the requirements of the ideal – this in spite of the very real sensations of fear, weakness and failure to live up to the masculine ideal. (Kerfoot and Knights, 1996: 92)

As we shall see further on in this chapter, these types of struggles make for similar hallmarks to the ways Weber's (1946) charismatic leader emerges, and the repetitive cycle of struggle and conquest becomes a way that routinisation is avoided.

In terms of relating the theory of masculinities to the research process, perhaps one of the most surprising elements of hegemonic masculinity is the suggestion that it is constructed by moral codes (see Whitehead and Barrett 2001, and Kerfoot and Knights 1996). There is scarce literature that reviews the link between morality and masculinity, and often morality remains on the periphery of any great in-depth analysis of gender. As such, the next section shows how this concept theoretically underpins and operationalises towards notions of work identity.

Morality

Within decision-making and everyday interactions, we often find ourselves facing situations that require justification of actions from a sense of what is right or wrong. As such, morality becomes woven into the everyday fabric of life, and defines the ways we come to shape our identity, which for this research focus, makes for a valuable theoretical tool. The operationalisation of morality towards a specific way of thinking is not an isolated concept as morality can be influenced by aspects of class (Sayers 2005), gender (Kerfoot and Knights 1996), culture (Weber 1971, Durkheim 1961, Lamont 2000) and emotions (Hochschild 1983), and vice versa. Morality permeates and stretches across three levels: society, groups and individuals, and to varying degrees these levels operate in a relational way in that it affects the way we think about things, the evaluations and justifications we make towards people and situations, and how we behave towards others. As such, the way morality sits and underpins particularised identities becomes an important thread to be woven into research analysis.

Morality and identity

Morality refers to the real behaviour of individuals in relation to learnt rules and values (of a particular community or group), and what becomes of interest is the way individuals obey, resist, respect or disregard dominant values. This term then, refers to a prescriptive system that either overtly or implicitly operates within any given culture, which could be viewed as the morality of behaviours (see Foucault 2000). However, for an action to be moral it is not just about conforming to a rule, law or value, rather this is about the relationship with the self. Foucault (2000) argues:

> This requires (the individual) to act upon certain modes of being that will serve as his moral goal, this requires (the individual) to act on himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself...there is no formation without 'modes of subjectification' and 'practices of the self'. (Foucault, 2000: 367)

These processes of 'becoming' infer 'self' to be in a transient process and self-activating where individuals continually appraise (self), which then filter to form a central part of identity.

Morality and work

Lamont's (2000) research and theoretical approach shows the connections between morality and work. Exploring 'the grammar of evaluations they [workers] use' (p.4), which become tapped through hierarchies or elements they differentiated themselves from, allows analysis to interpret the ways people come to make sense of their lives when interpreting and organising the 'differences' around them. Subjectivity then provides the means to reconstruct the internal coherence of workers' worldviews and how they adapt this to the working environment and their specific role. This then becomes a framework for analysis, which forms the criteria of individual perceptions of the moral self, and how moral boundaries are constructed and workers define parameters of cultural membership (p.9). Lamont explores the boundary lines between work and the external environment, and how they come to be put together or differentiated through individual and group experiences.

Lamont's conclusions show how the collective identity of working class men revolves around their struggle to make it through economic instability, uncertainty, physical danger and general unpredictability of life. With emphasis on the 'disciplined self', it is through work and a strong work ethic that constructions of self-worth are built to assert control over uncertainty. Work becomes the means to create and sustain a sense of 'moral purity' (p.12), mobilised to draw boundaries between decent people and 'others'. This self-worth is infused with a set of moral criteria and operates as an alternative to economic definitions of success - therefore, self-worth is linked to forms of sincerity and authenticity that appear as moral stances. However, this sincerity can also be seen as working class resistance if definitions of success are framed through not only who or what they aspired to be, but as important in terms of drawing boundary lines in respect of who they are not. Maintaining morals, for example, often leads to boundaries being drawn against professionals and managers who have their own

morals around individual success in their careers. Implicit within Lamont's analysis are overarching themes of masculinity, although this has not been explored in any great depth.

However, in order to convey how implicitly embedded morality is in sociological analysis and using Strangleman's (2004) research as a case example, we notice that morality appears conceptually embedded within analysis. For example, a moral order (p.95, 140), moral authority (p.159), moral identity (p.11), moral system (p.32), moral outrage (p.84), collective moral responsibility for occupation passed from generation to generation (p.81, 96), technical and moral control over work (p.136), lack of moral fibre (p.97) and moral decline (p.87). These findings do much to highlight the interconnections of morality and relationships between individuals, groups and the institution. However, in summing up the collective strengths of these papers, what they offer are fresh perspectives in relation to studies on working class resistance and/or ways working class cohesion occurs.

Work Cultures

As identification/differation and individual/collectivity are important to understanding notions around identity, the ways that these phenomena occur within groups is important to review, especially as FRS watch managers are part of a group, and yet set apart as a manager. As such, the notion of culture now assumes central focus as analysis seeks to understand the intersections between management culture (as watch managers identify with), and the crossover into the informal culture as organised by the watch.

Lincoln and Giuillot (2006) argue in a Durkheimian sense 'culture' is an emergent web, articulating the deep-set values, beliefs and symbolic systems of a natural collectivity. Once in operation, these portents become reality, 'autonomous' and capable of producing new phenomena. In this way, culture is a transient process. Cultural membership frames a particular sense of reality that independently shapes social action, where social processes reflect and sustain social action. It could also be argued these ideas link to Weber's 'ideal-type' bureaucracy, used as a means to classify and compare forms of social organisation

(Crozier 1963, Runciman 1978). If the premises of bureaucracy come to represent processes, procedures and ways of organising that demand obedience and objectivity of the worker, this too lends itself to a form of 'collective conscience', engendering a type of cultural expression. The bureaucratic system and rigid structures that support it, serves to safeguard against unfair advantage (assuring equality), and as such, the very heart of the bureaucratic machine is a moral system providing and upholding consistency, standards and organisational values. In this regard, Weber also points out the system provides the most effective way to control the worker. Bureaucracy is, therefore, highly prescriptive and requires discipline on the part of employees to submit to lines of 'office' (bureaucratically legitimised authority). Within the driving force of the bureaucratic system 'emotion', becomes rendered to a state of pure objectivity and suspense of personal judgement occurs in favour of the system. Though, respectively, Merton (1936), Selznick (1949) and Gouldner (1961) question the 'perfection' of Weber's 'ideal type'. So too, debate abounds if 'the opposition between organisational effectiveness and the freedom of the individual was possible' (Crozier, 1963: 177).

Theoretical developments

For organisational studies, the demands fuelled by Thatcher's 1979 'New Right' ideology to find ways to make cultural (and system) change occur in the public management sector influenced a renewed furore of theorising. New Public Management (NPM) has affected both the public and private sector, and a key feature of the successful integration of NPM principles into organisational culture was thought to reside in effecting cultural change with strong leadership to support it. Whilst authors such as Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (2004) propose that bureaucracy hinders organisational 'flexibility', their idea that culture could and should be manipulated was found disturbing by social scientists, who argued that this approach ignored conceptual complexity (see Dingwall and Strangleman 2005). Sociological perspectives began to argue that whilst the 'red tape' of bureaucracy was being unfettered within organisational change, that more covert, insidious forms of control were emerging centring around flexibility, innovation and the prominence of place assumed of charismatic leaders (Sennett 1998, Salaman 2005).

During the 1980s a variety of approaches were formulated promoting the suggestion that 'culture' was something an organisation 'is' or 'has', and was viewed as a phenomenon that could be manipulated by managers in a way similar to changing a strategy or a structure (see Deal and Kennedy 1982, Peters and Waterman, 1982). Attention became directed towards the idea of a 'quick fix' strategy to *seamlessly* change cultures to designer requirements by creating designer employees. It is from this perspective that we can begin to see the emergence of some of the key underlying assumptions relating to forging cultural change within the broader public sector and the fire service. In essence, these ways of thinking promote an ideology of all-powerful management paying little attention to the complexities of the dynamic behind workplace groups. More recently, Calhoun and Sennett (2007) argue for culture to become seen in more than purely tradition or creativity terms, and though conceding cultures possess 'particularised characteristics', they conceptualise the phenomena as transient, fluid and context specific. The authors stress that culture is in the 'happening', through micro-interaction and 'large bursts of innovation' (p.7). In this way, culture becomes both 'something one does, and something one learns to do better by doing it' (p.6). As such, sociological effort has often been directed towards 'making sense of the power of culture and the place of power in sustaining and organising culture' (p.6).

In terms of cultural resistance, Edwards (1979) casts the workplace environment as one of a 'contested terrain', and draws attention to workers' struggles in their attempt to resist managerial control over the labour process. In these respects, Hodson's (2001) conclusions suggest resistance surfaces because of the felt need of workers to defend and protect their dignity in the work environment. Hodson creates a framework highlighting four areas where challenge to dignity occurs 'outright mismanagement' and 'abuse' (more prevalent at supervisory level), and 'overwork' and 'limits to autonomy' (p.17). Conversely, Hodson suggests dignity becomes safeguarded through organised resistance, organisational citizenship, independent meaning systems, and group relations. Reactions and behaviours in these areas are both reactive and pro-active, with most resistance likely to occur in subtle forms and small-scale actions (like the subtle withdrawal of cooperation, enthusiasm, and motivation).

Formal and informal aspects of culture

Sociological distinctions between aspects of formal and informal culture focus on the dynamic between bureaucracy, management, supervisors and workers in the drive to effect change. Gouldner's (1954) work is particularly significant because it offers a framework to understand types of bureaucratic phenomena and the way formal and informal power gravitates discursively over various organisational sites. This is of particular relevance to my research; it provides a landmark to begin to unpack how the intended rational bureaucratic controls within organisations can paradoxically mask different types of counter-control within everyday interaction between the organisation, managers and workers.

Gouldner's research critically engages with Weber's (1978) theorisation of the bureaucratic 'ideal-type'. Gouldner argues that Weber seems to conceive of rules as if they developed and operated without the intervention of interested groups, which have different degrees of power drawn from varying resources in any a given situation. Gouldner primarily offers a working framework that tells us something about power and control, and how this mobilises across an organisation. In this way, he differentiated between three patterns of bureaucracy: mock bureaucracy[4], the representative pattern[5], and the punishment-centred bureaucracy[6]. These patterns also tell us something about the way authority becomes legitimised or neutralised in a complex dynamic between workers, sub-cultures and the bureaucratic phenomenon.

What becomes particularly revealing in Gouldner's research is how the interplay between the formal management culture and sub-cultures of the surface and sub-surface mines emerge through analysis. After changes were implemented in the gypsum factory, surface-workers continued to organise to resist the new rulings through a series of non-compliance attitudes and behaviours. In spite of this, control by management still appeared to take a grip in the surface mines under the new system of a punishment-centred bureaucracy. However, this reality materialised in a strange way, as within the new ways of working formal rules were used as bargaining tools - the antithesis to what was intended (rationally administered

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[4] Characterised by the failure to enforce or obey rules.
[5] Where managerially enforced rules are obeyed by workers.
[6] Where management attempt to enforce but is resisted by workers.

control). This type of give and take provided the space for workers and supervisors to experience increased levels of discretion to maintain consensus equilibrium.

In the sub-surface mines, the re-organisation of power had little effect. This in part was due to miners 'invisibility' while working, as it was hard for managers to enter their workspace to observe change. In the sub-surface mines, traditional informal ways of organising prevailed. Ways of working were understood through rules and not scripted through documents, but personalised in the hearts and minds of the culture-bearers maintaining traditional power structures and protocols that had been informally passed on through generations. Bearing a striking resemblance to the 'mechanisms' of a formal bureaucracy this informally agreed, authority, power and control remained an affair of the group, consolidated through socialisation processes, and upheld through homosocial working practices and tradition.

Work cultures and symbolic interaction
By contrast, Roy's (1959) research provides analysis of the workplace from an interactionist perspective. His work captures the ways status emerges within specific roles in the work group from frames of social interaction and informal social structures made visible through various performances of informal activities. These interactions occurred within the controlling frame of an informal pecking order ascribing status, providing legitimate parameters of 'who can say or do what to whom and get away with it' (p.167). Whilst illuminating certain peculiarities of culture and the dynamic between working individuals, Roy's work brings with it the assumption that identity is not a stable independent feature within individuals - rather it is constantly modified and remade as individuals interact with others and a phenomena in constant process.

Managers and supervisors in workplace cultures
Whilst Gouldner's research demonstrates how supervisory roles causes a separation between the 'know how' supervisors (new foremen) and the 'do how' supervisors (traditional

foreman)[7], Wright's (1982) work suggests supervisors to be in a juxtaposed position. Building up a picture of contrast, Thompson's (1983) research highlights the supervisor as distinct from the worker and management and having to become the 'driving' force of workers resembling Stonequist's (1935) 'marginal man' - neither management, nor labour and not fully accepted by either. More recently, Bolton and Ditchburn's (2012) account of a pit 'boss man' paints a different picture of how identity around the supervisory role is understood. In this case, the supervisor saw himself as a miner first and a manager second, with 'self' further imagined as part of multiple identities - as a miner, a trade unionist and a boss man. Conversely, Vaidyanathan's (2012) research situates managers and supervisors imagined 'next to' employees yet 'separate' inhabiting not a location, but operating from a position of 'professionalism', allowing them to maintain a serious commitment to task without mixing personal preference.

Charisma

Previously in this chapter, we gained an insight from a variety of authors of the ways identity comes to be constructed, maintained and operationalised. However, research focus also works to highlight the types of resources watch managers draw from to lead and manage the watch. In these respects, charisma presents itself to be one such phenomenon worth reviewing, and more especially as the charismatic phenomenon forms part of the discussion during analysis of the narratives.

Weber suggests charismatic leaders emerge in response to social crisis, 'in times of political, social, psychic, ethical or economic distress' (Weber 1947: 245). Where according to the dictates of the situation, the emergent charismatic individual responds to 'the calling'. Weber portrays charisma as 'a certain quality of an individual personality' that possesses both 'extraordinary' gifts and 'transformational' power, which simultaneously empowers and

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[7] New supervisors were not only separated by role and technical ability but also through their management style, known allegiances to management, and their confidence in their ability to get promoted. As the workers saw it, these men *are* management, and *are* the forerunner of the future.

operationalises power[8]. The charismatic leader embodies a life-giving and life-changing force, capable of transforming individuals, groups, social processes and environments. This is operationalised through the 'faith' the followers hold towards the leader to 'achieve' (specificities of success). Placing an unconscious onus (responsibility and duty) on individuals or the group to 'recognise' the extraordinary traits or 'gifts' of the leader - in so doing, the leader becomes self-appointed. In order to sustain this position, the leader becomes subject to process of on-going expectation from the group to 'prove self' and ensure 'wellbeing' of followers. Implicitly, within this sequence of events and explicitly highlighted by Weber is the concept of charismatic authority.

Weber (1947) develops the notions of traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic 'ideal' models of authority underpinning each ideal type with a different principle of legitimacy: sanctity of the past, rationality of the law, and the personal grace of a non/institutional figure (see Dow 1978). Honing in more precisely on the premise on which charismatic authority becomes established, Weber argues legitimation occurs 'by virtue of affectual attitudes, especially emotional, legitimising the validity of what is newly revealed or a model to imitate' (Weber 1968: 12). Although these types of authority are theoretically distinct, Weber also emphasised that they could occur in situ empirically mixed.

Academic critique of Weber's concept of charisma
Amongst Weber's critics, Bryman (1992) argues 'these [charismatic] collectivities are highly diffuse, sometimes contradictory, and often more suggestive of what is interesting and important in charisma than a definite exposition' (p.23). Offering ways to ameliorate these theoretical challenges, Perinbanayagam (1971) suggests whilst charismatic leadership and authority constitutes one typology, Weber 'left the details of these typologies unspecified' and places responsibility on the academic to 'specify and apply them to concrete instances' (p.387). Perinbanayagam urges academics escape the limits set by Weber to integrate notions of 'authority' with 'other relevant perspectives and theories to enlarge and or supplement

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[8] For Weber (1946), power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.

them' (p.388). More recently, Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) suggest for an abandonment of trying to understand charisma via means (such as transformational leadership) of specific lists of 'behavioural dimensions' and 'psychological states' providing 'a laundry list of outcomes' (p.21) focusing on 'effects'. What these approaches do not do is indicate what 'effects' include/exclude and why. Rather, they argue:

> We should explore and develop these ideas and insights free from the restraints, confounding of causes and consequences, and conceptual shortcomings, associated with the concept of charismatic–transformational leadership. (Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013: 46)

Therefore, given these varied academic reflections on charisma focus now turns to ways various dimensions of charisma operationalise. Taking the lead from Calas (1993) focus briefly explores the binary 'other' as Weber imagined by outlining the characteristics and relational properties of bureaucracy.

The emergence of the charismatic leader

Weber's notion of bureaucracy has played a central part as a 'primary institutional carrier of formal rationalisation' (Du Gay 2000: 4). The good bureaucrat is expected to suspend personal judgment in respect of the system and to rationally and objectively carry out the duties of office. As such, the bureaucrats' occupational identity operates in a discursive dynamic to symmetrically reflect the moral and ethical premise of the system it serves, ideally achieving individual and institutional objectivity.

The charismatic leader emerges outside the bonds, values and processes of bureaucratic structures[9], and outside of the confines of patriarchal and bureaucratic specialisms. Dow (1978) argues charisma is found in various occupations where the quality of 'extra-

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[9] Weber (1946) argues 'the charismatic structure knows nothing of a form or of an ordered procedure of appointment or dismissal. It knows no regulated career advancement or salary or regulated and expert training of the holder of charisma or his aids' (p.246).

ordinariness' manifests through success of extra-ordinary ventures (p.306). This represents a force that is inherently anti-structure, releasing power to 'revolutionise men from within', allowing the emotional and instinctual to be set free (Shils 1965: 26). However, charisma not only disrupts social order, it can also maintain and conserve it providing meaning, stability and continuity for individuals.

In *The Sociology of Religions*, Weber stratified charisma to either of two types of primary charisma by 'natural endowment', and charisma 'produced artificially in an object or person through some extraordinary means'. Weber also argues 'charisma can only be developed by which the germ already existed but would have remained dormant unless 'awakened' by some ascetic or other means' (Weber 1947: 2). Weber's stance has significant implications and explicitly casts a deterministic quantification, which separates the 'special' from the 'ordinary'. Consequently, Weber's binary approach becomes a divisive tool. Transposing this to the institutional setting Conger says:

> It might be more useful therefore to approach the issue of training charismatic leadership not from the perspective of creating an army of charismatic leaders but rather with the goal of enhancing the general leadership skills of our managers. (Conger, 1989: 160-161)

Conger's approach is indicative of a wave of thought that peaked during the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in relation to what Bryman refers to as 'the new leadership' movement. These eras witnessed organisational theorists trying to 'break the code' of charisma (Calas, 1993: 3 05), so it could be understood, studied and quantified to effect a resource for organisational purposes. For management theorists, charisma carried a trend of thought to be a useful construct to effect organisational and cultural change. By contrast, bureaucracy became displaced and open to critical theorisation. In the attempt to demarcate charismatics from non-charismatics, management theorists began to list charismatic characteristics such as:

Highly sensitive to the needs of followers, strongly articulate, willing to take personal risks, *agents for radical change,* and idealistic in their vision of the future. (Conger and Kanungo 1988, Conger 1989)

Also

Likely to display *emotional expressiveness*, self-confidence, self-determination and freedom from internal conflict and have strong convictions of their *moral* righteousness of their beliefs. (House, 1977)

Criticisms of these methodologies argued these approaches cut some aspects of charisma to size while overemphasising and ignoring others (see Calas 1993, Turner 1993). For the new leadership theorists' charismatic leadership does not centre on knowledge and wisdom as Weber (1946) envisaged, but represented an unconventional means of shaping a new organisational image. As DiTomaso (1993) argues, focus falls exclusively on the leader rather than 'assumed emerging relationships', and as Bryman (1992) observes, little acknowledgement or space is given to the routinisation of charisma. This appears as a questionable omission given the focus on culture change as part of the manager's visionary mission.

The discursive nature of charisma

Providing a more visual means of conceptualisation, Klein and House (1995) draw on the metaphor of 'fire' to explain the discursive nature of charisma. They suggest 'charisma' is the product of three elements: the spark (the charismatic leader), the flammable materials (followers - open or susceptible to charisma), and the oxygen (the environment) conducive to charisma (p.183). They interpret Weber's concept of charisma as neither one of the three elements in isolation but a product of their union, which when operating at once produce the fire of charisma. When the level of charisma is high and homogenous among the followers of a leader, charisma typifies the group as a whole and, as such, meaningful to characterise charisma as a group-level phenomenon. Their research shows some charismatic leaders to treat followers in the same way while other charismatic leaders treat each of their followers

differently. However, unlike the emotional detachment of the bureaucrat, the discursive nature of charisma is likely to be emotionally charged.

Discussion and summary

Although career literature offers a broad scope to conceptualise career within organisations Cuzzocrea and Lyon's (2011) directive argument to focus on the ways agency becomes subject to differing forms of experience, and why this might be so, is important to take forward. Concepts of culture, gender and forms of emotional labour have shown themselves embedded within career theory, rationalising the sociological tool kit and sharpening analytical awareness for this research. However, one of the most pressing issues emerging pre-empts the need to clarify sites where dominant cultural beliefs impact or affect choice of career movement for firefighters, and ways these choices come to shape experiences of work and forms of work identity within a career.

Whilst Hall favours using the notion of identification over identity, and ways boundaries form from processes of identification and otherness, Goffman argues 'identity' surfaces via the dynamics of symbolic interaction and from performance and not the cause of it. By contrast, individualisation theorists place onus on the individual's task to 'become' through a multiplicity of choices, and Giddens views the social subject as a free agent of choice taking responsibility for own development. In this way, the self is centre stage, and the making of identity becomes earned through labours of the self. Beck and Gorz argue it is only for the privileged few that work offers satisfaction and motivation to build a sense of identity and what is presently being debated are forms of a do-it-yourself or choice biography in contrast to traditional patterns.

Hochschild's work provides a twofold dimension: it offers a framework to define and identify aspects of emotional labour, and it also provides strong links to shifting forms of identity. Whilst Hochschild's work has been subject to criticism and on-going development, in terms of my research focus the conceptual framework she adopts, becomes useful to assess the

extent to which emotional labour is resourcefully operationalised by watch managers in daily work interaction. Pushing at the theoretical margins the 'conceptual union' between emotional labour and masculinity appears theoretically undeveloped towards images of masculinised identities. Therefore, heightened awareness towards focusing on the ways data links these two concepts becomes important to deconstruct, to add to theoretical debates, and contribute meaningful material to the sociology of the FRS.

Focusing on gender relations and specifically relations between masculinities, allows analytical attention to centre on the ways multiple forms of masculinity form 'between men'. This allows analysis to make explicit the ways differential masculinities play out through different roles and how the separation of watch managers' identities can be distinguished from 'others' (and vice versa). If, as gender theorists suggest power relations construct hegemonic masculinity, then the way power is exercised within the interplay of divisions of labour within the watch becomes an important aspect to explore.

Lamont's theoretical approach provides for a working framework to discuss the grammars of evaluation workers adopt to make sense of self, other workers, and institutional environment. Implicit within Lamont's analysis are overarching themes of masculinity. Although this has not been explored within her analysis in any great depth, the themes would benefit from being open to further analysis.

The watch manager is representative of a specialist manager working in a developed bureaucracy, and it is sociologically significant to examine 'why' and 'how' occupational identity becomes sustained within the rationalising and changing structures of the FRS. Given the complex picture Gouldner portrays, this research needs to provide a wider and deeper representation of the power forces at play between bureaucratic phenomena and differing types of sub-cultures that co-exist. As Gouldner's work shows, power and control is not a priority of management, and it is within the matrixes of power that formal and informal forces simultaneously form, inform and resist each other. Whilst holding on to Gouldner's

theoretical approach and focusing on the shaping of watch managers' work identity, research findings are able to build on Gouldner's work to show how issues of gender, morality and emotional labour additionally become important factors to maintain control and shape identity in bureaucratic organisations.

The potential for charisma to become a resource of power, control and influence is an important area of focus. Given that organisational change and uncertainty appears as fertile ground, where charismatic leaders emerge, focus towards finding out 'how' watch managers adapt in relation to on-going change, and the resources they draw from to manage and communicate change becomes important to analyse. Recent FRS research has not explored in any great depth the part watch managers play as agents of change, or explored the ways they might mediate the power of management. Important to draw out are the ways the combinations of research themes theoretically engage and overlap with each other as influencers towards fashioning a sense of the watch manager's work self.

Drawing from the theoretical approaches presented in this chapter, this research moves to create a picture of real-lived experiences of watch managers who are managing a particularised work culture in which career and identity emerges, and comes to be shaped via the means of everyday interaction with individuals, groups and the institution.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology and Design

Introduction

This chapter outlines my research methodology and design, and provides an overview of how the qualitative research approach and analysis has developed. Given the complex nature of the theoretical themes, issues and questions around identity and career, the research carries out in-depth interviews and focus groups around a series of carefully crafted questions (see appendix 1). This provided the means for interviewees to elaborate on answers to obtain in-depth meaningful data for analysis. In combination with field observations, provided scope for the theoretical conceptualisations (focusing on career, occupational identity, masculinity, morality, emotional labour and culture) to inform the research questions. The research design needed to be 'open' and have capacity to promote frank and honest responses contextually grounded to accommodate in-depth explanations.

Research questions

The research questions (outlined below) foreground discussions of methodological approach and research design throughout this chapter.

- In what ways do watch managers construct, maintain and operationalise their occupational identity?
- How do career trajectories impact on occupational identity and negotiations of power?
- What are the realities and the experiences of the watch manager's role?
- What types of relationships and resources do watch managers draw on to manage?
- How do workers in other roles view watch managers?

A case study approach

The advantage of a case study approach allows for an exploration of in-depth inquiry through a range of methods with joint facilitation of in-depth interviews, focus groups and observational methods. These combinations are able to capture complexities of social processes and a sense of participants' lived experience, allowing differing perceptions to emerge (of each role level) to make possible 'readable data that brings the research to life and are true to the concerns and meanings under scrutiny' (Edwards and Talbot 1994: 48).

Ragin (2000) discusses the different ways that 'case studies' have been understood and applied to research projects within the social sciences. Taking Ragin's lead, I might ask myself 'what is this research a case of?' Given that Ragin explains the difference between conventional variable orientated comparative work and case orientated comparative work, my research formed up around a case study of watch managers' identity from multiple perspectives. Intentions were to examine the moral, emotional and cultural boundaries of watch managers 'to unearth complex webs of formal and informal exchanges and interdependences… made, pieced together from the lived experience of individuals' (Harper 1987, in Ragin 2000: 14). Analysis identifies 'cases of identity' emerging via threads of similarity and difference, and the ways they occur in relation to other roles within the institution. Equally, where overt differences emerged between the two FRSs taking part in the research, this too forms part of the comparative process. The case study approach allowed a deeper understanding of issues salient to the watch manager's role and identity. O'Reilly (2009) suggests that researchers who adopt this method 'construct cases out of naturally occurring social situations [..] the collection of unstructured data and the qualitative analysis of those data' (p.24). However, Brewer (2000) highlights difficulties arising by arguing that both case studies and ethnographies share the same problem of 'small sample size' and issues of generalisability. Reconciling these issues Brewer argues:

> Generalisations are 'possible' using theoretical inference ... we do this by employing concepts that explain complex phenomena and building theoretical explanations that link concepts together ... these are applied to the specific case and then to other cases

as theoretical resources that might enable the broader understanding of universal themes … this involves the collection of analysis of further cases (Brewer, 2000 in O'Reilly, 2009: 26).

Adding to these debates, Yin (2003) argues that 'in analytic generalisation, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study' (p.36). It is in respect of the methodological approach that Yin proposes that my research becomes grounded towards analytical generalisation.

Sampling

The watch managers drawn from in this study are limited to those who presently (or previously) perform their managerial function responding to emergencies and are responsible for managing a watch on a wholetime/or variable crewed station (not those within the on-call sector). In order to draw from a diverse pool of watch managers, the research plan incorporates two particularly different examples of FRSs. I have selected one large FRS 'Metro' (this FRS organises through wholetime/variable crewed stations) and a smaller FRS 'Castle', which represents a rural fire service (possessing both retained than wholetime stations). The comparative features between these two FRSs manifest via both the nature of their work (the type of emergencies attended), and in respect of the differential technologies and institutional resources available to them. Equally, 'Metro' is likely to draw from a wider, more diverse and denser geographical area than Castle workers. Thus comparative differences surface in respect of workers, community, locale, types of emergencies most prevalent, and differing types of cutting-edge technologies.

In demographic terms, both FRSs offer a sample mean figure of 95.5% male and 80% white ethnicity. These figures are broadly representative of the FRS as a whole (DCLG 2014/15). Metro and Castle FRSs show marginal difference in their gender and ethnicity figures, which appeared in the research field as a predominantly a white/male environment. There also shows to have been marginal differences between these fire services in relation to the percentage of

overall roles below management level. For example, within 'Metro', management roles constitute 32%, and 40% of the 'Castle' workforce. Thus, although there is enough core universalising features to find similarities, there are also enough differences to explore a theoretically specified contrast.

The stations attended for this research (in each FRS) were not of my choice but a consequence of firefighters' willingness to be interviewed (who worked on a particular station). However, in outcome this worked out to include a variety of stations in different geographical locations within the boundaries of each FRS. Whether this sample is big enough to be statistically representative of the wider context of the FRS is not my major concern. What is more pressing to the outcomes of this study is the ability to carry out in-depth research that allowed access to sample certain categories of people within and orbiting the watch manager's role. The emphasises towards depth rather than breadth of data offers an illustrative attempt to understand 'identity' and 'career' through a variety of theoretical lenses over two very different demographic areas. Thus, I provide a rationale to suggest that limitations occurring in terms of size or scope of the research plan have become offset from the rich substance of research data. Table 1 (below) represents interview numbers within the selected 'Metro' and 'Castle' case studies.

	Metro	Castle	Totals
	4 fire stations	4 fire stations	8 stations
Senior Management Team	1	2	3
Divisional Manager	1	1	2
Station Manager	3	3	6
Watch Manager	8	8	16
Crew Manager	3	3	6
Firefighters	2 groups of FFs	2 groups of FFs	4
Union Representative	1	1	2
			Total - 39 participants

Table 1 – Research Interview Plan

This plan scheduled thirty-nine interviews of which two respondents were ethnic minorities and one woman. The research was designed to span a range of institutional levels[10], allowing a cross section of horizontal and vertical data to inform analysis within each FRS. This approach allowed an accumulation of understanding to emerge towards watch manager experiences and ways their role becomes perceived by others. Watch managers do not work in a vacuum but in a contextual and relational environment; capturing the subtleties and dynamics between workers and their work environment becomes an important focus. In order to understand the tensions, values and dispositions salient to the watch manager role, interviews took place with people who work with the watch manager, or who influence their role and the work they do, including their managers, the people they manage and acting representatives of the trade union.

As the watch managers operate within and across institutional boundaries there was a need to interview personnel on a number of institutional levels, keeping research lines of enquiry consistent. Some of the thesis questions, such as those focusing on identity, needed to be approached from a range of different angles. Therefore, the framework of interview questions was guided by the research themes to maintain a systematic thread. Where necessary, this was adapted to encompass the same line of questioning about the watch manager and their particular role to operationalise the core sociological concepts that the research drew out.

Aside from institutional positioning of other roles orbiting the watch manager position, other issues of interest surfaced. For example, crew managers viewed themselves to act as a buffer between the watch manager and firefighters. Firefighters' voices offered an insight into the relational dynamic of the watch, and how a variety of operational and social separations occur within the work group. Their collective views towards the watch managers' job in 'action' worked to add further dimensions of understanding towards the watch manager role. As the watch manager's manager, the station managers were a crucial component, aiding the piecing-together of watch managers' identity constructions. Although more senior managers have

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[10] These calculations become significantly increased in combination with a range of informal conversations that have taken place throughout the research process.

scarce contact with watch managers, some senior managers were interviewed to get their perspective on how watch managers fit into the wider scheme of the organisation. Whilst uniformed senior managers provided a reflective account of experiences in differing role capacities, human resource managers (unlikely to have had any operational experience) offered a further perspective, from being strategically tuned in to issues of cultural change. Outside of these groups, one FBU representative from each fire service was interviewed to gain an understanding of present political struggles, including their view on the watch manager role. The full breakdown of participant roles and pseudo names can be found in appendix 10.

Access

In September 2013, four FRSs across England were contacted at senior manager level to ask permissions to gain access for research purposes, of which two responded. Once the correct contact was established (at highest level of management), a follow up email was provided, setting out the focus and objectives of study and detailing research interest. At this stage, a principle officer within each FRS invited me to speak with them over the telephone so that I could answer their questions and queries. These officers then took the research request to the next stage, presenting details to a wider senior management group for approval and access to their FRS. Each FRS (and each research participant) was offered a short, concise summary of findings for taking part in the research. Following formal acceptance, the next stage was to negotiate how access to workers could be facilitated. Whilst arranging interviews with middle and senior management was more straightforward (representative of political and formal agendas), by contrast, access to station managers and watch levels needed a more sensitive and guarded approach, as their position is more vulnerable. Therefore, robust ethical considerations were anticipated and applied at every step during negotiations, to access interviewees at station level.

Once access was formally granted and a list of names and contact details were passed to me, I personally emailed participants (individually), outlining aims of study and asked them to

participate. Whilst women watch managers were purposefully invited to participate to provide a mix of gender responses, no interest in participating was forthcoming. Why this recurrently occurred was not clear. However, drawing from Woodfield's (2016) analysis that women FRS managers' need to overcome 'otherness' may go some way to explain reticence. However, in respect of those who were willing to participate, the preservation of anonymity became central to concern, and each participation occurred on the understanding that at no time would information or details of who had or had not taken part be made available to management (or to any other participant at any level). Neither, would any information be made available as to what stations I had visited. This allowed the researcher to respect the institution and at the same time keep the gatekeeper at a distance.

Ethics

The research 'plan' and the way access permission was sought, works to hide the identity of each FRS through two pseudo names: Castle (smaller FRS) and Metro (high density city FRS). To some extent, factors that would identify a FRS become ameliorated through applying one set of neutral terms to denote a particular role (e.g. adopting the generic term of watch manager rather than applying an idiosyncratic identifiable term such as watch commander). This research removes interviewee identifiers and adopts the use of pseudonyms to break the link between data and discernible individuals. Sensitive issues that could potentially identify an individual have been omitted although they added background knowledge for research notes. Equally, where a new type of working response initiative could identify a FRS via role identification, details of the new role have been carefully crafted so as to mask exact details that could identify a FRS.

Anonymity in the field

Particularly testing as a researcher were times of waiting in a fire station for watch manager interviews to begin. At the most extreme, whilst waiting for one watch manager, a variety of firefighters came in and out of the front office and they saw fit to ask me a relentless and repetitive round of questions in respect of 'who' I was waiting for and 'why' I was there. In

response, I gave nothing away except to continually say I had a planned meeting. This type of interaction (although not unusual) had the effect of intimidating and kept me 'on guard' and at times felt like a battle of wits. On reflection, I did wonder if I was being tested to see if I could be trusted in a similar fashion to Baigent's 'boob test' (see Baigent 2001: 29). There appeared to be an underlying basic assumption on the part of firefighters, that it was 'their right to know' who was in 'their' station. However, on these occasions my concern was to guard participant's anonymity and be closed to the giving out of any information.

Watch manager interviews took place in a variety of place, these ranged from the station reception area to a more covert place away from station at fire service HQ. For example, there were times as a researcher I was shuffled up to a room in a clandestine manner away from the watch, and at other times I found myself escorted by one firefighter to the watch manager's office where people were working and the door kept open. At the most extreme, one watch manager asked to be interviewed in the station reception (the public office) where I had been waiting. Throughout this interview firefighters continued to come in and out and felt free to interrupt the interview process by asking their watch manager work-related questions, and at times interjected to 'help' their watch manager elaborate on his answers. All this happened alongside the very noisiness of laughter and loud talking between firefighters from the front-of-house where they were working. What becomes important to highlight here is that watch managers chose their own terms of research engagement as to what 'space' they thought most fitting to take part in the research process. Whilst Metro watch managers chose to be interviewed 'on station', by contrast in Castle FRS, six out of eight watch managers chose to be interviewed away from the station in the HQ building.

Gender of interviewer effects

Flores-Macias and Lawson (2008) argue gender effects become confined to sensitive areas around gender topics. However, extending this perspective Rios Sandoval (2009) suggests gender politics and positions of power influence interview subtleties, arguing for 'in the moment gender dynamics' to procure and elicit the reproduction of gender hierarchies with

potential to affect the interview process and the data obtained. Whilst these issues are important to highlight and work to heighten the researchers awareness of issues that could have influence over the research process (and outcomes), at the same time it was important to harness these types of issues to provide important features of analysis. For example, during the research, questions around equal opportunities became a sensitive issue - perhaps more so since I was not only an outsider, but also a woman. This led to a feeling of dread in delivering, or probing, in or around subject matter, but did not detract from my obligation to deliver the question and probe answers. Whilst documenting moments of hesitancy what becomes important here are ways these types of questions were answered by the respondents. Though, this occurred in a broad range of ways (defensively, openly, resentfully) what mattered were the patterns of social understandings emergent from the discussion representative of dominant organisational discourses (or otherwise).

In terms of the gender dynamic, two issues surfaced. First, being an older and mature woman clearly of working class background (given my accent), did much to encourage a rapport in most circumstances. Second, my advancement in years did much to mitigate the overt facilitation of masculine exaggerated prowess, and instead worked to enable a series of discussions without other distracting dynamics getting in the way. My experiences appear to have echoed Arendell's (1997) research interaction where though the likelihood was that male respondents related to her as feminised 'other', on the other hand she believed herself to be perceived based on their expectations of her as a woman - as the 'passive' listener. For me as the researcher, this inertly created the room for meaningful data to emerge.

Though it was important to be 'aware' of gender of interviewer effects (as a woman interviewing a high proportion of men), and to maintain solid interviewing strategies to disarm potential pitfalls, what actually happened is that a rapport was established at the outset. The dynamic worked to provide the right level of probes and responses affecting a highly interactive exchange. In part, this was aided by my earlier experiences as a research assistant in the FRS environment. The wording of interview questions needed to be carefully crafted, and during the interview process I had to ensure I used neutral non-judgemental language in

my verbal exchanges. This enabled me to become responsive to the language and concepts used by the interviewee. These types of issues are important to consider as Arendell (1997) highlights that though questions are of the moment, responses are not 'stored in heads'. Rather, her appraisal states that the emergent two-way exchange creates a sense of 'space', where unproductive effects influenced by gender dynamic dissipate during highly interactive conversation - 'a strange mix of familiarity and anonymity' (p.342).

Research Methods

Semi-structured interviews

This research used in-depth semi-structured interviews to encourage research participants to elaborate on answers, which provided a balance of interview structure and individual autonomy (for both interviewer and interviewee). This allowed a sense of 'how people construct the meaning and significance of their situations from [..] their complex personal framework of beliefs and values' (Stewart and Cash 1988: 45). The interview questions were prepared in a set order but were asked flexibly, with consistencies of themes maintained throughout the research process. Whilst questions encompassed concepts, they were not too closed to inhibit free interpretation and wider associations to emerge. In this way, qualitative data relating to themes was recorded leaving 'space' to seek clarification (if required) to prompt further elaboration.

By contrast, Whyte (1981) argues 'the whole point of not fixing an interview structure with pre-determined questions is that it permits freedom to introduce materials and questions previously unanticipated' (p.35). However, this is offset; although research questions were pre-determined, they were framed in an indirect or open-ended way. As such, the research design encouraged interviewees to expand on their initial answer and speak meaning and associations into subject matter. Rubin and Rubin (1995) critical of this method, argue for front-stage personas to emerge that are often guarded and scripted. Whilst I recognise this to be a valid reservation, at the same time research inquiry is interested in the 'front stage' of occupational identity as Goffman (1959) views to occur. It is the work 'persona' and

management of self-identity I want to understand more fully. Therefore, rather than the presentation of a 'front' representing an obstacle to my research, it is instead a 'finding', albeit one I will need to more thoroughly probe and deconstruct.

Focus groups with firefighters

A focus group has a prescriptive agenda bought to the meeting in the form of semi-structured questions. It can be thought of as a planned discussion in contrast to group discussions that are naturally occurring and opportunistic (O'Reilly 2009). Davies (2007) argues that ideally, focus groups work most effectively with six to eight people, and Gibbs (1997) extends viability to between four and twelve people. As such, these parameters particularly suited my research enquiry because each watch generally contains between six and twelve firefighters.

Some of the difficulties associated with focus groups concern the logistics of facilitating group discussion and how this might inhibit candid and forthright data to emerge. However, on the other hand, focus groups allow for a picture of group dynamics to surface as they do in their established surroundings. Morgan (1996) suggests for feminist researchers to have found focus groups appealing 'because they allow participants to exercise a fair degree of control over their own interactions', which can become 'a basis for empowering clients' (p.133). Reviewing these issues prior to the interviews raised my awareness towards potential problems. My decision to select this method was influenced on the premise that the watch exists as a collective entity and performs 'operationally' as a team. As such, the need to interview the group as a naturally occurring phenomenon in their natural environment became a priority objective. Offsetting the downside of this approach was that the focus group provided the means to observe the ways firefighters make sense of their environment through the eyes of the group, interactions with others, and the interplay of ideas that flow from their synergistic processes. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) found that focus group interviews encourage 'the production of data or ideas that might not have been uncovered in individual interviews' (p.16). In outcome, I found the focus groups provided opportunities to observe moral standpoints of the group, whilst at the same time, allowed space for collective

consensus and disagreements to materialise. As such, potential restrictions of this research method became far outweighed by advantages. At the same time, I countered some of the potential problems by applying Finch and Lewis' (2003) five planning stages: scene setting, ground rules, individual introductions, opening topic, discussion and end discussion (p.176). This aided the ability to systematically frame the interview procedure.

Overall, this method provided the means to observe the interplay of group power pockets and premises on which they become founded, and how the ebb and flow of power sources emerged as a natural part of group dynamics. There was scarce indication of firefighters' inhibition to contribute. Rather, emergent barriers appeared in relation to certain topics (such as equality and diversity and union business). Interestingly, group controls were managed through the use of light-hearted banter or gentle correction rather than overt domineering practices.

Observational methods

Observational methods extended my understanding of interactional frames and social processes over a range of environments. In respect of adopting this methodological approach, Wolcott's (1981) four strategies were a useful guide that included observing a broad sweep, then nothing in particular, the search for paradoxes, and then noting problems that face the group. This format helped to create a framework based on specific criteria and focus in on categories of importance. Field notes and a reflexive diary have supported the observational method, acting as a valuable resource to perfunctorily review alongside narrative analysis. The use of observational methods added considerably to the pool of research data providing material to make sense of a range of issues in different contexts. For example, on one occasion, I was invited to join a watch manager (John, Metro) with their firefighters round the mess table. This allowed for gathering of data on social processes and managerial interaction in a more informal context. On three occasions after focus groups with firefighters (bar Metro watch 3), I was invited to stay for further tea (and biscuits) to engage in polite conversation outside the formalised 'space' of the research process. However, this was not a space where

my ethical guard dropped as often their conversations veered to enquire what other stations and FRSs were taking part in the research. At these times, I remained highly vigilant to ethical responsibilities. Equally, on impromptu occasions where the nature of material discussed (with all respondents) had the potential to be highly 'telling' or 'sensitive', this served only to enhance my personal understanding of the observed social subjects and the organisation.

Analysis

The data collected from semi-structured recorded interviews from focus groups and individual interviews with research participants were transcribed into text. Inductive thematic analysis was applied to qualitatively analyse the transcripts using the NVivo software. This was used as a guide to hone in on particular trends in the narratives. When a particular theme emerged, I would re-read the narratives in question to establish context and wider links. Oftentimes, particular foci were organised in a table diagram, giving an overall understanding of patterns towards similar/differing views of specific phenomena and emergent themes. Where possible, data diagrams and tables were created for my personal use to grasp the nature of relational components or simply deconstruct dynamics between specific variables. These became invaluable tools that allowed a sense of how one theme under review links with others. Analysis was not just extricated from the written word, but also influenced via observational notes taken during the interview. My notes included details of working environment, specifics about the interviewee, and dynamic between interviewee with myself, and between watch manager and firefighters. This was especially helpful to transmit phenomena that the spoken word does not carry. It seems the power of the spoken word is but one idiom that communicates sites of power, senses of self, work identity and, oftentimes, the impact of visual props (i.e. uniform) and tone of voice, etc., all carry valuable clues to influence analysis outcome.

Reflections on research methods

The one-to-one semi-structured interviews worked well and were flexible enough to pick up on issues emerging within answers to allow for deeper probing. Maintaining a reflexive diary

on interactions and field observations was a productive way of thinking more deeply about ways various interactions occurred between interviewer, interviewee and where appropriate firefighters. The focus groups with firefighters was very telling, especially in the way differing rules of engagement emerge between those with longevity of service and newer members of the watch. The importance of these three research methods (and reflecting on them) provided a rewarding framework to draw from. For example, had I not been so systematic in comparing and contrasting from these three methods I might have missed some important findings where some 'characters' impress more heavily than others, and the data they influenced. In these respects, it would have been easy to believe very little has changed since Baigent's (2001) account on fire service identities and culture. Even in the transcription, I found myself reinforcing a pattern of events, but this was my subjective self and left unchecked, my selections could have become skewed by unbalancing towards particular forces of personality. When I mapped attitudes to various types of change in a table against data from each watch manager, a symmetrical and proportionate pattern emerged. This showed the group of watch managers to form up as either those against certain criteria of change (promotional systems, equality, rank to role, NPM and targets), or pro-change with a smaller group in the middle (see appendix 11). This alerted me to degrees that researchers could be swayed to give more room to some personalities than others, especially as they make for dynamic reading in the telling. Though I elaborate more fully in the following sections that explain how the research has developed, being alerted to these potential pitfalls became as much as a methodological lesson, as a significant marker to avoid and incorporate to enhance analysis.

Thesis Development

The ideas I had when this project was in its early stages were intentionally focused on under-researched themes in the previous FRS research analysis. I was not aiming to include political influences or new public management (NPM) in any great depth, but the data pushed this up my agenda and into my analysis. More specifically, my preoccupation wanted to extend beyond mainstream FRS research analysis in respect of firefighters' hegemonic masculinity, and look more towards themes that potentially support forms of masculinities. In part, I was

of the view that supporting elements were missing in the 'masculinities' puzzle. Whilst I am not challenging the idea that gender is a crucial element in the construction of work identity, my quest was to build on current trends of thought or perhaps even challenge them. For example, from the early contributions of Thurnell-Read and Parker (2008), who recognised that emotional labour lays under-theorised in relation to firefighters' masculinity, and Scott and Myers (2005), who explored a range of emotional attachments between workers at the fire house, this niche remained relatively unexplored territory.

I developed a keen interest towards conceptual theorisations in relation to links between emotional labour, masculinity and firefighters' identity, and I also felt these were allied to notions around morality. In outcome, these combinations offered ways of understanding identity in the context of career, and the way forms of masculinities operationalise. I felt inspired to explore the finer nuances these concepts could add in respect of watch culture and the under-focused attention towards managerial identity. The most pressing work role to be singled out given the already extensive concentration towards firefighters and watches, was the role of the watch manager, especially towards how their managerial identity separates from firefighters. Other questions specifically relating to the watch manager role also emerged, for example, how do watch managers differentiate themselves from the watch? Was it that all watch managers were able to 'manage masculinities' without some form of emotional labour? These types of questions that have to date remained relatively unexplored in FRS research set in motion an inquisitive line of questioning that influenced my research focus.

Problem solving

Whilst I had my own initial ideas about how the research would develop, this has always been open to modification during analysis. During this process, and after many attempts of arranging data to display some sort of coherent system, I was unable to satisfactorily hang it all together, until I recognised that it was impossible to get a deeper understanding of 'meaning' without having a wider understanding of patterned themes. Altering my approach, I

began to re-evaluate the historical aspects of the FRS; I noticed connections between analyses of historical mapping and contemporary lived experiences of change, and their connections and influences towards identity formations. It is within the watch manager's placing in the organisation that focus around career trajectories becomes interesting, particularly in relation to the way that this is bound up with the ways cultural and identity affiliations, and detachments emerge.

Significantly, I found that the impact of NPM initiatives and change management practice appeared to act as a lever to understand the context of almost all themes for discussion, and provided a way to understand shifting forms of identity. This became more complex as I noticed that questions were rarely answered in a singular time frame. Often forms of nostalgia tinged the narratives, so as to suggest respondents' hearts were fixed in the past while trying to realign 'selves' with the present and in the face of an uncertain future. In order for the participant to structure their answer, many consistently swung back and forth from past to present. Often their present reality could only be understood in the context of their interpretation of the past, which often incurred recognition of struggles around modernisation and change. This too posed a problem in ordering the chapters as it became difficult to avoid 'putting the cart before the horse', and made problematic the means to systematically turn the pages of time in a coherent order. The major themes (career, identity, masculinity and organisational change) are invariably consistent with notions around 'culture', as all roads led 'from' and 'to' cultural phenomena. The narratives indicate the fire service is made up of a number of cultures: the public view looking in; the wider shared organisational culture across fire services; FRSs in relation to each other; station cultures; watch cultures, and so forth. Each culture unravelling sub-cultures in its wake, all of which reformulate particularised characteristics of identity, down to the most micro interactional form.

Using Lamont's (2000) moral framework approach through the narratives I found that whilst improvisations occur in a multitude of ways, patterns also emerge and surface through grammars of evaluation that individuals use to make sense of 'who' they are and what is going on around them. As such, it became important to understand cultural frames (and

filtering) at different levels of the organisation as watch managers' work identity could not be adequately analysed through restricting focus at watch level. Rather, there had to be an in-depth understanding of all three levels in a composite of identities for the watch managers' narratives to be understood to full effect. The crux of the thesis, is not necessarily to explain each watch manager's point of view separately (and idiosyncrasies of sixteen characters), but to move beyond this to explore (axis) where similarities and incompatibilities occur, and analyse 'why' they occur and what this means in terms of identities and the culture(s) that encase them.

As such, the axis provided the platform for a range of masculinities to emerge that either position in a reciprocal or a contradictory manner to each other (Poggio 2006). From culture to organisational changes, and gender to identity, the dominant themes play out their dance within the scripts (Kondo 1990). Each theme in some way linked to another in one big exhaustive mind map where connections become difficult to untangle. Although this further complicates any simple means to order chapters, what it does do is provide prominent structures to navigate through in analysis. The recognition of these types of challenges (and the need to think them through) is important in the way that they refine the research process, to transform problems to solutions and build the framework to sharpen analysis. As I began analysing the data, concepts of emotional labour, morality and charisma took position within the analytical order. However, whilst they are supporting themes that appear to underpin or explain phenomena in relation to 'masculinities', 'identities', 'culture' and 'career', this does not detract from their importance.

The unspoken data

The former paragraphs explain the way that dominant themes and sub-themes have evolved through the analysis of the written word. However, the narratives are not the only resource that speaks into the research experience. Equally telling were observation of interactions and sets of behaviours in the field, which offer priceless clues that the written word fails to

capture[11]. Alongside this, a further issue emerged. I had to think through how I was going to address the disparity between the sentiments I heard and accepted during the interview, and what transcription later identified as what had 'actually' been said. In a moment of reflection, I began to appreciate that without the 'presence' of the body and in the absence of the 'personality' that spoke the narrative, the data took a completely different interpretation. The amusing interaction during interviews dissipated in the harsh reality of the written word. The need to look for some explanation as to why this had occurred (and how meanings transmitted in the flesh had another meaning in the word) led me to explore Weber's (1946) notion of charisma, which theoretically seemed to fit with my experience. I found the charismatic appeal to effervesce from some watch managers and not in others. It is these types of transmissions from one person to another that is oftentimes impossible to pick up in the transcriptions. The charismatic element cannot be ignored, as we need to draw on the full range of Weber's conceptualisation of authority; in some cases it may explain 'how work gets done', which when exploring fine-grained observations allows the unravelling of power relations 'between' and 'in relation to' particular work identities to be understood. In the broader scope of research attentions, this research explores watch managers' patterns of improvisations around the (bureaucratic and ideological) systems that enable/disable forms of agency. In effect, this is an exploration of the power balance between structure and agency. What emerges is a sense of how gender engages with the identity project of NPM, and how this site operationalises as a means for types of masculinities to form, defend, and sustain a sense of authenticity.

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[11] For example, I draw upon 'vocabularies of body idiom' (Goffman, 1967) to fill the space that the interview data cannot.

Chapter Three

Contemporary Fire and Rescue Service Reform

This thesis begins by offering an account of contemporary transitions of organisational change, with this chapter reviewing the ways political change drivers have impacted on the fire service and been operationalised to shape new forms of work identity. This grounding provides a much-needed context that becomes a resource to contextualise narrative analysis. The political drivers behind public service reform capture time frames (inherited and lived), which become important to understand when engaging with narrative analysis, as are on-going developments of the present era (two decades on). As such, the second part of this chapter outlines the way the FRS is currently organised, and then focuses on the specifics of the watch manager's role to show how they fit into the current organisational framework.

Political Drivers Behind the FRS Modernisation Project

Fundamental change in the FRS took place after the strike of 2002 in the wake of the recommendations of the Bain Report (2002), when the full impact of the modernisation agenda and change strategies in line with NPM principles began to shake the very roots of the fire service. The landmark to promote modernisation occurred the passing of the Fire and Rescue Service White Paper (ODPM, 2003), introducing new human resource management, new risk management systems, and a regime to classify authorities' progress. The passing of the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) established a new duty on fire prevention. This became central to driving through change, and how the FRS became managed and monitored. Taking the lead on the modernisation project, the government set up the Fire Service Improvement Team (FSIT), and moving HMCIF to one side, then positioned the Audit Commission so as to take on responsibility for FRS inspection.

This era of history becomes important to review because it represents a time frame where longer-serving FRS workers would have experienced the changes first-hand as a memory of

'lived change'. The impact of NPM principles have not merely sought to change 'parts' of the institutional mechanisms or structures (Bain 2002: 34), but also to transform the ways workers think about 'themselves' in relation to the newly structured internal system (CLG 2006). This was a deliberate move to adjust the focus and priorities of fire service work (Bain 2002: 3)[12] and affect culture change.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) gave the opportunity for fire brigades to move towards being known as '*Fire Services*'[13], accentuating a customer/service provider relationship that reflected expansion of their role whilst repositioning focus towards prevention (Matheson, Manning and Williams 2011). This renaming was also symbolic of the need to break with militaristic traditions of the past (HMCIFS 1999: 21), allowing redesign of discipline and regulation by severing ties to the incumbent 'quasi-militaristic' approach (Bain 2002: 100). The twin purposes of organisational delayering and restructuring of organisational practice are argued by Rose (1999) and Iedema (2005) to create new sites of identification and struggle by decentring traditional ways of being and doing work. Central to reform was the displacement of twelve *rank* titles (as tradition has carried since conception of the FRS) towards establishing seven new fire service *roles*.

Table 2 (below) provides one particular example of how the changeover worked out in transition from rank to role in the London Fire Brigade (LFB).

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[12] New emphasis on prevention rather than reaction.

[13] Some fire services such as London still call themselves by the old title.

RANKS		ROLES		COMPETENCY LEVELS
1	Firefighter	1	Firefighter	
2	Leading Firefighter	2	Crew Manager	
3	Sub Officer	3	Watch Manager	(Competent a)
4	Station Officer			(Competent b)
	Rider Station Officer or 'specialist' not on flexible duty system			
5	Station Officer	4	Station Manager	(Competent a)
	(On flexible duty system)			
6	Assistant Divisional Officer			(Competent b)
	(NOT responsible for a group of stations)			
7	Assistant Divisional Officer	5	Group Manager	(Competent a)
	(Responsible for a group of stations)			
8	Divisional Officer III			(Competent a)
9	Divisional Officer II			(Competent b)
10	Divisional Officer I	6	Area Manager	(Competent a)
11	Senior Divisional Officer			(Competent b)
12	Assistant Chief Officer	7	Brigade Managers	
13	Chief Fire Officer			

Table 2 - Example of the Transition from Rank to Role (LFB)

Though the transition from rank to role was accepted by the FBU (and introduced as part of the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement for uniformed staff), this involved agreements for a pay rise. However, this carried the condition that the new criteria of job roles would make way for a redefinition of the scope of responsibilities and skills (job size elements) of the reduced organisational structure. Generally speaking, the new watch manager role replaced not only the station officer role (see above) but also incorporated the sub officer role. In effect, the two roles were often combined into one - creating the watch manager role.

However, the transition did not occur without difficulties. The problem presented was that in some FRSs responsibilities of a particular rank was not necessarily comparable to the responsibilities of that rank in another FRS. Therefore, the changeover from rank responsibilities (not generically applied over fire services at the time) found problems when changing towards defining responsibilities in the newly formed roles (to be generically applied across FRSs). For example, in the LFB a 'station officer' would have been transformed to a watch manager, yet in other FRSs this position may have carried the responsibilities of a paid employee at a sub officer rank. What this amounts to is that 'officer' titles in different FRSs had differing responsibilities and lines of authority, and, therefore, the absence of generic patterns of rank/responsibility across fire services in the UK made for difficulties of transformation to occur. The intricacies of the changeover had to be applied on a FRS-by-FRS basis. Each FRS was responsible to manage their own change, which occurred at different paces and over a number of years. Overall, the slow pace of change can partially be explained by the fact that the NJC and representative bodies of FRSs had to reach agreement on process and guidance towards implementation, which eventually became outlined in the NJC (2005) circular. Equally slowing the process down was that workers had the right to appeal decisions that their fire service made in respect of their new role placing. However, roles and responsibilities demarcating role responsibilities became defined and appropriated through the new Integrated Personal Development Standards (IPDS), which provided specific criteria of role responsibility and, additionally, demanded evidence of quantifiable skills, knowledge and personal qualities and attributes (PQAs). These criteria were formally required as prerequisites of being competent to inhabit role and legitimise managership.

The new roles and responsibilities of the newly created watch manager role potentially had the effect of lowering the old station commander/officer rank, as it had previously been understood. The new role of 'watch manager' (amalgamating station officer with the rank below sub officer) came into operation alongside competencies defined within it. One of the main reasons behind these changes were to encourage culture change (in line with equality legislation), and provide scope for 'outsiders' or 'professionals' to enter the fire service above operational levels where most of the roles had previously been filled by 'insiders' within the service. In order to assess rank to role development, the Audit Commission (2004) used markers of green, amber, and red to categorise and monitor progress of each FRS. In so doing, these processes also began to separate FRSs from each other in terms of the willingness and capacity to respond to change. In CLG's (2009) Report *'It's All About You',* the moral driver behind rank to role and IPDS becomes framed around putting control in the hands of the worker. Stating that twelve ranks are 'no longer appropriate' and promoting 'efficiency', the report makes the argument that ranks did not adequately reflect the roles actually played by people at work. Further, the report argues for IPDS to bring in a single standard across the service and for the new system to provide a more level playing field (or equality of opportunity), enabling a better system for workers to climb the hierarchical ladder premised on evidences of a particular range of skills. CLG (2009a, updated) states that in 2005 the IPDS project closed with FRSs having to take full responsibility for IPDS implementation. In 2006, the ODPM took the initiative to fund an interim team at the Fire Service College to provide IPDS support with the Organisational Development Centre (ODC) taking over stewardship.

The developing agenda for FRS change

Overall, the new vision of the FRS has been shaped through re-engineering in almost every aspect of organisation - changes have occurred in structural, operational and human agency terms. Whilst these cultural, structural, and process-orientated considerations have continued to be a constant feature to date, only the continuation of IRMPs and IPDS has been retained (responsibility now devolving to each FRS to manage and determine), with ever-tightening budget squeezes needing new innovative forms of organising to occur. The Conservative/Liberal coalition government's approach (taking office in 2010) moved away from producing an on-going audit trail. Instead, whilst government provided an

overall strategic direction, a more hands-off approach was adopted, allowing more freedoms for each FRS to assess risk and provide service to their communities. To support this, the Localism Act (2011) provided scope for FRAs to have more freedom, flexibility and responsibility - whilst at the same time placed an added emphasis on to chief fire officers and chief executives to account for delivery of service.

More recently, the focus of integrating equality, diversity and culture change, which were part of previous Framework Documents, are now relegated to a *given* supposition, not specifically outlined as a specific requirement. Central to current focus, economic challenges have been placed at the forefront of consideration. DCLG (2010) proposed cuts of up to 25% over four years to FRSs grants, with more cuts looming but undefined. With the dissolution of the Audit Commission, the National Audit Office (NAO) took the lead to advise FRS on how to approach the budget squeeze and find long-term solutions.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework (2012) continues to set out the government's priorities and objectives for the fire and rescue authorities in England. Each fire service has a responsibility to produce an IRMP outlining their particular management strategy and risk based programme streamlined to the needs of their community. However, the FBU (2015) argue that the reduction of firefighter numbers, station closures, and fewer available pumping appliances following budget cuts, is putting the service at risk. Debates around the ethos of 'efficiency' and what that means for the fire service in the post-modern world continues to form separations between politicians and senior officers with unionised firefighters. Rising discontents over cuts and pensions have led to a spate of strikes over 2014/15, giving way to increasing the already fragile relations between senior officers and firefighters. More recently, David Cameron leader of incoming elected government of May 2015, announced further reform of public services in the quest to find new efficiencies. In December 2015, Theresa May (Home Secretary) announced plans for her office to take over responsibility for the FRS. Proposals are still in the pipeline for police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take over FRAs, claiming to enable more direct democratic accountability in the FRS promoting public service parity, in line with how it currently occurs in the police (Grierson 2015).

Whilst these sections have outlined organisational change and ways political pressure has been applied to the FRS, an appreciation is gained towards the ways FRS change has demanded a new type of worker, and how the modernisation agenda sought to break with fire service tradition and for what purpose. This now positions the readers' sense of awareness as to how organisational reform impacts and/or precipitates defence of work identity, or influences more contemporary forms of it, within the new political climate. Leading on from this, the next section provides a synopsis of how the FRS is presently organised, and the place and importance of the watch manager's role within it.

Everyday Working Life

UK FRSs are delivered by the collective efforts of forty-six FRAs (see appendix 2). These demographics largely follow county borders with the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) enabling amalgamations to occur in specific circumstances. FRAs consist of elected politicians and come to arrange in a variety of formats depending on the strategic body for the area. Each FRA employs their own CFO or chief executive, who manages through a traditional bureaucratic hierarchy of departments. CFOs have traditionally risen through the ranks from firefighters, but increasingly since 2004, there has been fast track and graduate entry to operational roles, and a number of senior non-operational roles have seen direct entry including some chief executives.

Following the community safety chain the FRS hierarchy then evolves from area managers to group managers, and then to station managers who manage the four watch managers at their station. Each station then divides into watches (usually four) separated by colour (traditionally red, white, blue and green)[14]. Figure 2 (below) is an example of staffing on a one-appliance station (in a Metropolitan FRS) with the station manager bearing responsibility for watch managers and their teams.

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[14] One such example is Cambridgeshire FRS, which has recently incorporated a 'black' watch and introduced a new rolling shift system.
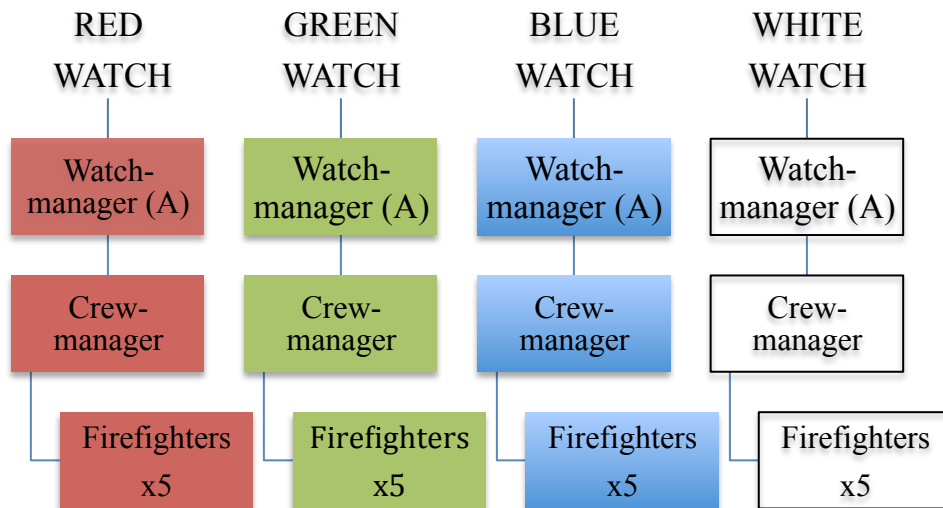
Figure 1 - Fire Station Hierarchy

Each watch manager is in charge of a watch (assisted by crew managers) and manages firefighter crewing providing 24/7 cover throughout the year on a shift basis with other watches. Part of the station manager's role is to manage the watch managers at their station, however, station managers are not part of the watch, and their operational role varies depending on the protocol of each FRS.

The watch manager facilitates and leads the operational response to emergencies and depending on the size and scale of the incident, remains in charge until the incident closes. At larger incidents, a more senior manager presence is required to take over command. The watch manager role operates through a particular shift system[15] (these vary across FRSs), but shift patterns are organised depending on the type of station, and resources available to command the ability to respond to community risks.

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[15] Depending on the number of fire appliances at the station, the quantity of firefighters can vary between five up to twenty-four. There is also a day crewing duty system where hours of duty of full-time employees average 35 hours at the station (usually 0800-1700) and an average of seven hours per week. These firefighters have to be on stand-by at home, with leave days crafted in between some shifts. The highest role for a retained duty employee is watch manager.

The working day

In order to assimilate a sense of where (firefighters and watch managers) time *actually* goes within the working day in respect of operational 'call out', Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's (MFRS) IRMP (2012/15)[16] is used as a benchmark to provide an example.

Table 3 - Example of Daily Incidents (MFRS 2012/15:42)

Incident Type	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Accidental Fires in the Home	3.75	3.6	3.57	3.55	3.28	3.27
Other Building and Property Fires	5.8	4.75	4.24	3.93	3.26	3.16
Vehicle Fires	5.44	4.15	3.72	3.3	2.61	2.20
All Antisocial Behaviour Fires	36.84	29.63	22.85	21.88	20.72	18.52
False Automatic Fire Alarms	14.7	15.02	16.57	16.31	16.21	15.23
Other False Alarms	9.88	8.71	7.4	6.83	5.70	4.97
Road Traffic Collisions	2.45	2.08	1.99	1.78	1.53	1.39
Other Special Services	7.8	6.59	5.97	5.46	5.90	5.25
Grand Total	86.66	74.52	66.31	63.05	59.21	53.99

Extracted from: http://mfra.merseyfire.gov.uk/documents/s502/Appendix%20A.pdf

In MFRS there are 1,230 staff employed at twenty-six fire stations. Given that there are 44 emergency calls per 24 hours, each station mobilises to an average of two calls per 24 hours. Although this appears a relatively low figure, what also needs taking into account is that whilst some calls can be prolonged, others may take less than an hour. This average is

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[16] Government requires FRSs to develop, plan and publish Integrated Risk Management Plans, which set out how the particular fire service will be responding to risk, prevention and workforce management.

somewhat false as some stations are busier than others and carry more of the weight in respect of the statistic[17]. This means that some stations can go days, if not weeks, without any real (or serious) calls, while others are much busier.

Whilst not attending calls, watch management and firefighters have other duties. The IRMP shows MFRSs work in areas of Community Fire Safety (CFS) and Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC), which form a part of the weekly station plan. The onus is also on each station and the responsibility of the watch manager to complete a previously agreed target of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) to drive 'risk' down. The MFRS' IRMP (2012/15) also documents the promotion of various risk-based projects that engage with the community to educate and provide advice in various locales, i.e. community advice through educational programs on fire safety, reducing Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), and youth engagements programmes to reduce arson.

When firefighters are not attending emergency 'call outs' they are either on stand-by or stand-down, which are terms used to describe different aspects of working arrangements (Baigent, 2001). When on stand-by, firefighters prepare for the operational, such as testing kit, drilling, technical lectures, inspections and fire prevention. Although the criteria are prescribed in Brigade Orders, watches often come to their own informal agreements as to how working arrangements are structured with their watch manager albeit arranged to meet targets.

Role and responsibilities of the watch manager

There are two types of watch managers directly accountable to the station manager. Watch manager (a) is in charge of a watch at a large station (more than one appliance with corresponding amount of FFs to make up crews for each appliance). Watch manager (b) is in charge of a watch at a small station (one appliance and FFs to crew as prescribed in regulations). The watch manager's role is institutionally and bureaucratically determined through their 'role map' duties and competencies, and evidenced through the completion of fourteen modules outlined in the Integrated Personal Development Standards for the

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[17] For a breakdown of this - refer to MFRS (2012) IRMP (2012/15) diagram 2004/05-2010/11 'Incidents across Merseyside' p.46.

watch manager role for each FRS. The watch manager's role demarcates overall responsibility to provide leadership, management and development support to the watch and other station personnel. Traditionally, watch managers have come up through firefighter (see appendix 3) and crew manager roles (see appendix 4). Crew managers provide some support for certain aspects of the watch manager's role and have the responsibility for riding in charge of a single fire appliance.

The watch manager has the responsibility to support and contribute to the planning and development of teams and individuals. Some firefighters may be 'in development' and the watch managers assess firefighters against development objectives. Once an assessment decision is made, watch managers provide feedback and give support to individuals and teams based on assessment decisions. This also provides the means to feed back into the internal quality assurance process and inspection. If there is evidence of poor performance within the team, the onus is on the watch manager to respond appropriately and take a plan of action. To some extent, the crew managers, as part of the watch, can share some of the responsibility and competencies of watch managers. The role maps of watch managers and crew managers appear to overlap; both role maps have seven of the same duties and perform different duties, with exceptions towards the watch manager whose role appears to be defined by assessment and training responsibilities and some administrative tasks.

Aside from the structural in-house responsibilities, the watch manager leads and supports firefighters to resolve operational incidents by planning 'quick time' action, providing tactical operational support and leadership. If the incident requires the presence of more senior officers then the watch manager takes on the role of command support or operates as an incident manager. After the emergency response, watch managers are expected to deal with the aftermath and close down the operational phase. This entails a debriefing session where performance becomes subject to reflexive assessment by the watch manager with the group. In this way, teamwork becomes an on-going project of assessment towards reaching optimum quality of service delivery that can provide for a sense of shared ownership. Equally, immediately after the incident, the watch manager has the responsibility to write a report to document the 'why' and 'how' of decisions/action taken and the outcome, which has to be communicated back to head office to provide a log for

future reference. This collectively contributes to analytical and statistical data of local and national databases of emergency service work.

Watch managers career trajectories

Promotion to the watch manager role is achieved by evidencing knowledge, understanding and competence in relation to institutionally and bureaucratically determined 'role map' duties, and competencies as prescribed in the IPDS of each FRS. This includes evidencing Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQAs) and achieving successful assessment at an Assessment Development Centre (ADC). It is traditional for each 'role' to act up to the next role in development before permanent appointment occurs. The face-to-face interviews and tests at the ADC determine how well behaviour matches the standards outlined in PQAs for each level of promotion, and these vary slightly at each management level[18].

Drawing from academic resources, we can also gain an insight into issues and attitudes around promotion. In the FRS, seeking promotion is not a given assumption within watch culture. Some watch managers do not want to take further promotion because it takes them away from the 'hands on' operational role and removes them from the close ties of the watch (Baigent 2001). Salaman's (1986) research findings indicated that often there was a lack of respect by firefighters for those who had chosen to take promotion above watch manager level. It appears those firefighters and watch managers that choose to stay, view those who are promoted as who have been disloyal to the watch and 'real' job of firefighting. However, in Salaman's own analysis there was also a suggestion that sometimes watch managers held these views to provide explanations for their own relative 'unsuccessful attempts' or 'perceived lack' in not achieving promotion. However, Baigent (2001) departs from wide scale generalisations and describes effects on watch managers' choices through the 'the pull or push' of the watch. Baigent categorises some watch managers as individuals who did not 'fit-in' with watch culture as 'careerists', who either leave the watch and move sideways into CFS or move upwards and take promotion to a more senior role. Outside this, Baigent casts other watch managers as 'reluctant careerists'

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[18] However, progression between levels of management from supervisory to middle-strategic (watch manager level and above) is achieved by successfully attending the appropriate ADC and consists of the Phase 1 tests (which vary in type) and role-plays. During all of these promotional processes, PQAs are thought fundamental as procedural and operational skills are layered on them.

who want promotion but do not want to leave the watch, so they stay in position. Whereas Baigent's concept of 'sympathetic careerists' represents those watch managers who want to move on (and do) if possible, but their reluctance always makes them sympathetic to informal hierarchies (p.72). Though these categories provide explanations for the ways careers become differentially mediated by individuals, they also highlight how power becomes differently invested through work identity.

In terms of how power is organised on the watch, Ward and Winstanley (2006) argue that the watch manager is either a part of the dominant synergy in the watch, where other informal peer group leaders are the powerbase, or 'the' resource from which the prevailing dominant discourses are drawn (see also Pamah, 2006). Focusing on these types of issues in this research will provide a fresh insight into culture, power and how types of authority co-exist or resist each other that builds on previous findings. Importantly, this extends beyond issues of gender to include focus as to how moral boundaries become drawn between specific roles in the watch dynamic.

Managing watch culture

Of particular interest to this research is how watch managers manage social relations at the station with their firefighters. Thurnell-Read and Parker's (2008) analysis shows firefighters to operate in a highly masculinised environment that sustains the performance of a range of masculinities. These show to become bound with issues of power, control and resistance within, over, and across institutional boundaries. Traditionally, watches/firefighters have been resistant to change and modernisation, and new ways of organising and working (CLG 2008). Given that part of the watch manager's job is to support change and modernisation, this is an area that may cause some tension for watch managers, especially those who are active FBU members. As such, the ways tensions become ameliorated within the watch manager's identity, become an important area of focus for my research.

Resistance and compliance

Baigent (2001) has identified some likely areas where contentions or disharmonious aspects of watch relationships occur between firefighters and their watch manager. For example, if the relationship between the watch manager and the watch does not conform to traditional dynamics, and for some reason the watch manager does not 'fit-in', then firefighters are likely to make it hard for the watch manager to manage by being particularly awkward. Baigent further argues that a certain amount of give and take needs to occur over informal aspects of work. If an autocratic style of management is adopted at the outset, this increases the likelihood for watch resistance to surface. Other research has shown for prominent personalities in the watch (whether that be firefighter, or watch manager) to influence attitudes and behaviours of watch members in relation to inclusion issues (usually in relation to women and men constructed as 'others') (see Pamah 2005, Ainge 2010, Woodfield 2016). Although these issues provide insight into the ways resistance occurs, a wider knowledge base around both resistance and compliance in terms of managing the watch needs to be provided. As such, my research directs focus towards how watch managers operationalise control and influence to provide an in-depth account to the types of resources drawn to sustain managerial authority and identity.

Work identity and reform

Within the shifting context of neoliberalism and radical reform of the FRS, centring focus on the watch manager's role allows the opportunity to explore how this particularised work identity has responded to the impact of NPM principles. These mechanisms have not only changed 'the organisation' but also the 'organisation of work'. Halford and Leonard (1999) point out that dominant managerial discourse 'cannot be read off from a given text' as if to simply construct managers as passive actors that seamlessly internalise change. Neither should it be taken for granted that all managers experience the prescriptions and influence of NPM in the same way. Rather, these authors argue for researchers to explore the ways managerial identities respond to the dominant discourses of the organisation arising from change. From a gender perspective, Davies and Thomas (2001) argue that more attention needs to focus on effects of NPM on gender construction and contestation in the public service environment. In order to capture these issues around notions of identity, Rondeaux and Pichault (2007) urge analytical observations to focus on the ways

work identities experience the 'impact' of change (accepting reforms have bought about transformations in identity), or pursue an identification of 'independence' (identities persist irrespective of the reforms), or in some way 'co-structure' (hybrid identities or modification) in the culturally transformational environment. Such approaches also allow insight into how managerial frames of reference emerge towards in-groups and out-groups, and if shifts in thinking have occurred. However, whilst this chapter has worked to provide a backdrop of contemporary FRS history and everyday organisation of work, the next chapter reviews an example of lived change (via rank to role) and how this affects understandings in the present.

Chapter Four

Rank to Role and New Promotional Systems

Introduction

Building on the previous chapters that provided a broad outline of fire service history and reform, attention now turns to the ways promotional systems, and the change from rank to role become reflexively made sense of within the context of 'lived' experience. This chapter draws from data at differing levels of the FRS allowing a multi-perspective to emerge, and examples of how reconfigurations of FRS culture has occurred that parallel attempts in the 1970s to shift FRS culture in a different direction. Focussing on rank to role as a lever for reform becomes important to review in terms of evaluating impact of change and evaluating changing formations of FRS work identity and ways promotional systems have moved on. Analysing narratives from different tiers, provides a variety of voices to be heard that infuse a particular dimension of meaning towards one specific aspect of change (rank to role). What emerges are forms of patterned responses at differing levels, which begin to show how diverse moral orders materialise within the scripts, and how differences of understanding occur within formal and informal cultures of the FRS.

Senior Managers

Principal Manager (Metro)

Whilst reports of the mid to late 1990s indicated the need for ideological change to act symbiotically with cultural change (Audit Commission 1995), it is interesting to show how these lines of thought become mirrored in senior management roles. For example, we begin this chapter with Ray (Metro) whose role and responsibility oversees the running of workforce development. Ray frames his arguments around rank to role in a way that links promotional systems with progress for cultural change. When Ray joined in the 1980s he suggests this was of a time frame that the organisation was very much more command and control 'I've got two pips, you haven't, do as you're told'. Reflecting back, Ray suggests authority of rank was operationalised on a 'quasi-military style' of command across the

service. During this early period of his career Ray views the old style exams as 'problematic', arguing 'they didn't really tackle the behavioural aspects or let's say the behavioural traits that as a human being one would expect an individual to possess'. In comparing and contrasting old and new promotional systems Ray views the old system to be 'great at bureaucratic number-crunching and tick-boxing', but 'lacking' in the capacity to monitor and evidence values, attitudes, behaviours and competence effectively.

The traditional exam components that were culturally embedded in the organisation also had a requirement that before you could take promotion examinations the candidate had to successfully complete the probationary period and two years of operational service (Holroyd 1970: 127). Ray begins by rationalising the benefits of the changeover to the new system through drawing attention to the dysfunctional traits within the working culture. He then moves focus towards benefits of change that the new system offers in its capacity to test for a range of skills, personal, qualities and attributes. Ray argues the new system makes provision to break with military and naval ties (from ranks to roles) to engender a new type of FRS worker (firefighter), manager (officer), and culture. Ray explains:

> The aspects of homophobia, the whole kit and the racial aspect, the equality/diversity agenda-wise was not there ... and the bullying harassment. It all sounds a bit clichéd but, ultimately as an organisation, it was nothing more … and again I am talking about in my time, it was nothing more than just a 'big boys' club' where the doors got closed.

Ray indicates that the hidden world behind the closed doors of the fire station needed culture change, and in response to political pressures seeking to attract a more diverse workforce (and transparency), led to a series of changes 'within' and 'applied to' the organisation. With the success of prevention work lowering fire calls, more time was being spent by firefighters either at the station or on HFS checks. This, Ray tentatively argues 'has possibly, for the more disruptive elements of the organisation tended to create more issues for the organisation to try and resolve', and more time for station tensions to emerge. Ray delivers his speech much akin to the dictates of Weber's (1947) 'good

bureaucrat' and in line with the moral argument of the system. Yet, (ironically), in this rationalising process it was the bureaucratic 'number crunching' element of organisational processes that he was eager to distance himself from.

In terms of the transition from rank to role, Ray positions himself to engage in the conversation by first stating the way in which this change should be understood. He then goes on to argue 'maybe I am going to take too much of a simplistic view but ..' and continues by positioning himself to argue that 'rank to role was nothing more than a change of title', and 'not readily understood by the general population'. Ray indicates that the term 'manager' rather than 'officer' enabled a more apt role description to emerge. Reflecting back, Ray says:

> I think there was this big sort of - how would I say? - A little bit of a wobble with the organisation initially, but in terms of the – let's say, the titling ... I think it was a bit of a red herring. What really kicked everybody off (and I think started not to concern people), but started to get the hares running - and this is both from an organisational perspective, but probably more from a probably fire service perspective was what rank to role …'. What we are talking about ultimately … was competence. It [rank to role] was talking about whether you could actually do your job.

Ray makes an interesting claim around competence, and cutting to the crux of the matter rhetorically enquires 'can you do your job?' Burke (1945) suggests metaphors are often used as devices to describe elements not wanting to be overtly acknowledged. Ray was inclined to use 'language as a resource' allowing the listener to understand the event through analogies and images (Cameron and Low 1999), leaving actual meaning open to the interpretation of the listener, who has to assimilate and transfer intended meaning into the context of what is being said (see also Bloor and Bloor 2007).

The main threads of Ray's argument are poetically laced with symbolic meaning and idioms of speech, delivered more slowly on points of emphasis and paced more quickly on

proviso comments. Carpenter (2008) suggests at best metaphors 'illuminate meaning of experiences and at worst metaphors distort or obscure the essences of them' (p.274). But what this particular clip of narrative shows, is the art of being able to convey meaning covertly for the listener to subjectively interpret and at the same time be protective over 'self', 'the issue' or 'people' where obscurity sits. This also tells us something about ways the identity of the teller takes control to project a preferred sense of self to the listener (Reissman 1993) and links to how Goffman (1959) views identity to emerge from particularised performances of self.

Though Ray derides tick-box examinations of the past where you had to 'mug up' to get a certificate in technical knowledge, he then moves to argue that 'probably some form of assessment in terms of individuals' knowledge is still required … and probably we have gone too far in one way than we should have done'. However, after appeasing his evaluation (quick time), Ray continues to emphasise the main 'thrust' was to replace the exam 'and see if someone could actually do the job'. This, he reiterates was 'a step in the right direction'. The repetition of questioning competence and the need to test for new criteria of skills appears as a reoccurring emphasis.

Ray then moves to outlining ways standards of occupational competence came into being (IPDS), where all workers had a role map, which was broken down into units of learning, and designed to evidence PQAs. Ray argues 'if you could do it, you got a tick in the box and if you could not, then you did not'. In his quest to rationalise the rank to role process, he defensively argues that 'it was never meant to be a big stick…it was meant as a support mechanism [see CLG 2009] to give people extra support to make sure they were good and could do their job'. However, this rationale sits aside an observation that the process of rank to role invariably sent an implicit message that 'officers' were being redefined as 'managers'. The disbanding of ranks simultaneously challenges the premise on which rank authority becomes substantiated, precipitating a free fall of power where new configurations emerge. However, the whole ethos of the modernisation agenda was not left to filter down on this one issue, but was driven through with a number of strategic changes *operating* concurrently. Ray suggests 'from our perspective - from a corporate perspective - it was always going to make us more efficient and effective in terms of

delivering what we deliver'. As a consequence, Ray argues workers have become more 'confident' and 'professional' at what they do, making progress towards:

> More confident individuals, knowing what they should be doing and to the 'nth degree - controversial degree - it would underpin and reinforce the arguments set out in the [IRMP] and you don't need as many people to do the job, because we have got more quality as opposed to quantity.

With an air of moral justification underpinning rationale towards operational sustainability, Ray moves to explain that because IPDS 'turned into a mish-mash of everything' FRSs have now established their own quality assurance systems. In the present context Ray sets out the type of managers needed to bring about continuing change:

> It's not all about blue lights and squirting water, it is more about being part of that partnership within communities to ensure that people are safe generally. So we don't need managers *per se*, we need … and again it's … we can debate until the cows come home … but there is a difference between a manager and a leader. The leader is ... there is something more personal about a leader, because that leadership would be able to inspire around him or her to be able to achieve a "yes" [from firefighters].

What becomes important here is that whilst rank to role procured 'managers', Ray now believes these managers also need to be 'leaders', to move the organisation forward. He also indicates that the types of leaders needed are those who can control and inspire the workforce at ground level, lessening the likelihood of resistance to emerge.

Area Manager (Metro)

Henry, an Area Manager (Metro), provides a slightly different perspective on rank to role and changes to promotional systems. Describing his career trajectory to have occurred

fairly seamlessly, Henry tends to view promotional systems (whether old or new) as 'opportunities'. However, whilst relating his experience of rank to role, he simultaneously distances self from the impact of the change explaining that he was in a specialist team at the time (not on a fire station), and exchanged his rank of temporary sub officer for the new role of watch manager. Although he was distanced from impact, Henry also remembers that rank to role 'caused a lot of confusion about who was in charge [at operational incidents] and can still do so in some instances'. This is markedly different from Ray, who views relatively little impact to have occurred, bar the initial organisational 'wobble'.

In outlining the main qualities that watch managers need to lead at an emergency, Henry argues:

> You have got to remain calm, stay in control, you have got to be a good leader, but you have also got to make sure that the watch are following you. There is no good having leadership qualities if the watch don't believe them.

Therefore whilst Ray (earlier) emphasises leadership to ensure compliance from the work group, Henry, by contrast, goes further to highlight the necessity of 'authenticity' of character and high-level skills of emotion management in every situation. Henry argues that possessing leadership qualities is only half of what is required – rather, leaders need to be somebody people will follow.

Apart from Ray (Metro), four out of the five senior managers from both Metro and Castle were more likely to steer conversations to focus on the opportunities promotional systems had presented to guide their career. This repetition appears to provide an important construct in the making of their present work identity, showing skills that work to refocus conversations towards more positive issues. These senior managers all tended to veer away from focusing on past issues, preferring to centre attention towards the present and be forward thinking. However, for senior management in Castle there was an inherent air of secrecy around explicitly outlining future plans and tended to shade answers to direct

questions avoiding specifics. Contrast also emerges between operational and non-operational managers in that Ray openly recognises (as did Bain 2002) the severity of the cultural malaise that had been the focus of much on-going attention in the past (see HMCIFS 1999, HMCIFS 2001, CLG 2008), and displayed few restrictions in recounting challenging behaviours and the need for culture change. By contrast, though uniformed senior managers did not overtly avoid the subject, they did not initiate or elaborate any more than was necessary in their answers towards these issues.

Senior Management (Castle)

Barry (senior manager, Castle), having been promoted 'quickly' within three years of joining in the 1980s, now assumes a very senior position. Unlike Metro senior managers he views the impact of rank to role to have been very 'divisive' as the strict hierarchy 'suddenly' became subject to:

> Taking those and putting two people who were potentially doing a similar job, if not the same job, and some were assimilated down and some assimilated up.

Interestingly, Barry also argues that this change 'particularly' affected the watch manager position, and in Castle FRS he recounts that at the time 'out of thirty-eight watch managers, probably eight got watch manager (b) (higher status and pay) and the rest got watch manager (a)'. Closing down dialogue on these issues, though aware of impact on the workforce, he asserts the change to have been a necessary process that the FRS had to go through.

By contrast Derrick (senior operational manager), who moved to Castle from a larger fire service, reflected on the complications of the changeover and also rationalises the benefits of the rank to role, and IPDS process in similar terms to Ray (Metro). Derrick views the watch manager role to be 'seventy per-cent people management' and argues for the new system to support the much needed weighting towards management skills. Remembering the changeover, Derrick (similar to Henry) remarks that 'it sort of passed me by as they just said "right, as of tomorrow you are going to be this" … and it was like OK, I am - *was*

- a DO2, now I'm a Group Manager?' Derrick continues his explanation through focusing on the crux of what caused discontent by arguing:

> There was lots and lots of talk around the word 'manager' - that's the bit that the people seemed not to like, because before you was an 'officer' [he whispers]. There was an 'ah I'm an officer', and that sort of means something if you like. Then, all of a sudden, you was a manager, and then it was just like, you was like, just the same as somebody in Tesco. It never really became a big issue in [the Metropolitan FRS] apart from that - the name thing. That's because a lot of people [in Metro] did not recognise what was happening through rank to role.

It was not until Derrick came to Castle FRS that he recognised how the changeover in Castle differed from the FRS he had just left (a Metropolitan FRS). In Castle, Derrick views for rank to role to have left 'an enormous legacy' of bad feeling because of the new role classifications in the new system, and hangovers of resentment towards the word 'manager'. As such, Derrick remembers that job descriptions became the focus of dispute and challenges, which were executed with 'a fine tooth comb', and where appeals in respect of grading and back pay for 'certain things' became a commonplace part of the transition.

Derrick argues that rank to role was bought in to try and focus people more on non-technical operational skills, as 'there was a need for a whole range of skills not just a bit of operational stuff over there'. Providing a reflective appraisal he suggests 'rank to role was probably poorly communicated internally and nationally'. When the exam-based process was replaced by assessment centres, requiring people to prove non-technical HR skills, it left a lot of people querying 'what about the underpinning knowledge and understanding of the technical bit?' As such, Derrick maintains there is a current movement within fire services nationally to address the imbalance. For example, some now use IFE exams to bridge the gap and others bring in external contractors and independent training bodies. As Derrick sees it, the problem has been that whoever led the rank to role nationally failed to get the right balance between testing technical ability with non-technical skills (presumably managerial skills).

The other important point Derrick makes (similar to Barry) is that the categorisations of watch managers had been differently translated in FRSs. Although guidelines were forwarded from government bodies and endorsed by the FBU to assist in this task, conflict between workers and management emerged over disagreements in the way their job had been described and categorised. In order to ameliorate the problem, Derrick explains that more roles were created - although Castle is currently thinking through new ways to unpick the legacy problem, perhaps by dropping the lower 'a' category and making everybody 'b'. Interestingly, Derrick (unlike Ray, Metro) views these past problems to impact on the present in the way station managers or watch managers are resistant to being moved around, particularly if it is to a smaller station (less status, less pay). If the change goes forward, Derrick suggests for it to increase movement and operational flexibility, make for less workforce resistance to occur, and go some way to appease resentments.

Training manager (Castle)

Vic (training manager, Castle) sums up his argument by suggesting that the rank to role change 'hasn't really served a purpose', and that the FRS has still ended up 'with the same number of roles as we had ranks'. In a critical tone, Vic argues it would have been better managed if they would have 'written the role maps for the existing ranks', and further says:

> There was a sub officer rank, which, when it went to a watch manager role so people act like a sub officer, right? Even though the watch manager role was designed to change the actual behaviours of that sub officer, and it took lots of things to underpin that: PQAs and following role maps and different development modules. However, what it boils down to is people acting exactly the same as they used to act as a sub officer. So there is not an awful lot maybe that has changed, except rank file pins and a different name.

Quite why this occurs at this stage is not clear, but the following chapter offers some insightful clues focusing on role models as to why this might be the case. However, whilst changes in promotional systems and transformations from rank to role took place, in

outcome behaviours continue, seemingly impervious to the change strategies being applied. This highlights the ineffectiveness of bureaucratic system change, which on its own terms appears insufficient to effect the wholesale change required.

Station Managers (SMs)

The consensus of opinion for station managers is mostly similar to the sentiments of the training manager - that in spite of managerialism and the attempts to redesign and reorganise work, 'not an awful lot has changed' (George, SM, Metro). These station managers collectively argue that ranks have reconstituted themselves within roles that still carry the elements that political strategies were trying to annihilate or change.

All but one of the station managers declared their dislike of the rank to role process and saw no reason or benefit for change. Ervine, who began his career in the 1990s (transferring from a Metropolitan FRS to Castle), declared to 'hate it' [rank to role] 'with a passion', and talked exclusively in terms of unfair grading and, ultimately, a loss of status he suffered in the changeover. Three of the five station managers (over both services) explicitly argue that the traditional ranks are very much alive 'between the lines' of the everyday service, but why this is so, needs to be analysed further on in the paper. However, the consensus of station managers is that while the new system writes the script, firefighters' 'minds' write in the meaning. George says:

> How I used to like things to be run is like, y'know, going through the ranks, and what you learn from an early stage is that the way it runs. When it is run properly is that everyone knows their place y'know ... when we've gone from rank to role there's still the roles - the roles are still ranked in the eyes of people at the station, so it's the way it works.

Robin (SM, Metro) also proposes some interesting views:

They know their trade from being a sub officer. Most of them have got promotion as watch managers, but in most cases, at crew manager rank it can quickly go to crew manager plus, and then be that sub officer rank, but haven't really learnt their trade. So they're going out to different stations but sometimes it's … you can tell that, erm, you haven't got … they're lacking in experience and management experience as well [pause] because the hardest part of this job, of being at station level - is managing people.

Apart from providing a view that believes quicker routes to promotion likely foster watch managers to lack the experience needed to be efficient, what becomes important to carry forward is the idea that managing people at the station is the most problematic area to manage. However, Robin's quote echoes many of the previous arguments, viewing rank to role as an unproductive force of change. George (SM, Metro) makes the argument that rank to role 'has made everything worse' by first bringing attention to how the initial reduction from twelve ranks to seven roles (post Bain, 2003) presently extends to 'nineteen roles'. In his opinion, this change has worked out to become counterproductive and has led to a much more complex, inefficient and confusing hierarchy (a view shared by Robin). George also points out that with the firefighter+ and crew manager+ roles incorporated into the system, sometimes the CM+ is told 'right, today you are going to be a watch manager', and so these crew managers find they have to 'dip in and out of the role left right and centre' for very little extra pay for their responsibility. Extending lines of authority can also be seen as a way of breaking watch culture through creating extra institutional layers working to distance worker from worker. This can also be seen as a disingenuous way of undermining lines of authority that rank to role bought about. However, in spite of attempts to dismantle the rank system, which George argues 'took the authority of rank away' goes on to say:

I don't care what anyone says we are still rank, everyone's about rank. A lot of people still have a lot of respect for rank and they don't necessarily have respect for the person but they do have respect for the rank.

However, in spite of the sophistications of managerialism and the redesign and reorganisation of work, George maintains that 'not an awful lot has changed'. Station managers argue that ranks have reconstituted themselves within roles still carrying the elements that political strategies were trying to change.

Aside from this cluster of views, Nick (SM, Castle) offers a very different perspective. Whilst acknowledging the necessity of the FRS to remain a hierarchical organisation on the fire ground, Nick views rank to role to have bought the much-needed skills of managership that the ADC process introduced to effect culture change. Having come from the military to the FRS in the 1990s, initially joining a metropolitan FRS in 1996 (and later transferring to Castle FRS), Nick argues the experience to have been 'a culture shock'. He remembers being 'absolutely appalled how much racism there was, how much homophobia there was', and says 'it felt like I had walked back in time to the 1970s'. Nick is quick to point out that, unlike other firefighters, he could see the substance in argument of Bain's comparisons between the police culture and the Lawrence Inquiry (MacPherson 1999) with the FRS. Reflecting back on how these claims were received in the ranks, Nick says:

> That accusation when that was made, there were people appalled at that, and yet they couldn't see themselves just exactly what they were like - they couldn't see that it was there. I think I could see it, it was feeling it every day and seeing it and, um, they just couldn't see it at all. Yeah, lots of negative people, lots of people who were just obstructive, lazy - not open to change, racist, sexist, homophobic, y'know … and they were everywhere.

Though, on the one hand, Nick views that the fire service has benefitted from Bain's (2002) insights into its organisational problems. On the other hand, Nick argues that Bain showed a lack of understanding as to why the fire service was like it was. Consequentially, Nick suggests this led to Bain 'making a lot of flawed decisions' in terms of his recommendations towards modernisation. Further exacerbating the change process was the way change became 'forced through'. Nick argues much of what was good about the fire service has been lost, such as: an erosion of the sense of family, loss of loyalty and

goodwill (outside the fire-ground), and, in respect of the operational, a loss of technical expertise and organisational knowledge. Although agreeing that cultural change was necessary, on balance, Nick frames these changes negatively because of the way change was implemented and the long-term unintended consequences that have since surfaced. Nick asserts these problems could have been avoided, believing them to result from a lack of knowledge and understanding towards the idiosyncrasies of the FRS by those facilitating change, and lack of foresight in relation to implications of change.

Anthony (SM, Metro) joined the FRS in the 1990s at a similar time frame to Nick (SM, Castle) and, similar to Robin and George highlights the ways quicker routes to promotion are possible in the new system. Particularly revealing is the way he explains for new promotional systems to disadvantage longer-serving (in this case older) firefighters, and is being overtaken by the next generation. Anthony says:

> I used to work in training, teaching a watch of crew managers and nearly all of them were new and younger, erm, because some of the older ones don't really understand the forms you have got to fill in. So the younger ones do it, and once you're on that path, it seems … it's almost a little bit less vocational now and it's got a bit more career minded - the people that are joining the service and therefore they want to move quicker.

For most of these firefighters, benefactors of an educational system of an era past, contemporary systems do not so easily connect with their sense of self, and the ways they express knowledge to enable them to progress easily up the new system. Ervine (SM, Castle), also highlighting these particular issues, suggests that whilst support can be offered to these firefighters in the form filling processes, the interview process at the ADC poses the biggest barrier. Ervine argues the longer-serving firefighters 'tend to answer honestly as they do', with very little room for manoeuvre to encourage or support them through the process. Whilst both of these station managers appear to have a certain amount of empathy for these firefighters, what becomes important to take forward, is that new promotional systems appear to foster a sense of disadvantage within some older/longer-serving firefighters who end up feeling resentful and/or distance themselves

from the moral legitimacy of the promotional system itself. This would have been unimportant in many other organisations, because these people would probably have moved on. However, this is very unlikely to occur in the FRS as time-in accrues status, kudos and ascriptions of respect within the informal hierarchy of the watch. As a consequence, those firefighters who are disappointed candidates not only distance themselves from the promotional system, but also instead become embedded in a lateral career within the confines of the watch where they retain control as firefighters, with seniority within the pecking order of informal power.

Watch Managers

This section, exploring rank to role as 'lived change' draws from eight of the sixteen watch manager participants who were established firefighters before the strike of 2002. In what appears as either a lack of good communication from management or resistance right from the start, Dale and Ron (WMs, Metro) were 'baffled' as to why rank to role occurred in the first place. Both watch managers speculate that motives were probably about 'money' or 'grading', and view the changeover to have been counter-productive as new roles have expanded far beyond the original delayering[19]. What we see emerging here is ever-increasing, quantifiable units being created seemingly to model a sophisticated type of Taylorism (Taylor 1911). Within this, each role layer has a set of criteria and rules, which separate worker (men from men) through a multiple division of labour. In a critical tone, Ron argues that a trial period at changeover from rank to role should have occurred to assess suitability before rolling the initiative out. Though Niall (WM, Castle) declares rank to role was 'probably' a necessary change, he continues on to argue that 'grey areas' emerge (similar to Henry, SM, Metro), that potentially challenge efficiency on the fire ground:

> The fire brigade is not a democracy on a fire ground; you need a rank structure and, for certain, with a certain set of responsibilities ... tell someone with another set of responsibilities to do something, [then] you need to ensure it gets done. If you've got a role and somebody then says that is not my role … it's a very nice grey area because it's back to: do you salute the person in the uniform? Do you salute their

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[19] Now encompassing firefighter development, firefighter, firefighter+, crew manager development, crew manager, crew manager*, crew manager (top hat) watch manager development, watch manager (a), watch manager (b).

role or whatever? We are a uniformed service, when the person in a position of responsibility tells you to do something you are expected to do that something. What you need though is the assurance that the person who is telling you: "do it" actually knows what they are doing!

Niall emphasises that despite all the reorganisation of rank to role based titles, at point of delivery (on the fire ground) the need for a rank-based structure is imperative. However, implicit within this narrative is a critical edge towards the efficiencies of promotional systems and lack of experience of the newer managers coming through. In relation to widening the gates, Niall provides an argument against bringing in people from outside professions on to the fire ground. With an air of resentment Niall argues:

> We don't need people on the fire ground who haven't been to a fire and don't know what it is like to go into a fire, who've never been run up and down ladders. The mind-set when you're dealing with incidents is quite complex because it's ... not only are you dealing with the instant, and the resources, the hazards, and the crews, but you have also got to realise also what they are doing and what you are asking them to do. You can't send somebody to do something if you have not done it before, and you don't know what you are asking them to do.

Niall continues on to stress that though you could bring in an extra tier 'of people who do know what they are being asked to do who should filter it', this would just add another tier of confusion. Rather, Niall asserts 'what they should have been done is been trained properly in the first place'. The repetitive phrases of 'we don't need' appear to be used to stress a point of anguish and moral indignation at the unwelcome presence of those outsiders as 'others' that have come into the service from non-traditional routes with 'other skills'. Implicit in Niall's narrative, is a voicing of opinion that the FRS is getting what it does not need, and not being given what it does, highlighting the inefficiencies of the system where investments would be best placed elsewhere.

For Bob (Metro), the move to role-based job titles was in part a means to sever traditional ties to the military and a 'very disciplined and very rank-based structure'. In so doing, he

argues management has attempted to streamline the FRS to be 'more linked in with the general public sector'. Dennis (Castle) also highlighting the move away from a disciplined service, does so in reference to the change of uniform and loss of 'officer' status, and, with an air of resentment, explains:

> They have changed me rank marking and they have made me wear a white helmet, and at the end of the day I like being called a sub officer ... I liked it. It had just had an air about the title that you weren't quite an officer, but you weren't just a leading hand, you weren't a leading firefighter, you were in the officer bracket. I just think that it separated me a little bit.

In this instance, what we see emerging are not just markers of positional roles or ranks, but also positional masculinities where uniforms were symbolic markers of positive difference and earned status that all recognised. These managers tend to evaluate solely towards operational efficiency, which, from one perspective, dilutes Bain's message that the fire service is now about community safety not the operational.

The impact of rank to role on work identity

Given these patterned responses, attention now turns to providing contrasting examples of how rank to role has impacted on the watch manager's work identity. The following set of paragraphs provides examples of one watch manager actively resistant to change (John, WM, Metro) in comparison to Grant (WM, Metro) and Mitch (WM, Castle), who differentially adapt to make change work for them. We begin with John who began his career in the 1980s and presents as a particularly interesting individual in the respect of 'impact' of rank to role's ability to challenge the traditional means to secure a particularised work identity. Within his narrative John appears to hang on to a sense of the past through rejecting the present titles that his role affords, and argues 'this new, erm, management ... watch manager … I'm not at all impressed with'. During the interview, John specifies preference to view his role as a 'station officer'. John explains that 'as rumour has it' and 'with all this modern language', he believes himself to be categorised as 'watch manager b'. The implications of this use of language also leads to the assumption that he is not disobeying a direct order or dissenting from the power of formal

authority, as he side-lines the issue to 'rumour'. John's agentic capacity to carve out a work identity of choice, operates in denial to the formal understanding of the organisation, but finds a way of 'being', and getting round the system in a creative and astute manner.

Whilst the interview interaction was guarded, and especially sensitive to discussion around the union and issues around more senior management when directly asked about certain topics, John could not deny 'self'. His attitude not only implies an air of nostalgia, but also carries with it an air of active defiance to the dictates of the wider FRSs political power, and in particular, the changes bought about through the modernisation process and the new role system titles that were bought into his FRS in 2007. In order to justify the moral premise on which his resistance rests, John argues that a lot of the change implemented has been unnecessary, and remarked 'I don't see that it has actually helped or contributed in any way'. Rank to role has been an intrinsic part of the modernisation process, but John has continued to operate (as far as possible to do so) as if it were the old regime:

> We all went on strike and then John Prescott said that we needed to modernise, and we were told that this was our new role … erm, it's not changed how I operate.

The way John continues to operate has not escaped the notice of senior management, but in response John muses:

> I take no notice of it … I just carry on doing my job. To be honest I have been advised not call myself a station officer on occasions, asked not to do it ... but, erm, you'll find Essex fire stations still have station officers, they seem to have kept the old rank structure. P'raps they felt more inclined to run their brigade their way. I'm not too sure.

John diverts the real agenda and points out rank to role was likely introduced for economic reasons to 'save a few pence' at crew manager level. Given that this change occurred across the organisation over seven years ago, one might be inclined to look for reasons that explain 'why' and 'how' has this type of resistance has managed to survive for so

long. Part of the answer may be found in Strangleman's (2004, 2012) work where in the context of modernisation and reform of the railways, workers felt changes as a 'personal insult' and 'an affront, or disrespect to an established culture with its own moral order' (Strangleman 2012: 419). What is interesting is the way that nostalgia often tells us about the present condition of the person rather than the past, where individuals reflexively look back to a time where their memory see this time frame as 'settled, fixed, rounded, and intelligible', to which they compare the 'incomplete, flux, chaotic, unstable now' (Strangleman 2012: 422). For the railway workers, the values of the past were being eroded 'in the recognition of the marginalisation of their own set of ideas, beliefs and norms that have helped to shape their identity' (Strangleman 2004: 12). Though John may connect with these sentiments, his distancing from the wider organisation and modes of self-sufficiency (see chapter seven) minimises the impact of the rank to role towards his preferred sense of work identity. In part, this is enabled through maintaining senses of disconnect with change management initiatives and the wider organisation.

By contrast, Grant (Metro), who began his career in the fire service at a similar time, offers a different perspective and frames his views on change around 'gain'. First, Grant argues for watch manager (a) and (b) categorisations to provide increasing flexibility to the operational sector. He then moves to explain that when rank to role came into his FRS, he was graded in the new role of crew manager, and was then offered the opportunity to 'act up' to watch manager, allowing him to gain experience of the next role. Viewing this favourably, Grant maintains this allowed for the scope to learn new skills and new ways of thinking having to 'look at the bigger picture' in terms of concern with targets, budgets 'future plans and projections'.

Unusually, Grant never faltered in the use of formal terms during the interview, and, unlike occasions in other interviews, he did not dip in and out of old and new language (by interchangeably using old ranks with new roles). For example, firefighters tend to refer to past language titles, etc., by following the terms with the quantification of 'in old money' when translating past to present. Grant's use of language indicates he has internalised this aspect of the new order as a 'given' from which, he has recently become the benefactor of promotion (thus further sanctioning his progress and his right to new powers of authority).

Mitch (Castle) mirrors much of the way that Grant positions his understanding, and although declaring himself as 'a sort of a new school of thought process person', also co-structures priorities through assimilating old and new priorities:

> I will be very much of: it's all operational competence and safety in the fire ground first, and then prevention work second. Whereas, y'know, the brigade to justify the fact we've got diminishing fire calls and stuff, to justify us being here now, [the FRS] is very much … prioritises CFS and prevention … so it is that change of culture - that's the thing in the fire service. We are culturally in our little shell and it would probably take someone to understand what the culture is to move us out of there into [he trails off into thought] … we're changing now. So y'know … I joined as a fireman, or a firefighter, I don't know, but there was that transition of the male-dominated job title to firefighter, and now you're a community firefighter, and no doubt you will be a community responder ... do you know what I mean? Eventually … because it [the FRS] is just becoming more encompassing.

Whilst Mitch's approach to the job is grounded in NPM reasoning, the puzzle of translating one identity to another - 'firefighter or fireman I don't know' - implies an ambiguous position in relation to notions around identity. In the process of 'becoming' (Hall 2000) or in the process of passing from old regimes to the new order, the crisis of masculinity surfaces in the transitional space of moving from one 'being' to another, and repositioning in the new order. Both Mitch and Grant have recently received promotion to station manager, and both provide evidence of being forward-looking and culturally aware. Although from two different FRSs, they frame answers similarly and in direct contrast to John. From a gender viewpoint, both Mitch and Grant 'do gender' in a similar way; through performing a stylised repetition of acts (Poggio 2006) based on the 'feeling rules' of senior management culture. They adapt to position themselves in alignment with the dominant discourse of the formal organisation (Hochschild 1983). In comparison, John, 'independent' from the feeling rules of the formal culture, maintains a traditional repertoire of stylised acts, which communicates the essence of militarised 'officers' of the past, as opposed to managers of the present.

In summary, it appears that longer-serving watch managers who started their careers *before* the strike, have experienced fast-paced change, witnessed radical shifts in thinking, and experienced a redefinition of their work and career map. The majority of watch managers resist this change, however, the ways reform has impacted on work identity varies from watch manager to watch manager. Those who joined the FRS *after* the 2003 strike were part of the new organisation from the start, and they have not internalised the resentment and struggles towards this rank to role, seemingly invested in the sentiments of their peers.

Crew Managers

The crew managers in Metro (Ken, Jo and Jim) on promotional schemes have been in the FRS a relatively short time and there was scarce reference to rank to role. Apart from Jo (Metro), who wanted to stay in this position longer than the FRS anticipated, all these CMs took the promotional scheme as a given, with no challenges to the way it worked. Jim's narrative is representative of the ways these crew managers come to frame their understanding in the light of 'their' training, which is supporting them up the organisation. He states:

> Yeah, the brigade I think there's kind of being a kind of shift at the moment. From what I can see in 2007, the brigade went from ranks to roles where we changed all the ... and then you had all the watch officers [he corrects himself] the station officers, and officers of old became managers, so then they were teaching people to manage. Now I think they have realised that you end up losing some of the leadership that was in the officers of old - they were leaders as well as managers, and then the emphasis shifted to become managers and now it's shifting back. The brigade has just published something called the leadership strategy, which is designed to get everyone to think about how they can become a leader, erm, at all levels. It was not, or not been, widely accepted by everyone, let's put it that way. Some people see it's worth - some people don't. I'm personally ... it's a good thing ... y'know ... you need to be a leader as well as a manger, but unless everyone sees how y'know, or understands how it is supposed to work - it is a bit of paper in the end.

This appears in line with management thinking, given that Ray (senior manager, Metro) wanted to produce watch managers to effect compliance of the work group. Further to the conversation, when asking Jim to explain the difference between a leader and a manager, he says:

> So a manager this is part of what the strategy is there to show ... so a manager is essentially following policies and managing behaviours rather than a leader is, which is just inspiring people to follow them ... it is almost like … I'm doing this, let's do this, come on, go with me as a leader. Whereas, if you don't do this, these are the consequences - is the manager … which is a bit more of a negative thing and it's almost like managing by tick boxes. If you're late - you get this. If you're sick, you're going to get this. Y'know, these are out of my hands, there you go. They're kind of trying to redress the balance a bit, if that makes sense.

The use of language such as 'following policy', managing by 'tick box', 'inspiring people to follow', and issues around 'readdressing balance' are all linguistic terms applied in the same way as found within higher management tiers. Jim appears to intimate the development of leadership framed by a sort of charisma - to promote a follower's attachment.

However, the two longer-serving and 'non-moving' crew managers in Castle (Justin and Reg) both thought of the changeover of rank to role in terms of loss. As Reg says:

> The station manager then went from being part of a watch to being completely separate and for a while it was ok, because he would stay on the station, and he would come out and drill you … he would take part in stuff. It just doesn't happen anymore. They are totally separate now - hardly anything to do with them, because they are so busy.

So here we see that the outworking of rank to role appeared to work to further separate firefighters from their junior officers, and that different priorities and new types work make to separate them spatially, from the watch and widen an ever-increasing gap. Justin (Castle) also feels as though he would have preferred to keep the rank structure, and being able to address officers as 'Sir' - a way of ascribing respect believing the title 'manager' not able to carry respect in the same way. The manager-officer-leader triangle appears to cause imbalance across the two FRSs, or at least confusion to role identity given that roles span both emergency public environments and the private space of the station. In terms of promotional systems: as most of the crew managers in Metro were gaining from the promotional system, there were little (if any) problems spoken about.

In Castle FRS, Reg, having been a crew manager for eight years and believing it to be the best role in the FRS, has little interest in whether promotional systems are good or bad, especially as the pay for the responsibility at watch manager level (in development) is little extra. Whereas, Justin airs his dislikes of the new system and argues about the loss of a much needed disciplined approach. Furthermore, though Justin argues the job requires 'physically' dealing with incidents in an attempt to resolve them, he also believes the practical aspect should be central to assessment, rather than 'kind of writing how to do it'.

Watches

Interestingly, over both Metro and Castle FRSs, newer firefighters asked the firefighters with seniority to explain rank to role when the question arose in interview. This infers that this particular modernisation issue was something little talked about in the day-to-day at the station. However, whilst longer-serving members on Metro watch (1) thought of rank to role as wasted resources 'because nothing has changed', they also suggest it to have been 'a paper exercise'. The longer-serving firefighters on Metro watch (2) tended to dwell on rank to role shortcomings, viewing the transition to 'have come away from the fire service a bit' and view the FRS to be presently run 'more run like a business'. Equally, this watch felt that much of the discipline that the ranked officer held (especially in view of unquestioning obedience of new recruits) was gone. The relatively new emergence of questioning an order or 'even thinking about doing it' was also seen in terms of 'loss'. One firefighter with seniority highlights the importance of discipline, which he

argues is 'not about marching and saluting', rather 'it's about if you're at an incident and the wall behind you is about to collapse and someone says "run" you just need to do it…you can't say "why?"'

Longer-serving firefighters (across both FRSs) were attached to ideas that uniform was important to 'identify' the person in charge. This was an issue because present uniforms were thought to do little to demarcate 'rank', and the idea of being an undifferentiated mass with little to symbolise 'difference' was viewed negatively. However, watch 2 (Metro) await the arrival of new uniforms, which they believe go some way to mark difference between managers and firefighters. As such, the consensus view was that 'it feels like they [management] are going back to rank again'. When asking this watch why they thought that the FRS changed from rank to role, a younger/newer firefighter suggested 'they [senior officers] had too much time on their hands', but standing to correct this statement a firefighter with time-in interjected to say:

> No, I think it was to do with the … erm, it was too militaristic when they started bringing in managers from other sectors to be station managers and above. They couldn't …. those people wouldn't have gone through jobs as officers somewhere … they are managers and they wanted to presumably come in as managers. They was managers and they just wouldn't have applied for the jobs if they thought they were going to join a militaristic organisation. (Firefighter with seniority, Metro, watch 2)

The message about attracting a wider audience to join the FRS surfaces and although a longer-serving firefighter suggests it was a good idea to 'bring in people with specialist skills', he quickly adds the proviso 'but don't put them on fire stations'. Seemingly to believe they would be more suited to a position in 'logistics or something like that', rather than have 'just thrown them in there and then just moved them on', resentfully surmises the loss of tradition, suggesting that management think:

That's the rank to role ... uniforms, discipline, get rid of it'. (Firefighter with seniority, Metro watch 2)

Similarities of thought

Castle firefighters echoed similar arguments regarding rank to role as Metro firefighters (e.g. the changeover was a waste of resources and in outcome the fire service is now being run like a business). These collective views appear to become dominant organisational discourses holding sway of thought at front-line levels. However, one longer serving firefighter (FF2, Watch 1, Castle) maintains the rank to role transition to have 'changed the outlook of their [sub officer/station officer] job', declaring 'I think it almost was like 'manager'. At this conjuncture the newer and, in this instance, younger member add to debate by saying:

FF 1:   You don't need a manager …we all know what we need to do - we all just get on with it - we don't need managing. Yeah, all they do [the WMs] is just put stuff in the computer for us when we want time off or put extra pay in.

         [A long-serving firefighter talks over him]

FF 2:   They are supervising not managing.

         [Laughter from the group]

FF 1:   When we are on the fire ground they supervise, they don't manage because we all know what to do pretty much sometimes.

For watch 1 (Castle), very little was spoken about in terms of the promotional systems, with all but one firefighter happy to remain in the work group for their career. Seemingly to believe working above watch manager level brings a different outlook to the job these firefighters were more vocal about the problems associated with recruitment, and

widening the gate to allow minority sectors join. In terms of the leader/ manager debate, FF2 (longer-serving) suggests 'you need guidance, you need somebody to guide us … now if you turn up to an incident you need a leader, you need somebody to turn to'.

Though watch 2 (Castle) were similar and appreciative of the sense of family watch camaraderie provides, one firefighter with seniority offered an opinion saying 'I currently don't like the systems they have got in place for, erm, people who are aspiring for promotion, so for as long as it stands as it is, I won't be attempting it'. Whereas a newer but established firefighter argues that, those who take promotion and especially higher management 'get a hell of a lot more responsibility for not much return'. However, similar to watch 1 (Castle), he believes the extra money promotion provides is on the periphery of what counts to them, and argues the consensus would prefer to 'be happy' at work by carrying on and 'doing the job they joined to do'.

For the Metro watches again the same pattern replicates with one firefighter thinking about promotion for the future, and the others consensually agreeing that going for promotion is a decision that 'takes you from the fun stuff to office work' (FF1 watch 1, Metro). The same issues emerge from watch 2 (Metro) who refer to the watch manager role as being 'a black hole', declaring 'someone's got to get the blame for it [when things go wrong], it is not going to be us, it is going to be our managers, so why would I want to take that role on?' But this watch were particularly vocal about the new promotional initiatives and, mirroring much of the earlier watch managers' criticisms, highlighted their dislike of graduate entry schemes, viewing fast-track managers to not spend enough time in role and too much time worrying about 'what's written down', rather than what they need to do.

At watch level, cultural issues of the past were overtly avoided (particularly in Metro), as if these problems had never existed. Neither did these issues form any part of their arguments in their understanding of system change. This can be partly explained by the way that it was widely thought that minority groups' (e.g. women and ethnic groupings) lack of appeal towards a FRS career was due to problems within wider society. It was also a common theme for them to propose the argument that barriers exist because some ethnic

minority cultures view firefighting to be a low-class, 'tainted' job, whereas women view firefighting as a male-centred profession. Nevertheless, the lack of reference to dysfunctions of culture can also be explained by their refusal to acknowledge or be aware of how certain behaviours and cultural understandings are problematic for 'others'. For example, Nick (SM Castle) describes an inability among firefighters to see themselves in the way that others could discern. In this way, firefighters adopt a distancing technique, where focus becomes redirected towards other issues that firefighters view to be morally wrong, but become cast as issues that senior management are unable to see or discern.

Although a few of the newer firefighters were open to thinking about promotion in the future, the majority of watch members over both FRSs showed a distinct lack of interest in any movement to progress up the institution. In Metro, the firefighters in general looked upon the new promotional 'schemes' with a high level of disregard and disrespect. However, over both Metro and Castle there was a commonly held belief that traditional values were being eroded and informal understandings of what is good/bad and right/wrong were under attack by management and politicians. Therefore, FRS efficiency (in their eyes) was being compromised at point of delivery.

Summary

Whilst rank to role occurred more than a decade ago, it appears that from the station manager level down, traditions of rank are very much a part of the fabric of everyday work, whether the changeover was a part of the firefighters' career narrative or not. These working realities appear relatively unacknowledged at more senior management levels. The rationale supporting the necessity of rank to role as a lever for change at senior management level, aligns with, and reflects drivers within FRS policy dictates. Interestingly, analysis shows senior management (Castle) to be more likely to acknowledge problems and resentful emotions associated with the rank to role change at station level (impact on firefighters). Whereas senior management (Metro) either distance 'themselves' from the impact of change and focus on ways this has negatively impacted on the operational (Henry) or tend to downplay effects of this change (Ray). For these senior managers a sense of disconnect with the past emerges appearing eager to fixate on the present and moving forward with change momentum. Ironically, it may be apt to apply

a more general application of Henry's (senior management, Metro) view that 'it is no good being a leader if nobody wants to follow'.

By contrast, from station manager down to firefighters, analysis suggests the notion of being 'known' via a role has not been fully colonised within the minds of front-line workers. Consequently, 'rank' appears to operate in tension with 'role' titles. The actual reasons as to why roles have been created within roles in the new era is not an issue that appears understood or overtly explained within the narratives. This 'development' appears to have fuelled resentment within watch circles, making fertile ground to attack management rationale especially as roles have expanded far beyond the old rank levels. This appears to closely align with a type of Taylorism approach, and resonates with Braverman's (1974) preoccupation towards sites where division of labour comes to multiply. Though this expansion of roles at watch level promotes a sense of organisational 'flexibility' and increases management control over the labour process, what it also does is re-layer formal vested authority within the watch, which could potentially elucidate tensions with informal authorities on the watch.

From a policy perspective, with new promotion systems and accelerated promotional programmes built into the new system, the firefighter is now though able to engage with the promotional process at an earlier stage than had been possible in the past (Audit Commission 2005). Though, the new systems ultimately work to establish a dominant collective consciousness, to colonise the workforce and put the firefighter centre stage in control of their learning opportunities, it appears that firefighters generally view the opposite to be true. For longer-serving members and those newer firefighters receiving the benefit of a standard educational level, the promotional process appears intelligible and intangible. This has fuelled resentment towards 'graduates' representative of a differential 'classed' education coming in with skills mainstream firefighters refuse to recognise as valuable. This 'diversity' also challenges gender orders within the watch as newer types receiving benefits of a higher education bring with them a new form of masculinity founded on differential skills and 'particularised' higher level thinking skills, which challenges traditional values of practical orientations. However, as we shall come to observe within the fullness of the narratives, the power of the informal collective

consciousness - sets of shared beliefs and moral attitudes (see Hall, Hockey and Robinson 2007) below middle management, appears resilient to these types of changes, and managerial attempts to decentre traditional identities is met with varying amounts of resistance and agentic innovation.

Chapter Five

Role Models and Career Trajectories

Introduction

The previous chapter shows how frames of understanding towards forms of organisational change differ within hierarchical levels of the FRS. Higher tiers tend to view change as rationalisations of progress but become open to challenge around watch level. The issues of rank to role and change in promotional systems are specifically relevant to understanding how transitions impact work identity. Attention now turns to watch managers' experiences in early career as new firefighters. As such, analysis will explore the way role models come to feature in watch managers' early recollections, providing insight into the ways workplace selves form towards a preferred sense of self. What unfolds is a sense of how work-identities become forged through tensions and attachments to people, types of work, and in relation to organisational systems. This discussion develops to show the ways watch managers have differentially come to inhabit their position, and how experiences of agentic power or restrictions spanning both old and new promotional systems have occurred.

Theoretical approaches to role models

Two of the earliest theoretical contributions regarding 'role models' can be found in Merton's (1949) and Thielen's (1957) work who found that medical and law students more often chose a figure in the profession who was either a practitioner, or a person known through repute who becomes a 'model' to imitate or an 'ideal' to aspire to. This type of purposeful action resonates with Hall's (2000) identification process, where markers emerge to create boundaries sifting worthy/good aspects of persons in processes of identification and differation. Merton and Thielen's research show that identification with a role model works in a comparative sense for the student to measure 'self' against, whilst simultaneously providing for a sense of future vision. Transposing this to the FRS, on the one hand, role models allow new firefighters to see 'self' as someone to promote and 'become', and on the other hand, the promotional systems dictate that evidence of

particular types of skills and personal qualities become evidenced via the system. What becomes of interest is how weightings of these two constructs of system versus influence of role models' agency become balanced so as to shape the watch managers' early sense of work identity.

Though career theory and organisational behaviour traditions consensually agree for role models to aid the guiding of individual development and career success (Gibson 2002), there is also a general assertion that workers' 'identification' with role models is crucial to both individual growth and development (Dalton, 1989). Wright, Wong, Newill (1997) and Gibson (2002) propose two primary views of conceptualising role models. First, the traditional view depicts role models to be critical to an individual's career development process, being workers who occupy socially important roles, such as leaders or managers. These role models offer a means to refine the 'followers' developing identity through providing an image of someone the follower would like to 'become'. Gibson suggests that this view (role identification theory) is based on the idea that individuals become attracted to those they feel a similarity with, either in terms of attitudes, behaviours, goals, character, motives or a desired status position (see also Kagan 1958). Through observation and imitation these followers seek to enhance similarities with role model(s) (often-exemplary figures) offering critical clues to identity and career achievement.

The second more recent tradition draws from social learning/social cognitive theory (Bandura 1977), proposes the theory that people become attracted to role models to aid development through learning new tasks and skills. In this way, Wright, Wong & Newill (1997) suggest role models become cognitive constructions created by individuals to aspire to their ideal or 'possible' selves based on their particular developmental needs and ambitions (p.701). This introduces the idea that individuals piece together a composite role model from attributes derived from a range of possibilities (real and imagined) through an active learning process from multiple role models, rather than a focus on selecting a particular exemplary person. Broadly speaking, identification theories emphasise motivational and self-definitional aspects of role models, and modelling theories emphasise aspects relating to learning. Therefore, what becomes apparent in relation to

these varied approaches is that either people-centred or skill-centred fixations occur in the quest to 'become'.

Having set out these broad theoretical approaches, this chapter begins by drawing from watch managers in early career and experiences of immersion into watch culture. This then leads to focus on reasons 'why' certain individuals become singled out as role models and what purpose they serve to the new firefighter. The type of analysis this produces highlights various sites where influence on work identity occur and how the dynamic operates (defining the attraction/spark). These processes are important to enable a deeper understanding of the ways identity and career develops in the FRS, and because they offer insight into undeveloped areas within the sociology of work towards a more thorough deconstruction of 'processes by which individuals create and sustain development through identification with specific types of individuals' (Gibson, 2002: 135).

Early memories

Analysis of watch managers' experiences as new recruits coming on to the watch indicates that either consciously or unconsciously the new firefighter is in transition. Although deemed competent from training school, these watch managers have begun their career as inexperienced members of the watch, still to prove and build on firefighting skills learnt in real-time emergency situations. Curtis (WM, Castle) only a few hours into his first shift reflects back and remembers the bells going down on station, but unlike the staged incidents at training school, he says:

> I just walked outside to just this sea of people and machines, and I was just thinking holy [shit], erm, so that was it, and after that everything was easy because we started off with just chaos ... immediately.

Whilst Curtis' example refers to the operational in terms of social organisation, he was also was quick to recognise:

There was some very strong characters and my very first night was extremely difficult because I was the new recruit, and within a couple of hours we got turned out to a school fire, which was, when we turned up, a big fire already. So day one, was a few hours of torment and know your *place*.

Therefore, both the operational and social organisation of learning to 'fit-in' occurs through learning not only formal rules but also the unwritten rules of the watch culture (Chetkovich 1997, Baigent 2001). For Curtis, his 'place' appears suggestive of a type of 'pecking order' in the informal organisation of work and male hierarchy on the watch, but how the criteria plays out is less clear. However, watch managers also share memories testifying to a range of emotions at being immersed in watch culture. Dale (Metro) remembers feeling it to be 'scary' and 'intimidating', Grant (Metro) is in 'awe of firefighters', whereas John (Metro) describes the experience to have been 'daunting'. At the extreme, Grant uses the metaphor of 'a baptism of fire', whilst James (Metro) describes the need to 'be in the shadows before your character can come out'. In his late teens, Dale declares that in comparison to firefighters', he 'felt like a little boy'. He also argues 'I was their new boy - they taught me, I am who I am today because of them'. Whilst these examples situationally differ, they are at the same time pre-emptive towards types of imminent change and transformation. What is interesting is that Grant's metaphor has enabling properties, whilst James' experiences are suggestive of restriction, and Dale's carries a medium of both examples. However, what becomes significant within these examples is that all three are indicative of transformations or adaptations. These examples are similar to Vickerstaff's (2007) findings that show how young men undertaking post-war apprenticeships viewed their experience to go beyond learning a skill or trade, and that it became 'an apprenticeship in masculinity'. Her analysis suggests established workers tested the apprentices' moral fibre (playing jokes and tricks) and their willingness to submit to group norms, values - in turn, the apprentices talked of 'coming out the other end a man' (p.339).

Yet, for these new firefighters theoretical links can be drawn to Goffman's (1961) notion of 'mortification-of-the-self' as the firefighters have passed from civilian-self to trainee firefighter 'institutional-self'. The firefighter aspires to pass from newly qualified

firefighter to experienced firefighter (in the eyes of their watch), and an integrated member of the team. Whilst Grant, James and Dale's examples appear as 'people' centred, by contrast, Craig (Castle) veers away from references to watch members in terms of transformative properties and instead focuses on the transformative powers vested in the promotional systems, providing 'the' means for 'becoming' towards shaping work identity. These reflective examples provide clues to a range of sites where types of 'transmutations' become experienced and where formations of identities begin to emerge, plateau, perform and interact. However, these transformations are not clear-cut. For example, it is not clear if they relate to age, time-spent/experience, proving masculinity, or the ways earning a placing in the watch hierarchy occurs. Additionally, how does this work out for those firefighters' new forms of accelerated promotion systems that defy these crucial elements? In order to gain an insight into these types of issues, the focus now turns to experiences of role models in early career.

Role Models in Early Career

Crafting a career

Attuning to the task, focus turns to Bob (Metro), who at a superficial level appears to bear little common ground with other watch managers, centres emphasis around 'learning your craft' in his early career. The deconstruction of Bob's narrative becomes used as a means to demonstrate how connections occur with different aspects of analysis from other watch managers' narratives in the developing sections. When asking Bob if he had any role models in his early days, he says:

> It is a sense of time and experience and a lot of people draw on that ... so you listen to those people, you take on board what they say and you are influenced by them ... I mean, because then, although we're not so busy now, then, you had to listen because we had a lot of fires then. So if we take [****] as a station now ... we probably have two or three house jobs in a tour, whereas now we might get one ... I mean in a month or whatever, and I mean it was busy times, and you learn your craft very quickly depending on where you were stationed. So people would try and get to busy stations, er, because you would learn your craft that much quicker

and build up your experience that much quicker … so if you were going up for promotion you could draw on your experiences.

In spite of the longstanding tensions that have plagued fire service history in the unions' struggle to upgrade the categorisation of firefighters in the work index (Holroyd 1970, Cunningham 1971, Ewen 2010), Bob holds definitive ideas around the skilled nature of firefighting, recasting his role models in a rational orientated way: as multi-skilled persons that provide the means to learn the craft of firefighting (see also Holmes 2015). Echoing Kondo's (1990) ideas around Japanese artisans, Bob carefully attends to the meaningful and experiential aspects of work to secure a position of rank in the organisation. Like the artisan community in Kondo's accounts, Bob worked long hours and sought to build up his skill by observing and paying attention to his officers in order to take possession of various forms of knowledge and draw from their long-standing experiences, where one day firefighters would benefit from his knowledge in the same way. This resonates with Faludi's (1999) shipyard 'fathers' and Strangleman's (2004) footplate and signalling grades in the railways, in the way that the craftsmen of the profession gained status, respect and authority, not solely because they were 'in charge', but because of the specific body of knowledge and tacit skills they share.

At a personal level the notion of 'craft' is about the ability to do something well and to be self-critical and disciplined (Sennett 2008: 104). As such, eager to learn firefighting skills, Bob selected his role models because he respected their experiential knowledge (Kram 1985) and were representative of gatekeepers to the skills he wanted. Aside from Sennett's (2008) theorisations and Holmes (2015) differing perspective towards craft - both have theoretical limitations. This emerges in the sense that within the FRS narratives 'craft' is not simply restricted to a phenomenon that expresses itself through one person. The developing chapters' evidence suggests that craft in the FRS extends to leader-group symbiosis, where the team perform the skills of firefighting craft collectively as well as singularly.

Reflected in Bob's account was a preoccupation with quantity of 'shouts', which was thought to procure a wide range of experience, which would enhance his skill set. This

resonates with Braverman's (1974) idea that the power to allocate skill/craft is in the hands of the powerful. Transposing this model over to the FRS then places power in the hands of those firefighters' who possess (and observably prove) skill, making for the need to fit-in all the more urgent to achieve. The journey of this experience appears to induce types of change within an individual, and as Kondo (1990) describes 'they begin to believe in their own powers for self-transformation' (p.221). Yet, Bob appears on a road to 'self-sufficiency', which from the outset centres on the desire to gain promotion to secure a higher place in the institutional hierarchy. It was not 'the person' or personal characteristics of individuals that became the over-riding focus for Bob, rather, the officers and experienced firefighters become the vehicles to learn the craft. These ideas of gaining experience (over a pre-determined suitable time frame) and becoming skilful in the use of technologies, closely relate to the art of 'firemanship' (HMSO 1981 p. iii). It is also culturally representative of the time frame when he started his career and began taking steps to achieve promotion. For Bob, learning his craft would emerge through a series of status passages (Turner 1967), which the new recruit has to pass from apprentice to something akin to the journeyman in the quest to gain rank and oversee the skills of other firefighters. In the context of the fire service environment, Bob's work identity in early years is in transience, aspiring to move forward in his quest to create and legitimate his place in the organisational hierarchy, where once secured, elevates his skills above 'others'.

The charismatic curve

Similar to Bob, John (Metro) has been in service through four transitions of government, but by contrast, John's recollection of role models in the early days formulates towards a particular type of personality and form of authority. At this time, the old rank system was still in operation with the dominant discourse of 'officers' rather than 'managers' used to denote roles within the organisation. Early memories highlight the type of officer and management style indicative of a past era (of nearly thirty-years) and form an archetype around which John appears to have continued to imitate. As such, the 'presence' of the station officer materialises in John's early recollections revolving around the idea that 'you turn up and do as you're told, that's what you do, and so we did a day's work with my first officer in charge who was a very decent person'. This highlights the listener's

awareness that a sense of moral purity mobilises for John, where he begins to demarcate boundaries between decent people and others (Lamont 2000). John's narrative also indicates that autocratic styles of management were accepted practice, and that the power of rank and types of personal values worked to legitimate kinds of managerial authority. John suggests his promotional motivations were driven by the fact that he likes 'new challenges', but although being 'all ears' is not presently 'actively' thinking about gaining further promotion. Though on different occasions in the past John has 'put his foot in the water' (of promotion) by acting up or taking other positions, further concedes 'my itchy feet have always got me in hot water'. Though details were not forthcoming, what this metaphorical language conveys is that the premise on which his work identity is founded did not easily operationalise in the hierarchical level above. The inspiration for John to climb the career ladder to watch manager (station officer) position is both to do with self-development and person-centred emulation:

> I always wanted to give promotion a try, the career path was important, erm [silence] … I think my first station officer - I looked at him and I thought I wouldn't mind aspiring to be him so, yeah, I got promoted quite quick as well.

When inquiring of the type of people to have impressed John in early career, he first reverted back to his 'station officer' and then extended to include 'lots of people on the watch as well'. When asked why he had placed the 'station officer' high on his value system, John suggested:

> Erm, it's the way someone does something isn't it? It's their charisma, erm … the way they command authority without having to be overbearing. It's, erm, a lot of it is personal skills isn't it? I always thought you've either got it or you haven't ... it's, er ... you can hone it a bit but it's really how you handle yourself. Most people respond well to people who are decent and honest, I think, and he certainly was.

Here we see the significance of the notion of charisma, which John implicitly links to power, authority, and values around identity. For John, taking command is a practiced art, which requires a fine balancing act without being overbearing. Though these ideas appear

to contradict his earlier statement that charisma is something you 'have' or you 'do not', nonetheless, achieving control over various aspects of work (on and off the fireground) and managing firefighters was an important skill needing a specific form of authority to be recognised and valued. Trust and respect was something that had to be carefully constructed - enabled through the performances of 'honesty' and 'decency' (the important moral fibres), which the firefighters and officers appear to need and 'possess' as transient phenomena and which need to be constantly performed, proved and observed in the everyday. John perceives this 'gift' of charismatic persona as something that *cannot* be learnt, but rather a characteristic that someone is endowed with 'naturally'. Rather than seeing charisma as a social process, John takes a deterministic prognosis, which separates men from men, premised on a set of exclusionary criteria. The centrality of John's argument mirrors Weber's (1946) notion of 'extraordinariness' that becomes inherent in leaders (the chosen few), where the recognition of certain exemplary attributes is perceived by the (many) followers. Equally, the firefighter pressing forward to embody and prove similar traits to the role model simultaneously increases the chances to be singled out (as having potential). The emulation process produces an effect that the officer (role model) can connect with or recognise to be of value (as an extension of self). In effect, both the role model and social subject become chosen ones but under different circumstances and in relation to different forces of power.

In John's situation, the charismatic element creates types of connections, investments (time, skill, persona) and the recognition of this 'gift'. It appears from my field notes to surface in the ways that firefighters were observed to have a commitment and respect of the 'officer' (John) with whom strong bonds fostered the essence of team solidarity. The moral threads underpinning all these types of themes cannot be understated as they emerge from many different sources. For example, what a man should be like (with ideas around what is honest and decent), what the organisation should be like (traditionally centred), and what an officer should be like (competent, charismatic, good sense of right and wrong). Whilst John's role model operated in close quarters with the watch this was not necessarily a generic trait across the other narratives.

So whilst Bob has pursued work identity and the honing of his craft one particular way, John pursues the crafting of an identity in another. In a Foucauldian sense, John's 'art of existence' or 'techniques of the self' (Foucault 1979, Foucault 2000) breathes life into the historically fading footsteps of his predecessor through the preservation of the moral values and persona of his role model (the station officer of the past). Through his own inheritance and earning *rank,* John has become the new gatekeeper, upholding traditional work values and customs to future heirs in the watch. The moral and technical control over work, which had traditionally been handed down, continues to operate as a power force in the crafted self of the present. In terms of John's narrative, the homosocial aspect is not restricted to a one-way dynamic; it goes beyond men reproducing men in their own image, and extends to the recognition that the 'select' make choices to replicate the role model sustaining the life code of one particularised pocket of fire service culture. This becomes part of what I have termed earlier as 'a preservation strategy' (p. xix) and in this case works to hold sacred, traditional values centring on commitment, trust and loyalty. This represents the antithesis of what Sennett (1998) believes to underpin 'the new spirit of capitalism' (erosion of trust, do not commit, keep moving, erosion of loyalty and sense of drift) (see also Boltanski and Chiapello 2007). For Bob, investment of time and commitment seems to foreshadow the importance of any particular person or personality, and for John the opposite occurs in the investment of a certain type of persona, which sets up a particular dynamic of power relations in the watch through fostering strong bonds of mutual solidarity.

The discipline(s) within work identity

Following on from this we begin to assess more fully the ways that other types of 'investment' (development, skills, emotion, moral) surface and add to the debate. As a contrasting example, we turn our attention to James (Metro), who goes to great lengths to describe the way he appears to identify with his first station officer. Unlike John, this dynamic revolves around different criteria and in less close proximity:

> My Guvnor - he was welcome, he was keen, he wouldn't do anything that I wouldn't do, you knew where you stood. Regards to discipline, erm, it was more like a discipline than I would say now. So you had a structure … I suppose a

clearer structure. The Guvnor, the station officer, he was *'the'* station officer - he would put that trust and faith within his junior officers. Back then it was the case that he would only come out and do drills if there were issues that were occurring - he could see them visually, identify them and deal with them as he should.

The personable characteristics of the station officer and keen attitude to work are the first issues raised. Identification with the role model occurs not in the context of learning per se, but in James' recognition that the role model validates his own attitudes and values, and on this premise the dynamic represented in these reciprocal positions appear to facilitate mutual trust, respect and validation of a particular form of masculinity. His early reflections indicate his understanding of being a firefighter centres on a tri-part model of discipline: outside as a means of correction, personal self-discipline, and fire service work as 'a' discipline. Combined, they mirror a military model of values and discipline (Ministry of Defence 2008) and Weber's (1978) model of a developed bureaucracy. For James, 'the' station officer was someone who was clearly defined and separated through position of rank and whose responsibilities of office are of primary importance to any other personal considerations. James' dialogue describes how the organisational ranks of the past worked to 'contain' and 'maintain' control with correction, only to be exerted where necessary in the presence of observed 'lack'. This description is suggestive of the need for the leader to perfect the balance of a number of issues at one time, a skill not easily learnt or perfected by newcomers, but operates just as the bureaucrat (and soldier) side-lines personal political sentiments in favour of 'obedience' to the (new) system[20]. Astutely, James sidesteps questions around negative people in the early days and refocuses attention back towards positives:

> You wanna talk about role models … the Guvnor had senior firefighters on the watch who were very, very good and very keen, very good to develop you - so I think because he created a watch, he had a lot trusted in them. Getting back to role models, erm … senior hands, my mentor ... erm ... from going through the daily attributes of the role to queuing, a) on equipment to on arrival ... tactics when we turn up to an incident, going through the equipment, which we should take, to be

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[20] My field notes observe James' office to be adorned with visual observations of charts and measurable targets quantifiably measuring his work group's comparable efficiencies with 'others' at the station.

mindful of what to do, and what not to do. Because the station officer had a lot to consider I suppose, in the run of a mix of an incident, so in fact I suppose filters through from the top to relieve them.

The use of consecutive positive adjectives and word repetition, which James adopts, works to stress important points regarding the level of standards. He very aptly describes differences between a role model and reference individuals (senior firefighters) and the mentor[21]. What becomes of significance is the moral responsibility to maintain authority and development of the watch. The 'Guvnor' invested trust, faith and time in the hierarchy of his second-in-commands to oversee the wellbeing and development of firefighters, but crucial to this example, 'the' station officer was the 'creator' of the product, in human terms - 'the quality of the watch'. If, as Sennett (2008) suggests, the craftsman invests in the creation of the product and craftsmanship emphasises objectification of the product it produces, then this appears to provide an apt example of those very sentiments. Equally, in this case, human organisation becomes part of the inner wiring of the Weberian bureaucracy, which in military terms operates in the officer's absence. Nevertheless, we could also assert that the managerial/leader investment in the team also becomes an investment in 'self' if the team is the yardstick by which the manager is viewed/judged. The notion of discipline is important in this context; particularly in the way it secures levels of obedience. These issues become all the more thought provoking in the light of Foucault's view that power is not a discipline, rather, discipline is one way in which power can be exercised (see Foucault 1977, Andrews 2010).

Seemingly to engage with Wight, Wong and Newell's (1997) theoretical approach the 'possible self' was seen in terms of reaching the station officer's position, with James recognising forms of similarity to himself in terms of action, thought and behaviour. This appears to precipitate the force of magnetism, spark or metanoia effect (Klein and House 1995), and confirms to James his suitability or ability to succeed in promotion based on the 'possible self'. This process also closely resounds with current trends of research. For example, Warhurst's (2011) study shows how role models 'become' selected on grounds of affinity, compatibility and rapport.

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[21] 'Mentoring is typically defined as a purposeful and consistent relationship providing explicit guidance and support using clear learning techniques such as questioning and the provision of advice with the overall aim of career development' (Chao, 1997:17).

The art of emotion management

The relationship between the public and firefighters is one that has historically been built on their 'presence' at emergency situations and through observations and reports of masculine heroism, which has accumulated and maintained high levels of virtuous reputation (Ewen 2010). In this way, reputations are inherited from predecessors (by quality of work carried out in the past), and they are accumulative in that they are reinforced and built upon (or contested). On intermediate and micro levels, analysis indicates that managers, officers, firefighters, watches, stations and unions also carry reputations within the service in relation to each other, and become vessels of power constructs, which all co-exist inside the organisation. An explicit example is found in Curtis' (Castle) narrative that constructs the idea of a role model around the central feature of 'earned repute'. Drawing from his early recollections, Curtis gave a very in-depth account of his role model who was an incoming sub officer, as the former was being 'moved on' due to unmanageable power relations on the watch. The new appointee was presented with an opportunity in what was thought to be an extraordinarily hard set of circumstances. This poses a particularly important context, as consensus opinion (within all narratives at each level of the FRS) indicates that managing the operational is less difficult than managing internal relations at the fire station. The task, or test, which presented itself to this sub officer served as a platform from which to demonstrate strength of character. Particularly revealing in the way that Curtis describes how both senior management and the work group were waiting to see what happened. The 'need' to win and substantiate character and work identity presents itself as an opportunity for making a name. In relating how the sub officer took immediate control, Curtis says:

> He came in day one (the sub officer) and we hadn't even finished ... where we
> have parade ... we had not been still for ten seconds ... er … he dispersed the
> parade and had one individual in his office where they remained for an hour and a
> half, and we could hear them through the entire station. After that day, everyone
> else on the watch knew their place including the individual who had been having
> shouting matches. Their shouting matches just continued for three months, I would
> say fairly regularly - if not every day, it was every other. After that, the watch
> became a lot better simply because he was willing to stand up for what was right
> and what his responsibilities of his position were ... erm … regardless of how

unhappy that made the individual. He knew the individual was in the wrong and the way they were doing it was wrong.

Curtis appears particularly drawn to his role model because of his moral stance 'to stand up for what was right', impressed by the sub officer's strength of character viewing him as 'a good guy'. This bears a striking similarity with a particular type of post-war manager in Roper's (1994) research, where managers would and could legitimately shout down competitors to challenge their decisions and undermine their authority to win deals. These positional and interactional sites are also tenuous because masculinities can rupture or secure through emerging challenges and are contesting sites, where men render themselves vulnerable to the presence of cracks or weaknesses (Dunsire 1999, Poggio 2006). The skill of masculinity here is one that operates in an arena of calculated risk and performances of Goffmanesque dramaturgy. The means to claim a particularised masculine identity in the offing becomes presented in the ability to emerge from the 'believable' performance of self - claimed through winning confrontations. The nature of the dialogue and the aggressive enthusiasm with which the wager was performed appears as a specific marker of a certain type of 'die hard' masculinity. The verbal sparring match between one ringleader and the new authority on the watch was a test of endurance, strength and stamina. In effect, though, both engaging in conflict, so too the combatants enter the arena where the winning and losing of power will inevitably occur (Donaldson, 1993). This audible and somewhat transparent communication provided a theatre of power contestation, with the watch able to witness the battle of wills in action where there could be only one victor. Likewise, the front stage and backstage provide an environment where a collective dramaturgy of identity occurs.

For Curtis, the attraction to his role model appears to be based on a number of skills inherent in the sub officer's skill of taking control, emotion management, persuasive rhetoric, holding the line, not backing down, and the ability to withstand and overcome (the informal ringleader later put in for a transfer). Stamina, control and skill are drivers behind this type of emotion management, echoing similarities to the debt collectors in Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart*, becoming subject to a certain type of discipline

crafted through prescriptive performance(s) that symbolise the hard-nosed battling where a specific form of masculinity surfaces.

These connections similarly resonate through Craig's (Castle) narrative that recollects his old sub officer to be 'good at managing people, good at calming situations down, good at organising and you got a lot of trust from him a lot of well you trusted him'. The repertoire of skills appears as all encompassing, with trust serving as a centralising feature. Interestingly, the use of emotion management as a self-discipline and emotional labour as a resource, appear so as to bring 'order' to a variety of situations, both on and off the fire ground. Further on in Craig's account, we also observe emotional labour being enacted through performances of masculinity:

> On the fire ground, very serious … erm, off the fire ground he was a bit of a 'Jack the lad' and made everyone laugh and made sure everyone was happy. One of the most important lessons him and others, not just him, have said: "Managing is easy, all you have got to do is look after people's pay and people's holiday, and if you keep everyone happy with those then you don't get no trouble".

The sub officer gives the impression that management is a seamless action that merely requires bureaucratic skill. However, the acknowledgement of the need to keep people happy appears to extend beyond the administrative as the sub officer plainly uses humour as a resource for control to facilitate a type of male bonding ritual (see Collinson 1988). Setting the 'feeling rules' over two contexts (fire station/ground) appears to require a complex set of skills that attempts to procure positive emotional states within firefighters to balance within an environment of control.

Similarly, Niall (Castle) who has longevity of service also reminisces about how his role model (sub officer) brought humour into the everyday realities of work. Niall, though being a benefactor of such a management technique, also reconstitutes the sub officer's legacy via his own work identity. He plays the part of a sitcom character (a borrowed personality) and then attributes associative 'parts' (as in the sitcom) to others on the watch. Particular characters adorn the inside of lockers, showing a 'buy-in' from the team

that sets a dramaturgical theme for the station work environment operating as a collective project. The charismatic quality of the sitcom 'character' imbues and carries a particular form of authority vested in a quirky type of masculinity of an era past. The creation of this sitcom character was distanced from working class physicality and macho behaviour, preferring to build on humorous twists that embodied high-level thinking skills to make the powerful look weak (uncannily resembling the graduate types). In outcome, Niall argues against adopting a hard-nosed approach (like some managers) to get work done. Rather, what particularly impressed Niall about his sub officer was that 'he had an effect on me where he had got lots of stuff done without shouting and I quite like that', and 'getting stuff done without going toe-to-toe arguing'. Thus, what is noticeable is that the means (humour) to an outcome (getting work done) appears most easily achieved for the good of all parties (pluralistic values) via an odd yet particularised performance of masculinity - to effect positive emotion and precipitate 'goodwill'. Humour also operates at a very subjective level, which requires high levels of a particular kind of skill to maintain a balance of control over work at the station. In this context, humour operates as a sophisticated form of emotion management, which seeks to produce a desired frame of mind in watch members while on station duty that goes some way to minimise resistance from the ranks.

The significance of good and bad role models

The most prevalent thread within watch managers' narratives regarding role models took the form of first, outlining of one particular individual (predominantly the sub officer or station officer), and second, the explanation of how learning occurs from good and bad role models all the time. These watch managers constantly evaluate and separate through moral markers that define their conception of what is good/bad and right/wrong in relation to people, systems and skills. Even John (Metro), who has created his work identity around the charismatic role model, was at pains to stress 'like I say you come across a bad role model you learn as much from them as you do a good role model'. Echoing these sentiments, Grant (Metro), a long-serving watch manager, clearly remembers his first station officer as a young firefighter with zesty positivity. Grant's euphoric demeanour indicates that even after nearly thirty-years' service, though this 'officer' has since retired, his 'presence' still fosters very positive memories:

I looked at my Guvnor when I came here, he was like ... I mean a station officer was like a step from God basically, and at that time he really was. We didn't see him and, y'know, the role has changed a lot over the years but when you go back twenty … twenty-five years … the station officer was like just somebody just bigger than life character. Y'know, the watch ... as a fireman, you generally didn't speak to the watch/station officer, you would speak to the sub officer or the leading fireman as a fireman. If you have reason to speak to the station officer in charge, like, it wasn't gonna be good.

Here we see the recognition of an extraordinary and god-like archetype whose persona and reputation embodied power and discipline. The 'Guvnor' was symbolically divided from the firefighters through minimal interaction and division of labour. Although there was a sense of awe in Grant's reflections, he also stresses the dynamic and positive impact that incumbent firefighters on his first watch impressed upon him. Trying to convey his esteem for them, he says 'I mean they weren't just good, you could go on standbys at other stations and you can't imagine 'good' until you've got a level to compare it to'. These types of comparisons serve as markers that set workers and watches apart from each other and intimate that every practice of each firefighter and officer comes under review. Grant then goes on to explain he learns more from observing negative people than he does from people like himself in the FRS. Grant assesses the 'impact' of character, behaviour and attitudes of 'others', and uses this to modify his own management style and hone his own managerial practices[22]. These learning curves provide means for trust and respect to be built between the firefighters with their watch manager, which operate so as to empower both manager and firefighter. In this way, dividends are two-fold. Grant views negative people as 'a challenge' and actively seeks to find ways to make them more engaged, and help them develop, indicating that those with a negative attitude tend to be lower ranking officers (crew managers and firefighters). However, he says 'the guys who are above my rank tend to be more positive - that's why they have been promoted'. This represents another site where separations between firefighters and managers emerge through divisions of labour and differentiated attitudes. Grant does not merely identify his learning

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[22] Some of these poor management style traits include lack of communication and keeping the watch informed, inability to delegate and empower staff.

to occur from the extraordinariness of the role models, but also highlights the multiplicity of sites on which learning takes place. Furthermore, the recognition and assessment of the ways in which this could help improve his practice to encourage compliance rather than resistance from the watch, appears to take this one step further.

From extraordinary to ordinary role models

By contrast, five watch managers (Frank, Gary, Sid, Mitch and Ron) when talking about the idea of a role model, offer very differing perspectives. Frank (Castle) was happy to identify one sub officer who he looked on as role model, arguing he was 'very, very, professional, knew his job and was really, really, good at it practical, as well as clever and really good on the fire ground, and when you need it they give you leadership'. Other officers were singled out for being practical (ability) and straight (in character), and one particular individual displayed 'the epitome of what you would expect from an officer on the fire ground'. On the other hand, Frank argues that he has not modelled himself on them and recalibrates his work identity as 'very, very different from other officers more than he has ever known'. He claims to invest in a more collaborative style of managing on the fire ground. Frank argues 'I'm not frightened to turn round and say, "what do you think?" Especially to my crew manager and the others, I am much more of a collaborative worker than any dictator'. Though recognising attributes in 'others' in early career, Frank does not model himself on them rather, he highlights what he views to be important differences between them. Gary (Metro), a long-serving watch manager, moved to stress that his role model was 'ordinary' - 'the mess manager, an ordinary firefighter'. On his first day Gary appeared preoccupied with understanding 'what the culture was' and the mess manager provided some important clues about how to behave and what was appropriate to do and say. From the beginning his mess manager made it clear there were few choices to be made about food - you either wanted what was being made (with little variation) or you did not. The mess manager's approach appears to be used as a yardstick to assess the way shifts in fire service culture, management style and rules of interaction have changed.

Negative experiences in early career

At the other extreme, two out of sixteen watch managers' early recollections were overtly negative experiences. What is interesting is that both of these watch managers had previously held positions in the armed forces and both appear to have found integration much harder (albeit for different reasons). Sid (Castle) argues there were 'no positive role models' and describes the shock of finding officers who had been in the FRS a few years to be 'fat, useless, lazy layabouts'. Comparing present experience to his previous army days, he argues for the culture and workers (firefighters) to be 'disappointing'. Equally, Mitch (Castle), who filtered into wholetime firefighting (via the retained section), was unable to identify any one particular role model. However, Mitch, unlike Sid, turns this to his advantage and discusses ways that from 'peers and upwards' how he has learnt to 'pick up good bits from people', and in this sense 'there is role models all the time'. These two particular watch managers (as new firefighters) entered the fire service having already been subject to the norms, rules and values of 'an/other' institutional culture. Their previous master status built on army values comes under threat and subject to new challenges in the new environment, where work organises differently and people are less intelligible to them. Difficulties lie in adapting to the new types of workers and the new terms of behaviour in the watch culture. Although both have passed the station manager's examinations, Mitch has recently been promoted, but Sid remains a watch manger and has resigned himself to the idea that the next step for him is his imminent retirement. However, Ron (Metro), also an ex-military worker, provides another dimension of experience, which identifies his station officer (also ex-military) as his role model, describing him as being 'a real old fashioned guy' - 'big chested', 'shaved head', and if you did something wrong 'you got balled out'. This 'didn't bother' Ron, as it was a practice that was familiar to him within what appears as a hard-nosed military form of masculinity, embodying the value of discipline, serving to differentiate 'officer' from 'subordinate'. The station officer invested his time to further Ron's development by helping him in the areas where he was struggling most, and according to Ron, the station officer 'really did know his stuff'. The station officer's emphasis on 'clean shoes', 'clean boots' and an intolerance of lateness, all served as aesthetic markers of respect and discipline. For Ron, these types of values and standards become a central part of his present management identity and strategy for managing. His affinity towards these types of disciplines become ways his hybrid identity emerges, assimilating both military and fire

service identities. Interestingly, the identification of a role model and the social process of making time to engage with the new firefighter on learning issues appear as a general practice, and becomes a common thread to surface through narratives particularly at watch levels.

Summary and discussion

Thus far, this chapter shows how role models are important to new firefighters in shaping work identity, the creation of imagined futures and career paths. Figure 2 (below), shows the rank/role frequency of the watch manager's role model in early career.

Figure 2 – Frequency of Watch Manager Role Models in Early Career

Castle (red) and Metro (blue).
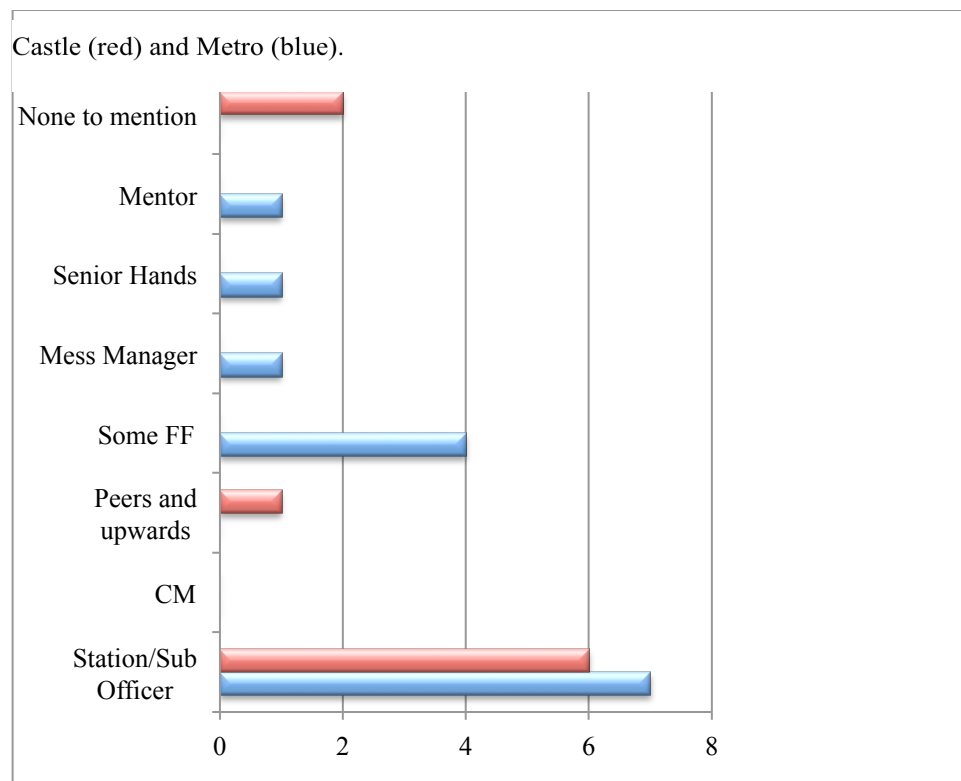
Figure 2 indicates the station/sub officer position to be most influential role model for these watch managers in early career.

A significant finding is that the extraordinariness of the role model for these watch managers as new firefighters, serves to perform a function either in respect of development concerns possessing exemplary skills (correlating to social learning theory) or serving as a person to emulate - someone to 'become' (correlating to role identification theory). Synthesis of both sources (development, skills *and* character), also surface in the narrative contributions of James, Grant (both Metro), Niall and Mitch (both Castle). What we can surmise is that though the recognition of a particular role model serves differential purposes they all revolve around learning or development of some kind, either character building or practical skills. The most pressing 'want' or phenomena of 'value' for the follower, surfaces through the need to identify or objectify someone or something to manage insecurity, instability or vulnerability in the new environment, and as a mode of transformation. What also emerges is that these watch managers as new firefighters either determine types of 'lack' (differation) or types of 'connection' (identification) within self in relation to the role model. In so doing, the types of desirable attributes pursued or connected with range from: a charismatic personality; exemplary skills and knowledge; performances of types of masculinities; humour; emotional control, and extraordinary characters, to various types of discipline. However, all these 'sparks' work so as to operationalise various forms of 'control' either over self, people or environment.

The way these forms of control veer back and forth across different sites become impossible to document lest it were the focus of the entire thesis. However, in whatever combinations these extraordinary traits assume, they appear as a disciplined craft, which work to perfect control, balance and order. It could be argued that the pursuit of craft and the crafting of the self are part of a double-edged sword that work together to create and sculpt work identity; something that is always in the becoming, constantly honed and in need of being proved through daily interactional performances. Equally, a craft can be thought of as a discipline, something that is finely balanced between the application of rules, self-criticism and creativity, alongside a voice of critical commentary (audience, customer and co-worker). In part, these connections can be found at the heart of the work firefighters do on a day-to-day basis (Baigent 2001), which in the emergency setting, seeks to preserve life and salvage what it can out of extraordinarily difficult emergency situations. For the follower, the positive role model provides a phenomenon to fixate on, representing a mode of inspiration and where negative, the role model provides the criteria

to begin to draw boundaries between self and 'others' to create and substantiate identity in the present moments of the work environment.

In terms of the way that 'proximity' becomes important to the new firefighter/role model dynamic, figure 3 (below) shows how differential mediations of space by role models emerge.

Figure 3 – Impact of Role Models and the Mediation of Space
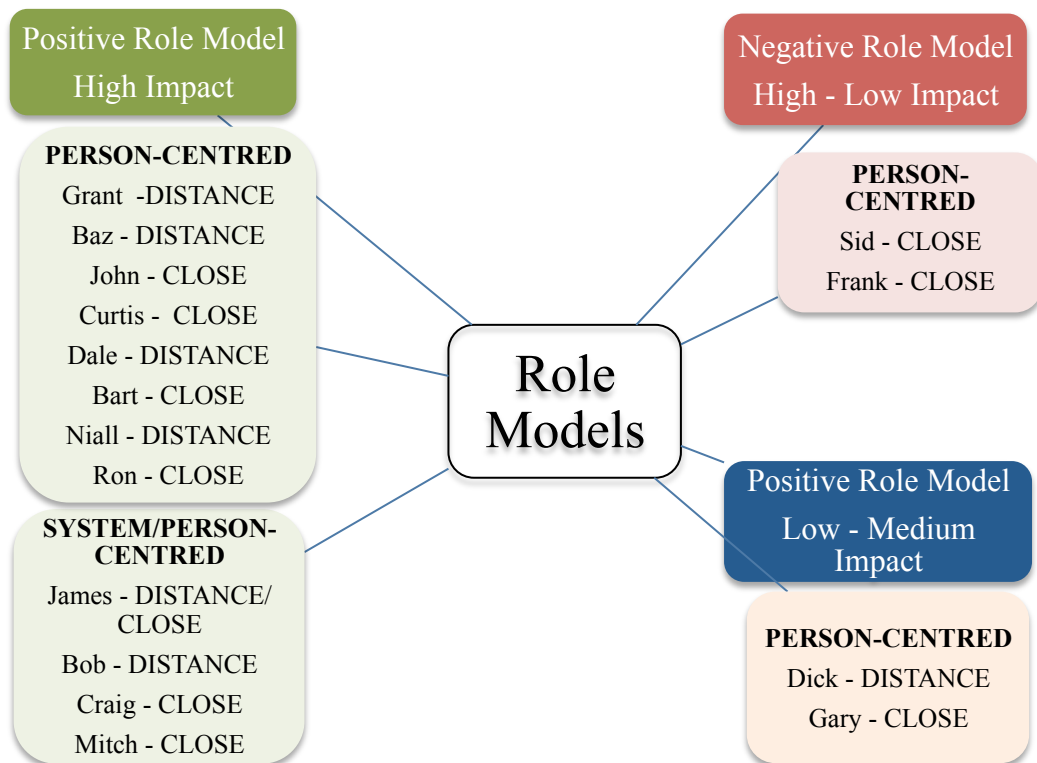
Analysis also shows that firefighters with seniority (informally ascribed) feature highly (second) as role models for watch managers as new firefighters. This is interesting because whilst on the one hand, the sub officer/station officer becomes primarily singled out, this has shown to also work in combination with role model influence of established firefighters. As such, for some new firefighters a dual process of influence can be in operation providing a plethora of resources to draw from to establish a sense of work identity.

Navigating the Promotional Systems

Of the sixteen watch managers, three had preconceived ideas of promotion on joining John, Bob and Ron (WMs Metro). Of these watch managers, Ron changed his mind and took longer to ascend the organisational hierarchy as he reflects how he really enjoyed being a firefighter, and knew once he got to watch manager level that the job would change as 'you don't get to go in [hands-on] anymore' on the fire ground. Whilst these three watch managers initially took a direct-orientated approach to promotion, other watch managers have come to promotion via less direct means. For example, Baz (Metro) argues he would have been happy remaining a firefighter for his whole career but when an opportunity presented (ten years ago) for him to 'act up' to a managerial position, he did so on the understanding it would be a short-term measure until staffing shortfalls stabilised. However, Baz unexpectedly found himself 'really enjoying the new role of temporary leading firefighter' (crew manager), which consequently instigated a chain of events whereby he opted to seek promotion to watch manager role with much prompting from his station manager. The acting-up experience has also worked as a catalyst for other watch managers across the two FRSs, as Bart (Castle) puts it 'I didn't just jump into where I am now... I had had a taste of it'. However, Grant (Metro) adds an interesting dimension explaining that acting up and undertaking out-duties at another station alleviated the fears he harboured of being detached from his co-firefighters and the work group:

> I was on that point where once you start to move as a fireman you don't fear it … because a lot of firemen become locked into their ... it becomes like a home, and they live there and they stay there so long that they actually fear a little bit I think. There is a bit of fear of the unknown 'change', and they're used to their building and their space, their room, and their routine. So once you have made that move … I thought that it was a good thing.

The security of inhabiting and co-habiting particularised workspaces within the station serves to provide a ritualistic form of security, and a strong sense of belonging across and within watch boundaries. The milieu of possessive pronouns in Grant's narrative (e.g. *their* space, *their* room, *their* routine) denotes types of affiliation and intimacy serving as posits of power. The close attachments firefighters form within the confines of the station and knowable, predictable ways of organising stand in stark contrast to the everyday demands

of firefighting where incident environments vary (e.g. roads, streets, lakes, water, fire, chemicals, vehicles, homes and places of work). For those firefighters who choose to go for promotion, their choice comes to symbolise more than a mere career decision. Rather, this choice represents the fullest expression of change to a firefighter in terms of: organisation of work; levels of responsibility; being a part of a team (performing similar roles) - to a change in who they have to be, what they have to know, who they have to work with. What we are saying here, is that getting promotion may not only say something about how the organisation views the value of the firefighter (if promoted), but it may also implicitly be symbolic of the values of the firefighter, when it comes to moving one step away from being 'like' the others in the watch. The metamorphosis effect from firefighter to manager/officer (with formal powers of authority inherent in the new role) also creates the need for a new facet of work identity to emerge. Grant's earlier reflections are tinged with dramatic realisation where promotion is not about loss (as firefighters may view it) but about gain - and no longer being oppressed by the 'fear factor' of 'change'. Grant's recognition (by default) of this transformation begins to make transparent the difference and separations that emerge between himself with the now 'other' firefighters. The process of 'acting up' is not merely a means of business continuity management but can also work as a tool of procurement and a way of developing self. Dale (Metro) suggests that acting up helps to build self-confidence, and prepare for future promotional exams and having been temporary for two years concludes:

> I'd learnt a lot and saw a lot and been there in a lot of situations where I had made mistakes, but I had learnt from them. So, when I was sitting down and being asked y'know - what would you do in this sort of situation? I'd actually had the experience to ... but it was honest experience, but that took me twenty-five years to get that.

What Dale refers to in his description of 'honest experience' relates to combinations of time-in and experience. Though narratives showed the most cited role models to be *their* sub/station officer role as influential and someone to aspire to, now in actuality, the most prevalent, variable watch managers base their decision to go for promotion centred on perceptions of 'lack' in management practice above their role. Six out of sixteen watch managers (three from each FRS) felt compelled to go for promotion because they saw

'other' people doing the job above them less competently than they thought they could achieve themselves (Dale, Grant and James in Metro) and (Dennis, Curtis and Mitch in Castle). Of these six watch managers, time-served was not a variable to influence results as equal distribution occurred amongst longer-serving and newer type watch manager. Whilst Mitch (Castle) argues that 'people go for promotion because they are fed up of being told what to do', so too Dale, in a moment of dramatic realisation, came to a similar understanding:

> What I'm being told what to do ... stuff by people that don't have a clue and it's no good me just saying y'know … you just haven't got a clue, I just thought, actually, maybe I should go into that role.

The driving force behind Dale's decision to go for promotion appears based on his own self-evaluations of competence, and where (by default) he begins to recognise separations between himself and 'others'. This is also a moral issue, and, in part, is about reclaiming and reappraising the moral control over work. Similarly, one of the main reasons Grant (Metro) wanted promotion is when he recognised that 'is not the standard that I'm used to, they [WMs] were not instilling professionalism or standards into younger ones'[23]. In Grant's case, the need to seek promotion overtly extended beyond self-interest, and central to his argument was the need to safeguard traditional values and standards in the younger recruits. One reason was about 'lack' of quality in watch managers, and another about safeguarding the new firefighters and preserving fire service standards in the present for the future. Along the same lines of thought, and with self-empowerment central to decisions around promotion, Curtis (Castle) argues:

> It [getting promotion] gives me the ability to shape other people to become what my vision should be - of a well-rounded firefighter in the rescue service. If I go further in the future, which I hope to do then underneath should be a core of people that will do a good job so for me. It was selfishness because I could do a better job, and I enjoyed being a leader in the panicked environment that we are sometimes in and, secondly, it was for the future.

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[23] (i.e. standards as in not having to be told what to do)

On the one hand, career choices appear to centre on ideas around 'lack' and 'difference' in 'others' (Dale, Grant, Gary, James, Dennis and Curtis). On the other hand, choices to maintain an upward mobility were also based around important issues of self-development and desires to take on extra challenges and the need to push 'self' forward (Grant, John, Gary, Bob, Ron, James, Niall, Mitch, Dennis, Craig, Bart and Curtis). However, as another contrasting mode of self-empowerment, Mitch (Castle) defines a different line of reasoning:

> I think they always thought retained were at a different level [of firefighting]. Admittedly, the … erm … the knowledge probably wasn't as good as it was wholetime, because obviously you go away on a wholetime course for eight weeks and you get bombarded with assessments and information. But [I] held my own obviously … hence my reason for promotion because I didn't think that I was treated particularly well and I wasn't willing to be continually treated like that. So you get a bit of promotion and then they might not always necessarily respect you, but they have to respect the rank and so I think that was a bit of a safeguard that I had.

These types of safeguarding practices also emerge in another context, but this time, as Niall (Castle) explains that management gave him an ultimatum 'if you don't take the rank we are going to take away your qualifications'. To his way of thinking, rather than have management 'push him around', Niall wanted to put himself in a position where he would at least have some say over what was happening to him, and the only option open was to take promotion.

Self-preservation, self-empowerment, self-differation and self-development are all types of safeguarding practices, which appear at the core of themes around promotional decisions for these watch managers. For example, perceiving 'lack' in management as a reason to go for promotion could also be seen in terms of safeguarding standards and values of the organisation, as could being in a more empowered position to safeguard against effects of change. However, the most definitive difference between Metro and

Castle FRSs workers is a dominant discourse within Castle about change, where a large portion of narratives argue it is no good moaning about change if you are not willing to be a part of the organisational change process (Bart, Curtis, Sid, Mitch and Dennis). Linking to this, the desire to get promotion was thought to place you in a stronger position to make a difference in the FRS decision-making processes of the future. Whilst Castle watch managers saw the inevitabilities of organisational change to feature in the future of the FRS, by contrast Metro watch managers were more preoccupied with past tradition and the way things used to be. An obvious reason for this discrepancy is that the formative years of fashioning their work identities are located in a previous organisational era, often perceived as a type of 'golden age'. Metro watch managers tended to be more cynical and more likely to talk frankly without being overtly politically correct (PC) or diplomatic. In terms of an overall pattern, the higher managers go the more sophisticated they are towards PC awareness. These findings support the idea that upper management and firefighters are not only a product of themselves (through their differentials) but also a by-product of each other.

Chapter Six

Station Managers: Paternalistic Fathers to New Management Men

Introduction

The previous chapter highlights the importance of uncovering modes of influence ascribed to role models in the way the new firefighters begin to shape identity. Strongly resonating with Weber's (1946) theorisation of charismatic leadership and charismatic authority, the pull or attraction towards the role model surfaces as either identification of an extraordinary skill, or personality (in others). This appears to work so as to carry a form of charismatic power between role model and new firefighter. The onus to embody a particular archetype (personality) and possess certain work skills becomes more pressing to achieve, as it secures the new firefighter a place within the wider context of FRS organisational charisma (historically accumulated public affection and respect of firefighters and the work they do). However, for the new firefighter, just as Weber's (1946) theoretical argument proposes 'instability' or routinisation of charisma to make charisma's Achilles heel unsustainable for long periods, we find that for the most part the attraction (or lure) towards exemplary individuals then becomes refocused towards 'others'. The firefighter begins to turn attentions towards singling out 'differentiation and lack', rather than 'need' or 'affiliation and similarity'. However, I argue that this process becomes a necessary 'transformation', acting as an informal status passage and a marker of a maturing fire service identity. Through time-in and now integrated into the watch, the firefighter has earned the right to judge 'others'. The now established identity has then reached a stage so as to 'play a part' in differential recognitions premised on moral frameworks and ideas around right/wrong and good/bad. These operate as culture-setting or culture-reproducing mechanisms, where cultural frames and filters begin to emerge, providing an insight into the moral rules of particular work groups (Durkheim 1957). The implication of this analysis leads us to question if this pattern reoccurs as new promotions are gained upward through the organisation.

However, our present focus now builds on what we have already established, and through singling out the station manager's role, we deconstruct the relational aspects between the

station manager and the group of watch managers they manage. This shows how informal social processes work, alongside the formal, dictates of the station manager's role providing insight into everyday management cultures at station level. First, we turn our attention to the way that station managers think about the job they do, their relationship with the bureaucratic system, and the types of relationship they have with those they have responsibility for. The second section explores how these station managers find watch managers to contrast each other and the ways watch managers differentially exercise their authority over watch members. The overriding theme that permeates the station managers' narratives - relates to the relationship between 'bureaucracy' and 'agency'. Drawing from Weber's (1947) notion of the 'ideal bureaucrat' and Salaman's (2005) notion of the 'new manager' in new management bureaucracies, the unravelling of these accounts provides insight into the ways the station manager is linked or distanced from these two models. This is important because differing relationships to these two phenomena potentially affect attitudes of the watch managers (and the watches they manage). Whilst Gouldner's (1954) analysis centres on the types of relationship the manager and worker have with the system, and how authority and power becomes legitimised, this chapter builds on Gouldner's ideas to take account of the place gender and morality.

Metro Station Managers - From Plate Spinning to Swinging Lamps

We begin this chapter by showing two contrasting styles of managing and personalities at the station manager level. First, George (Metro) performing an identity akin to the descriptions of old style management, and then Anthony (Metro), who is more representative of a new-style manager embodying a less hard-nosed form of masculinity, and adopting a more philosophical approach towards his role. George is an established station manager and on the day of the interview, I was escorted to his office by a firefighter where I sat and awaited his arrival. On entrance and after introductions my first aesthetic observation was that George embodied the old style of manager - one closely aligned to a military model in the way that he carried himself in uniform and conveying the sense of a powerful character. Overall, George was very confident in his skill set and his 'time-in' became more weighted by the notorieties of his presence at landmark 'shouts', which in the 'telling' act as symbolic markers, building reputation and status. In some ways, there was a dramaturgical feel about his interaction and his bodily 'presence'

assumes an air of authority. From the outset George presents as the sort of 'man', you would not want to cross. It was George who first introduced me to the phrase 'swinging the lamp' as we talked over his career trajectory and previous jobs he had attended, saying 'yes, that's what it means - talking over jobs (fires)'. He explains that the expression derives from the Navy where sailors would tell yarns in the lower decks with the lamp hooked on a rafter swaying back and forth at the mercy of the sea. George describes his role as managing the day-to-day running of the station, which includes responsibility for over fifty staff members split into watch managers, crew managers and firefighters. The breadth of his role includes responsibility for the fire station, health & safety, quality assurance of training, and station discipline, as well as facilitating and undertaking external work on committees and community initiatives. Lowering his tone, George then asserted:

> I am paid to manage, and I am paid to deliver what the organisation is trying to implement and I have to remind people of that so sometimes.

This 'epitaph' delivered in a forceful style as though it has been well rehearsed on a number of different occasions then takes a different turn when George declares 'my people, my staff, they are the most important thing to me, and then delivering the targets'. This reordering at first glance appears to blur distinctions between system and agency, but George argues this layering provides positive outcomes towards procuring what he needs to achieve and highlighting a give-and-take type relationship. He says 'if they're happy and I can do things to help them, they will do things to help me'. This two-way informal understanding operates outside the pure reliance on 'the system'. Providing an example of point, he says:

> I have proved that over this period of industrial action where all my key performance indicators - which are target driven - I'm still achieving with x less people than I would do normally, and that is down to the fact that the relationship that I have with the watch managers, and mainly with the watch managers. But also I find that I am quite interpersonal with the watches and themselves they know

that I'm the boss, and they know that if they have a real problem they go through line management but if they need to see me they can.

Significantly, George believes modes of achievement are maintained and secured through the quality of relationships between 'himself', watch managers and the firefighters, therefore, not purely attained through exercising authority invested in rank. Rather, it is the quality of informal relationships that provides the backbone to get the best out of the firefighters and those that manage them. George appears to be balancing together the authority of the system whilst harvesting the benefits of being a 'someone' and a 'formidable character' in the informal order. This is further maintained through the quality of relationships with the watch managers, which is carefully constructed and balanced via accessibility, time and proximity of space. Similar to Roy's (1959) findings, that small work groups have 'times and themes' to pass the working day, George adopts a times and themes approach to gauge and balance his proximity to firefighters in the watch. For example, he argues that in order to operationalise control effectively, there is a need of a certain detachment, but not too much so as to become distant (and not gain a sense of what is going on in the watch), and not too little so as to become separated. The means of marking boundaries emerge in other ways, as George further explains the need of 'informally' pulling certain firefighters up for calling him by his first name. This is particularly recurrent with one of the longer-serving firefighter who he has to intermittently remind 'if you want George - that's out of work, when I'm here, it's 'Guvnor!' At other times, George has to refocus the watch and remind them that their job 'is not just about reacting to the bells going off, going to alarms, going to fires, going to car crashes'. As George sees it, the problem with firefighters is that they become 'very insular' and inward focussing, being used to the confines and security of the station environment. To counter this issue (particularly at watch manager level) George encourages his watch managers to take on a community or work initiative away from the station that often works to broaden their approach.

George maintains he achieves a 'very good' rapport with his watch managers supported through his 'open door policy' and one-to-one management meetings on rotation at stations once every four months. When these four watch managers are together they

operate under 'Chatham house rules'. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss key performance indicators and targets and discuss the most interesting shouts they have attended, de-brief, and 'learn from practice' *together*. In an accumulative manner, a sense of shared history is in a constant state of 'becoming' - a metaphorical place where lamps learn to swing and gain momentum within the closed group. The sharing of stories builds a cultural reservoir, but the managerial group is 'exclusionary' (only open to his watch managers) and 'exclusive' in the way they share important information behind closed doors. This perpetuates a 'front' of work identity, which in the telling and re-telling of stories (either in a lecture or round the mess table) becomes a resource from which all firefighters draw on and gain dividends. These occasions provide a stage to enact and perform the art of storytelling and the context provides the means to strengthen male bonds (Bird 1986).

George stresses that key to being a successful station manager and managing watch managers properly is 'great communication' (albeit whilst raising his voice and often talking over me in discussion). Reflecting on his own experience of being a watch manager, George asserts that his station manager 'didn't suffer fools gladly, but if you went to him and said I got this problem he would support you 100%'. Remembering those days, George learnt keeping problems to himself often tended to make matters worse and was encouraged by his station manager to share his managerial problems. Providing an example, George says he would go to his station manager, and say:

> Guv got this … y'know really like the guy but … y'know … he is really pushing the limits for me now and I'm a bit unsure what to do.

The station manager would advise George how to deal with the problem firefighter or watch, and then accompany him to observe and afterwards give an appraisal of how he handled it. These types of relationships are indicative of a paternalistic management culture (Hearn and Collinson 1998) and an example of how one generation fits in with the next. This ritual practice has influenced the way George manages his watch managers, stating 'when I got to that role, I realised that is exactly what I have got to do'. So George becomes part of a socially produced practice and explains that for the watch managers 'it

is massive knowing that they can talk to me - knowing that I will support them and back them up is also massive'. George also maintains that they know he will tell them 'when they are in the wrong'. Interestingly, the protocol as George puts it 'not to correct in front of the troops', would be followed up with a private chat between himself and the watch manager. Offering an example, George says:

> Whoa … you're totally wrong, you can't do that … so you need to now find a way to get them back on side because what you have done there, is like, completely wrong.

Whilst I stress this is an example of managing at the station and not the fire ground, nonetheless, there are two points to highlight. First, George's management practice becomes based around availability where advice and support is given under the gaze of discipline and correction, not through graphs and figures, but through human observation (informally practiced). This cultivates a type of cultural managerial practice and in this example; the influence of the role model appears as crucial to the making of a managerial identity and in honing a form of managerial masculinity. Secondly, George implies that getting on the wrong side of firefighters has far-reaching implications of possible long-term modes of resistance. Equally, asserting power and correction in the wrong manner is thought to be counter-productive and the skill of exerting authority 'in the right way' becomes crucial to the watch manager role. George argues:

> There is a time to be authoritarian and there is a time to let other people maybe have a go ... fire ground - you tell them what you want and when you want it and where you want it, and it is as simple as that.

However, he stresses that nine times out of ten, fire ground management is authoritarian, arguing:

> Certain areas of the watch manager's role is authoritarian ... discipline, erm, when you're out doing drills when you're in charge you have got to lead.

Contrasting George's blend of masculine authoritarian and open-door management approach, Anthony, a station manager of twelve years, carries less of a militaristic style of persona in his station management role. Anthony describes his job as 'multifaceted, bit of HR, bit of operations, and bit of training, basically plate spinning'. In terms of managing watch managers, Anthony suggests he 'allocates the watch managers tasks and leads them'. The attraction towards his role is the element of unpredictability, albeit set in the context of semi-routine 'filling in forms and checking things, authorising things, doing the admin stuff and a lot of the other stuff is, erm, as it comes in really'. Anthony adopts a 'people-centred' approach to managing, preferring 'interaction', particularly in relation to developing newer watch managers and crew managers, which he views central to his role function. Anthony's biggest challenge in role is time-management, remarking 'it's very difficult to please everyone', portraying a sense of a constant push and pull in different directions. However, what emerges as most important and challenging in Anthony's work is not controlling the operational (as it is hardly mentioned), but controlling or managing human agency within the watch. In a parental type attitude, Anthony explains:

> They [firefighters] get bored and they'll test the limits and they test the boundaries, much like children I suppose ... erm, but those talents … it is difficult to utilise people's imagination, creativity and talent in this environment.

Indicating that there is little scope to harness the multiple talents of watch members and little room for agency to manoeuvre within their role, whilst plates continue to spin and many aspects are to be managed simultaneously - the bottom line is achieving success. Whilst Anthony views watch manager's roles as 'challenging', he acknowledges that he needs a lot of skills to manage firefighters - his success becomes dependent on watch managers doing their job. He says:

> Someone who makes my figures stay green, who makes my reports all nice and happy, so I am seen to be doing a good job, I think, erm, that the fire brigade don't want 'mavericks' they want policy followers and rule followers.

When operationalising his authority, Anthony prefers to be democratic but suggests it depends on the situation at hand where sometimes he has to be 'quite forceful, autocratic,

quite bangy and pointy'. In addition, he particularly encourages a collaborative approach between his watch managers, and watch managers with their firefighters. During training sessions, he encourages watch managers to 'encourage a buy in' from the watch, through encouraging firefighters to take some of the responsibility in training the group to deliver certain subjects to incite the resistant members in the watch to be bought in 'covertly'.

Within the male-dominated environment, Anthony argues that various sub-groups form in the watch with members invariably gravitating towards people who share the same values and interests (for example ex-service men, football, fitness). However, Anthony also views tensions occurring because of the limitations of the firefighter's role for talented people, 'because basically they are paid to sit on the back of a fire engine like a sack of spuds, that's their job'. In spite of a desire to develop these firefighters, he argues 'often you've got a kinda malaise that sets in, and a culture whereby - I'm paid to do this, this is what I'll do'. This carries the inference that on occasions, workers define their limits as to how far they are willing to comply with organisational authority, and that they will test the limits of those (managers and masculinities) that manage them. At the same time, these cultural behaviours closely resonate with what Taylor (1911) refers to as 'soldiering' or more specifically a 'jobs worth' attitude. Anthony argues that part of the reason why 'goodwill' (at the station) is at an all-time low, stem from the on-going friction between union members and employers over cuts, and disagreements over terms and conditions of employment, fuelling industrial action.

Anthony views 'differences' between self and others to emerge from his ability 'to see the bigger picture' be 'a blue-sky thinker', and possess values that centre on positivity (unlike firefighters). To challenge negative firefighters, who he deems to be 'the 'darker thinkers', he adopts the following approach:

> Well, look, just think about what it is you do ... think about what you might be asked to do ... and that the worse time in someone's life you'll be there to make it better for them ... and that's what it's all about. It's not about the taking this and taking that, or what you get - think about what it means.

Within this conversational dialogue, there is a strategic attempt to refocus attention towards 'what really matters' about being a firefighter (as he sees it as a manager), as a point of moral obligation to keep customer focus to the fore. In some ways, Anthony centres self on modern approaches to work, encouraging a more outward-focusing attitude in those he manages. Equally, these types of observations provide the means to create a sense of moral distance. This distancing technique also surfaces in relation to the types of work Anthony undertakes, arguing for the 'the policy-driven stuff' to become 'tedious and extreme'. Feeling that most FRS workers are disempowered, and unlikely to be in a position to 'effect any real policy change', he conveys his preference for concentrating on areas where he can make a difference: managing agency and the human side of organisational life. Whilst separations occur on various sites, affiliations are firmly fixed towards his 'Guvnor' (the group manager), when he says:

> My boss, he manages on personality, so he's very ... er ... he, erm, I suppose much like me, very keen on the people: "Let's get the people right and the rest will follow". So I share that voice I think, so those are the easy things. Sometimes, again like me, we are not the greatest at detail or … er ... systems, so we'll probably struggle through some of the systems together.

Anthony makes a connection between himself with his group manager who he sees as having a charismatic personality, outlining ways they hold similar views, values and attitudes to managing watch managers and watches. Interestingly, this appears to operate in a similar way to the role model connections outlined in the previous chapter. Though acknowledging a sense of detachment towards the 'fire brigade in general', in particular 'the entity that is HR, policy makers', it seems that whilst one plate spins - appeasing bureaucratic systems through keeping figures green and going through the motions of operationalising policy - another spins that embodies anti-bureaucratic sentiments infused with a moral tone of what is 'wrong and right'.

During the discussion, Anthony takes a very defensive position when being asked about the problems of integration and retention of women and ethnic minorities. In a shielding manner to any suggestion of FRS resilience, Anthony argues 'the integration of women

and minorities are second-to-none in the fire service'. He validates his remark by suggesting 'figures' would testify a different story to any suggestion otherwise. Whilst acknowledging they have 'all heard stories about bullying and harassment', he says 'I don't tend to believe that'. Neither does Anthony believe the fire service had a 'particularly racist culture' but concedes that there 'might be a bit of misogyny'. He says 'I think that people are people and I think you are going to get arguments everywhere'. Anthony projects problems 'outside' to the ills of wider society, rather than accepting or owning them as a FRS problem. When these issues surfaced the atmosphere changed dramatically and the 'elephant' in the room (equality issues) that always silently lurks took on an overbearing presence. Moving the discussion on, Anthony explains why problems occur and blames 'very zealous policies towards certain groups rather than the people themselves'. More to the point, he argues:

> People are not being themselves because they're afraid of what could happen and if they are themselves, so they are not going to be an integrated member of the watch.

As such, Anthony goes further to suggest 'firefighters have possibly gone the other way, they're not being themselves for fear of reprisal', and states:

> We are losing a little bit of the human in people, because they are terrified of causing offense or using a phrase that they would use in everyday life.

Whilst these attitudes carry the notion that 'men have lost their voice' which 'stops them being themselves', what is more to the point is that Anthony firmly places blame onto over-zealous policies. Consequently, because of fear of disproportionate reprisals, he suggests firefighters feel 'muted'. These sentiments reflect Bly's (1990) notion of the predicament of the New Man in the 1970s, when (as Bly saw it) men had lost their Zeus energy. The notion that firefighters have become muted, which somehow constrains their identity, then paints a picture mirroring feminist arguments about patriarchy (Walby 1990). Anthony's narrative contains an indirect message in relation to a perceived reversal of power, coupled with what he sees as over-zealous policy that over time has bred resentment. These sentiments resonate with the resentment felt twenty-seven years ago

when EO policies were introduced into the LFB (see Salaman 1986). Potentially, what this type of sentiment has the power to do is become a fire service 'echo' that creates behaviours and attitudes that permeates their cultural belief system before events have happened, irrespective of differing experiences of watch members. As myth has it, Echo cannot think for herself, she can only repeat what she hears. However, what this station manager chooses to hear appears to be very selective, as, although he concedes to hearing horror stories about bullying and harassment, he has chosen not to internalise them as a truth thus preserving the integrity of the FRS, and distancing the organisation and self from taking responsibility or owning the problem.

Whilst these tensions occur, Anthony also demonstrates a type of distancing from his role in the way he reduces the benefit of his role to 'it pays the mortgage'. These sentiments may also contain an application of a certain type of taint management (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999) through distancing 'self' from what firefighters have traditionally viewed as morally stigmatised parts of the job (bureaucracy and operationalising policy directive from senior management) (Paton, 2003). This becomes important because whilst the station manager argues that the skills needed to manage firefighters include a need to carry authority; be imaginative; possess empathy and be thick-skinned, he also highlights the need to possess a certain amount of self-credibility. Drawing parallels from Tracy and Scott's (2006) work, similar links can be made in the way correctional officers (COs) use the taint management strategy of 'refocusing'. In this context, COs argue to do their job purely 'for the money' and take the view they are only one part of the system (simply following the rules and just doing their job). By distinguishing between their work of carrying out policies and procedures, as different from the work of 'constructing' them, the COs were able to distance themselves from certain features of their work thereby neutralising particular aspects, which carry moral stigma. Though Anthony creates distance from bureaucracy, policy and moral dictates of the job, by comparison George (the previous SM) talks more in terms of how he works at keeping a balance of distance and interaction in relation to those he manages.

Aside from managing firefighters on station, for those station managers carrying out their role away from the station these types of concerns or skills do not become so central to

their present work identity. For example Robin (Metro) works off station at HQ and is primarily involved with policy and corporate sustainability, but at the same time he is also required to attend fire calls as and when needed in his station manager capacity. For Robin, who has recently been promoted to station manager, the lack of proximity to firefighters is a defining feature of his job, and although conceding 'the hardest part of this job of being at station level is managing people', he goes on to argue for the merits and impact of his office-based job. Robin suggests that in his experience of being a watch manager on station allows him to be involved with issues he like dealing with, for example, 'developing people' and, in this situ, views his role to make 'a bit of change'. However, in his present office based role, Robin argues the large-scale effect of the work that he does provides input on national policies and risk assessments, and this allows him to become 'a big influence of change'.

For these Metro station managers, there are a number of reoccurring similarities whether it be in personal capacity as seen in Anthony's 'blue sky thinking' and 'being able to see the bigger picture', or George's attempts to make the watch managers understand the differences they can make through community initiatives outside the station. Robin's work quite clearly takes him further afield than the parameters of the community, enabling him to contribute to policy on a national level with other FRSs. For George and Anthony, being on station and managing the day-to-day while both declare adhering to the system, they also evidence the need to be people-focused, whereby managing 'agency' becomes of paramount importance. These two station managers draw on refocusing techniques to produce a specific attitude of mind in their workers, and one that borders on emotional labour techniques, albeit bound within the constraints of a particular type of masculinity. George and Anthony seek to make changes in patterns of thinking from their staff, whereas Robin, being away from the station, is at liberty to construct and influence change at a policy level.

Castle Station Managers - From the 'paternalistic father' to the 'new man'

In Castle FRS the station manager's job takes on a slightly different format as they have various duty shifts to manage. For example, Ervine (Castle) manages a busy station with

multiple appliances, which he suggests 'attracts a particular type of person' as remuneration is no better elsewhere working a shift. Ervine describes his job as being split into three parts, including the day-to-day managerial role where he looks after three fire stations (one wholetime and two retained), as a first attendance officer[24], and separate duties of a fire investigation officer[25]. When asked about the aspects of the job he did not like, Ervine began to talk generally around his responsibility to make sure watch managers are managing 'appropriately' - suggesting 'it can get quite nasty, y'know, in terms of what you have to ultimately threaten them with'. Ervine also makes reference to the ways backlash occurs, which purposefully attempts to 'taint' managers' reputations. Ervine views these 'Chinese whispers' as a part of the fabric of the 'cultural activity of the fire service', arguing 'it doesn't take long for things to travel round'.

Gossip is an informal, interpersonal communication in organisations, and his example shows ways informal power operates to resist management through separating and defining in-groups from out-groups with 'gossip' privy to only those trusted to receive it. This informal process acts as a way for workers to communicate 'emotions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes' that cannot formally be sanctioned or allowed (Michelson and Ryan, 2010: 3). What we are talking about here is an informal tool of power with the purposeful objective to affect harm, which may also work to inhibit agency, choices and behaviour of the recipient, making it harder to perform difficult functions without thinking twice about repercussions of taking action. If in his management capacity Ervine were colonised to the dictates of Weber's 'good bureaucrat', his emotional detachment would safeguard his human feelings to such matters. However, aligning to the characteristics of Salaman's (2005) 'new manager', Ervine still appears to be experiencing the fall-out from this experience. What becomes important to highlight is the way 'gossip' operationalises or 'reputations' tend to shape how work identities are viewed, and becomes an important 'control mechanism' within both FRSs. However, aside from these problems, Ervine enjoys the aspect of his work that allows him to ameliorate problems and in particular, the ways issues emerge with development folders:

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[24] Going out to fires and incidents (of certain categories) in his car.
[25] Investigating causes and origin of fires at incidents - not to manage the emergency.

Occasionally we would have someone that wasn't doing it, didn't understand and just having a real nightmare with it. I used to feel that I'd go out there and just put their minds at ease and be that link between the thing that is a nightmare for me, that is causing me problems, and getting them to a point where they understand it, and can start on it and can start moving forward. Y'know, sort of interpret the language, because there was always an issue and still is a little bit with the language that is used.

For Ervine, the means to accentuate a sense of empowerment in those struggling with development is a skill he likes to use, and one, which he finds 'very rewarding'. However, newer firefighters finding development difficult could also be viewed as counter-productive to the advancement of 'new thinking' and entrepreneurship, which are markers of developing and sustaining a new culture. Whilst Ervine's actions are based in his desire to show both kindness and share skills, at the same time throws into question other possible analyses. First, this type of interaction bears a remarkable resemblance to the characteristics of a paternalistic management culture (see also George and Anthony), central to which, Collinson and Hearn (2005) argue is the way management power appears to manoeuvre in a way to benefit and protect employees. This works to enhance the subordinates' mode of self-interest, which promotes chances of success and belief in the system. However, this also operates to colonise workers into new ways of thinking and approaching future development tasks, simultaneously encouraging interdependence of hierarchical relations fostering 'fatherly rule'[26].

Paternalism operates under the premise of 'equality for the purpose of securing instrumental gain' (Kerfoot and Knights 1993: 70). This works in the longer term to break down resistance, reinforce compliance, and build trust. At the same time, is also a homosocial practice where, rather than old skills being passed down, new skills are being introduced and passed on. Collectively, through paternalism, colonisation and homosociality, skills that embody workplace identities become subject to change and a new process of replication. In order to assess the weight of these theoretical positions, if we look more closely at the way Ervine frames his argument, we notice that whilst

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[26] Collinson and Hearn cite this as being one who is authoritative, benevolent; wise, and possess self-discipline (p.12).

defining 'their' problems as 'a nightmare', these difficulties emerge not just in relation to the worker, but also present themselves as such to him as 'the' station manager. In this sense, their success is a necessary means to his success and symbolic of his commitment to the new progressive practices. Reflecting back on these situations, Ervine maintains that:

> Even now, to talk to someone about an issue, er, even if it wasn't specifically related to development folder, I find it quite empowering personally to go out and really put someone's mind at ease ... almost … not touching on counselling, but similar.

Although viewing this type of interaction as 'close to counselling', what Ervine is actually performing is emotional labour, producing an altered state of mind and feeling in the worker. Managing workers' emotions (either personal or work related) appears as central to the work that these station managers do. In effect, this less transparent side of work becomes reformulated, adjusted and re-presented to inherently masculinise what has widely been thought of as a feminised skill (Roper 1999), the existence of which appears under-theorised in male-dominated workplaces.

In a similar way to George and Anthony (WMs Metro), Ervine also seems to wrestle with reconciling aspects of system and agency. For example, he says:

> If someone comes in and sort of says, oh, y'know, they have a problem because the system has said they have got to do this and do that, whatever … it's my job to make sure that they stick to that. But I don't see it as my job to make them stick to that system or do that in a certain way without considering their issues and problems y'know, so I try and put a level around it.

Tensions between the system/agency dichotomies are further elaborated later on, with Ervine declaring:

If someone gives me an issue to deal with I will take that on board, I won't just go "oh yeah that's really bad" and when they walk out I just forget about it, like they are just another number. I couldn't ever be like that, but ultimately my job is to make sure that the system is adhered to.

What emerges is a sense that Ervine has to think innovatively around the dictates of the system to be fair to both organisation and worker. Seemingly to operate in what Gouldner (1954) determines as a punishment-centred bureaucracy, Ervine sees problematic the inability of the system to accommodate the human element, thus rendering it under certain circumstances, inefficient and ineffective when taking into account the bigger picture and quality of outcome.

With regard to discipline matters, Ervine avoids being a 'shouty manager' and prefers to respond in what he describes as 'an overly assertive approach', which he believes to produce better results, allowing him to manoeuvre in his position 'as stress-free as possible'. The basis for adopting this approach emerges via his first-hand observations of other managers 'that just walk round, shout and scream', which seems to have little effect on firefighters. Ervine says to adopt this particular style would put him in 'a dark place' and in preference finds:

By acting naturally when I do get a bit angry over something it normally gets a better reaction because someone thinks: "Oh god what's upset him?" as opposed to just the same, y'know, roar, roar every time.

Ervine's managerial pursuit to remain cool under pressure (which is an extension of the feeling rules on the fire ground) offers an opportunity to show strength of personality and perform his managerial duty whilst sensitising firefighters to his mood. Weighing up his options, shouting would be to the detriment of displaying self-control and against his own self-interest. However, depending on the way firefighters interpret this response, some may believe this to be a sign of limited control and weakness. I argue that cultural frames

also carry moral markers of masculinity (the right and wrong way to prove masculinity) and depending on the variances within cultural norms, managerial responses become open to differing interpretations.

Ervine has recently been working on a desk-based project that 'if all goes well would feel like success, and intervened off my own back and changed something, bettered something'. Identity-enabling properties appear to centre on being committed to change and in the pursuit of types of efficiencies. Whilst Anthony (Metro) has little faith in 'single-handedly being able to effect change through policy', Ervine is of the opposite opinion, to the extent that he sees the fruition of such preoccupations as crucial to affirming a positive sense of self in carving out a work identity through worthwhile ventures.

Whilst describing his affiliations to rest with 'certain individuals as station managers and group managers', he overtly differentiates himself from firefighters. This he partially accounts for, because of the time that has elapsed since being a member of the watch but argues he 'couldn't go back on a watch', and would be 'a complete and utter misfit'. Explaining further, he says:

> I don't have the same drivers - the same things that I think ... I mean, I'm sure we would share things, y'know, go out to incidents; we know why we are there and what we would like to achieve. But y'know, when someone says about, y'know, we need to save some money … I think about what I can do to save money, not, oh, who cares?

The crucial point to take on board here is that managerialist thinking has had to become embedded in Ervine's work identity to such an extent that it becomes impossible to imagine himself to operate in any other way. Appearing to be colonised to dominant discourses of management thinking, Ervine through his own volition argues 'I don't think I feel affiliated to the watches anymore or associate with the watches, or have their same beliefs'.

Some of the new ways of responding to emergencies in the quest to realise newer forms of efficiency have emerged within the FRS landscape. Similar to Ervine, Nick started his career in a large city FRS and transferred over to Castle. His role as station manager takes him away from the confines of the station being in charge of a new initiative towards first response. His responsibilities include: managing one retained station and two separate wholetime watch managers who perform specialist duties. These watch managers operate as separate entities - they do not manage watches but perform roles within the remit of community initiatives. Previously, Nick has managed watch managers in the traditional sense 'on station', and additionally had the added responsibility of managing two retained stations. Similar to Anthony (Metro), Nick views the hardest part of his job to be managing an excessive workload combined with 'the ever-changing nature of the role' where, as he sees it, the organisation 'feel they can just move you around from pillar to post'. As a consequence, he relays the difficulties this poses in his ability to 'get to grips with a particular role and do it well' and 'for any amount of time building relationships'.

Despite these challenges, Nick argues the work he does 'defines *me* as a person' but 'it is not necessarily everybody'. Further substantiating the way he sees links between identity and work, he shares his observations towards the effects of firefighters short-term separation from work as a consequence of suspension from duty (unable to make contact with fellow workers). In some cases, Nick suggests this to have caused distress with them 'almost to the point of committing suicide' being 'cut off from that network of people and friends and what defines them as a person'. Elaborating further explains 'yesterday that worker was a community firefighter who was looked up to and held in high esteem and 'now - today you are nothing'. Secondly, Nick alludes to long-term separations from work, suggesting that those who retire 'can't really walk away from the job' and tend do voluntary work in uniform:

> They have a belief about what being a firefighter is and I think over a period of time they begin to believe that that is what they are. They don't … they forget that they are an individual in their own right and they become the thing that is a firefighter for them.

These contextual insights indicate a sense of loss and connectedness with society as the firefighters appear adrift from their normal surroundings, much akin to what Durkheim (1957) would describe as anomie. Whilst Nick makes this point about the ties between identity and work as a self-defining feature, which goes beyond work/life balance, he has previously described ways he differentiates himself *inside* the organisation with other firefighters standing-apart from mainstream culture (see chapter three).

Roland (Castle), approaching the latter end of a FRS career, works two management identities: as a wholetime station manager and as a watch manager on a retained station (outside of wholetime duty hours). As a station manager, Roland has various responsibilities that he describes as 'generally I'm sort of covering for people who are moving on in other jobs', and views to have more autonomy than firefighters in his job because the role allows for being at home on the weekend (when not on duty). Similar to Robin (Metro), Roland has also worked on developing policy and contributing to the updating of Castle's IRMP, stressing his job as a station manager to be 'purely sort of office based'. Roland differentiates firefighters from more senior managers, viewing them to be less under pressure than the group and area managers are. Adopting a sympathetic attitude to middle and senior managers, observes them to be 'just snowed under with stuff' and although conceding staff levels to have been reduced, points out that the workload remains the same with tighter controls to be grafted into the everyday. Roland argues:

> The government want to cut down paperwork but they keep giving you things to do that generate paperwork, y'know. So how ... I mean … I don't know how they can claim that they are doing it because they are not ... there are certain elements as well, paperwork generates itself.

These sentiments are reflective of Du Gay's (2000) and Salaman's (2005) critique of new managerialism, which in spite of espousing to break free from the shackles of bureaucracy (and red tape), in reality, evidencing outcomes implicitly demands the minutiae of quantification and the generating of a paper trail. These new insights, which potentially link with the diminishing ability for managers to exercise power and control over work,

are important to build upon in the developing chapters. Whilst the station manager's success is organisationally evidenced via outcomes and meeting targets, we now move forward to gain the station managers' top-down view in respect of how watch managers are thought to differ from each other, and types of power tensions that sit within the confines of the watch.

Constructing Watch Managers through 'Difference'

On a collective level all the station managers interviewed indicate certain amounts of internal strife between watch managers. For example, Roland (Castle) differentiates watch managers from each other by arguing 'I noticed years ago that you could split people into two camps, y'know, happy where they are or going forward'. Whereas Anthony specifically sees it as a core part of his job to 'make sure any bickering has a lid put on it quite quickly and encourage that collaborative approach'. Equally, Anthony sees differences in ways his watch managers choose to legitimate their authority by suggesting three of his watch managers to adopt a collaborative leadership style and one 'a bit more old school and possibly a bit more authoritarian which seems to work for him'. Further elaborating, Anthony suggests:

> I'm not sure it's a conscious decision to be collaborative; I think it's just the way things are. I don't think they've got the confidence to necessarily adopt an authoritarian approach.

This resonates with Strangleman's (2004) findings that in the railways you 'ask' old ones and 'tell' new ones. Anthony argues of the need to adapt his approach when managing his watch managers - according to needs, strengths and weaknesses. He argues that a part of his job is to 'identify those strengths and weaknesses, and work with the strengths and develop the weaknesses, simple as that'. However, watch managers are also differentiated via other means, as Anthony also explains 'one is temporary, one leaving, one new and one who is very experienced'. Anthony adds 'they've all got different levels of ability which has to be taken into account'[27]. Overall, these station managers (over both FRSs) show little variation (if at all) when describing how their watch managers differed from

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[27] These variances take on a similar pattern across both FRSs, and alerts attention to the possible difficulties of having to adapt to meet the needs of such a disparate group of managers.

each other. However, Ervine raises an additional observation that watch managers' attitudes to work tend to vary. In these respects Ervine compares 'one particularly operationally focused [watch manager], who needs no checking up on - but does need to be reminded of the other softer side of the management', with another, who is 'very hands on', who 'if he thinks his boys have been a bit busy he will do it himself'. By contrast the new (temporary) watch manager appears as 'chomping at the bit for promotion and super, super keen', with another substantive watch manager to be 'super keen and very professional ... just never have cause to pull him up on much'.

Those watch managers with time-in were also seen to differ from each other. For instance, Nick argues those about to retire have 'seen every possible management style come and go ten times', and accordingly suggests difficulties occur when 'you try and influence them *to be* anything different than what they are'. Then at the opposite end of the spectrum, he says that the newer watch managers 'need lots of support and guidance in terms of *how they manage their watch* and how they get them [FFs] to do the things they need to do'. What is important to take forward here is that for longer-serving watch managers, the focus appears to rest in terms of 'who they are', and yet the newer watch managers are spoken of in terms of 'what they do'. This highlights the difference between an established work identity and one in the making.

At what point a newly appointed watch manager becomes time-served is unclear; those who are looking for promotion are likely to remain compliant – those who are not interested may quickly become time-served (and in this role their next step *is retirement* and this could be a long way off). It must also be remembered that the newer watch managers are potentially still in development and need to appease the station manager, whilst also trying to gain a foothold in the management structure. By contrast, the 'long in the tooth' watch managers are potentially defending their established position. The longer-serving watch managers become the gatekeepers and moral guardians of established work practices whereas the newer watch managers may be seen as gate-openers who threaten the established power of the group on the watch. Whilst these station managers make no reference to newer watch managers resisting their instructions, there are indications that the longer serving watch managers are more likely to resist, as Nick further explains:

It's very much down to the personality of the watch manager ... their personality comes into it more and more. Some of them are obstructive … some are really self-motivated, so ... and depending upon how that individual is as a person, combined with what experience they have got in the fire service would dictate the way that you then have to deal with them as well.

Nick provides his watch managers with an outline of the work required and then tends to 'leave them to do it, rather than being very prescriptive about how they do it'. However, with some of the less experienced watch managers, Nick suggests a need to be more prescriptive in terms of how they do things to get the best out of their crews who may at times be resistant to change, or 'where you are introducing some new working practice or doing some things in a different way or measuring things'. Therefore, it seems that interruptions to traditional rhythms of work and organising differently are catalysts, which set the context for resistance to occur within the watch. The dislike of being 'measured' appears as inherently anti-NPM, the crux of which is committed to measuring outputs and efficiencies. Nick continues to make two important points. First, 'time-in' provides the means to wield informal power within the watch and he affirms:

Regardless of the watch manager there will be an informal leader within the group, and if that leader choses to throw their weight around … how as a watch manager you deal with that is *key* really to your ability to manage the watch.

Therefore, the ability to manage successfully is in Nick's appraisal to do with 'power', and quite how power and authority is ascribed, inhabits much of the focus of the next chapter. Linking with the theme of power the contrast between weak and strong watch managers is an issue that has been consistently elaborated on at every tier of the organisation (firefighters, senior managers, station managers and union reps) excepting at the watch manager level. The types of phenomena that undermine the watch manager's authority were primarily sourced from tensions arising between them and other personalities on the watch, who exert influence over the watch. Nick continues to explain how the peer group leader can be a disruptive force and undermine the watch manager's authority and ability to manage:

If you are undermined by somebody that has got a lot of time-in, that wants to be disruptive rather than working with you, that can be, er, really difficult because the watch will turn to them as their informal leader instead of you being their actual leader. But then that can happen just as easily with somebody that is young ... it's about ... I suppose it is down to that individual and whether or not they can carry the group[28].

Anthony (Metro) provides yet another example to illustrate these types of issues, and identifies the power of the peer group leader as the person with the ability to subvert managerial authority:

Well every watch has them and they are really the key to your watch manager's success or failure. I would teach my watch managers to work on that peer group leader and get them on your side because without them you are struggling … very few have taken on a watch and won.

Although peer group leaders operate informally within the watch, Anthony argues that when negative dynamics occur 'it is the watch manager's role to manage the informal group leader'. As such, Anthony indirectly avoids this situation as a potential challenge to *his* authority as station manager and firmly places responsibility on to his watch managers. Equally, George has also witnessed power struggles between the watch manager and members of the watch. Although arguing that on *his* station the watch managers 'run the watch', he then moves to suggest that this is not always the case on other stations where 'some of the firefighters run the watch'. When pressed further to ask how this happens, George says:

Manipulation ... yeah, there is a common theme with some firefighters: the louder I shout, the more right I am, and I'll tell about it. I've been to stations where I think: bloody hell, the bloke in charge has got no control over these people whatsoever.

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[28] Only on one occasion was this reversed in the collection of narratives where one senior officer described how in early career his ability to thoroughly understand policy meant when he was asked for an opinion by the other firefighters that in so doing (by default) usurped the longer-serving members (informal) authority. Eventually, firefighters tended to automatically defer to him and not the peer group leader. This caused problems of equilibrium on the watch and he was moved twice where on the last occasion was put in a watch with only long serving members.

Being a firefighter at the time of these experiences, George chose to remove himself from the situation. When asked how the problem used to be sorted out, he explains that senior management - 'the hierarchy' - would disband workers, thinking the problem to have gone away. In terms of this occurring in the present, George views firefighters to be 'far more savvy - if they push the boundaries they are going to lose their job in this day and age'. The issue of the watch manager vying for power and control is not restricted to George's account, but emerges as a theme of importance to the identity and role responsibility within narratives at all tiers of the organisation - excepting for watch managers' data. As to why this omission occurs at watch manager level remains a question paused for reflection, but with regard to 'why' peer group leaders emerge, it cannot easily be reduced to partisan power bases or dysfunctions of culture. However, offering insight, Nick (SM Castle), although bearing blatant hallmarks of a new manager and committed to culture change, makes the point that if groups of firefighters or groups within other institutions 'feel that they are being managed badly, then they are going to react to that'.

Summary and discussion

With the pursuit of cultural change in the FRS post (Bain 2002), these station managers echo the importance of the watch manager role and the significance of their station manager role, investing time in developing various facets of the watch manager's practice, in order to contain workforce resistance (either from watch management or firefighters). Equally, the continual and relentless need to evidence standards and new efficiencies appears as the driving force that encourages a particular interest in their watch managers. This reiterates the prominence of station managers' focus on the agentic capacity of workers they manage to effect their success, which although in institutional terms is evidenced via 'reports staying green and figures staying nice' (Anthony, Metro), ironically these would not easily occur with a workforce that was troublesome or resistant to management. Therefore, in order to effect workforce control 'efficiently', what emerges within the station manager's narratives is that there is a need to encourage a culture of co-option, rather than merely drawing on more formal means of coercion that the system permits (Crozier 1963). Whilst station managers argue to pass on a particular set of skills, which become more akin to a 'practiced art' (not easily gained via a module, e.g.

emotional labour), in so doing, the station manager invests time in cultivating human skills including the honing of gendered managerial identities that enable watch managers to manage the predominantly male-centric culture. As we shall see through the following chapters (focusing on WMs, CMs, FFs), this is not always an easy task, as firefighters are generally known to be apprehensive of change, and traditionally have not only resisted via union involvement, but also through their informal organisation on the watch.

However, whilst these station managers are all committed to effecting change, they do so with a range of different objectives. Being isolated from the watch both spatially and preoccupation with their own role requirements (discipline, policy, targets and community initiatives), they also draw on a different range of identity resources. Analysis indicates that the majority of station managers adopt various taint-management strategies (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999), either to neutralise the stigmatised aspects of their job or to manage meaning and realign positivity of focus, particularly towards the watch managers and crew managers they manage.

Emergent within this chapter are ways station managers either overtly describe the cracks in the system (e.g. Anthony Metro and Ervine Castle), or the implicit suggestion of such, of what Anthony terms 'the human element', to build in what the system cannot. Whilst a sense of duty operationalises through the narratives, the station managers appear at odds to either protect or infuse a sense of honour in the work they do in the search to authenticate 'self' (Hochschild 1983). The complexity of this further cascades to show a good deal of emotional labour being performed on a daily basis in an attempt to reconcile the balance between the system and human agency. For example, in order to carry out his role, Anthony invests a certain amount of emotional labour to submit to the prescriptive line of management when operating in formal situations, and 'about face' in a similar vein when dealing with firefighters and watch managers. What materialises is a state of what Selznick (1949) describes as tension between formal authority and social power. This is best illustrated in Anthony's (Metro) sentiments towards EO, which do not align with official policy (IRMP) but appear similar to previous attitudes (of resistance) in Salaman's (1986) research. Equally, George's (Metro) narrative highlights the precedence that the weighting of social power carries particularly drawing on a masculine fronted form of

emotional labour when interacting with watch managers in response to problematic issues they experience. However, what we need to grasp is that these skills are passed on homosocially, and work to support specific types of performances of managerial masculinity. They also provide the scope for charismatic dynamics to operationalise[29]. In effect, these social processes create the foundations on which informal authority is substantiated, working in conjunction with the formal power institutionally invested in role. This works synonymously to authenticate the carrying of authority, and at the same time as Collinson and Hearn (2005) theoretically describe: align with key component of paternalistic management cultures. All the station managers believe themselves in some way to be set apart through their powers of reason - from Nick's (Castle) ability to see reasoning behind culture change and equality, to Ervine (Castle) and George's (Metro) ability to see the bigger picture. These are not only measures of valued skills, they are also markers of specific types of management masculinities and denote 'difference', which sets them apart from those they manage, accommodating a reformulation of the gender order they were once subject to in the watch.

The station managers collectively acknowledge that outside of the formal management structure in the watch (crew and watch managers) the influence of informal politicking of power occurs where certain personalities wield control over other watch members. The significance of peer group leaders as a social construct of power becomes an important focus to follow through, especially if they work to oppose and undermine the authority of the watch manager. Nick (Castle) goes as far to argue that peer group leaders are the key to a watch managers' success or failure. Adding to this, the station manager's narratives highlight that whilst the station manager may guide and advise the watch manager, the station manager appears to have little direct influence on the day-to-day actions of the firefighters and, ultimately, places managerial responsibility (and, ironically, the crux of people management) firmly on the watch managers' shoulders.

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[29] According to Klein and House (1995), charisma is a fire that ignites followers' energy, commitment and performance. Charisma resides not in a leader, nor in a follower, but in the relationship between a leader who has charismatic qualities and a follower who is open to charisma, within a charisma-conducive environment.

Chapter Seven

'Watch Managers at the Helm'

'Tensions of Power'

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how watch managers' managerial identities surface in the day-to-day of interaction and types of resources drawn upon to manage. What becomes central to focus on are ways shifting forms of identity have occurred in the face of change and modernisation. Analysis thus far, has shown ways the process of change has differentially been understood within the FRS hierarchy, and how watch managers in early career either identify or disconnect with particular role models and experiences of navigating promotional systems. As the previous chapter has provided an overview of the station manager role, and how this connects to management of watch managers, what becomes important to take forward are two particular themes - the ways watch managers think about and manage change, and how authority and control are operationalised (either sanctioned or challenged by the watch). This leaves unexplored territory thus far to include focus on the ways the remaking of identity occurs towards the shaping of a managerial identity, and how 'performances of self' and managerial practices shape identity outcomes.

This chapter first takes a broad overview of the ways that change and NPM initiatives impact on the day-to-day of work and how transitions of change reverberate differentially between Metro and Castle. This then unfolds to illustrate the ways watch managers' managerial identities become apparent in varying continuums from 'idealised tradition' to more 'contemporary managerialist' forms of managership feature across both brigades. This is guided by ways watch managers cluster similarly as to disassociate or identify with change. To do this we have four parts to the chapter. The first section shows ways affiliations to traditional values secure a particular form of work identity. This leads to the second section showing examples of managerial identities that neither fit with the

organisation, nor the watch comfortably and why this might be so. The third section provides watch manager examples that either embrace or resentfully manage impending organisational change. The last section draws out watch managers' heirs, apparent as managerial forerunners of future. This ordering allows for managerial identities to emerge from those who seek to preserve traditional management styles, and those who assimilate either a hybrid identity or new management model in the face of fire service modernisation.

Watch Managers, NPM and the Organisation

This thesis has shown that from around 2001 a new focus emerged that challenged the traditional idea of the fire service as primarily a rescue service. This new focus centred on fire prevention and community engagement. More recently, budget squeezes and cuts have accompanied new ways of organising almost as another tool to accelerate change. What is emerging from this thesis is that whilst principal and senior managers make or communicate policy, it is the watch managers who largely become responsible for the hands-on implementation of policy and achieving the targets set by senior managers. In so doing, watch managers find themselves having to manage relationships with those pushing change above (management), as well as with those resisting below (firefighters). Therefore, watch managers' views on various new initiatives become vital to understanding senior management, watch manager and watch dynamics - a focus central to the following section.

All the operational watch managers in Metro were keen to stress the impact from the weight of having to hit differing types of 'targets' (for example, CFS, fire alarms and community engagements projects). The majority of watch managers were found to have 'issues' in relation to targets and PIs, ranging from views that thought 'there were too many of them', to other remarks declaring 'we have got a target for everything'. These measures of performance tended to emerge in relation to questions about 'pressures of the job' because the watch manager's role facilitates the 'doing' of firefighters' work to make targets happen. Other comments tended to highlight the idea that 'managers don't seem to understand we have to fight fires as well'. What becomes of interest here, in terms of the watch manager's role, is how NPM initiatives (targets and PIs), become differentially

viewed - either cast as aspects of their work they dislike, or as unwanted pressures to manage. More tradition-based watch managers who joined the fire service before Bain are vocal about their misgivings, whilst newly appointed watch managers who joined post Bain (although feeling similar pressures) assume a less vocal matter-of-fact approach.

Though these issues surface in Castle, watch managers appear to have internalised these as a given, and tended to focus on how they might operationalise their autonomy in planning how they reach the targets and objectives set by senior managers. Overall, Castle watch managers were less resistant and less resentful of the changing organisational landscape (excepting for rank to role - see chapter four). In part, this may be accounted for because these types of changes to working practice were not a part of their living fire service history; most began their career at the time of or post Bain (2002). However, for two watch managers in Castle (Niall, Frank) the computer took on a very unwelcome 'presence'. Detachment from the computer emerges from what it comes to represent - replacing human labour: a challenge to autonomy, personifying a new criteria of demands, control and surveillance, and often precipitated emotions of anger, disassociation and nuisance. Although this technology does not have a body *'per se'*, Niall views the computer as taking away the means for watch managers to use their managerial agency to organise for the particular training needs of his watch. Secondly (and in common with those in Metro), Niall views the computer system as a means for senior managers to run reports on watches and control *their* (watch managers') organisation of work (from afar), in the confines of their 'ivory tower' away from the station. Having provided a broad comparative overview of general patterns emerging from data towards organisational change, attention now turns to four separate sections showing how watch managers come to shape identity in relation to modernisation and change management initiatives. Each section provides case examples of the differential ways watch managers come to think about the job they do, affiliations and detachments they hold, and the ways managerial authority operationalises in the watch environment.

Tradition and the Managerial Identity

The charismatic authoritarian (John)

Similar to Gouldner's (1954) research, which found imposing bureaucratic control to the 'unconverted' and 'resistant' manager or workforce becomes difficult, this section begins with John's narrative (WM Metro), representative of a watch manager who tries to operate independent of change and the influence of modernisation. What becomes theoretically interesting, are the ways John's account makes visible how nostalgia (Gabriel 1993), charismatic authority (Weber 1964), and resistance, discursively engage that allows for the managerial identity to emerge. Previous introductions to John have shown him incipient as the watch manager preferring to be known by the rank title of 'station officer'. At the beginning of every workday John chooses to start two hours early (unpaid) to get the computer work out of the way, enabling him to 'get on with managing', be 'a hands on manager', and inhabit close proximity with his watch.

In terms of John's relationship with the wider organisation and political economic pressures on the FRS, he adopts a coping mechanism, which generates a type of distancing technique, placing space between himself and the external pressures of the organisation. Whilst on the one hand John acknowledges these pressures, on the other hand, when asked directly about 'change', he suggests at his level 'a lot of change has been for the better', though at the same time argues 'at my level I am not aware of government ever affecting … [his role]'. This cluster of remarks shows high levels of contradiction, but also becomes a means to understand how resilience to change management occurs where, for the most part; we see his strategy operating a type of resistance by distance (Collinson 1992, Collinson 2005). Unsurprisingly, John dislikes the aspect of his role to do with 'a lot of change' asserting 'change is not communicated well and probably not necessary'. John averts 'moaning' about change initiatives, and instead choses to 'crack on, quite happy', though this approach appears to work for him, at the same time appears to create as much distance as possible between self, senior officers and the wider organisation.

What is also striking in reviewing the transcript is John's lack of reference to 'community', particularly given that government created legislation to turn the FRS from being an inward focusing culture to a more outward focusing approach (HMG 2004).

More clues to John's 'distancing' practice emerge from his answers to questions about the relationship between his watch and other watches, in the way he views watch managers to represent their own watch, with each wanting 'their outfit to be the best'. Though explaining that rivalry and competition occur, John also says 'we are not fighting each other', and suggests high levels of solidarity and support occur between watches at the station. The most significant suggestion to indicate a high level of detachment from outside the walls of the station was his remark 'yeah, erm, I'd see it more that the station is an island, not the watches, yes, my view is that the station is an island'. John appears to operate within his role in terms of a sense of disconnect with the wider organisation.

The skills John felt needed were leadership, honesty, consistency, ability, understanding and enthusiasm. Though John concedes the need to maintain balance between management and the watch, he did not feel 'in the middle at all' and his understanding of success was defined in terms of 'doing my job well and not get into trouble'. However, of vital importance (and another sign of inward focusing values), was his answer to a question about the most important aspect of his job. John replied 'my watch … because all that matters in the fire brigade is my watch nothing else'. Equally, when asking how he views himself differently to firefighters, he replied 'I'm not … I am a firefighter'. This colonisation of 'self' with 'his' watch suggests there was no hierarchy (layers of authority) in the watch. John's identity may appear to revolve around being a firefighter (the firefighters are him and he is firefighters), yet contradicting this, his authority, status and the way he commands obedience sets him distinctly apart. John, still engaging with a personality of his old station officer (see p.101), emulates a learnt practice by placing emphasis on his 'own' systems to legitimatise his authority where he sees charisma (a personal skill where you either have it or do not) as a carrier of authority.

John does not see a difference between authority at the fire station and the fireground he argues the same rules apply over the two sites:

> I think traditionally… erm … people view two different types of management. People will tell you on the fire station that it's … erm … perhaps a little bit more consultative to management on the fire ground. I don't go out on the fire ground

and become a very demanding, autocratic. I don't change personality on the fireground, no … if they don't argue here; they are not going to argue out there. Some people, they find a bit more of discussion on issues when they want something done. We don't have that here.

John appears as an authoritarian manager but he uses his charisma to achieve this position. The reasons given for this type of management style is the search for 'authenticity', as it is important to John to be consistent all the time:

Yes it's me … I'm true to myself. It's me. Whatever I am, it's not a front or an act. I'm my own man. I've got no other way of explaining it. I was given some good advice by a senior officer once, and he told me (he was a very decent man) he said: "Don't worry about all the rules, do what you think is right instinctively".

In the first instance, John appears to draw from the power and authority invested in his 'rank', legitimised through the bureaucratic structure. However, if we analyse the narrative more closely we see evidence that John instead bases his management style through rules based on his own moral framework (Lamont 2000), and operates his watch as a traditional fire service masculine hierarchy. John does not rely on dealing with problems through formal authority involving disciplinary hearings as laid down by senior managers. Rather, he prefers to do face-to-face stuff, declaring 'most of us want to do our best but they are too heavy handed - there is no need for it'. Instead, he relies on informal (charismatic) authority in the day-to-day to deal with situations more appropriately. John resolves problems through ''aving a word and nipping it in the bud … yeah, a little walk round the yard and a little chat, and, erm, nine times out of ten, that's the end of it'. However, adding a warning tone to his voice, he adds that if the problem reoccurs 'again we have a proper chat about it'. John maintains 'you can only, y'know, try a nice decent approach that should work'. If this is not heeded, he adds 'someone is asking for more aren't they?'

John's relationships with more senior managers appear to manifest in an ad-hoc and, sometimes, contradictory manner. In the first instance, John separates senior managers,

arguing some are 'good' and 'some do not command respect and do not earn trust'. Therefore, it is no surprise when John suggests that he 'does not feel in the middle at all' between management and the watch (unlike many other watch managers). The enculturation of his own style of 'officer-ship' harmonises the watch to such an extent that his occupational identity projects and manifests in watch members. The deficit between FRS systems versus his own particular way of dealing with problems also emerges when asking about his experiences as a manager of problems with equal opportunities (equality). At this point, John redirected attention away from himself as someone who knows better, towards an appraisal of 'the hierarchy' (senior management), saying:

> Whenever something happens I always take the line: what about the parties involved? What's best for them? Sometimes the brigade gets rumour of the problems and it tries to deal with them in some ways that are not very good for the parties involved, which makes their problems worse.

John went on to explain how the system 'should' operate:

> When someone's got a problem … ask them how that they would like it resolved ... not promise y'know ... because sometimes they will have a good idea they can live with as well. Before everyone dives in, it is important that you listen to people's point of view - everyone.

It is at this point that the self-confessed autocrat 'mutates' to take a democratic point of view, where he places value on reaching a consensual agreement. Interestingly, John seems to distance himself from institutional systems and appears to operate within the boundaries of his own 'moral system' and his own way of doing things. This not only speaks into the way resistance surfaces within the everyday realities of managing, but also speaks into the very core of his identity, made telling through the grammar of evaluation he uses to determine what is morally right and wrong, and good and bad, based on learnt practice (Lamont 2000).

So when it comes to managing the watch outside of the operational, it appears that the decisions he makes centre on the type of person he believes he needs to be – the leader. John suggests of the need to possess 'a bit of self-belief', and ends by asserting 'obviously if your judgements are no good it will get you in a lot of trouble, but if you're a decent person and you do what's right, you're never be far...' John's relationship to the bureaucratic system appears to vacillate between a 'mock' and 'punishment-centred' bureaucracy, in which John separates himself from senior management through his approach to solving problems. John sees his managers' preference for a formal route 'to cover themselves' - a practice not necessarily providing the best outcomes.

After the interview, I was asked if I would like to join John and the watch around the mess table for tea and biscuits. Two issues of interest surfaced here. First, the way that John appeared as centre-pin around the mess table during the interplay of polite chat with the watch. I observed that the firefighters were acutely aware of his 'presence' throughout this time and routinely glanced in his direction when talking to me to look for assurance. John's demeanour and countenance appeared to send messages to the firefighters who, oftentimes, would finish their sentence by asking 'isn't that right, Guv?' This appeared to provide the opportunity for John to sanction the discussion or amend what was said. As I left the fire station and began my journey home, I could not help but feel this watch manager and the watch symbolised the direct antithesis of what their senior managers wanted or indeed thought was occurring.

Known by his watch as the 'station officer' or the 'Guvnor', John appears to have managed to sustain and defend the old values and moral premises on which his role model, 'the station officer', centred himself around. The collective memory of a bygone age becomes extended and taught (passed on) to the present cohort of firefighters in the watch through a traditional fire service model of an inward-facing hierarchy (Baigent 2001). Rather than John feeling a sense of 'loss' in relation to his nostalgic attachments (rooted in the past, as outlined in most theoretical explanations), John becomes the foci and the totem (Durkheim 1961) through which the past is carried into the present. This serves to create social cohesion and provides a sense of identity, not just for John, but also his watch.

In a Weberian sense, John not only legitimises his authority via bureaucratic authority vested in role (as tradition describes) and the sanctity of the past (traditional forms), but it is also highly influenced by the charismatic element. John's charismatic and somewhat cavalier leadership appears to operate (as far as possible) 'without getting into trouble' outside the boundaries of the contemporary 'norm'. Through his expressive personality, he imposes himself and his own 'idea' of 'how things are done around here' on the watch environment with self-belief, confidence and energy. The watch appear to accept his 'presentation of self' as authentic and share his definitions of the world where he reshapes or orders realities through the way his power is exercised over the group. Weber's charismatic leader, which has become central to the present discourse of 'leaderism' (O'Reilly, 2010) is not adopted by this watch manager to bring about change towards present political, and managerial 'visions' and 'missions'. Neither would it be, because John is the leader of eight firefighters and his charisma focuses inwards on them alone, to preserve and protect past values and attitudes (embodied in a previous archetype) to ensure the survival of this group, and the moral premise on which it is founded to be handed down to future heirs of the watch.

This practice allows John to observe and police compliance in respect of traditional station norms that he and those who went before him established over time. John lives under his own 'foucauldian gaze' to maintain a status quo that controls and operationalises to full effect what he is able to see at one time. This spatial saturation provides him with the means to constantly prove, maintain and defend his work identity, and gauge the impact of his 'force of personality', presenting opportunities to 'perform' and 'handle himself' in front of the watch.

The emotion manager (Dale)

By contrast, Dale (Metro) views himself to be an 'emotional manager' who 'likes working with people' and 'likes going out … looking after the community'. The less appealing aspects of his job revolve around 'paper and computer targets'. Dale views himself to be most attached to his watch and most detached from his station manager, who he casts as inhabiting as an 'isolated' role and 'neither wholly part of a watch and footmen of more senior management'. Dale's main issues of contestation (similar to Bob and Gary) relate to

the changes made to promotion systems and the new entry schemes (see chapter four). This group of watch managers share similarity of having longevity of time-in and view society and the nature of the job, people and organisational processes to have, as Dale puts it, 'changed massively and not for the better'. Although Dale concedes rules have always existed, he argues for procedures and policies to have multiplied that are 'drummed into us more now'. The extent to which 'figures' and 'reaching targets' assume a more important place than actual emergency work fosters strong resentment. Dale argues in terms of what senior management want 'it is how many smoke alarms I have done that is the most important one'. He asserts 'I can actually get told off for going on too many fires'. Furthermore, Dale suggests these issues have done much to fuel tensions, and divides between firefighters and senior management than has traditionally been the case. Other issues such as quicker routes for promotion (often viewed as jumping rank without longevity of operational experience) provide little time for would-be managers on their way up the hierarchy to establish ties with firefighters alongside the wide scale perceptions (particularly in Metro) that management 'promote people who are very party line'.

Dale's particular management style centres on knowing 'everyone is different' and claiming to wear twelve different management hats (to adapt to each firefighter). He argues 'you cannot treat everyone the same just because we are all under the same guidelines and policies'. However, whilst *this* type of diversity is accepted and moderations within management practice to accommodate 'difference' are applied, on the other hand, Dale feels annoyed at mantras of senior management, and says:

> We keep getting told we are diverse, diverse, we have got to be diverse because of the communities, but when we put our uniform on all of a sudden we are told we are all the same!

Dale believes the watch manager's role to be 'the hardest job' particularly when sent emails from 'the hierarchy' worded 'you will'. Irrespective of whether he agrees with 'stuff coming down' or not, Dale explains if he were to communicate the message as it was written to the watch 'they'd be dead against it'. In these instances, Dale reduces the

directive to only important points, which he then takes time to explain to the watch[30]. This becomes a very important part of the job, as Dale says 'if I was just to say here is the email, read it ... I'd have them up in arms'. Dale acts as a type of filter but he 'gets people to do stuff' through 'convincing them to do it rather than telling them to do it'. Although viewing himself to be a successful manager, Dale proposes this occurs through practicing a range of skills (interpersonal, listening and being a nice person). However, looking more closely at implicit support mechanisms within Dale's narrative, other more traditional criteria come into play such as longevity of service, operational competence, and the ability to engage with firefighters' reasoning through a hands-on approach.

This narrative brings to our attention not only management of 'tensions', but also the undocumented, informal understanding and softer skills that are actually required to perform at watch manager level. The ways that the mediation of space becomes used as a means to secure a definitive managerial identity cannot be understated. Whilst John reacts to change in one particular way (a disconnect from the wider organisation), Dale views his role in more mediatory terms as a filter (serving benefits to both watch and management). At the same time Gary (Metro) describes himself as 'the buffer', whereas Bob refers to the way he 'wins reasoned arguments'. The diverse ways these watch managers respond to change in organisation appears mediated via balancing measures of proximity, alongside managing tensions of distance to reach *their* daily objectives.

In the day-to-day of managing, Dale says 'if things need to be done I'll be the first one out there, and then they will turn round to me and say, "Guvnor you shouldn't be doing this". However, Dale reasons that this approach provides two-way dividends; on the one hand, being close enough to see what firefighters are doing, and on the other he declares that 'this is where the fun is'. This approach mediates and balances Dale's least favourable aspects of his job 'being stuck in front of the computer quite a lot', with one that he enjoys. From an analytic viewpoint, this also sustains a sense of connect with the firefighter self.

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[30] As does Bob, Niall, Gary

Interestingly, close proximity to the watch plays an important part in terms of group control and compliance (similar to John). Although Dale suggests to not be 'hands on' or describe himself as 'one of these autocrats or democrats', he believes himself to successfully combine watch integration and his managerial role into one. Particularly telling in terms of how he views his role, when asking about the leadership initiatives in Metro, Dale responds:

> What sort of leader am I? Am I a leader? I don't think I'm a leader. Am I manager? That's a new terminology in the fire service as well y'know - 'managing'. When we changed to manager [role play] – we're not managers y'know, we're officers, we're like ... but we do manage, and it's a big thing, massive thing, managing people.

Though the uncomfortable union between being a manager and leader appears unresolved, Dale sees value in both roles. This further adds to his identity dilemma. Furthermore, Dale sets himself apart from firefighters in terms of his decision-making, responsibility and being answerable to his line manager. However, Dale does not view this difference in terms of a move away from the traditional form, but rather as a marker of how the organisation has changed. Dale describes his style of authority as 'hands off', yet it clearly involves being 'hands on' when it comes to being as much a part of watch daily life as possible. Though on the one hand, appearing to maintain a close firefighter connection, Dale also differentiates work identity in the way he views firefighters to be disinterested in 'why we do stuff' (unlike him), and in how firefighters do not always understand that 'sometimes you have to change the way that you do stuff'. He asserts that 'firefighters just know we have to do it'. What becomes interesting about Dale is that instead of him viewing his managerial identity to be in any way colonised or affiliated to newer practices of management, he sees what he has to do (not what he is), down to the ways the FRS has changed as an organisation.

What John and Dale have in common is the way they have to draw from various resources to effect 'consent', in order to perform their role and invest in varying forms of what Hochschild (1983) describes emotional labour. They all also attend to the micro-politics of

potentially challenging situations to maintain the overall rhythm of work within the station environment. In effect, watch managers manage potential resistance within the watch when new ways of organising or new systems are put in place (such as targets). This cluster of watch managers (bar John who makes no reference to these issues) all share commonalities. For example, Dale previously argues of the need to 'convince the watch to do stuff'. Gary speaks of having to 'sell stuff to the watch', and Bob goes through the same process albeit wrapped up in a masculinised 'sparring match' where each segment of the 'order' from 'the hierarchy' is taken apart until there is little room for the resistant firefighter to manoeuvre. Although this sounds straightforward, it is not, because of the different types of personalities that vie off each other in the watch. In effect, it seems something of an arduous and complex task in need of a complicated skills set underpinned in each case through a range of performances of masculinity, all working to reach the same objectives - managing tensions and effecting control over the watch.

Square Pegs in Round Holes

The outsider hybrid managerial identity

This group provide an interesting cluster of watch managers (Sid and Ron), who for varying reasons find themselves detached from the watch and/or management. We begin with Sid (Castle) who is the only watch manager was unable to identify a role model worthy of mention (see chapter five) in his early fire service career. Though having previously managed a watch on station, Sid presently works in a community safety capacity (off station). He is a case example of a firefighter/manager who experiences an on-going struggle to 'fit-in' to the FRS. Difficulties for Sid began early on in career (joining from the military), often finding himself at the receiving end of firefighters' banter, chiding him for reading literature and his love of the arts, i.e. music, history, art history and philosophy. He sarcastically remarks 'obviously to do that, you are a girl'. Being very pragmatic in outlook (seeing different points of view and of the belief that you should respect people's decisions) appears to have done little to alleviate tensions between himself and other firefighters. Although conceding some good times during his career (in one particular watch), Sid finds himself increasingly uncomfortably placed in the FRS. Not only did certain firefighters present as difficult to manage (both men and women), but his negative experience has been further exasperated by the lack of support he received

from senior managers during problematic times at work. Sid describes his management style as 'trying to reason with people' to deflect challenges from resistant firefighters. However, unlike other watch manager accounts, this approach only worked 'sometimes' - often, success depended on 'how they (firefighters) work themselves and their personality'. Yet, in terms of watch dynamic and peer group leaders there was also very little to draw from that was spoken about. Though Sid makes no explicit references to targets and PIs as markers worthy of discussion, neither did he indicate them to be issues of contention. Unlike the majority of watch manager accounts, Sid believes all FRS employees have a right to their own opinions (for example, Sid understands why some firefighters choose not to strike), and it seems that being able to see the bigger picture from a multitude of perspectives has done little to forge bonds with either management or firefighters.

By contrast, Ron (Metro) provides a different perspective, unlike Sid who would like to be more affiliated with the firefighters, Ron harnesses separation as a tool to manage effectively. Believing of the need to be 'consistent, kind and definitely admit you were wrong openly', Ron also highlights the need to balance proximity with firefighters, and says 'you have got to have that fine line between being approachable but being just slightly set apart as well'. Ron criticises watch managers who become too close to their watch and though some make this dynamic work, Ron views this practice to pose problems, especially when the manager has to assert 'no that's not happening'. Ron argues this is a common task as station managers use watch managers to 'deliver stuff to the watch all the time' that is likely to be unpopular. Though conceding the watch 'do not always get the full picture', at the same time he takes the stance that 'it's my job to protect them [*the watch*] away from rubbish ideas', which 'cause me more issues'. In these respects, Ron finds himself having to manage firefighters to do activities he knows 'they have got no interest in'. Similar to Gouldner's findings it appears that the rules are sometimes used as a bartering tool in the same way that 'give and take' operationalises in other accounts; relaxing on one rule in order to deliver something that will not be popular in return for something else. Ron says:

Some of the things that they do ... obviously I don't want management to find out about … so you kind of like ... not a tight rope because that makes it sound really dramatic but it's just a bit of ... don't tell that person one thing - you know the watch aren't going to tell them ... and vice versa … isn't it?

Concerning the impact of NPM principles, Ron[31] highlights that apart from managing figures and hitting targets:

You've got pressures from the watch from certain projects that they don't want to do, and pressure from senior management pressuring you to do them, and your trying to jump around and sell bits to the watch.

Ron is also ex-military and manages a 'young' watch and he singles out one particular firefighter for 'his personality', 'his previous experience' [military], 'his personal style', and the way 'he has just got really good standards'. Given this list of attributes, Ron says 'I grab him or one of the others from the watch (who are similar) when needing assistance with something that might be problematic to implement'. Ron has a firefighter with time-in who he could turn to on these occasions, but is reticent to do so because in his estimation 'the problem would go over his head', and argues 'he just wouldn't take on board what I was saying'. Ron's preferred choice of firefighter revolves around similarities, for example, previous military experience (like him), and someone who would understand why there is value in having 'clean kit' and getting 'gear cleaned'. As in the wider day-to-day work, if these types of values are not routinely performed, then they are impressed and policed until they happen 'automatically', and 'until people pick up on it'. Ron implies you do not have to be liked to get 'respect' and 'get control'. Drawing on Locke's (2013) description of military institutions who organise to 'build a man' at the same time, these cultural practices build in an idealised form of masculinity that holds hegemonic power over others. These types of values create boundary markers that become core to institutional identity. Given these 'imported' identity markers it makes sense that frustrations and tensions surface between him and some firefighters. On the one hand, Ron says 'firefighters will tell you they are 'being professionals when they all run into burning

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[31] This resonates with Gary (WM, Metro, group one)

buildings and save people', yet on the other hand, he says 'they don't want to sweep the yard'. Whilst firefighters cannot see identity-building connections between the two, Ron and other firefighters 'like him' can see them and how they fit into the bigger scheme of things. Ron's role model is the military and through this he is able to feel secure in separation from firefighters, yet maintains affiliation to the wider establishment (excepting for promotional systems). However, in the day-to-day running of the watch Ron highlights the importance of maintaining a status quo and uses his presence at the mess table to intuitively pick up on any negative dynamics occurring between firefighters. Whilst small conflicts are left for them to sort out themselves, bigger issues that could affect productivity need to be managed. It seems as though for all the masculine bravado, being a watch manager is like being a mother and father all rolled into one[32], albeit under the guise of a paternalistic father.

Both of these watch managers share a sense of detachment from their respective fire services (albeit in differing ways for different reasons), but commonality surfaces in ways they become accepting of change. Tensions are more firmly placed towards issues with firefighters or managers, not systems. These two managers carry forward their military master status in such a way that it either becomes an asset (Ron) or poses a barrier (Sid) to their sense of belonging. Ron's narrative shows the ways he mediates a balance between detachment and separation from both watch and organisation. This is important as it allows him to form his sense of work identity in such a way that he appears to self-actualise through it (Maslow 1987). Interestingly, Ron was the only watch manager in this grouping that identified a role model (successful combination of FRS with military identity) in early FRS career. The co-structuring of Ron's work identity appears successfully integrated on two levels as the master status of military values co-aligns with the 'front' of his FRS managerial role. In this way, Ron is able to successfully combine the two so as not to deny 'self'. Ron draws from military values of his past to set boundaries of discipline and work standards for firefighters in the watch. At the same time, he is able to keep his military attachments alive in the present by drawing on people (as resources) to harness productivity and substantiate his sense of authority.

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[32] Mirroring James (watch manager, Metro, group four)

By contrast, there was very little to draw from in Sid's data about managing a group, seemingly to feel a sense of loss and detachment from firefighters. Despite some omissions (due to its personal nature and toxic affect that would identify him), Sid was unable to convey much sense of success in terms of managing and relations with the watch. For Sid, negative experiences seemed to overshadow the positive. Whereas for Ron, differences occur in the way he attends to detail of the dynamic between himself and firefighters, in this sense resonates with Stonequist's (1935) marginal man. Though Sid appears to occupy a similar position, he does so for a different reason - due to his sense of detachment and ill fit with both management and firefighters and vice versa. Interestingly, both watch managers appear to work in a punishment-centred/consensual relationship with their FRS, and this appears similarly about face in terms of the watches to these managers. The charismatic appeal surfaces 'backstage' in Ron's narrative in his description of the peer group leader (firefighter of his choice) whose 'personality', 'previous experience', 'personal style' and the way he values military standards, presumably becomes part of, not only a homosocial practice, but also an extension (or magnification) of his own work identity and sense of self[33]. The 'set-apart' firefighter is likely to be a future heir to Ron's role, due to his perception that he has what it takes to be a manager (because he is like him). It is on these sites that we potentially see the watch manager/firefighter role model cycle becoming subject to replication.

Managerial Identities Shaped by the Cutting Edge of Change

The manager of a watch co-operative (Baz)

The watch managers in this section provide differing examples of how cuts or modernisation has affected their managerial role and sense of work identity. We begin with Baz (Metro), who at the time of the research is at the cutting edge of organisational change, with his station earmarked for closure. Baz, therefore, finds himself managing a situation where his firefighters will scatter across the city to new station postings. These changes (in the face of budget cuts) inadvertently work to break cultural and emotional bonds that have been many years in their forming. Being posted away from an environment, where a sense of belonging and sense of shared history has built up over time, is not a position any firefighter welcomes. Therefore, this snowball in the

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[33] Similar to John (WM, Metro)

'happening' gaining momentum day by day is likely to maintain a deeply emotional edge akin to trauma (Gander 2014). Baz, being 'saddened' by the present direction of the fire service, became vocal and passionate about his misgivings in relation to the impact of budget cuts on staff and the community he serves. Taking the view that 'the FRS is currently in danger of creating a service that is nowhere as good as is it now', Baz draws parallels with the Ambulance Service of the 1990s, which was understaffed and under-resourced.

Baz views his role and the work he does as 'important' and representative of one cog in the machine supported by other tiers, which, in combination, produces the hierarchy that makes emergency operations 'happen' successfully. Central to his responsibilities of role is managing the face of the FRS in the community, making sure interaction occurs in a 'professional' and 'responsible' manner to gain best outcomes. Whilst Baz enjoys the pressures of his role, making decisions on the fire ground for 'the safety of people potentially at risk', his work passion revolves around the desire to 'go on shouts all day long'. Though Baz argues to 'love' spending time with his watch, for most of the work day - 'a third to possibly a half' - he finds himself 'chained to a desk and a computer' dealing with admin. When computers were introduced into the fire service Baz remembers being told the paperless office would make his job easier, but argues this has done nothing more than 'created the ability for senior officers to be able to run reports on various aspect of your role who then expect reports in turn for it'[34]. In outcome, Baz views the paperless office to be a faster and more sophisticated means to quantify, assess and create a new set of demands (see DuGay 2000). Whilst distancing 'self' from the admin side of his role through his derision of it, Baz argues this burden has occurred via 'a slow creep of additional things to do'. In addition to this, with management levels placing increasing expectations on the watch, views his job 'to manage these expectations and find a balance of what works and what is achievable'. Baz talks of the difficulties of planning the day[35], with timetables in a constant mode of reconstruction, trying to fit everything else in around fire calls. Whilst ameliorating these tensions demands flexibility, Baz contends 'I don't get bent out of shape if I don't get stuff done at the expense of the fact we have been responding to calls' (similar to Gary, Metro). In defence of his particularised value system,

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[34] Remarks also highlighted by Gary, Bob Dale (WMs Metro), and Niall (WM Castle).
[35] Similar to Gary (Metro).

Baz then explains why targets become central to senior manager's focus and how they link to performance related pay initiatives:

> Then we have what are called key performance indicators, and one of these is smoke alarms, and part of those is P1 vulnerable people. So everyone's drive is to get seventy odd per-cent smoke alarms that we do are for P1 people ... if they don't get that percentage, that affects their [senior managers'] pay.

This narrative implicates the idea that processes and target-setting are likely to encourage a culture of 'management self-interest', and simultaneously highlights the demands that watch managers face when 'real' emergencies get in the way of paper priorities (reaching targets and recording outcomes) that impose a continuous stream of pressure on an already demanding job. Despite these pressures, Baz recognises the 'community' at the forefront of values and he still believes the station is the most empowered sector of the FRS, and the most disempowered 'anyone not part of a watch'. Nor is Baz particularly resentful of his managers, though this has not always been the case. At present Baz views the area manager and his station manager to be positive characters that are supportive to his role.

Baz describes the watch he manages as 'very experienced', 'self-governing' and the dynamic between them and himself as 'almost a co-operative really'. His relationship with the watch is not premised around creating distance but maintaining close bonds through a strong sense of collegiality and 'being mates out of work as well'. Contrary to other accounts (see Grant later on in this chapter and also previously Ron, Metro), Baz argues under these norms, managing 'is easier because they are less likely or very unlikely to wanna create problems for me'. As Baz operates his managerial role at the extreme end of close proximity, what now becomes of interest, is how Baz operationalises authority, maintains control and sets himself apart from firefighters. First, Baz describes his general management style, and says:

> I don't really go for everything I says goes, but like I say, sometimes that has to be the case - but that does not have to be the need or the benefit of screaming and shouting at people. I don't think you get the best out of people by being that way.

Second, Baz outlines the difference between the way authority operationalises at the station (more relaxed) and on the fire ground (formal bureaucratic function). Although there seemed nothing 'extraordinary' in a charismatic sense about Baz on reflection he was 'extraordinary' in the way he was trying to deal with and manage the internal crisis of the station closure for himself and his firefighters. Above all else, Baz prioritises focus towards responsibilities of handling emergency response and serving the local community (outward focusing attitude). As such, Baz chose not to focus on things that he had little control over, such as the station closing, outside other legitimated means to resist such change (such as union affiliation). However, in sense of managing the inevitable - a situation not of his choosing - it is no surprise he felt himself most estranged from the wider organisation and has no interest in further promotion. Although I did not feel a force of personality 'in body', certainly through the transcription process his charismatic oratory skills and force of personality pervaded the written word that was not apparent at the time of the interview. Baz's focus on 'democracy' eclipsed notions of a leader in the traditional sense and his moral outlook for managing revolved around principles of 'do unto others as you would have undo to yourself'. Though this seems almost simplistic it appears to work for him to be a successful manager, and is particularly thought provoking given that academic research has often shown that managing firefighters is not always an easy task (Paton 2003, Ericson 2011).

The leader of 'men' manager (Curtis)

By contrast, Curtis who has transferred to Castle from another fire service[36], offers a very different perspective in that he hopes for change and privatisation of the FRS. With seamless ease Curtis describes how he 'sat a few exams' and 'here I am'. Appearing to harbour little resentment towards existing promotional systems and being a child of the new system, Curtis hopes to become a senior manager. He presents as a very rational, eloquent and charming person that prizes the rationale of management theory. Being confident in his own ability, Curtis is very absolute when describing his role, confidently professing 'I am a leader of *men* and ultimately a line manager responsible for the performance and discipline of the watch'. In terms of organisational change (and echoing general lines of thinking in Castle watch manager accounts) Curtis has a clear opinion:

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[36] Similar to Frank, Ron, and Sid (WMs Group 2).

I don't think you should have the right to moan about something that is going wrong as a result upon what somebody else is putting upon you if you're not prepared to make a difference in the change yourself.

For Curtis, legitimating the desire to go for promotions rests on the idea that you need to be a part of higher tiers of management to affect decision-making processes for the future of the FRS. However, as a stand-alone voice Curtis asserts:

I think we need to be privatised to highlight the fact there are areas that are falling down. If we were a private company we'd have been in big trouble a long time ago and we wouldn't exist and it's only because our short fallings are just covered by greater finances … and the fact that, like we discussed earlier, the truck will always turn out with myself and the gents here [firefighters]. Senior management 'above' can be in complete disarray … and I think the privatisation of the fire service - that I 'think' will happen, and I hope will - will make the management of the fire service a better place.

Whilst Curtis had little to say about targets, he has more to say about equality training, which he views as overly lengthy, having to sit one exam to satisfy council requirements and another for the FRS. In terms of widening the gates to minority groups (women and ethnic groupings), Curtis says:

I personally do not have an interest in having a workforce that reflects the people we are here to protect. I have an interest in having the people in the roles here, who are the best people that could do that role.

Issues of race and gender are on the periphery of 'skill' and 'ability'; to Curtis the only category that should matter is to recruit 'the best people for the job', which by implication suggests the strongest and fittest should be employed - men. The push to achieve equality is often resented by watch managers as being a sideshow to more pressing agendas of

work. However, whilst some watch managers were overtly pro-equality and diversity[37] for others, defensive arguments surfaced as to why barriers or problems exist in relation to attracting recruits from a wider pool of people (diversity/ race). The arguments highlighted centred around barriers within societal perceptions towards 'the job'[38] being thought essentially suited to men. These ideas emerged to also abound in line with essentialist arguments in wider society and that minority ethnic cultures view the firefighter role as low status. In these respects, the dominant argument as to why change was slow, hinged on the idea very little could be done to change dominant perceptions 'outside' the FRS.

In an appraisal of his perceptions towards problems inside the service, Curtis takes the view that 'senior management aren't doing the role of managers', and suggests the FRS would benefit from more specialised management from 'outside'. Whilst this narrative appears forward looking and places weight towards integrating specialist skills from outside, Curtis stands alone in arguing for privatisation to occur. The basis for his argument rests on his belief that this outcome would reconstitute the FRS to the efficiencies of the past, prior to introduction of equal opportunity legislation and initiatives. In Darwinian terms, Curtis appears to lean on the ethical premise of the survival of the fittest (elitist attitude) to make for a much more efficient FRS of the future mirroring attitudes highlighted in earlier FRS research (see Salaman 1986, Baigent 1996).

Curtis distinguishes himself from firefighters in his ability to 'see the bigger picture' (in terms of change) and in the boundaries he has to set to 'reign in conversations' on the watch. Curtis is of the opinion that watch manager's and firefighter's experience agency differently, and he goes on to say, 'I don't get to express maybe my true opinion because while I wear this shirt I represent the brigade'. Overall, he views firefighters to have 'less stress in their role, so they are happier and they're able to be more of their individual self at work'. In these respects, Curtis believes himself bound by a different set of rules (although he felt free to express himself with me). Although this process separates manager from worker and shows the ways agency becomes momentarily constrained, this could also be seen as a marker of a watch manager's own sense of self-discipline, working to maintain a socially constructed managerial work identity.

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[37] Baz (WM Metro), Craig, Frank, (WMs Castle)
[38] Bart (WM Castle), George, (WM Metro).

Weber's notion of the 'detached bureaucrat' has shown to surface with regularity in narrative analysis and, as such, the way this process occurs now becomes important to review. First, narratives have noted the separation some watch managers describe to be between 'how they really feel' with 'how they must feel' (as managers representing the 'presence' of management and the formal culture). Following the line of stresses towards 'must', what emerges from this are the ways Hochschild (1983) conceptualises either surface or deep acting to occur. Second, it may well also be that for the watch manager, the 'firefighter self' has to be subsumed into the managerial identity, which comes to the fore by laying down boundary markers or performing emotional labour to precipitate 'consent' in respect of orders that they want the watch to comply with. In this way, a part of the agentic self becomes suspended in true bureaucratic 'rational' fashion, where personal views become side lined, and take on the 'presence' or 'front' in deference to the wider organisation (senior managers). Third, what these watch managers are describing is a first-hand example of how processes of emotional labour operationalise in such circumstances. Whether berating, encouraging or manipulating; emotional labour works to produce a desired effect (in this case compliance) and attempts to shape human agency (of self and others), as well as creating moral boundaries in obedience to the rules and ethos of the system. Whilst watch managers may persuade firefighters to temporarily suspend their agency to comply, there may also be times that watch managers may decide not to intervene to maintain their kudos and keep stability on the watch. However, where the line is drawn may vary between persons and groups. Some, like John, have this fully worked out, but new watch managers are likely to need time to reach the balance of a two-way informal understanding and a testing of boundaries in this area makes the masculine hierarchy a tentative process. Nonetheless, because watch managers have also been firefighters they are likely to draw on their experiences at those times to judge how this balance was achieved (or not) by their then watch managers.

For example, it is useful to review the way Curtis' role model impressed upon him in the showdown between an on-coming watch manager with a firefighter. In this circumstance, there was no compromise - only a winner and loser could emerge (see p.107). In this context, leaders emerge and hegemonic masculinities come head to head just as Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) argue happens, where gender hierarchies come open to challenge. Nonetheless, in most daily interaction between watch managers and watch members the

interactional sites where masculinities emerge and dance (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001) produce *compromise* - 'incarnate' in the 'giving and taking of power'. The principle of 'give and take' appears to come into play both on and off the fire ground. Watch managers have given examples where firefighters have worked hard for two to three hours at a shout and then given down time. Others accentuate modes of adaptation working to shape their management style (e.g. Dale's twelve hats or John's 'ave a chat') to produce what is needed to manage. Utilising these managerial strategies appears to forge respect and foster bonds between manager and firefighters. Aside from these examples, some watch managers describe the ways the principle of give and take provides time for resistant firefighters to air their views before explaining policy rationalisations. Rather than a single model following an organisational line, watch managers are appearing to use a wide range of skills to manage, including how 'space' becomes 'used' as a resource - negotiated in such a way to maintain control, show respect for others and to provide the space for masculinities perform and narrate for each other.

Added to these issues most watch managers also talk of the way they harness the authority of the peer group leader to gain compliance and goodwill from the watch. Operationally the watch manager is not always the most knowledgeable person and they draw from the experience of firefighters in the watch through taking advice or suggestions whereby a continuous stream of examples surface with a common axis - to make things work. What also surfaces is the way that fire service masculinities can operate in a contradictory manner. Analysis indicates that the dynamic of give and take operationalises two forces of power; on the one hand, as in the reining in of conversations by watch managers works to 'challenge' what Connell (1995) views to be masculine hierarchies, or Bird's (1986) pecking orders (just as the firefighters' voicing of opinions challenges the hierarchy). On the other hand, there are times when give and take works to maintain the equilibrium of the male hierarchy or watch on a fire station. This is in stark contrast to the way that principal managers make policy and decisions, which are 'followed' by a constellation of other managers further down the hierarchy. It is only at watch manager level that compromise becomes essential as a necessary means to maintain order. However, it is also at watch level that most of the policies have to be implemented by the watch manager making for a hard combination to achieve.

The winning and losing power can be a dynamic process continually in play throughout each day. For example, similar to Craig (Castle) and Dale's (Metro) accounts - Curtis openly describes the way he 'took on a watch that had a very bad reputation' (like his role model). Whilst Curtis appears to skirt around specifics of the challenging situation presented to him, what he did do was steer the conversation to discuss the way problematic workers were often 'people who have a lack of confidence in their ability'. Curtis' explanation as to why problems occur centre on forms of 'lack' and feelings of disempowerment in those particular firefighters that have need of being addressed.

Another main thread, not so easily discernible in previous work on fire service culture and firefighter's identity (see Childs, Morris and Ingham 2004, Desmond 2007, Ericson 2011), is what Curtis then shares when asked to define the most important skill to his role. He asserts to be 'taught to smile' fostering a positive mentality regardless of what is going on. What becomes important is to 'lead in a positive way and support in a positive way' with the golden rule to 'empathise' rather than 'sympathise', which maintains positivity. This highlights the importance of performing emotional labour forming up as an important 'front' of Curtis' managerial identity. Similar to the premise of management prescription in Hochschild's (1983) *The Managed Heart* where flight attendants are taught to 'smile', here at the opposite end of binary constructions of gender watch managers claim alongside operational competence, the hardest skill of managership is being 'competent at being positive'. These managers appear in a constant process of what Hochschild terms 'shaping the inner will' to manifest a state of positivity in order to elicit particular feelings and behaviours in 'others'. This continues as a dominant theme throughout analysis and through practicing such performances becomes an important marker, symbolic of separation between watch managers and those they manage. This also closely aligns with how Goffman views 'self' to emerge from the performance rather than be a cause of it.

In terms of managing firefighters, Curtis passionately declares that 'I love it', although recognising 'everybody is an individual and each have their own pressures that affect them within their lives'. Curtis sees his role in terms of operational leadership and in terms of being available to offer support and advice regarding personal circumstances if the need arises (which many watch managers propose to be a necessary characteristic of their job).

Why this is important goes beyond mere human kindness. Outside pressures can produce a negative effect on a firefighter, which, in turn, can affect the working team, because firefighting is no ordinary job and a firefighter who has personal worries can endanger the optimum effectiveness of the team.

With regard to management style, although disliking 'pigeon holing' himself into one particular 'management style', Curtis draws from a range of management theorists incorporating knowledge from his own self-learning pursuits and applies as he sees fit depending on the issue at hand. In terms of wielding authority, Curtis says 'there is a time to be autocratic and democratic and everything else that comes in between'. Centring on flexibility, he declares 'it's about knowing the difference between when you need to change and how to manage things and that you do understand the fact that people learn in different ways'. Curtis says:

> I am a pro-active manager and that if there's a problem I will try and address it properly, and then in the meantime, I will try and take the role of a team leader as opposed to a manager because I think it's fair to say that that works better at that level than being the manager.

Curtis pro-actively distances constructions of his work self around managership, taking preference to craft his sense of work identity on that of a (team) leader (of men).

The Forward Swing of the Lamp - Fore Runners of the Future

The watch manager as a totem of equality

As a case of occupational identity, Grant becomes of interest in the way he adopts a particular masculine work ethic fostered around his beliefs forming from early career where self-discipline and proactivity become core to 'who you are' and link with 'what you are able to do'. Grant exudes charisma, and embodies power and energy through his physicality having a 'presence' of authority. Believing the watch manager role to be the most empowered in the FRS, Grant argues:

No matter what higher management say, it's how that watch manager downstairs interprets those instructions when they pass it on to the guys that interact with the public - and that is the face of the fire service.

Whether Grant's appeal works in the watch dynamic is an observation I am not privy to analyse, but the following excerpts of data provide a rich insight into how his management style operates. Grant's moral framework centring on his own ideas of equality pervades every aspect of his being and becomes central to his own sense of work identity. Grant feels most affiliated to his co-watch managers who all experience the weight of pressures coming down from above and the pressures rising from the watch below. Grant maintains 'you're just sandwiched right in the middle'. He also warns 'I don't think you should ever try and be friendly or the friend of anyone on the watch, that is not what you are there for'. Rather, Grant argues that his role calls for 'setting an equal standard and let everybody know that you're fair, firm but you are the point of discipline for the FRS'. Though Grant argues to at the same time to look after firefighters' 'best interests as a person' and 'support' them, he draws clear boundaries, declaring 'firefighters have to understand that you have got a job to do here'. He explains his primary role is 'to get that job done efficiently'. This is the first sign that shows how Grant positions his attachments (and identity) away from firefighters, towards management levels, remarking:

Firefighters fight the fact you are wearing a white shirt and the stereotypes they have of watch managers that have built up over a ten to fifteen year period on a station.

Similar to Baz, Grant highlights the important skill of being able to identify how to approach firefighters as individuals. In his estimation there are 'good and bad people in the mix', but all will 'pose different challenges'. His view is that firefighters are people who are 'dynamic' and 'like risk and danger', and though this makes for good combinations on the fire ground, it is more problematic when managing in the more informal settings of the station. In these respects, Grant views watch managers to need skills of self-motivation, a high level of discipline, work without being supervised, and the

ability to generate and manage your own workload. Crucial to holding and keeping power, gaining respect and maintaining authority, rests on being seen to be operationally competent. In these circumstances, he firmly believes that 'you will be forgiven lots of other failings if you're not such a good man manager'.

At the station, Grant suggests watch managers need to possess 'broad shoulders to carry on despite the way firefighters can take umbrage and moan'. Similar to Gary, Bob and Dale (WMs Metro), Grant explains that watch managers may have to implement things they do not agree with, the skill is to side line personal feelings and focus on the 'organisation's targets and needs'. Grant sees problems occurring for those watch managers who are unable to see 'the bigger picture' when having to deploy instructions from management above. He argues these particular watch managers find themselves unable to deconstruct the 'order' and communicate management reasoning behind the change, which, in turn, 'places them on the back foot because they just feel the way their guys do'. As such, these watch managers are likely unable to diffuse problems arising from unpopular messages to assert control over the situation. They also appear to lack the skill of translating NPM language to one that will cause least offense to resistant firefighters (an informal marker of managerial skill between watch managers).

Despite these examples of detachment with firefighters, also surfacing within Grant's narrative are the ways connections with (some) firefighters occur. For example, Grant talks of being able to 'pick out the good guys on the watch' by 'the nice way they speak to people' [like he does], to the ways they 'just operate' [get things done using own initiative like he did], and demonstrate the capacity to show 'respect and empathy'. Grant's sense of attachment veers towards those that mirror his own qualities. In effect, these firefighters are 'his' protégés who reflect his own values and in his opinion 'are gonna get promoted'. By contrast, he sees others as 'a little more problematic' and in respect of successfully managing them, he says that sometimes you have to empower them, by saying 'come listen, you're really good at doing this ... can you show the rest of the watch how to do that?' This he believes results in opportunities to 'build their ego up' to the point that 'they appreciate you, they feel valued, and you've won them round' (similar to Curtis, Castle).

Although management at the station can be a little bit more relaxed than operationally, Grant explains that on station there are times that firefighters will challenge you in your role. Despite arguing of the need to maintain separation with firefighters when something 'quite radical' comes down from above to implement, Grant first listens to firefighters' responses (allowing space for resistant firefighters to be heard). Next, he shows empathy towards their concerns, then discussion, then reiterates their group position, which it is something they have 'no control' over, finally stating 'we have to do it'. This is another example of a 'dance of masculinities' (Gherardi and Poggio 2001), which positions and allows respect afforded to both parties; a theme that emerges consistently throughout the narratives that it becomes a practice akin to a management ritual. By the virtue that this negotiation takes place, reinforces the belief that a masculinity driven hierarchal arrangement continues to operationalise at watch level.

In view of this area of questioning, analysis shows a number of supporting resources to surface. Using Grant as an example, the first notable issue to emerge is that Grant has time-in and a wide-ranging operational experience. Though Grant highlights the importance of maintaining balances of 'distance' with the watch he also asserts his ability to 'deal with that position as watch manager'. On the one hand, 'looking out for firefighters' best interests', and on the other, 'pulling them into line and disciplining them when necessary'. Equally, at the station where it is more 'easy going' Grant 'lets his crew managers run things more'.

For Grant, the notion of separation to the watch is seen as necessary requirement to maintain equal and fair treatment to all watch members. When asked if he found himself having to balance between management and the watch, Grant highlights the importance behind the principles of 'give and take'. In respect of differences between longer-serving and newer firefighters, Grant expresses the opinion that 'in general, older workers have got older values and that is what it is about, it is about values'. Though stressing age is not necessarily the most important issue, he goes on to argue:

> If you have someone who has been in the job say fifteen to twenty years, and they
> are used to that standard where we used to go out and drill everyday: "Ah these

guys don't know how good they had it ... I was fighting fires when you was at nursery". Y'know … that whole old school mentality that separates the old guys from the young. Where guys are a bit older and they are on the up, on a young watch with predominately younger firefighters, they tend to get drawn along with them because they are the majority, aren't they? So that whole... the watch dynamics hasn't been buried...how the watch functions ... who have they got as head figure in the watch or does the watch manager really rule the roost?

In answer to his rhetorical question Grant develops understanding and begins to explain how peer group leaders emerge:

You do have some watches where they think an old firefighter is the head figure, then, y'know, [you get] that whole political thing going on don't you? You get that power struggle. If they think the watch manager is not up to it, then you got guys who like ... will be looking towards the crew manager. They might value the older experienced crew manager and he has been there for fifteen years, and the watch manager has only been there for two years. Especially now … we have got things like multi-tiered entry, target and development - so people have been accelerated through the ranks who have only done three years in the job and they're at watch manager level.

Whilst Grant discusses how firefighters negatively view development schemes, he also recognises that experience is relative. He explains:

It's a tough one ... *it's not true,* y'know … you could have a guy who works in central Metro ... a really busy station for three years and he knows more than a guy who has been out in [****] for fifteen years who has been to a quarter of those fires.

Having grasped the importance of Grant's focus on 'standards' and 'values', implicitly laced in most of his replies, the interviewer cringed inside when asking about equal

opportunities, and after delivering 'the' question there was a 'silence'. The atmosphere in the room changed in seconds from what was a cheerful and engaging environment to one of seriousness. It felt like the elephant in the room had given birth to 'the interviewer' who had (at this point) descended from favour, and fell from in-group to out-group status. After a momentary facial expression of distain towards the interviewer, Grant gained momentum to defend the FRS in relation to its record of accomplishment towards integration of minority groups and women. Though he intermittently conceded gaps in the FRSs understanding of race cultures, he also stressed these types of issues were on the periphery because what matters in doing the job are skills, standards, competencies and discipline. These values disadvantage no one and set proper limits for individuals (irrespective of any advantage or disadvantage) to aspire to. For Grant, maintaining 'standards' and 'discipline' operationalise in a similar way to Durkheim's 'totem' around which he centres his work identity. Grant becomes set-apart through his co-alignment towards transitions of policy and system change, and of interest is the way 'equality' becomes an outcome of Grant's sum total values, rather than separate objectives or issues of contention. There was only one area of contention when talking about FRS change, and that was the now familiar target-driven culture and the growing responsibilities of paperwork. Pausing momentarily to return to John (Metro), what needs highlighting is that just as John becomes the foci and the totem (Durkheim 1961) through which the past is carried into the present, the same applies to Grant. Yet, Grant is representative of all that is new in the FRS and has managed to reconfigure 'feeling rules' in line with managerialist principles embedded in formal agendas, and in obedience becomes an heir apparent within the new system (by contrast to John). However, both John and Grant (albeit in differing ways) harness the values of the past to create social cohesion and provide a sense of identity for themselves and their watch.

The watch manager identity centring on adaptability

Grant's shaping of work identity is very similar to Mitch (Castle). At the time of interview, Mitch had just been promoted to the role of station manager and sitting in front of me in his uniform with his extra pips looked best pleased with his new promotion. Mitch respects the promotional system and pursues development to keep boredom away and gain as many skills as possible in his portfolio of work. Chapter five introduces Mitch

as a watch manager, who on first joining, found himself challenged to fit-in. He was a new firefighter who tended to view everybody as a role model incorporating good attributes whilst distancing from bad practice/ways of being. In this sense, both head and hands 'practice' of role models become 'living' resources on which to support his role. From the beginning of his career, Mitch thought the best way to safeguard himself was to take promotion up the ranks. By all accounts his relationship to the organisation is one of a consensual dynamic although there are frustrations with the system (like getting his laptop on time). Aside from these smaller frustrations he positions himself in a way that accepts change is in a constant state of 'happening'. Bearing little similarity with those watch managers who have a relationship that shapes a managerial identity independent of change (like John), Mitch appears to 'fit' the new manager archetype.

Whilst Mitch cannot give hard examples of either watch or management affiliations, or be able to provide an example of whom he feels detached from, all the same, he takes the view that station managers had always supported him. Mitch explains 'when you're in your watch, you are in your watch and when you're in the station you represent your station'. Drawing these parameters, he goes on to say:

> I can't really say there was anyone that was out of the loop as such, everyone else is here in one capacity or another just to support you. Even if you speak to one person in this office here once a year to ask a question, you get the answer don't you really? So …

For Mitch, people (and groups) are seen as supporting mechanisms or resources, and rather than seeing differing roles as 'others' or opposing power forces, it seems people and roles become a means to an end – to get the job done. Aligning to Weber's notion of a 'good bureaucrat' what we now need to find out is if Mitch's way of experiencing work in his watch manager capacity differs from other watch managers. In respect of managing firefighters, Mitch says 'it's like on some days it's like a crèche'. He then moves to argue 'you are just managing guys with a bunch of PMT all the time'. Continuing, he explains that when starting a shift he always tries to 'chip' himself for work and 'stay on the same level' (similar to Dale, Metro). Mitch expands on the difficult aspects of managing

firefighters saying 'firefighters come in and suddenly, I suppose what is acceptable one day is not acceptable another day'. Taking the view that firefighters are out of touch 'with the real world outside', he explains that if he comes in and says 'right fellas, we'll just do a bit of this today', groaning could possibly permeate the group. However, Mitch enjoys managing firefighters for the most part and asserts it to be 'easy to run a watch'. Outside of this, the watch manager role requires the management of problems and firefighters' expectations. Providing an example, Mitch says 'if it's something the service have put in place, even if it is something nationally ... you're their sounding board aren't you?' Whilst arguing it to be 'frustrating', 'not having the means to answer questions' (providing management rationale), he is also quick to point out that although 'most of the time I agree one hundred per-cent what they [firefighters] say - but you'd have to step up a bit don't you?' This is yet another example to emerge in Mitch's narrative where firefighter logic (still there in the background) is subsumed in favour of the duty demanded by the watch manager role. In terms of managing, Mitch is similar to other watch managers (Dale, Ron, Curtis, Craig and Grant) and talks of the need to harness the peer group leader. Viewing these informal leaders as a resource, he says:

> Because those peer group leaders, although they are motivators of the watch in their own right ... if I said: "Right we are going to do that guys" ... they will motivate the others to do it without me having to stand over there with a big stick sort of thing, which means I don't have to do that. They would also be more than respectful for when I then come down ... if that makes sense. So, they don't take over the watch they just naturally want to do that bit.

Equally, Mitch sees these informal teachers of craft and possessors of group power as 'the ones that now need to move on … or look at moving on' and further singles out one firefighter, highly skilled in knowledge about ropes and knots (and whatever else), who would make a 'new leader', and who he is currently supporting through the promotional process. Mitch appeared keen to see him 'sit there with his stripes' believing him to have the ability to become a 'good' watch manager.

Though implying a sense of satisfaction from spotting potential 'talent' for promotional suitability and through providing encouragement and support at the same time, leads to question why Mitch chose to take promotion. Whilst he admits this was a hard decision to make (and revisits his decision daily), he says 'I've achieved an awful lot there ... or they have achieved an awful lot, but sometimes it's just time to move on isn't it?' Similar to Gidden's idea that social actors are free to orchestrate their career biography and be in control of their own learning, for Mitch carving out a work identity is something done to the self, by the self, through extending skill set. At the same time, this carving of a managerial identity is in a constant process of 'proving oneself' to self and others, and, as such, becomes part of the project of masculinity. Though the uncertainties of the changing FRS environment abound, the self becomes the mediating instrument of control in the face of future uncertainties for the service. Significant to take forward in this instance, is that Mitch's approach and values that drive them become founded on criteria the formal culture (bureaucratic system) dictates to define and measure success (Wilensky, 1961).

Chapter summary

What is unusual about these findings is that I expected to discover that each watch manager was similar in how they secured work identity and authority, based on previous research findings (see Baigent 2001, Childs, Morris and Ingham 2004). For example Baigent's work analyses how new firefighters' identity needs to fit-in with watch norms and values of FRS culture. However, my research analysis shows how the station managers and watch managers try to fit the human aspect (of firefighters' agency) into the bureaucratic system, and cultivate a watch culture of co-option to maintain a productive working environment.

Watch managers show a range of relationships to the organisation within Gouldner's framework from mock, consensual to punishment centred. Although these variances occur, so too do common threads in relation to particular change issues that either veer towards or away from validating promotional systems, EO, targets and PIs (see appendix 11). Attitudes to change become significant in how they manifest in cross cutting ways as centralised features of watch manager's identity. Widely spoken of was the need to draw on resources and skills to gain compliance 'for what management want' (above). In

drawing out the unwritten and under-represented aspects of the watch manager role, what becomes apparent is that at the station, watch managers not only manage HR issues but also in various ways 'act as a buffer' between management and the watch. In effect, efforts are pursued to manage communications from 'the hierarchy', and get the watch to a point of compliance to maintain equilibrium. Although some of the watch managers argue that 'it is their job to bat away stupid ideas' (from above), most describe the way they control information and the terms of interaction with which messages are communicated to the watch to maintain harmony between management and firefighters. In so doing, a ritual dance of masculinities emerges, and so too do a number of ways that emotional labour becomes a part of their resource for managing, rather than straightforward instruction based on bureaucratic authority.

However, my analysis suggests that behaviours, skill sets, and work identities emerge from two strands of a relationship: one with the organisation (formal) and one with the watch (informal). In order to sustain and balance these two relationships there is a need for these watch managers to possess sophisticated skill sets. These two sites render importance in the way work identity shows to reside through ways watch managers reconcile these two forces (of relationship). Whilst all these watch managers provide a multiple array and unique examples of 'selves' what did emerge through each transcript was one distinct personal theme that formed the axis around which their own work identity rotated. Explicit links can be made between 'identity' and 'ways of managing', which appear to co-exist in combination. The lynch pin between identity and managing emerges from the data, in the way that authority is legitimated by each particular watch manager.

What becomes important in configurations of watch managers' work identity are understanding the ways balances of Weber's authority types occur and what this ascribes to identities about 'who' watch managers are, 'what' their values are, and whose purposes they serve. More to the point, whether autocratic, democratic or charismatic, all have supporting themes that add substance to carry and authenticate their managerial authority. Similarly, charismatic authority presents overtly in John's narrative via his interaction with the watch, and differently through Grant's 'presence', dynamic personality and reasoned argument. However, what is important to carry forward is that there are

occasions when the charismatic appeal operates in connection with forms of emotional labour as a resource or a support mechanism for performances of masculinity.

A sense of belonging emerges through ways watch managers situate themselves, positioning so as to identify more strongly either with management (Mitch and Grant) or watch side (John, Dale and Baz) or inhabit a more neutral marginal placing (Ron, Sid and Curtis). These positions also appear influenced by whether the watch manager wants promotion or to see out their career as a watch manager. Equally important is how a sense of belonging surfaces through the game of work (Burawoy, 1979:85) and principles of 'give and take'. This dynamic between watch manager and firefighters, though assuming contradictory positions, need each other for shows of power to be validated. Interestingly, sites of give and take also emerge on the fire ground (working as one team) via differing skill sets - watch manager (head) firefighters (hands) to deal with emergency response (O'Connor 2016). Equally, on station when getting the watch to accept change or management directive (that is unpopular) the interactive stance between watch manager and resistant firefighters has also shown to become subject to a parading of an ebb and flow of power. However, whatever context, each scenario allows a stage for masculinities to be seen and heard through performances of self. Whilst notions of watch managers own perceptions towards work identity forms one part of the picture, it remains incomplete without the inclusion of other sector insights - an area the final conclusion threads together. As such, the next chapters offer insights from crew managers and firefighters towards the watch manager's role (and being managed), providing crucial insight towards ways the watch dynamic operates and the watch manager's place within it.

Chapter Eight

'Holding the Line'

Crew Managers: Authority, Power, Belonging and the Watch

Introduction

The previous chapter highlights how watch managers' behaviours, skill sets, and work identities emerge from two strands of a relationship: one with the organisation (formal) and one with the watch (informal). Another central theme to emerge was ways the watch manager's differentially wield their authority over the watch and draw from differing resources to manage. What now becomes important to focus on are ways crew managers view their role and types of relationships they foster with their watch manager and firefighters. An interesting theme to surface is the ways crew managers differentially experience working *with* and *under* the watch manager's authority, and how this fits into the cultural dynamics operationalising in the watch.

The crew manager role is crucial to research analysis because in hierarchal terms this role is the dividing line between firefighters and the watch manager. Therefore, the crew manager role is the first promotion above firefighter and acts as deputy to the watch manager. Crew managers are not directly responsible to senior managers but to *their* watch manager, often finding themselves in closer proximity to the watch than watch managers who have other duties to perform away from the confines of the watch (i.e. office work, meetings, etc.).

Role boundaries of the crew manager's job
In terms of operational work, Ken (Metro) views the transition from firefighter up to crew manager as 'not actually that much of a huge big step up'. Although conceding 'you are the officer in charge of that pump and it is your responsibility to send messages', he also acknowledges that 'you're not quite just the basic firefighter who is just told what to do

and they get on and do it'. In operational terms, differences between the crew manager role to that of the watch manager plays out in the way crew managers may be required to attend low-grade fire calls (i.e. bin fires and automated alarms), and 'incidents that do not require a lot of panic and real organisation to do'. Ken goes on to explain bigger incidents 'like a smoke issue or fire, or anything like … persons reported … anything where you get multiple calls, then the watch manager is straight on it'. Equally, a difference between the two roles is that at an incident the watch manager positions 'a few steps back, taking in everything what's going on rather than just watching one specific task'. However, further differences emerge. For example, Jo (Metro) explains if the crew manager's fire engine turns up at an incident first, they are in charge until the watch manager turns up, and then the crew manager 'falls in with the firefighters'. These types of transitions call for flexibility and adaptability in a similar fashion to the way that watch managers describe to step back at a bigger incident when a senior officer arrives.

As a crew manager Justin (Castle) suggests his role to 'have the best of both worlds'; still able to wear breathing apparatus (BA) and participate as part of a crew at an incident and at other times 'getting to be in charge at incidents as well'. Thinking back, Justin describes stepping up in the watch manager's absence (out on union duties) to have been highly rewarding, recognising it to have been a time to develop and progress his skill set. Unlike other crew managers' accounts, Justin explains that the watch managers he has served under 'haven't kind of held me back or restricted with kind of what I have wanted to do in terms of, kind of, the management of the watch', implicating a more agentic experience than others. Overall, these crew managers view their role to support their watch manager over both operational incidents and back at the station. Justin highlights the way the fire service 'seems to almost talk about the two worlds as if they are totally separate - there's station management and here is fire ground management'. However, Justin views station management to have changed over the years with the most obvious change to be the way watch managers have become 'more driven by targets'. By contrast, Ken (Metro) views change to have occurred more towards how senior managers exert pressure on watch managers to gain compliance from their crews, who at the cutting edge of change 'may not like what they are rolling out'. From Ken's perspective, management increasingly view the watch manager's job 'to make sure that you get it in there and you change their

minds'. However, Jo (Metro) raises an interesting point indicating ways this affects her role:

> We're the middlemen, the crew managers, we're his [WM] sort of connection point and take the lead on certain things and disseminate it down.

However, as Jim (Metro) points out, in combination with disseminating things down is the difficulty of 'trying to get people on board'. Explaining further, Jim says:

> There is a distrust of all that kind of stuff in terms of how you can present a leadership model, but if you don't phrase it in the right way, or frame it in the right way, it is viewed as management speak and [FFs] ignore it. If you get the interpretation right for the station at station level and below, I think they will buy in to it.

What this highlights is the necessity for dual language or the avoidance of one type of language for another (in effect an interpreter), to appease firefighters and ameliorate tensions. In effect, there is a need of one language (in neo-liberal terms) for management audiences, and another for firefighters (narrowing the gap for interpretations to encourage resistance). For example, modernisation can be translated in union terms as 'fire service cuts' or 'efficiencies dressed up as cuts' (Wrack 2014). So, in this sense, avoiding politically loaded euphuisms becomes a main part of the crew and watch manager role (informally understood) and highlights the need to translate (or transform) senior management directive in a way that can be made palatable to the watch and avoid resistance. This is not just a matter of cutting a message down to give important bits (as WMs have indicated), rather, this sits aside the additional requirement to command a respectful communication guided by political acumen of persuasive argument to the watch (Childs, Morris and Ingham 2004). As such, the task demands the characteristics ascribed to the charismatic leader as Weber describes. The many faces of flexibility appear as crucial to getting the job done successfully. These aspects of role function emerge in the ways crew managers describe the actualities of their role. For example, alongside

implications of the need to be flexible, Jim (Metro) uses the metaphor of a 'chameleon role' and goes on to argue 'the type of crew manager you have to be depends on what type of watch manager you have'. To his mind, pro-active watch managers beget pro-active crew managers, and in circumstances where the watch manager is viewed as 'lazy', crew managers have to follow that line. Jim argues any attempt to change things in the watch manager's absence not only poses problems for the crew manager (in the long term with the watch manager), but also when the watch manager comes back, the futility of efforts become apparent as everything inevitably returns to 'normal'. By contrast, Jo (Metro) views her crew manager role to be 'sandwiched' between firefighters and watch managers. In the quest to get the balance right, Jo argues 'you have to be diplomatic both ways, you have to be close to the watch but professionally slightly detached as an officer'. In terms of affiliation and loyalties, Jo suggests to position as to become 'the ears and eyes for the Guvnor' on station. Jo further explains 'you have to be a bit more on the firefighters' side so that you know what is going on because stuff will go on that the Guvnor doesn't see'.

Overall, four of five crew managers over both FRSs position 'selves' to affiliate more closely to their watch manager than firefighters, however this occurs for different reasons. Jo (Metro) feels attachments to the watch manager because of the depth of trust built up between them and because of faith in the watch manager's judgement and knowledge base. Jim (Metro) argues to 'side with the Guvnor any day of the week', and to be 'treading middle ground' between his watch manager and the firefighters. However, he also argues to have a 'really good working relationship' with watch members and views for firefighters to relate differently to him (as a CM) than the watch manager. Justin (Castle), offering a similar account, also views himself more weighted towards the watch manager purely because of the 'break down of workload', but emphasises this 'no way reflects levels of respect, or the amount I like those individuals, or even the individual roles'. However, Reg (Castle) is an exception to the general rule, viewing himself as more affiliated to the firefighters (having been a firefighter for eighteen years). He comments:

> I'm like a firefighter's representative to a watch manager [he laughs] ... saying that,
> I know I have worked on watches where the leading firefighter and the sub

[officer] keep themselves to themselves and the firefighters are a separate entity … it's different on every watch.

Here we see an example of the way that the old rank structure creeps into dialogue and how computations (of rank to role) occur in real-time between the old and the new role identities. Equally, what becomes of interest is the way that relationship affiliations and attachments to either/or firefighter/watch manager depends on the watch, and the specifics of the watch manager's personal qualities and managerial identity. This indicates that the crew manager's loyalties and attachments form bonds for a range of reasons, and that watch dynamics become founded on a range of different premises.

Affiliations and sites of power

Apart from Reg (Castle), who views himself as not detached from any person or sector of the organisation, the remaining crew managers thought themselves most detached from station managers, mainly because little contact is necessary in the day-to-day. Equally, separations from station managers were thought influenced and symptomatic of 'divides at station level and above' (Jim, Metro), being a consequence of bad relations between watches and senior management.

Similar to Curtis (WM, Castle), Ken also highlights how his managerial responsibility places a differential set of what Hochschild's terms 'feeling rules' into operation. Ken explains:

> When I was a firefighter I had less responsibility in terms of like, I could talk, let my hair down a bit more and get involved with a lot of the banter and things like that. Now I've … now I am a crew manager, I have a little thing in the back of my head where it just sort of says to you, y'know … keep everything to another level. Because if you do have a problem from it, then you're one of the people that needs to be seen to diffuse that at the start or identify these things. Y'know … you have got a little bit more of responsibilities.

What Ken describes is the way his sense of self and loyalties become subject to a process of reconfiguration in the transition from firefighter to crew manager. Inhabiting the crew management role appears to demand the need to 'shape the inner will' in a way that places restrictions on former behaviours (as a firefighter), and moves to elicit particular controls on 'others'. In this way, masculinity connects with forms of emotional labour, where Hochschild's idea of the *'managed heart'* works to become reconstituted away from informal understandings to line up with formal agendas. In effect, Ken describes the performance of emotional labour in much the same way as Hochschild's flight attendants use prescriptive responses to procure a particular emotional state in others. The difference is that in terms of the flight attendants, their 'customers' were at liberty 'be', 'say' and 'do' with no apparent boundaries to morally regard. Whereas for the crew manager, the main outcome was to create 'boundaries' and inhibit agency of firefighters to stay within acceptable lines of the moral dictates of the formal culture. The flight attendant 'appeases' customers' agency and the crew manager operating in a male dominated environment 'constricts' agency of firefighters and the work group. However, for both situations, and for both flight attendant and crew manager, fundamentally this process becomes about transforming people and environments into instruments of control a central construct in Kerfoot and Knight's (1996) theorisation of links between masculinity and management.

Whether this transforms from what Hochschild terms surface acting to deep acting is not clear, but what becomes important to grasp is that this on-going practice of self-awareness towards managership status makes for a (cultural) boundary marker between firefighter and crew manager, also setting a new 'moral' parameter to guide action. Though resonating with watch manager accounts, this recognition also highlights the ways a crew manager's sense of disempowerment/empowerment simultaneously occur. On the one hand, they experience *constrained autonomy* (as they used to experience it), and on the other, a sense of *empowerment* through practise of a new skill (or control mechanism) to produce a desired outcome. At the same time, a sense of differation occurs, separating crew manager from firefighters through practising a managerial practice. This process allows the crew manager to learn and hone new skills of self-discipline demarking a (new) contract of inter-watch relationship, separating the firefighter self from manager self.

Focusing more widely towards perceptions of power, two (of the five) crew managers view senior management as the most empowered sector (Reg, Castle and Jim, Metro) and

power as bureaucratically devolving down from top tiers. Though Jo (Metro) argues for firefighters to be the most empowered, she elaborates:

> This is more apparent at the moment because of the strike, erm, yes, the workforce at the moment that has the most power and we have become aware of that over the last few weeks. They are, or we are, strong in unity in terms of management and firefighters … it is hard to say. In theory, the power lies with management but in practice it is probably the firefighters.

What is interesting about these combinations of thought is that both agency and constraint are viewed to differentially occur at both management and grass root levels. Whilst Jo (Metro) sees strength in union solidarity, Justin (Castle) views empowerment to rest at watch levels through watch solidarity and the strength of watch culture. Though Justin argues station-based watches are 'not always encouraged and liked by management', and suggests the inevitabilities of working together over long time periods 'can make or break you'. Further explaining, he says:

> You form strong bonds and become a strong team, which historically has been a strength of the fire service … erm, but there is times when with looking at station closures and rota changes … kind of ... by breaking up that watch culture and bond ... it would perhaps be easier to implement other things and make the changes.

Other ideas surface towards notions of power and forms of disempowerment. For example, Jo and Jim (Metro) suggest crew managers to be the most disempowered role (being sandwiched between watch manager and firefighters) with Jim previously arguing to experience a distinct 'lack of agency' in his role, making for what he describes to be 'very disenfranchised officers at this level'. Whereas Reg (Castle) views constraints of agency to occur at station manager level, believing they have no choice but to 'get done what their Guvnor tells them to do'. What becomes of interest is the way that crew managers differentially view 'lack', or 'loss' of agency to occur within the institution. For example, though Justin (Castle) and Jo (Metro) view firefighters as most empowered,

Justin at the same time views firefighters most disempowered, arguing that 'they can't always influence policies and procedures and the way things are done in the future as much as they would like'. Placing the firefighters in a contradictory position is similarly accounted for by Ken (Metro) who believes that although senior management has the power to 'change things', 'remove schemes' and 'tell grass roots what to do', on the other hand argues:

> Stations do have a fair amount of power as well in that we have got the vast amount of people, y'know … got the majority of the opinion … we … maybe there is a sort of self-perception that we really do the most important work.

Ken believes there to be a perception in the brigade 'that we are literally the last line to be cut because we do the most important job'. Conceding this to mirror public perception goes on to substantiate his point by declaring 'we can have that sort of self-perception that we are the most powerful people in terms of what you want from a fire and rescue service - what station staff do'. Nevertheless, Ken also says that 'firefighters' have the least power to change things, and the least power to effect things'. He remarks:

> It feels like … because of the bridge between government and grass roots … because of the fact that a lot of the things get decided above our heads and then changes come down that we have to accept them ... that's where a lot of the disillusionment comes in. Because it is like, we really need protecting. We are doing a really important job, this is y'know … let us get on with it kind of thing, and you are making all these changes.

What emerges is the idea that power is not just bureaucratically ascribed but power is also ascribed on another (informal) hierarchical level where increased importance is attached to hands on work. Bringing the union into the equation, Ken says:

> We have got a very old school union as well. A lot of unions are like quite new … whereas, the FBU is very much more like a '70s one - that's a fight for workers

and rights and things like that, and nearly every firefighter … I'm in the union … nearly everybody still is so.

This excerpt brings to light a number of contrasting issues. First, Ken does not necessarily believe that changes within the FRS are either 'necessary' or 'right' (efficiency and moral arguments). The bottom line is, change is likely to be resisted by firefighters and watches. Whilst Ken views there to be vies for power and control between government, senior managers and firefighters, what is interesting is that the union still exists as an industrial trade union operating traditional practices in a contemporary work environment. Although Ken (fast-track manager) supports the union, backing occurs in the face of a challenging and moving external environment (melding forms of traditional practice with contemporary phenomena). The crux of the argument yet again revolves around the ways human agency becomes constrained or enabled in relation to different types of stakeholders in differing contexts. This makes for a strange dynamic of culture in the public service as opposed to that in the private sector.

Watch culture

Inherently contradictory experiences of crew managers become highlighted in other ways. For example, Jim (Metro) observes the FRS to possess 'an unusual culture', suggesting 'in some ways it is brilliant and sometimes it can be horrible'. Continuing on, he explains that 'it purely depends on the people that are doing it [as they see it] … it's just having to work that out as you walk into it if that makes sense, and working out what's nice and what is not'. Ken's (Metro) experience seems less complicated, describing his watch to be 'quite an insular little unit' who 'gets on well' but with little cliques operating as sub-groups (also a view shared by Justin, Castle). Interestingly, Ken likens being in the watch to 'the big brother house' as they share blocks of long shifts eating, working and have downtime together in close proximity. What these insights bring to the fore is that firefighter groups and power dynamics within them can and do vary. Equally, joining a watch or being a part of the group (and accepted as such) is not necessarily a straightforward experience or uncomplicated process.

Whilst the next chapter attends to ways firefighters describe the push and pull of power tensions when a new watch manager turns up, Ken becomes of particular interest being a

crew manager awaiting imminent promotion. Ken's expectations rest on the assumption that once assigned a watch he will have to manage firefighters with a seniority that will be 'of a certain mind-set about how things should be done'. Ken appears confident that he will be able to stand firm and assert how he wants things done but suspects the older hands will be thinking 'who is this kid who's turned up and now telling me the way I need to do things?' However, as Ken explains, differences do emerge:

> Some old hands say twenty-five, twenty-six years' service are good but there are also some of the real old school blokes who are a lifetime on-station guys, and they can have their favourites and people to dislike, and they can be quite abrupt.

Though Justin (Castle) suggests to have never known any kind of 'difficulty' or 'negativity' to occur between newer and senior members of the watch (being the CM exception), by contrast, Ken (Metro) maintains:

> The first question you get asked by firefighters is about how much time-in you have got, and depending on the answer, people would make a lot of judgements instantly.

Though old hands generally argue that the newer firefighters should be keener and more interested to 'get-in', from Ken's own experience, longer-serving firefighters appear 'more willing to do things for themselves and accept responsibility for their actions a bit more'. Equally, in terms of operational work, Ken finds that old hands 'will act … you don't have to worry', but the newer firefighters 'tend to be a bit more waiting for someone to bark something at them'. These behaviours take an about turn on station where Ken finds the newer firefighters keen 'to do everything you tell them' but when dealing with old hands says:

> Can be a nightmare to manage because they don't really want to do a lot, they are difficult to do things, and have issues with their leave, and there are always things coming up with discipline and things like that.

Ken (Metro) asserts on some watches, time-served firefighters take on the role of an informal type leader 'who are very clued up on things, whose opinions account for more in certain debates'. It was thought these longer-serving firefighters 'like to be a bit more in control of the surroundings' although presently finds 'all the firefighters have a fairly even say'. Whilst asserting that you should always have a type of rank structure 'coming first', makes the point that dominant characters can and do take some form of lead to firefighters. These characters tend to be assertive and 'domineering', and potentially become a negative influence because they have status within the work group. Ken also remarks that long-serving firefighters can occasionally try to sabotage daily plans, and sometimes become lead spokespeople for the group by arguing - 'I don't really want to do that - let's do that'. However, on the other hand, Ken remarks:

> Yes they're in charge, and everyone looks to them, and they know what they are doing anyway, and they know when to step back as well … everything is more or less done for the good … you've gotta make sure that you manage that so that things are still getting done and you're still in charge on there. That's one of the hardest skills for me, especially as someone quite new for me to try and pick up.

Similarly, Jo (Metro) reinforces the influence and control of time-served firefighters who present as a strong leader for a watch, and although Justin (Castle) views these characters positively, at the same time acknowledges 'the big characters can abuse it'. Whilst these views take a general overview that the informal leader(s) presence contributes to the common good, this sits aside the recognition that at times these influences work against the formal authority. Therefore, whilst Ken (Metro) suggests that 'you should always have the rank structure coming first' (in terms of who is in charge), his insights also indicate the presence of two power structures in operation at one time (formal and informal). What needs highlighting is that unlike other industries where managers come into positions from outside at a management level, by contrast, these FRS managers (at station level) take on managerial roles having fully experienced grass roots culture (and been a part of it), which may have a considerable influence on their management practices.

These accounts are not just a matter of management practice and theorisations of culture, what they hold within them are types of gendered identities vying for recognition and validation, showing the ways 'masculinities at work' converge, separate, challenge and co-opt so as to define parameters of work identity. In the quest for control, in the face of unpredictability or uncertain environments, what we see evidence of (within the narratives) are ways Kerfoot and Knights (1996) theorise masculine subjects to invest in 'identity work' through controlling social relations, and particular notions of self (Collinson 1992), as work identities emerge from particularised performances of everyday interaction (Thompson and McHugh 2002). Having recognised the embodiment of gender within these power tensions we now focus on gaining a sense of how crew managers view watch managers to operationalise authority over the watch, a central way ascriptions of work identity emerge.

Watch managers and authority

For these crew managers, station management has a different set of challenges to overcome than those presented at an incident. The crew managers' narratives argue for watch managers to operationalise straightforward bureaucratically recognised authority on the incident ground:

> Y'know it's a bit like the army, when you are on a serious job you don't have time for people to be questioning decisions … you see the hierarchy, you see how it works and you jump into it, and that's where the fire brigade works best at the operational stuff. Most of the problems that people have and most of the discipline issues or anything else … come from station life. (Ken, CM, Metro)

The crew managers indicate that watch managers, managing two diverse environments (station and fire-ground) need a wide and varied skill-set. The most obvious difference between the two FRSs is that the Metro crew managers emphasise operational management and leadership skills to be important, alongside valuing watch managers to possess 'diplomatic and social skills' and loyalty. In particular, Jim (Metro) draws attention to the idea that 'they can't be a flapper' and so emotion management is crucial to

sustain respect from watch members needing to present a calm persona 'no matter what you come up against'. Whereas, Castle crew managers were more likely to emphasise needs of personal qualities and attributes such as flexibility, good listener, good communicator, a 'people person' and someone who 'takes charge', but where mutual respect occurs between the watch manager and other watch members. However, implicitly indicated to be the most complex or difficult aspect of the watch manager's role is the pronounced need to manage culture and cultivate particularised skills and resources to gain co-option with the informal hierarchy. Substantiating these observations and in line with Holmes' (2014) idea of craft, Reg argues:

> I don't think you can just turn up and be a watch manager. Like I say, if it was in the police or accelerated promotion people … I don't think so. I think you have got to have built up a level of respect and you have to have an air of authority, which you can't learn really, that has got to be there, and then you build up the respect with it to be a successful watch manager I think.

Echoing these sentiments, Jim (Metro) says:

> I think you've got to be clear on who's in charge … and actually some of the most difficult people I have met in the fire brigade - difficult people for managers [to manage] - have actually been looking for a manager to show them that they are in charge.

Both these crew managers emphasise the importance for the watch manager to be willing to listen to firefighters on the watch. However, Jim (Metro) also indicates that authority needs asserting in the right way, and argues 'if you get flustered or get shouty, no one likes to see that, so it's a balance between being in charge and knowing what's going on'. Jim provides an example by saying:

> Like a plane flying into a building or whatever … everyone will look at you, as in: - what do we do now? If you're just going [the CM yawns for effect] it sets the

tone. I think it is the kind of thing where a lot of the testing that you get from firefighters and things like that is actually designed to see if you are like that. Y'know… if they can push you on station to the point where you snap, then they start to lose that little bit of … no matter what you get you will still be calm.

What this highlights is the sense of purpose behind challenging behaviours. The testing of boundaries by firefighters allows the watch manager to prove high levels of emotion management (resilience and toughness) that work to validate the watch manager's authority and their right to lead. In this way, watch managers employ the use of emotional labour (which in itself becomes an art or craft), learning to turn surface acting into deep acting, operationalised to meet the challenges of the situation (in this context at the station). Jim's (Metro) narrative provides an example of a site where competing masculinities emerge, and where the potential winning and losing of power occurs, and the making and breaking of work identity:

Sometimes, it's worth fighting certain battles and sometimes it's not worth fighting certain battles, and having the wisdom to know the difference is probably the key to making it. If you fight every single battle, you end up sitting in this office with no one talking to you, but if you let some things go, or let too many things go … then you are at the point that you are not running the watch that you are supposed to run.

In these respects, operationalising authority is not an easy matter. These types of examples show how crew managers come to acknowledge that high levels of discernment and interpersonal skills need attuning to the masculine dominated work environment. However, in terms of how challenges to authority between crew managers and watch managers occur, Jim (Metro) reiterates what his watch manager told his group of crew managers:

"In front of the guys, don't question me … I won't question you … we will work whatever is said … that's our line. But if I'm being out of order and I'm saying something that's not right, come in here and we will talk about it and we will sort it out from there" … and that's, I think, the way that they worked, and it's the way

we work here. I think it tends to be most successful because you don't get the firefighters just moaning at the Guvnor. They can come to the crew managers and something will happen about it … also it's not just a Guvnor barking orders - who even when he is wrong, he will argue black is white for the whole month, which some places it turns out like that.

Overall, it seems that the combination of masculinity and management practice deployed by watch managers appear underpinned by various negotiations of power (see also 'give and take' in chapter seven). Additionally, as the narrative above indicates, these are often (but not always), supported by protocols. However, these power relations are often sustained by hidden or disguised processes, not readily understood by those not immersed in the experience of fire service culture. These practices appear to work behind the scenes to support what Goffman terms 'fronts' of work identity with the hidden processes, becoming part of the repertoire that makes up the 'doing' of culture (see Calhoun and Sennett, 2007).

Summary and discussion

There are a number of important themes to draw out in this chapter. First, comparative differences occur with watch managers' data, in the way crew managers' relationships appear as less complex in terms of mediating a multitude of relationships (as WMs do). At the same time, crew managers tend to position so as to either experience their role feeling 'sandwiched' between the watch manager and firefighters, or position flexibly as 'chameleon role', or in a mediatory position. Second, crew managers tend to experience their role in different ways, as one crew manager describes freedoms given by the watch manager to manage the watch, whereas others suggest to experience a lack of autonomy. Equally significant is how relational patterns of behaviour emerge through attachments/detachment - either veering towards firefighters (being FFs representative to WM), or toward their WM (being the WMs representative to FFs). Crew managers consensually view watch management to operate differentially over fire station and fire ground with the former presenting as more problematic to manage in terms of people-management, gaining compliance and operationalising authority. This is hardly surprising, as this thesis reinforces other research showing similar outcomes to occur (see Salaman

1986, Chetkovich 1997, Baigent 2001, Ainge 2010). However, what I am showing here is a different perspective - how the watch and firefighters influence the crew managers'/watch managers' experience of their role.

Interestingly, Collinson and Hearn (2005) argue that 'typically it is within the managerial function that organisational power resides and decision making is the key aspect of managerial authority' (p.293), which invariably includes workplace power relations (Collinson and Hearn 1996). Kanter (1977) also takes the view differences between men and women's experiences in organisations revolve less around gender, and more around work position and structures of opportunity. With these theorisations in mind, what is noticeable (within the narratives at all role levels) is that whilst roles in the FRS hierarchy vary, each worker pursues differing opportunities that empower their sense of work-self and reflect work values. What becomes important to outline are the ways crew managers experience agency/opportunity or lack of autonomy during various interactive time frames at work. Aside from the mainstream disillusioned crew managers, Reg's (Castle) stand-alone experience of his role as giving of choice and autonomy provides him with an empowering sense of development, growth and progression, representative of a differently founded sense of self.

For these crew managers any feelings of disempowerment are partially ameliorated via the bi-part operational aspect of the role - at times being in charge and at other times 'falling back to the firefighter role'. In this way, crew managers do not give up the hands-on aspect of the job in the way that the watch manager role requires. Yet, in other ways, the work-self could equally be thought a case of fractured identity. For example, in some instances crew manager's sense of coherent self becomes compromised through the need to communicate differentially between two diverse audiences requiring dual vocabularies (one front of work identity for management and another constructed for firefighters) to avoid euphemistic interpretations. This practice may impact on the shaping of work identity in the way language is never freely adopted. On the other hand, these types of issues allow space for creativity of thought to occur, especially in challenging circumstances when communicating unpopular messages to the watch.

Equally, Ken's (Castle) contribution provides insight towards how as a crew manager 'you have to keep the tone of the watch on another level' no longer can you speak freely as it had been previously possible (as a firefighter and between firefighters). This highlights yet another area where language is thought to compromise the crew manager's sense of agency. There are times crew managers steer firefighters' conversations and on other occasions, they steer to avoid discord erupting within the group. On both occasions they appear to provide a moral compass to set markers of standards for interactions. These issues surface as essential constituents of day-to-day work. The crew managers appear in a constant process of applying self-discipline becoming a measure of how self-policing and group policing occurs. Their presence as (crew) managers, labours to constantly influence terms of interactions within the group. These insightful extracts of narrative bring our attention to the way separations between self and others become subjectively felt between roles in the watch, providing insight towards experiences of managing.

Crew managers' perceptions of power indicate times of agency/constraint and power/disempowerment to occur for both grass roots and management levels. Affiliations to the FBU and firefighters' solidarity are the means by which crew managers come to view firefighters as empowered (in practice). Perceptions of power towards the firefighter role are most strongly attributed because of the particularised work that firefighters do (cutting-edge of delivery). However, some crew managers also view senior management as an empowered sector because of their liberty to effect policy and decision-making (unlike firefighters). Interestingly, what emerges through the crew managers' narratives (similar to some watch manager accounts) are ways they come to influence the tone of watch culture. At the fire station, informal watch hierarchies have their own set of moral frameworks that can either resist or co-exist with the formal authorities (CM, WM) on the watch. However, all crew managers concede there are informal leaders in the watch - the 'characters' with seniority of service whose influence is both positive and negative (usually positive on the incident ground and likely negative on station). Unlike other industries where managers join at managerial levels by contrast, these watch/crew managers take on a managerial role having fully experienced grass roots culture (and been a part of it), which may have a considerable influence on their management practices. The next chapter builds on these insights providing more clues as to how we might recognise the informal culture and the ways tensions of authority come into play. Particularly

revealing are firefighters' explanations of how power dynamics operationalise when a new watch manager arrives on station.

Chapter Nine

'Tugs of War'

Firefighters: Watch Identity, Being Managed and Tensions of Power

Introduction

Despite FRS modernisation and organisational delayering through the process of rank to role, alongside a considerable amount of academic interest in formal and informal FRS cultures (Hinds-Aldrich 2012, Thurnell-Reid and Parker 2008, Baigent 2001), one firefighter pertinently remarks 'there's only two ranks, you're either in charge or you not' (FF, Metro). Although this firefighter draws our attention to a stark reality of watch management, at the same time, this catch phrase sharpens analytical awareness towards types of authority that vie for power in the watch. Emergent within analysis of this chapter, are ways firefighters view power tensions to operationalise in the watch. In particular, focus highlights the ways the informal hierarchy organises and influences the watch manager's sense of authority, experience of work, and constructions of a particularised work identity.

This chapter draws from narratives of firefighters group discussion representing the final tier of FRS hierarchy adding a much-needed perspective towards the watch manager role. In order to retain a holistic understanding of each watch and grasp group dynamics, the chapter divides into four main sections each representing one watch (two watches from each FRS). Analysis explores ways firefighters think about their job and differentiate from their watch manager. This allows for the push and pull of power to emerge of how managerial identities and authority becomes established, challenged, and defended in the day-to-day of work. This particular focus leads to show ways firefighters' group identity (culture) emerges through particularised rules, norms, and values of watch culture and ways dominant discourses become re-enacted via daily interaction.

Management by proxy (Metro, Watch 1)

The first watch was a large group of firefighters of mixed ages and seniority of service, and similar to the three other watches, all were members of the union. The group dynamics in the focus groups were particularly interesting to observe, which set a pattern that all watches tended to follow. In particular, it was noticeable that when one firefighter provided an answer, often this set in action a collective debate with newer and established firefighters chipping into the discussion. What was surprising, were the moments when firefighters disagreed and with an air of gentle challenge, the more dominant members imposed their views in a way of underhanded correction, suggesting an informal hierarchy. What also emerges is a sense that firefighters were used to having discussions between themselves, as they were well rehearsed about times to speak, and whom they could, and could not, either talk over or interrupt. What these observations led me to believe is that group rules of interaction apply between newer and longer-serving members (within an informal hierarchy), simultaneously working to make known their strength of watch solidarity. This may not be quite so discernible to those interviewers not familiar with watch groups.

When opening discussion on what makes for a 'good' watch manager, the watch collectively argue for 'time-in' to be highly important as this allows the watch manager to 'learn how to do that role correctly', gain management experience and 'do the job well'. A watch manager's job satisfaction was thought to emerge from their proven ability of 'doing a good job' and responsibilities for overseeing the watch at an incident. Adding a spice of humour laced with truth, one older hand interjected theatrically, impersonating his watch manager to say 'well done lads! You did a great job, you made me look good' - causing laughter to echo within the watch. However, seeing through the banter, the firefighters' quip immediately alerts us to the importance of understanding how differences resonate between watch manager and firefighters' work identity. In this respect, the types of workers who this watch believes are drawn to the watch manager role are those who possess 'natural' leadership ability, 'that are leaders and will always be a leader because that's just the way they are', echoing Carlyle's (1888) supposition. The way separations between watch managers and firefighters are thought to occur began to surface early on in the interview when it was suggested that 'some watch managers don't see things the way we do', who are 'very pro-management', and that these watch

managers were keen to get promoted. As such, distinctions are drawn between those watch managers who allow themselves to be influenced by senior management, who 'try to do everything they say' with those watch managers who 'sort of like say - I have done that and push it to one side and do the important things'. What this infers is that watch managers can be categorised in terms of the way they chose to prioritise work seemingly to be a reflection of whose purposes they chose to serve.

In terms of the most important skills watch managers need to possess, range from being operationally competent and experienced to being a 'good man-manager' (at the station). This watch felt it was important for the watch manager to 'manage confrontations', 'treat people as individuals' and understand the 'different needs of firefighters on the watch'. Those watch managers who have gained promotion via non-traditional means (fast-track) are viewed suspiciously. One particular firefighter argues 'I wouldn't trust them [the WM] until I had been to ten to fifteen jobs with them because I know that they know nothing'. It was consensually thought that these types of watch managers are likely to only operate within the boundaries of their 'neatly written operational notes' to meet the demands of the emergency situation. The watch argue the only way to gain real experience is to attend 'actual' rather than 'virtual' incidents, and the best way to learn the craft of firefighting is through experience rather than theory as pressures of an incident cannot be recreated. Viewing the present promotional system critically, one firefighter argues:

> It doesn't make any of us worthwhile going for promotion because it will be someone outside with a degree who will get in front of us anyhow … so our hands are tied really, it's a bit sad.

Although this is representative of an issue where firefighters view inequalities within promotional systems, it is also indicative of resentments towards forms of FRS modernisation. In terms of the impact the modernisation agenda has had on the watch manager's role, one longer-serving firefighter suggests that the delayering process of rank to role took away the authority and autonomy of the watch manager role:

> Where it used to be the watch manager that used to run the station and deal with what training we do, now it's the computer. The computer tells us what we have to

do … it tells the watch manager what he has to do, and we do what the computer has told him we have to do.

For example, at the station the watch manager comes to manage by proxy as a human extension of a machine (automaton). This appears to absolve the watch manager of the need to take responsibility for what work gets done, rather than as a manager empowered with agency and choice (as thought in the past). Therefore, managing at the station becomes thought of (by the firefighters) as operating in similar terms to what Ritzer theorises as the 'McDonaldization' of work (Massey 2012). Work then becomes organised through a new paradigm of rationality, where 'efficiency' becomes subject to a new sense of calculability and set of predictable outcomes (Ritzer 1996).

In the firefighters' example, the reimagining of 'efficiency' under these circumstances become mobilised through explicit 'orders' given via the computer, which does much to depersonalise the way interaction occurs. An example of this is how the FRS computer software is able to determine and calculate training needs of each firefighter, set deadlines for skills to be tested, and quotas for fire safety visits. This could be seen as a way of lessening room for resistance between watch manager and firefighters. This is also a way to deplete the margins of a watch manager to effect agency and exercise 'give and take' (see for example Grant, Dale, WMs, Metro), or manage by consent (see Bob WM, Metro). If the watch manager role were reduced to one of 'messenger', then clearly influence and power are being eroded amounting to a new reconfiguration of what Braverman (1974) theorises as 'deskilling'. Management's attempt to reconfigure a new mode of rationalisation that may not only place constraints on watch managers' agency, but may also work to homogenise and neutralise watch culture to colonise firefighters' behaviour.

However, given that this watch is of strong unionised character, it could also be argued, that this mode of depersonalisation is a way that this watch manager diffuses conflict between self and firefighters - by blaming the faceless computer for organising daily work at the station. Although alleviating some tensions, this enactment may also increase the depth of firefighters' resentment towards the system and senior managers. It seems less than coincidental that the firefighters complain that the current way of organising (via the computer) hinders the ability for watch managers to refine specific training needs for newcomers in the watch, which restricts overall efficiency and effectiveness of the group.

However, in spite of these challenges, there was an expectation for their watch manager to bring newer firefighters' hands-on (in skills) and 'install a lot of real sense or advice to them'. This then becomes a collective responsibility within the watch aiding new firefighters to hone skills and learn codes of interaction. These homosocial learning practices pass down from generation to generation of firefighters (Bird 1986), deepening the recruits' connection between work and self (Attewell 1990) and attachments to other firefighters. However, of more pressing concern to the firefighters were the watch manager's competences and skills at an incident, which is subject to a form of on-going evaluation, providing the means to authenticate the watch manager's status, gain respect, and legitimise the watch manager's right to manage and lead the group. By contrast, the watch consensually agree that central to their disapproval are:

> Guys that have gone through the ranks from this station who are complete and utter idiots, promoted purely because they tick the boxes in the promotional exams.

These views appear to place watch managers in two contrasting camps of either authentic or verboten heirs. These types of collective sentiment provide a real insight into frameworks of firefighters' grammars of evaluation[39] (Lamont 2000) operationalising as an axis through which they come to cast particular ascriptions towards the watch managers' work identity and shape the moral compass of the watch. This watch also highlights two important issues relating to the way management have sought to redefine work relationships. First, firefighters describe the way that time-in and 'hands-on experience' is no longer seen by management to be the highest value skill in terms of who should and should not be promoted. This highlights the disparity between the moral frameworks of the collectivity of watch with the moral frameworks of senior management. This suggests watch managers find themselves juxtaposed between an ever-widening gap between firefighter and management rationale (see also Dale and Ron, WMs, Metro).

These firefighters thought that the separations between the watch manager and firefighters occurred over the way the manager chose to run the watch. This is important, because it provides an insight into how the relationship-contract becomes established within the team. One firefighter explains 'some micro-manage and some don't … and more of a

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[39] Sites on which good, bad, right and wrong emerge

loose reign, and some are really, really, tight, and like scared to let go, to run it a little bit'. This promotes the idea that watch managers exercise choice in how they choose to manage their watch and the way that power operationalises. At the same time, this also provides indications of how watch managers come to sculpture their work identity through ways they chose to take power and release power, become givers of autonomy and takers of watch autonomy. This giving and taking of power between watch manager and watch, also surfaces in the firefighters' explanations of what happens when a new watch manager arrives on the watch. A firefighter with seniority says:

> The watch will slowly change and eventually fit-in and they will all sort of suit each other's … I guess … personalities ... y'know … people who are happy to be managed in certain ways, whereas other people just think … well, no, I don't wanna be…

This demonstrates how watch managers and firefighters meld towards a state of equilibrium or how problems arise when firefighters resist particular ways of being managed by certain personalities. However, if a natural melding of the watch manager and watch (firefighters) occurs, then differing masculinities converge and bend to accommodate each other. This tends to ameliorate the threat of change (Drummond 2002). In these circumstances, a new sense of watch identity emerges because of the fluid symmetry between them. By contrast, if discord arises from the union of watch manager and watch, then competing masculine identities take up positions against each other and disunity surfaces between watch manager and firefighters on a regular basis (see Curtis WM, Castle, chapter five).

The consensus view of the work group was that the best role in the FRS was that of firefighter, with one firefighter arguing that 'it should be, otherwise we would go for promotion'. Interestingly, for this watch the crew manager role was singled out to be the worst role because as one firefighter suggests 'he gets it from us, and he gets it from the watch manager, so he is in between and he gets it from both sides'. It was also thought crew managers spend a lot of time away from the watch on out-duties and that they carry the burden of acting up to watch manager 'being out on the pump all the time', but on

station find themselves 'all being moaned at in the office'. It is in the further discussion of similarities between roles that other symbols of power surface:

FF1   There is a difference, though like when I observe a watch manager and our crew manager, I always feel … they sit in a different seat to start with [in the fire engine] and that just registers straight away, and at the station, in the office, you can see who is in charge - and it filters down from that.

FF2   It's like there's only two ranks … you're either in charge or you not.

FF3   I'd say crew manager is … how I think of it anyway … a crew manager is nearer a firefighter, and a watch manager is nearer a station manager, rather than the other way round ... I don't know whether that is because of uniform or what have you.

For these firefighters, a sense of belonging emerges via boundary markers, marked via space demarking status, and aesthetic signs of whom they are similar and dissimilar to in the work organisation. This watch perceives themselves to feel most detached from anyone who was not a part of the station, viewing these roles as 'a totally different job' and part of 'a totally different world'. Above watch level, these firefighters view managers to lose their free thinking, having to comply with mantras of 'yes sir, no sir' to managers above them. Separations also occur through descriptions of themselves versus management, suggesting for managers at HQ to be 'Neanderthals' and for group members to be 'brothers and sisters'. In this way, in-groups and out-groups emerge, but draw from differing resources of power and experience autonomy and constraint differently. For these firefighters, the Fire Authority and HR were thought the most empowered sectors of the FRS. Though viewing themselves as the most disempowered sector, this was simultaneously tempered with the consensus view that their only real power and voice towards management was through union membership:

We go to the FBU, the representative bodies. That is only how we are ever going to get our voice heard really...when you haven't got a voice … our only voice is around the mess table. We can go and see our line manager and that's as far it will stop, then if you wanna make … get anything done, you have to go to your

representative body whether you are in the union or whatever it might be - because we haven't really got a voice anymore.

Seemingly, to echo Anthony's argument (SM, Metro), a long-serving firefighter suggests over the years, management has undermined camaraderie and being together around the mess table. However he was also quick to argue that senior managers attempts to break tradition, which 'hasn't affected the way we operate as we still all stick together and make the best of it that we can'. Highly valued within the watch, was the collective work identity representative of the totality sum of operational experience attributed in balance towards longer-serving members. One firefighter argues 'there's no substitute for experience with people not in this job'. What emerges here, are ways the watch become subject to cultural frames and filters, enabling a sense of shared values, sentiments and understandings, which work to bind the strong collective consciousness together. In this way, social solidarity and the role of rite and ceremony becomes manifest through the speaking out of shared views - a showing of respect towards their informal hierarchy. The crux of watch solidarity and bonding is operationalised in the mix of newer and experienced firefighters, and the giving of time to help each other. The firefighters argue a good watch has a balance of age and experience for the watch to operate efficiently as a group. The variables of age and experience appear to construct layers in the informal hierarchy, which on the one hand, works as a cohesive unit and united front, and on the other hand, internal pecking orders denote informal markers of separation: the inner layer between firefighters (on the watch), between firefighters' and managers (in the watch), and the boundary layer denoting separations between the watch with workers on the outside of watch culture. This becomes more complex as it extends outwards both horizontally and vertically up the organisation (i.e. watch versus watch, WM versus WM in a continuum). These separations occur on multiple sites (for example age, longevity of service, skills, roles held, the means by which roles were gained, status, forms of masculinities, etc.). It is on these types of axis that work identity 'becomes' subject to differential experiences by each firefighter or watch manager in the watch.

The giving and taking of power (Metro, Watch 2)

In Metro watch 2, what became noticeable during their discussions is that newer and younger firefighters were 'talked over', and that other firefighters would talk in the

background while they were speaking. For the longer-serving and most dominant members of the watch, this did not occur. Mirroring watch (1) where longevity of service ascribes high status and informal protocols become visible through interaction - the hierarchy of the informal culture shows to surface 'in action'.

For these firefighters, the importance of the watch manager role revolves around the incident ground with expectation firmly placed on the watch manager 'to come up with the plan' and 'make decisions' as to how the team mobilise. Bringing in a theatrical analogy, one firefighter argues 'the watch manager is the first person that you have got … to kind of step back … and hold the little strings and make puppets work'. In this sense, the watch manager role takes on an importance to become the orchestrator of firefighters' work. At the same time, this type of description illuminates not only the way labour divides in the watch via various responsibilities and skills but also the workings of power in the watch. What emerges here, is not just a particular formation of power relations, but also the way this interplays with the division of labour, which are sites where Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) argue for masculinities to be constructed (in combination with patterns of emotional attachment). When the watch manager takes control over the incident ground and mobilises firefighters, the power invested in their formal authority simultaneously empowers firefighters to demonstrate proficiency in their skills. In combination, watch managers and their firefighters work in harmony to bring order out of a chaotic situation. Initially, this appears as a stage for competing masculinities at work, but collectively, firefighters and their watch manager organise so that 'all' benefit from taking part (including those in need of rescue). Thus, the incident ground sets the scene for particular identities to emerge from the performances work. In this environment, the firefighters' hands-on skills become 'the front' of occupational identity to onlookers, whilst the watch manager becomes 'the front' within the team. It is on the fireground that two forms of masculinities emerge (in different guises separated via differing skills) and converge (watch manager and watch), both in supporting roles for each other: the watch manager performing 'directive-masculinity' (logos/rationale), and firefighters enacting 'action-masculinity' (pathos/action). Both masculinities are underpinned with identical moral purposes 'doing what is right and good' (ethos), in extraordinary circumstances. In effect, both roles are front stage and back stage but for different audiences.

Separations between firefighters and the watch manager occur via various levels of skill and proficiency, and in terms of differing kinds of pressures on each role. These firefighters see their watch manager's pressures as:

> People doing stuff round the station that needs to be done … y'know, things got to be done … ticked off, and signed off, that's how they measure everything now from above. They [management] just say, they have not met this target and that target … so obviously something is going wrong … as long as you meet the targets.

This watch view all watch managers to differ from each other. For example, comparing their outgoing and newly appointed watch manager (on fast-track promotion), one firefighter quips:

> Our previous one [WM] took about seven or eight years to train and then he retired [laughter]. The new guy has not been here very long, so we are settling into a working relationship with him at the moment, which is going fine.

By contrast, to the recently retired watch manager, the new watch manager is viewed favourably - thought to possess leadership abilities, be a good motivator and communicator, and a manager that runs the watch 'how he wants it'. It appears that when the watch manager first came to the station he told one of the older hands:

> "I'm not changing anything because it [the watch] runs itself … it's fine" … so he said: "there is no need" … he said: "I can get on and do what I want to do", and: "you do what you want to do". Stuff gets done so …

In the context of the station, what we see emerging is an example of the way negotiation of masculine identities occurs (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985, Collinson and Hearn, 1996). On the one hand, the watch manager (facilitating-masculinity) refrains from micromanaging but maintains control via delegation to a leading-hand (action-masculinity) who can control and manage the watch, and has gained status and respect the watch manager

lacks. What we see here is formal and informal control merging. Whilst traits and attributes of both are similar; for example, leadership, management, inter-personal skills, and types of ascribed status, they operationalise in different circumstances and different ways. These skills and attributes are recognised differently within the value systems of the formal and informal hierarchies. For example, this watch manager highly values techno-bureaucratic skills (a much needed skill to deliver evidence of work outcomes for the formal hierarchy). By contrast, the 'old-hand' values the craft of firefighting, earned through experience and being seen to be a good firefighter (Baigent 2001). Already substantiated in this research is that hands-on experience ascribes a high status to firefighters in the informal hierarchy. Nevertheless, what also emerges here is the way formal and informal hierarchies possess differing value systems determined by the aspect of work they feel most attached to, which works to make an assertion about the shaping of occupational identity.

Whilst the firefighters observe the new watch manager to 'keep a line between them and him', it is how the new watch manager organises the relationship between himself and firefighters that is important to deconstruct. On the surface, the narrative seems to indicate a softer approach than one might imagine a new watch manager to take. On the one hand, this watch manager has 'set out his stall', but he has also harnessed the skills and authority of the senior hand by letting him know he will not contest his ability to organise the watch in their daily activities. This concession appears based on the watch manager's foresight that this dynamic works because 'stuff gets done'. In this instance, the watch manager's strategy has not only potentially bought one of the peer group leaders on-side, but it could also be seen as a way of devolving responsibility to a 'safe pair of hands' that has influence with watch members. This works to create a sense of trust between the watch manager and senior hand where the watch manager informally recognises the informal hierarchy within the watch (sanctioning informal authority) and vice versa. In effect, this give and take of authority not only legitimises two work identities, but also reinforces and magnifies the persona of each.

This working arrangement is similar to the dichotomies of the know-how (head) and do-how managers (hands) in Gouldner's (1954) research, with the know-how managers

working away from the shop floor in the office quantifying work, and the do-how managers overseeing and doing work with the factory men. However, in this circumstance the watch manager (head) and older hand (hands) work together, harnessing authority on both formal and informal terms towards the watch. This situation leaves the senior hand open to accommodate, consent, or resist the watch manager's control. What we observe to be happening here is the way formal and informal authority interlope to create a synergy: an accommodation on both sides configuring terms of the work relationship. This conspires to build mutual respect and trust, on the one hand becoming self-serving because both interests are protected and on the other creating and maintaining a working sense of dual-authority maintaining a sense of equilibrium (as opposed to how it was under the old watch manager).

When directly asking how the watch runs, the firefighters' agree 'it runs itself'. The firefighters in this watch believe themselves to be 'a good watch' and to 'tick along steadily'. This opinion forms from observing differences between themselves and other watches when performing out-duties at other stations. Extending these types of comparisons, the work group explain how the dynamic works when being posted to a new watch with the consensus agreeing 'you adapt more to the watch … watch managers, they have to adapt to the watch rather than the watch adapt to them'. Reiterating the point, one firefighter says 'when I came in, I changed to the watch, they didn't change to me, so I adapt to the watch rather than the watch change'. How this works in the longer terms with in-coming and out-going firefighters is explained by one firefighter who says over a ten-year period there has been 'a sort of nucleus' of three longer-serving firefighters who have remained constant on the watch. In terms of in-coming and out-going watch managers, one firefighter (with seniority) says:

> From my experience, generally, it's the watch that manages the manager … because if it's the other way round (you looked quite shocked there). I mean … no, maybe this is the first manager that I know that has got very distinct ideas and is very positive what he wants and expects, and it works very well. But with previous managers, it interfered … they adapt to the watch, especially in years gone by, I mean … and if the watch is all experienced then it is very difficult and very difficult to manage that sort of situation. Quite often, it will be that the senior

hands of years gone by who kind of … potentially, dictate that, and it still goes on, but I don't think so on this watch definitely not.

Whilst the firefighter with seniority argues this does not happen on his watch, what we do know is that their particular system is supported through the giving and taking of authority between the watch manager and the older hand. Whilst neither have totalitarian power (at the station) both hold the watch 'in balance of power' and both empower each other (as discussed earlier). By contrast, on the fire ground, terms of engagement are much more straightforward with one firefighter arguing that 'generally fire ground discipline is very different to the way it is in the station', and in this context 'there is no room or time for debates' whatever is asked 'just gets done and whatever he [the WM] says … you do'. By comparison, (on station) it is argued that 'there's still the respect' but 'you can kind of make a point or you can make more of a fuss about something that you don't think is a very good idea'. The latter was something of a regular occurrence with the previous 'Guvnor' (WM).

The success and failure of a watch manager appears to revolve around 'someone who is prepared to listen to the watch' and 'someone who the watch can discuss things with' like during times when drills are performed. Though skills of adaptability were also thought important, so too was the watch manager's ability to 'flex his muscles a bit so at the end of the day, he is still the officer in charge at the station'. Although suggesting autocratic authority to operationalise via the watch manager on the fire ground 'unless it is risk critical or something like that', one firefighter (with seniority) explains:

> There's enough experience here on our watch to say, if it did come to it, that you would question the Guvnor, that they would say: "hang on Guvnor, I'm not sure about that", on the fireground.

What appears demanded of the watch manager is acknowledgement of the longer-serving firefighter's experience (and respect) allowing prompts to occur only when necessary from the senior hands. This appears as a process where trust between firefighters and watch managers occurs in the practice of a binding of power(s) - where both parties (WM and

watch) reiterate the parameters of their working relationship. This shows to operate in a similar way to what Metro watch (1) describe as the way the two factions learn to bend and meld with each other.

This fitting-in process similarly works when a new recruit joins the watch and although they are formally ascribed a mentor, in actualities one firefighter argues 'they don't really work because everyone helps'. When asking about the relationship between younger and older workers there was a 'deathly silence', then one firefighter broke the silence by asking if the interviewer meant the 'senior hands'. At this conjecture, a firefighter broke the silence by stating 'you give them a bit of respect, give everyone respect, but you might give them [senior hands] a little bit more respect'. The consensus view of these firefighters was that new recruits 'are not treated differently but you have to teach them correctly what they should be doing and what is expected of them'. It was important that 'good habits' were learnt on the station that are thought to 'benefit them [new firefighters] in the future, and only then do they get respect'.

Long-serving firefighters sustain respect via experience and sharing of skills. Newer firefighters were described to 'show respect' by asking the older firefighters for advice. In this way, a power/knowledge relationship becomes a construct between longer-serving and newer firefighters bestowing a mutual sense of empowerment. However, not all senior hands are viewed positively, as one firefighter explains 'going around other watches, he is the bloke that is sat over there doing sod all, all the time, but now everyone mucks in here I think, it's very different'. Whilst at this point laughter erupts within the group, what becomes interesting to note is the way watches and firefighters appear in a constant mode of comparison between themselves and 'others' in the FRS.

The push and pull of power (Castle, Watch 3)

For Castle (watch 3), the watch manager role is viewed to be 'head of organising everything we do when he is on duty' and 'responsible for targets and other certain things being met'. When the watch manager is off on leave, sickness, or detached for any other reason, it was explained that then the crew manager steps up to be responsible for that role. The watch manager role was also seen in terms of 'making sure the watch work to a pattern that will tick all the boxes for training, HFS checks and that watch competencies

are achieved over the year'. A good watch manager was thought to be someone who 'makes sure everybody knows where they stand'. An important part of the conversation focused on 'respect' issues and how a new watch manager would fit-in with the watch:

> It has to be mutual respect … and a good watch manager must respect his firefighters … ultimately … which, we will give him respect. It doesn't matter how good you are if you haven't got respect … y'know, speaking as 'done a couple of years' [sarcasm - this firefighter has done twenty-five years' service], if a watch manager don't respect me, then I am not gonna respect him. (FF2, watch 3, Castle)

The type of management attitude that is thought to show respect is a watch manager that 'doesn't have to check up on you every five seconds, as we know what we have to do on day-to-day business'. A longer-serving firefighter then interjects to point out the watch dislikes 'someone with an iron fist over you to tell you what you have got to do'. Being micro-managed was viewed as an affront to firefighters' dignity. In terms of how the watch dynamic works when a new watch manager arrives, a debate sets off between firefighters in the group:

FF2   I think a lot of the time that watch managers come into watches that are already established and it's hard because, then they need to put a period of time-in for them to get to know how the dynamics work

FF3   Just because you can pass an exam does not make you a man-manager.

FF2   No, and so there is an element of fitting-in with how the group … fit-in with how the group interact with each other, but at the same time achieving what they need to achieve and if they can't do that … then there tends to be clashes on watches. But if they can manage how everyone works … because everybody has got their own little ways of doing things … but if they can get around the way people work individually, and as a group to get everything done and keep it harmonious, then they are a good watch manager … in my book anyway.

FF1   There is a lot more firefighters on a watch than … there is one watch manager and one crew manager. They need to kind of fit around how we work, especially if they have come in afterwards

FF2   That is a part of mutual respect isn't it? If you know your position in life then everyone has got the opportunity to take that position, and if you don't want to take the position then you have got to respect the people that do want to take the position. But then, they have also got to have respect for people they are now in charge of ultimately … and ultimately, they are there to protect our lives and the decision-making process when you are at an incident ground.

Similar to other accounts, these firefighters take the view that what makes a good watch manager on station can be very different to what makes a good watch manager at an incident ground. In terms of the operational, it was thought crucial for the watch manager to be 'calm, controlled and measured and take command', all of which affect the degree of success at an incident. Some watch managers were thought to be 'awesome around the station' and 'great at paper work and emails and stuff like that' but on the fire ground 'absolutely useless' and 'start flapping'. There was a consensus that the watch manager's role is made up of two different jobs, which they believe to be 'quite a difficult tight rope to walk' in respect of getting it right in both environments.

The most important skills for a watch manager revolve around 'man-management' - skills that one of the senior hands argues 'could not be taught' (presumably via modules). Substantiating his argument, this firefighter uses his old sub officer as a case example:

FF2   He could sit round and you'd end up doing a job, not because you are meant to be doing it, not because it is down to the routines of doing it, it is above and beyond what you should be doing and you are doing it … and you are half way through thinking … what am I doing this for? I shouldn't be doing this. But the way he talked to you … he could talk you into doing things in such a good way - his management skills were superb … but he was great, he was the sort of person that gelled the watch and got people to do things without … there was no arguments … only talk.

Interviewer - How did he do that then?

FF2   I don't know, if I had his skills I wouldn't be here would I? If I knew how he did it, I wouldn't be here.

What is important to highlight here, is that the old sub officer continues to have had a profound yet puzzling effect on this firefighter who still appears baffled in respect of why this might be so. Interestingly, this phenomenon bears a resounding similarity to what Weber (1946) constructs as charismatic authority. In this example the magnetisms of the sub officer transforms the will and motivations of the firefighters (similar to emotional labour). This simultaneously promotes cohesion and identification with in-group members aligning with what Etzioni (1961) describes as 'the ability to exercise, diffuse and intensive influence over the normative and ideological orientations of others' (p.91), which fosters a collective moral conscience (Lunenburg 2011). In the firefighter's description, the charismatic manifestations describe a sort of 'hold' that the charismatic personality has over the follower - where authority is gained through the desire to please. This process works to the extent that judgement is suspended (just as in Weber's notion of 'a good bureaucrat') even when dramatic realisations surface (i.e. when the firefighter questions his actions 'what am I doing this for?'). Although, the narrative draws attention to the way the firefighter questions his actions, it does not stop the process, outcome, or dynamic occurring. The continuing intelligibility of the sub officer's effect on the firefighter causes him to assume the sub officer possessed 'good man-management skills', but surely it must be more than this? Often we think that charismatic leadership occurs in a crisis - more geared to appear in the leading of firefighters in the chaotic environment of the incident ground, but quite clearly, this was not so on this occasion (occurring at the station). The extraordinary appears to emerge through the way the sub officer was able to motivate and get firefighters to do things over and above what they normally do - transforming the will of the follower without questioning the authority of the manager (an example of revolutionising the firefighter from within). The out of the ordinary in this case, appears as a trait within both follower and charismatic persons. Authority in this circumstance becomes operationalised latently and because of gravitations of attachment, felt towards the leader (and through personal choice) the firefighter aligns, submits, and responds to the will of a charismatically gifted individual.

For this watch, a good watch manager is also someone 'who understands the strengths and weaknesses of people he is working with both above and below him', needing to show proficiency 'at recognising and developing people without making them feel self-conscious or making a big show and dance that some people are more skilful in other areas'. The firefighters also maintain the need for the watch manager to recognise and harness skills bought into the watch from outside (such as building and forestry knowledge) that could contribute to operational effectiveness. Another firefighter pointed out the need for the watch manager to be able to sift between those firefighters who are 'dynamic and get on with things and those you have to push'. Importantly, just as the other watches have indicated the firefighters need to be able to trust the watch manager on the incident ground. One firefighter explains that if this comes into doubt then:

> You are not going to give them 100% on the incident ground because you just think; you are not doing … not going down the right route in the first place.

Differences between watch managers are seen in terms of their ability to excel in certain aspects of their role. These firefighters suggest that watch managers' skills are not consistent across the board with strengths and weaknesses in different areas. For example, one firefighter indicates:

> My first watch manager was very good to me in my development with regard to paperwork and getting me through my development folder and doing a lot of training, but possibly … operationally - he wasn't. Second watch manager was worst on an incident ground … he was a flapper.

Ultimately, the inference was that whilst watch managers demonstrate inconsistency of skills and knowledge - firefighters do not. In respect of those watch managers wanting promotion, the firefighters suggest these watch managers to 'start talking fire service promotion spiel' as if 'swallowing a management pill, talking rubbish and becoming all authoritarian and bureaucratic'. For those watch managers who chose to take promotions

further up to station manager level, it was thought that when they know they are leaving the watch they begin to distance themselves from the watch. One firefighter argues:

> You change … you have to change your personality to take promotion. A lot of people can't do both, they don't know how to be themselves and go for promotion. They change, and I don't like that and I don't respect people that change.

Resoundingly, these firefighters believe the watch manager's authenticity becomes compromised and subject to what they describe as 'indoctrination', aligning thinking towards management rationale.

There was a consensus of agreement that there were 'power' cliques everywhere in the FRS with each department 'understandably' looking after their own interests. A sense of fragmentation was thought to occur at senior levels of Castle FRS with management figures pulling in opposite directions. These senior managers are viewed as being 'pulled from pillar to post because of political rather than operational pressures'. By contrast, firefighters were thought to 'at least complain about the same things', (valued because they display solidarity) usually towards 'wanting to get outside and do things properly'.

This watch took a particularly staunch view when describing their relationship with the union correcting the interviewer through arguing 'we *are* the union we are not *in* the union'. At station level, firefighters believe the union to be very effective providing the means to wield power (and have a voice), working to maintain a sense of 'power balance' in the organisation. Aside from the union on the one hand, it was agreed that there was a balance of power on the watch because their watch manager listens to their ideas, but that senior management do not. For example, these firefighters argue when senior managers visit to rollout a lecture (about change, etc.), it is done so from dictatorial position. When asking this watch who they felt were empowered sectors of the FRS, a debate began to erupt with two-thirds of the group arguing that firefighters were not empowered and one third differing in opinion, suggesting:

Firefighters are empowered because they make things work because we have to, these things are driven down to us, and we have to make the best of the sometimes-dubious things that come out.

What is important to highlight within these differing opinions is that whilst union affiliation forms the main thread of solidarity (and consensus of opinion), outside of this, firefighters treat each other as individuals and feel secure enough to challenge each other's opinions in relation to other (more insignificant) issues.

Finding middle ground (Castle, Watch 4)

For Castle (watch 4) the watch manager role is viewed to be subject to a number of pressures. First, the watch manager role is thought of as 'challenging', with one firefighter explaining 'there's us coming with our issues sometimes, and then it's coming from the top as well'. Pressures were also seen to impact on watch managers from senior management who the firefighters argue to have recently sent a batch of reprimand letters to those watch managers not satisfactorily delivering CFS targets.

This watch portray a number of similarities to watch 3 (Castle) in the way they attach importance to harness newcomers' skills bought into the watch from outside professions. In terms of the way they view watch managers, overtly spoken against was a watch manager that takes the view on the fire ground 'I'm in charge, do this, do that'. Rather, they thought a good manager 'would want everybody's input on a certain situation'. This watch collectively thought at an incident 'you need a leader, you need somebody to turn to' and 'watch over you'. Two firefighters elaborate on their point:

FF 3   You can't go and just self-deploy or just run in there, on your own, willy-nilly … you might think you know what you are doing but you need someone to look … watch you on the outside.

FF 2   Yeah, you would probably be … OK, it's a bit like blinkered vision. You know what you have got to do … and you would probably say - right I've got to do that,

but you need somebody to stand back and look at the bigger picture for you as well, because while you are doing that … you can't see this.

By contrast, at the fire station it was thought 'guidance' was needed, taking the view they all know what to do and just get on with it. In this context, FF1 argues of watch managers 'all they do is just put stuff in the computer for us when we want time off or put extra pay in'. Similar to the inconsistencies of skill highlighted by the other watches, this watch also felt some watch managers 'are quite good at the HR stuff but they may lose it a bit on the fireground'. The important skills of a watch manager according to this watch, range from being a good listener, to being level headed, calm and knowledgeable, and someone who has good communication skills. Most importantly the watch felt they needed 'a leader that is willing to stay out in front of us, represent us, defend us on that sort of stuff' and 'be someone that you have some respect for'. With regard to those watch managers that move up and away from the watch, the consensus felt this new role requires a completely different mindset:

> They have got to be told … and just do it … they can't argue with them [senior managers]. If they have got a job to do, like change a policy or anything like that, even if they don't agree with it … their mindset will change and they will agree with it in the end.

This watch takes the view that whilst formal authority is gained through a watch manager's promotion, the exchange demands the loss of free thinking and the ability to challenge. Legal authority is gained but autonomy constrained.

Differences between watch managers were primarily seen in terms of the way that authority operationalises concerning station matters describing that on the one hand, you have 'dictators', and on the other, 'diplomats'. For this watch the best balance was thought to be 'having someone sort of in the middle'. This balancing of authority is described as a watch manager who 'if he has something to say he will say it', and at the same time be a manager who filters unimportant detail of management communication to explanations of what is going to happen and why. The latter approach provides the watch with an insight

into 'the bigger picture' in regards to what needs to be done. However, the firefighters also highlight how some watch managers inappropriately switch authoritative styles in an ad-hoc fashion, appearing to be 'cool' one moment and 'barking' (shouting) the next. As such, 'not knowing what side of the bed they got out of' makes the experience of being managed 'a bit of an emotional rollercoaster'. Why these inconsistent management qualities surface were thought an unintended consequence of rank to role. When the fire service transposed from officer to manager titles the longer-serving firefighter remarks 'I think it went to their heads a little bit because I think they thought they were managers'. Although this firefighter concedes watch managers do 'manage', reiterates his point by saying 'they are not actually managers'. The firefighter elaborates further, arguing watch managers are *not* professional managers and that some watch managers use their authority inappropriately. However, what also surfaces from the firefighter's narrative are areas of confusion towards the watch manager's role (and own sense of work identity) with this also extending to firefighters confusion towards it.

FRS research papers often represent watch groups as possessing high levels of group solidarity (Thurnell-Read and Parker 2008). However, this watch acknowledges that differing dynamics (good and bad) occur between watches on station, stations versus station, and between differing types of watch managers. Challenges to group solidarity also surface between firefighter and firefighter within the watch. One firefighter explains:

> One person who doesn't like that other person on the watch, rather than the whole watch, and that will kind of spread to the whole watch … so they don't speak to each other at all, but this station has not been like that at all.

Extending their discussion to include empowered and disempowered sectors of the FRS, the watch view senior management as the most empowered sector but conceded the Chief has little power over setting fire budgets. As to the most disempowered sector, similar to watch 3 (Castle), a debate occurred between firefighters in the watch. On the fire ground some watch members view firefighters to be disempowered because of health and safety legislation (delaying their ability to react immediately at an incident). Other firefighters take the view that watch managers are the most disempowered; sometimes they are

'scared to do anything because of senior managers turning up, giving them a telling off if they do something wrong', and having to be 'a bit cautious about what they do'.

When turning attention to differences between newer and longer-serving members on the watch, these firefighters consensually view that newer (often time younger) and longer-serving (often older firefighters) are not thought of any differently to each other on their watch (although this might not be the case on other stations). However, they also take the view that (newer) firefighters tend to have more respect for watch managers being 'time-served' - a measure of 'having been there and done it'. Although, often time watch managers would be younger and have less experience than the older hands, it is sometimes the case that watch managers get promoted above their mentor, becoming their boss. However, a firefighter with seniority provided an example of the way this change of power balance works itself out:

> Sometimes the watch manager will take the most senior firefighter in with him on certain jobs when he is on an echo and ask for his sort of input ... because he may have been to four, five jobs there, and the watch manager hasn't. So ... a good watch manager can draw on people's experience. The senior firefighter would then have a different view of the watch manager because the watch manager is showing like a submissive side ... asking him for help ... where he wouldn't ask us that sort of question, so we don't see that side of this all the time.

This firefighter continues to explain that this informal work practice allows the [long-serving firefighter] to see 'a different side to a watch manager, the more vulnerable side of me is maybe a more junior person'. These insights show how on particular occasions differential masculine hierarchies of power depend on each other for support where an inversion of power occurs (based on experience not authority vested in hierarchical positioning). It appears what is lacking (for the watch manager) is harnessed in the resource of knowledge and experience of the older hand. Importantly, this provides an example of the way the giving and taking of power occurs and how informal and formal roles can form a support system. The firefighter with seniority wields authority based on knowledge and experience, and takes its place in the hierarchy (informally) with the watch

manager's authority being recognised by the firefighter based on the giving of respect for having earned the role (via the promotional system). This practice demonstrates the way that knowledge possessed by experienced firefighters can work to reinforce their watch manager's managerial masculinities rather than oppress or contest it. This is indicative of the idea that masculinities are on the one hand positional, and on the other, reciprocal (Poggio 2006). At the same time, and in differing contexts, both old hand and watch manager are forms of what (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985) and Connell (1987) conceptualises as complicit and subordinate masculinities that are at time subject to power inversions.

Discussion and summary

My analysis shows that the informal hierarchy on the watch forms up in a pecking order where experience, knowledge of craft, and time-in, provide markers of status to become (informal) leaders within the watch. These firefighters act as gatekeepers of craft knowledge (and stories) becoming a resource for newcomers on the watch.

Collectively, the most contentious issue between firefighters were the discussions around who is most empowered/disempowered (sector or people) within the FRS. On one hand, some firefighters saw themselves as disempowered (unlike politicians/ senior managers), while other firefighters felt that they were most empowered because it is the firefighters 'who makes things work, no matter what comes down from senior levels'. Ways that firefighters differentially perceive empowerment/disempowerment to occur shows for firefighters' masculinities to assume a contradictory position that becomes subject to forms of both dominance and subordination. However, if we link these ideas to the ways watch managers have previously documented themselves to 'listen' to firefighters and give them the space to 'be heard', alongside efforts invested to foster a culture of co-option with the watch, these combined clues suggest firefighters are a powerful group force.

Firefighters appear to judge their watch managers in terms of weak/strong and effective/ineffective. For example, watch 1 (Metro) sees accelerated promotion of watch

managers as verboten heirs, lacking in time-in, experience and operational (hands-on) skills. Conversely, whilst watch 2 (Metro) respects the management and organisational skills of the watch manager to meet targets and get 'things signed off', by contrast, watch 1 understates these elements. The watch believes the impersonal dictates of the computer to be managing their daily agenda and see no value in reaching targets as measures of watch self-worth or efficiencies. What emerges from these differing opinions towards value of particular skills (and judgements of them), show that for some watches there has been a shift in attitudes since Salaman, 1986, and Baigent, 2001. As firefighters' attitudes towards new skills of managership are in a state of transition for some watches, for other watches these newer skills present similar to Strangleman's (2004) findings 'as an affront to the moral order of the informal culture' (p.456). As previous FRS research has indicated, the link between skills and work identity are highly entwined, so too is the issue of gender. However, my analysis suggests for evidence of shifts in thinking towards the validation of new skills. Consequently, diverse repertoires of masculine identities emerge within the watch manager role. The redefining of the watch manager's skills set by senior management either become subject to recognition or resistance. In effect, newer forms of masculinity either become validated and legitimised, or undermined (by firefighters towards their watch manager). The outcome of this is that traditional FRS gender orders within the watch are under threat, with differing types of watch managers being subject to disparate forms of value to the firefighters, watches and management.

In terms of a situation where a new watch manager arrives on a watch, this presents as a complex processes of fitting-in, particularly in relation to discussion around who fits in with whom. For Metro watches, data analysis shows that watches 1 and 2, expect watch managers and firefighters to adapt or meld towards each other. Though on the one hand they espouse this balance, on the other, they intimate the watch manager to respect and bend towards the established order already operating on the watch. Watch 2 presents as the most extreme example, suggesting the watch to be the most dominant partner between the watch manager role and firefighters, arguing not only 'the watch runs itself' (a repetitive theme with other watches), but also go as far to suggest 'it's the watch that manage the watch manager'.

For, Castle watches 3 and 4, though agreeing watch managers and firefighters adapt to each other, they also stress central to reaching equilibrium is for mutual respect to occur. Though, watch 3 (similar to Metro watches) also believe 'the watch manager needs to fit-in with how the group interact', for watch 4 the 'respect exchange' surfaces when the watch manager defaults to the knowledge base of the firefighter with seniority when particularly difficult emergency situations arise. This provides one example of how the giving and taking of power occurs and the way formal authority becomes subject to the informal power/knowledge authority that works to create balance between formal authority and craft knowledge. These types of interaction become part of the process by which mutual respect between specific firefighters, watch and watch manager becomes ascribed and legitimated.

Overall, data from all watches indicate that tensions of power occur, and that some form of accommodation is likely to occur between firefighters and their watch manager. Equally, the watch groups collectively argue that changes to watch power dynamics are not easily accepted, nor taken lightly. Analysis also indicates that firefighters' team efforts at the station organise to preserve traditional watch culture, becoming a matter of safeguarding watch identity.

Conclusion

Introduction

This conclusion has several focuses. First, it summarises my main findings in response to thesis questions. These form under key sub-headings: career; crafting identity; management identity and organisational change; the job; experiences of managing; and resources for managing. As such, I first outline the ways watch managers experience navigating FRS career structures. This becomes important in terms of assessing how the watch manager role (post Bain) engages with changes to traditional promotional systems, new priorities of work and the watch manager's sense of self. Attention then turns to how watch managers come to frame 'the job' around their preferred sense of work identity in the broader landscape of change. This then sets the context to understand the ways watch managers harness work relationships to manage effectively and position work identity in relation to firefighters and management. Though controlling different types of spatial proximity emerges as a resource for managing, the follow-on sections highlight differential resources watch managers engage with as 'practices of the managerial self'. The latter part of this chapter summarises the ways other roles construct the watch manager's identity, and provides an evaluation on the pros and cons of modernisation. The final section outlines the ways my findings contribute to sociological debate and the current body of FRS literature.

Career

For watch managers, early career role models are shown to significantly influence the making of managerial identity and the shaping of managerial practice. My analysis shows how in early career that investing in a sense of identification or distance from personalities and practices provides many dividends. For example, aiding cultural understanding and adopting a particular masculine ethic and a sense of identification on which to mould the self via homosocial reproduction.

Though some watch managers experience the promotional process (to their role) with little apparent effort, others found difficulties in getting to the watch manager position, or in

achieving further promotion. Problems range from deciphering managerialist-aligned language, to criticisms of the ways senior management place importance on PQAs over and above operational knowledge. These issues were thought to compromise the authenticity of their present work identity. For other watch managers, particularly those who had never sought promotion, the positive experience of 'acting up' (for an interim period) created the desire to gain promotion and build confidence aspiring towards a new possible self as a manager/leader. However, this works in tandem with the realisation that in the transformation from one role to another, the new self will revolve around a new set of power relations between self and watch members.

As to why some firefighters become managers and others stay as firefighters revolve around two main reasons. Some watch managers have always wanted promotion, whereas others consider themselves to be able to do a better job than those already in role above them. However, getting to the watch manager role and choosing to remain in role for the duration of their career provides for one set of dividends for the watch manager, playing out horizontally through the operational, where accumulation of experience earns status, trust, respect and the right to lead from within the watch. The choice to stay in role as an 'end stop' of career is viewed (by firefighters and watch managers) as symbolic of their attachment to the value of front-line response, union commitment, and attribute worth, affiliation, and loyalty to firefighters and watch culture. This is similar to those firefighters who provide the core of service delivery - they have no interest in promotion because they place most value on the job/role they perform - 'hands-on' in emergency response and a preference for watch camaraderie.

Therefore, choice of career path becomes underpinned through preference towards a particular way of thinking, being and doing. A main theme to emerge from analysis is the different ways watch managers construct their moral framework to interpret their work environment. Core to this is how they come to apply a specific interpretation (and moral judgement) towards the ills, or by contrast, the value and necessity of organisational change (including embracing equal opportunity initiatives) (see appendix 11).

Watch managers on accelerated promotional schemes are likely to find that, firefighters question the legitimacy of their authority because they lack experience both on and off the

fire ground. This highlights the difficulties associated with any attempt to increase graduate entry/accelerated promotion, as this tends to work against the building of status, trust and respect from the watch. This sits at odds with the recommendations of Thomas (2016) that argues for increasing routes of graduate entry and accelerated promotion, and at the same time recognises the importance of trust and respect as central to the FRSs culture and organisation of work.

Equally important to issues of career are the ways various forms of masculinity emerge within watch managers' accounts. Some align closely with Baigent's (2001) firefighter's identity, and often follow the lateral career path accruing social status through 'time-in' and allegiances to the informal culture. By contrast, others cultivate newer forms of masculine identity centred on rationalisations for change. However, closely aligned to the internal power dynamic within the FRS in the defence of traditional forms of hands-on working class masculinity, is how distinct 'classed' masculinities emerge in a relational dynamic (Mac an Ghaill 1994 and Willis 1977). My findings resonate with these authors, and links emerge in the ways watch managers show how differing resources (or lack thereof) to not only create, but also perpetuate a particular masculinised sense of self that is likely to frame and impact on future career courses.

Crafting identity

In part, watch managers define themselves in relation to the formal, bureaucratic system (and culture), *and* the differential ways that they agree or disagree with particular policy issues *in combination with* their relationship with the informal firefighters' culture. Largely, these managers use their agency to fit *their* managerial identity in-between the formal culture (management agendas) and the informal (firefighters') culture. This 'fit' allows them to adopt positions that authenticate their own sense of work-self. Interestingly, analysis shows that watch managers position their role and affiliations differentially - either strongly with the watch, marginally, or affiliated with management or a needs fit approach. It may be that those who adopt a 'needs fit' approach (adapting between the three positions) come to be viewed as 'successful' from multiple hierarchical perspectives.

This thesis shows case examples of how the watch manager's identity is made and re-made in the everyday via on-going processes of interaction identification, convergence and separation. Also significant is how on more than one occasion the newer watch managers were spoken of predominantly in terms of 'what they do', and longer-serving watch managers were more often spoken about in terms of 'who they are'. This highlights the idea that the managerial identity has to be earned and in the 'becoming' comes under scrutiny via hands-on work, and the way they handle informal interaction and managerial practice at the station. Over time, when this repetitive crafting stabilises (through numerous interactions over different sites), a substantive identity emerges in the eyes of the watch and their manager that sustains itself 'in action' within the day-to-day of work.

Identity also emerges from specific performances of masculinity, or in relation to development issues as this allows the watch manager to establish their own sense of managerial credibility and respect in relation to self and to firefighters. The various ways authority becomes legitimated by each particular watch manager serves as the lynch pin between identity and managing. This has shown to often balance between autocratic and democratic authority in the day-to-day of work. However, forms of authority and notions of 'discipline' need to be supported through types of authenticity (Goffman 1959, Hochschild 1983). Either/or 'proving competency' and being thought of as a 'good character' serves to build and substantiate trust, which becomes an important conduit to accessing networks of power.

Research findings also highlight ways identity confusion surfaces as a consequence of change, in what I would describe as the gap between tradition and the contemporary era. For example, there was often unease between the use of the term 'firefighter/fireman' at both watch manager and firefighter levels. For the watch managers, confusion often occurs in the officer/manager and manager/leader dichotomies. This suggests that these two responsibilities become hard to reconcile within 'one role' - effecting a distortion of the self. These identity dilemmas add an extra layer of complexity to an already challenging role.

Management identity and organisational change

Thesis findings contribute to knowledge through presenting how the impact of NPM principles have come to influence each watch manager's identity. Adding to Halford and Leonard's (2012) findings (in other work sectors), my study shows that watch managers either operationalise 'independently' or 'co-structure' identity in relation to organisational reshaping. My analysis shows how to different degrees and in relation to different aspects of change, how certain aspects of past practice are hailed as 'morally right'. Although each watch manager's attitude varies towards particular aspects of change (whether embraced or challenged), this becomes an important marker to understand why the pace of culture change has been so slow; the social organisation of work at watch level does much to keep sacred, traditional 'ideals' that tend to clip the wings of change-management initiatives.

The never ending project of aspiring to a particular managerial 'ideal', links with Lamont's (2003) classed moral frameworks and the ways that Jefferson (1996) theorises men seek to emulate or become a particular masculine ideal. As mentioned previously, choices to adopt a managerial identity link to constructing a particular form of masculinity, however, the crafting of identity goes beyond these issues. What this thesis draws out is that watch managers perform their role 'innovatively', though 'flexibility' and 'adaptability'. Though these skills inertly capture NPM principles, these less tangible managerial skills (and PQAs) may not necessarily operationalise as management would envisage and condone. Although each watch manager has their own entrepreneurial way of achieving managerial outcomes, most do so whilst simultaneously crafting and sustaining a work identity symbolic of their own preferred sense of work self.

What emerges for these watch managers is that from early career role models (good and bad) and experiences of firefighters' informal organisation (including watch dynamics), they accumulate experience and knowledge, which, from their first inception as a firefighter, they build into a portfolio of understanding towards the complexities and subtleties of firefighters' culture and the tensions that affect team equilibrium. Findings suggest a sophisticated and repetitive cycle of experiential learning occurs, providing reservoirs of kudos that hone the self, shaping finer nuances for the managerial identity to emerge, survive and manage effectively. In outcome, these (informal) learning processes

allow for a variety of idiosyncratic identities to emerge. Some watch managers strive to maintain a tradition-based identity whilst others change and adapt to the formal organisation's ideals. Mostly, these managers adapt to provide a managerial model that makes the watch work by balancing the day-to-day challenges (and demands) from both management and firefighters. To do this requires reserves of moral fibre, where work identity emerges as a project of the self (Giddens 1991, Grey 1991), negotiated by the self, perpetually working to authenticate performances of the self. The experiential resources that watch managers draw from to meet these challenges (likely) reach beyond *what can be (formally) taught and learnt.*

Interestingly, differences between Metro and Castle watch managers revolved around differing attitudes to change. Castle watch managers appeared more orientated towards the transitions and inevitabilities of change, showing a sense of urgency to assert their voice (through promotion) in the future planning of their FRS. For Metro watch managers, attachments to tradition are overtly pronounced and resistance to change surface in such a way as if it offends their sense of work identity. In part, this can be accounted for because the metropolitan brigade has strong roots in 19th century fire service conceptions as a public service rather than private enterprise (Ewen 2010). These differences may also be explained in terms of masculinised dichotomies, indicative of a specific type of class conflict that appears very much alive between the lines of the narrative.

The Job

Individual watch manager's attitudes towards reaching targets and the value placed on performance indicators vary. However, without exception these issues were spoken about in terms of 'pressures' of the job. Some watch managers are predominantly inward focusing towards their watch, others are community focused, and some focus on further promotion as the means to substantiate their work identity through self-development.

The place of CFS (the central refocus of work since 2003) remains largely understated or 'invisible' within the watch managers' narratives. One explanation of this relative invisibility is that watch managers adopt taint management strategies (see Tracy and Scott,

2006) towards less liked/valued aspects of the role. Analysis indicates that watch managers tended to freely emphasise those aspects of their role that imbue meaning and value 'to them' and their preferred sense of work-self, whilst covertly de-sanctioning other aspects of their responsibilities. For example, some watch managers highlight their abilities in terms of taking on a watch that 'others' have found unmanageable, or winning confrontations (verbal sparring) with resistant firefighters through reasoned argument. Conversely, others accentuate the power of democracy within the team, which works to share skill and knowledge to improve operational effectiveness. The former example highlights typically hard-nosed masculine 'male' attributes bound with particular qualities and performances of working class masculinity. The latter example tends to frame their managerial masculinity (albeit revolving around respect of collective team knowledge) around effective leadership skills in terms of mobilising, facilitating and problem solving (and overseeing safety issues) at an incident. Aside from these issues and core to the watch manager role is the skill of maintaining watch equilibrium whilst delivering potentially unpopular messages and policy change driven down from senior management (to firefighters).

Experience of managing

My findings indicate that managing at the station is the most challenging aspect of role. Beyond issues relating to operational competence and 'proving self' (see Baigent 2001), work identity 'emerges' (Goffman 1959) in and through the ways watch managers utilise their skills and resources to maintain equilibrium and control on the watch. A main finding of this research is that at the station there is no hard and fast way that running a watch occurs, as differing types of relationships and power dynamics emerge between each watch manager, particular firefighters and the watch (to maintain the status quo). Watch managers attaining these equilibriums can produce the illusion that formal authority is more powerful than it is, especially if targets and other quantifiable outputs are achieved. Taking a broad view, what it takes to run a watch successfully tends to revolve around three criteria: risk, predictability and flexibility. Whether consciously or subconsciously, watch managers manage potential 'risk' to watch harmony by 'predicting' (anticipating firefighters' likely responses) and 'flexibility' (the give and take dynamic). What is sociologically interesting about my findings is that particularised work identities emerge

from watch managers' performances of self founded on various types of similarity and difference in a number of cross cutting ways.

Though each watch consists of firefighters of different ages and skills, there are evident similarities between watches. As chapters six to nine show, the watch operates a sophisticated informal bureaucracy. There are recognisable similarities to Weber's (1978) notion of a developed bureaucracy - there is evidence of firefighters sophisticated development of perpetuating preferential skill sets (by of their own means) in preference to those determined by senior management. Analysis also shows the ways watches informally organise their own hierarchies/divisions of labour bearing a striking resemblance to Gouldner's (1953) account of sub-surface miners. This includes a range of processes, for example, falling into line with informal protocols (Baigent 2001); informal pecking orders (Bird 1986); and a particularised moral order of the group (Durkheim 1964). My analysis also shows how the informal power of the watch surfaces when a new watch manager is assigned to a watch. This can set in motion either a series of sophisticated power negotiations between the watch manager and informal peer group leader on the watch, or outright challenges to the new authority. What surfaces from these types of experiences is how power relations are differentially mediated - a consequence of felt threats to either watch identity (by firefighters) or securing an authoritative managerial identity (by the watch manager).

Resources for managing

Give and take

As mentioned previously, an important task within the watch manager's role is to stabilise and ease daily tensions surfacing in the watch. In these respects, 'shared understandings' assume a particular importance. One such example is the principle of 'give and take': a relational process emergent in a two-way dynamic between watch manager and firefighter(s) occurring in different situations and diverse contexts. These two-way discursive practices allow the opportunity to secure (or attack) a masculine identity. I argue that give and take is a dual narrative, where differing masculinities position and posture (in relation to each other), whilst allowing each other the 'space' to perform. In

this way, forms of masculinity emerge via interactive performances between self and others. Work identities emergent from performances of the self (inherently Goffmanesque), become a means by which forms of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) come under challenge (see Curtis p.107), but they do not always occur in a threatening way. For example, Grant (WM, Metro) provides an in-depth explanation as to how resistant firefighters need space to have their say when he delivers unpopular orders/messages from management (p.175). Grant affords the resistant firefighters some space to posture and 'be heard' through asking questions and airing their views. This is an important protocol (informal understanding) where the dance of (competing) masculinities allows for validation of the self to emerge, for the self - or prove self in the eyes of 'others'. Connecting with Hodson's (2001) insights, these organisational rituals, whether up-front showdowns (like Curtis's example) or more moderate interactions, allow workers with diverse forms of cultural capital and informal status to be shown (or earn) ascriptions of respect (or otherwise), fostering a sense of dignity (or humiliation) towards self and work identity.

Proximity and detachments

The majority of watch managers from both FRSs refer to a balance between maintaining distance and proximity to the watch. Whilst some watch managers gain more control through close proximity, others prefer to create boundaries. Either way, mediating proximity becomes a way to assert or enhance the impact of managerial authority. Getting the balance right is a sign of their skill and for new watch managers this appears as a skill they are still fine-tuning. One way that watch managers legitimately detach is to take time out in the office to complete bureaucratic tasks. Though firefighters stigmatise this aspect of watch managers' work, it is often viewed (by firefighters and watch managers) as necessary (for what management want), not a labour of love (like the operational). The ways watch managers view other types of separation to occur is through what they term 'being able to see the bigger picture' and in their ability to understand reasons behind change, even if not totally accepting of them. Watch managers also view differentiation in terms of centring selves around maintaining 'positivity' (unlike firefighters) and viewed as a marker of management calibre (WMs and above). Therefore, part of the foundation upon

which identity emerges, comes out in the way watch managers create space between themselves with other workers, either via differing attitudes or types of work.

Emotional labour

Having recognised the need for watch managers to maintain daily (if not hourly) equilibria within the watch, this balance comes to rely on the co-operation and good will within the team - more so for those watch managers who need the skills and expertise of the group (see also Javidan and Waldman 2003). In these circumstances, emotional labour becomes less a choice and more a necessity to counter the daily challenges of work. For these watch managers, the need for emotional labour is made evident either overtly (e.g. Dale) or implicitly (e.g. John). Nonetheless, whatever manifestation it takes, emotional labour emerges as a management resource. For example, we have previously noted that all watch managers assume the need to be 'competent at being positive' (regardless of their feelings). This resonates with what Hochschild (1983) terms 'shaping of the will' and becomes the means for the managerial identity to separate from the firefighter self. This 'shaping' is evident in other ways, such as how watch managers describe they are no longer as free to talk as firefighters can (in becoming moral guardians of watch 'chatter'). This either precipitates emotional dissonance or leads to surface or deep acting as part of managerial practice. How watch managers 'really feel' about these discussions is of less consequence, rather what they *ought to feel* assumes a new importance. It has been described that while they wear the 'metaphorical' (in most cases) white shirt of management, certain rules of engagement need to be put into operation. In this way, the managerial identity becomes subject to a differing form of 'feeling rules' than that of firefighters.

Overall, the various forms of emotional labour employed indicate a dance of masculinities engaged in by watch manager and firefighters. Different methods of dealing with these issues are evident, for example, John (Metro) talks of an informal walk round the yard one-to-one, and other accounts portray rituals within communication between manager and firefighter (outlined previously). Many of the watch managers' accounts also highlight the need to deal with firefighters' problems in the work environment, as well as be available for firefighters to share personal pressures/problems that could inadvertently

impact on operational effectiveness. However, taking a broader view, emotional labour appears as a crucial resource to perform if work is going to get done and good work relations maintained. Rather than being cast in a negative light, as in Hochschild's (1983) research, by contrast, my analysis provides examples of how emotional labour produces positive outcomes for both watch manager and firefighters (provided the masculinity that drives is culturally sanctioned by the group). As such, the use of emotional labour is less likely to cast the watch manager to a subordinate position. Although similarities occur with Hochschild's analysis, such as how in certain situations the watch manager's 'feeling rules' are assimilated towards management prescriptions, at the same time my analysis presents emotional labour to provide a support mechanism for other resources of power (such as masculinity, charisma and wielding types of authority).

Masculinity

A theme developing thus far are the many instances in the day-to-day that the winning and losing of power is in constant play - what Donaldson (1993) describes as masculinities vying for control. This occurs between watch managers and firefighters, between watch members/watches on stations and is evident within manager and worker divides. Performances of masculinity/ies emerge via repetitive organisational scripts (e.g. training that is played out on the fire ground) and through dominant discourses (such as voicing the illegitimacy of particular groups/systems). In this way masculinity is always in the becoming, looking for opportunities to enact self through reactions to certain situations and workers. However, the way firefighters' masculinities converge and separate in the day-to-day presents as an on-going challenge for watch managers to manage.

Gaining control and authority over situations and/or people, taps into a source of power that not only sustains the pecking order but also sharpens the metaphorical 'face' of work identity. Some watch managers describe how they 'won't tolerate confrontation', whilst others report being able to 'take confrontation' and 'respond to confrontation', or the ways 'they avoid confrontation'. However, irrespective of what stance is taken, watch managers draw on different skills/resources and use emotional labour to achieve particularised personifications of masculinity. Equally, whilst some watch managers criticise and distance themselves from the paperwork trail, bureaucratic processes, and IT work, others

validate themselves through these types of work becoming a representation of success (to management). Particularly interesting is how some watch managers sustain a front of masculinity behind which a particular type of emotional labour operationalises. Whether this emerges through 'hard talk' or 'soft talk', or through channels of democratic leadership, in each case, moral justifications support and evoke specific ways of doing masculinity to validate their preferred type of managerial practice and managerial self.

Communication

An effective watch manager is one who understands the rules of engagement, knows when to lead, and when to ameliorate tension. Communication skills are particularly important to managing successfully, though the way this is managed differs from watch manager to watch manager. Some entrust everyday communication via their crew managers (using CMs as a resource), others communicate face-to-face by pure force of personality and charismatic authority. By contrast, others adopt a 'management by proxy' approach through overtly dissociating from the moral stigmatisation of allocating daily tasks by emphasising that instructions come direct from the computer. Other watch managers harness a relationship with the informal leader on the watch (who has informal power and respect of watch members). In this way, though formal and informal power can come to work co-operatively (in tandem), so too do differing forms of masculinities centring on different skills (head versus hands), and means to status (attributed via formal and informal means). My findings suggest that the power of watch culture as a collective force is not easily managed.

The links between communication and power emerge in a variety of ways. For example, some watch managers seek to 'protect the watch from stupid ideas' (Ron, Metro), by controlling information and terms of interaction. Watch managers find themselves having to become 'interpreters' and 'sifters' of management communication, a skill they constantly hone to harness the vocabulary of two languages - one that is policy orientated when talking to managers, and one that avoids loaded interpretations when relaying messages to firefighters so as to avoid resistance.

Charisma

In the application of Weber's concept of charisma to my analysis, I draw from Perinbanayagam's (1971) insights urging researchers to break free from conceptual constraints and to apply Weber's theorisation of charisma to concrete examples. Additionally, Knippenberg and Sitkin's (2013) informative insights urge researchers to develop Weber's ideas free from restraint, focusing on effects (rather than purely a laundry list of outcomes, psychological states and behavioural dimensions). Equally, it is important to clarify that during the research process, what I found to be charismatic may not be viewed as such by all/some other firefighters/managers, sectors or watches. However, as Weber points out, what is charismatic to some is not to others. My analytical efforts have allowed an exploration of how the effects of charisma surface via interaction and through the narrative detail, and provides focused attention on how the dynamic comes to work within and influence the organisational environment.

My analysis offers grounded examples of Weber's (1946) theory of charisma as a transient and relational property sustained through social interaction. Charisma presents as both an identity enabling resource for leaders and followers, and a portent that infiltrates and influences the ways the group collectively come to make sense of the surrounding environment. My findings show that for some watch managers the charismatic phenomena operationalises as a powerful resource through which their own sense of identity (underpinned by their own moral framework) shapes their own form of managerial practice (and values). As such, the charismatic dynamic carries and maintains a certain interpretative element within the relational forces of power. This finding first struck with force when I was trying to make sense of the discrepancy between some of the communications I accepted in interview, when a different meaning emerged (what was actually said) in the cold light of day during the transcription process: a very real grounded example of the charismatic 'power' behind the 'force of personality'.

Interestingly, my findings highlight the ways 'followers' become an extension of the leaders 'sense of self', and simultaneously the dynamic or spark also comes to magnify the followers' sense of self. This synergy appears to produce a cultural phenomenon greater than the sum total of individual parts. Similar to the position of the detached bureaucrat in

compliance with the system, the follower(s) under charismatic effects suspends judgment in response to the leader's force of personality, authority and kudos. Within this process, certain techniques of taint-management are utilised by the charismatic leader to distance selves from stigmatised aspects of the role. These types of process emerge on different occasions from the melding of identity between follower and leader (between role model and firefighter), or on some occasions in respect of watch identity and watch manager.

The Achilles heel of charisma, 'routinisation' is avoided in the FRS in a number of ways. Firstly, as the firefighter's identity matures (via role model emulation), this model is handed down through the use of charisma to attract and influence new firefighters. This closely resounds with Roper's (1999) theorisation of ways homosocial processes of seduction and succession occur within work environments. My example of Grant's narrative shows how charismatic authority is sustained when he takes promotion and leaves a legacy of heirs (like himself), as he now moves on to a new role (and space) where his own reinvention and reshaping continues. Equally, there are instances where watch managers challenge the new order of FRS in a very vocal way, setting the tone (and criteria of personality) that dictates (or supports) the dominant discourses of the informal culture. This encourages solidarity of thought and a sense of membership, whilst providing the means for a sense of connect (identification and belonging) to occur for new firefighters to form attachments to a sense of shared history (through homosocial adoption and compliance). As such, particular rationales of thought become totems that bind firefighters together to substantiate cultural boundaries, and symbolise what is thought to be sacred or profane in the organisation. This process does much to separate firefighters from senior management.

Further substantiating forms of charismatic authority and power are other supporting variables. For example, in terms of performances of masculinity, the 'sparks' ignite through evaluations towards certain exemplary ways of being or doing. This covers a broad spectrum, including focus on practical skills, certain types of emotion management (possessing resilience and strength), emotional labour, rank, bodily physique, presence of personality and various types of knowledge. All of these variables, in whatever combination, serve to authenticate and informally legitimise the moral right to lead. In the

FRS environment the charismatic dynamic appears at times to surface, either supporting watch managers as agents for, or against, change management initiatives. Therefore, though the charismatic leader can lead workers from one order to another, my findings indicate the reverse also applies and can work to sustain tradition. In the same way Baker's (2012) research involving a group of women, shows a continuum of charismatics within one group where different strengths, knowledge, skills emerge in a concertina effect, my research shows this also occurs in the fire service. These types of social processes do much to broadly substantiate forces of charismatic influence and avoid routinisation. This is further impacted through the nature of the FRS as an emergency provider with no shortage of crisis to make fertile ground for charismatic leaders to emerge.

One such example is Grant (WM, Metro), whose bodily presence, physique, expressive personality and persuasive arguments work for him to harness much of what is revered within a traditional fire service leader (high standards of firefighting skill and fire service values) appearing to produce the right balance to procure followers and earn respect and trust. Central to his values is the issue of equality, which Grant appropriates through applying FRS rules to all workers irrespective of race or gender. Whereas, John (WM Metro) models himself on his old station officer, and his authoritative style commands obedience and respect from being long in service and through appropriating his own way of sorting out problems when they arise in the watch (where he can get away with it). This produces a type of Solomanic arbitration, free from organisational restraints. By contrast, the watch managers who have found fitting in and managing problematic, surface as personalities who come to understand their environment differentially from mainstream watch views. In particular, these managers see both value and flaws in senior managers' and firefighters' arguments. Equally, those watch managers displaying a form of masculinity that does not connect with firefighters (i.e. differing skills or pen pushers), or hold differing forms of thought or educational levels (with a degree) are also likely to be passed over by the watch as someone they would want to follow.

The use of charisma as a tool of analysis has been invaluable to my research. The many issues highlighted in this section broaden the conceptual boundaries of present FRS

knowledge. Overall, the charismatic phenomenon (as a relational force) has exerted influence in a variety of ways. For example: the making of work identity; connections between work identities; links between leadership, masculinities and emotional labour; shaping of the work environment; and ways the power of charisma comes to affect organisational momentum.

Harnessing relationships to manage

Particularly interesting is that the FRS is an example of a public service organisation continually looking to make further efficiencies, yet the informal culture still holds considerable sway in relation to alternative interpretations of managerialist initiatives. For these watch managers, what matters to being successful in role is how they harness the co-option of the informal authority on the watch and makes it work for them. This is important, because whilst watch dynamics may change and be open to differing forms of control and consent, firefighters' culture presents as such a hardened replicating phenomenon of sophistication - that change is difficult to activate without some form of flexibility (balancing forms of give and take) between watch manager and their firefighters (at the station). This works aside the observation that in the working out of watch managers' identity, a number of choices present in terms of positioning and affiliation, albeit in a difficult set of circumstances and uncertain future.

The need for watch managers to foster good working relations with the watch cannot be understated. Unlike senior managers, who can visit and leave the station, they are there all of the time, sharing physical and social space with the firefighters. Therefore, maintaining good relations with the watch is paramount, not just in terms of the *quality* of life experience at work, but also in terms of being seen as a leader with credible value (hands-on skills) - someone who wields authority from an informally authenticated work identity that the watch will *want* to follow out of trust and respect. At this point, then, the complex nature of the watch manager's task emerges as having to be a person that carries authority, and yet at the same time, works with the many personalities and informal power strongholds in the watch hierarchy. The consequences of failing to achieve the right balance between these aspects have far reaching effects. For example, if relations with the watch break down or become difficult, it will affect the quality of teamwork during

emergency responses. Outside of this, failure to command authority (and respect that supports it) makes for a problematic dynamic to occur and for the credibility of managerial identity to sustain itself (in the eyes of firefighters, management and self). The multi-dimensional requirements of shaping good relationships, whilst retaining control and authority over the watch, emerge as transient and unacknowledged aspects of the craft (Holmes, 2014), which are made and remade in and thorough everyday interaction (Calhoun and Sennett, 2007).

Constructing the watch manager's identity from other role perspectives

What is important to recognise is that whilst the watch manager's perception towards work identity forms one part of the picture, it is vital to gain a rounded view and consider ways that other roles view and interpret the watch manager role. For the most part, senior managers view the watch manager role as very important, though Ray (senior manager, Metro) argues with a rationality that says watch managers are 'as important as everybody else' as they have a particular set of responsibilities to perform in the overall organisation of work. What surfaces from senior managers (Metro and Castle) is the recognition that managing a watch is not easy. The senior managers go as far to suggest that watch managers can be differentiated in terms of either being weak or strong in role. For station managers, the watch managers they manage are important because they deliver the targets that the station manager is responsible for achieving. Station managers view a central part of their role to support watch managers dealing with 'difficult' firefighters or resistant watches.

 Interestingly, whilst watch managers all gave the impression they assume a 'presence' of authority with their watch, this was not necessarily reflected in firefighter focus group accounts about watch managers *per se*. More pronounced during these interviews, were the ways tensions of power converge between the two roles (firefighters and WM). Firefighters tended to view their group as a powerful force that mattered to the organisation because they are in possession of a 'collectivity of experience' and a resource of practical operational knowledge actually performing emergency response. The four watches interviewed tended to underplay the value of the watch manager's role in favour of their own 'hands-on' work but they saw benefit in having someone to oversee the plan

of work at an incident. For firefighters, operational skills take on a particular importance and being 'seen to be a good firefighter' is the way authority becomes legitimised and trust invested in their watch manager as leader. These firefighters (and often longer-serving watch managers alike) accentuate the important links between skill, authority and trust, which are thought to have been ill considered when implementing contemporary forms of change and new initiatives. In terms of duties at the station, firefighters view the watch manager role (unfavourably) as a bureaucratic function and tool to deliver quantifications of their work outcomes and measure competencies for management. In effect, the watch manager has to achieve success along these two dimensions (pleasing the watch and management) to validate a sense of managerial credibility. What becomes particularly important about research findings is the differential way this works itself out and that it becomes open to variance between watch managers.

Pros and cons of modernisation

Modernisation of the FRS has provided a backdrop to my research analysis, therefore it is necessary to offer a brief consideration of the pros and cons of modernisation in relation to four particular areas: rank to role; promotional systems; culture; and identity. In the broader landscape of change, FRS modernisation was an attempt to produce a leaner, more efficient organisation, and to undo the negative aspects of firefighters' culture. On the one hand, this can be seen as positive change by providing an alternative means of crafting a work identity and making it possible for new identities to emerge in line with the new contemporary model (policies and values) of the FRS. This transition sought to remove military connections associated with harsh management and bullying, and effect cultural change (including widening women and ethnic minority representation).

Equally, the attempt to focus towards CFS and fire prevention is a positive step as it has reduced fires. Therefore, from a moral and economic standpoint this is difficult to challenge. However, because watch managers have skilfully managed change so as to provide CFS, and yet protect the significance of firefighting as an on-going craft, CFS has not displaced the centrality of firefighting, the traditional order of the informal culture in the hearts and minds of firefighters, and the ability to craft a traditional masculine work identity (although opportunity may have lessened due to fire reductions). Equally,

delayering and introducing a new promotional system (IPDS) and rank to role could also be viewed in positive terms, with its improved economic rationalisation, the shortening of the chain in command, and in the extension of role requirements to both harness the skills of a manager with that of a leader.

However, in outcome, my research shows a series of difficulties occurring in both the short and long term. Aside from the initial problems of assimilating and defining the new roles across the FRS, this has been seen as a disingenuous way of dismantling the power of the traditional officer/leadership roles in the watch. My analysis provides evidence to suggest rank is still alive in the minds of firefighters and their managers who retain the common held belief that by the virtue of the work they do, the FRS is a disciplined service. Similarly, the method of choosing new managers through assessment centres has led to firefighters and some watch managers having concerns that watch managers (especially those on types of accelerated promotion) would not have the required level of operational skills. At the same time, attempts to delayer and the introduction of rank to role in the FRS have defied some of the original logic in the way managerial roles have increased to levels beyond that of the traditional model.

Linking all these issues is the topic of watch managers' (and firefighters') identity, because, in part, the whole modernisation agenda has been about an attempt to change culture by reducing opportunities to secure the traditional masculine work identity. However, there were consequences in regard to firefighters' reactions to what they saw as deskilling and an attack on their masculine identity, hardening resistance through distance and defence of traditional values (see Salaman, 1986, Baigent, 2001). By contrast, at watch manager level, shifting forms of identity away from tradition (or hybrid versions of both) emerge that co-align with change (such as equality and diversity). However, countering this is the observation that differing types of inequality now emerge, displacing the value of hands-on working class men who arguably have reduced chances of successfully navigating and playing to the demands of the current promotional system (as opposed to graduates).

As such, defensive attitudes towards change (from firefighters and some watch managers) surface alongside consequences in regard to firefighters' reactions to what they saw as deskilling and attack on traditional identity. As a result, the firefighters in this case study have reacted against change and hardened resistance through distance in defence of traditional values, and watch managers have been required to compromise to retain control. This leaves FRSs that contextually resonate with Salaman's (1986) and Baigent's (2001) findings, *but carrying out CFS*. Though this aspect of work becomes displaced in terms of how (some) watch managers and firefighters ground their own ideas around work identity.

Research contribution

My analysis adds depth and breadth to the present body of FRS knowledge, bringing a new understanding of watch dynamics by focusing on the watch manager role. My research builds on a number of dominant themes presented in a wide array of FRS literature that engage with issues of work identity. For example, centrality of homosocial processes (Ericson 2011); taint management (Tracy and Scott 2006); spatiality and emotion work (Yarnal, Dowler, and Hutchinson 2004, Hall, Hockey, and Robinson 2007); political acumen and communication (Childs, Morris and Ingham 2004); managerial power and spatiality (Kaprow 1974); and watch managers as influential over exclusionary practices (Ward and Winstanley 2006). I also contribute to issues around FRS group solidarity and work identity (Thurnell Reid and Parker 2008, Baigent 2001); assimilation into culture (Scott and Myers 2005); ways FRS divides and unites (Allway 2010); group power as animating social actors (Hinds-Aldrich 2015); and equal opportunities, FRS management and gender (Salaman 1986, Perrott 2016 and Woodfield 2016).

Moving beyond these issues my contribution provides a much-needed insight into experiences of the transition from firefighter to watch manager role and highlights the types of dilemmas, challenges and dividends that ascendancy to the watch manager role brings. Gaining promotion is not just about a change of duties or status (as bureaucratically defined), or simply about accruing different skills and responsibilities. What my analysis is able to grasp is how these particular watch managers (as men) come

to reshape and position their masculinity in the reimaging of self from firefighter to watch manager.

In terms of how my analysis casts watch managers' work identity either to revolve around traditional leadership skills or becomes subject to mediations of identity (bridging the old and new era) this finding builds on current understanding around complexities associated with the impact of change. What has been gained is a working framework providing examples of how firefighters and their watch managers make sense of and negotiate gender relations between each other, and in relation to 'others'. As such, my analysis contributes to Woodfield's (2016) and Perrott's (2016) findings highlighting the ways women as FRS managers face daily challenges to overcome 'otherness'. By contrast, my findings provide an alternative perspective as to how forms of 'otherness' emerge in the day-to-day experiences from this group of watch managers (as men). More broadly, my contribution to gender theory emerges through ways I use grounded examples showing how masculinities come to be supported by less overt themes (such as emotional labour and morality). This is a relatively under-explored area in gender studies. As gendered practices are thought to inform and become informed by specific kinds of emotional work, the analysis presented shows how the workings of emotional labour do much to support the managerial identity in the male-dominated environment.

My analysis highlights the importance of links between identity, practice and managing change, and may offer an invaluable tool when planning future policy -whether struggling to change a toxic workplace culture (see Lucas 2015), or ameliorate specific types of organisational tension - the contextual insights bring to the fore ways new initiatives can become counter-productive over the long term. Gaining insights from the broad range of watch managers' accounts on differential managerial practices and problems that surface could be used to better support the watch manager role and the complex demands it makes in the day-to-day of work.

Lastly, the contribution I offer to the sociology of work revolves around the ways the centrality of work identity emerges and impacts on performances of the managerial self and managerial practice. These findings provide an alternative perspective to Beck (1992)

and Bauman's (1998) claims that work is no longer the central means around which identity rotates. My analysis highlights the ways the power of work identity comes to influence the environment/workers and poises to thwart or promote organisational transformation. However, central to my findings is that there is no 'one single way' that the watch manager's managerial identity emerges from daily interaction, which highlights the complexities associated with change management in this work context and could be useful to future planning in similar organisations.

Overall, my findings contribute to a range of academic fields, for example the political sciences in terms of the ways the charismatic leader dynamic surfaces. Equally, organisational studies may benefit from insights gained towards role models and the influence they wield. Gender studies may find interest towards how variables come to connect and support forms of masculinity. Finally, I anticipate my findings would be useful to those focusing on FRS equality issues, not only to engender debate but also to inspire future policy innovation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Research Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Personal Details
   - Length of service
   - Role
   - (If applicable) Type of watch manager (a) or (b)
   - (If applicable) Shift system

2. Can you tell me how you came to join the fire service?

3. Can you remember your first day in the fire service?

4. Can you tell me about the people that impressed you in the job?

   - What about nowadays?
   - What about the watch managers' that impressed you?
   - Who do you feel closest to at work / most detached from?

5. Can you tell me about how you have come through the ranks to be a watch manager?

   - Are you interested in promotion?
   - Do you think that management style of a watch manager is influenced by if they want to go for promotion or not?
   - Do you know anyone who has been promoted through to middle management?
   - What does success mean to you?

6. What is the most important thing about being a watch manager?

7. Can you talk me through a watch managers' typical day?

   - Same as yesterday?
   - Is it structured?
   - What happens when you get a 'shout'?
   - Is there any difference between managing in the fire station and the fire ground?

8. Has being a watch manager lived up to your expectations?

   - Is the work you do what you expected to do when you set out to be a watch manager?
   - How important is your job to you?
   - What do you get out of it? (Motivations)

9. Can you talk to me about the good things and bad things about doing your job

   – Aspects of work you like/do not like?
   – Highs and lows?
   – Freedoms and restrictions in role?
   – Could you describe the types of pressures on you in your management role?

10. Can you tell me about the watch

   – Relationship between older workers and younger workers
   – What do you think of younger firefighters
   – Do you think that the younger ones and older ones think about you any differently?

11. What is it like managing firefighters?

   – What happens when things go wrong?
   – Can you give me an example
   – In what way are firefighters different from you?

12. What qualities/skills do you think are needed to be a watch manager?

   – What range of competencies do you use on a day-to-day basis?
   – Do you have a particular management style?

13. How has your role changed?
   – Is your job going to get harder?

14. How would you describe the current relationship with management at the moment?

   – Who do you think is the most empowered/disempowered group /sector of the fire service?

15. What do you think in respect of the future of the fire service, where do you see the service going?

Appendix 2

Map of Forty-Six Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales

Appendix 3

Role Map (Firefighters)

Ref	Title - Firefighter Role Map
FF1	Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters
FF2	Take responsibility for effective performance
FF3	Save and preserve endangered life
FF4	Resolve operational incidents
FF5	Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials
FF6	Support the effectiveness of operational response
FF7	Support the development of colleagues in the workplace
FF8	Contribute to safety solutions to minimise risks to your community
FF9	Drive, manoeuvre and redeploy fire service vehicles

Appendix 4

Role Map (Crew Manager)

Ref	Title - Crew Manager Role map
FF1	Inform and educate your community to improve awareness of safety matters
FF8	Contribute to fire safety solutions to minimise risks to your community
WM1	Lead the work of teams and individuals to achieve their objectives
WM2	Maintain activities to meet requirements (MCI A1)
WM3	Manage information for action
WM4	Take responsibility for effective performance
WM5	Support the development of teams and individuals
WM6	Investigate and report on events to inform future practice
WM7	Lead and support people to resolve operational incidents

Appendix 5

Role Map (Watch Manager)

Ref	Title - **Watch Manager Role map**
WM1	Lead the work of teams and individuals to achieve their objectives
WM2	Maintain activities to meet requirements
WM3	Manage information for action
WM4	Take responsibility for effective performance
WM5	Support the development of teams and individuals
WM6	Investigate and report on events to inform future practice
WM7	Lead and support people to resolve operational incidents
WM9	Support the efficient use of resources
WM10	Acquire, store and issue resources to provide service
WM11	Respond to poor performance in your team
A1	Assess candidate performance

Appendix 6

Watch Manager Modules

IPDS Modules for the Watch Manager Role

001 Interviewing techniques and incident debriefs

002 Facilitating learning and development

003 Leadership skills 1

004 Equality and fairness - Equal Opportunities and anti-discrimination

005 Personal Development

006 Health, safety and risk management

007 Employee relations

009 Investigation techniques

014 Presentation skills

026 Working with your community

062 Managing yourself

063 Community Fire Safety and advice

064 Maintaining internal resources

070 Support the development of colleagues

Appendix 7

Pay Scales for Firefighting Roles

|	Basic Annual	Basic Hourly Rate	Overtime Rate
	£	£	£
Firefighter			
Trainee	22,017	10.05	15.08
Development	22,933	10.47	15.71
Competent	29,345	13.40	20.10
Crew Manager			
Development	31,189	14.24	21.36
Competent	32,533	14.86	22.28
Watch Manager			
Development	33,237	15.18	22.77
Competent A	34,160	15.60	23.40
Competent B	36,381	16.61	24.92
Station Manager			
Development	37,842	17.28	25.92
Competent A	38,977	17.80	26.70
Competent B	41,737	19.06	28.59
Group Manager			
Development	43,582	19.90	N/A
Competent A	44,889	20.50	N/A
Competent B	48,313	22.06	N/A
Area Manager			
Development	51,165	23.36	N/A
Competent A	52,699	24.06	N/A
Competent B	56,124	25.63	N/A

Appendix 8

Promotion and Promotion Examinations – (wholetime men)

Rank	England and Wales
Leading fireman	(a) Written educational examination (b) Oral and practical technical test (c) Two years service (d) Successful passing of an interview
Sub-Officer	(e) Written technical examination (f) Practical examination and practical test (g) Four years service (h) Successful passing of an interview
Station Officer	(i) Written technical examination (j) Five years service (k) Successful passing of an interview

Source: The Holroyd Report (1970:127).

Appendix 9

Fire Service Promotion and Assessment
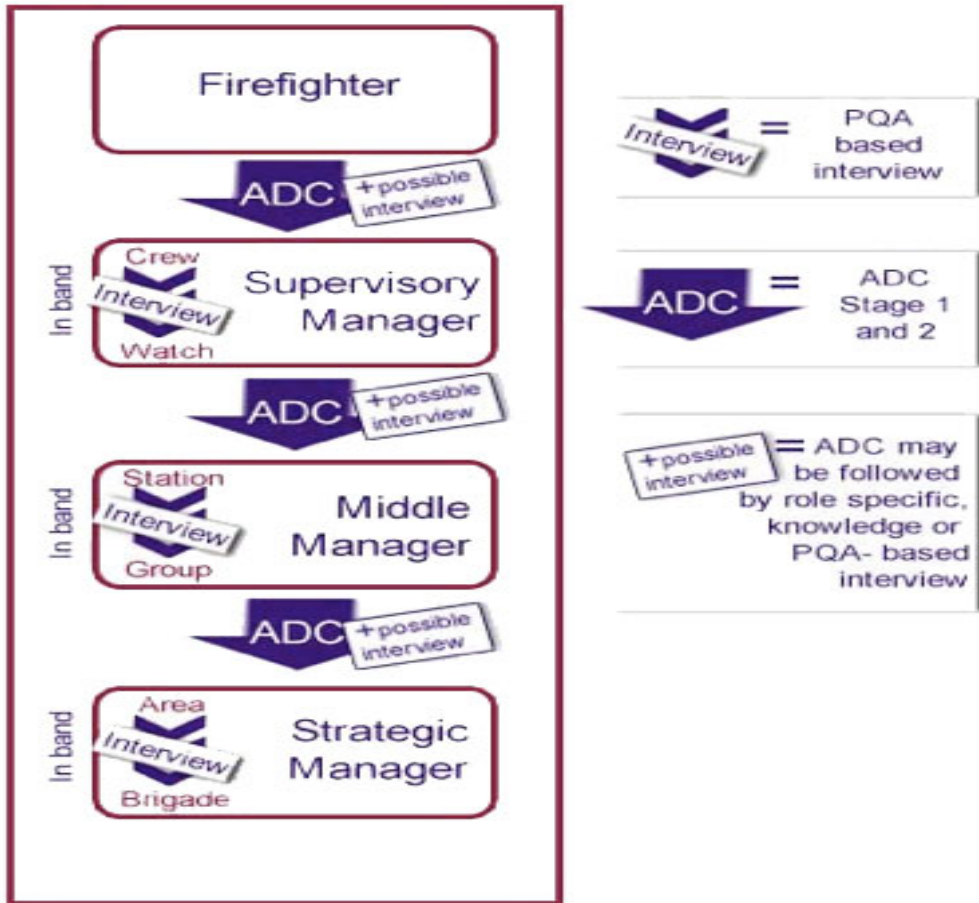
Source: Fire Service Promotion and Assessment

(Consulted 24 June 2016) at: http://www.frsdevelopment.com/frs-promotion/

Appendix 10

Research Participants

Senior Managers Interviewed		
	NAME	**FRS**
1	Ray	Metro
2	Henry	Metro
3	Barry	Castle
4	Derrick	Castle
5	Vic	Castle
Station Managers Interviewed		
	NAME	**FRS**
1	George	Metro
2	Anthony	Metro
3	Robin	Metro
4	Ervine	Castle
5	Nick	Castle
6	Roland	Castle

	Watch Managers Interviewed	
	NAME	**FRS**
1	John	Metro
2	Gary	Metro
3	Bob	Metro
4	Dale	Metro
5	Niall	Castle
6	Frank	Castle
7	Ron	Metro
8	Sid	Castle
9	Bart	Castle
10	Curtis	Castle
11	Baz	Metro
12	Dick	Castle
13	Grant	Metro
14	James	Metro
15	Mitch	Castle
16	Craig	Castle

Crew Managers Interviewed		
	NAME	FRS
1	Ken	Metro
2	Jo	Metro
3	Jim	Metro
4	Reg	Castle
5	Justin	Castle
6	Curtis	Castle
Watches Interviewed		
	NAME	FRS
1	Watch 1	Metro
2	Watch 2	Metro
3	Watch 3	Castle
4	Watch 4	Castle
FBU REPRESENTATIVES		
1	Jeremy	Metro
1	Owen	Castle

Appendix 11

Watch Managers and Organisational Change

	Wants Promo	WM	Faith in Targets or Performance Indicators	Faith in Promo Systems	Problems with EO Initiatives	Predominately accepts changes in organisation
GROUP ONE		John (Metro) >20 years service	-	-	-	N
		Gary (Metro) >20 years service	N	N	Y	N
		Bob (Metro) >20 years service	Y/N	N	Y	N
		Dale (Metro) >20 years service	N	N	N/Y	N
		Niall (Castle) >20 years service	N	N	N/Y	N

GROUP TWO		Frank (Shire) >20 years service	Y/N	N	N	Y/N
		Ron (Metro) >20 years service	Y/ N	N	N	N/Y
		Sid (Castle) >20 years service	Y	N	N/Y	Y/N

GROUP THREE		Bart (Castle) >10 years service	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N
		Curtis (Castle) >10 years service	Y/N	Y	Y/N	Y
		Baz (Metro) >20 years service	N/Y	Y	N	N/Y

GROUP FOUR		Dick (Castle) >10 years service	Y	Y	N/Y	Y
		Grant (Metro) >20 years service	Y/N	Y	N	Y
		James (Metro) >10 years service	Y	Y	N	Y
		Mitch (Castle) >10 years service	Y	Y	N	Y
		Craig (Castle) >10 years service	Y	Y	N	Y

Appendix 12

Acknowledgements