

***On Patrol* for Good Public Relations: Are Police-Public Interactions Symmetrical?**

A Memoir Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree

By

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Abstract

In 2009, the Ottawa Police Service collaborated with Rogers Community TV to produce a documentary type show called *On Patrol*. While offering an educational ride-along perspective to the viewer, the show also acts as a convenient platform for showcasing a community-oriented organization interested in establishing good public relations. The aim of this study is to assess whether the police-public interactions in the episodes studied conform to a two-way symmetrical public relations model and if so, how effectively. Using a model developed by Hon and Grunig (1999), which borrows from interpersonal communication and conflict resolution theories to integrate symmetrical/asymmetrical communication strategies that modulate organization-public relationships, the dialogues and monologues in the show are examined through the lens of various tenets of the above-specified model. Although the *On Patrol* production does indeed embody the spirit of positive public relations, the police-public interactions analyzed are nevertheless not unambiguously symmetrical because of the unique requirements of the police profession.

Keywords: public, police, television, *On Patrol*, symmetrical, public relations, Grunig

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INTRODUCTION

The institution of policing at various levels finds itself in a precarious state. The public scrutiny surrounding police forces/services/departments/agencies has been elevated to unprecedented levels (Toch, 2012). Some of the attention exists because of specific scandals that plague various organizations, while some of it has roots in a broad-based recent phenomenon – society’s embrace of the powerful tools of social media, namely YouTube. With user-generated videos being posted by citizen activists and non-activists alike, many of whom remain anonymous, the public is now privy to a steady diet of seemingly unsavoury footage of our men and women in blue (Hayhtio & Rinne, 2009; Goldsmith, 2010; Greer & McLaughlin, 2010; Kelly, 2012). Some of these captured incidents have arisen out of large-scale geo-political events, such as the G20 protests in Toronto (Keyes, 2013) or the Occupy Movement in New York City (Zuccotti Park) and elsewhere (Thorson et al., 2013), while others revolve around every day police activity and operations.

Then there are the scandals that attack the very soul of an organization, taking a large bite out of morale, damaging the public image, and resulting in sombre soul-searching. One notable example is the case of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with Robert Dziekanski’s airport death in 2007 (Perrott & Kelloway, 2011), which saw an exasperated Polish man – who was facing a language barrier – trying to connect with his mother inside a Vancouver airport terminal, tasered to death. The ordeal, captured on video, contradicted the statements made by responding officers. In Ottawa, a particularly devastating incident in 2008 that generated extensive media coverage involved a 27 year old woman whose defiance of police orders –

following a run-in with officers over public intoxication – led to a life-altering turn of events. The story that emerged in days that followed was that she had been savagely strip-searched in a cellblock, left for hours in her own urine, and for all intents and purposes, humiliated. The case went to court with an alleged charge of sexual assault against the presiding cellblock sergeant of that evening; a lawsuit also followed (Tanovich, 2011).

While bad publicity through YouTube footage should prove challenging enough, the perpetual problem that police have in conveying to the public of what exactly they do, and how they go about doing it has to be considered. In short, the general public, having never been in the role themselves or exposed only to a very socially constructed image of law enforcement – via fictional programming and a highly mediated account of the profession through the show *COPS* – are largely unfamiliar with police practices and procedures, including how police communicate in their interpersonal dealings with members of the public. As a result, the public must often rely on an incomplete reference frame on which to gauge the demeanour of police officers. Recognizing this gap, the Ottawa Police Service (hereafter OPS) has teamed up with Rogers Community TV to produce *On Patrol*, a documentary-style television show which features a ride-along experience with a profiled officer.

Background

The immensely popular and very successful American police show, *COPS*, a *Fox* network creation, was a venerable pioneer in its ability to straddle the line between documentary and reality-based TV to create a blended genre known as “info-tainment” (Hallett & Powell, 1995) or infotainment. There are comparable, far lesser known Canadian equivalents, such as *To*

Serve and Protect, and the relatively new *Border Security*, but these have not been the subject of any studies, and they have certainly not come close to captivating audiences the same way. While *COPS* is similar in design – “fly-on-the-wall” or “cinéma-vérité” documentary (Doyle, 2004) – to *On Patrol*, as they both include a mostly silent camera operator and three or so vignettes per episode, the difference is night and day when it comes to the nature of calls that officers respond to. For instance, Irving (1998) did a content analysis of 36 episodes of *COPS* and found that it incorrectly portrayed policing as a “monolithic crime-centred profession” (featuring an overrepresentation of violent crimes at 41.5 per cent, with only 10 per cent being non-criminal calls), when in reality it is a catch-all for social ills. Similarly, Hallett and Powell (1995) found that *COPS* actually subverts the goal of promoting realistic public expectations due to the heavy emphasis on entertainment, as it shows a disproportionate amount of exciting service calls. Part of the reason for this is that *COPS* is a nationally syndicated primetime show, and as such, does not have a geographic focus; they move from one locale (municipal police force) to another within the same episode in order to give the viewer only the most exhilarating footage after weeks of filming, effectively boiling down 50-60 hours of tape to one hour of air time (Doyle, 2004). Doyle (2004) called the show a “constructed version of reality”, one where the law-and-order/tough on crime agenda is on display and the “us versus them” (the “other” or dehumanized criminal) mentality is present. In contrast, the show under analysis, *On Patrol*, gives a fairly unmediated account of an officer’s shift and places an emphasis on dialogue with the civilians encountered in order to resolve issues.

The first iteration of *On Patrol* covered the Toronto Police Service, with the Ottawa version making its debut in 2009. While it is not exactly a franchise model per se, there are other

editions of the show in Waterloo Region and Collingwood/Barrie. To date, *On Patrol* in Ottawa has produced four seasons and 30 episodes; however, according to the supervising producer, Lynne Whitehead (personal communication, November 5, 2013), there are no plans to continue with the series as OPS has not requested further episodes. Although Rogers produces the program, the ideas for content come from OPS, and they maintain the final say for editorial consent (Lynne Whitehead, personal communication, November 5, 2013). The show is presented as an educational tool, or a job shadowing experience via virtual ride-along. There is, however, a deeper meaning inherent to the content – and likely, an additional motive behind the effort. *On Patrol* runs counter to the familiar *COPS* approach that profiles the action-themed displays of members of a paramilitary-bureaucratic force knocking in doors and chasing down suspects; rather, in this show, the audience is exposed to a softer side of the profession that paints officers more akin to social workers or mediators interested in establishing positive community relations through active listening and two-way dialogue.

The central question addressed by this research paper – using Hon and Grunig's (1999) model – is whether the communication style practised by officers in the episodes of *On Patrol* is strictly symmetrical in nature. Overall, the impetus behind this study is a personal and academic interest in the public image and representation of police; how police are depicted in a medium such as television, and how they can employ certain communication strategies when liaising with the public, a vital stakeholder on which they depend.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of reviewing the literature is two-fold: First, it is helpful to expose the reader to the growing trend of image awareness in policing. This offers an introduction on how documentary-style shows, such as *On Patrol*, emerged as a platform for reputation management by police organizations. It is evident that society's expectations and demands have grown when it comes to public knowledge of police activities; productions such as *On Patrol* can satiate this appetite. Second, a brief review of public relations models that pertain to the focus of this research study is presented. What follows is a historic overview of the two-way symmetrical model, from its incarnation in James Grunig's work to the approach selected as the relevant theoretical framework for this study – that of Hon and Grunig (1999).

The Role of Public Relations and Image in Policing

If we begin from the premise that the show being examined, *On Patrol*, serves as an effective public relations platform for OPS, it is useful to look back at the rise of image consciousness of police, why organizations are bothering with it, and the increasingly important role that public relations plays in the profession.

Barlow and Barlow (1999) saw the rise of image cognizance as fitting into a post-modernist phase of policing where public relations are crucial and the model of community policing is synonymous with the idea of promoting a good image: "Police must sell themselves to the public and an essential part of this sales campaign has been to promote community policing..." (p. 666). They cite Wilson and Kelling (1982), who argued that image-management

benefits both the police and the public, since police will be more likely to take an interest in the neighbourhoods they patrol.

Mawby (2001) regards the 1990s as a period where the police became a highly visible and accessible public institution, thanks to an explosion of media content on television – and this is before considering the rise of Internet. In Britain, there was also the effect of managerialist government policy at play as well as widespread concern with police performance and misconduct. To combat this external pressure from media and the public alike, and to manage this new age visibility, police services raised the level of their image work by hiring press officers, marketing professionals, public relations officers and corporate identity specialists – all with the goal of promoting, projecting and protecting the police image. These are skilled media professionals and he makes a point of saying the ones that are not civilians (i.e. officers) are in the minority and have been trained and advised by specialists. This hiring binge represented an astronomical rise in police budgets to meet the demands of media. Mawby (2001) recognizes the risk that police image work could be used for nefarious motives, like “systematic misrepresentation to mask malpractice, to abdicate or deflect responsibility” (p. 45), but states that police forces are opening up communication lines with the public in order to provide transparency, allowing the media and general public to learn about policing policy and practice.

Motschall and Cao (2002) contend that the Public Information Officer (PIO) position in police organizations has changed to reflect law enforcement’s move from a closed system of communication, suitable for a paramilitary outfit of decades past to a more open system that reflects a service orientation. PIOs admitted to approaching their responsibilities more

proactively (whereas in the past it was singularly reactive) including creating opportunities for gaining positive agency publicity, managing appearance, and acting as the department's boundary spanner or liaison – bringing information to management on the inside from the public on the outside. The goal of the proactive approach is not only to inform but also to persuade publics to support and trust the agency. These are techniques associated with the two-way model of public relations behaviour, albeit perhaps asymmetrical. Further, several PIOs noted that their efforts included building public trust, confidence, and understanding. As one PIO stated, “Without public support, police could not function” (Motschall & Cao, 2002, p. 176). The idea is that by educating and involving the public, through the public information function, “police hope that citizens will put into perspective controversial events that typically involve just a few officers but which often reflect poorly on an entire department (Motschall & Cao, 2002, p.155).

Terpstra and Trommel (2009) review the connection between police work and the presentation and manipulation of symbols, meanings and information, which is the basis of Manning's work (1977). Manning, (as cited in Terpstra & Trommel, 2009) using a concept called “police presentational strategies”– which he derived from the dramaturgical approach of Goffman – found the most symbolic presentations of police are uniform and patrol car, but another strategy capable of presenting the police mission, mandate and activities to the public is their professionalism. The authors see this rise of image awareness in policing as a direct consequence of our environment. Society expects police not only to resolve problems of crime and disorder but to comfort citizens' feelings of insecurity. From this, it is implied that police should provide information about their activities, in a transparent and accountable way.

Therefore, in a society dominated by mass media, the police must present themselves actively using the media (Terpstra & Trommel, 2009).

Keane and Bell (2013) explain that over the past 20 years, there has been a significant increase in the level of sophistication in police-public communications, with police now embracing all available methods, including having their own YouTube channels (Hollins & Bacon, 2010, as cited in Keane & Bell, 2013) and Twitter accounts (Hermann, 2009, as cited in Keane & Bell, 2013). Clarke (2012, as cited in Keane & Bell, 2013) reports that Scottish police are even tweeting from the beat to engage with their communities. This same practice took place as a pilot in Ottawa in January 2014 with Constable Pete McKenna and his partner Sergeant Iain Pidcock using a Saturday night shift to tweet out all sorts of happenings, including a description of the calls they were attending, as well as bathroom and food pit stops (Roche, 2014).

There are two main objectives of police prioritizing their communication with the public: To gather information and intelligence from a trusting public, which helps keep communities safe (Feist, 1999, as cited in Keane & Bell, 2013); and to maintain and enhance the public image of police, providing assurance to the public of their ability to serve and protect (Mawby, 2001, as cited in Keane & Bell, 2013). These two goals are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Keane and Bell (2013) believe that in Britain, the police elected to not use force to quell disorder during the 2011 street riots following accusations of heavy-handedness in earlier years during G8/G20 summits and student protests in London. This inaction, the authors believe, largely had to do with the sensitivity of police with respect to their public image, and raises the question of whether police are in danger of confusing police image and police performance. In a Canadian

context, this is certainly reminiscent of the 2011 Stanley Cup riot in Vancouver where police faced criticism due to the lack of a measured response to hooliganism (CBC News, 2011; CTV News, 2011).

McGovern and Lee (2013) reiterate the significant growth in professional public relations departments in police organizations over the last decades – this time in Australia – which has transformed the ways in which the police do business with media, and the public by extension. The authors spoke to 12 key media professionals working within police corporate communications units across Australia and on the topic of reality television, comments were made about the value documentaries hold in showing officers acting fairly and methodically. The authors go on to highlight the main challenge to police image work: “This increased control over the framing of the police image is, however, somewhat offset by the growth in citizen journalism, blogging and other activities that present new challenges to the production of hegemonic policing images” (McGovern & Lee, 2013, p. 119). The authors view image work as both a way to support legitimate policing and a way to compensate for a lack of organizational legitimacy by presenting images that are mostly positive. Despite this, they dismiss the notion of public relations as spin as reductionist, since it ignores an important reality of modern policing; that is, the link between image work and a public confidence agenda in police organizations.

Public Relations Models

Public relations research began in the 1950s and 1960s as an extension of mass communication research at a time when many scholars were interested in the direct effects approach; consequently, public relations was viewed as a tool of persuasion that could be

accomplished simply through public information campaigns (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2006). It was not until James Grunig introduced organizational theory to public relations in 1976 and developed the concept of symmetrical communication that the public relations process became viewed as a management function (Grunig et al., 2006). While there exists a wide range of communication theories that can be applied to the field of public relations, the focus below will be on two-way symmetrical communication strategies and the maintenance of mutually beneficial organization-public relationships.

The unequivocal starting point for this theoretical framework discussion is Grunig and Hunt's (1984, as cited in L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) four models of public relations: press agency/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. The press agency/publicity model is propaganda-based and relies on persuasion and manipulation to influence audiences to behave as the organization desires; the messages disseminated benefit solely the organization and may not always be entirely true. The public information model uses press releases and other one-way communication techniques to deliver a message, although the information is truthful here. The two-way asymmetrical model does allow for feedback in the form of research gathered on the target public, but this research is used solely to inform the organization's persuasion program, so that they are better able to influence and change their public's behaviour. Lastly, the two-way symmetrical public relations model allows for behavioural change on both the part of the organization and the public; it uses effective communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its publics. The feedback garnered in this last model is used in a benevolent fashion, in what is called "boundary-spanning" or "environmental scanning"

whereby people occupying public relations roles relay the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the public to management – who is part of the dominant coalition that determines organizational strategy – for consideration in strategic planning and decision-making. The Excellence study conducted by Grunig and his associates – which saw 327 organizations of all types surveyed in Canada, the United States, and United Kingdom, followed by qualitative interviews with 25 organizations – revealed that excellent departments design their communication programs based on the two-way symmetrical model rather than the press agency, public information, or two-way asymmetrical models (Grunig et al., 2002; Grunig et al., 2006). Later on, Grunig (2001, as cited in Hung, 2007) refined the four static public relations models by identifying four underlying variables that describe the nature of communication between organizations and their publics in more detail, which he called the maintenance strategies for public relations practices: symmetrical/asymmetrical communication, one-way/two-way communication, mediated/interpersonal communication, and ethical/unethical communication.

Inspired by Lee Thayer's (1968, as cited in Bowen, 2013) concepts of synchronic (at one time) and diachronic (at two times) communication and the logic of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's open systems theory – that systems must be more or less open to energy, information, and thus capable of incorporating feedback, or otherwise they would decay into entropy and fail (Krippendorff, 2008) – Grunig emphasized that a two-way symmetrical communication style that was inherently ethical was the proper conduit for public relations practitioners to use. In public relations, symmetry implies a balance of interests, as well as a symbiotic or mutually constituting relationship (Bowen, 2013) between the two parties (organization and public). Regardless of whether there is an actual imbalance in power, normatively, they are considered equal partners

when engaged in two-way symmetrical communication, a dialogic process. The basic premise is that there is discussion, collaboration, negotiation and compromise between the organization and its public, which may see one party give up something it wants in exchange for something on another issue in the immediate or in the future (Bowen, 2013). Therefore, there is a definite give-and-take that is fundamental to two-way symmetrical communication. Over time, using a two-way symmetrical approach helps in the building, strengthening, and maintenance of relationships with publics, which assists in fostering trust and credibility between the two parties (Bowen, 2013). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002, p. 314) were careful to point out that symmetry does not signal capitulation or submission on the part of the organization towards its public's goals: "Total accommodation of the public's interests would be as asymmetrical as unbridled advocacy of the organization's interests." It is important to note that even if the sides cannot come to an agreement over a contentious issue, the mere existence of a symmetrical relationship – which endures longer than an asymmetrical one – allows for the possibility of continued dialogue down the road to find options for mutual gain/benefit (Bowen, 2013).

Over the past 30 years, the two-way symmetrical model has been attacked for being too idealistic and utopian (Piecska, 1995; L'Étang, 1995; Cheney & Christensen, 2001, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002). Miller (1989, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002) pointed out that public relations and persuasion are "two Ps in a pod" and that public relations is by nature asymmetrical. Leichty and Springston (1993, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002) felt that an organization relying solely on the symmetrical approach for all publics was not practical, and that the contingency approach of using different public relations models for different publics and situations was more reasonable. Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002, p. 314) concede this point by

admitting that the two-way symmetrical model will sometimes be less effective than at other times; they ask, however, whether an asymmetrical approach will be successful at all when a symmetrical approach is not entirely effective. One notable criticism, held by Leitch and Neilson (2001, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002) is the unrealistic premise – worded as “simply absurd” – that an organization holding a much more powerful position in the relationship would relinquish their interests when dealing with a public. This was met by Grunig’s defense that the professionalism and knowledge of the public relations practitioner would allow them to rise above this inequity. According to Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2006, p. 47), “They should be able to advocate symmetry in public relations for the same reason that a physician tells an overweight person to exercise – because it is good for the organization, just as exercise is good for one’s health.”

Another damaging claim is that the model exists only in its normative form – that it could not exist in the real world, made by, among others, Leitch and Neilson (2001, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002). Grunig and Grunig (1992, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002, p. 307) say that it is a real as well as a normative model, but they themselves acknowledge that it is a model that organizations “often do not use because an authoritarian dominant coalition sees the approach as a threat to its power.” They also allege that a small part of their work (one study looking at activist groups in the Pacific Northwest) where there was not support for the symmetrical model has been misconstrued to represent the prevailing body of research. In short, they claim that there is overwhelming evidence that the two-way symmetrical model is both normative and positive. The symmetrical approach is actually believed to contribute to the effectiveness of organizations from a profitability point of view. By maintaining positive, collaborative relationships with its

publics, organizations can often save large amounts of money that would have potentially been wasted on legal settlements, regulatory compliance or other damage control had another public relations model been exercised (Grunig et al., 2002; Grunig et al., 2006).

From a conflict resolution perspective, it was seen as difficult to locate the exact point for appropriate behaviour on the continuum between two-way asymmetrical (advocacy of the organization's position) and two-way symmetrical (accommodation of the public's position) communication. Priscilla Murphy (1991, as cited in Plowman, 2007) suggested that a mixed-motive version of the two-way symmetrical model would better describe what is actually being practiced in public relations, thus representing a more positivist or descriptive model than Grunig's conception, which is said to be more normative. The mixed-motive model, also termed collaborative advocacy by some, borrows from game theory and is supportive of using asymmetrical strategies alongside symmetrical ones. The model "describes behaviour as most public relations professionals experience it – a multidirectional scale of competition and cooperation in which organizational needs must be balanced against constituents' needs" (Plowman, 2007, p. 87). In other words, organizations try to satisfy their own interests while simultaneously trying to help a public satisfy theirs. This new model of symmetry using two-way practices (symmetrical and asymmetrical) was recognized by Grunig, Grunig and Dozier in 1995 (as cited in Plowman, 2007). Interestingly, Grunig would rebut that Murphy's notion of the mixed-motive model accurately described the two-way symmetrical model as originally conceptualized by he and his colleagues – that being for the organization and their public to find the win-win zone on issues and reconcile their interests (Grunig et al., 2002).

Synonymous with two-way symmetrical communication is the idea of dialogue (Heath, 2001, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002, p. 317), or a dialogic approach to public relations, which, according to Michael Kent and Maureen Taylor (1998, as cited in Kent, 2013) refers to the negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions. Baxter (1994, as cited in Grunig et al., 2002, p. 317) used the theory of dialogism (“the simultaneous fusion or unity of multiple voices with each voice retaining its differentiated uniqueness”) developed by Russian rhetorical scholar Mikhail Bakhtin to describe interpersonal relationships. Dialogue is a complex communicative skill that is more than merely talk or sharing of information. True, authentic dialogue is said to require spontaneous, face-to-face, interpersonal interaction (often limited to two people) with both parties being committed to the conversational process over the long term, so that trust and empathy can be built up (Kent, 2013). The six basic tenets of dialogue include the following: *risk* (a willingness to interact with others and to be changed); *trust* (fairness and openness); *proximity* (spontaneous, honest, face-to-face contact); *empathy* (supportiveness); *mutuality* (a recognition of shared goals and interests); and *commitment* (to ethical conversation). Similar to two-way symmetrical communication, individuals who engage in dialogue do not have to necessarily agree – often they vehemently disagree – but they must share a willingness to try to reach mutually satisfying positions.

This review of public relations models, detailed above, serves to chart the evolution of the symmetrical approach to public relations, raising scholarly critiques that emerged along the way. The mixed-motive version, developed in the early to mid-nineties, brought the purely two-way symmetrical model closer to the realm of descriptiveness, as in offering something that could actually be practised by organizations, but its vagueness in identifying components or

tenets represents a significant shortcoming. In contrast, Hon and Grunig (1999) advocate a clear and detailed public relations model, one that spells out the characteristics that impact relationships.

Theoretical Framework and Definitions

Hon and Grunig (1999) put forward a select set of symmetrical and asymmetrical communication strategies that affect the development of organization-public relationships. Originally called relationship maintenance strategies, and then revised to cultivation strategies, they are drawn from interpersonal communication theories (Canary & Stafford, 1994, as cited in Hung, 2007) and conflict resolution theories (Plowman, 1995, as cited in Hung, 2007). The researchers of the Excellence Study suggested early on that in order for an organization to achieve its goals, building long-term, positive relationships with their publics was crucial. Further, in order to manufacture these relationships, two-way symmetrical public relations models were optimal – within which interpersonal communication strategies are used. Until Hon and Grunig introduced them with their “maintenance” or “cultivation” strategies, research into the interpersonal communication processes in public relations had been limited (Rhee, 2007).

Hon and Grunig’s (1999) model serves as a lens for the discourse analysis of *On Patrol* in order to answer the following central research question: Does the local cable production, *On Patrol* – which blends informational and entertainment content into a vehicle positioning OPS as a community-oriented organization – conform to a two-way symmetrical model of public relations, and if so, how effectively? The various tenets of the Hon and Grunig (1999) model, delineated and defined below, act as the criteria against which the dialogue between police and

public, and the monologues of police – found within their narration to the camera/audience – will be assessed. As stated, the goal is to see whether police-public interactions are unambiguously symmetrical.

From the interpersonal communication side of the model, there is *access* (either party is willing and able to go to the other when they have complaints/queries rather than taking negative reactions to third parties); *positivity* (anything the organization or public says to make the relationship more enjoyable for the parties involved, such as police using pleasant language); *openness* (sharing of information, thoughts, and feelings in an honest and transparent manner); *assurances* (showing a commitment to maintaining the relationship through respect and treating the other party and their concerns as legitimate by demonstrating understanding/empathy); *networking* (organizations building coalitions with the same third-party groups that their publics do); and *sharing of tasks* (organizations and publics working alongside each other to solve joint or separate problems, such as when police treat the public as partners, asking for their help or delegating tasks to them).

From the conflict resolution side, there are *integrative* strategies (a purely symmetrical approach where parties solve their problems through open discussion and joint decision-making to achieve win-win solutions); *distributive* strategies (a purely asymmetrical approach where one party imposes its position on the other through aggressive tactics like domination, arguing, hostile questioning, and making demands, threats or presumptions); and *dual concern* strategies, also known as mixed-motive or collaborative advocacy which contains both symmetrical and asymmetrical techniques. Within symmetrical, there is *cooperating* (both the organization and

the public work together to reconcile their interests and reach a mutually beneficial solution); being *unconditionally constructive* (the organization does whatever it considers is best for the relationship, even if it must relinquish its position somewhat, even if the public does not reciprocate); and stipulating *win-win or no deal* (if the organization and public cannot find a solution that benefits both, they agree to disagree for the time being and postpone the decision to a later time. Within asymmetrical, there is *contending* (the organization attempts to persuade the public to accept its position); *avoiding* (the organization physically or psychologically evades the conflict with publics); *accommodating* (the organization, to some degree, gives in on its position and its goals); and *compromising* (the organization partially meets the public's expectations, but both sides are not entirely satisfied with the outcome).

It is important to consider the context in which this model is being applied; that is, we do not have public relations practitioners caught in the middle of the organization they are supposed to represent and a public that they are trying to appease. In this case, the police officer is an employee of the organization, and is acting directly on behalf of its interests, while trying to maintain positive relations with a crucial stakeholder, the general public. In effect, there are only two parties to the process here – police (acting in a public relations role) and public – not three as Grunig conceived (public relations practitioner, organization and public). The public is defined as any non-sworn member, or civilian, and can include lawful and unlawful citizens (suspects or perpetrators) alike. Based on the above, a few slight modifications are required to the model: First, given that there is no third party in the process, it is not possible to evaluate the *access* tenet and this will be left out during analysis; next, due to the overlapping themes and similarity between the two concepts, *integrative* strategies (a purely symmetrical approach) is subsumed

under the *cooperating* tenet; lastly, since there are no third-party groups to build coalitions with, in the context of the *On Patrol* program, the present definition of *networking* is not applicable, but instead of discarding the tenet, it will be understood here as police building long-term relationships with the public through the performance of unique, special favours that go above and beyond the call of duty.

There are a number of reasons for selecting the Hon and Grunig (1999) model as the theoretical framework. First and foremost, it offers a very clear breakdown of tenets or characteristics that can be used to examine the police-public interactions in the episodes. Most importantly, these are tenets that can be objectively evaluated by a researcher using a medium like television. Other theories, such as Kent and Taylor's dialogue (1998, as cited in Kent, 2013) offer tenets that more or less insist on self-evaluation by the parties involved, rendering them off-limits for a discourse analysis of a TV show. Next, interpersonal communication is fundamental to the model, and the tenets reflect how effective interpersonal communication strategies can be in establishing symmetrical relationships. In fact, Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002) believed that interpersonal communication is used more than mediated communication when practising two-way symmetrical public relations. Next, the conflict resolution theories are invaluable because they offer a provision for asymmetrical techniques alongside symmetrical ones, which allows for the possibility of studying the material in the episodes from a balanced position – instead of searching for the absence of something (opposite of the tenets), it is possible to look for the presence of something.

While it is certainly not unexpected that the Rogers-produced show *On Patrol* will give off a positive, feel-good sentiment about the professionalism and community-oriented nature of local police officers, applying a public relations model to the front lines of the job – where situations are fluid, emergencies can develop, and reaction time is not on the side of first responders – to examine police-public interactions to see whether they conform to a purely two-way symmetrical model represents a new frontier for this topic.

METHODOLOGY

This study has a number of delimitations. For the purposes of a data source, there is no analysis of newspaper articles that make reference to the image of Ottawa Police, nor do I examine other mediums for explicit signs of community-oriented practices, such as Twitter, YouTube or the organization's website. Moreover, this paper is not examining how the audience perceives police based on the show, as this would have entailed a different study and research design, namely one concerned with audience effects. For data, only audio-visual materials and their transcripts, from the community television-produced show, *On Patrol*, are examined. The reason for focusing on the television medium is that unlike static font appearing on Twitter, on a website, or in a newspaper, TV offers video-captured interactions between police officers and members of the public. Regarding YouTube, while many individuals post their videos of OPS interactions with the public, the problem here is the lack of credibility associated with these anonymous users and in a similar vein, the complete lack of context frequently surrounding these videos; for their part, OPS does post YouTube videos but these are more geared towards a recruiting or organizational philosophy agenda. Therefore, only *On Patrol* offers the perspective of police-public interactions that is officially sanctioned by OPS, which provides a coherent narrative that is suitable for analysis. At the same time, this programming, which is subject to final review and approval by the very same organization (OPS) being profiled, could be perceived by some as a contrived source, and thus not wholly reflective of true police-public interactions. This notion is discussed more in-depth as a limitation later on in the concluding section.

Research Design

This study takes the form of a discourse analysis which is both descriptive and interpretive in nature. I am undertaking this study through a social constructionist lens, as I am interested in “how reality comes to be constituted in human interactions and in language,” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 16) when it involves two mutually constituting sides in society – i.e. police and the public. Overall, I am interested in the substance of the dialogue (what is being said) and the tone or temperament on display from officers, and to a lesser extent, what is not being said in the exchange. Material of interest includes officers relating to civilians using friendly language, officers showing leniency during traffic stops, special favours offered to the public, the absence or presence of aggression/hostility in dealing with the public, and a certain self-awareness professed by the officers about the importance of public relations in their job. The appropriate research method for this study is discourse analysis, which has as its goal “to analyse the ways in which language contributes to the construction of social reality,” (Schreier, 2012, p. 46) through the study of social interactions between the police and members of the public; due consideration is given to the social context – police as authority figures maintain a notable status advantage over civilians. Overall, this is a concept-driven analysis, in which the various tenets or concepts of the chosen model serve as a lens through which to examine the discourse, assessing along the way whether police-public interactions are representative of two-way symmetrical communication.

Data Collection

For this study, there is one source of primary data – the *On Patrol* television show – from which my original research is based. Each episode of *On Patrol* lasts for just over 25 minutes

with five episodes being selected. This does not constitute a purely random selection, since an explicit attempt was made to capture unique aspects of the ride-along (i.e. suburban night shift vs. rural day shift). Further, there are also episodes where the camera steps out from the cruiser and captures different environments, such as the central cellblock at headquarters, an up-close look at the guns and gangs unit, or a studio interview with the Chief of Police. These, however, were passed by in favour of the traditional ride-along format, which guarantees a linear timeline of events, and is more conducive to the exercise of examining police-public interactions. Thus, there was relevance or purposive sampling (Krippendorff, 2004) undertaken to select the episodes. Another factor in the selection of episodes is simply the availability of episodes free of charge. As a Rogers subscriber, I had access to a select set of episodes on their Anyplace TV (on demand) website, and found others playing on Rogers Cable 22 (TV channel). The first step in gathering the data was recording the full audio of the episodes from both sources (website and TV) and this was accomplished via the voice memo utility of a mobile phone. The audio file was then sent by e-mail so it could be manipulated on a desktop computer before the next step. Given that the format of the audio file was m4a (similar to mp4), it was necessary to convert this to a more common file type, and thus the program 'Any Audio Converter' was used to create a transcription friendly mp3 file from the existing m4a file. Next, the program 'Transcription Buddy' audio player was used in conjunction with the newly-created mp3 files. With this program, it was possible to designate certain 'hot' keys in Microsoft Word so that one could pause, play, fast-forward, rewind, speed up, or slow down the audio file while transcribing. (Note that the full transcripts of the episodes are available upon request, as well as the mp3 audio files.)

Data Analysis

The sampling unit or unit of data collection is represented by the full episode, but the recording unit or unit of analysis is smaller blocks of text (conversation excerpts) found within the three main segments of each episode. Excerpts from the transcripts, including illustrative quotations from both the police-public dialogue and police monologues are featured as data points. There is no minimum or maximum length criterion for the excerpts, with the most important consideration being preservation of surrounding context; thus the length of the excerpts (data points or recording units/units of analysis) is determined essentially by thematic criterion. While the same excerpt cannot be categorized simultaneously as multiple tenets of interpersonal communication, nor can it be categorized simultaneously as an interpersonal communication tenet and a conflict resolution tenet, it is entirely possible that the same incident can span multiple tenets as within each incident or service call, there are various interactions occurring, and consequently, various eligible excerpts. For excerpts where multiple tenets apply, the best fit in terms of representativeness is picked.

The discourse in the *On Patrol* episodes has been textually analysed for both denotative (literal, descriptive meaning) and, when required/relevant, connotative (figurative, culturally ascribed meaning) language (Schreier, 2012). For the latter, I am using my perspective on the world of policing as well as knowledge of background issues to interpret and unpack some of the content to facilitate a richer understanding for the reader. While priority is given to analyzing the interactions between police and the public, there is a significant amount of narration taking place at the hands of the featured officer, who is explaining things from the police perspective to the camera/audience at home; this discourse is valuable and of interest, since it touches on relevant themes from the public relations model. While the public's point of view is certainly represented

within the excerpts, since a two-way dialogue is of interest to this study, the emphasis in the analysis will be on the officers' words since they represent the organization's public relations mandate.

After transcription was completed, I performed a casual reading of the entire document. I then went back to watch the episodes without consideration for the model (unbiased). Next, I then familiarized myself closely with the model, making slight adjustments to the original concepts of the tenets to suit the case under examination. I performed an initial coding of all the material over the course of two days. A week later, I did another round of coding, making corrections along the way while concurrently revisiting the conceptions of the tenets to ensure proper classification of the excerpts. A few days later, prior to analysis, a final, exhaustive check on coding was done to ensure the best fit for excerpts.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Effective Interpersonal Communication Tenets

Positivity

A total of 30 police-public interactions occurred over five episodes, with 18 of these showing the beginning of the exchange and 13 showing the end of the exchange. Of the 18, 10 featured a positive opening greeting by the officer, such as ‘Hello’, ‘Hi’, ‘How are you?’ or some combination thereof; of the 13, 11 featured a positive ending, such as ‘Thanks’, ‘Drive safe’, ‘Have a good night’ or some combination thereof. It is noteworthy that in the majority of instances where no positive opening or closing remarks were made by the officer, the civilian was in a precarious position – either being suspected of committing a crime, or in a crisis/trauma of some sort – and language that went beyond niceties, such as direct commands/questions, was likely deemed more essential.

From some of the excerpts below, it is apparent that during traffic stops pleasantries can assist in defusing tension and establishing a rapport with the public, before a request is made:

Constable: Hey, how are you doing?

Motorist: Good yourself?

Constable: Good. You got a burnt out headlight?

Later...

Constable: Hi, how you doing?

Motorist: Good and you?

Constable: Good. Is this your car?

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

And...

Constable: Hey how’s it going?

Motorist: Not too bad, yourself?

Constable: Not too bad. Can I get your driver's license, ownership and insurance? I just pulled you over because you got a headlight out.

In another traffic stop, the same officer makes small talk, perhaps as a subtle way to probe whether the motorist is being straight with him, but taking the inquiry at face value, the officer is being personable, finding something common to bond over:

Constable: You coming from work or...
Motorist: Oh no, I went to a movie at the theatre.
Constable: Oh ok, what movie did you see?
Motorist: Uh...that new one with...with uh...with one of the...Olympus.
Constable: Oh yeah, any good?
Motorist: Yeah.
Constable: Oh cool. Ok just give me two minutes, I'll be right back.

(From Season 4, Episode 4, featuring Constable Erik Burnie)

Polite instructions are issued when searching someone before they ride in the police cruiser, complete with manners of 'please' and 'thank you', as well as words like 'perfect', 'awesome' that are colloquial and conducive to an easy-going interaction; they give off an 'it's all good' vibe. Officers then caution him as he enters the car, checking to ensure he is seated properly:

Man: And two lighters. I got a couple other pockets here. Believe one's just uh...
Officer #2: Just paper?
Man: Yeah. This is all uh work related stuff, for RRSP, pension, and casual time.
Officer #2: Perfect. I'll just get you to put it on the trunk for me and I'll check your pockets real quick? Can you please widen your stance for me?
Man: Oh my wallet.
Officer #2: Perfect. I would have found it. Alright, so just widen your stance for me, keep your legs apart.
Man: Oh.
Officer #2: Awesome, thank you.
Constable: It's a bit tight so watch your head (*helping man into backseat*). You ok? I'm going to close the door ok?

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

In one call of an individual suspected of trying to pick up prescription drugs with a forged doctor's signature, the responding officer still greets the man, before effecting the arrest:

Officer #2: Hi, how are you? I hear you're here to pick up a prescription.

Suspect: Yeah.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Humour can also be observed as a sort of icebreaking technique. A woman was stopped for turning right on a red light, and admits that her passenger told her to do it. The officer tries to make light of the situation to comfort the driver:

Constable: Well you don't listen to someone who's not driving (*laughing*). That's everything? And you said you're looking for parking?

Woman: I guess I found it now.

Constable: Now you found it...see this is a bonus of getting pulled over (*smiling*), I'll check everything out, if everything's ok then...alright?

Later on in the exchange, he reinforces the lesson of not listening to her young daughter, the passenger, staying light-hearted:

Woman: I'm not going to listen to her...

Constable: Don't listen to your passengers.

Woman: Don't listen to my daughter!

Constable: Do you have a driver's license?

Girl: Noooo! (*rudely*).

Constable: No? So don't listen to someone who doesn't have a driver's license (*in joking tone*).

Woman: I know!

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Upon clearing a scrap outside a strip club, the officer acknowledges a joke about how weird things happen with a full moon, and then mentions how it is also end of the month, which is a direct reference to social assistance cheques going out (a precipitating factor for heavy consumption of drugs/alcohol in certain hotspots of city) – a reality of life for many individuals living in Vanier, where the strip club is located:

Man #4: Stick around, it's a full moon.

Constable: Yeah, for sure eh (*laughing*). Full moon and end of the month, so...

Man #2: (*Laughing*) Thanks.

Constable: Alright, have a good night.

Another example involving the same officer occurs following a traffic stop where the motorist has two licenses – one active, one expired. The officer explains that motorists need to destroy their old license upon receiving their new one, and then drops a *Seinfeld*-esque line (one episode featured George Costanza struggling with an overflowing wallet from keeping too many cards, stubs, receipts).

Constable: Yeah, you're supposed to destroy them when you get your new one...

Motorist: Yeah.

Constable: People forget.

Motorist: I have a bad habit...

Constable: You got to put your wallet on a diet there...too many cards right?

Motorist: Right (*laughing*).

Constable: Drive safely, have a good night.

Motorist: Ok thank you.

(From Season 4, Episode 4, featuring Constable Erik Burnie)

The importance of approaching the public with decency and respect in order to elicit a response in-kind is on display below from one officer who briefs the other on how to handle an individual with a unique condition, who she has previously dealt with:

Officer #2: So he recently had his house burnt down, ok.

Constable: Ok.

Officer #2: He does have Tourette's. Uh he's quite a big fella, but usually really good, like if you approach him nicely, he's usually responsive.

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

Openness

The officers reveal to the camera on two occasions their desire to be regarded by the public as just a regular person outside of their ascribed professional role, as someone with a good sense of humour who is fairly easy-going. This is a unique glimpse at the personal side of police officers that we are not often exposed to:

Constable: (*To camera*) So I like to treat people with pride and respect and show them the person beyond the uniform.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

And...

Constable: (*To camera*) It's just different every day, it's fun every day. Like the first disturbance/dispute between the couple and all his ex girlfriends. He had a good sense of humour, he was a lot of fun...like...just...I like people that get to see that we have a sense of humour and that...that we're compassionate and normal, quote, unquote.

The officer in the above quotation certainly did enjoy a lengthy conversation (below) with the individual about his personal matters, taking an active interest by providing surface-level relationship advice – along with some playful ribbing – as she drives him to his ex-girlfriend's place. Before the ride:

Constable: Where you going?

Guy: I got to go see my ex on McArthur.

Constable: A different ex?

Guy: With my children. My children live there.

Constable: The one that you're trespassing.

Guy: Noooo, I didn't trespass (*exasperated*).

Constable: But the same one...the same one? (*laughing*).

Guy: No it's not the same one. I had an ex with two children. I came back yesterday from there, was staying there for two days (*bag zipping up*). I stayed there for two nights, with my kids and my ex and her daughter.

Constable: Ok.

Guy: And I decided myself to come back here...

Constable: Ok

Guy: Because she wouldn't let me come back here for my stuff. So I decided to come back here, try to make a little bit of amends, tell her that we're going to be friends and roommates and get my stuff right here at the same time.

Constable: That never works with women.

Guy: Nothing else works with her...so that's what I did.

Constable: The roommate story. Come on...(*incredulously*).

Guy: She's the one who made it up.

Constable: Buddy!

While driving:

Constable: No no, what's the plan?

Guy: What do you mean? Oh...no women!

Constable: No women!

Guy: I'm actually just going to my ex's in Iroquois to build her a new chicken coop, because her chicken coop is all rotten and I'm going to be staying there for about a week, and then I'm going to T.O. with my mom and sister.

Constable: You can't make this stuff up! (*laughing*)

After arriving at the destination:

Constable: I suppose I should wait in case you have another one of these eh? Where is she?
Guy: If you want to come, you can come. Follow me.
Constable: I'm starting to sense a pattern, Daniel.
Guy: This is a good pattern.
Constable: Aren't you worried that her boyfriend might be here?
Guy: We've been separated for seven years.
Constable: Is that ok? Ok, Diane says it's ok? What's the plan? See you forgot the plan already.
Guy: No I didn't forget the plan.
Constable: Where are you coming? No, don't follow me! We're done!
Guy: I'm going for a coffee
Constable: Ok.
Guy: You want to take me there too?
Constable: No (*laughing*). I think you made my Friday, Daniel (*laughing*).

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

The sensitive case of the woman in the cellblock in 2008, and how this negatively impacted the police-public relationship in the community, is alluded to in an intimate disclosure by the officer:

Constable: (*To camera*) I think the past couple of years have been pretty hard on the Ottawa Police and the portrayal of certain cases, and I've actually felt the impact out on the road from members of the public.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

An officer who stops a known drug dealer to check up on him takes a friendly, exceptionally casual tone with the man, as they catch up on what would seem like pretty standard stuff – what he got caught stealing recently, where his acquaintances/buddies are at:

Constable: You got court tomorrow for possession of stolen property stuff?
Man: Wednesday. Wednesday.
Constable: For the... for what, drugs or property?
Man: Uh, it was property.
Constable: Yeah, that GPS you got caught with?
Man: Yeah.
Constable: Where's Mary at? She's been looking for you all week.
Man: Mary's in bed man.
Constable: Yeah but all week, she's been losing her mind looking for you.
Man: Yeah, well she doesn't have far to look now.
Constable: Well I know, I told her, go home.

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Following the issuance of a large ticket with demerit points for distracted driving, despite the officer being visibly frustrated with the driver's conduct and imposing the harshest penalty possible under the circumstances, she is honest and forthcoming by presenting options to the motorist as to how to reduce the penalty:

Constable: You're more than welcome to plead not guilty and go to court. You have a clean driving record. I can't make you any promises as to whether or not the ticket will be lowered or what decision the crown will make, but what I'm telling you is that you have an immaculate driving record.

After some protestation from the motorist that the cell phone use was only for a brief moment, the officer reacts frankly, trying to reinforce the gravitas of distracted driving. She then reiterates her suggestion above on how best to handle the ticket to appease the motorist, before ending with a chastisement:

Constable: And see, now...now that you're saying only briefly, is saying that you...you still don't get how serious this is, like...

Woman: No, I do, I do.

Constable: You're already saying...so

Woman: I do, I just find, of course...I understand the seriousness of it.

Constable: And, this is the fine for the cell phone. This is careless driving, which is two different offenses, so what I'm saying is with your driving record, plead not guilty, take it to court and we'll see what happens then. Like you...you could have killed someone today.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Assurances

Upon learning that the woman's dog ran off after being hit by a vehicle, the officer shows sincerity and reassures her that the dog will be found. In this case, with a woman crying in the flesh, a missing dog is considered a priority, despite it not being really a police matter:

(Dog owner is crying and inaudible)

Constable: Where's your dog? Your dog got hit *(sympathetically)*?

Dog owner: He's gone *(sobbing)*.

Constable: Ok we'll find him, ok. We'll find him or her.

Later on, the same officer attends to a very sensitive call where a university student was threatening to jump off a building. The officer finds the girl and applies his softest tone in an effort to console her, suggesting that people are concerned for her safety, and going so far as saying that he doesn't "hate her" to counteract her negative feelings of despair:

Constable: What's the matter? I just want to talk to you for a minute ok? What's wrong (*in a sympathetic voice*)? What's wrong?

Girl: (*Sobbing*) Everyone hates me.

Constable: Pardon me.

Girl: Everyone hates me

Constable: I don't hate you.

Girl: You don't even know me!

Constable: No...Ok, we'll just go over here...

Girl: I'm not going to jump don't worry...

Constable: I don't want you to jump ok?

Girl: I wasn't going to. Man it's all _____ [fucking]...

Constable: Ok, well a lot of people are concerned. That's why they called us.

Girl: No they're not!

Constable: Well, yes they are.

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

In a highly emotional call following a collision between two vehicles, the officer shows an appreciation for the situation and total empathy for the man whose concern for the well-being of his pregnant girlfriend led to a hasty physical response of him pushing the other vehicle's occupant:

Constable: I'd ask you to sit down but I know that you can't, can you?

English guy: I'm a little wound up.

Constable: Yeah you're a little wound up. No, that's completely understandable.

English guy: This guy just t-boned me and my pregnant girlfriend...

Constable: Yeah, no no.

English guy: I literally want to rip this guy's head off.

Constable: Ok (*laughing*).

English guy: No no I'm cool, I'm cool, just understand that...

Constable: I appreciate that a 1000%.

English guy: Right.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

After stopping a woman for turning right on a red light at an intersection with a sign prohibiting it, the officer notices the woman is dejected and before leaving with her documentation to take back to his car to check out, he reaches out:

Constable: You're upset?

Woman: Yeah.

Constable: Why? *(in friendly tone)*.

Woman: Because I listened to her.

Constable: Ok, well I'll let you have a chat with her while I check everything out, ok?

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Lastly, following the brawl outside the strip club, despite believing it was a 'consent' fight with both parties taking swings, and thus rendering the incident not really investigable, the officer reassures the group of men that the police are there to help out if there is a reoccurrence:

Constable: Sounds good. Yeah so if they slide by again and give you guys trouble, give us a call.

Man #2: For sure.

(From Season 4, Episode 4, featuring Constable Erik Burnie)

Networking

Doing something unique such as driving someone and their bike to another location after he is caught trying to pry open a window on a residence he believed was his basement apartment qualifies as an opportunity used by officers to develop good relations with the public:

Girlfriend at door: Thank you, thank you so much.

Man: Thank you, thank you.

Constable: And remember, your bike is at the back of the residence.

Man: Right on, thanks a lot guys for your help. If you guys didn't come by, I don't know what I would have done.

Constable: You're welcome.

Officer #2: Anytime.

Constable: It was good timing, ah?

Man: Much appreciated.

The importance of doing nice things for people is acknowledged by the officer, who is cognizant that it is constructive towards the cause of building bridges with the public:

Constable: *(To camera)* That actually worked out well, because he was very compliant with us. He has a sister who is a police officer too, so he has respect for us, which is nice, and we ended up driving him to his girlfriend's house, so it was a happy ending.

And...

Constable: *(To camera)*... You know it's community relations. If he does remember the incident, it was just a nice thing we did for him, because we don't want him to be out on the street.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

Likewise, after giving two warning tickets (\$0 payable) to a motorist rather than costly tickets, the officer acknowledges that it is important to treat people well, and give breaks, as that one positive interaction can pay dividends for the relationship down the road:

Constable: *(To camera)* Every contact we have with the public...it's...it is a chance for PR for us, because if he's treated nicely by this police officer on this night, it may make him, you know, a fan of ours as opposed to somebody who is reading this stuff in the paper about us and making snap judgments, so they could say 'Well I was pulled over once and the officer was really nice to me and gave me a break'. It's always nice to do that.

(From Season 4, Episode 4, featuring Constable Erik Burnie)

Another special effort is made by the officer locating a runaway dog after it was hit by a car and bringing it back in his cruiser. Before the dog is found:

Constable: *(To camera)*... So we got a Husky on the loose, eastbound, probably near the canal area. So we're going to have a look and try to find the dog. It means a lot...it means the world to people, it's like a child to them, so we're going to do our best to locate the dog.

After the dog is found and returned, the owner is enamoured with the work of this officer, overcome with emotion and shedding tears as she praises him:

(Dog owner is sobbing with joy)

Constable: I just want to make sure he doesn't run away again. Do you have a leash or something you can uh, just before we uh, let him out.

Dog owner: *(Hugging officer)* Thank you.

Constable: Oh...my pleasure.

Constable: He looks fine, he's not limping or anything, just have a look...

Dog owner: You're my hero right now.

The officer reiterates how important pets are to people, and the impact his assistance had on the woman:

Constable: *(To camera)* I'm sure she was pretty happy and crying, and very emotional, and...and... like I said earlier, a lot of people, their animals are like their children, so and uh, she was very happy we found her dog and brought it back safely home.

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

A brief segment is shown where a street person is struggling to walk with his crutches and gets an offer from the officer:

Man: Got to get to the hospital.

Constable: Yeah I can tell. So let's go. We'll walk to my car, I'll give you a drive. Can you step down or hop down?

Man: Sorry.

Constable: It's alright *(in a sympathetic tone)*.

Constable: Ok, crutches aren't working for you, so let's just go in the backseat.

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Lastly, the officer who responds to a man in the midst of a domestic dispute with his now former girlfriend decides to offer him a ride to his ex-wife's house so that he can pick up some stuff:

Constable: Did you call us or did she call us?

Guy: She...no actually I did. I called 911 and she took the phone.

Constable: Why did you call 911?

Guy: I couldn't get my stuff out the door. She said 'Call 'em, call 'em', so I called 911.

Constable: Ok you've got two options, you can smoke that now, or get a ride with me now.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Sharing of Tasks

Below, the officer responding to a call for a suspected inebriated driver (who turned out to be distracted by her cell phone) liaises with the motorist who tailed the distracted driver and called it in; the officer secures the witness' willingness to testify:

Man: And he was ahead of me, and he was going sideways, from line to line, and then he almost hit two cyclists...

Constable: Ok.

Man: And he got to St. Laurent and Hemlock, and he didn't take off at the green light. I didn't honk the horn or nothing.

Constable: So the light was stale green?

Man: Stale green and then it almost turned yellow.

Constable: Ok, but if we were to charge them with a ticket, would you be willing to go to court?

Man: Yes.

Constable: I'll just let the officer know because he doesn't know what you saw, and I don't know if he's just going to let her go.

Man: Oh yeah.

After conferring with the other officer, she returns to obtain a written statement:

Constable: Do you...can I get you to write a statement?

Man: Yes.

Constable: Just one sec, I'll get you the case number.

Man: Alright.

Later on, the same officer engages the help of a pharmacist in order to assess the value of prescription drugs that the suspect was trying to obtain with a fake prescription:

Constable: Can you tell me what this is?

Pharmacist: This, 60 tablets, would be worth about \$1200-\$2000.

Constable: Really (*impressed*).

Pharmacist: My cost would be about \$7.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

The officer in the following example checks in on a false alarm at an apartment building, and requests of the neighbour to let the apartment owner know that the police attended and did not find anything:

Constable: Everything's clear over here. Ok well, we...

Woman: You know what? Her alarm is...she doesn't set it.

Constable: Well we got a call for an alarm, whether it was an accident, a phone error or the wires are all messed up, everything's fine with me...if you want to let her know that she had an alarm and we stopped by. She's not here so...

Afterwards, the officer explains that in addition to what they ask of the neighbour above, they were able to access the apartment in the first place thanks to the neighbour opening up the apartment with her spare key:

Constable: *(To camera)* Uh so that was a false alarm, uh we got a call for just an alarm from an apartment. Uh we went, knocked, no one answered. Uh luckily a neighbour had a key and she was nice enough to let us in just to make sure everything was safe inside and no one was in need of medical assistance, or nothing going on inside, so we cleared the apartment, everything was ok, and we let the neighbour know it was a false alarm, and we'll clear it and go on to the next one.

While on a warrant call for someone, the same officer tries to obtain the whereabouts and contact information from another man who answers the door:

Constable: Hi, how are you?

Man: Good.

Constable: Looking for _____.

Man: Um, I can tell you that I...uh...that he...I really don't know where he is.

Constable: Does he live here still?

Man: Um, yes he does, he does come occasionally yeah. He does.

Constable: He's supposed to live here though, he's got conditions.

Man: He's right now spending a lot of time with his girlfriend like you know, that's his brand new girlfriend...

Constable: Do you have a phone number for him? I'll give him a shout and...

Man: Uh, yes I do.

Constable: Perfect.

Man: I can actually just go and get it for you.

Constable: Yeah that would be great. Just need to have a chat with him.

Furthermore, this officer makes use of the close working relationship with the Shepherds of Good Hope agency to drop off an inebriated Native woman, in hopes they will accept her and take her in for observation, despite the recent ban imposed on the woman by Shepherds:

Constable: Where she was, people were calling, saying it's a drunk female sitting on the stairs, so we got called and...

Shepherds staff: Ok.

Constable: Thought instead of taking her to jail...

Shepherds staff: No absolutely, that's why we're inclined...if she's not aggressive or anything, we just have to run it by management, to just double check that...

Constable: Sounds good.

Shepherds staff: Can you give me two more minutes?

Constable: No rush, she's behaving, so...

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Conflict Resolution Tenets – Dual Concern (Symmetrical)

Cooperating

Below, the officers and the man who unknowingly tried to break into a residence swap ideas and negotiate a win-win solution for both parties. While the police suggest dropping him off at a shelter until the morning, the man is keen to get into his unit right away, even if that means waking up his landlord. At last they reach a solution of the police driving him over to his girlfriend's house, which absolves the police's responsibility (of him stay outside for hours in the cold), and satisfies the man, who is not comfortable with the idea of spending time at a shelter.

Both parties are happy:

Officer #2: Well there's a few things we can do if they don't open the door. We can't really break in. We can either take you to a shelter where it's going to be safe...

Constable: Just for a few hours, right?

Man: I don't want to end up on the wrong side of the law because I didn't...

Constable: Yeah.

Man: I know you guys gotta do what you gotta do...

Officer #2: Just a warm place for you to be.

Constable: Yeah we got a responsibility to make sure you're safe.

Man: Even if I were to have the option to have you guys call my landlord, who is the owner of this building, and say 'Yes, indeed, he's the guy who lives there...'

Constable: You think your landlord is going to come out at four o'clock in the morning to let you in? Right?

Man: That's not my number one concern (*laughing*).

Constable: We're not doubting that you live here. It's just the fact that you can't get in...that's the issue, right?

Officer #2: It's too cold.

Constable: Yeah exactly.

Man: Ok so say I go to the shelter, what would happen. How long would I have to stay at this place for?

Constable: Just stay, just sleep there for a few hours, and in the morning, come back and hopefully someone is going to answer the door, right? Or call your landlord in the morning at a more reasonable time. Can you call your girlfriend, see if she's going to respond to the calls you made?

(*Inaudible*)

Constable: Do you know the exact address?

Man: We've been dating for a year and a half, so I've got it...pretty down pat by now.

(*Laughter ensues from all parties*)

Man: Awesome.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

When the officer responds to a domestic fight between a man and a woman, the man accused of stealing items is quick to volunteer a search of his bags to prove he did not take anything, to which the officer happily obliges. The officer is able to determine quickly that he is not taking anything, and the man saves further embarrassment/aggravation:

Constable: So she's upset, she doesn't want you to leave. You're moving out, it's a breakup.
Guy: She thinks...like everything that she bought, a pair of my underwear or something, a pair of socks, she wants to take it away. So if you guys want to go with the stuff with her, to see what she bought...
Constable: I'll see what she's accusing you of first.
Guy: That's what she's accusing me of.
Constable: Ok.
Guy: Taking the stuff that she bought. There's nothing in there. It's clothes.
Constable: Nothing in there?
Guy: Go ahead.
Constable: You want me to look through your bags?
Guy: Go ahead.
Constable: Ok, well I'll take the opportunity to look through your bags (in a cheery voice).
Guy: I don't mind it.
Officer #2: Better check to make sure there is nothing else.
Guy: Ask her.
Constable: There's nothing in there.
Guy: *(To woman)* Do you want movies? Do you want the movies?
Constable: Ok. How about we zip this back up?
Guy: Do you want to check in there?
Constable: Absolutely! I'm nosey, it's my job to be nosey *(unzipping bag)*.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

The officer attends a call where an inebriated Native woman needs to be moved along, and with the cooperation of the woman, who consents to being searched, he avoids bringing her to jail by dropping her off at a shelter. Both parties benefit as it represents another chance for the woman to get the help she needs – the shelter is a much more suitable place for her than jail; for the officer it alleviates the time-intensive task of booking her:

Constable: Female's first name is _____. Don't know the last name but she stays at the Sheps (Shepherds of Good Hope). How much have you had to drink today?
Woman: I had a six...
Constable: A six pack?
Constable: You're ok though, you don't need an ambulance?
Woman: No ambulance...
Constable: Do you want to go to Sheps?
Bystander: Yeah a six pack at least.
Constable: Six pack.
Woman: You're going to have to drive me.
Constable: Ok we'll...we'll go to Sheps, get you sobered up.
Woman: *(Inaudible)*.
Constable: Relax...

Then...

Constable: So do you have anything else on you?
Woman: Noooo...

Constable: Let me just do a quick check.

Woman: Ahhhh...

Constable: Don't worry, it's ok.

Officer #2: No no no no no, keep your pants on. Get your shirt though.

Woman: (*Inaudible*).

Constable: Let's go, your taxi awaits. Hop on in.

Woman: Shepherds!!! (*in excited voice*).

Constable: Shepherds it is.

Constable: Alright, to the Shepherds.

(*Cruiser arrives at Shepherds*)

Constable: (*To camera*) So this is _____. She had too much to drink. And instead of taking her to jail, we're going to see if the Shepherds of Good Hope will take her, so she can go sleep it off and hopefully we don't see her again today. This is a common thing down here. There's a lot of people with substance abuse issues, so it's not too uh... odd for us to be getting calls for an intoxicated person who needs to be moved along. Ah luckily she was ok, she's not violent, she's not giving us a hard time. She's pretty good.

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Unconditionally constructive

In her opening monologue to the camera, the officer explains how she uses soft skills, rather than physical coercion, as much as possible in performing her duties. This reflects the spirit of being unconditionally constructive, doing whatever it takes not to upset the police-public relationship, and an important element of this is, whenever possible, not using force in their dealings:

Constable: (*To camera*) I think I can actually resolve a lot of situations by speaking with people and calming them down when they're highly escalated. I tend not to go hands on too much, because I find I can talk myself umm, talk people down and talk them out of the situations and crises they find themselves in.

And...

Constable: (*To camera*) You know, there are times when we have to get physical with people, and I think members of the people of the public may see that portion of it and not understand everything, but for most police officers, they do anything they can to avoid being physical.

The same officer has to deal with an intoxicated, incoherent woman who called the police to her residence but then did not allow them entry. Rather than the police forcing entry, they elect not to. A reference is made to police needing to have thick skin, which effectively translates to tolerating abusive/strange behaviour at the hands of the public without reacting negatively:

Constable: (*To camera*) The female called us twice in the umm past 10-15 minutes. First time she called saying there was a suspicious male around her residence. Second time she called, she said the male was in

her residence. So we get there to assist her, because she had called us, and then uh, and then she's not too receptive to us being there. So...she was under the influence, and umm we couldn't check the residence to see if the male is indeed there, but she said he was gone so hopefully she doesn't call us back again, unless she actually has to. Yeah, it's actually not that uncommon, especially when they're...when the person has consumed some alcohol, because you know that changes your state...so you know, it's part of the job, you don't take it personally, because otherwise, you'll get offended on a lot of different calls, so you just basically say 'Oh well, if she's fine, and he's no longer there, we don't need to be there anymore'. You got to get a bit of a thick skin.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

Win-Win or No Deal

Throughout the episodes, there are no interactions that reflect the concept of win-win or no deal, which denotes that if the police and public cannot agree on some matter, the decision is deferred to a later date, where a healthy symmetrical relationship ensures that a mutually beneficial solution would arise naturally. When the police respond to a call for service, a resolution, one way or another, must be reached; they do not have the luxury of deferring.

Conflict Resolution Tenets – Asymmetrical

Distributive

The officer below comes across a man without clothes and issues a stern order for the man to go get clothes on and then return to talk to him. He informs him that being nude is a crime, and then makes some presumptions about the man either being on medication or on drugs:

Constable: ...Hey hey hey, wait up.

Man: I'm doing nothing.

Constable: Yeah yeah, but get some clothes on. Why are you naked?

Man: Because I'm going downstairs to *(inaudible)*.

Constable: Ok I want to talk to you after. Go put some clothes on.

Man: *(Inaudible)*

Constable: Are you on medication?

Man: *(Inaudible)*

Constable: What's going on? Why are you naked?

Man: Because I'm *(inaudible)*.

Constable: You can't be naked walking around. You know it's a criminal offense eh?

Man: Sorry, sorry.

Constable: Alright? What are you on?

Man: Nothing.

Constable: You're sweating.

Directly related to the incident of the dog being hit by a car and running off, is the service call below about fireworks being set off, which sees the officer express frustration, make demands, and enter into hostile questioning and presumptive attribution with the group on the balcony:

Constable: (*Looking up at a balcony*) Um so who is setting off the fireworks? Who is setting off the fireworks? What is all this on the ground?

Man: Some kids.

Constable: Some kids? (*in disbelief*)

Man: Yeah some kids.

Later on...

Constable: (*To group on balcony*) I don't have witnesses proving it's you setting off the fireworks...

Man: No it's not.

Constable: But I think it is, so you got to stop it now. Whoever's up there setting off fireworks, it's got to stop. Understand me!?

Man: We were watching TV.

Constable: Well, that's not what people are saying. They're saying it's coming from this balcony. People are setting off fireworks. I want it to stop!

Man: I'm talking to you, you're talking to me right?

Constable: Yeah I'm talking to you!

Man: Ok listen. It wasn't me!

Constable: I'm not saying it's you. I'm saying it's coming from that balcony and it scared off a dog!

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

Below, the officer navigates a tense scene, but unlike the previous visit to this woman's house, where officers left without entering the home (to appease the woman), this time, the officer enters the residence and remains firm that they will not leave until the son departs (the son was seemingly the original reason why the woman called 911). Despite the woman swearing, getting up in the officer's face and telling them to leave numerous times, the officer is steadfast:

Woman: Nobody has been here before.

Officer #3: We've been here three times.

Woman: Ok I'm sorry, did you actually come in to my house?

Officer #3: We were here maybe seven minutes ago. You don't remember us?

(*Inaudible*)

Woman: You have no reason to be here. Get out.

Constable: You called us three times...

Woman: Yeah I did, and now I'm telling you, you have no reason to be here.

Constable: Well, we actually...

Woman: Actually you don't.

Constable: As soon as your son leaves...we'll go. It'll just be a couple of minutes.

Woman: No, get out of my house, you have no...no anything to be here, in my house.

Constable: We'll wait right here, ok?
Woman: No no no. My house is outside this door.
Constable: I hear what you're saying...
Woman: Excuse me, get outside my house.
Constable: We're just waiting for your son, ok?
Woman: Ok really?
Constable: Yep.
Woman: Get out of my house. Get out of my house, I'm not touching you, get out of my house! Get out of my house! Get out of my house!!! This is my house.
Constable: I understand that.
Woman: You don't have anything...seriously...really! Get out. Get the _____ [fuck] out!
Constable: We're just waiting for your son.
Woman: Get out! Mitchell!
Constable: As soon as he's done, we're out of here.
Woman: No, are you kidding me? This is my house, not my son's house.
Constable: I understand that.
Woman: Get out, get out! Get the _____ [fuck] out! (*sobbing*). Out of my house.
Constable: He's almost...
Woman: Get out!
Constable: He's coming now.
Woman: Mitchell, seriously?
Son: Yes, ok I understand. I understand mom.
Constable: Mitchell, let's go.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

Following the accident involving two cars, the English guy whose girlfriend was pregnant started physically attacking the other driver. Unlike the other officer (Constable Botting), who showed unbridled empathy, the man is scolded by this officer for his comportment and threatened with an assault charge:

Officer #2: Did you get out and start pushing and grabbing or attacking the other guy?
English guy: Yeah.
Officer #2: You did?
English guy: I did, well, I...there's no reason for it...
Officer #2: There isn't, that's an assault charge!
English guy: I'm aware...

And...

Constable: (*To camera*)...But he was a little harder on the first guy we talked to, the white guy, because he was the guy who was pushing and shoving, and justifiably Pete should have been um...Pete cautioned him about assault, road rage...

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Conflict Resolution Tenets – Dual Concern (Asymmetrical)

Contending

Below, the officer hammers home to the man that while she is showing leniency in issuing only a warning ticket for the expired license plate sticker, the full onus is now on the driver to go and get it updated as soon as possible – even going so far as to suggest where to accomplish this – and that he was fair game the next time he gets pulled over:

Constable:...So technically the vehicle is no longer plated. So what I'll do is issue you a warning ticket, but you'll need to get it updated as soon as possible. There are uh, there's... they got rid of the uh self-serve kiosks, but there are a couple of Ministry of Transportation offices open on Saturdays, so you may want to do that, ok?

And...

Constable: So I've issued the warning ticket, so it shows a payable amount of zero, but if it was the full charge, it would be \$110, ok...so I would advise you to go tomorrow if you can, because now this is going to show on the system that you received a ticket today, and if you're driving again without the validation updated, then you could get the full ticket, ok, do you have any questions?

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

In the situation described below, the officer, who is worried about the emotional state of the suicidal girl, insists that for the girl's safety they cannot leave her alone and that she needs to talk to someone:

Officer #2: You want to go talk to somebody at the hospital? It's no big deal, we all go through hard times.

Constable: Yeah.

Girl: (*Sobbing*) I don't want to talk to anybody.

Constable: But we can't leave you alone, that's not going to happen. We don't uh...we just want to make sure you're safe, or you're with someone you can talk to, or...

And...

Constable: (*To camera*)... No there's not going to be any charges, it's just making sure she's got someone to talk to tonight because she's a bit upset and we don't want to leave her alone. That's the main issue here and that...uh that's about it.

The same officer here tries to reason with the man suspected of assaulting the Tourette's-afflicted individual that even play fighting can have serious consequences, and for him to be cautious in the future given his size advantage:

Man: Like you know, and I didn't...haven't done anything. Like we got in a wrestling match, that's him grabbing me...the back of my leg.

Constable: No but even if it's...even if there's no criminal charges, you could be looking at civil charges, right, because he's injured right now. Even if it's playing and having fun, now he's hurt. Like you're a big guy. He's a bit smaller, so you got to be careful when you're playing around.

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

Following the car accident involving the English guy and French guy, the French guy complains that he was pushed and the officer sympathetic to the English guy tries to impress upon him that there were unique circumstances involved that may explain the English guy's caustic response. She is careful, however, to not totally dismiss the French guy's concern:

French guy: Yeah, you speak French? French?

Constable: No, but the officer on the way...there's another officer just about to arrive that speaks French.

French guy: Yeah, I come to...the light..but the man is pushing me.

Constable: Ok ok, just relax for two secs, it's ok. He's anxious, his girlfriend is pregnant, not saying that pushing you was right. He's already said 'I'm anxious, I'm ready to choke him', it has a lot to do with the pregnant girlfriend.

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Avoiding

When a second officer arrives on scene (to assist with the French speaking motorist involved in the collision), he hears the English guy's side of the story and rejects getting pulled into the debate on who is telling the truth or not; he clearly establishes that his role is that of mediator and is careful to stay true to a neutral position, staying out of the conflict:

English guy: So I'm driving, the light is green no matter what they tell you. There's 10 of them and 1 of me, so obviously they're going to tell you I'm driving at highway speeds. I don't know if that's...I overheard you talking.

Officer #2: Ah you know I'm not here to judge, I'm just here to be a mediator and try to get...

(From Season 3, Episode 2, featuring Constable Carolyn Botting)

Accommodating

In the following two instances, the officer elects to issue warning tickets rather than tickets that cost the individual money. This leniency reflects that the officer is not fully exercising the extent of their authority, relinquishing some of their position in the process:

Constable: *(To camera)* So he's aware that he has a burnt out headlight, and he already had a replacement, just hasn't put it in. So we'll just issue him a warning.

Constable: So I'm just going to give you a warning ticket, so it shows a payable amount of \$0, but it would be a \$110 fine, so as soon as you get a chance, if you could change that, ok, and there's all your documents back.

And...

Constable: *(To camera)* So he thought that the vehicle was authorized until the end of the month. But actually, it's to midnight of your birthday, so a lot of people seem to be confused as to when their vehicle is actually valid, so definitely showed some leniency, because it's only one day.

Below, the same officer attends a call where a man (who appears somewhat intoxicated) is caught attempting to access a basement window of a house that he believes, mistakenly, is his apartment unit. The officer fully accepts the explanation without too much interrogation and no charges or warnings are ever discussed:

Constable: You live here in the basement? What's the address?

Man: 2030 *(inaudible)* Unit #2. But you see, there's two downstairs basement apartments.

Constable: Yeah, it's the wrong house actually.

Man: This is not 2030?

Constable: No, come with me, come on *(trying to not laugh)*.

Man: Well that explains a lot. Sorry.

Constable: That's ok.

Man: Sorry about that.

And...

Man: No, not at all. I apologize for that, I really do. It's actually uncanny how much that place looks like...

Constable: Yeah a lot of the homes here look the same. Ok, so it's just a couple of doors down.

Man: The street is so windy and curvy with so many intersections, like it took me four or five times to try...I didn't mean to you know, cause a disturbance.

Constable: No it's just that the people...they weren't expecting anybody, right, so they called us *(mild laughing)*.

Man: Oh the residents, they actually thought...oh I feel terrible.

(From Season 4, Episode 1, featuring Constable Marilyn Warren)

Below, more traffic stops result in only warnings being handed out. As evidenced by the second interaction, the officer seems to value the man's positive disposition, and this is undoubtedly an important factor in the mind of an officer when they are deciding whether to show leniency or be 'accommodating':

Constable: So if you look down here, it says warning, zero dollars, just going to give you a warning for the headlight, just try and get that fixed as soon as possible...

Motorist: Thank you.

And...

Constable: *(To camera)* So he blew two stop signs very close to where he lives. I find a lot of people, their driving experience gets worse as they get closer to home. Working man, in his... in his 40s *(printing paper)*, meant to stop and all that kind of stuff, I don't like to hit people where it hurts like that. It'd be a different story if he was...um...you know argumentative with me, if he was rude to me. Again, personality goes a long way when you get pulled over by the police.

Constable: Just to let you know here, it says 'warning, zero dollars'. Just for the stop sign, like I understand it was one of those when you're not quite stopped all the way, so I'm not going to like, I'm not going to hammer you for that. It's a \$110 fine normally, and you're a working man with rent to pay, so, I'll give you that. This is also a warning just for your...the light on your license plate, it's burnt out. Those burn out really easy and no one ever notices because they're only on when you're driving, so I'll give you another warning for that. Just uh you know, take care of that whenever you can. And there's your... driver's license is inside and all your other documents.

Motorist: Thank you.

Still with the same officer, the below exchange reflects an unparalleled degree of accommodation. The officer pulls over a vehicle after it stops at a red light, and then inexplicably proceeds through the red light as if it were a stop sign. Perplexed, the officer affords many opportunities to the motorist to provide a rationale as to why he did what he did, showing a real reluctance for dishing out the full fine, almost as if he feels bad:

Constable: Like where...whereabouts are you coming from? Like...were you tired or like?

Motorist: No.

Constable: How'd you miss that light?

Motorist: I guess we were talking and I got distracted.

Constable: Alright, fair enough. Just give me a few minutes.

Then...

Constable: *(To camera)*...I'm going to go and chat with him again, see if he's got anything else to say....

Then...

Constable:...um the fine for a red is like \$325 eh. I don't know...like what happened?

Motorist: That's exactly it, we don't really have...

Passenger: We're trying to...

Motorist: We're sitting here trying to figure out

Constable: Cause you're...

Motorist: Cause I looked...

Constable: Yeah...you were...

Later on, the officer is pleased when the motorist presents himself as ready to face the music.

Also, the officer obtains ID from the passenger, his son and considers this as a sign of goodwill.

Ultimately, he settles on the explanation that the driver must have been distracted by talking to his son:

Constable: Oh ok. Alrighty...well. Just give me two more minutes. I'm gonna see what I can do you, because I don't like dropping a massive...

Motorist: I mean.

Constable: Fine on somebody...

Motorist: I ran the light there (*laughing*)...I don't know.

Constable: Yeah.

Motorist: If I broke the law, I broke the law.

Constable: Ok, well I appreciate your honesty then. Just give me a few minutes.

Constable: (*To camera*) So we had a small amount of success there. When the passenger volunteered up his ID when I asked for it, um it's his son, so...I'm still not sure what the issue is, and I'm thinking it was just genuinely...he was talking to his son, and wasn't...wasn't paying attention, came to a stop at the intersection and treated it like a stop sign, just you know...not really...not full head in the game.

And...

Constable: ...Um, in regards to the red light, I'm not going to give you the full highway traffic act fine. It's a \$325 fine like I said, it's uh three points on your driver's license, then it's insurance for seven years, so that adds up. So instead, what I did, I gave you a fine under our city bylaw for disobeying a traffic control signal. The toll on that is \$65, um it doesn't go on your driver's license, and it shouldn't affect your insurance either.

The officer reaffirms to himself the justification behind his leniency:

Constable: (*To camera*) Like I...I can't justify handing him a \$325 ticket for a minor violation of the traffic laws that didn't come to...anybody's harm. Nobody was hit, uh there was no collision... Um, in this case it was a minor rolling traffic violation. Sure it's a red light, but um I honestly think he had no idea he blew it, treated it fully like a stop sign, came to a full stop, and then proceeded through slowly. He was not blowing lights, he wasn't speeding....I mean I don't think there's anything more to it than...than him being in conversation with his son

(From Season 4, Episode 4, featuring Constable Erik Burnie)

The officer deals here with a man who throws his hands into his pockets upon the cruiser rolling up, as if hastily getting rid of something. After some questioning, the man comes clean about having a marijuana joint. The officer, appreciating the man's honesty, gives him a break and saves him from trouble with his probation officer; again, the officer does not exercise the full extent of his authority:

Constable: Can I check?

Man: Check?

Constable: Yeah for drugs.

Man: Why?

Constable: Well you were talking to a guy who just got arrested for drugs two days ago.

Man: *(Inaudible)*.

Constable: So that's why I'm asking, and then your hands went right to your pockets when I rolled up.

Man: Yeah but I always put my hands in my pockets.

Constable: But they weren't when we were...they went as soon as you saw me, they went into your pockets, so I'm just saying, do you have anything?

Man: *(Inaudible)*.

Constable: Where?

Man: *(Inaudible)*.

Constable: Ok, you're going to be arrested for possession, because I mean you're going to be charged...you can't have a joint. Do you have any more? I'm going to check, ok?

Then...

Constable: *(To camera)* Uh after talking to him, I asked him if he had any drugs on him or anything he shouldn't have...uh he was honest and pulled out a joint...um cause it was a consent search, I know that courts tends not to uh like that...they usually like when you have more grounds than that, uh so I searched him, he had no more drugs. Because he was honest, and it was a consent search, I decided to just warn him about possessing drugs.

And...

Constable: And I appreciate your honesty, and that's why you're not in handcuffs right now. So the joint is going to get put in for destruction, I'm going to do a report saying that you've been warned, so your probation officer is not going to know. But, if you get caught again, it's going to show you've been warned, and any chances...done.

Finally, after a woman is caught making an illegal right turn on a red light, the same officer indicates even before getting out of the cruiser that he is interested in hearing her explanation, reflecting a willingness to show leniency depending on the circumstances. After hearing her troubles with her passenger and checking that she had a decent driving record, he gives out only a warning:

Cameraman: What made you pull her over?

Constable: Uh she made a right on a red light, and there's a sign that clearly indicates no rights on reds, so we'll go have a talk with her and... see what her thinking was.

Then...

Constable: *(To camera)* She's upset because her passenger told her to turn even though she wasn't supposed to. So they're probably having a nice discussion right now, and we'll see what her driving record's like.

(Constable returns to woman's car)

Constable: So you have a good driving record, there's no problems, so I'm not going to give you a ticket. I'm going to give you a warning...

(From Season 4, Episode 3, featuring Constable Brodie Muldoon)

Compromising

Not much compromising occurs throughout the episodes; in fact, only one situation registers as offering this outcome. After the officer stops the stark naked man and instructs him to get clothes on, they seemingly come to an agreement (not shown on camera) whereby in exchange for the officer not arresting the man, the man promises that he will go up to his apartment, not to return to the ground level:

Constable: *(To camera)* Yeah, it's a strange call *(laughing)*. It is a criminal offense. Nudity is a criminal offense, um under the criminal code, but in this case, he wasn't doing any mischief or masturbating or doing anything of the sort, so got him back in his unit. Girlfriend over there with him, so she's going to look after him. He doesn't want ambulance. He was very sweaty, um, pupils weren't really reactive, so um I guess he's definitely under the influence of drugs and...so yeah, my main concern was that he is ok, and he's not going to re-offend, so I made sure he is dressed up and in his unit. He told me he wouldn't come out. It's no guarantee, we might have a call again, but I think he's going to be ok for tonight.

(From Season 3, Episode 3, featuring Constable Stéphane Poirier)

CONCLUSION

Summary/Interpretation of Findings and Implications from Model

The objective of this study was to assess the efficacy of the Hon and Grunig (1999) public relations model for interpreting police-public interactions found in *On Patrol*, a community television-produced show by Rogers. The various tenets of the model – borrowed from interpersonal communication and conflict resolution theories – served as a lens through which to analyze the discourse (police-public dialogue and police monologues) to determine if, and to what extent, police-public interactions are symmetrical.

From the interpersonal tenets, looking at *positivity*, many interactions contained pleasantries, good manners, and perhaps a surprising element of humour, all of which helped to break the ice and build up a rapport with the public. While there were some interactions lacking niceties, these interactions were tenser in nature and the language used by officers was more or less commensurate with the situation at hand. *Assurances* were definitely present, although some would say this is part and parcel of the job, as officers must offer empathy in certain situations and console people who are suicidal, for example. *Sharing of tasks* – by treating the public as partners, asking for their assistance in police matters – was found extensively in two of the episodes, reflecting the resourcefulness of officers, another important competency for their job. *Networking* was prominently displayed across all the episodes, with officers doing special, unique favours for the public – things that are not typical police responsibilities, such as locating a missing dog or driving a man and his bike home. These voluntary acts are seen by officers as a tool to get on the good side of the public, as two of them even admitted as much in statements to the camera. *Openness* emerged as the most prevalent tenet as officers shared thoughts and

feelings in an honest and transparent way, both to members of the public and to the camera. The message was the same in both: Police officers are personable, approachable individuals that genuinely enjoy what they do, and want the best for the police-public relationship.

From the conflict resolution tenets, *avoiding*, *compromising* and being *unconditionally constructive* were fairly unapparent, each occurring only once or twice across the episodes. With *avoiding*, the one instance recorded did not materialize out of police shirking their duties, but rather from police following procedure by remaining impartial in a ‘he said, she said’ dispute. While *compromising* in everyday language sounds entirely positive, it is not win-win according to the tenet’s definition – as *cooperating* is – since both parties must concede something. *Win-win or no deal* was effectively shut out as a tactic. Given the nature of policing, this is logical, as a call for service typically must be resolved somehow (along with a report written by the responding officer). Police simply do not have the luxury of deferring a matter or decision to a later time so that they can reach a mutually beneficial solution with the public. Being *unconditionally constructive* has at its roots doing what is best for the relationship but it means relinquishing one’s position without the other reciprocating, such as maintaining self control/restraint when dealing with an abusive, intoxicated individual. Due to only one such contentious situation occurring, this tenet plays a minor role. With this tenet, it is surprising that it is considered on the symmetrical side of the *dual concern* strategies, since it strictly favours one side.

Next, the *distributive* strategy, which is purely asymmetrical, was present in almost all of the episodes, as displays of frustration, commands/presumptions, and insistence on a position

were all notable, such as the scolding of the men setting off fireworks from their balcony or sending the naked man upstairs to put on clothes. In many of the examples reflecting this tenet, the officer had very little room to maneuver in relinquishing their position; laws and norms in society have to be protected. Also on the asymmetrical side of the continuum, but less extreme, is *contending*, where officers persuade individuals to adopt their position; examples included the officers explaining to the girl at risk of suicide why she couldn't be left alone or the officer urging the motorist that he had to take immediate action to renew his license plate. In terms of *cooperating*, where both parties work together for a win-win solution, these interactions numbered less than expected, perhaps because the scenario was somewhat open-ended in terms of how it could evolve or unfold. (This is in contrast to the numerous traffic stops, which end up almost unanimously in the officer's court of decision.) Another reason for the shortage of *cooperating* could be the rigid criteria of the tenet; both parties must not only work together, but both must extract a benefit from the exchange. Lastly, *accommodating* was the tenet that was most represented. It was quite astonishing to see the amount of leniency transpiring during traffic stops. Warning tickets with zero dollars payable were the norm, provided that the motorist was respectful when speaking to the officer and that their driving record was decent. In a non traffic stop event, the officer let a man possessing drugs off with a warning, but once again, there was give-and-take going on, as the man was upfront when asked by the officer and that scored him some points. By showing leniency, officers did not exercise the full extent of their authority; thus, according to the tenet's definition, they gave up some their position.

To respond to the central research question set out earlier on, while the police-public interactions analyzed were largely collaborative, participatory, inclusive, ethical, and above all,

community-oriented, they do not conform strictly to the two-way symmetrical public relations model as set out by Hon and Grunig (1999). Although there is ample data reflecting the interpersonal communication tenets (despite *access* not being evaluated), the rigid definitions of the model and the high-risk nature of policing effectively favour the asymmetrical side of the conflict resolution (*dual concern* and *distributive*) tenets. For instance, while *accommodating* is a lovely thing for the police to do, in terms of giving breaks on traffic tickets, by its very definition, it favours one side, and this renders it, unfortunately and perhaps counter-intuitively, an asymmetrical technique. However, as outlined above, the same standard should then be applied to *unconditionally constructive* (for which there was not a lot of evidence in the episodes), although it is considered symmetrical. Hung (2007, p. 464) puts it into perspective, explaining that we cannot expect that organizations that want to cultivate positive relationships with their publics – as the police certainly do – will use only symmetrical communication strategies. Asymmetrical strategies are seen as a necessary tool to the relationship if the expected outcome is for the benefit of both sides (Hung, 2007). In a profession like policing, where there are legitimate life and death situations, or when the law must ultimately be upheld, there will be occurrences of asymmetrical communication, and this explains why *distributive* or *contending* conflict resolution techniques are employed, or why there is a lack of support for *unconditionally constructive*.

To summarize, the excerpts observed in the episodes lend more support to a mixed-motive model – rather than a purely two-way symmetrical model – one where it is not considered sacrilege for asymmetrical strategies to be used in conjunction with symmetrical ones. The Hon and Grunig (1999) model, used as a theoretical framework in this study, encompasses these ideas

and represents an evolution in thinking from the early days when Grunig and company promoted a notion that is perhaps now regarded as a false dichotomy – an organization having to choose between following a purely two-way symmetrical or a purely two-way asymmetrical model.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of this study could be considered the small number of episodes covered. Due to the space constraints of this research paper, only five episodes could be examined thoroughly. A more comprehensive study testing out the research question would have looked at more content in order to obtain a larger sample of police-public interactions. Next, given that the OPS has final editorial say, it is entirely possible that some content did not make the final cut, and this could bias the research. It is acknowledged here that critics may argue that *On Patrol* cannot be relied upon as an accurate proxy for analyzing police-public interactions, given that so-called reality or documentary-style TV is generally very contrived. In a study of greater depth, a consultation with the presiding inspector of the project or a media relations contact could have been sought in order to preclude the possibility that displays of asymmetrical communication, reflective of the *distributive* or *contending* tenets, for instance, were not left on the cutting room floor. In the absence of such a guarantee, however, the episodes and the interactions found within them are taken at face value to be truly reflective of the happenings during the officers' shifts.

Going forward, real world applications for this research could be in the training and development sections within police organizations or police colleges/academies. Similarly, as a performance evaluation tool, reviewing whether their members interact with the public using two-way symmetrical dialogue could be an interesting endeavour for police forces/services/

departments/agencies. If producing an entire TV show is logistically not possible, the content to study could be as simple and convenient as body cam footage, which is becoming increasingly common equipment among some police organizations. The Hon and Grunig (1999) model did leave something to be desired when it came to its applicability to the world of emergency services as some tenets did not really materialize, whereas others had to be molded slightly to fit. Furthermore, it could be argued that some tenets were falsely overrepresented both for good (symmetrical) and for bad (asymmetrical). Namely, part of the officer's job requires them to conduct themselves symmetrically, to show concern and empathy in delicate situations (*assurances* tenet) or to work alongside the public to solve problems (*sharing of tasks* tenet); likewise, when things hit the fan, so to speak, they must act asymmetrically, such as raise their voice or issue stern commands (*distributive* tenet). The Hon and Grunig (1999) model may be better suited to studying the arena of community policing, where the public relations process is allowed to evolve over time, with feedback and its incorporation in the decision-making process being more of a factor. For instance, by choosing to focus on an ongoing crime prevention issue that brings about town halls and public consultations, a researcher could speak to both designated community police officers and constituents/neighbourhood groups to evaluate whether the communication process is symmetrical or asymmetrical according to the tenets.

In conclusion, the police, as a necessary agent of the state along with the military, hold a monopoly on the use of force in our society. This is a powerful effect and the level of responsibility ascribed to them should be matched by an equally high level of confidence and understanding from the general public. A program like *On Patrol*, a documentary-style, reality-based, community television-produced show that could be categorized as infotainment,

accomplishes the Ottawa Police Service's reputation management objective by giving the public an inside look at how officers go about doing their job. Its value, however, demonstrated through illustrations taken from five episodes, lies not only in its ability to educate and inform the public, but in its capacity to showcase local police officers as community-minded individuals who practise two-way symmetrical public relations when dealing with members of the public.

Overall, the police-public interactions examined through dialogues and monologues in the episodes do project a symmetrical form of public relations; however, rare is the case when one party is not in control during an exchange, and the police-public relationship is no exception here. In this discourse analysis, police professionalism was undoubtedly prominent throughout, but it was discovered that, by default conditions – having certain sworn powers that afford them a status advantage over citizens, including the legal responsibility to protect life and property – police needed to act, on certain occasions, asymmetrically towards the public.

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