



Goffman on Organizations

Peter K. Manning

Peter K. Manning
Northeastern
University, Boston,
USA

Abstract

This paper has two linked objectives: the first is to select those aspects of Goffman's immense body of work which continue, in my mind, to have a bearing/relevance for the organization studies field. The second is to offer one condensed empirical illustration, drawing upon an earlier published study which took purchase/inspiration from Goffman.

Keywords: organization, organizational work, performance, working consensus, theatrical/dramaturgical metaphor, front/back stage, rules, trust, case

Introduction

Changes in styles and genres are not easily recognized in the semi-chaotic field of organizational studies. Almost 25 years ago, I wrote hopefully that organizational analysis was changing, and that the dominant functionalistic notions advanced by an old guard guiding a desiccated field were being challenged: 'Recent work on organizations based on the phenomenological view, previously ignored by organizational theorists, is now frequently acknowledged, new directions are emerging and a dialectic animates the relationships between theorizing and research.' Whether this has occurred is a moot point, but the consequences of the failure to take up the challenge are with us.

'Organization', like every key concept in the social sciences, is subject to wide variation in use and application and it is not surprising that cumulative knowledge is elusive in our field.¹ To study organization in my view requires not only to identify its outlines or limits as a concept but to illustrate in some detail the consequences of actors-working-in-organizations or organizational effects. The primary thrust of *Organization Studies* over the years has been a contrast conception: a contrast to functionalism, to quantification in its technical guise, and to numerology. This move, although dramatic, has not drawn on the tight focus of Goffman's writing while it does reflect his broad interests in the interactionally sustained aspects of order and ordering. I agree with Edgar Schein (2006: 291) who wrote, 'To this day, people do not take Erving Goffman's work seriously enough.' In my view, there has been little progress in Goffman-based work in the last 25 years because Goffman's ideas have been instanced as illustrating this or that theory rather than a brilliant, unique and masterful evocation

Organization
Studies
29(05): 677-699
ISSN 0170-8406
Copyright © 2008
SAGE Publications
(Los Angeles,
London, New Delhi
and Singapore)

of the central dilemma — posed as a question — of modern life: what do we owe each other? In terms of the call for papers to which this article responds, it points to one crucial foundation for organizing. Crucially too, Goffman begins with, stays with and ends with interaction in situations and any organizational analysis that begins with variables, that asserts anything as shaping interaction a priori — for example, gender, class, social capital, race, rules, or narratives — misplaces and reifies the putative problem and its correlates. Goffmanesque analysis cannot be based on ‘narratives’ or stories for they are secondhand versions, accounts, tales, stories, myths, legends, and not encounter-based analysis. So, for example, excellent work that is based on a narrative approach such as Czarniawska’s (2006), or Dick’s (2005) based on textual analysis, hovers above the grounding of interaction. The Goffman-like actor is a person who seeks to be treated as he or she treats others; who reciprocates when responded to; who is as open as the interaction necessitates; who apologizes, explains, seeks remedies, and enjoys the flow of reciprocated exchanges (Chriss 1995). The indignities that arouse enmity are slights, in brief and erstwhile, because they reduce tenuous obligations and sustained reciprocity.

While ambitious, given the range and depth of Goffman’s scholarship, I write here of some core aspects of Goffman’s work, their relevance to present concerns in organizational analysis, and further elaborate some points from my own work which suggest his influence in organizational studies (see Manning 1976, 1980). My primary interests are in his ideas concerning organizations, ordering and order, trust, and some of the secondary ideas such as organizational under-life, performance and framing. In this paper, I suggest that the most important idea for organizational analysis is the processing of bureaucratic information because it is there that the expressive aspects of actors’ involvement and the instrumental aspects of attaining stated ends come into dramatic convolution. I discuss later in this paper the importance of ‘organization’ and ‘organizational work’ and, given the nature of the empirical materials, the notion of a ‘case’ and the related idea of an ‘arrest’, because they show the interactions of formal purposes, and emotional involvement and expressiveness. In these analyses I try to show how performing in the interests of order is not the same as what the organization requires in formal bureaucratic terms.

The paper begins with an overview of Goffman’s work and moves on to outlining the core of his ideas. Next, and given our objectives, Goffman is tied further to organizational analysis and, through doing so, points to his, still unrealized, contributory potential for the organization studies field. Once some background to my work is discussed, I selectively draw on a study of police work conducted in the 1970s ([1977] 1999, [1979a] 2003).

Goffman and his Work: A Legacy

Erving Goffman wrote with parsimony and elegance, even while dying and in great pain (Goffman 1983a, b). Every sentence was quotable in part because each was so nuanced and multifaceted. It had a depth not easily fathomed. While a number of secondary commentaries on his work exist, a serious student of his

work must read it carefully and come to an assessment. There is no ‘correct’, ‘proper’ or even generally ‘sanctioned’ reading or interpretation of his very subtle and extensive body of work. Like the situational analysis he favoured, any application to an organization should focus on how interaction takes place. His ideas have been widely interpreted and connected to a variety of topics and concerns and there is a large secondary literature on Goffman, some of which deals with his perspective on institutions and organizations (Lemert and Branaman 1997: 265–271).² These reviews see the work within a context of perspectives, including symbolic interactionism.³

Goffman certainly resists classification and categorization. His thinking and writing are original. The most basic truth of his work is that it captures what ‘we all know’ in a literary and perceptive fashion and assembles examples that are themselves amusing, queer, even wacky. Whether this is indeed the aim of ‘theory’ is quite another question. What is the virtue of verisimilitude? I suppose one could fault Proust and Joyce for being too mundane. In my own overview of his work here, I focus on the key concepts noted earlier and lay some groundwork for his organizational analysis and my own organizational analysis which is touched upon at the end of the paper.

Goffman published his first book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (*PSEL*), in 1959,⁴ a polished version of points made in his dissertation that became in time one of the most influential social science books of the last century. He made a simple point in understated, dramatic fashion: we are all performers in the interest of order. After *PSEL*, he published essays based on organizational ethnography, *Asylums* (1960); essays on the social psychology of deviance and socialization in *Stigma* (1963b) and *Encounters* (1961); on interaction as a process in a collection of mostly previously published papers, *Interaction Ritual* (1967). In *Relations in Public* (1971) and *Behavior in Public Places* (1963a), he explored public association and management of appearances. His critique of rational game theory, taken to be an example of the thing he rejected, was published as *Strategic Interaction* (1969). His central work, based on an incipient cognitive social psychology, was called *Frame Analysis* (1974). Two later works, largely ignored by critics, were *Gender Advertisements* (1979) and *Forms of Talk* (1981). The last papers he published were brilliant, original and complex, like Hemingway, in their simplicity: ‘Felicity’s condition’ (1983a) and ‘The interaction order’ (1983b). In each, he asked what made possible the sometimes orderly interaction he found so engaging. That which is found on the surface was made possible by something else. It is the ‘something else’ that is the heart of sociology and arguably too the heart of organization studies.

These published works do not manifest a smooth developmental pathway, but an associative quest. *PSEL* is the most frequently cited and influential of his works. *Asylums* and perhaps *Stigma* have a continuing purchase on scholars’ imaginations and this may be because of their salient and poignant examples of spirited failed humanity rather than their contribution to social theory. *Frame Analysis* and *Forms of Talk*, perhaps the most analytically focused, are rarely applied (see Gonos 1977; Chriss 1995; Manning 2003). The next sub-section will draw out the core ideas across this body of work.

The Core of Goffman's Ideas

Goffman's work highlights doing, performances in which an expression is given off in hopes of producing a reaction or confirmation. I outline this as a narrative that reflects some ordering or progression toward a 'working consensus'. Easily overlooked, though, is this issue that ordering requires some sort of 'working consensus' (*PSEL*: 9). Clearly, such a consensus is not guided or produced by individual motivations, values, norms or rules. It comes and goes as required, and it is not a stated purpose, end point or end of the interaction. Ordering begins here; it does not end as a result. It emerges. Performances are embedded in surrounding social systems. Embedded means the performance is always situated: it may be in a gathering, an occasion, in a setting, indeed, any place in which two or more people interact, or gather in sociability's name. A performance is a 'seeable': something one sees, behaviour, not a value, a belief, or an attitude. A performance is a sequence of gestures, postures, verbalizations or actions seen by others (seen, not talked about) and responded to. The notion of response is an important validating point; it is through the response that the first move is confirmed as existing or having meaning. Each response may be a validation of what is given (somehow seen as motivated) and what is given off (that which is incidental but seen as 'unintended'). Like Durkheim, his abiding and enduring concern is how strangers treat each other with respect. The axial distinction in the social organization of any grouping for him is between the public, something visible to several people without an interactional general centre, and the private, or a group that has something of a boundary around it, a gathering, small group, cluster, a little collection of people with mutual gaze and focus. His terms for these are many. On the one hand, actors enmeshed in interactions set out claims for recognition, status, prestige or even notice, a 'face' or a 'line' (defined shortly) and, on the other, audiences of various compositions react to or respond positively or negatively to this line or sequence of actions. Should the response not be forthcoming, misunderstood, obliquely countered, ignored or otherwise turned against the sender, alienation, embarrassment, withdrawal, defence or retrying will result. This sequentially balanced interaction is a network (not his term) in which not only the dyad or group is involved, but the social organization in which it occurs is drawn in.

Goffman's theatrical metaphor is just that — a useful analogy. It has been influential, as have other uses of the metaphor (Schreyogg and Hopfl 2004; Mangham 2005). Goffman's work is dramaturgical, but not all his work is easily captured by this label. He does not see life as wholly theatrical, but rather he argues that aspects of it can be so seen. As he has continually asserted a metaphoric way of talking about something that is not a literal rendition of social life. A metaphor captures one thing in terms of another, an absurdity that cannot be literally true. Any metaphor, while powerful, has its limits. The world is not a stage and, at times, it is not even dramatic (Goffman 1959: 254; 1974: 126–155). The importance of this analysis is that organizations are not mini-theatres, but they supply the fronts, appearances, manner, routines and stimulate the necessary teamwork.⁵ The idea is that in and through interaction, performances are selectively presented, selectively responded to, and selectively adequate to sustaining

the working consensus on which interaction depends. It is the selected various presentational emphases and their sequelae that are of interest, not the fact that they are performances. His evocative metaphoric thinking, when combined with literalism, often confused people. He was not endeavouring to be funny, in my view; his work was pained, not ironic. When he lists a series of losses including a nose and some other banal losses, he is showing that a loss seen from the loser's standpoint is always a loss whatever its value may be in some other scale of value. On the other hand, he believes that we *understand* this idea of loss without making hierarchical judgements and taking value positions. The vividness of the often amusing examples is intentional because the point is to demonstrate the orderliness of even the most apparently bizarre. The surface and underlying forces and processes may be in contradiction.

There is also no micro–macro distinction in his work; society *is* constrained interaction. Unlike Simmel, his work is not about social forms but about the ways in which forms create interactional dynamics or pressures toward ‘working consensus’. Organizational artefacts such as mission statements, goals and objectives, strategic plans and the like function as tools to reduce choice, not to guide it. They are background knowledge, only on occasion front stage or immediate. When a detective, for example, gets a high-profile case, they are not told to ‘dot the I’s and cross the T’s’ and that clearances are critical; this is said if they fails to clear it or makes a mistake (Corsianos 2003). As Goffman stated frequently, the work of society *is* interaction; without it, no business can be done; in fact there is no business that can be done. Interactions differ in purpose, and this purpose is in effect ‘laid on’ by obligations and connections to larger social enterprises such as businesses, parades, ritual occasions, or even small interactional clusters such as queues (Goffman 1983b). Interactional obligations are entangled with other stated aims and requirements: making an arrest, cutting open a chest, getting a product sold, committing someone to a mental hospital, and the like. The interaction order for Goffman is problematic, almost fragile, because he makes validation and response so essential (Rawls 1987). The constraint varies, but the concern remains; thus, whether the self is cynical or more sociable, whether he is ransacking misleading, capricious rational formal models of ‘strategic interaction’ or using them to portray their weaknesses, Goffman’s aim is to show how situated constraints work on actions whatever their setting. The moral constraints on ‘rational choice’, on ‘gaming’ or any strategic analysis errs because it does not begin with (a) the moral meanings imputed to action prior to the first move, (b) the fundamental inequalities produced by the unequal distribution of resources prior to action, (c) constraints that do not inhere in the rewards at issue — the investment of moral stakes in the actions undocumented in the formal schemata. Thus, organizational ‘rationality’ cannot be explicated from the actor’s point of view outside practice-based exchanges (see Manning, 1977, 1979).

All that passes for order is contingent. This assumption is marked in *Frame Analysis (FA)* where he sees the possibility that once an activity is framed, or defined in some collective sense, there are disruptions, or ‘normal troubles’, matters ‘out of frame’ that may well break the extent frame, or collapse interaction, and negative experience within the frame. *FA*, in some respects, is an effort,

a bow toward formalization of meaning that fails (see Scheff 2006). On the other hand, *PSEL* seems to flow neatly into ethnographies beginning with selves, performance teams, teamwork and its vicissitudes and some aspects of the cultural and social organization of interaction. The essays in *Asylums* also present a rich panoply of concepts such as the underlife of an institution, lodged selves, and the betrayal funnel. Its heavily ironic tone with reference to authoritative arrangements is echoed in most of his work; authority's face is always misleading at best and brutal and vicious at least. *Asylums* is a study of the interaction order (Rawls 1987). Certainly, his detailed, almost exquisitely so, depiction of the social organization of the mental hospital in *Asylums* is premised on the notion that a formal organization that denies what might be called humanity, recognition of the interactional 'selves' of participants, cannot function.⁶ If one considers the challenges to organization-as-usual presented by the introduction of talented and ambitious minorities, women, or others who are marginalized, the question arises: what forms of dispossession of selves and territories do they experience? What subtle cues of diminished personhood are passed as 'the way we do business here'? The resultant complex interdigitation of the social worlds he presents demonstrates that the rational/purposive model of organizational function, with whatever elaborations and mystifications, is a partial and misleading picture at best. If actors cannot interact to sustain their sense of being affirmed, they will resist. The ways resistance unfolds are various (see Manning 2003: 157–8). *Asylums* can be seen as an angry depiction of a failed organization, a form that exploits humanity in the name of care and concern. It is in many ways an exploration of the limits of the concept of a 'rational' organization, and of the concept of organization. Resistance may be feeble: indeed, as research on the back stage of police departments shows, the back stage can be more violent than the front stage in spite of arrestees' resistance (Holdaway 1983; Young 1996; Bazley et al. 2006). For example, violence is not applied to the mentally ill, the drunk or old by the police on balance: they are seen as not being responsible (Bittner 1967; Alpert and Dunham 2004). Not all the weak are exploited by organizations. That is, police patrol practice is oriented to sustaining authority if and when it is questioned. When questioning is not possible — a drunk, an Alzheimer's victim, a child or a disoriented homeless person — they are treated with a distant concern (Bittner, 1967). The context of power and resistance can only be understood by close attention to detail, in terms of realized context and practices 'done'.

This account of Goffman's core ideas is necessarily condensed and partial: my intent was to indicate that it holds much analytical promise for those OS scholars undertaking empirical studies of human interaction realizing all kinds of organizational forms we witness today. Indeed, his legacy is a rich, complex, daring amalgam and inspirational resource. In the next sub-section, I draw out some further specific links and connections for what form this organizational analysis may take.

Goffman and Organizational Analysis

Goffman produced in reference to organizations a few key ideas which I intend to elaborate below and illustrate subsequently. Here is a shorthand version: in

the freshness of encounters, equity reigns; it is the zero or base position of Goffman (see the first line in *PSEL*, 1959). Formal organizations shape and modify interactions. ‘Organization’ is an addition to the armamentarium of the powerful, those on top of an organization and those who influence them, because it places ecological, material, structural and cultural limits on choice. Constraint often produces response and resistance. These can be minor or major aspects of the organization. Exploring the nature of these limits and how they are imposed (or not) is the core of Goffman’s organizational analysis. I argue here that organization is the *framework* for considering trust, order and ordering, framing and performance.

A definition of organization from *Asylums* (1960: 175–176, and qualified further on page 176) is:

‘An “instrumental formal organization” may be defined as a system of purposively coordinated activities designed to produce some overall explicit ends. The intended product may be material artifacts, decisions, or information, and may be distributed among participants in a variety of ways. I will be mainly concerned with those formal organizations that are lodged within the confines of a single building or complex of adjacent buildings, referring to such a walled-in unit, for convenience, as a social establishment, institution, or organization.’

Now this is a formidable attempt at definition because it mixes formal properties with the particular organization he studied and its very ‘walled-in’ aspect. By defining the instrumental formal organization as he does, he is pointing to the fact that more is done in organizations than those purposively coordinated activities designed to produce some explicit ends. I would assert that the moral and expressive aspects of organizations are of equal or perhaps more interest to Goffman than the instrumental aspects. Because the instrumental activities are recorded on paper, assessed for their success, used to evaluate personnel, and in every way seen as ‘rational’ (oriented to achieving the stated instrumental ends), they may mistakenly be seen as the full description of organizational action. His primary point is that organizations expect participants ‘to be visibly engaged at appropriate times in the activity of the organization’ (p. 176). Later (p. 177) he writes, ‘Any study then of how individuals adapt to being identified and defined is likely to focus on how they deal with exhibiting engrossment in organizational activities.’ I take this to mean that the ways in which ‘organization’ becomes meaningful to individuals varies situationally and that it can at times be liberating, enlivening or oppressive. It is not a thing: it does not always have ontological priority for individuals in organization; this varies. Goffman, because he draws heavily and most subtly on Durkheim, shares with Berger and Luckmann an interest in what is made of interactions, but he begins with the practices that build up and sustain order, not with typification, and other ad hoc concepts that punctuate the Berger and Luckmann arguments — one could say they build meaning down from forms rather than beginning with emotionally saturated practices that create and sustain connections. Goffman’s notions of organization and organized are close to Bittner’s (see Bittner 1965) in the sense that ‘organization’ is a concept applied to action by observers, or ‘a label ... used to describe repetitive, common, authoritatively coordinated but situationally located activities’ (Manning [1977]1997: 40). An organization is a kind of

analytic conceit, but insofar as it produces tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966) about the where and when of behaving, it has meaning.

This means that, while organization as an idea varies in its reality, it is a situated and situational view. For Goffman, the situation is pre-eminent and his concern is with moments and their men [sic], not men and their moments (1964). As a formal concept, 'organization' comes in and out of everyday life; we may or may not be self-aware while working. Organizations occasionally become visible' or present — they intrude on the natural attitude or what is taken for granted day to day. This happens when mistakes are made, rules are violated, celebrations of the organization are held (holiday parties, faculty meetings, retreats).

Rules in particular are used to display 'organization', as are records. All forms of organizational records are ways the organization speaks to itself; they reflect only in a distorted fashion, an encoded fashion, the environment. For example, as explained below, records on drug arrests do not measure any relevant fact about drug use or dealing, but are used to monitor officers' performance. What is called organizational is that which is accountable, an *ex post facto* rationalization for action (Mills 1940). Even when Goffman defines an organization as goal oriented as he does in *Asylums* (1960: 175–177), it is to strike an ironic note because so much of what is done in an organization, and needs to be done, does not pertain to accomplishing the rational instrumental and stated goals or goals of the organization.

To study an organization is to study not only what people do, but how they rationalize or explain the whys and wherefores of that work. Action is fluid, a movement, changeable, subject to definition and redefinition. If this is true, how can one reify 'organization' as a set of fixed, measured, variable relationships? In this sense, as Hughes (1958) first pointed out, mistakes are indicators, telling what can and can't be done in the name of an organization. The more one looks into these matters, the greater the contradictions between what is done and why and as a result, the greater need for ideological or belief-based explanations. For example, police use crime maps to produce images of clusters of crimes, and frame them as technical re-doings, that is, 'mock-ups' of the real crimes in action; if one were to see them as drama, scripted and planned for entertainment, it would be a mistake, a misframing, of major proportions (Manning, forthcoming). The reaffirmation of the framing as 'real crime' by senior people makes the shared view shared and redundant. In organizations in which choice is made largely at the bottom, as in teaching, social services and policing, the framing of cases is left to the functionaries with the hope that they will not produce visible errors that embarrass the organization publicly. Those at the bottom, on the other hand, believe that they are covering the errors of those at the top. In each case the matter is reframed while still in what is called the real or primary frame.⁷

Let us again consider organizational interaction. If, in the course of interactional encounters, actors open themselves to response (sometimes we don't and the order is private and bounded in which we interact), a response is required. This may take the form of a concerted sequence, in which case it is a 'line' or request for additional response. In this set of exchanges, we verify each other as worthy others. Drug police (see below), if asked to sniff or use a drug, always

have an excuse ready to hand, for to turn down a gift is an affront in itself. Because this situation cannot be predicted, it is the basis for the informal assessment of an officer: she has 'flair' in the face of a potential collapse of a front. In this set of exchanges, we verify each other as worthy others. If we do not or cannot, for whatever reasons, constraint arises which may be accountable (require an explanation) or not. These interactions may by implication include others and thus a working consensus may emerge. At this point, 'organization' comes into play. Limits arise from the actor's perspective — whether they are what he calls 'negative experience', frame-breaking or threatening information or that which causes 're-thinking' or reframing (which might be described as a sense of recognizing: 'I got it wrong the first time'). Organizations are abstract entities, but organizing is a relational process of co-participants, and when these organizing processes come into contact with the hierarchical aspects of organizations, there may be conflict. Those in the command segments can create limits by involving rules and procedures. These limits are marked, dramatized or expressed, in the options and nuances of what is said and done. The saying and doing in such marking is often shadowy because power blinds and binds relations and their scope. This power is rarely expressed (it is part of the 'felicity condition' Goffman 1983b). The rest comes as organizing ideas, designed to move and integrate people in groups, penetrate and shape what is done with the other. If and in so far as organizations deny orders, they will be produced: they may be counter or oppositional such as the occupational 'subculture' of the uniformed patrol officer, or what he calls the 'underlife' of a mental hospital, or exaggerated versions of American individualism produced by CEOs and management gurus. At the edges of encounters 'organizations' do their work and if the encounters cannot unfold they become oddly shaped; they exist in the form of an 'underlife,' as Goffman detailed in *Asylums*. Every organization has an underlife — the modes of interacting in places and times that are contrary to the stated instrumental aim of the organization. Underlife may be revealed or indicated by sabotage, as in damage to audio and video equipment in police cars by officers who resent 'big brother' (Manning 2003: 157); back stage damaging of the product such as in restaurants; playing video games and using the internet to shop; playing games on the job (Roy 1960); or drunken confrontations at annual parties. These are forms of resistance. Since power relations are signalled by rules and their enforcement, hierarchy manifests itself in and around rules but they are in every way indexical, pointing to the situation, not to the 'organization', formal or otherwise.

The most fundamental idea underlying any interaction among strangers and organizations as units is *trust*. It is a false and misleading assumption that trust is absent in modern life; it must be made present more in modern life where strangers have fewer cues to establish it in advance. As organizations span continents and communication is disembodied, disembedded (free of time and space constraints) and virtual, trust becomes problematic and legal resolutions such as the European notion of a 'contract' questioned, trust is re-examined in interorganizational relations (see Heimer 1992). Nevertheless, as Goffman asserts, quoting W. I. Thomas, we live by inference (*PSEL*: 3). This idea can be glossed by the idea that interactions require an in advance assumption that the

second person or other(s) is at least trying to do something like the first person, that is, to sustain an interaction. In the instant or current situation in industrial nations, 'high modernity', in which time, place and setting are flexible and range from virtual to face to face and all simulacra in between, performances rely on trust (Rawls 1987, 2002). Furthermore, the centrality of trust is evidenced in ongoing sequences of interpretation. Goffman, following J. L. Austin, terms this the necessary 'felicity condition'. Social interaction is a communicative dance based on trust and reciprocity — the foundations of organizing. Thus mutuality and duality (responsiveness) constitute the 'promissory, evidential character' of social life' (Goffman 1983a: 3). While trust, or acceptance of forthcoming outcomes, is necessary, it may be violated, new contingencies may arise, and a new line of action may unfold. People perform, respond, perform, respond and thus they symbolize. In *Frame Analysis*, Goffman ruminates on this in respect to fabrications (benign and exploitative), and the vulnerabilities of experience (Goffman 1974: chapter 12). That is, if the framing process is subject to redefinition by lies (fabrications) that may be damaging or those that are merely benign, or experience from which the frame is drawn come into doubt, the frame may be questioned. There is always the possibility of 'existential dread' in Goffman because if we create order via reciprocity and exchange, and those exchanges 'spin' or change, the uneasiness of disorder looms.⁸

It is in interaction, even long-lagged interaction, that trust is displayed. It is not an attitude. It can be seen but is not a predisposition to act: it is displayed in action. Presentation, that is interaction, is more important than self. The self is not the central concept of Goffman's work, but it is there in various shapes and aspects (see pointedly, the quote on the last page of *Frame Analysis*). There is a tenacious insistence in Anglo-American society that such a thing as self exists, and thus it is always a potential way to explain or account for behaviour, make sense of the continuities of one's experience, or to point out oddities or anomalous experiences. Goffman's point in *Asylums* is this: there are very few materials from which that which people believe is fundamental can be created. Whatever, consequences of interaction seen as the self are more important than the consequences of some feature of the interaction labelled — such as a 'self'. The notion of a self is strategic beginning point, because as Goffman acknowledges, one could start backwards and seek motivation in a biogenetic contest, or in larger units that engender obligation and loyalty such as families or organizations.

Goffman is not presuming order. There is an abiding sense in which chaos and disorder lurk always at the edges of interactions and these require work to manage and keep on track. There is a dark shadow on much of what he writes: the shadow of interruption, loss of poise, alienation and betrayal.⁹ It is through and by interaction that all orders, small groups, formal organizations, institutions, and societies, are created and sustained. They are the vehicles to which we assign our burdens. Enduring obligations one to another bind us. While slips and intentional disruptions of performances go forward, there is a lasting sense in which they can be and are managed, but the shadow remains. This means in effect that the overtly 'obvious' features of formal organizations, rules, roles, relationships, structures of power and authority, mission statements, strategic

plans and goals are only meaningful in and through the interaction by which they are constituted.

The constraints of organizational life are many, and some are material and in some sense obvious (computers, desks, chairs, meetings, rooms, other equipment, people-in roles), and their features are both subtle and immediate and visible, but in many ways organizational actions are doubled-coded, they take space and have material presence, but their uses and functions are socially defined and sustained. This holds true for technologies, visible and invisible, work routines, rules and their contexts, role and obligations and certainly the rhetoric, accounts and organizational symbolizing that is enacted (Barley 1986). Internally, organizations are clusters of work routines, dense interactions, cliques and embedded groups that are constituted and reconstituted over time. The 'place' of such standard conceptual paraphernalia as roles, selves, groups and even persons are negotiable in interactional sequences and are not free standing or incontrovertible. Even such cliché matters as statement of the rational purposes, goals and complex, differentiated positions of an organization are materials for doing things. While its ecological and material basis is present, the uses to which the animate and inanimate are put emerge through and by interaction. Organizations are composed of interacting segments, occupational groups, and archipelagos of order, which bring people into conflict, competition and co-operation that is occasioned and occasional. It is these interfaces that provide rich veins of data bearing on power, authority and careers.

In the next section I introduce some background before moving onto an empirical illustration of a study drawing upon Goffman.

The Background

Goffman's emphasis on the differential use of symbols to convey a message to an audience, an impression as it were, intrigued me as I was embarking on my studies of policing in the early 1970s (see also Manning 1988, 1992, 1996, 2003). While many viewed Goffman at that time as a 'micro-interactional' theorist, I thought the questions of ordering remained at whatever level one considers. I stumbled upon the scope of his ideas when first working on a theory of policing. I imagined that an organization is an actor, or performer, a social object to which motives, purposes, aims and social features are attributed to and responded to by other actors. It could create and disseminate impressions to its advantage. It could create a sustaining imagery to compete in an organizational environment. It could produce a line and create order in its audiences. Policing could be seen as engaged in a kind of dramatic game of 'impression management' or effort to persuade audiences via strategies, tactics and information of the quality of its actions. If the police organization is an actor, it interacts with other actors in symbolically articulated games (city government, social control with other civic bodies; see Long 1960), and its actions have consequences for other actors. Its existence as an actor is not constant but a product of the moves and definitions relevant to the situations in which action occurs.¹⁰ The police organization, because it is rooted in local places, financing and obligations, cannot

move, outsource its functions or redefine its mission. It has to sustain its legitimacy in the present. Policing as practice is an elaborate form of ritual, an illusion of control in a divided, democratic, secular society in which strangers must somehow get along. Using a quote from Durkheim in *Police Work* (Manning 1977), I hinted that societies create sacred objects from secular ones and that policing had through its own promotional rhetoric and politics *created* quasi-sacred status in the polity. The police are a kind of aberrant and sacred island amid a sea of secularization. At the same time, they are what society makes of them, 'dirty workers' of a kind, and so they keep much of their work out of sight and back stage (Holdaway 1983; Dick 2005). Police practices, what is done in the name of the police organization, require visible display of involvement in policing as an organization (see below on Goffman's discussion of 'organization'). In many respects, my sketch of police work as a kind of drama is what passes for an organizationally based theory of modern policing. *Police Work* was one way in which elements of Goffman's framework (via Durkheim; see Rawls 2002) entered organizational analysis and the next section touches upon this study of police-at-their-everyday-work. Given space restrictions, more detailed illustrations and analysis is set aside but available elsewhere (Manning [1979] 2003).

An Example of Organizational Analysis

Narcs' Game (Manning [1979] 2003) is a study of drug law enforcement based on fieldwork, observation, interviews and records gathered in two drug enforcement units in the Washington DC area. While the drug of interest has changed from heroin to crack cocaine in big cities today, and the media attention has diminished in drugs as a category, more recent research in Boston suggests to me that the organizational processes that produced the loose supervision and the entrepreneurial spirit of the officers remain. The most important aspect of any research is the questions asked, not the answers. Here is a series of questions.

- 1 What is the organizational work: that which counts and is counted? The work is craftlike, rather than bureaucratic. The fundamental idea that drives this craft is trust, as Goffman has told us: you must trust your informants to do the job (make buys, report information, retrieve the evidence, describe the persons and settings in which the buy occurred); you must trust your colleagues to 'back you up' on raids; you must trust your sergeant to tolerate your errors, misconceptions and occasional lies. If trust fails, violence may arise to sustain a connection: violence fills in for the absent. If an informant fails to make a buy and pockets the money he will be arrested. Drug law enforcement is a performance, sometimes a team performance (*PSEL*, chapter 3), whether one is working an informant, making a buy, testifying in court, or acting (while undercover) as a 'major player' or dealer. The team features more in Goffman's view of organization than the organization. It is the team to which the actor owes loyalty and from whom he or she takes direction (*PSEL* pp. 97, 214). The unit within the police organization was a context for action and rationalization, but most officers worked on their own, defined their own cases, met and paid their own

informants, and only occasionally were seen in the office. If they did not see the organization as an accountable object, they ran the risk of being sanctioned for deviance (too much overtime, not enough arrests, unfinished and needed paperwork). Over the course of the work, making cases, the actors required the resources of organization, but defined themselves as entrepreneurs, small businessmen carrying out a creative, volatile and sometimes violent craft.

- 2 What is an organization? All organizations must produce and maintain a niche via claims or a licence and a mandate and a presentational rhetoric — an elaborate account or rationalization — that sustains their credibility. This can be done using a variety of rhetorics and tactics, some of which involve direct information gathering and processing. Harrison White (1981) has shown that like other interactions market moves are based on the last move and the next imagined move, not actual market intelligence.¹¹ This argument, what one might call the social construction of the relevant environment, is developed based on detailed ethnographic data in *Narcs' Game*. Organizations create and bound their environmental 'other', that which is not the organization. The absent presence of an organization is as important in performance as the presence of it is as a rationale. The study was on the one hand an exploration of the ways in which the organization imagined, created, reproduced and maintained an 'environment' in which enforcement was to take place. This environment was a 'social construction', an interpretation based on organizational readings, what the members thought what was 'out there'. This included beliefs about the distribution of drugs, the drugs at issue, the number of users, the social problems associated with use, the moral implications of use, and the role of the criminal sanctioning in controlling the market and use. Enforcement is carried out by casework. Investigators work cases. A complementary thread of my argument was an examination of the creation of cases within the two organizations. If it were based on information, this would be available and widely disseminated and used. I found that case-making and working cases was a function of internal sanctioned and visible organizational practices rather than based on the facts associated with the use and/or distribution of cocaine, heroin or prescription drugs.¹² The cases 'worked' were defined by investigators.
- 3 What is a case? The organizing idea in drug policing is the case, something like the patient's file discussed by Goffman in *Asylums*, the file in Bittner, and Garfinkel's 'Good organizational reasons' (Garfinkel 1967), or sense-making (Weick 2001: 188–198). Agents define cases, work them or not, and close them without more than superficial guidance, reprimand or review. The word 'case' is a shifter, and varies in meaning by the context in which it is used. In a fashion used in the abstract by outsiders such as researchers, US attorneys and district attorneys, it is something about which paper must be generated (and perhaps once 'opened' or written up, must be closed in some fashion). In the organization it remains an 'open text' metaphorically, thus permitting agents to pursue hunches, leads, ideas and other ways of reducing uncertainty. The loose idea, the case (and arrest) and their fringe meanings, permits agents to wander, open and close cases, as they move toward closure.

In *Narcs' Game*, 'case' referred to any or all of the following overlapping and not mutually exclusive ideas:

- An idea for a future investigation such as 'I have a dynamite informant.' This means that the current informant can either make buys, introduce an officer to a dealer to make a buy, or point out dealing places. Any of these can lead to arrests and more informants, and thus sustain 'production' of more cases.
- A lead passed on to an investigator by a phone from citizen, or in person from an arrestee, or a fellow officer (e.g. "'Slick" is dealing again around 24th and U'). The question then is what do I want to do about Slick and can I do it? The later is the determinant concern, not the former.
- An informant's file which records valid information, given past buys, and may lead to future ones.
- An affidavit or a warrant for a place or person. This typically states that evidence of a crime is to be found there based on reliable evidence provided.
- A written report of a buy and arrest.
- A pending court case after a person is charged and arraigned. In many units, those nominally arrested may not be charged but merely intimidated to work informally and dismissed when they have satisfied the investigator. This creates a tension between the organization that defines informants as general unit property and individual officers who see them as personal property. This tension exists in any entrepreneurial enterprise, including universities (professors and their students).
- A case officially assigned to an investigator (by a sergeant or lieutenant). This rarely occurs in an investigator-centred organization, but it can happen in an organizationally centred unit (see below).
- Knowledge of a set of people, vaguely linked or said to be linked, who are considering or are importing or dealing in drugs. These are often quite moot points. These facts might be the basis for a larger case that involves working up to bigger dealers.

In short, the concept was situated, useful situationally, and had no transcendent meaning or use. It had an organizational aspect, however. Of the two organizations studied, Suburban (a pseudonym) was an organization-centred, case-processing department which tracked cases more closely and where sergeants had a closer idea about how and what officers were 'working'. Supervisors, a lieutenant or sergeant, could determine what cases were assigned and in that sense, were 'open'. The assigned and open cases in Suburban, because they arose from citizens' calls, were deemed worthless. On the other hand, in Metro (a pseudonym), and 'being' an investigator-centred department, cases were handled much more informally and there was no official count of what was being done or could be done. In both units, investigators appeared busy, reported they had informants and pending cases (see above list for the range of things that this covers). No case in this unit was 'open', but a case could be closed when the outcome was positive and recordable, i.e. when it generated an arrest, evidence, or an informant. These

all required considerable paperwork. These 'closed cases' were a numerator for an unknown and unknowable denominator. There can be no 'clearance rate' in a drug enforcement unit, only (at best, if kept at all) records of outcomes, informants and expenditures (overtime, buy money and reward money). These arguments also apply to the indexical term, an arrest.¹³

In all of these ways (the definition of the work, the organization, the case, and the arrest) efficiency, that is, putting effort into producing short-term visible outcomes, is valued over effectiveness or impact on the market. Known places, known persons, known groups, 'gangs' or dealing groups, and drugs' known patterns of distribution (source, size, shape, colour, standard units) and slang terms used are targeted more than others. Visible street sweeps or set of public arrests was good media time and seen as having a positive impact on public opinion.

Recall that in the classic model taken from Max Weber (Gerth and Mills 1958), an ideal type of a bureaucracy is one where paper records (and now electronic ones) are kept assiduously to track past decisions, anticipated outcomes, the actions of staff, evaluations of staff and their performance; the disposition of cases and problems arising; rules and regulations of the organization itself, and other meta-rules used to guide and sanction members. These are nominal and idealized functions. A case in bureaucratic terms is an official record consistent with the organization's stated purpose, what is believed that the organization 'knows'. This fieldwork suggests that it might be more accurate to argue that what is recorded is that which might be questioned in future about any decision. In this sense, what is recorded is an anticipated statement, or a forward- and/or backward-looking formulation of decisions taken. What is written then is a configuration of anticipated actions, actions taken, and agents' understandings of what has happened. With reference to agents, records of buys, seizures (drugs and money), other evidence collected, outstanding buy money (given to an officer in anticipation of making a buy); informants registered (if such a file is created and made available in the unit), and other matters involved in a case as it unfolds (if it lasts more than a few days and involves more than a bust or hand-to-hand buy and arrest) was recorded consistently across any of the seven cities we studied in detail (Williams et al. 1977). It was not possible at any given time to know what the aims, objectives, outputs or potential cases of the agents were in the unit.

Narcs' Game was a detailed analysis of the messy nature of formalized, purposive action. How is it that collective or joint actions are known and understood so that the organization can obtain an 'embracing concept of the members' (Goffman 1961: 179–180)? As Goffman writes extensively, collective actions must include trust; without it, nothing goes forward (1961: 174, citing Durkheim). Sergeants thus trust that their agents (squad members) are working on something; in the case of the squads that 'work the street' (six of the nine in Metro), the evidence is the arrests and warrants served. The visible evidence is seen when people are arrested, raids are staged and officers return with the evidence prisoners or 'sad stories'. Those who work the schools and pharmacies squad were not trusted because they did not do real police work — make arrests. Their work was invisible.

Another point arising but which cannot be pursued here is that rules do not reduce complexity; they produce it. The structural insulation and isolation of the

drug unit enabled it to maintain some physical and social distance from the organized and organizing centre of the headquarters. At that time, often the drug unit was located outside the police department in a separate building without a sign: the cars were also unregistered in the state Department of Motor Vehicles and the identities of the officers were concealed in even city county or state organizational records. This both mystified the officers (*PSEL*: 71) and protected them. Drug law enforcement was theorized from this perspective as a constellation of uncertainties, or outcomes of which the consequences were unknown (facts may be available but can be estimated, such as the likelihood of drug dealing in a particular location in the city, but are not known at the time) or unknowable (cannot be known, such as the number of drug dealers in a metropolitan area).

Closing this section, the organizations studied worked in several ways to manage the impression of impact and the control of drugs. Agents maintained a front and controlled the setting as much as possible (*PSEL*: 88). They remained out of sight personally and professionally. They preferred not to appear in court or in the television news. They were never seen in uniform. They resembled, by costume, manner, appearance and front, the people they hunt and arrest. In sum, they were marginal and symbolically distinctive from the rest of the organization and they dramatized this in action (Manning 2003: 51–52). Necessarily, the organization is a social mirror that reflected the same structure, values and processes as the ‘bad guys’ (Manning 2003: 80–81). They are entrepreneurs, work secretly, act illegally, and in this and other ways they act much like their opponents. These could be called mutually shared projections of social reality, now a part of the working mandate of the drug unit and the beliefs of drug dealers. The secret of the menacing, omnipresent and effective drug police is that there is no secret. They are daily enacting, in Weick’s (2001) terms, their sense of the job.

As noted above, the objective for turning to this study in broad terms was simply to indicate the ways Goffman’s work was a source of inspiration. Much more remains to be said and certainly learnt and drawn upon as the immense bank of books evaluating and summarizing and so on and so forth testify. The brief incursion into the study and the analysis here begins to show that paperwork, social roles, rules governing decisions and in effect how the organization is mobilized or moved into action, are defined occasionally and situationally, depending on the squad, the meaning of the term ‘case’, and the opportunities for enforcement as officers defined them. Further, given the nature of this particular organizational form realized, no long-term goals were stated, no objectives set, no standards or levels of performance extant. The practices were based on a seemingly enduring, well-understood situational rationality that took into account what was possible at the time, given the high levels of uncertainty in information terms that prevailed concerning the environment of use and dealing.

Final Comments

The complexity of a situated analysis of organizations is best expressed in the last chapter of *PSEL*, ‘Conclusion’ (which it is not). Goffman keeps twisting the focus to show that one can see organized action as framed by technical, political, structural and cultural approaches (p. 240) as well as the ‘dramaturgical’. This

would lead us to look at ‘impression management within the establishment, the role of teams, and the interrelationships of the teams within the establishment’ (p. 240). He then continues to show how deeply interrelated the approaches are. Here is the focus: not in types of establishments, their structure, function, product or service because these are in every way incidental to the ordering necessary to accomplish any of this. It is this grounding that is assumed in demographic studies, those based on records, surveys or official data of any kind. Since the organization defines its product in ways that encompass and enfold its workers, any production process produces meaning. Clearly, variables that cohere into typologies exist, such as the mandate of the organization, service, or profit; the degree to which it directly serves the public; the internal emphasis on modes of compliance (money, loyalty, tradition), but these in Goffman’s framework must be linked to the processes by which they are negotiated. Again and again, work is interactional work in whatever organizational context.

In this paper I have argued that Goffman’s work is an ambitious and ambiguous stimulus that has been widely interpreted. I believe that the core of his work lies in the analysis of performance, organizing and organization, the underlife and related selves, trust, and ordering. Goffman’s actor is an emotional being, and in truth a ‘democratic man’ or person, while for him the formal instrumental organization is a constraining bounded arena in which interaction occurs, creating often inhumane hierarchies. Clearly, all of these aspects could not be empirically illustrated nor discussed in depth but I hope that readers have been prompted to search out ‘the originals’ and take inspiration in ways that the brief case study drawn from *Narcs’ Game* did. On a more personal note, I came to Goffman and his work via reading Durkheim more closely after reading the essays in *Interaction Ritual* (1967) and later via conversations with Robert ‘Habi’ Habenstein at the University of Missouri. Habi was a PhD student in sociology in Erving Goffman’s cohort at the University of Chicago and a close friend. Indeed, I took the job at Missouri fresh from graduate school because I admired Habi. It was with Habi and Lee Hearn that we drove for most of a day from Columbia, Missouri, to Campaign-Urbana in Habi’s pink Nash automobile to hear Erving speak. The crowd assembled; no one knew where he was or how he was arriving. The host, Joe Gusfield, was anxiously pacing the aisles of a huge overflowing auditorium on campus. At the announced time for the speech, Erving walked down the centre aisle, mounted the stairs to the stage and took out a stack of 4 × 6 notecards. He placed them carefully in front of him and evened the edges with his hands. He looked up. He then delivered the finest lecture I have ever heard: poised, definitive, and eloquent, it was based on a failed paper he never published. He vanished soon after the talk because he wanted to return to Berkeley for his son’s senior prom. I spoke with Erving subsequently, once in a hotel bar, once in an elevator in Denver, and shared a Chinese meal at which he critiqued at length the food to several hovering waiters and to us. He argued against a title I had proposed for a book of mine and refused to write a forward to it (this was a principled decision; he never wrote for anyone else). I returned from England for the ASA presidential address he was to deliver, having been invited by him in a formal letter. But alas he was near death even as we congregated. I cried and mourned his departure when he

died and could not bear to attend his wake at which John Lofland collapsed while delivering the oration. His personal influence was much like his work: oblique, refracted, misunderstood, rich and redolent. I can only write now that I miss him. More importantly, the field misses his incisive, penetrating writing. He is not with us, but his work is with us yet. A legacy indeed.

Notes

- 1 Using a search engine (in December 2006) to probe the contents of *Organization Studies* for references to the term 'organization', I found 693 mentions, with almost as many definitions (or it functioned commonsensically without a precise definition).
- 2 My interpretive warrant extends for some years; but others have also struggled with the Goffman corpus. Two known commentaries are in profound and consistent disagreement about the nature and thrust of his ideas. Phillip Manning (1992) sees them as evolving, systematic, and containing hopeful fragments of a theory. Tom Burns, a colleague of Goffman's at Edinburgh in the 1950s, flatly states, on the other hand, that Goffman's ideas lack a systematic theoretic structure or end point (1992: 74ff). Thomas Scheff, in a recent book (2006) focusing on *Frame Analysis*, sees Goffman's work as a detailed sociological cognitive social psychology. There is an abundant secondary literature too. To date, two edited collections of research papers in the dramaturgical perspective: Brissett and Edgley (1990) and Combs and Mansfield (1976); five edited collections on Goffman (Ditton 1980; Drew and Wooton 1988; Riggins 1990; Smith 1999; and Trevino 2003); and two collections of his work with lengthy biographical and interpretive essays (Fine and Smith 1999; Lemert and Branaman 1997) are available. Bennett Berger's introduction to the Northeastern University Press's edition of *Frame Analysis* (1986) is a useful commentary. The Lemert and Branaman book (1997) contains a complete bibliography, selections from Goffman's writings, and cites the relevant secondary sources. Branaman's essay, 'Goffman's social theory' is a modest and non-contentious overview, while Lemert's 'Goffman' sets his ideas succinctly in the framework of the sociology of knowledge.
- 3 The approaches with which his work has been connected include dramatism (Kenneth Burke's term), Meadian symbolic interactionism (Brissett and Edgley 1990, Lofland 1969), semiotics (Vester 1989), structuralism (Gonos 1977), and even a separate version of theorizing (Denzin 2004). He has been also taken as a representative of the decadence of modern morality (Cuzzort 1976), as providing a vision of politics for mass democratic society (Berman 1982), a postmodernist in disguise (Clough 1992); an acute observer of modern democratic manners among interacting strangers (P. K. Manning 1976), an interesting writer (Becker 1993), an amusing writer with several odd voices who has done too little fieldwork (Fine and Martin 1990) and as a failed interactionist who employs no self-based human agency (Denzin and Keller 1981).
- 4 *PSEL* was originally published as a research paper by the University of Edinburgh in 1956. Phillip Manning (1992: 44–8) sees the modifications Goffman made in the Anchor 1959 edition as important in tempering the cynical view of the actor and self in the 1956 version.
- 5 Teamwork is situational and occasioned, not an ongoing and lasting idea based on shared norms, values or beliefs (*PSEF*: 79). It forms around producing a 'a single routine'.
- 6 I am indebted to Anne Rawls for this point made in personal communication.
- 7 In spite of the 'cognitive bias' one might find in *Frame Analysis*, Goffman does not begin with sense-making as a source of coordination of actors as does Weick (2001) — there is a nagging sense in which the grounding in Weick's arguments is cognitive rather than interactional. However, as Weick explains, his work and Goffman's is about interactions, processes, and on the natural and sometimes messy aspects of organizing (Weick 2001: xi) within the context of formal organization or formally organized groups. The explicit role of cognitive organizing, as in the evocative and important paper on 'collective mind' (Weick and Roberts 1993), is argued logically from fieldwork and posited as a cause of reliable action sequences. Gary Alan Fine's *Kitchens* (1996: 54–79) is a near example of Goffman-like work in its focus on routines for putting out meals in kitchens. Fine mistakenly begins with a list of *posited* characteristics of cook's time, but salvages some purchase on the process by describing what is done over and over and how it works.
- 8 This is a very complicated point which goes to the heart of FA and cannot be fully or properly elaborated in this context. My point is to show that unlike Garfinkel, who assumes an order is always present, Goffman sees it as friable. The framing process is an attempt to reveal the underlying cognitive aspects of mutual ordering.

- 9 Goffman is never self-referential when writing. One could discern almost nothing of his obligations, friendships, loyalties, needs, desires or emotions from his writing.
- 10 The idea or concept of the *actor* was specifically defined in elegant detail as a social object by Talcott Parsons in the Weberian tradition ([1937] 1949: 44–49) in which he delineates the concrete actions of a person from an analytical approach which sees acts, actions and the actor as relational and intended to specify outcomes and explanations of actions. The Parsonian concept does not refer to a ‘performer’ who intentionally performs to achieve a dramatic purpose, and whose motivations are to impress, manipulate or promote personal goals, but a socially defined unit is a social system with certain attributed orientations to norms and values, subjectively integrated in an action system and making choices in reference to these norms, values and subjectively understood meanings. Goffman, like Garfinkel, knew the Parsonian scheme (Garfinkel was a student of Talcott Parsons at Harvard), rejected the normative value and systemic aspects, but used the term to indicate those in interaction rambling toward a working consensus through which they became something of social value. The important differences between Garfinkel and Goffman have been carefully spelled out by Anne Rawls (2006: 4) where Garfinkel (2006: 107–117) states clearly and at length two versions of the actor. For our purposes here and similarly to Goffman, he argues (2006: 107) that an actor is ‘the short-hand generic designation of the agent to an action’. Garfinkel’s second meaning is the content of acting (p. 107) and need not occupy us here.
- 11 While I have argued for a view of organization and how Goffman sees the organization, it is important to note that, in recent years, organizational analysis is more inclined to accept the fallacious argument that some organizations are based on rationality and direct monitoring of the environment via ‘market forces’, while others do not. This position has been used to argue that school, welfare and policing organizing efforts are irrational and responsive only to institutional protective myths that buffer them from evaluation (Meyer and Rowan 1977; see also Powell and DiMaggio 1983, the most cited article in sociology in the last 25 years). These are elegant, data-free and evocative essays. Market dynamics, pricing, sales and new products are no more indicative of the next action than any other socially organized system.
- 12 At the time of the study, 1975–1977, ‘crack’ cocaine, inexpensive nuggets with a rapid and sometimes explosive effect, was not in visible use in the district. The primary interest of the officers in the two units was heroin.
- 13 That is, an arrest is also a ‘shifter’, a term that changes meaning in context for officers and has no fixed meaning organizationally. Drug officers in special units are expected to produce, usually in terms of arrests. There are local stories and rankings of skill and expertise, but the official records kept by supervisors bear only on what is done by officers that can be recorded. The ebb and flow of markets, price, quality, number of users, quantity of drugs are of no interest. The primary aim is to keep officers working as the hours are flexible, the agents are invisible once they leave the office (these are often in buildings some distance from headquarters or any precinct or district), they operate on their own cases largely without direction, and the external evidence of activity work is nil. Conversely, a lot of work by an agent or agents on a case can yield nothing if an informant quits, dies or is killed, might have to appear in court, the district attorney will not charge on the case, witnesses drop out or leave the country, or evidence is lost or compromised.

References

- Alpert, Geoff, and R. Dunham
2004 *Understanding police use of force*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barley, S.
1986 'Technology as an occasion for structuring'. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 31: 78–108.
- Bazley, T. D., K. Lersch, and T. Mieckowski
2006 'Police use of force: Detectives in an urban police department'. *Criminal Justice Review* 31: 213–229.
- Becker, H. S.
1993 'The politics of presentation: Goffman and total institutions'. *Symbolic Interaction* 26: 659–669.
- Berman, Marshall
1982 *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Bittner, Egon
1965 'The concept of organization'. *Social Research* 32/winter: 230–255.
- Bittner, Egon
1967 'The police on skid row'. *American Sociological Review* 32: 699–715.
- Brissett, Dennis, and Charles Edgley, editors
1990 *Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook*, 2nd edition. New York: Aldine deGruyter.
- Burns, T.
1992 *Erving Goffman*. London: Macmillan.
- Chriss, James
1995 'Habermas, Goffman, and communicative action: Implications for professional practice'. *American Sociological Review* 60: 545–565.
- Clough, P.
1992 'Erving Goffman: Writing the end of ethnography' in *The end(s) of ethnography*. P. Clough. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Combs, James, and Michael Mansfield (eds.)
1976 *Drama in life*. New York: Hastings House.
- Corsianos, Marilyn
2003 'Discretion in detectives' decision making and "high profile" cases'. *Police Practice and Research* 4/3: 301–314.
- Cuzzort, Ray
1976 *Humanity and modern social thought*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Czarniawska, Barbara
2006 'A golden braid: Allport, Goffman, Weick'. *Organization Studies* 27/11: 1161–1674.
- Denzin, Norman
2004 *Performance ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Denzin, Norman, and C. Keller
1981 'Frame analysis reconsidered'. *Contemporary Sociology* 10: 52–60.
- Dick, P.
2005 'Dirty work designations: How police officers account for their use of coercive force'. *Human Relations* 58: 1363–1390.
- Ditton, Jason (ed.)
1980 *The view from Goffman*. New York: St Martins.
- Drew, Paul, and A. Wooton (eds.)
1988 *Erving Goffman: Exploring the interaction order*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press. Revision of papers originally presented at conference 'Erving Goffman, an interdisciplinary appreciation', University of York, July 1986.
- Fine, Gary Alan
1996 *Kitchens*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fine, Gary Alan, and D. Martin
1990 'A partisan view: Sarcasm, satire and irony: Voices in Erving Goffman's *Asylums*'. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 19: 89–115.
- Fine, Gary Alan, and Greg Smith (eds.)
1999 *Goffman*. London: Sage.
- Garfinkel, Harold
1967 *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Garfinkel, Harold
2006 *Seeing sociologically*. Edited with an introduction by A. W. Rawls. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Gerth, H. H., and C. Wright Mills
1958 *From Max Weber*. New York: Oxford University Press. (1st edition 1946.)
- Goffman, Erving
1959 *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Goffman, Erving
1960 *Asylums*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goffman, Erving
1961 *Encounters: Two studies in the*

- sociology of interaction*. Indianapolis, Indiana polis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Goffman, Erving
1963a *Behavior in public places*. New York: Free Press.
- Goffman, Erving
1963b *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Goffman, Erving
1964 'The neglected situation'. *American Anthropologist* 66: 133–136.
- Goffman, Erving
1967 *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behavior*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goffman, Erving
1969 *Strategic interaction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goffman, Erving
1971 *Relations in public*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goffman, Erving
1974 *Frame analysis*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goffman, Erving
1979 *Gender advertisements*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goffman, Erving
1981 *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goffman, Erving
1983a 'Felicity's condition'. *American Journal of Sociology* 89: 1–53.
- Goffman, Erving
1983b 'The interaction order'. *American Sociological Review* 48: 1–17.
- Gonos, G.
1977 "'Situation" vs "frame": The "interactionist" and "structuralist" analyses of everyday life'. *American Sociological Review* 42: 854–867.
- Heimer, Carol
1992 *Reactive risk and rational action*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Holdaway, S.
1983 *Inside the British police*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hughes, E. C.
1958 *Men and their work*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Lemert, Charles, and A. Branaman, editors
1997 *The Goffman reader: Charles Lemert and Ann Branaman (eds.)*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lofland, John
1969 *Deviance and identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Long, Norton
1960 'The local community as an ecology of games'. *American Journal of Sociology* 64/3: 251–261.
- Mangham, Ian
2005 'Vita contemplativa: The drama of organizational life'. *Organization Studies* 26/6: 941–958.
- Manning, Peter K.
1976 'Goffman and the decline of civility'. *Canadian Review of Anthropology and Sociology* 13: 13–25.
- Manning, Peter K.
1980 'Goffman's framing order: Style as structure' in *The view from Goffman*. Jason Ditton (ed.), 252–284. London: Macmillan.
- Manning, Peter K.
[1977] 1997 *Police work*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Manning, Peter K.
[1979] 2003 *Narcs' game*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Manning, Peter K.
1988 *Symbolic communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Manning, Peter K.
1992 'Technological dramas and the police'. *Criminology* 30: 327–345.
- Manning, Peter K.
1996 'Information technology in the police context: The "sailor" phone'. *Information Technology Review* 7: 52–62.
- Manning, Peter K.
2003 *Policing contingencies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Manning, Peter K.
Forthcoming *Technology's ways: Police uses of crime mapping*. New York: New York University Press.
- Manning, Phillip
1992 *Erving Goffman and modern sociology*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Meyer, John, and C. Rowan
1977 'Institutionalized organizations'. *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 340–363.
- Mills, C. Wright
1940 'Situated actions and vocabularies of motive'. *American Sociological Review* 5: 904–913.
- Parson, Talcott
[1937] 1949 *The structure of social action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Polanyi, M.
1966 *The tacit dimension*. New York: Doubleday Books.
- Powell, W. W., and Paul DiMaggio
1983 'The iron cage revisited'. *American Sociological Review* 48: 147–160.
- Rawls, Anne
1987 'The interaction order *sui generis*: Goffman's contribution to social theory'. *Sociological Theory* 5: 136–149.
- Rawls, Anne
2002 *Durkheim and epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riggins, S. (ed.)
1990 *Beyond Goffman: Studies on communication, institution, and social interaction*. Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Roy, Donald
1960 "'Banana time": job satisfaction and informal interaction'. *Human Organization* 18: 158–168.
- Scheff, T.
2006 *Framing Goffman*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Schein, Edgar
2006 'From brainwashing to organizational therapy'. *Organization Studies* 27: 287–301.
- Schreyogg, H., and H. Hopfl
2004 'Theatre and organization: Editorial introduction' (special issue) *Organization Studies* 25: 691–704.
- Smith, Greg (ed.)
1999 *Goffman and social organization: Studies in a sociological legacy*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Trevino, A. Javier
2003 *Goffman's legacy*. Foreword by Charles Lemert. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Vester, H.
1989 'Goffman and post modernism'. *Semiotica* 76: 191–202p
- Weick, K.
2001 *Making sense of the organization*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Weick, Karl, and Karlene Roberts
1993 'Collective mind in organizations'. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38: 357–381.
- White, Harrison
1981 'Where do markets come from?' *American Journal of Sociology* 87: 517–547.
- Williams, J. R., L. J. Redlinger, and Peter Manning
1977 *Police narcotics control: Patterns and strategies*. 2 volumes. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Young, Malcolm
1996 *An inside job*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peter K. Manning

Peter K. Manning (PhD Duke, 1966, MA Oxon 1982) holds the Elmer V. H. and Eileen M. Brooks Trustees Chair in the College of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, Boston, MA. He has taught at Michigan State, MIT, Oxford, the University of Michigan and elsewhere, and was a Fellow of the National Institute of Justice, Balliol and Wolfson Colleges Oxford, the American Bar Foundation, the Rockefeller Villa (Bellagio), and the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Wolfson College Oxford. Listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*, he has been awarded many contracts and grants, including the Bruce W. Smith and the O. W. Wilson Awards from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and the Charles Horton Cooley Award from the Michigan Sociological Association. The author and editor of some 16 books, his research interests

include the rationalizing and interplay of private and public policing, democratic policing as a social form, homeland security, crime mapping and crime analysis, uses of information technology, and qualitative methods. The 2nd edition of *Narcs' Game* [1979] appeared in 2004 (Waveland Press), while *Policing Contingencies* (University of Chicago Press), was published in 2003. *Technology's Ways* is forthcoming in 2008 with New York University Press.

Address: Northeastern University, 360 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115, USA.

Email: pet.manning@neu.edu