

Book Chapter Proposal

“Informality in making policy (work)”

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Abstract

Vehicles of Informality – the role of the car as a mobile space of policy and relational work

The materiality of policy and organisational worlds – buildings, laptops, furniture, mobile phones, and car parks – has been an under-examined aspect of policy relations. Everyday materialities are routinised in such a way they are enacted as trivial, contributing to an indifference towards the roles they can play. In particular, the role of the car and quite what happens while travelling, aside from the driving of the vehicle itself, is largely overlooked. How relations with colleagues are re-assembled and re-organised in, and through, the small threshold spaces that are car interiors, where actors are suspended between two states – neither here, nor there – effect every day work. Importantly, in recent years, the car has become a complex communicative assemblage for multi-tasking, a coordination centre for telephone, GPS, internet etc., a place of work; but cars are also places of refuge, a comfort zone for affective regulation via the sound system.

This chapter empirically explores, from a multi-sited, interorganisational ethnography in rural Scotland, the indispensable spaces of cars as mobilising relations for the implementation of regulation requiring certain NHS services to integrate with local government social care services. Given rurality actors had cars, which they used to drive back and forth across sites in the area. I suggest a focus on mundane or taken-for-granted materials, like cars, can unsettle understandings of policy, engendering thinking beyond ‘formal’ policy practices, to illuminate acts of implementing ‘through things’ (de La Bellacasa 2011). Materialities provide a novel way into interrogating policy practices as they unfold in a range of in/formal settings, in this case carried by vehicles. As an object, the car is a fluid site whereby embodied, routine and often unnoticed doings are produced through and between relations between bodies, objects and places. These relations are spatially and temporally enfolded, and constitute the practices of policy work, particularly in rural areas.

1) What is it with cars? Encountering mobile interfaces of in/formality.

In the early 2000s, before the days of video conferencing, and smart phones, a common feature and expectation of all the jobs I had worked in as a public servant/manager in rural Australia was the requirement to drive. Whether that was back and forth from the metropolitan policy centre, or across regions for meetings of various kinds, driving for hours to meet face to face, even for just one hour, was 'part and parcel' of these roles. Moreover, sharing rides with other practitioners on long-distance journeys was a regular occurrence. As a practitioner, these mundane experiences attuned me to the activities that go on in these particular mobile spaces beyond being just a mode of transport, especially the relational work associated with mobilising policy, what Peck (2003) describes as 'policies 'in motion''(229), ensuring action at a distance (Carter 2018).

Fast forward to 2016, in the midst of ethnographic fieldwork in a place I call Kintra, a time which saw ambitious legislation go live for NHS boards and local government social care services in Scotland. They were required to form Integrated Authorities in each local government area. The emphasis of the legislation was on interorganisational reconfiguration of health care and social care services, known as Health and Social Care Integration (HSCI); a flagship policy epitomising public service reform in Scotland in which normative aspirations of collaboration were central (Mulherin 2022). And managers - the local policy actors - were expected to implement it. Through the course of fieldwork, I observed how NHS and Council managers enacted day-to-day collaboration as they attempted to operationalise integrated care; interrogating how they worked to both reconfigure and hold things together behind the scenes, away from the frontlines of direct care, immersed in spaces of governance and operations.

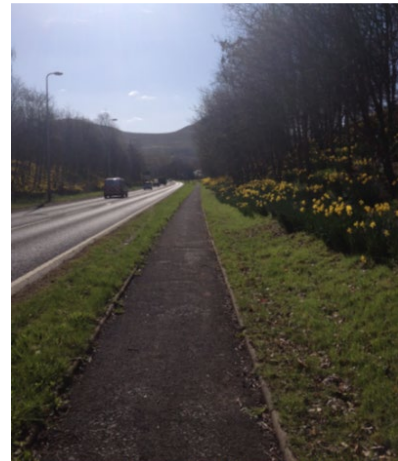


Figure 1. Journeying in Kintra

Ubiquitous objects were central to managers' work, e.g., mobiles and tablets, which when away from their desks ensured their availability. Given Kintra's rurality, all the managers had cars, which they used to drive back and forth from Council to the Hospital, to other Council and NHS offices, and community organisations in the area. Some managers also commuted from across central Scotland and even England. The car was an essential device for a manager's work, but they were also personal artefacts that belonged to the individual. The extent of driving stood in contrast to historic, apocryphal stories told to me by managers who grew up in Kintra about people not travelling outside their communities; with multiple sites of service delivery reflecting a tenet of the area that I was told was parochialism. While a manager needed to use their car to get to these varied points of delivery, the length of organisational memory and community memory, for a manager, was important to understand.

To situate this chapter, my ethnography describes and names a place I call Kintra¹, a rural corner of Scotland. A place where the history of the Council can be traced back to the 12th century (Taylor 2016) and the NHS to 1948 (Lewis 2001). Kintra was a large rural area with an ageing population of over 100,000 people, with close to 50% living in smaller villages or remote areas. These enumerated particulars, however, are limited in their representations. Early on in my fieldnotes, I variously described the area as beautiful, a 'rural idyll' with 'sodden fields', 'rolling hills'; as an 'assault of greenery', 'prone to flooding and snow, often randomly'; and where the 'weighty histories' of towns and villages scattered across the area mattered. Balancing demands from these communities, while

¹ Kintra is Scots for country, rurality (www.dsl.ac.uk, accessed 28/11/2020). This name, the names of towns and actors in this chapter are all pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of those involved in the research and the area it took place in.

working to spread resources equitably across Kintra, was an enduring dilemma for managers. Kintra was a place where ‘national laws and policies were being translated; not just any policy, but particular legislation that was attempting to realise a longstanding ambition of the Scottish Government’. While some staff half-jokingly referred to it as ‘teuchtar-land’, ‘cut off via topographic barriers’, Kintra was connected to other Councils, NHS territorial boards, national agencies, and the Scottish Government, sustained by technological territories of affiliative objects (Gherardi 2012: 82-87), including, legislation, policies, plans, emails, and people. Geographic distance between Kintra and Scottish Government offices in Edinburgh was viewed as advantageous, as they wouldn’t attract Government attention, and therefore meant that NHS Kintra and Kintra Council could do their own thing (Mulherin 2022: 130-33).



Figure 2. Haith Royal Infirmary - wrapped in carparks.

In what follows, I explore the experiences of car travel with managers, and consider through observations how cars effected policy work, when treated by practitioners as an inconsequential means for getting around that bore no relation to the delivery of policy; a ‘regular occurrence ... constituting part of the unreflexive, habitual practice’ (Binnie et al in Holmes and Hall 2020: 9) of doing their jobs. As an ex-manager of rural care services in Australia, the car was vital for sustaining both intra- and inter-organisational relations, not just in the transporting of a manager here and there, but for what went on during car journeys and the work

involved within. I show how cars mobilised managers on behalf of their organisations, hither and thither, but as personal objects they operated as a threshold, a permeable space between work life and personal life - a generative site of the in/formal. Settings such as cars also allow for informal arrangements in the way they bring actors (and actants) into contact with each other, the consequence of propinquity, i.e., closeness. Given these features, I suggest that a focus on automobility provides a fruitful lens to reveal the connections between different trajectories of policy that develop through blended formal and informal everyday managerial practices within their operational context.

I offer an account of how informality and formality might fold into one another and highlight some of the ways in which this might transform policy intentions. As an unexceptional, ordinary object unnoticed because of its ordinariness, cars ‘are so embedded in the tacit, embodied routines that underpin, but are nevertheless crucial to, everyday life’ (Buse, Martin, and Nettleton 2018: 244), contributing to an indifference towards the role they play. A seemingly banal an object as a car revealed relations meaningful in their mundanity, that I want to demonstrate had localised effects when it came to policy ambitions, actively constituting relations for policy implementation, with the aim to generate new insights and new questions concerning policy work (Wagenaar 2018).

I zoom in to share, in excerpts from car journeys with a manager called Samuel, how this effected his role in enacting the implementation of HSCI given his ‘geographically stretched responsibilities’ (Klocker et al. 2015). As the manager responsible for primary care, his NHS services were inextricably connected on a day-to-day basis with Social Care. I show how HSCI policy travelled through entangled modes of in/formality, namely, distributed spatial relations, and simultaneity, where actors are entwined in multiple practices while driving in cars. Managers were making the most of journey time while fulfilling the requirement to be present in diverse sites of activity. As Laurier et al point out, ‘while car trips might be thought of as a form of ‘suspended animation as it passes from A to B. ... [T]heorists of speed and mobility ... have turned this notion around, animating the

suspension, as it were, and placing movement at the heart of how our societies and cultures are continuously organised' (Laurier et al. 2008: 2).

In this 'open[ing] up the interior of the car, as it journeys, as a place of import ... and substantial interest for social science investigations' (Laurier et al. 2008: 20-21), I then briefly reflect on the effect of HSCI policy's encounter with the Kintra carescape.

2) In/formal Things

... even as the business people are speeding along motorways, they are likely to be busy doing desk-work: trying to keep up with complaints from clients, requests for help from colleagues and dictating letters to secretaries; trying to keep to optimistic appointment times with clients and colleagues; trying to stay in synch with those who do not have to drive to meetings; trying to do office work with paper documents; and on their mobile phone to recoup time otherwise lost in transit. These varieties of desk work and the dashboard equipment of driving have not been designed to go together, yet the office workers we studied managed to artfully combine them. (Laurier 2004: 264)

While the work going on in cars reveals temporal elements that makes journey time productive, to accomplish this relations with things need to be foregrounded. When it came to fieldwork, what I did not grasp initially was the role of materials and how their relations were entangled in intra- and interorganisational doings. The relatings of objects altered my attention, slowly transforming my analysis into a part 'ethnography of non-humans' (Gherardi 2019, 211). Whilst HSCI had 'multiple material manifestations' (Woodward 2019, 16), boundary permeability was detectable through rooms as sites of inclusion and exclusion; magnetic entry tags allowing movement around buildings; and bodies occupying jointly-appointed positions. These objects coalesced in quotidian events, like journeys to meetings, occasions where I thought clues to how HSCI was being implemented could be discerned. As I endeavour to highlight, these materialities permeated practices of policy in relational ways, and policy permeated materialities in relational ways too; 'not solely determined by human agents but rather through the relationships that unfold between humans, social worlds and more-than-human entities including objects, technologies and environments' (Clark and Lupton 2023: 401). In bringing materiality to the fore, the dualisms that characterise Eurocentric thought (e.g.. nature/culture, human/non-human and mind/body) are troubled. Attention is paid instead to the sociomaterial processes through which meanings and experiences are produced (Clark and Lupton 2023).

While our entanglements in materials are manifold, I suggest a focus on a mundane object in the form of a car can be used to uncover not only neglected things but also neglected issues in policy work, e.g., the boring (and often frustrating) activity involved in electronic diary management to arrange policy discussions while driving (Star 1999). Furthermore, when it comes to aiding policy implementation in the frontline of service delivery, for many practitioners in health and social care services, moving and travelling is a requirement of the job, and the car is central to how this is achieved. Yet, Ferguson argues, 'the role and meanings of the car [in policy work] remain largely unanalysed ... [and this] makes it appear as if the work goes on without movement, that it can be done without professionals ever having to leave their desks (Ferguson 2009: 276). This approach offers 'a window into capturing prosaic issues usually left by the wayside (Holmes and Hall 2020: 231), we see how spaces of policy are materialised by others thought of as outside of policy; in contrast to those who shape policy at a distance, the policymakers, politicians, and executives who orchestrate the texture of environments where policy implementation takes place with intended and unintended effects.

While not necessarily concentrating on vehicles, from day one of fieldwork the centrality of cars as the space for what I wrote as ‘informal conversations’ are indicated in my fieldnotes. I appeared to ‘know’ or place value on what happening during car trips as a beneficial way to elicit details about HSCI’s implementation. This realisation generates questions about the circumstances of policy implementation as not only associated with places, like Council or hospital buildings, but also spread across places, away from policy actors’ own offices, including ones that are fleeting or mobile. Analytically, when it came to cars, effects arose from both the physicality of a space and the patterning of the activity that occurred there. Something Ferguson argues is

central to the management of time, space and relationships in people’s everyday lives, and to the flows and practices within entire societies and across the globe. ... far more goes on in cars than was previously understood, as travel time is not simply wasted or ‘non’ time (Ferguson 2009: 275-76).

I want to suggest that attending to materials, in this case cars, combined with geography, allows for more nuanced understanding of how policies are mobilised from national centres of policymaking to local sites of action in all their connectivity, and how they mutate as they move with the iterative actions of multiple actors (Durose 2011). Additionally, a spatial focus prompts us to consider how policy is configured in particular settings, which practices are facilitated through different spatial contexts and what the implications are of arranging policy implementation and settings as we do. ‘Place’ implies something more than locality; it also enables ‘understanding how different processes and things combine to create the world as it is experienced’ (Pink 2012: 23). In this instance, the ‘contingent, negotiated and ‘throwntogetherness’’ (Buse, Martin, and Nettleton 2018: 247) of mobile spaces where practices configure policy. Thus, when interrogating materials on the move and spatiality, their mobility is an effect of effort. ‘Mobility and ... materiality are themselves relational effects, ... they are an outcome or an accomplishment (Adey 2010: 18).

The material and social entailments of cars emerge from features like privacy, in which the boundaries are controlled and facilitate ease in terms of informal interactions, mixed with the propinquity afforded by size and seating arrangements, which can foster informal interactions in a space where people are physically close, i.e., the blend of the enclosed architecture of the car, the undivided attention that car travellers can give one another, and in particular the ‘pause-fullness, and slowness, of car conversation’ (Ferguson 2009: 281). According to Ferguson (2009: 276-77), the work that goes on in cars is therefore generated through the design of cars, centred around the interaction between the purpose of journeys; the effects of being in movement and the discussion this enables; and how configuration of seating and where people can sit alters power relations between professionals and build trust. By following the mundane materiality of daily work carried out in cars, the informality of automobility and actors experiences reveal the extent to which policy work is mediated in sociomaterial arrangements in the form of enmeshed technologies, institutions, and actors, actively shaping the contours and the discontinuous trajectories of policy actors through formal and informal realms of organisational action; understanding these scaffolding conditions for policy mobility can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how in/formality in policy work comes to be enacted. These features make the car a place where policy work needs to be considered, interrogated and analysed (Ferguson 2009).



Figure 3. Manager's Carpark at Kintra Council & Public Carpark at Kintra Council

To highlight these features, I noted on day one of fieldwork, that to shadow the Chief Officer through her day, I needed to accompany her in her car. In our leaving the Council building to the car park to the car, the communicative dynamics between us shifted from orienting statements about the Council, as we were in an open plan office occupied by Council's senior management team and administrative staff and where various speech acts could be easily overheard; to a small, enclosed space where it was just her and I and the conversation shifted to a more open style. My following her through a building, across a car park to her car, became an opportunity for her to describe particular features of the Council and provide more detail about her role, entangled with the car and a GPS. I recognised that being alone in the car provided other possible lines of enquiry to be explored when there were no others around, out of earshot and reflective of more forthcoming communication.

We head off to a presentation the Chief Officer was doing at the College to health and social care students, as part of the consultation on the draft strategic plan for the partnership. We travel in her car to another town, and it is a good opportunity to have some informal conversation. Because of her position her car had a parking space, although someone else had taken it and she'd parked in someone else's spot. She remarked that she'd never had this before and thinks that it is reflective of the hierarchy of the Council. She talked about getting to know the area given how dispersed the towns are. The trip to the College took 20 minutes but she was ably assisted by a GPS (December 1, 2015).

Five months into fieldwork, my relations with managers had evolved and much had happened. And, while still in and out of cars I had more to discuss, and managers were at ease disclosing views on numerous matters. The managers with integrated responsibilities had nuanced understanding of organisational differences that they had to navigate figuratively, and literally, by car.

I follow Stephen, the Integrated General Manager for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services, out to the carpark and he tries to remember where he parked the car. We find the car and drive to a meeting at Council. We talk about different approaches in the NHS. He thinks the NHS is more micromanaged and is focused on performance management and doing what the Finance Director thinks should be done – there is less debate. Whereas Council there is more debate, less performance management. I raise the phrase I've heard since being in Kintra about 'visual leadership' and other words e.g., 'values' etc. and wonder about the consequences in relation to behaviours and actions. He thinks the Council CEO would know less about the performance of things but has a wider remit than the NHS CEO. (April 21)

I also came to learn that manager's cars were spaces that could be reached into via Bluetooth technology, with phone calls received through the car's audio systems and caller id displayed on the dashboard. Ferguson describes this as where one 'mobility system' – the car – meets another

mobility system – computer technology – and permits information gathered on the move to become part of administrative practice and flow around (Ferguson 2009: 289). Likewise, the stationary car was a space for managers to take a break, ponder the day's experiences, smoke, eat and make phone calls that they did not want overheard in open-plan offices.

On one occasion, I got a lift with a Scottish Government appointed, governor of the NHS Kintra Board. She provided different insights from a governance perspective quite openly, even though I was a stranger.

It was a daylong meeting of the NHS Board. To get back to the train station, I got a lift with one of the non-executive members of the board, who expressed concern about daylong meetings and the impact on them as board members. She was a retired CEO of a trust, an ex-psychiatrist. As she drove, ... she shifted to HSCI and whilst supportive, regarded the legislation and regulations to be a mess and that there was a conflict of interest for those board members on the Health and Social Care Partnership. She thinks it was created by civil servants who don't know what it's like out in areas. She's not impressed by the idea that the Health and Social Care Partnership commissions and then hands back to the NHS and Council. I respond by indicating I observed an absence of clarity. I thought lifts to the station are great for people to share what they really think! (April 7).

Car interiors were a material, movable space where the informal came to the fore and with that exposing granular regulation of action, on the part of the policy actor, associated with implementation. Correspondingly, while I explore how the car is associated with action on the move, its material role in stationary action e.g., providing an additional space for having lunch, needs to be recognised. Equally, the affordances of the car in facilitating other activity like the after-meeting debrief in the carpark all play a part in enmeshing the informal in the midst of everyday work.

3) Porous mobilities

In almost all of the existing literature what happens in the interior of the car remains largely unexamined ... The inside, however, is perhaps almost too trivial, as a space not of state, city and politics but one of family argument, refreshments and gossip (Laurier et al. 2008: 3)

There are few human activities more mundane than informal interaction and few settings in which to study them more commonplace than cars and carparks. As a site for ethnographic interrogation, cars lack the strangeness to surprise us, as most of us have personal experience with them. Furthermore, Drew et al (2022) suggest, methodologically that talking in the car has effective advantages over other approaches, '[w]hile people's bodies and minds reside within the 'inner space' of the car, vehicular movement can also unlock their recollections of the places and things they pass in the 'outer space' that extends beyond its boundaries' (6).

As a form of 'practice of everyday life' (De Certeau 1984), the car enables the movement of bodies by the millions, and as such is 'so pervasive that it forms the daily routines often taken for granted' (Drew, Skinner, and Bardsley 2022: 6). Thrift (2004) argues, car travel is a vital means through which humans come to know the world, that 'reconfigures civil society involving distinct ways of dwelling, travelling and socialising in and through an automobilised time-space' (46). He noted, almost 20 years ago, that developments in car technologies, merging software and

ergonomics, was shifting how automobility was being practiced, car's habitability and the practices of driving and passengering (51).

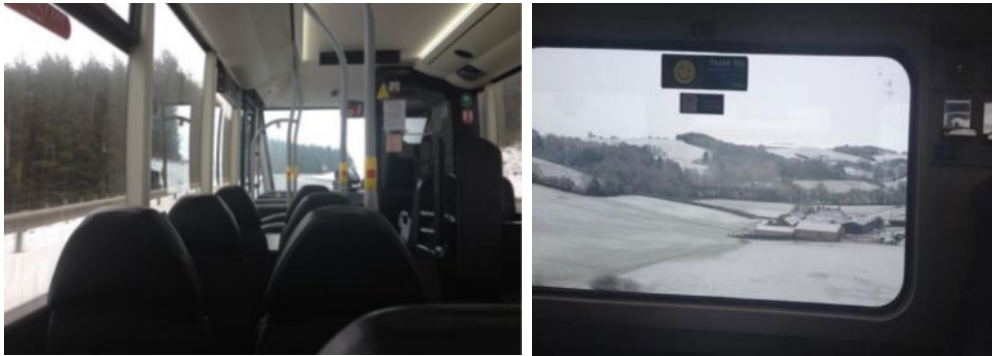


Figure 4. Access to the Field

Transport was a difficult feature of fieldwork, requiring I travel to and from Kintra by bus or train, which meant I was a passenger in many car journeys to and fro various towns; an ethnographer positioned 'in motion in the field' (Birtchnell, Harada and Waitt in Holmes and Hall 2020: 232) centred on car-related matters.

While car journeys were pragmatic ways for me to both shadow managers as they went about their daily routines, and to get to different locations in a large rural municipality, it soon became obvious that the journeys afforded opportunities to talk with managers about their jobs and involvement in HSCI implementation, their assessment of HSCI implementation progress and the impact on their roles. Although not always uninterrupted or alone, having a manager's attention fostered understanding of their knowledge, experiences and perspectives, and consequently, interesting insights emerged (Drew, Skinner, and Bardsley 2022). Spending time with managers and others in cars, made for productive time to build connections and trust.

Cars mobilised relations in what was a form of private space into which work could intrude, but on the driver's terms. It was a vehicle, in both senses of the word, to learn about people and places, chat about shared experiences, listen to their versions of events, and talk about things not necessarily shared in front of others. It facilitated multidirectional conversation in which researcher/subject relations shifted and discussion emerged organically on diverse topics. Cars were 'a good place for certain sorts of conversations' (Laurier et al. 2008: 17).

As I got to know each manager over a number of car trips, the trips took on different forms, which highlighted their generative features for ethnographic observation, if trust was established. Firstly, more affective elements emerged as dissonance and emotion was bared in unguarded moments, when they divulged concerns about HSCI implementation efforts; as well 'matters of life, love and death were discussed, ... and inter-personal support was given. ... intense feelings are generated – 'auto-emotions' (Ferguson 2009: 276). This was exemplified when Stuart, the Associate Director of Allied Health and I were travelling in the Occupational Therapy team leader's car to a meeting with Mental Health services. He had been working on a restructure of Allied Health Services in response to HSCI requirements and was in negotiations with the union, and 'in an agitated manner off-loaded about being challenged about his structure chart and being shafted by a specific individual' (February 23, 2016). Often accompanied by affect, the other affordance of cars was the enabling of information disclosure on the part of interlocutors for events I was unable to observe. This was apparent one afternoon when I got a lift from the hospital to get the train home, where a retelling of an event at the new partnership's board meeting exposed underlying tensions with HSCI.

As Integration Programme Manager, Chrissie drove me towards the train station, she divulged what happened at the board meeting yesterday and how angry she was. She said 'Claire' (the board Secretary) told the Chairperson to move two items on the agenda to private, items relating to the appointments of Chief Officer and Chief Financial Officer, and that the NHS CEO, who Chrissie then called 'a fucking cunt', did this. ... The NHS CEO argued staff appointments shouldn't have staff present. According to Chrissie, Julia, the Chief Officer, had to leave and was very angry ... I said, 'I wonder if this was about realising the legislative implications, and Chrissie responded, 'the NHS CEO realises they're losing power'. I thought to myself, I really like car conversations, you learn a lot ... but I was shocked by what Chrissie told me. I felt for Julia, what a difficult job (March 8, 2016).

In revisiting my fieldnotes I realised managers were sharing their views with me in cars from the beginning, with the discussion during these trips often following on from preceding activity that was dominating their attention, such as contentious meetings often related to HSCI.

I went in Julia's car to the hospital for the informal managers meeting. She talked about the day having been difficult, focused on delayed discharge, and said that it was about underlying politics, 'blaming social work for the delayed discharge', but she indicated the situation was more complicated (January 5, 2016).

Subsequently, I began to wonder if there was a third feature, I felt like I was a receptacle for managers to process their feelings about HSCI and express out loud their views when I was in the car, knowing I was a researcher and ethically required to keep things confidential.

4) The compounding everyday predicaments of HSCI

I shadowed the managers in the HSCI management team over five days each in order to aide my understanding of their role, its relationship with HSCI, and their approach to collaboration. I spent a lot of time with Samuel, who was the NHS General Manager of Primary Care. He had a wide remit and was well regarded for his diplomatic manner and skills as a trouble-shooter, he prioritised relationship management, appeared to dress in the same navy suit every day and expressed love for his BMW. What follows are extracts of my fieldnotes from between February and April 2016, when he was dealing with operational challenges and the 'politics' of HSCI. His diary was often full, involving meetings across a number of towns. When I began shadowing Samuel, he detailed the dynamics of his job.



Figure 5. Samuel's Desk.

In the car, he talked about being on call for primary care/community and now acute which impacts his weekend. NHS executive directors are trying to combine acute managers and primary care managers to be on a rota. ... Later in the day, as we were leaving the Council, we stood in the carpark while Samuel debriefed with his NHS colleague Frank, (manager of unscheduled admissions), about what was a difficult meeting with Council care managers. It was the first meeting I observed where there was explicit disagreement and conflict. We headed back to the hospital and Samuel mentions that this was the first type

of meeting of this kind reviewing and challenging decisions in order to learn for the future and how confronting it was (24 February).

From the outset of my time with Samuel, I was exposed to the dilemmas and discretion entailed in his role. On that single day he was feeling conflicted by the demands for his presence in acute services in the NHS and the imperative to work constructively with Social Care to address delayed transfer of care that were straining relations with acute services.

My time with Samuel was unevenly spread over weeks. He began to pick me up from the train station before heading to whatever meeting was first for the day. I was able to listen to him explain his work directly, and indirectly via mobile calls where he did not always disclose my presence, necessitating that I remain quiet. I quickly learnt his job involved lots of driving given he had staff distributed across Kintra and managed wide-ranging services. Consequently, he developed ways to work 'on the go' and fill the 'empty' time in his journeys.

I meet Samuel as I come out of the station and he's trying to speak to his PA on his Blackberry. He describes a change in his diary, arising from yesterday's informal management meeting. 'Joanna' had done some work on the commissioning document, but it still needed more work, so Chrissie requested he work on it and "make it look more professional". On the drive over to Council he gets through to his PA ... and they discussed diary changes. As his mobile is linked through the car, he spoke hands free. She joked about not liking him today as he can't meet with Stuart and then the Deputy Medical Director. He responded about having to go to an afternoon meeting at a GP practice with the new Medical Director, as directed by the NHS CEO. Invoking the CEO brought the conversation to an end as we arrived at Council to meet with the Integration Programme Manager (30 March 2016).

In this extract, Samuel is entwined in various technologies while driving and being responsive to a dynamic context that needs his involvement; where the connectivity of his mobile and Bluetooth technology permitted communication with his PA for diary management, and other work between meetings, including pre-meeting briefings, debriefings after meetings, peer support, discussing plans, and agreeing to future action. Over those few days, he became more comfortable with my presence, not concerned about what I heard. This was also reflected in his increased openness about his views on HSCI and seeking my perspectives. As time went on, this openness extended to revealing personal details about the impacts of work on his wellbeing.

Samuel asked about my reaction to the meeting and the GPs view of their practice and HSCI. He also asked about my PhD and how it will shine a light on their practice. He expressed concern about a lack of operating model for HSCI and not being authorised to action ideas, such as those advocated by the nurse from the GP practice we'd visited. He put this down to Kintra's history and thinks they perpetuate it by not being clear what they're managing. ...that what they are doing is an exercise in making it appear like it's something (March 30, 2016).

We get into the car, and he tells me he used to work 55 - 60 hours a week when he also had to manage the acute hospital and ended up having 2 months off to recover. He doesn't do that now. As we head to the train station he talks about work pressures generally. I then said it was good to have had a positive meeting on the HSCI launch day April 1, with Julia being on Radio Scotland and articles in the local papers. I asked why there wasn't more from the organisations today in relation to marking the occasion. He thought there should have been more made of it, muttering something about 'fucking

stupid decisions' (April 1).

As we leave the hospital and get in Samuel's car, he talks about how he's frustrated with his emails and needing to be on top of them as they were 'out of control' – his PA sorts emails ... so he'll need to spend time in the evening and go through them. He describes email toing and froing at the moment that's getting personal and that he's just said to stop and have a face-to-face meeting. He prefers talking and calling rather than emails. We end up talking about CDs – he's just bought the latest Pet Shop Boys which leads us to talk about our musical tastes and concerts (April 4).



Figure 6. Front and back car parks at Haith Royal Infirmary

While Samuel appears to be the kind of 'person-thing ... automobilized person' that Thrift (2004: 47) describes, given an interdependency with the car supporting him to accomplish his work role, he also used his car for emotional regulation supported by music, but there were tasks that couldn't be done while driving, i.e., reading his emails needed to be done after hours at home. In his opening up about his work and the progress being made with HSCI, his distributed efforts to support HSCI seemed to be persistently constrained by NHS arrangements.

I was in the carpark out the front of the hospital, in between Ambulances and cars dropping people off, waiting for a lift from Samuel. He'd already been at Council but came back to get me to return to Council for a meeting about community-led models for local services being promoted by the Scottish Government. As I got into the car, I hear Elvis singing a version of 'Bridge over Troubled Water', and remark, 'you must have a lot on your mind' (assuming he was stressed), to which he nods but changes the subject and turns his music off. I could see food wrappers flung on the floor of the passenger compartment and in the empty mug holder space in the console. It smelt like a mix of cigarettes and air freshener. There were clothes and documents spread out on the back seats. It looked like he'd been spending a lot of time in his car, although he didn't seem to have his mobile resting in its cradle to take phone calls like he usually does. We chat on the 10-minute drive over to Dochmuir about ideas for setting up a community ward. He'd been questioning these ideas and talked to another manager, who also shared his concerns. I asked about him working on the Commissioning Plan, and he laughed "no that's this weekend's work". He then started detailing how he was the Hospital duty manager yesterday and he described the specific directive they are given at the end of every month about having to meet particular targets, e.g., 95% admissions, so they knew that if they had 4 people go over 4 hours waiting in A&E, it would prevent NHS Kintra achieving their national performance target. I learnt this degree of close monitoring at month's end led to managers influencing clinical decisions, which Samuel wasn't always comfortable with. ... After the meeting finished, while standing in Council's carpark he described feeling like he's having to deal with so many people and personalities and so many different issues. This conversation continued in the car as he drove me to the train station, where he described being immersed in so much that without the clarity of a

model like that of NHS Highland, “we’re in treacle and there are so many different interpretations of what it’s about and so people are creating their own realities” (April 5, 2016).

Two main features of his car work stood out, namely simultaneity and sustaining distributed relations. The variety of meetings he organised to be present at reflected how broad his role was and the range of services that reported to him, requiring him to be across multiple policy areas, including HSCI. He was explicit about his intentions to talk directly with not just those he managed, but colleagues from Council and the community sector. In this sense he was aware of the policy work entailed in his role, but his relations were dispersed across Kintra, and he determined that his bodily presence mattered to informally sustain these relations. Accordingly, he traded off desk work with car work, hence the informal work-arounds he developed for accomplishing work while driving, simultaneous enactments to allow things to go on. As my time with Samuel came to an end, the cumulative pressures of his work were obvious, he was not just stretched, he was increasingly stressed. He said they were “building an aeroplane whilst it’s flying, you know, so it’s already taken off and it’s in the air, but actually it needs to be finished” (June 6th, 2016). While he expressed commitment to HSCI, he was very frustrated, especially with data production, the resultant waste of energy when new daily data would arrive about the number of beds available, and the ill-informed responses based on what he felt was inaccurate data – all emerging from the nexus of practices associated with acuity in the NHS. Despite his lengthy employment with the NHS and grasp of the issues, processes, budgets, personalities and politics, and desire to be across lots of activity, when it came to HSCI (in an attempt to shore up its formal legitimacy with the NHS), planning activities overwhelmed all other HSCI work, a form of work he had limited involvement in given the expectation of his involvement in operations.

These moments inside and outside the car with Samuel reflected its porosity and salience as a mobile space for shaping practices of policy. However, despite his reparative efforts Samuel resigned from NHS Kintra within twelve months of the HSCI ‘go live’ date. His experience exposed that even with the localised, interpretative capacity provided for in the legislation, this rested implicitly on an assumption that policies like HSCI can have an unfiltered and immediate impact on sites of implementation, which was counterbalanced by institutional realities in Kintra. This assumption ignored not only care services circumstances in Kintra, but also the knotted relations engaged in the process – something my trips in cars revealed.

My journeys end.

‘... mobile policies are not simply travelling across a landscape – they are remaking this landscape, and they are contributing to the interpenetration of distant policymaking sites’ (Peck and Theodore (2010a, p. 170)



Figure 7. Off on a trip in the snow.

Witnessing managers movements as they journeyed throughout Kintra in their cars, uncovered the dense relations managers were enmeshed in; relations in the management team, relations with the teams they were responsible for, relations with authorisers and governors, and the partner organisations they worked with. These dense relations were conditioned in arrangements with things as well, with the car generating relations in particular ways that affected the implementation of HSCI, as they produced ways to work ‘on the go’. In world/s of ‘evidence-based everything’, what was displayed was the ambivalence and complexity in the workings of automobilised policy as it travelled on trunk roads, town streets and village lanes. Neither hidden nor fully articulated, enfolded patterns of in/formal doings prove essential for understanding the blurred boundaries of threshold spaces, like the car, which are critical for policy mobilisation. For as McFarlane explains,

Informality and formality are as nomadic as people themselves. They have no pre-given geography or political content, progressive or otherwise. They co-constitute and dissolve spaces, becoming politicised or depoliticised at different moments, and they both enable and restrict organisational life (McFarlane, 2012, 89).

Cars were a hybridised workspace, quasi-private artefact; ‘a fluid container ... a secure base to retreat to, either to be alone to reflect and ‘contain’ themselves’ (Ferguson 2009: 291); where they could listen, chat, generate connections, share experiences, divulge conflict, and discuss action. The car is implicated as a context of affective and embodied relations between policy actors, materialities and spaces of mobility and dwelling; an informal, threshold space, - the transitory office - where meaningful policy work is conducted that is critical for enabling the flow of policy work to continue.

Better knowledge about the affordances of the car and mobilities has a contribution to make to deepening understandings of policy implementation. While Laurier et al’s (2008) research explores ‘a tentative sociology of passengers and passengering’, I want to suggest that analysis of the role and meaning of the car in the mobilising of policy as exemplified in the implementation of HSCI in rural Scotland, adds a further crucial dimension. This entails what goes on within the car as a site of practice, and the place of the car and system of automobility in policy arrangements. Apart from the differences between the car and other meeting places, there are relations involved in policy work in the car which mark it out as different from work undertaken elsewhere. What goes on in the car is part of the countless iterations of practice that go on at various implementation sites and it is these entangled relations between them that creates the ‘fluid’ interventions that leads policy to flow in particular directions (Ferguson 2009: 291).

Short Bio

Tamara Mulherin recently completed her PhD in Politics at the University of Edinburgh. She has been a Research Fellow with the Usher Institute at the University of Edinburgh, and a Post-doctoral Fellow in the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University. She has recently taken up a Lectureship in Organisational Studies with the Newcastle Business School at Northumbria University. Her doctoral research was an inter-organisational, multi-sited

ethnographic study into health and social care integration in Scotland, exploring how collaborative practices were enacted for the implementation of new legislation.

Tamara has more than 20 years experience in the public and non-government sectors, across a multiplicity of policy domains, including, mental health, disabilities, health inequalities, homelessness, social care, international development and domestic violence. Her experience has encompassed diverse roles, including, management, planning, policy, evaluation, service delivery, and community development.

Tamara is interested in posthumanist public sector organising, mundane governance of care, the documentality of collaboration-as-practice, care configurations as forms of infrastructuring, linking this with notions of repair and maintenance in the context of public sector reform.

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