



**Maynooth  
University**  
National University  
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**School of Business Research Seminar Series 2018-2019**

***“Challenged Bodies: The Narrative Construction of a Good Police Officer”***

**Dr Anja Schaefer**

**Date: Friday, 1 February 2019**

**Time: 10:00am**

**Venue: CB9, Callan Building**

**Paper Abstract**

Anja will explore how police officers in a post-conflict context construct their individual and collective identities as good professionals in narratives of bodily encounters with others. The paper treats experiences of bodily involvement in the world of one's work as occasions for identity work. The paper specifically focuses on the construction of an identity as a 'good professional', with an emphasis on 'good' as 'ethical'. The paper thus aims to bring together concerns around ethics, identity construction, embodiment and inter-subjectivity in an exploration of ethical identity construction.

Policing is an interesting context in which to explore this question. What constitutes a 'good' police officer and a 'good' police force is inextricably entangled with the physical performance of police work. A high proportion of police work is performed interactively, with and on the bodies of others, be it members of the public or fellow police officers.

Following Diprose (2002) the paper builds on the assumption that identity is performed through the body; that embodiment, inter-subjectivity and performance are central to identity work. The theoretical framework draws on notions of the centrality of the body in human perception, knowledge and identity (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and of the construction of the self as performance (Goffman, 1959), as well as the literature on the constructed and relational nature of identity processes and identity work. The analysis is presented in three themes: 1. Physical danger of police work; 2. Bodily encounters with others; and 3. Bodily comportment of a good police officer.

**About the Speaker**

Anja gained her doctorate from the University of Buckingham (UK) after working as ESRC Research Associate at Manchester Business School from 1996 to 1997. She joined King's College London as Lecturer in Marketing in 1998. Then moved on to the Open University (UK) as Lecturer and later Senior Lecturer in Management, where she contributed to teaching and research as well as working in the roles of Programme Director and Head of Department between 2004 and 2017. Anja joined Maynooth University School of Business in January 2018 as Senior Lecturer in Marketing.

To RSVP, please email [business@mu.ie](mailto:business@mu.ie).