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Introduction

The last 20 years have seen substantial developments in the relationship between police organisations and higher education institutions (HEIs) in England and Wales (Bryant et al, 2012). These developments have been most pronounced in the provision of HE degrees aimed at those currently working in, or aspiring to work in, the policing profession. Bryant and colleagues (2014) note that such programmes generally fall into one of three categories: i) ‘in-service’ where police officers engage with HE education during their service, ii) ‘initial service’ where officers initial police training is provided by an HEI, and iii) ‘pre-service’ where officers study prior to commencing their initial training.

The relationships that have emerged between academic and police organisations can be portrayed as genuine and productive, characterised by close and effective working practices. Police-university knowledge transfer partnerships have flourished over recent years, while policing degrees at all levels, from Foundation to Masters and PhD study, are offered in several institutions of higher learning. And whilst, historically, it has become *de rigeur* for senior officers to successfully engage with HE level learning (Punch, 2007), perhaps the most significant change over recent years has been the extent to which HE is seen as appropriate to officers at all levels within the organisation.

Unsurprisingly, the expansion of the HE sector to meet the perceived demands of 21st century policing has not been without its complications, nor its detractors. At a fundamental level, Canter (2004) notes that one of the greatest differences between the police and academia is their essentially opposed ideas of what constitutes ‘knowledge’, driving many of the divergences in worldview between the two as police officers and academics draw on

significantly different values when testing and assessing data, evidence or information. At a less epistemological level, Bryant et al (2014) show how this meeting of the academy and the police has not always been without issue and that some representatives in both organisations remain reluctant to engage with the other.

Whilst it is tempting to portray the relationship between police and the academy as a linear account, using broad-brush strokes to cover complex issues, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the relationship and its underlying contexts. As far back as 1983, Reuss-Ianni and Ianni noted the cultural schism which exists between street officers and managers in the police. Similarly, the term ‘university’ denotes a broad spectrum of institutional histories, structures, relationships and cultures, leading to academic police studies being a ‘stratified’ subject (Manning, 2010: 97). A select few universities act as ‘knowledge producers’ with established research and study programmes, while below them in the hierarchy are the ‘wholesalers’ and ‘retailers’ of knowledge, i.e. the HEIs producing some research and researchers, and those that are ‘professionally oriented’ (ibid).

The contexts against which academic and police organisations operate have seen widespread change over recent years. For example, issues such as austerity measures (Brogden and Ellison, 2012), the advent of New Public Managerialism (XXXXX, XXXX) and the changes they have evoked in policing are mirrored by the growing marketisation (Brown & Carasso, 2013) and discourse of employability (Boden & Nedeva, 2010) within the HE sector. Such issues continue to drive substantial, and often resisted, changes to organisations with particular identities. Therefore, whilst it is possible to talk broadly about the relationship between the police and the academy in England and Wales we should expect nuances to occur in this relationship driven by both internal organisational factors and external political ones.

More recently, the future of police/academic partnerships has come under closer scrutiny with the introduction of the College of Policing consultation on *Policing Education Qualifications Framework* (PEQF) (College of Policing, 2016a). It is likely that this development will provide the context against which future debates about the role, nature, impact and integration of HE in policing will take place.

The shift to academic police education and training offers a unique opportunity to explore the cultural nuances shaping the relationship between HEIs and police organisations. In this paper, we report on the findings of a study drawn from 31 interviews with serving ‘graduate officers’ in a large urban police force. The research explored a number of factors relating to police officer engagement with HE. The current paper focuses on the cultural and structural responses to graduate officers

A Brief History of ‘Academisation’

‘Academisation’ of police education is a long-standing trend within police training/education although until recently restricted to the higher ranks of the service. In England, it can be traced back all the way to the establishment of Metropolitan Police College in 1934, designed for individuals deemed ‘officer material’ both from the inside, and controversially, outside the police (Martin & Wilson, 1969). However, it was not until the 1960s and the increasing concern over police legitimacy that issues of training and education began to take centre stage (Lee & Punch, 2004). The Robbins Report of 1963 and the resulting government policy expanded HE

routes for a number of professions, although the police retained separate training establishments (ibid). By 1966 the Bramshill Scholarship Scheme heralded police support for some management level officers to enter HE and two years later the introduction of the police Graduate Entry Scheme indicated more formal acceptance of the benefits of HE (ibid). The 1978 Edmund-Davies pay awards increased the financial remuneration of police roles, making policing more attractive to graduates (Reiner, 2010).

During the 1990s, the concept of ‘reflective practitioners’ (Beckley, 2004) became a powerful motif for public sector occupations increasingly viewed as professions (nursing and social work being suitably comparable). And whilst arguments continue as to whether such ‘new’ professions are being professionalised or merely submitted to greater external oversight (Fournier, 1999; Evetts, 2013), what was becoming clear was that they, and their practitioners, were exhibiting professionalisation in essentially different ways to the more established professions.

By the early 2000s, the HMIC (2002: 10) assessed police probationer training as ‘not wholly fit for purpose now, nor to support the police service of the twenty-first century’. A year later, BBC documentary *The Secret Policeman* illustrated some of the shortcomings in police professionalism. Such issues reflected the ongoing concerns over police professionalism, training and education facilitating the emergence of police/academia partnerships. The introduction of Foundation Degrees in 2001 opened another door for collaboration between forces and universities in joint delivery of Initial Police Training, the model echoing the two-year junior/community college degrees for law enforcement typical in the US (Hawley, 1998; Bassett & Tapper, 2009).

A shift from training to education was strongly recommended by Sir Ronnie Flanagan in his 2008 *Review on Policing*. It highlighted both the increasing demands the changing social context placed on officers' skills and knowledge, and the disparity between the police and other professions in regards to entry qualifications and individuals' responsibility to achieve (instead to organisational responsibility to provide) them.

The Current State of the Union

More recently, the relationship between the police and the academy has become increasingly driven by the rhetoric of professionalisation (XXXXXX, XXXX), widening the applicability of HE engagement to a broader spectrum of police staff. The current pre-entry qualification Certificate of Knowledge in Policing (CKP), introduced in 2014 and delivered by College of Policing licence holders, including a number of universities (CoP, 2016b), was the first step in a more comprehensive plan toward policing as a graduate profession. The Policing Education Qualification Framework (CoP, 2016b) proposes to set minimum qualification levels for each rank, with level 6 (Bachelor's Degree) for constables, progressing to a minimum of level 7 (Master's Degree) for Superintendents, with equivalent requirements set for police staff. While there are provisions for recognition of prior learning and alternative routes, there is an explicit commitment to partnership with HE. The rationale for degree-level recognition includes the familiar benefits of transferability of qualifications, standardisation, attracting higher-calibre candidates, critical thinking skills, reflective practice, problem-solving, deeper understanding and broader knowledge, whilst also explicitly tying into the professionalisation agenda (XXXXXX).

Unpacking the Rationale

The desire to achieve police professionalisation via enhanced training and education provision is not new (e.g. Greenhill, 1981; Potts, 1982; Hawley, 1998; Roberg & Bonn, 2004; Carlan & Lewis, 2009). Indeed, academic education can be seen as a core characteristic of professions, necessary due to the complexity of work, the high level of responsibility, and the guarantee of competence which educational qualification provides. The symbolic benefits are considerable. The abstract knowledge base and the monopoly of techniques and technologies stemming from it serve to define and legitimate a profession (Abbott, 1988). With regard to policing, this is illustrated by Ericson and Haggerty (1997) who show how those engaged in knowledge work (one element of professionalisation) are increasingly granted the authority to shape ‘the narratives surrounding crime, disorder and risk’ (XXXX XXXX). Similarly, Loader and Mulcahy (2001: 42) identify the development of the ‘elite police voice’, how senior officers exercise their power of ‘collective naming’ by being able to ‘authorize, categorize, evoke, represent, reinforce and undermine elements of the wider culture’.

Professionalisation via academic education thus serves as a way to redefine and relegitimise the police (XXX, XXX). The instructional abstraction HE provides bolsters credibility and ‘enables survival in the competitive system of professions’ (Abbot, 1988: 9). Increased public and governmental scrutiny have done little to reduce the politicised nature of contemporary police work and, in the face of such external pressure, the professionalisation agenda holds a number of advantages for police organisations. As Sklansky (2014) notes, police professionalism allows the organisations to make claim to bodies of specialist knowledge, to push reform from within and is considered to be associated with greater efficiency. There is also the suggestion that educational inputs may mitigate, in part, some of the negative

influences of police organisational culture. In particular, there have been widespread concerns regarding the discretionary nature of policing, both historically (e.g. Royal Commission, 1962 [see Willink, 1962]), and contemporarily (e.g. Punch (20007)).

Academic education and its recognisable qualifications (cultural capital) improve the police's status with the public, other professions and government (social capital), in turn strengthening the claim for pay and resources (economic capital) and providing a much needed edge in 'conflicts over competence' that the police routinely find themselves engaged in (XXXX XXXX, cf Bourdieu, 1986) The steer towards 'academisation' can therefore be seen as driven by the perceived benefits at an external or symbolic level, rather than the 'up-skilling' of individual officers. Research does show that HE background is linked to higher levels of public satisfaction, lower numbers of complaints and disciplinary actions and less use of physical or verbal force in interactions with the public (e.g. Lee & Punch, 2004; Wimshurst & Ransley, 2007; Paoline & Terrill, 2007). However, such evidence appears to attract less prominence than it might warrant. Similarly, less focus is being given to the benefits of HE for individual officer performance in terms of autonomous learning, analytic skills and criticality. It thus appears that the academy has been co-opted as a strategic partner to lend legitimacy to the police institution but in a way that fails to draw on the broader benefits of HE.

The relationship between HE and policing draws us to a number of issues which have been highlighted above. A partial explanation for the challenges identified here may be found in the intrinsic tension between the process and/or rhetoric of police 'academisation' and the ongoing agenda to 'professionalise' the police (XXX, XXXXX; XXXX, XXXX). At a superficial level, these two processes align. However, in reality, we will argue, there exist

structural and cultural resistances within the police organisation that create hurdles to successful implementation.

Methodology

The aim of this project was to assess police officer experiences of undertaking a HE degree. The study utilised a constructivist qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with 31 officers from a large urban police force.

In 2013, the authors were awarded a small grant to resource a feasibility study in this area of research. Six semi-structured interviews were undertaken and analysed and a report published (XXXX XXXX). The report identified five key themes warranting further research: 1) drivers of officers' HE study, 2) facilitators/inhibitors of their HE engagement, 3) organisational and individual responses, 4) outcomes of the experience, and 5) the resulting identity change.

For the present study, a sample of serving police officers was created through a designated sponsor within the police service in question who publicised the research on the organisation's intranet and collated positive responses to the request for participation. Respondents participated in a semi-structured interview based upon a set of standardised questions mapping the above five themes. The approach also enabled the exploration of unanticipated issues that arose during the course of the interview. This allowed key themes to emerge organically and for issues of interest to be developed in greater depth. Following transcription of the data, a thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) has been initiated, utilising the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

Given the constructivist nature of the strategy and data, the authors make no claims regarding generalisability. However, following the work of Guba and Lincoln (1994) the paper seeks to highlight the ‘transferability’ of the findings by presenting an appropriate level of information to enable others to judge how such knowledge could be used in other contexts. The authors also aim to adhere to Malterud’s (2001) advice on being careful not to overstate the material that has been drawn upon.

Findings

The scope of this paper is to provide a preliminary analysis of a key theme emerging from the data during the early stages of the thematic analysis. Whilst the project generated a number of themes and sub-themes around motivations, drivers/facilitators, inhibiting factors and organisational response, it is the latter of these that provides the focus for this paper.

The current study explores the structurally and culturally driven responses of the organisation and its staff to serving graduate officers who have completed an ‘in-service’ degree. During this preliminary analysis stage we have not differentiated between participants in terms of gender, ethnicity, rank, degree type or level, although it is likely that such factors may explain some variation in experiences.

One of the key focuses of the research was to explore officers’ organisational experiences whilst undertaking the degree and after its completion. Overwhelmingly, officers reported an indifference on the part of the organisation to their successful completion of an educational programme, signified e.g. by non-utilisation of skills, apparent lack of value placed on the

degree in general or as part of officers' career progression. Whilst some positive experiences were reported, these occurred at an ad hoc or informal level (through peers), typically driven by existing inter-personal contacts. In addition, some officers received a tokenistic response (e.g. notices) to their education achievements, while some also reported hostile reactions. The following section will explore these in more depth. Where necessary, the interview excerpts have been truncated to accommodate presentational restrictions, whilst taking care to maintain the integrity of the data.

Indifference

The strongest theme emerging from the data was that of indifference on behalf of the organisation. All participants, even when noting examples of outright hostility or tokenistic acknowledgement (or the rare experiences of positive regard), described a 'non-reaction' on part of the police organisation to their HE achievement. Many indicated that this was what they'd expected although it is difficult to know how much of that is due to post-hoc rationalisation to deal with disappointment. Some, like Participant 23, openly acknowledged having had some expectations.

I mistakenly thought that the police would recognise your achievement [laughs] but obviously, nowadays the [name removed] police doesn't care whether you're the cleverest person in the world or whether you're the stupidest person in the world. (Participant 23)

Knowledge and research on policing topics, even those directly relevant the officer's immediate work role were met with indifference. Participant 27, for example, had identified an issue

within his own work role and completed a dissertation on it, only to find that no one was interested.

I've been in [unit] so long there's been a real lack of female officers in [unit], it's not gone up from five percent in the last 20 years. Even though the amount of female officers has increased twofold. No interest in it whatsoever. Still the same sort of cultures that are in place, especially in [unit]. I think they don't even want to know. There's answers in there, in the dissertation there's answers of what you can do – just small things because there's research to support it. Not interested. Not interested, because the culture is so strong in [unit]. (Participant 27)

In similar vein, Participant 4 relates his frustration after having studied organisational change and then attempted to apply best practice in his work.

We studied it and we looked into it and we looked at the limited research on it and we found out the general over-riding things and we wrote our bits on it and then coming back into the police... And I said "well look, I'm not being funny but I've done research on this." Not interested. "But you're doing it wrong," "We're not interested, that's the way we're doing it." (Participant 4)

The experience of Participant 2, a female Superintendent with a PhD, is particularly telling. Both her academic and policing credentials are strong, but the organisation fails to take advantage.

I am an expert in [subject]. I've written, I've peer reviewed... And so then the service are organising how they're all [subject]... Do you think they'd involve me? Despite me writing to them and this, that and the other. No, not interested. I've written to the College of Policing five times because they are doing the work that I've already done. And they don't even bother to write back to me. (Participant 2)

She is not alone, as Participant 31, an Inspector halfway through his PhD, also reports a lack of response. What is notable about these two cases is the seeming indifference not just from the officers' own organisation, but also their national professional body. The College of Policing has been at the forefront of pushing higher-level qualifications, evidence-based

policing and the professionalisation of the service – all typically seen to go hand-in-hand. Experiences of these two officers are thus particularly interesting.

I registered my work as you're meant to through the What Works Centre, College of Policing and I also sent a précis of my study to the Evidenced Based Policing Unit within the [organisation]. I didn't get any response, confirmation from them whatsoever to say thank you very much for letting us know that you're doing. But those skills, that experience is not – that's why I keep coming to 'valued' or 'used'. I don't feel as though I'm being utilised in the way that I could be. There's no talent management within the organisation around. No strategic kind of mission. We've got all these people with these skills and attributes. But there's no real 'let's make the best use we can of that resource.' (Participant 31)

Not being valued, not having one's skills and knowledge used, as Participant 31 notes above, is not without its consequences. The message it sends to individual officers is demoralising. The message it conveys about the value of higher education for the service is equally dispiriting.

Nothing, it means nothing in the [organisation] to have a degree as a police officer. It makes you feel devalued in some ways... If you've got a 2:1 you can go straight through the process, straight in to training and in three years you'll be an inspector. For me to do the same from now it would take me a lot longer yet I've got eight years' experience as a police officer in loads of different roles and have done a degree during my service and there's no assistance for me in any way to do that. So they obviously see a value in officers with degrees – coming from the outside. But they don't appear to value officers who are already in the police who have degrees. (Participant 7)

The valuing of HE degrees appears constrained by officers' rank and role. Most notable is the difference felt in regards to those entering with a degree and those gaining one whilst in service.

We've got so many people who are graduates at different levels and I think the organisation looks far too much at what is outside rather than what is inside. We've got fantastic people in this organisation at different ranks, all the rest of it, who've got some fantastic ideas but are effectively overlooked. This organisation, they put so much emphasis on graduates and I am a graduate, and I'm a graduate in Policing and I'm still waiting with 450 people to find out tomorrow whether or not I'll be promoted in a job that I already do and I have done for three years. So that's the frustration, that's the negative because there is absolutely nothing that I have filled in [in the application] that

gives me the edge because I'm a graduate. It hasn't benefitted me professionally in any way at all. (Participant 28)

We will explore some of the potential cultural and structural reasons for this in the Discussion, but first it is necessary to note two other types of experiences related by the participants.

Hostility

As noted, indifference – from the organisation, colleagues and superiors – was the most overwhelmingly common experience reported by graduate officers. However, some also shared stories of explicitly negative or hostile responses. Notably, such reactions tended to come from line managers or other superior officers, suggesting the hierarchical rank structure of the police bears some explanatory relevance here.

There was a guy came in, he had a PhD apparently and on his email signature it sort of said you know – PC 452 ST, PhD at the end of it. And apparently his sergeant said to him “take that off you **** that means nothing.” And there is still very much a culture of a degree is something that you ought to hide. (Participant 3)

The guy that sat down next to us [prompting a change in interview location] is my Chief Inspector. He knows I've been doing it [the degree], he has said in three years four words on the subject. And that's when I came up with an idea that he hadn't thought of first – completely unrelated to the degree, but he thought that. “That's that effing degree,” were his words. And I looked at him and said “well actually it's not but clearly that's what you think.” So yeah, I haven't put a picture of myself in my gown on my desk – I don't think he'd be impressed! (Participant 26)

Participant 24, a Chief Inspector with two undergraduate degrees, recalls her experience upon joining the police after her first degree:

Because I always remember, when I first joined this job and I'd finished my maths degree. I passed out of [training school], went for our first day on what was then called Division. And I remember going in with the other probationers for this so-called welcome meeting. I remember that he [Chief Inspector] said, he just looked down and he said to me "yeah, PC X, I don't think a degree's going to do you any good in this job." I never forget him saying that and it was almost like I'd been marked out as a graduate, marked out as if it was a negative thing. So I never mentioned it. And I know that's a common experience because I know my colleague has had the same sort of reaction and in those days it was. I love the fact that you could now say 'oh guess what, we're taking in graduates and we're taking them in at inspector level.' I think if I did they would just be turning in their grave. It would be too much for them to comprehend, they wouldn't have understood it at all. And I remember being told as a probationer, I was told that I asked too many questions and that I would fail. That they would sack me if I continued to ask questions. I got a very damning first report because I asked too many questions. (Participant 24)

Tokenism

On those occasions that officers' HE achievements were acknowledged, it was done in a rather tokenistic manner.

I don't know if it's valued, I think they just expect to see it. "Do you have your degree? Yes you do. Fine..." I think it's very much a tick box. (Participant 8)

A number participants related stories of having newly graduated officers listed on the organisation's intranet:

There isn't anything. There's no, other than it being put out on the Intranet whenever you pass, just as a cursory thing, somebody phoned me up and told me I was on there. Nothing. (Participant 18)

I think they put it in notices all the following people have got a BSc because one of the other people pushed for it, one of the other people who graduated at the same time pushed for it but I don't think it's been recognised at all. (Participant 24)

This type of recognition was not rated very highly by the officers who would have rather had a more concrete opportunity to put their newly acquired skills and knowledge to some practical use. Participant 4, a Sergeant with an undergraduate degree, conveys the sense of personal and professional disillusionment clearly:

I've long ago given up bucking the system and worrying about... I should be more angry than I am but you might as well throw rocks at your head, the only difference it'll make. I'm disappointed, not so much in that because I know the way it's in a big organisation. I would have thought there would be someone in the organisation going "oh right, we've got a pool of newly qualified, therefore obviously quite keen because they've gone out of their own way, on their own time with their own finances to get this degree, let's utilise this, let's set up a research department or something in the organisation where these newly acquired skills can be honed, directed to the benefit of the police". What they've actually done is say "thanks very much, not interested." "I've got this great idea." "Yeah, that's really nice but we're not doing it that way." I didn't really expect it to be any different. I'm disappointed for the police. I'm disappointed because I do believe that – and it's not just in this degree thing – I think it's generally they don't look at the resources they have in their staff. (Participant 4)

Another facet of tokenism can be observed in the blunt way officers' HE related skills and knowledge are used, on the rare occasion that they are.

Sometimes when they thrust something at me, because I've got a slightly mathematical background I'll say "Yeah but that's meaningless. The numbers are low, statistically that's not going to be significant." I keep saying to them "That's not a very good statistical tool when you're talking about this sort of thing and you'd be better..." and they just look at you and you think 'ok, I'll give up now.' (Participant 24)

They think because you can read and write you might want to look at some cost saving measures for them or do some sort of weary report that you might not have any interest or indeed specialist knowledge in, but because you can read and write you might be a safe pair of hands. And it's almost an exploitative, rather than a relationship, rather than a collaborative approach about how do you think this might help the organisation? It's "X can read and write, here's a safe pair of hands, go off and write..." whatever they need writing (Participant 29)

Discussion

The findings provide two key areas for further discussion. First, around the value of an HE qualification and, second, around the cultural and structural integration of graduates.

Value of an HE Qualification

Despite the rhetoric of police organisations' value of HE qualifications, our data suggests that a majority of police officers in our sample perceived the organisation as being indifferent to those who successfully complete degree programmes. Some also experienced reactions that were more openly negative or hostile. Recognition, when present, was tokenistic, and only rarely did the officers have an opportunity to utilise their skills and knowledge in a professional context. Behind these headline findings, some interesting nuances emerge. First, our data suggested that those who have undertaken 'in-service' HE qualifications perceive their degrees to be less valued than officers' entering with a similar qualification. In this respect, it appeared that the police were able to accommodate the 'graduate' label if present prior to joining the service. The current rhetoric of changing the police to a graduate profession thus remains problematic. The data did not investigate the experiences of the new graduate entrants, and thus a question remains whether their skills and knowledge are any more utilised, given the organisation's apparent reluctance to take advantage of its resources. All in all, the preliminary analysis of the interviews suggests that for the police the value of HE lies in its symbolic cultural capital rather than in the knowledge and skills graduate officers could – given the opportunity – bring to the organisation and practice of policing.

Reasons for this likely stem, in part, from the police's views on what constitutes 'knowledge'. Clark (2005) describes two 'ideal type' perspectives into professional expertise. The first is 'knowledge focused', being formal, systematic, theoretical, developed via accredited research and transmitted via (academic) publications. The second perspective is 'agent focused', resting on the assumption that 'professionalism resides in the character of the professional as a person' (ibid: 186) and is thus by necessity subjective, acquired through experience and acceptance of personal responsibility. Police professionalism has, traditionally, relied on the latter and without a doubt, contextualised knowledge is important for police work (Thacher, 2008), as well as being increasingly valued in HE as evidenced by the adoption of various problem-based learning approaches. However, the imbalance has negative consequences as evident in the experiences of the graduate officers interviewed here.

Fraser (2008: 163) describes 'common sense' as the 'knowledge engine' that drives the police organisation, creating a culture where 'you don't need rigorous evidence to back up any argument or decision, just personal experience'. Graduate officers challenge the 'habitus of policing' and the established credibility deriving from practical experience. They are willing and able to question why things are done the way they are (axiomatic knowledge), how people and events are categorised (dictionary knowledge), the methods (directory knowledge) and values of policing (recipe knowledge) (Sackmann, 1991). What is particularly threatening is that they are doing this from *within* the organisation, which makes its reactions (ignoring, discouraging, placating) understandable.

Second, there was a perception that those officers of a senior rank were more likely to be accepted as graduates, than those of the constable or sergeant ranks. This feature is supported

by Bryant et al's (2014) reference to the 'excluded middle' in police education, where higher ranking officers and new recruits are encouraged to engage with education, while those between the two are effectively dissuaded from doing so. Despite these findings, the rhetoric of the value of education permeates modern policing as is shown by this year's PEQF consultation.

Structural and Cultural Integration of Graduates

There appeared to be little structural integration of 'in-service' educated officers by the police organisation. Not one interviewee reported that their degree qualification directly influenced their subsequent career, role or deployment by the organisation. Numerous respondents highlighted the absolute lack of response by the organisation to their successful completion of a degree although some received acknowledgement of their attainment through notices. Others had more negative experiences. For example, Participant 2 experienced a real reluctance on the part of the police organisation and its professional body to draw on her expertise and PhD research. The central finding regarding structural integration of officers following an 'in-service' degree was that their skills were effectively ignored.

In terms of cultural integration of graduate officers, the findings show a little more variation. Many officers found close colleagues in the organisational environment supportive of their achievements. Others witnessed elements of informal hostility through comments suggesting that their degree was irrelevant, something derided or the academic process a means of ingratiating oneself with superior officers. The data suggests that these cultural responses may have contributed to some interesting coping mechanisms. Some interviewees were effectively

‘flying under the radar’ by self-funding their studies and not applying for study leave. Some hid their educational engagement from even close colleagues. Conversely, others used post-nominal letters as a means of standing up to the culture that they felt had not supported them. For many, the lack of support and acknowledgement for their academic pursuits meant that whilst they joined a degree programme with professional development in mind, they quickly learnt to re-assess its purpose as either ‘personal development’ or as a means of ‘future-proofing’ in an occupation that no longer represented a long-term vocation. What is of particular interest here is that whilst many interviewees highlighted the contempt held for their qualification, they themselves continued to value it, and the notion of HE, regardless. Participant 15 summarises this well:

I would encourage people to do it but say don’t do it thinking it’s going to get you anything in the job because it won’t from what I’ve seen of it. It counts for nothing. Do it for you, don’t do it because you think it’s going to help you with promotion or any of those things. (Participant 15)

Despite the rhetoric supportive of HE, many officers found little acknowledgement of this by the police. Indeed, we came across only a few instances where the police had sought to use the skills or knowledge officers had gained through their studies. This was considered surprising by many given the financial and study leave support that the organisation had made available to officers. At a more informal (or cultural) level, responses varied from supportive to hostile. In terms of the latter, some officers were denigrated for their engagement with HE and given the impression that it was incompatible with the work and values of police officers.

Police professionalism is implicitly connected to police culture, with the latter often viewed as having a detrimental or destabilising effect on attempts to enhance the former. The shift from

a paradigm based on experience (often denoted through 'years served') to one based on knowledge (Gundhus, 2013) is likely to meet with cultural resistance. Parallel to this is a transformation from what XXXXX XXXX term 'de facto' authority to 'epistemic' authority. Police professionalisation, as driven, in part, by 'academic' knowledge appears to be meeting with similar cultural resistance as the management reform agendas depicted in the work of Marks (2007) which highlighted the challenges of implementing New Public Management agendas in police organisations. However, at the same time, it can be argued that cultural resistance to new forms and orientations of knowledge within the police could be driven by more than a mere reactionary stance against 'change'. Indeed, what remains to be seen is whether or not the academic influence in policing proposed by the PEQF is entirely dissimilar from the reforms driven by NPM. Gundhus (2013) writing about the 'new' professions notes the presence of new structures through which to enforce control and little of the 'occupational collegiate authority' which we associate with more established professions. At the same time, we should be open to the fact that resistance to academic knowledge and ways of thinking may in part be structural rather than cultural. For example, Gundus (ibid) identifies how the vertical hierarchy of command within police organisations is likely to inhibit officers' abilities to take meaningful decisions, especially within the lower ranks. This may prove to be the crux of the problem. Low to mid ranking officers with degrees present a dilemma for the police: whilst they possess the critical and analytic skills of a graduate, they remain situated at a position on the police hierarchy prohibiting the applications of such attributes.

Conclusion

Malcolm Young (1991: 37-8), in his classic biographical and anthropological exploration of policing, noted how:

Even at the same time as it publicly commends higher education, seeking out the graduate entrant, spending large sums on publicity to this end, and funding access to degree courses on scholarships, it also holds to a central ethic of distrust of the academic.

A quarter of a century later, little, according to our interviewees, appears to have changed. Of interest here is that whilst HE is ‘publicly commended’, at an internal organisational level its value is less clearly articulated to those who engage with it. This suggests that we can identify a substantial contrast between the external facing benefits of HE at a presentational level (for example, in terms of evidencing professionalisation) and those potential benefits derived from employing practitioners with enhanced skills, knowledge and experience. This discrepancy has been keenly felt by the graduate officers in the current study. The findings align closely to the work of others (such as Punch, 2007) who show that whilst the police as an institution may aspire to be viewed as a profession, underpinned by engagement with HE, at the structural and cultural levels the integration of HE into the police may expect to encounter resistance.

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