

Professionalising the Police: Problems and Possibilities.

John Joseph McCanney

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Abstract

The College of Policing created the Police Education and Qualifications Framework as a national framework for training police officers and staff. In 2020 it mandated that police recruits must be educated to degree level. This is part of a wider professionalisation agenda which aims to gain the police recognised professional status. While this has generated debate on the relationship between the police and academia, and the necessity for officers to be educated to degree level. There has been little discussion of any parallel need for organisational change within policing to accommodate this fundamental innovation.

This thesis considers the nature and extent of the organisational changes needed to meet the demands of professional practice, including the utilisation of the skills and knowledge of graduate recruits, the development and adoption of evidence-based practice, and the creation of a code of ethics. The primary research was conducted in three phases each designed to address an aspect of the professionalisation process. The initial phase explored the existing policing milieu to assess its compatibility with professional practice. The second phase covered the influence, on student officers, of studying a graduate programme and their perception of professional policing. While the final phase explored student officers experience of operational policing and to what extent their education influenced the performance of their duties.

This research resulted in the publication of four academic articles in peer-reviewed journals. Three of these articles covered each phase of research, while a fourth covered pragmatic philosophy both as the conceptual basis for this research and as a potential framework for research in policing and for guiding policing practice.

The thesis goes on to provide suggestions for changes to police perceptions and practices to facilitate the adoption of the profession traits that would validate the police's claim to professional recognition.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

The research and methodology underpinning this thesis has been published in a series of articles. The articles are listed below and while material from the publications has been used throughout the thesis links have been provided alongside the articles to indicate the relevant chapters in the thesis. The publications have been cited, as appropriate, throughout the text.

The first publication has also been presented at an online seminar at which I was an invited speaker, and an edited version has been published in a blog on the British Society of Criminology's Policing network.

Is there 'discretionary space' in rank-based police constabularies for graduate constables to think critically and make autonomous decisions? (2021) John McCanney; Julie C Taylor; Elizabeth A. Bates. *The Police Journal, Theory, Practice and Principles* ([see Chapter 6](#)).

Professionalising the police pragmatically (2022) John McCanney; Julie C Taylor; Karen Morris. *Police Journal, Theory, Practice and Principles* ([see Chapter 5](#)).

Doing the Job! Expectations of Police Recruits (Pre and Postgraduate entry) (2023) John McCanney; Julie C Taylor. *Policing A Journal of Policy and Practice* ([see Chapter 7](#)).

Non-Graduate-entry: A Retrograde Step for the Police Professionalisation Agenda? (2024) John McCanney; Julie C Taylor. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles* ([see Chapter 8](#)).

The PEQF: Current and Future Developments. Canterbury Centre for Policing Research. London Policing Seminar Series 14th November 2023 online.

A Requirement of 'Discretionary Space' in Professionalised Policing. Published on the British Society of Criminology Policing Network (Jan 2025).

Chapter 1: Introduction

Prologue

I was a police constable for 20 years, before I joined the police I worked in hotel management, and I found many aspects of my previous career were applicable to my new role in the police; one exception was participation in decision making. While it would be difficult to claim that hotel and catering, as an industry, is at the forefront of innovative, inclusive management, they are, in my experience, streets ahead of the police.

On joining the police, I was confronted by a management structure that was almost identical to that created by Robert Peel for the Metropolitan Police in 1829. Rank defines and delineates the boundaries of influence and authority in police decision making and is expressed in the ubiquitous use of ‘sir or ma’am or sarge or sergeant (Davis, 2018). While surprised by this management style, I did not challenge the limitations imposed on the role of constable but acquiesced to expectations and fulfilled my allocated role.

After completing my probationary period, I studied for a bachelor’s degree in policing, this stimulated an interest in how decisions are made in the police, both at an individual and an organisational level. Following the completion of my BSc, I undertook a master’s degree during which I developed my interest in police decision-making. My dissertation explored the organisational influences that informed operational decision making.

Towards the end of my policing career, I was deployed as a police trainer delivering initial recruit training at police headquarters. During my tenure at headquarters the College of Policing announced a major reform to policing in England and Wales, the professionalisation of the police. This reform included a significant change to recruit training, the introduction of a graduate-entry requirement for new recruits (College of Policing, 2020b). The College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs’ Council described their vision of a professional police officer as a confident, autonomous decision maker, empowered to make professional judgements based on up-to-date evidence-based knowledge, rather than the current reliance on rank and experience (College of Policing, 2016c; Jones, 2016; National Police Chiefs’ Council, 2016).

My previous research had found that the rank-based structure of the police, and a reliance on prescriptive policies, seriously limited and undermined the ability of frontline officers to make the autonomous decisions that are a central ambition of the professionalisation process. These findings resonated with published research which found that junior officers' attempts to participate in decision-making were stymied by their rank and policies (Jones, 2016; Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; Norman and Fleming, 2022). A review of the College of Policing publications provided little insight into how, and the extent to which, the existing workforce, police leaders and current police practices would have to adapt to accommodate professionalisation and, in particular, critical thinking graduate recruits. This was despite a recognition that effective use of graduate recruits would necessitate greater autonomy, less supervision and a flatter organisational structure (College of Policing, 2015b; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016).

This lacuna is the context for this thesis; it aims to explore the challenges that the proponents of the professional agenda will face. In particular, it focuses on the effectiveness of the new graduate entry routes in inculcating a professional identity amongst the new recruits.

1. 1 Thesis Structure

This PhD intends to provide an insight into these issues and to contribute to the debate on the professionalisation of the police and the implementation of the agenda. It begins by exploring the organisational milieu in which the graduate recruits will be working, to assess how supportive it is likely to be towards a professionalised workforce. It then goes on to develop an understanding of police recruits' perceptions of their new role as they leave the classroom-based period of their training. The final part of the research considers the positive and negative experiences of their initial phase of operational policing.

This thesis is undertaken from the perspective of professionalisation, it examines the various aspects of the operationalisation of the College of Policing's ambition to establish the police as a profession comparable to medicine or the law.

It proposes that such a fundamental change is likely to face resistance from several stakeholders, and long-established police practices and culture. It also employs the concept of the police as a class to highlight the importance of the existing relationship between the police and wider society in any process of professionalisation.

It argues that in order to overcome these challenges, and to act as effective change agents, PEQF graduate recruits will have to inculcate a professional identity, based on a professional knowledgebase, that uses critical reflection and autonomous decision-making, and operates within a collegiate environment.

The thesis begins with a detailed discussion of these aspects of the professionalisation process. This provides a foundational backdrop and context for the primary research of the thesis.

The primary research contained in the thesis explores whether the PEQF curriculum and its delivery inculcates a professional identity amongst graduate recruits that will be robust enough to overcome the embedded sources of resistance to the project discussed in the thesis.

The hypothesis is that unless PEQF graduates are fully committed to the professionalisation agenda and are inculcated with a police professional identity they are unlikely to be able to overcome the barriers and resistance faced by the professionalisation process. This in turn could undermine the entire agenda and lead to the failure of the College of Policing's ambition to claim the police as a profession comparable to medicine and the law.

Chapter 1: This chapter provides context for the thesis and discusses the influences that lead to the professionalisation of the police. It also describes the original contribution made by this thesis to the body of knowledge on professionalisation of the police.

Chapter 2: Using the prism of professionalisation, this chapter explores the history of the police in England and Wales. It considers how practices and attitudes formed in the early days of organised policing continue to influence contemporary policing and their likely impact on professionalisation. It is acknowledged that this is a somewhat lengthy and detailed account of the early development of policing. This is deemed necessary to illustrate the historical embeddedness and rich narrative of many of the policing

practices and attitudes that will be confronted by aspects of the professionalisation agenda.

Chapter 3: Police culture and leadership are important aspects of policing, that are again grounded in the history of the police. They have the potential to either undermine or endorse professionalisation, this chapter considers their attributes in the context of professionalising the police.

Chapter 4: The definition of a profession has been debated for years, the College of Policing has adopted a traits-based position. This chapter explores the meaning of professions, their traits, strengths and weaknesses and how the police might benefit from acquiring the status of a profession.

Chapter 5: This chapter introduces pragmatism as the philosophy that underpins the primary research of the thesis. It then discusses the overarching methodology and mixed methods used in this doctoral research and considers the status of the author as an insider researcher.

Chapter 6 through to 8 present the three phases of the primary research in turn, the first phase adopted a quantitative approach to understanding the views of operational officers on their opportunities to make discretionary decisions. Phase two used a qualitative approach to gather the views of probationary officers, both graduate and non-graduate on their expectations of policing following the completion of their initial training course. Phase three used focus groups to explore these probationary officers' experiences of operational policing, in particular the opportunities and barriers that they faced.

Chapter 9: This chapter presents a general discussion of the results of the primary research. It considers the results in the context of the professionalisation agenda. It goes on to present a variety of options that could address some of the issues raised in the thesis. The intention is to suggest options for reform of the implementation process of the professionalisation agenda.

Chapter 10: This chapter concludes the thesis with a short discuss of key features of professionalisation of the police and its potential benefits for the future of policing.

1.2 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by initially analysing the literature on the history, leadership and culture of policing through the prism of professionalisation. While the literature has been considered by others, this research brings together strands that allows the police to be seen as a class whose current practices both in terms of its external relationships and its internal organisation are firmly grounded in its history. The thesis then considers what it means to be a profession and provides a unique insight into the extent of the internal changes needed to professionalise the police and the necessity of a public debate on the nature and extent of the police role if the police are to achieve professional status comparable to medicine and the law.

The initial primary research phase creates original knowledge on the opportunities that are available to serving police officers to make autonomous decisions, and the facilitators and barriers that they recognise in this context. This research was undertaken within the context of graduate entry and provides an original and relevant insight into the policing milieu and adds to the existing literature on officers' operational use of discretion. The results of the second research phase contributed to the literature by providing a comparison between two groups of student officers, from non-graduate and graduate entry courses, the results indicated that the graduate course had not inculcated a professional identity amongst the student officers nor embedded the utility of evidence-based policing. This original finding contributes to the debate on curriculum design and adds to the literature on the implementation of graduate entry. The final research phase provides original data on the experiences of probationary officers in operational policing. This data is consistent with the data from phase one and also adds to the existing literature on discretion within the milieu of operational policing and the implementation of graduate entry.

1.3 Background to the Thesis.

Policing in the 21st century has been characterized by ever-evolving complexity. The typical response officer polices diverse communities with an array of different needs and expectations (McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021). They are faced with an ever-expanding number of criminal offences and complex online investigations. Officers are

often expected to act as pseudo paramedics or mental health workers, and to make sophisticated assessments of risk, while working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable people are protected (College of Policing, 2015b; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016).

It was in response to these challenges that, the Government, The National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing argued that policing should be recognised as a profession. This position had been previously articulated by Peter Neyroud in his 2011 report on police leadership and training (Neyroud, 2011). He stated that the,

'police service needs to move from being a service that acts to professionally to becoming a professional service' (Neyroud, 2011, p. 11).

The report went on to recommend the creation of a professional body that would set national standards for practice and education and training. The College of Policing, established in 2012, became the professional body for policing. It was given a mandate to set national standards for policing and to transform the police into a recognised profession, it was, therefore, the first step in the professionalisation process (Lumsden, 2016a; Holdaway, 2017).

The College of Policing claimed that graduate-entry would both recognise the complexity of police work and provide constabularies with an educated workforce capable of utilising an evidence-base to make the autonomous decisions needed in 21st century policing (College of Policing, 2016c, 2018). In addition to graduate-entry the College of Policing undertook the development of a knowledgebase for policing, and created a code of ethics for all police officers and staff (Holdaway, 2017; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; College of Policing, 2019b). These are distinct but interconnected traits, which are commonly found in traditional professions and are often used to differentiate professions from other occupations (see section 4.3).

Claims to professional status for policing have a long history, in the 1970's Sir Robert Mark (Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police) claimed that the British police were a profession (Holdaway, 2017; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). Peter Neyroud, citing Robert Peel's strict recruitment criteria, and the good pay and training, claimed that the police were a profession, similar to medicine and the law (Neyroud, 2011, p. 30). However, the innovations described above would seem to be an acknowledgement by

the College of Policing that policing, as it was currently structured, lacked professional status and that it was pursuing a traits-based approach towards achieving a recognition of the police as a profession (Holdaway, 2017; Martin, 2022).

Achieving professional status has generally been accepted as a positive change for policing (Bryant *et al.*, 2013; Fleming, 2014). The promoters of professionalisation claim that it would put police officers on a par with established professions such as social workers, doctors, and lawyers (Neyroud, 2011; College of Policing, 2016c; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016). It is also suggested that recognised professional status could re-legitimize the police, a university education, with its recognised qualifications, provides cultural capital that could improve the police's public image and challenge negative aspects of police culture (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). While an evidence-informed knowledgebase would help to validate and justify officers' decision-making to the communities that they serve (Tilley and Laycock, 2014).

However, some writers have voiced criticisms, Holdaway (2017), argues that the promoters of professionalisation have accepted police claims to professional status without criticism or consideration of how professions are defined, nor the social context in which the current claim to professional status is made. He suggests that the professionalisation of the police is part of wider changes to police governance, which have seen central government distance themselves from direct authority over constabularies. Other critics suggest that the real motivation is the potential for cost savings, rather than a genuine desire for critical thinkers (Leek, 2020; Wood, 2020b; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). Some writer have argued that higher education institutions are too close to the police, who they see as a new source of income, and are therefore willing to provide accredited courses that lack academic rigour (Paterson, 2011; Macvean and Cox, 2012). It has also been suggested by some commentators that the professionalisation of the police goes against the 'Peelian' notion that a constable is a citizen in uniform, and that the status accorded to a professional police officer conflicts with the ethos of community policing (Sklansky, 2014).

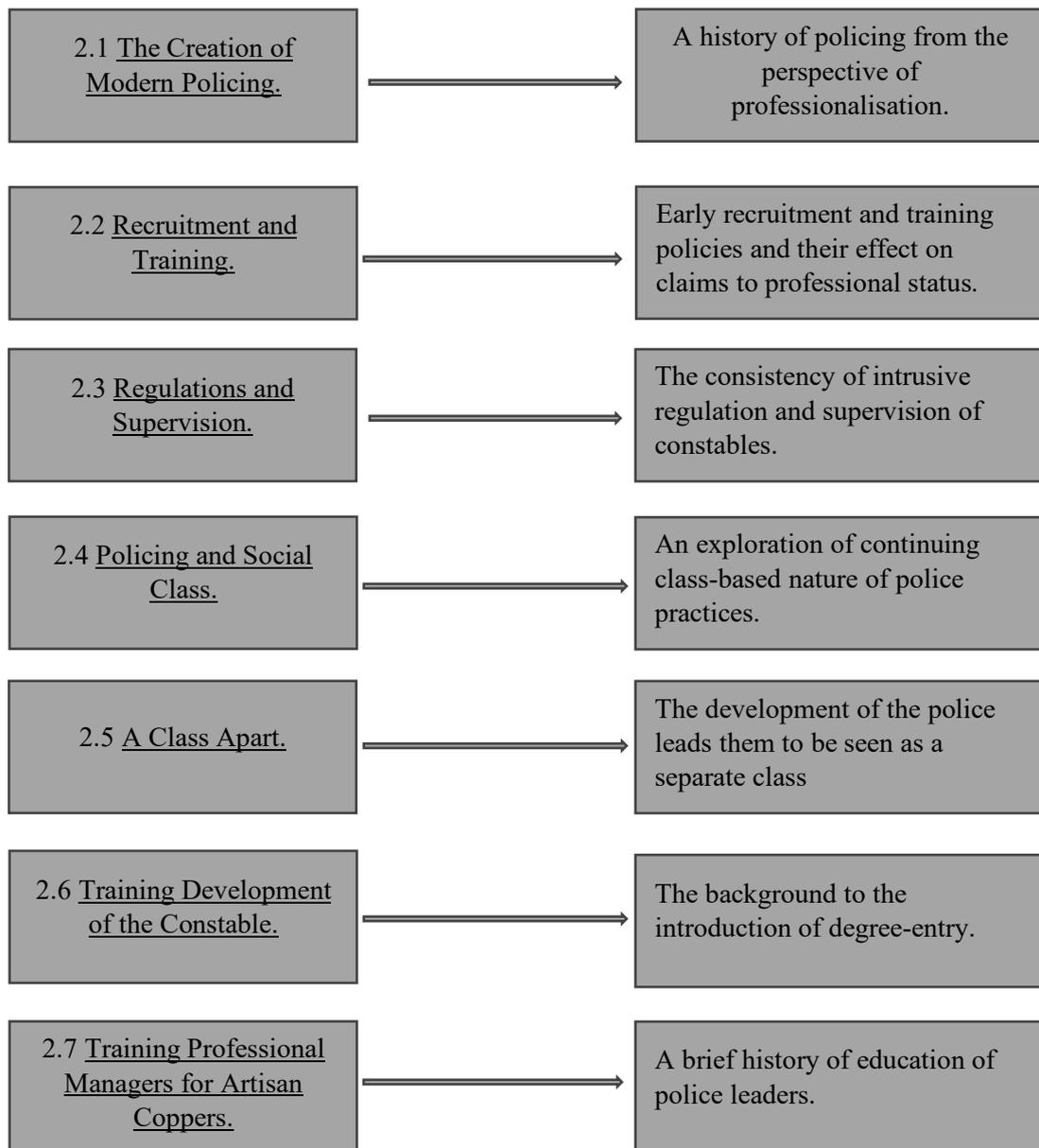
In addition to these cogent criticisms there are some operational challenges facing the successful implementation of the professionalisation agenda. The first of these is the organizational structure of the police and its command-and-control management style. The fact that decisions are made by those with rank is an unquestioned orthodoxy and is

deeply entrenched throughout the organisation, so that even minor decisions are flagged for the approval of senior officers as a matter of routine (Norman and Williams, 2017; Davis, 2018). Furthermore, due to a series of policing scandals, police leaders have tended to adopt a risk adverse mentality (Green and Gates, 2014), manifested in the creation of numerous bureaucratic procedures for virtually every situation, which are perhaps enforced to negate potential future criticism rather than out of a practical need (Rowe, 2007; Heslop, 2011a). Compliance with these procedures, and the performance targets aligned to them, are often monitored by computer systems. Such systems can easily highlight any compliance avoidance, and it is argued, limit officer's discretion and lead to a perception of micro-management (Chan, 2003; Neyroud, 2011). Some commentators have suggested that the police organisation, both at a strategic and an operational level, is not yet ready to accept the idea of graduate constables. The use of knowledge acquired in a classroom setting, rather than gained through experience or based on rank, to solve police problems challenges the existing orthodoxy which locates authority and knowledge in a rank-based hierarchy that is supported by both senior officers and the rank and file (Roberts *et al.*, 2016; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Davis, 2018). These sources of resistance may well coalesce to frustrate both the individual graduate officer and the professionalisation agenda (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Norman and Williams, 2017; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

It was perhaps unrealistic for the proponents of police professionalisation to assume that such a fundamental change could be achieved at a single stroke, setbacks and re-evaluations were to be expected. During the progress of this PhD, the College of Policing, on the request of the Home Secretary, retained a non-degree entry route. While there maybe short-term gains in moving away from a graduate-only entry for policing, this does appear out of synch with other services such as nursing, paramedics and social work who work with the police on a regular basis ([see section 4.7](#)). It also appears to represent the abandonment of the previous commitment to graduate-only recruitment. While the impact of this change is, at the moment, unclear it is a major challenge to the ambitions that underpin the professionalisation agenda. It could be argued that this change has the potential to undermine the entire professionalisation agenda. While this research was undertaken prior to the retention of a non-graduate-entry route, the results should be considered in light of this change and may also be relevant to the debate on the appropriateness of this development.

The next chapter provides an historical overview of policing in England and Wales. Policing is a very traditional occupation. The contemporary police retain many customs and practices that would be recognisable to officers recruited in 1829 (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Manning, 1977). The historical nature of these features means that they form deeply embedded orthodoxies within policing that are rarely challenged. Therefore, a knowledge of the historical basis of policing practices is important to anyone attempting to bring about fundamental change in policing. The professionalisation process challenges many of the orthodoxies in policing. These include a rank-based hierarchy in which decision making and authority are based on rank, recruitment policies that privilege character and experience over academic qualifications, a promotion process that encourages conformity over innovation, and a preference for practical experience over scientific research.

Chapter 2: Policing Prior to Professionalisation.



2.1 The Creation of Modern Policing.

The Metropolitan Police was created amidst the turbulent social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Prior to the Industrial Revolution social order was maintained through the personal relationship between workers and their squire. A relationship that was founded on recognition, loyalty and intergenerational bonds (Perkin, 1969; Newby, 1975; Rule, 1996). The local squirarchy maintained a paternalistic, benevolent attitude towards their workers, albeit on their terms (Dahrendorf, 1972; Rule, 1996; Stedman Jones, 2013). In the context of this relationship they were willing and able to manipulate the legal process, either by ensuring convictions or showing leniency as the situation dictated (Hay, 1976; Bowling, Reiner and Sheptycki, 2019). However, the personal nature of traditional social control meant that it was undermined by the widespread migration that characterised the Industrial Revolution as workers became anonymous members of an undifferentiated working class when they moved from the village to the city (Perkin, 1969; Case *et al.*, 2017).

It was in these tumultuous circumstances of conflicting class formations and the decline of the traditional social order that Sir Robert Peel sought to create a new police force for London. There was widespread resistance towards such an innovation, previous Government attempts had failed when parliamentary committees had rejected the idea as being incompatible with British liberty (Critchley, 1972). The respectable classes had deep misgivings that the Government would use the new force to violate the rights of 'free-born' Englishmen (Critchley, 1972; Stead, 1985). They feared that it would be used to intrude into the private life of every English gentleman and be the start of the end of English liberty and freedom (Emsley, 2009; Gaunt, 2010). The leaders of the working class were concerned that a new centrally directed police force could be used to undermine working conditions and restrict recreational activities such as street trading and gambling (Storch, 1975). There were also criticisms that the new police would not be as efficient as the existing watchmen, they would be more expensive and out of the control of the local rate payer (Critchley, 1972; Rowe, 2017).

These concerns were to some extent mitigated by a general acceptance that the existing system of policing was ill equipped to deal with the new situation and that change was

needed (Palmer, 1988; Rawlings, 2002). The ancient system of Watchmen and Parish Constables was seen as incapable of responding to the new demands placed on policing by the emerging capitalist, urbanized environment (Manning, 1977; Jones, 1982). There was a widespread fear amongst the public that crime was on the increase and that there was a risk of social disorder arising the middle and working class demands for political reform (Rawlings, 2002; Rowe, 2017). Many members of the respectable classes were convinced that the uncontrolled spaces of the working-class slums were a breeding ground for crime, immorality and that radical, subversive elements in the working class intended the overthrow of the entire social system (Storch, 1975, 1976; Jones, 1982; Emsley, 1983; Palmer, 1988; McLaughlin, 2007).

There was also a growing fashion amongst the respectable classes for courteous, elegant behaviour and refined manners (Emsley, 2009). The working class were seen as boorish, dissolute, coarse, ill-mannered class who enjoyed a variety of depraved entertainments (Storch, 1975; Jones, 1982; Rawlings, 1995). Their behaviour outraged polite society and the respectable classes began to demand that genteel standards of politeness and decorum should be the norm in public places, and that the state, and its agents, were responsible for enforcing these standards of behaviour (Manning, 1977; Storch, 1989; Emsley, 1996).

This brief overview of the political and social circumstances in which the Metropolitan Police force was created illustrate that it did not have political consensus nor widespread public support. Instead, Peel and the early commissioners had to accommodate a variety of conflicting demands and opposition often from powerful sections of society. In attempting to appease these different factions Peel and the early commissioners made compromises to ensure the successful implementation of their new police (Reiner, 2010; Rowe, 2017). The Metropolitan Police model was subsequently used as the template for establishing policing across the country (Reith, 1956). This meant that their decisions on recruitment policy, structure and practices affected not only the Metropolitan Police but policing across England and Wales.

Reiner has argued that accounts of the history of policing fall roughly into three camps; the orthodox, the revisionist, and a more recent post-revisionist perspective (Reiner, 2010, p. 40). The orthodox view frames the birth of modern policing in terms of its universal beneficial character. All classes benefited from the new police, they were an

efficient and necessary replacement for the existing system. Any resistance to the new police was based on self-interest and was ill-conceived (Rowe, 2017). This view has been challenged by a Marxist inspired revisionist account in which the new police were seen as a reaction to the needs of industrialisation and capitalism. They were controlled by the ruling classes and operated for their benefit, the outcome was the oppression and control of working class. These accounts have, in turn, been challenged by post-revisionist research that portrays a more complex and nuanced picture of early police development. This argues that the emphatic positions of the orthodox and the revisionist are undermined by evidence; for example, the working class were often the victims of crime and did benefit from the new police, but the bourgeoisie benefited more. That while there was sustained working class resistant to the new police, this was motivated by the enforcement of specific laws, rather than against the legitimacy of the police as a whole (Reiner, 2010). This thesis supports a post-revisionist position which recognises the complexity and inconsistencies of police development, including the claim that the teleological ambitions of police reformers are often diluted by political or financial impediments that lead to negotiation and compromise (Rowe, 2017).

The birth of the police in 1829 and the subsequent developments may appear to be ancient history with little relevance for modern policing. However, policing practices retain a close affinity with these early policies and customs, and the similarities between the functions and the role of the early police and modern policing is striking (Manning, 1977; Loftus, 2010). The following sections consider aspects of policing that are embedded within the history of policing that are relevant to the professionalisation process. These could present barriers and problems for police professionalisation and need to be considered by those engaged in the implementation process.

Sir Robert Peel was a skilful and experienced politician, and he took a measured approach to the content and presentation of the Metropolitan Police Bill. He was vague about the type of force he was creating, the contents of the Metropolitan Police Bill were couched in broad, general terms with few specific details (Rawlings, 2002). The constables' legal powers, including the power of arrest, search and procedures for bail, were undefined (Reith, 1956; Palmer, 1988). The description of the organisation was limited to the fact that the men were to be sworn in as constables by Justices and that their role was preserving the peace, preventing crime and apprehending offenders

(Reith, 1956). This presented the new police officers as the latest incarnation of the ancient and established Office of Constable, connecting them to the tradition of communal policing (Bowling, Reiner and Sheptycki, 2019). The Office of Constable can be traced back to the Norman Conquest and had originally been a high office in the Sovereign's Court (Critchley, 1972). By the 19th century the office had lost much of its prestige (Lustgarten, 1986; Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). Despite this, the office was still an ancient and recognised role, it had a sense tradition, and an aura of democracy being part of the ancient structure of village life and self-governance (Lustgarten, 1986). The constables swore allegiance to the Crown, their authority was original, based on the common law, their powers were known and limited (Stead, 1985). Robert Peel used to this ancient office to present his new force as being of the people and drawn from amongst them, the constable's powers would be no more than the common law right of every citizen to arrest and bring a prosecution (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). This claim became and remained an unquestioned orthodoxy both within and outside of policing. It was accepted by the 1929 Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure, which claimed that the police were merely, 'citizens in uniform', with little distinction from other citizens in terms of powers or duties (Rawlings, 2002, p. 153). In 1956, Reith maintained that the constable was part of, 'the historic tradition that the English police are the public and the public are the police' (Reith, 1956, p. 288).

These concepts coalesced into one of the core principles of policing in England and Wales, 'policing by consent' a notion which is still relevant today. It is incorporated in the College of Policing's Code of Ethics and is included in their Vision 2025 document, which sets out the future of policing in England and Wales (Reiner, 1978; College of Policing, 2014; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

These enduring features of early policing both support and undermine claims to professional status. The Office of Constable's inherent legal powers and lack of external oversight are similar to the traits of autonomous decision-making and internal control common to professional practice. However, the notion of policing as an activity open to all is an anathema to the specialist conception of a profession (see Chapter 4).

2.2 Recruitment and Training

The recruitment policy imposed by Peel and the first commissioners of the Metropolitan Police mandated that recruits were to be under 35, at least five feet seven inches tall, of good physical stature, physically fit, able to read and write, and of good character (Critchley, 1972, p. 52). While the regulations demanded that the recruits should be literate this was not always strictly observed, and some forces employed schoolteachers to teach the new recruits writing skills. Apart from these qualities, no specialist knowledge was required of the constables (Steedman, 1984). Peel insisted that his new police force would only recruit men to be constables who were,

'not of rank, habits or station of Gentlemen', (Gash, 1961, p. 502).

This policy combined with intrusive conditions of employment, strict discipline, long hours of foot patrol in all weather, verbal or physical abuse from their fellow citizens and the low rate of pay of a guinea a week meant that the first constables were all working class men, with little formal education (Critchley, 1972; Ascoli, 1979; Rawlings, 2002; Lee and Punch, 2004; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). These first constables were drawn from a cross-section of the working-class with a high percentage of ex-service men (Manning, 1977). There was a preference for farm labourers because they willingly accepted orders, and could be drilled and smartened up (Steedman, 1984). Many recruits joined the police to tie them over periods of unemployment, and did not see the police as a career (Manning, 1977; Cohen, 1979; Steedman, 1984). Others, especially unskilled labourers, saw the police as a respectable trade which provided them with steady employment and warm clothing. The adoption of a policy of internal promotion provided some of them the opportunity of promotion, perhaps all the way to chief constable (Critchley, 1972; Emsley, 2009).

The recruitment criteria of Peel and the commissioners are distinctly non-professional. The Industrial Revolution saw the creation of several professions, all of which claimed that their practitioners were gentlemen (see section 4.6). The lack of specialist education, training or knowledge also undermines any claim to professional status, as does the social status of the recruits and the view that the police was not a career (see Chapter 4).

2.3 Regulations and Supervision

The commissioners made it clear to the respectable classes that the police would not interfere in their lives or interfere with their freedoms, by publishing the detailed regulations that would govern the behaviour of their new constables in the Times newspaper (Rawlings, 2002; McLaughlin, 2007; Emsley, 2009). The General Instructions that constables had to follow ran to several thousand words, and their intention was to restrict constables' discretion as much as possible (Rawlings, 2002, p. 118). These regulations were very intrusive and included: the pace at which they should walk, who they could marry, and where they could live. They had to patrol designated beats on foot at a steady pace of two and a half miles per hour and to check doors and windows to ensure that they were secure (Martin and Wilson, 1969). They were not allowed to speak to each other whilst on patrol, nor normally allowed to enter pubs or drink whilst on duty (Critchley, 1972; Emsley, 2009). The importance of maintaining an attitude of respectfulness, deference, and acting with courtesy, was made clear to the constables,

‘He [the Constable] will be civil and obliging to all people of every rank and class. He must be particularly cautious not to interfere idly or un-necessarily in order to make a display of his authority; when required to act, he will do so with decision and boldness... He must remember that there was no qualification so indispensable to a police officer as a perfect command of temper, never suffering himself to be moved in the slightest degree by any language or threats that may be used; if he do his duty in quiet and determined manner, such conduct will probably excite the well-disposed of the bystander to assist him if he requires them’ (Critchley, 1972, p. 53).

The principle that the police should only act within their legal powers and treat people with respect remains an important aspect of the policing landscape (Bradford and Quinton, 2014; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). The behaviour Peel expected from his officers is consistent with the aspirations of police leaders today. The Competency and Values Framework (CVF) published by the College of Policing sets out the values, behaviours, and competencies expected from everyone working in policing and are used to assess potential police recruits (College of Policing, 2016a). While the language

differs from the General Instructions, there are clear similarities. In 1829, the Constable was to be,

‘... civil and obliging to all people of every rank and class’ (Critchley, 1972, p. 53). In the CVF, this is ‘impartiality’, ‘public service’, and ‘emotionally aware’ (College of Policing, 2016a).

In 1829, officers were expected not to make a show of their authority, but when needed, to act with, ‘decision and boldness’ (Critchley, 1972, p. 53), today officers are ‘compassionate’, ‘resolute’, and required to ‘take ownership’ (College of Policing, 2016a).

In the 19th century sergeants and inspectors made regular checks on their constables, strictly enforcing the regulations. Constables were disciplined or dismissed for even minor infractions of the rules (Critchley, 1972; Emsley, 2009). Despite the necessity for discretion acknowledged in the General Instructions, the regulations and the constant supervision inculcated a belief amongst constables that they did not have the right to act on their own initiative. The senior officers prized obedience over intelligence and innovation, so it was enough for a policeman to walk around demonstrating calmness and self-control and watch and wait for instructions from above (Ascoli, 1979). This expectation was acknowledged by the Chairman of the Lancashire County Council, who in 1877 stated that,

‘no police Constable can act upon his judgement, ‘he must report to the inspector, and take instructions from him’ (Ascoli, 1979, p. 147).

Although the necessity of police discretion is recognised today, officers are subject to a plethora of policies and procedures that are seen be many as undermining discretion. Although these are now administered and monitored through the use of computer systems, rather than a reliance on the patrolling sergeants and inspectors of previous generations (Flanagan, 2008).

This type of close supervision and hierarchical control is contrary to practice in traditional professions. The traditional professional practitioner views autonomy and discretion as central to their practice (see section 4.3). Any attempt to limit this would likely be seen as a challenge to the profession itself.

2.4 Policing and Social Class.

The police were established in the face of varied opposition, and in conjunction with the development of a class-based society, and they soon became involved in the conflicts that arose between the classes. While they tended to support the ruling classes, it cannot be claimed that they were a member of this class and instead it is useful to conceptualise the police as developing into a separate class. Karl Marx wrote that,

‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past’ (Marx, 1852, p. 595).

This resonates with the creation of the police, its subsequent development, and its contemporary practices. Class definitions are normally framed in terms of inequalities of wealth or status. In addition, they can also be differentiated in terms of the possession of legitimate authority over others. This authority is a general social relation that is either possessed or denied by the occupation of social roles (Dahrendorf, 1972; Thompson, 2013). The police are such a group they are often defined by their unique possession of legitimate physical authority over others. In creating a police force, a society empowers a specific group to,

‘exercise authority over them - to intrude into their privacy, interfere in their conduct and ultimately to use force against them’ (Waddington, 1999, p. 298).

To legitimate these intrusions, police powers, must be universally applied to every member of the society, regardless of gender, class or status and everyone must be equal before the law or at least appear to be so (McBarnett, 1978). In unequal, class-divided societies, such as that found in the London of 1829, this is an almost impossible standard to achieve. In such circumstances state powers are often framed so as to protect the interests of powerful groups often to the detriment of other groups in the society (Storch, 1976). Marx argues that the dominant system of production define economic relationships which provide the base on which the legal, political and other social structures of a society are built (Marx, 1859). These relationships often lead to tensions that both validate and challenge structures, so while the ruling class have the opportunity and authority to determine and disseminate the dominant ideas of their

epoch, they cannot simply impose their ideas and are forced to represent them as beneficial to all members of society (Storey, 2013). Therefore, conditions are created that preserve their authority and control but appear to others as democratic and accountable through a process of active consent (Cohen, 1979). The Office of Constable presented the new police as part of the ancient tradition of community policing with powers that differed little from those of the ordinary citizen. Policing was to be of the people and for the people. In reality, the recruitment policy, and the pay and nature of the work guaranteed that policing was a working-class occupation, which meant, in the class-conscious society of the mid-19th century a constable would never be considered to be a gentleman. This maintained a class difference between the patrolling constables and members of the respectable classes. At the time the class-based nature of the police was uncontroversial, the Attorney General, Sir Alexander Cockburn speaking to a parliamentary committee in 1854 stated,

‘One knows perfectly well the class of men from whom the policemen are selected’ (Emsley, 2009, p. 73).

In 19th century society deference to ones ‘betters’ was a natural aspect of a social hierarchy, that was widely accepted and seen as beneficial to all parties (Hay and Thompson, 1975; Newby, 1975). This natural deference and the policies and regulations enforced by police leaders meant that a constable would not readily challenge their ‘betters’ (Steedman, 1984; McLaughlin, 2007). The police had little interest in the behaviour of the middle and upper classes. While the behaviour of the ‘respectable’ classes might be scandalous at times, it was not a concern for the patrolling constable. The relationship between the police and the respectable classes was one of deference and politeness.

The new police were introduced at a time when there was an increasing enthusiasm amongst the ‘respectable’ classes for greater refinement and elegance, leading to a growing demand for appropriate manners and behaviour in public spaces (Emsley, 2009). The ‘respectable’ classes included many artisans, skilled workers, and shop keepers, who were active members of religious congregations or reforming groups such as the temperance league. They, often in alliance with members of ruling classes, lobbied police leaders to act against their dissolute and immoral neighbours. They demanded that action be taken against traditional working class pastimes, including

gambling, frequenting public houses, sports such as cock-fighting, and drinking and disorderly behaviour in the streets and public parks (Storch, 1976; Jones, 1982; Emsley, 1996). Police leaders responded positively to these demands and instructed their officers to impose order on boisterous members of the working-class, such as habitual drunkards, and control a variety of working-class activities including Sunday trading, street trading, and the pubs and popular fetes used and enjoyed by the working class (Storch, 1975, 1976; Emsley, 1983; Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988; Rawlings, 2002).

This biased class-based approach to policing was openly encouraged by police leaders, the Chief Constable of Essex told his officers to walk on the outside of the pavement and,

‘not shoulder past respectable people but give way in a mild manner’ (Rawlings, 2002, p. 154).

Another chief officer informed his officers that when they were enforcing the Poaching Prevention Act 1862,

‘not to interfere with anybody whom they knew to be a respectable man’ (Rawlings, 2002, p. 155).

The police were recognised as a working-class occupation, and this helped to make them acceptable to the middle and upper classes. However, this connection made it difficult for later reformers to recruit more educated and middle-class recruits (Stead, 1985, p. 39).

Despite this class-based enforcement, Sir Robert Peel and his commissioners were largely successful in portraying policing as a universal benefit, they created a system of policing that maintained the dominant standards of public order and morals, publicly promoting an overt commitment to the universality of the rule of law. They presented the police force as an impersonal bureaucracy, whose agents operated through detailed regulations. The constables were working class men, benignly enforcing the law for the benefit of the whole community (Reiner, 1978; Wood, 2016). While, in reality, police leaders employed policies, procedures and operational directions that concentrated policing on the residuum and the working-class poor and away from the activities of the respectable classes (Cohen, 1979). The Watchmen and Parish Constables had often

retained a class loyalty and policed the area in response to the community rather than the expectations of the respectable classes (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). After the introduction of the new police, communities had little influence on police strategies or implementation, they were subjected to policing rather than directing policing. The working class became the objects of policing and were expected to cooperate (Petrow, 1994; Rawlings, 2002).

While the strictly defined class structures of the past may have become indistinct, the police still differentiate between groups of citizens. Police officers still distinguish between the compliant, law-abiding majority and the challenging or criminal minority who are seen as problematic, dangerous, and not deserving of help (Reiner, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). Cohen (1979) argues that the police have continued to defend bourgeois conceptions of right and property by targeting the elements of working class and street life deemed 'unrespectable' particularly those that threaten urban order and industrial discipline. Mcara and Mcvie (2005) have claimed that the informal objective of policing remains to enforce social discipline amongst the poor, the underprivileged, certain ethnic minority groups, and those considered to be anti-authority and innately criminal. This suggests that while the specific individuals and groups targeted changes overtime the police rationale and activity remains the same. The 'dangerous classes' of the late 19th century have now morphed into the homeless, drug addicts, and habitual criminals that are seen as problematic or distasteful by the majority. Police attention has consistently been directed towards the poor despite claims of egalitarianism (Crowther, 2000; Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2010). Membership of these categories is not fixed but is often contextual, and based on whether the individual's behaviour is perceived as problematic for the police or transgressing societal values or decency (Reiner, 2010).

Police attention has often been focused on the generalised 'other', the public have few concerns about how these low-status powerless groups are policed so long as they are controlled, and order maintained (Reiner, 2010, p. 123). In the 1930s, the police targeted transient Irish navvies, who were seen as trouble-makers and castigated in the role as the 'other' (Weinberger, 1995). In the 1950s, following migration from Commonwealth countries, the police displayed racist attitudes towards migrants from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent (Rowe, 2017). In more recent times, the use of stop and search, established under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, has been

associated with the disproportionate policing of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities (Miller, Bland and Quinton, 2002; Lennon and Murray, 2018). It is claimed that the overuse of these powers has undermined the relationship between the Black community and was a major factor in the Brixton riots in 1981 (Murray *et al.*, 2020). Despite a series of critical reports and policies into and around the use of stop and search, (Scarman, 1986; Macpherson, 1999; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010), official statistics still show that Black people are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched than White people (College of Policing, 2022b).

There have been various explanations for this over representation of Black men in stop search statistics including; discrimination and racial prejudice by the police (Miller *et al.*, 2020), the ethnic makeup of 'street populations' who due to economic or lifestyle choices are more available for the police to stop search differ from the populations of racial or ethnic minorities measured by the census (Miller, Bland and Quinton, 2002; Waddington, Stenson and Don, 2004; Miller *et al.*, 2020). Regardless of these explanations, official statistics and academic research into stop search suggest that there remain strong links between offending, social class, economic conditions, and police contact (Taylor, 1999; Hale, 2013; Reiner, 2017).

In the 19th century the demands of the respectable classes led the police to undertake regular street clearing patrols, moving on drunks and groups of men found loitering in public spaces, this became known as the 'move on' system. In the working class communities, it was seen as a violation of their right to be on the street and was deeply resented (Storch, 1975, 1976). However, the policy was popular in other quarters as it made it possible for 'respectable inhabitants' to go to church without,

'witnessing some disgusting exhibition or having their ears offended with blasphemous and filthy expressions' (The Times 14 Oct 1829 cited in Emsley, 1983, p. 66).

To provide a legal basis for police interventions an ever-increasing number of petty offences were enacted, such as dropping orange peel or shaking out rugs in the street (Rawlings, 2002). The police role was also quickly extended, and they became responsible for dealing with vagrants, public houses, weights and measures, poor relief, lost children, control of contagious diseases in animals, and food and drug control (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Rawlings, 2002). This ensured that policing, for a variety of

reasons, was directed against marginal sections of the population, the unemployed, the street trader, and the outsider, or the rogues, vagabonds and incorrigible thieves described in the 1824 Vagrancy Act (Waddington, Stenson and Don, 2004; Brogden, 2013). The class basis of police activities and attention was officially recognised by the police, with Colonel Rowan, one of first commissioners stating,

‘we look upon it that we are watching St. James and other places while we are watching St Giles and bad places in general’ (Rawlings, 2002, p. 154).

These interventions garnered the police support from amongst the ‘respectable’ working class, the middle, and the ruling classes. These groups also became confident that they were safe from unwarranted coercive policing (Brogden, 1982; Waddington, 1999), and began to hold their ‘bobby’ in affection and esteem, which was repaid by the constables with due deference and respectfulness (Storch, 1975).

The policies of the ‘new’ police may have gained support for the police amongst the ‘respectable classes’ but they led to an increasing criminalisation of sections of the working poor and undermined the commitment to the neutral and impartial administration of justice. Police practices, such as arresting the poor for drunkenness while upper-class drunkards were quietly taken home (Steedman, 1984, p. 152), and extra-legal action against working-class pastimes (Storch, 1976) meant that there was, ‘one law for the poor, another for the rich’ (Cohen, 1979, p. 119).

In the 19th century police intrusions into working-class life were resented and resisted by communities who disliked the surveillance and restrictions on their pastimes. The policies enforced by police leaders often undermined the efforts of local beat constables as they tried to establish co-operative relationships on their beats (Storch, 1976; Jones, 1982). The constables had to balance the demands of the law, their superiors, moral reformers, the public, and their own views. They used their street level discretion to,

‘negotiate a complex, shifting and largely unspoken contract’ with the public (Petrow, 1994, p. 42).

This meant a blind eye was turned to some activities and groups while others, the ‘roughs’ the unemployed and destitute were to be strictly controlled (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). Policing working class areas was risky, officers were often alone

on foot patrol, and police officers were routinely abused, assaulted and injured, by members of the community, especially if they were seen as being over officious or intolerant (Storch, 1975).

The threat of violence meant that a reputation for toughness was highly prized within the police force and officers often cited the dangers they faced as a justification for their excessive use of force (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). Constables had to quickly establish their authority and demonstrate 'who rules around here.' Officers would often use strict enforcement and informal physical punishments to establish their authority, especially amongst the young (Cohen, 1979). The uniform rather than the law was the basis of this authority, officers found it easy to justify their actions and would often rely on summary punishments rather than a formal prosecution when dealing with minor offences or disorder. It became common practice for a constable, taking up a new beat, to make a large number of arrests for minor offences, such as drunkenness or disorderly conduct to demonstrate their authority to the community (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). This was accepted as appropriate behaviour, so long as its targets were members of the residuum who had breached the tentative and contingent understanding of 'public propriety', which was shared by the police, the respectable working class, artisans, and traders (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). The ability to decide the punishment, who was prosecuted and who was not, enhanced the constable's authority in the community. They became the arbiters of acceptable public behaviour, but this further undermined the neutrality which was meant to be at the heart of the legal system (Cohen, 1979; Brogden, 1982; Rawlings, 2002).

The necessity for police officers to use 'street justice' to establish their authority over the communities they policed has persisted to the present day, Weinberger's research into 1930s policing found that officers would often fight it out with people who assaulted them to establish their toughness rather than bring them before a court, and on taking up a new beat they would over enforce the law to demonstrate their authority (Weinberger, 1995). Officers still place importance on maintaining their authority, Loftus (2010) found that officers used the 'attitude test' when dealing with the public. Those who responded to officers enquires with politeness and deference were treated leniently, while those who demonstrated resistance were dealt with formally, often leading to official sanctions including arrest. It has also been argued that the concept of

reasonable suspicion, a necessity criterion often found in legislation dealing with police powers, is used in an extra-legal manner to maintain order or discipline individuals or groups who challenge the police rather than as intended by the legislature (Quinton, 2011).

The class-based nature of policing presents problems for a professionalised police force. A profession provides a universal service to all citizens based on their clients' needs and not on class position or political influence. The belief that a professional will act in their best interest is foundational for the trust in professions both at an individual and societal level. Professions also have a body of specialist knowledge which strictly defines the limits of the services they provide, (see Chapter 4). It appears that the police have inherited an omnibus service with few limits.

2.5 A Class Apart

The concept of the police as a class is not simply an abstract premise, the varied and contradictory pressures on policing during its formative phase created individuals and an institution that was uniquely set apart from the rest of society. In some respects, this was intentional. It was generally accepted from the earliest days that a policeman is always a policeman, even when off duty (Critchley, 1972). The restrictions placed on police officers excluded them from many working-class pastimes setting them apart from their working-class peers and their background (Steedman, 1984, p. 119). Their exclusion was not only regulatory but also social, they were often regarded with suspicion in their local communities which restricted opportunities for informal, social contact. The police officer may have been cast in the role of a 'citizen in uniform' but the nature and demands of the role made relationships outside of policing difficult to maintain. The policeman in his uniform became a symbol of state authority and social control, a person to be avoided. He became an authoritative and unwanted character who aroused fear and hostility as well as deference from his working-class peers (Storch, 1975; Weinberger, 1995). While police officers often inculcated middle-class values and were willing to suppress behaviour that was seen as a threat to these cultural norms and values (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). They were rarely accepted as members of the middle class or upper classes, when this did happen it was on an

individual basis often following significant promotion within the force (Weinberger, 1995). Their class position was anomalous, in economic terms they were working class, but their role in maintaining the social order meant that they were inherently conservative in outlook and tended to support the domination of capital over labour (Reiner, 1978; Weinberger, 1995). Officers recognised their role separated them from their working-class roots and they adopted a self-image that set them apart from the rest of society (Weinberger, 1995). The various pressures of operational policing, the risk of physical harm, the need to conceal breaches of the regulations and respond to external criticisms combined with the social exclusion described above led officers to develop a strong cultural identity as a police officer which was defined in terms of not being a civilian (Reiner, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). This encouraged officers to, not only support each other at work, but to socialize together and they became increasingly inward looking and developed an occupational identity which set apart from the rest of society (see section 3.2) (Steedman, 1984; Waddington, 1999).

This discussion of the class-based nature of policing illustrates that policing operates within a complex, interconnected and interdependent society. Therefore change, as necessitated by the professionalisation process, within policing will require not only changes to the police occupational culture but also in changes in society's expectations of the police and the extent of their remit.

The professionalisation process intends substantial changes to the training of the constable. Police initial recruit training has retained a strong affinity with the past and understanding its background is important in bringing about successful future changes. The next section considers the background to the introduction of graduate entry for constables.

2.6 Training and Development of the Constable.

The initial training undertaken by police constables in the 19th century was based on a military model and consisted of foot drill, rote learning of police powers, and regulations, followed by a short period of 'on the job' training with an experienced officer to 'learn the ropes' (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Emsley, 1996; HMIC, 2002; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). New recruits were told that they would learn how to police by watching, working with, and asking questions of their more experienced colleagues (Critchley, 1972). This level of training probably reflects the limited expectations that police leaders had of their constables (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). Constables were expected to patrol their beats at set pace, check doors and windows were secure, and challenge any suspicious persons, in order to prevent crime and disorder (Emsley, 2009; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). Therefore, drill, a study of the regulations, and learning 'on the job' was deemed sufficient training for a police officer until the end of the First World War (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Rawlings, 2002; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). Following the war and the report of the Desborough Committee there was a drive to standardise and improve police training. This did lead to more cooperation between constabularies, but change was slow (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). Recruit training still retained an emphasis on learning the regulations, drill, and discipline (Stephens, 1988). By the 1930s most forces had their own training school, with initial training normally lasting around three months. However, the methods and quality of the training varied from constabulary to constabulary (Critchley, 1972).

Introduction of Regional Training

Following the end of the second-world war a substantial increase in police recruitment was needed and this necessitated greater training provision. Therefore, in addition to the Metropolitan Police Training School at Peel House, eight new District Training Centres (DTCs) were established and financed by the Home Office (Critchley, 1972; Emsley, 1996; HMIC, 2002). This standardised recruit training and moved it from individual forces to a regional level (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). The DTCs were controlled by a committee of chief constables, who approved the curriculum, and the training. It was delivered by long serving officers on secondment, and retained the militaristic approach of pre-war training programmes (Charman, 2017; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

Recruits attended for 13 weeks and returned to their home constabulary for local instruction, before returning for two weeks prior to the completion of their two year probation period (Critchley, 1972; HMIC, 2002). These Regional Training Centres continued to provide recruit training until the introduction of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) in 2006. The training centres were subject to a series of inspections, these voiced criticisms that the training failed to provide recruits with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the real needs of the community. During the 1970s, official inspections into recruit training found that much of the existing syllabus was unnecessary and recommended a move away from the teaching of drill and law towards the study of social science topics to improve community and race relations and develop the recruits understanding of the role of police in British society. The intention was to centralise police training on a national basis and to improve police relations with the public (HMIC, 2002; Rowe and Garland, 2003; Charman, 2017; Tong and Hallenberg, 2018).

These changes were not universally welcomed, recruits reported less interest in topics that did not support their self-image as ‘crime fighters’. In particular, the inclusion of a social studies package in the Metropolitan Police recruit training programme was criticised as being too academic and irrelevant to their role (Stephens, 1988). Social science discussions, part of the curriculum, were described by researchers as confused with ill-defined topics such as ‘deviancy’ and ‘community relations’, furthermore, the police instructors failed to challenge the reactionary or unthinking views expressed by many of the students (Smith and Gray, 1985).

Following the Brixton riots in the early 1980’s, Lord Scarman produced a report which contained several recommendations in relation to police training. He emphasised the importance of the tutor constable, the use of police discretion, and recommended improved training for all officers in community and race relations. He argued that the initial training period should be extended and include social skills training to provide all officers with an understanding of different cultures and the attitudes common within ethnic minority communities (Stephens, 1988; Holdaway, 1998). The subsequent training programme faced suspicion and criticism from rank and file officers, it was seen as irrelevant to their role and was poorly understood (Holdaway, 1998).

In 1986, the University of East Anglia published a report into the six District Training Centres. It found that there remained an over-emphasis on law enforcement and that the courses retained a militaristic discipline which limited the opportunity for a learner centred approach (Stephens, 1988). The report argued that the curriculum should be developed to cover the legal, procedural, and social dimensions of police decision-making and actions. Following this report, a national course for recruit training was designed which provided periods of classroom based instruction, followed by operational experience under the guidance of a trained tutor constable (Stephens, 1988). However, there were problems integrating classroom and work-based training, including resource issues particularly a shortage of trained staff. Some chief officers complained that the recruits lacked sufficient knowledge of the law, and these issues led to a re-shaping of the training programme (HMIC, 2002).

In 1999, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (The Macpherson Report) recommended that training in race relations and valuing cultural diversity should be reviewed and revised (Clements and Jones, 2009). Police training should involve a partnership between the police and the local community with an emphasis on the importance of good community relations in the delivery of fair and effective policing (Clements and Jones, 2009). These recommendations led to the creation of several training programmes, which included a local perspective and the involvement of the local community. This heralded a move away from the normally insular police training model and began to open up police training to outside influences including issues of diversity and equality (Clements and Jones, 2009).

In 2001, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) conducted the only comprehensive review into recruit training and produced a report 'Training Matters' in 2002. The report raised concerns about the relatively short time that students spent in the classroom and that the use of serving police officers as trainers led to the early inculcation of police sub-culture amongst recruits (HMIC, 2002; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). It found that the curriculum and the teaching approach had changed little in 20 years, with rote learning of police law and procedure still prevalent, alongside drill, lifesaving, and physical education. There were inconsistencies in delivery, limited evaluation of training outcomes and insufficient contact between recruits and the communities they would be policing. The report concluded that police probationer

training was not wholly fit for purpose, and was unable to support the police service in the 21st century (HMIC, 2002; Peace, 2006; Wood and Tong, 2009; McGinley *et al.*, 2019). It proposed several recommendations, including the introduction of accreditation and qualification frameworks, links to higher education, and continuous professional development (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018), but the most radical recommendation was that the National Police Training Centres should be closed, removing the residential requirement that was seen as a barrier for some potential recruits, instead recruit training should be delivered locally by each force (Peace, 2006; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

The introduction of IPLDP

A year after the publication of the HMIC report, the BBC broadcast a documentary, *The Secret Policeman*, which exposed racist attitudes amongst some of the recruits at the Burche Training centre, and poor teaching practices during lessons on race relations (Clements and Jones, 2009; Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). This documentary hastened the implementation of the new training programme, and it was announced that probationer training would be delivered under the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). By early 2006, IPLDP was adopted by all 43 Home Office forces and was seen as a radical change with a move from Regional Training Centres to delivery at a constabulary level. It also allowed constabularies to further develop partnerships with higher education institutions to create and deliver recruit police training programmes (Wood and Tong, 2009; White and Heslop, 2012; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

In the early 1990s, universities such as the University of Portsmouth and the University of Leicester had initiated the development of undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications in the field of Policing Studies. Following the Police Reform Act 2003, several police forces began to work more closely with local universities linking recruit training to academic awards such as the Foundation Degree in Policing (Wood and Tong, 2009). Although IPLDP did not mandate university involvement, collaboration with higher education institutions was encouraged and some constabularies developed or deepened relationships with higher education (Wood and Tong, 2009; Dominey and Hill, 2010; Charman, 2017). Some of these partnerships developed police recruit programmes that awarded both foundation and honour degrees for successful student

officers (Bryant *et al.*, 2013; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). The working relationships within these partnerships could be problematic, often due to the different perspectives within the university and the police disciplines. For example, the abstraction from police duties for academic study was often seen as ‘lost’ time by the police rather than as an ‘investment’ in their officers’ education. The practical needs of academic study could be undermined by a necessity to meet the operational demands of the constabulary, with ‘protected learning time’ scheduled at the start of a 10 hour shift (Blakemore and Simpson, 2010, p. 32). Research into the university experiences of police recruits found that those without previous university experience struggled to cope with the work, there was also dissatisfaction with some of the university lecturers who were seen as ‘anti-police’ and condescending. The student officers struggled to identify as ‘real’ students or as police officers and some questioned the relevancy of the studies to their role (Heslop, 2011a; Macvean and Cox, 2012; Charman, 2017). There were also concerns around the staffing of the university courses. Police Studies was a relatively new area of academic study, so there was an inevitable lack of suitably trained staff. Universities employed ex-police officers, who while having the relevant practical experience, often lacked understanding of academic practices. This led to tension, a tendency towards a ‘them and us’ relationship between ex-practitioners and university lecturers and to some extent simply meant that police training moved from the training school to the university campus (Macvean and Cox, 2012; Charman, 2017).

While police forces who had reverted to exclusively in-house delivery avoided these problems, their programmes tended to privilege the teaching of law and police procedure and provided limited opportunities for engagement in critical thinking and problem solving. The programme was often delivered by experienced officers who acted as role models for the recruits and often taught in a similar didactic way to that found in early training programmes (Peace, 2006; Paterson, 2011; Charman, 2017; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

This flexibility of provision within the IPLDP scheme was intended to allow constabularies the freedom to adapt the programme so it was relevant to local needs and the recruits’ working environment (Peace, 2006; Dominey and Hill, 2010; Macvean and Cox, 2012; White and Heslop, 2012; Charman, 2017). While this was a worthwhile ambition, it ensured that the opportunity to radically revamp recruit training provision

was missed, and the involvement of higher education institutions did not become the norm (Wood and Tong, 2009; Charman, 2017). Local provision inevitably created a diverse pattern of training provision undermining any ambition to set nationally agreed standards (Tong and Wood, 2011; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

The IPLDP framework consisted of three different training phases that retained traditional practices while introducing some innovations. The recruits' training started with classroom-based sessions delivered either in-house by the constabulary or in conjunction with higher educational establishments. This initial classroom phase has been a constant feature of police recruit training since the early days of policing, yet the opportunity, for some, to obtain a degree-level qualification and the routine involvement of lecturers from outside of policing was an innovation. The recruits then moved to an 'in-company' phase, work-based learning under the guidance of a tutor constable, including short placements in specialist departments. This apprenticeship style training has been a core feature of recruit training since the days of Robert Peel. Finally, there was the innovation of a community phase during which officers joined local community projects or charities to give them an insight into the cultures and issues of the communities they would be policing (Peace, 2006; Charman, 2017). This was in response to one of the key recommendations in the Macpherson Report, that officers should understand the communities they police. However, in reality the community phase was given little kudos, nor promoted internally as a key aspect of the course and often lasted only 3 to 5 days (Charman, 2017).

It has also been claimed that the inclusion of modules on communities, social issues, professional judgement and discretion (Peace, 2006; Charman, 2017), intended to professionalise the police and deliver cultural change (Peace, 2006; Heslop, 2011a), were undermined by the introduction of assessment criteria based on 22 units of National Occupational Standards (NOS) (White, 2006; Wood and Tong, 2009; Charman, 2017). Probationers were expected to demonstrate competency in each learning requirement within their two-year probationary period to achieve the new Diploma in Policing set at Level 3 (Dominey and Hill, 2010; College of Policing, 2016c; Charman, 2017).

Achieving these competencies became the main focus of those delivering and assessing the training. Subsequently, the time available for non-assessed topics, such as critical

discussions of policing issues, ethical decision-making, and professional judgement, was limited by the overriding need to complete the competencies (Charman, 2017). The rigid curriculum along with the aims and objectives linked to National Occupational Standards made self-directed learning and the use of reflective practice problematic (Clements and Jones, 2009). White (2006) argues that this created a hidden curriculum, which while appearing to provide officers with a wide educational foundation to facilitate the reflective policing of their communities, in fact the programme privileged traditional behavioural competencies such as legal knowledge and police practices, a focus on the 'how' of policing and not the 'why'.

While the introduction of IPLDP represented the most comprehensive overhaul of initial police training prior to the introduction of graduate entry, with completion resulting in a nationally recognised qualification and a variety of training provision that, for some, included collaboration with higher education institutions (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). The retention of didactic teaching and competency based assessment, with a focus on knowledge transmission and lack of engagement with the social issues in which policing operates, suggests that IPLDP rather than being a radical reform of police training was in fact, 'more of the same' (White, 2006, p. 391).

In response to the continuing challenges facing policing in early 21st century the Government commissioned reports from two ex-chief constables Sir Ronnie Flanagan and Sir Peter Neyroud both of which were influential in the debate on police training. In 2008 Flanagan produced the Flanagan Review of Policing, which claimed that the police were facing an expanded and diversified range of issues. He claimed that the police had become a risk adverse organisation and that Government interventions had created an ever-expanding bureaucratic burden on police officers. He argued that if the police were to deal with these increased demands especially the growing emphasis on their duty of care towards the public. Officers would have to use discretion, demonstrate problem solving skills, and be accountable for their actions (Flanagan, 2008). He proposed that dealing with this complexity would require a move away from training to education equipping police officers to make nuanced evidence-based decisions based on professional judgement (Flanagan, 2008). He went on to highlight the disparity between the police and other professions with regard to entry qualifications, education, and a recruit's own responsibility to achieve the requisite qualifications before entry to their

chosen profession, suggesting that some of the cost of a police education should be borne by the recruit (Flanagan, 2008; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, Peter Neyroud adopted a similar position, he argued that the police should become a profession with a professional body supported by a charter. This body would set national standards for policing, develop a service-owned qualification framework, and strong relationships with higher education providers (Neyroud, 2011). He pointed out that the lack of any nationally set minimum educational standard for entry into the police was incongruous in a society in which general educational standards were rising (Neyroud, 2011). Therefore, he recommended that all police recruits would be required to obtain a new ‘Police Initial Qualification’ before attestation and employment as a police constable. He claimed that this was comparable to established professions, such as nursing and teaching, and would assist the policing in its claim to professional status. Neyroud suggested that the qualification should be set at level 4 and provided in partnership with higher education institutions, who had been accredited by the professional body to provide the programme (Neyroud, 2011).

In 2014, a pre-entry qualification the Certificate of Knowledge in Policing, was delivered under a College of Policing licence by several universities. It was a short-lived programme but was a first step towards the introduction of graduate entry. Following a consultation process the College of Policing decided to introduce a graduate-entry requirement for all recruits entering policing (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). While accepting Neyroud’s argument that policing should have a minimum educational entry requirement, they decided that a level 6 graduate qualification reflected the complexity of the work currently undertaken by constables and would be the appropriate level for future demands (College of Policing, 2016c). Graduate-entry was introduced nationally in 2020, and mandated that all police recruits must obtain a degree in policing before they are confirmed in post, (see section 4.6) (Leek, 2020; Wood, 2020a; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

This brief account of the history of police recruit training has demonstrated that policing has consistently been seen as a craft-based occupation, that did not need any minimum educational standards for employment (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018; Hough and Stanko, 2019). Instead, it has relied on internal assessments of practical skills and the personal

characteristics of candidates and practical skills of candidates, followed by a period of in-house training on specific skills and practices, and apprenticeship style work experience before recruits are confirmed in the post of constable (Stead, 1985; Foster, 1999; Green and Gates, 2014).

It is clear that, despite a series of recommendations, police recruit training courses have struggled to successfully incorporate social science theories, critical thinking, and problem solving to police recruits (White, 2006). The difficulties of developing a graduate-level route within the IPLDP programme highlight the issues of implementing such a fundamental change. Training innovations have faced resistance from trainers, police managers and student officers who retain a preference for the practical aspects of policing, especially those relevant to crime fighting, such as making arrests, driving at speed or using the radio (Birzer, 2003; Charman, 2017). Their views have ensured that recruit training programmes have continued to focus on the skills and knowledge valued by the experienced police officers who are employed as recruit trainers. These trainers inculcate the new recruits into the traditions of policing they themselves learnt at training school at the start of their police career. As Reitz claims,

‘at police schools policemen learn from policemen, what policemen have learned from policemen’ (Reitz, 1988:33 quoted in Jaschke and Neidhardt, 2007, p. 314).

These features of police recruitment and training are inconsistent with claims to professional status. An accredited tertiary qualification is a trait commonly found in a ‘regulated profession’, limiting professional practice to only those holding the relevant qualifications (Bryant *et al.*, 2013, p. 388). During their training, the recruit learns the underlying knowledge and skills of their profession and inculcates a communal professional identity (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2006). The skills of critical thinking and the ability to critically analysis options are a feature of most tertiary education (QAA, 2024). These are valued within professional practice, and a tertiary education is almost universally accepted as the fundamental basis of practice within established professions (see section 4.3).

If professionalisation is to succeed and graduate education is to be accepted as a norm within policing. Police leaders will have to support the concept and the project as a whole. It is therefore important to understand the attitudes and motivations of police

leaders. Once again it is necessary to explore the historical background of police leadership, and this is the topic of the following section.

2.7 Training Professional Managers for Artisan Coppers

In the initial recruitment for the Metropolitan Police, the managerial ranks up to that of superintendent were filled by ex-warrant and ex-non-commissioned military officers from the Army and Navy. Once his police force was established Sir Robert Peel quickly introduced a policy of relying on internal promotion to fill vacancies. This prevented the creation of an officer class within the police and limited the nepotism prevalent in other Government departments at the time. It was believed that men adept at receiving and obeying orders would be best suited to giving orders to others, so promotion was offered to experienced officers of good character, who had a good disciplinary record of compliance with the rules and regulations, and obedience to their superiors (Critchley, 1972; Stead, 1985). The reliance on internal promotion provided several benefits for police leaders. It motivated a level of compliance amongst officers and provided a reason for some officers to stay in the role and try to improve their pay and social standing through promotion. It also permeated the working-class bias in the constable role through the ranks and reinforced the social distinction between the police and the respectable classes. However, it did limit the pool of available talent, especially to fill the more senior roles, and overtime this became an increasing concern (Critchley, 1972).

In 1929, the Royal Commission rejected Peel's principle of internal promotion arguing that it was not in the public interest to limit the highest offices in policing to ex-constables (Critchley, 1972). In response, the Home Office proposed the establishment of a national police college, The intention was for the police to talent spot individuals and educate their own leaders. However, due to the anticipated costs of the scheme and the ambivalence of the Police Federation towards it, the scheme was abandoned (Critchley, 1972; Emsley, 1996).

Lord Trenchard became Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in 1931, and quickly decided that the paucity of effective police leaders was a major problem for policing

(Critchley, 1972). Despite changes to policing practices and an improvement in the status of police officers, the number of recruits from university or public school was negligible, and around 90% of the Metropolitan Police's recruits had only received an elementary education (Critchley, 1972). The long hours of foot patrol required before constables became eligible for promotion meant that talented, well-educated young men often rejected policing as a career. Trenchard thought that the development of an 'officer class' within policing was the answer and this led to the setting up of the Hendon College Course in 1934. This course was open to individuals for within and outside policing. Candidates from outside policing were required to pass an exam or possess higher education qualifications; while candidates from within policing had to demonstrate leadership potential (Critchley, 1972). In both cases the ambition was to recruit men who were 'officer material' with the leadership potential for future promotion to the highest ranks in policing (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). After completing two years training, the Hendon College graduates were appointed to a new rank of junior station inspector and then later station inspector (Weinberger, 1995). The scheme faced widespread and passionate opposition, as it broke the tradition of internal promotion (Martin and Wilson, 1969). The 'Hendon College boys' were portrayed as having little idea about policing, with academic study and book learning seen as no substitute for years of hard won experience in policing the streets (Weinberger, 1995; Emsley, 2009). The scheme was vehemently opposed by the Police Federation and by those in line for promotion who disliked the further competition. The Home Office was uncomfortable with the scheme's potential to create divisions between officers and 'other ranks' (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Critchley, 1972). The start of World War Two was used as a reason to close the course and it never re-opened after the war (Martin and Wilson, 1969; Emsley, 2009). While the long-term effects of the Hendon course were never studied, it is interesting to note that the first two Chief Inspectors of Constabulary and a high proportion of the chief constables in the 1950s and 1960s were graduates of the course (Martin and Wilson, 1969).

The negative reaction to the Hendon Course led the post-war Oaksay Committee to be more cautious when considering the provision of education and training for those officers deemed to have leadership potential. The Committee recognised the benefits of internal promotion and, at the same time, acknowledged that candidates for senior

positions benefited from participation in higher education. They argued that any education programme, if it was to be accepted by both the rank and file and police leaders, must be seen as fair to all officers and should not be thought of as creating a privileged ‘officer class’ within policing (Critchley, 1972).

This balancing act reflects the perennial conflict between those who believe that policing needs to attract and recruit talented individuals with leadership potential from the widest possible pool, and those who see the constable as the bedrock of policing and view selection based on social rank or academic education as an anathema to the institution and would undermine it. This latter position received support from the Home Office, which stated in a memorandum to the Oaksay committee that,

‘The police service of this country depends for its reputation and efficiency upon the character and ability of the ordinary constables who walk the beat. No matter how brilliantly qualified a cadre of officers produced by a Police College might be, this would be no compensation for any falling off in the quality of the constable and it is, therefore, fundamentally important that any scheme of higher training, designed to pick the best qualified men for senior posts, should be recognised by the rank and file as fair, and as not involving any suggestion of favouritism based on social qualifications or even academic attainments’(Critchley, 1972, p. 208).

Despite these concerns, the report’s recommendations led to the creation of the National Police College, later renamed as the Police Staff College, at Bramshill, while it has never achieved any recognised academic status (Young, 1991; Heslop, 2011b), it became a police ‘university’ and senior staff college for those destined for high rank. By 1966, the Bramshill Scholarship Scheme was providing support for some senior officers to study at higher education institutions. Two years later a graduate-entry scheme, was introduced to attract graduates into the police and indicated a tacit acceptance of the benefits of higher education for policing (Lee and Punch, 2004; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). The graduate-entry scheme, the Bramshill Scholarship, and the special course at Bramshill for potential high flyers have all played a significant role in the careers of many senior officers (Reiner, 2010).

The Neyroud and Windsor reports both published in 2011, contributed to the implementation of the Direct Entry scheme that would allow talented leaders from other sectors to enter policing at the rank of inspector or superintendent (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). The scheme was opened by the College of Policing in 2014 and up to 2020 had recruited 33 individuals. A review into the scheme reached a generally positive conclusion about its effects on policing (Campbell and Colover, 2020). However, the College of Policing has currently paused the Direct-Entry scheme, stating that whilst they remained committed to the concept, its reintroduction will be dependent on demand from forces and the evaluation of ongoing work on police leadership and promotion process (College of Policing, 2024b).

The Winsor Review in 2011 also recommended the introduction of a mechanism that would allow talented constables to achieve the rank of inspector within three years (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). In response, the Fast Track programme was introduced, this aims to attract, identify and develop talented officers who could reach the senior ranks of policing. There is a rigorous national selection process to identify individuals with the ability to become an inspector within two years and the potential to raise to the rank of superintendent (College of Policing, 2024c).

Since its inception the College of Policing has taken over responsibility for the training of police leaders. It has introduced a variety of innovations for improving leadership in policing; including the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) for promotion to the rank of inspector (College of Policing, 2025d). It has replaced the Strategic Command Course with the Executive Leaders Programme (ELP) for senior police leaders (College of Policing, 2025c).

The College of Policing also created the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) as a national framework for professional training and qualifications for policing. Its aim was to create national educational standards for the different ranks in policing, aligning specific ranks to specific educational achievement (College of Policing, 2017; Strong, 2019). The introduction of graduate entry was brought in under the auspices of PEQF. There was also an expectation that an inspector or superintendent would be required to achieve a level 7 qualification. However, agreement on this was not achieved and currently the project is paused. The College of Policing have indicated that roles will not have an academic requirement for the 'foreseeable future'

(Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; College of Policing, 2024d). Despite the failure to agree national educational standards, many senior officers have completed post graduate courses, at a variety of universities including the MSt. in Applied Criminology and Police Management offered by Cambridge University (Bryant *et al.*, 2013).

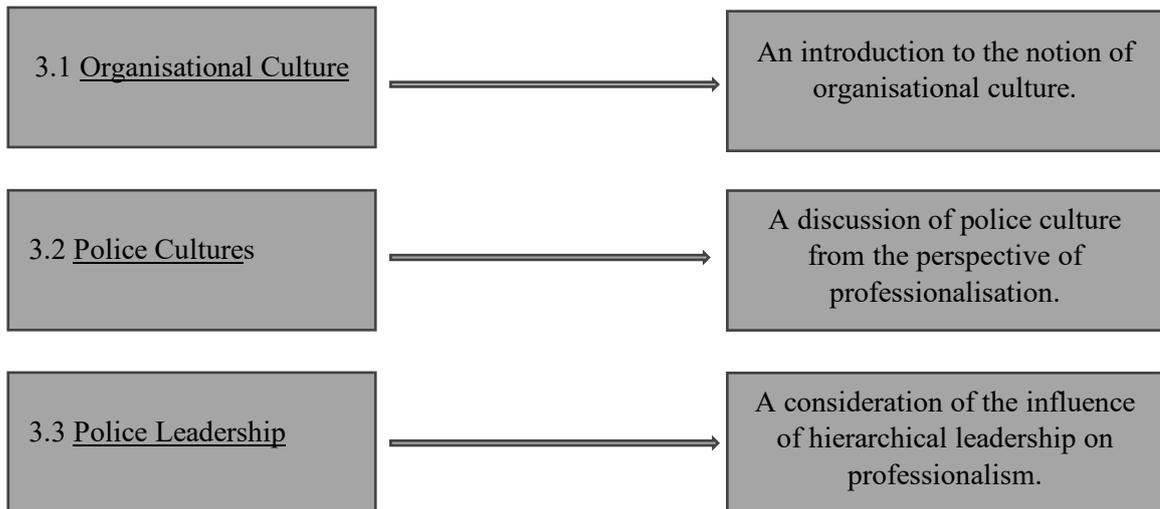
Despite the innovations introduced by the College of Policing there are still consistencies with the past. There is still a preference for leaders who can demonstrate practical policing experience (Caless, 2011; Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). Internal promotion is still the norm in policing with most current police leaders having joined the police as a constable. The current promotion process to sergeant and inspector still requires candidates to pass a legal knowledge examination, demonstrate competency in their current rank, and that they possess the necessary qualities to undertake the role (College of Policing, 2025d). Whilst the process has been modernised, the fundamental attributes and skills being sought differs little from those required for promotion in the early days of policing. In Peel's police, candidates for promotion had to demonstrate a good disciplinary record, that they had been successful in their previous role, and possessed the necessary qualities for promotion (Critchley, 1972; Ascoli, 1979; Reiner, 2010).

In modern organisations professionals are often managed by individuals who do not possess the same qualifications as the professional practitioner. So, there no inherent problem with the current structure of police leadership in the professionalisation agenda. However, the continued reliance of experience as the criteria for promotion and the failure to align ranks with academic achievement suggests an unwillingness to provide the professionalisation agenda with the managerial support that it needs (see section 3.3).

The history of policing has not only informed, and influenced police practices and leadership, it has driven the development of a particular and enduring culture within policing. All organisations have a culture that defines how their views of themselves and the world they operate in. Police culture is complicated and contested, it has endured overtime and geography despite facing criticism from both within and outside of policing.

The next chapter explores organisational culture and in particular police culture, it considers how and why the culture had developed. Its influence on how officers seen themselves and their role and how this in turn affects police practices. It goes on to discuss how culture is passed from generation to generation and its potential to impact on the professionalisation agenda. The chapter concludes with a discussion of police leadership and its relationship with culture and how this could influence the extent to which professionalisation is accepted and implemented.

Chapter 3: Police Culture and Leadership



3.1 Organisational Culture

All organisations develop a culture which consists of the informal knowledge, attitudes and values that underpin the working rules, accepted practices and behaviour that practitioners use to make common-sense understandings of their working environment and function effectively in their role. Schein describes culture as the ‘deeper basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization. These operate unconsciously and define, in a basic “taken-for-granted”, fashion an organization’s view of itself and its environment’ (Schein, 1991, p. 6). Sackmann claims the essence of an organisational culture is the ‘collective construction of social reality’, these constructions are imbued with emotion and important to individuals (Sackmann, 1991, p. 33). This is the shared knowledge that individuals hold in relation to their perception and interpretation of their social and physical reality. Sackmann goes on to classify cultural knowledge within organisations into four dimensions: (i) dictionary knowledge which defines and labels things and events within the organisation; (ii) directory knowledge which describes how things are done; (iii) recipe knowledge prescribes what should be done or not done in specific situations and finally; (iv) axiomatic knowledge

which covers the assumptions about ‘why things are done the way they are’ in the organisation (Sackmann, 1991, p. 39). This final category is often the preserve of senior managers and differentiates a managerial culture. This is a set of shared norms, values and perceptions developed through interactions with the outside world. It provides a holistic, historically determined consensus on an organisation’s vision and strategy, which is normally closely aligned with its mission statement and achieving organisational success. It is often framed in terms of standards, ambitions, rules, goals and is generally imposed on employees in a top-down manner by management (Gottschalk and Gudmundsen, 2009; Bacon, 2014).

This managerial organisational culture can be differentiated from rank-and-file occupational culture in that organisational culture is located at the top of the organisation while occupational culture develops and is employed within the rank-and-file (Paoline, 2003; Bacon, 2014). Occupational culture is in part a response to the demands imposed by organisational culture and consists of the taken-for-granted assumptions, the generalised rationales, values, beliefs, and ideologies that are developed to cope with the rules and practices of the organisational culture operationalising them, as much as possible, for the benefit of the rank and file (Paoline, 2003; Bacon, 2014). These rules and practices become so ingrained within practitioners’ thinking and actions that individuals are often unconscious of them (Gottschalk and Gudmundsen, 2009). These cultures interplay and provide a context in which individuals’ common experiences lead them to a shared understanding of how to interpret conduct, retain loyalties, express opinions, and use or abuse authority, which can either undermine the organisation or produce successful solutions to everyday problems (Schein, 1991; Bacon, 2014).

3.2 Police Cultures

Policing has not been immune from this process and a recognisable police culture has emerged out of the historical development of policing with its enduring consistencies and changes (see Chapter 2), (Reiner, 2010). Chan (1997) claims that Schein’s definition of culture is particularly apt as a description of the development of police culture,

‘a pattern of basic assumptions – invented, discovered, or developed by a given groups as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relations to those problems’ (Schein, 1991, p. 9).

While police culture may reflect this cultural orthodoxy, its influences are exceptional. The police are unique in that the risks present in their working environment come not from environmental factors, that can be assessed and mitigated, but from the unpredictable actions of other people (Reiner, 2010). The risk is exacerbated by a need for the police to maintain a display of coercive authority towards the public and demands from the organisation to produce results (Skolnick, 2011). At the same time, the role itself is ambiguous and vaguely defined with three major, often conflicting, functions: order maintenance, law enforcement and a service role (Paoline, 2003). Historically, police leaders have been inconsistent in how they have balanced these demands and have tended to privilege law enforcement over the other functions. This ambivalence has created a sense of insecurity amongst the rank and file who respond with an ‘ass-covering’ approach to their work and a crime fighting orientation towards their role (Paoline, 2003).

Reiner (2010) describes one of the core characteristics of police culture as a sense of mission to protect the weak and preserve a way of life. Officers prefer action-oriented policing, the chase, the arrest, the fight to achieve their mission. These characteristics are congruent with the crime fighting role that the police have been assigned and for which they have a preference, the protection of the law-abiding majority from a dangerous criminal fraternity. This is ‘real policing’ a macho action-oriented outlook that values the use of force in dangerous, dynamic, exciting situations in which officers act courageously to protect the vulnerable and maintain the social order (Waddington, 1999; Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2010; Heslop, 2011a). Their mission is often frustrated, and officers can become cynical and pessimistic about society and their role. The nature of the role and its inherent dangers encourage a deep suspicious mindset amongst officers about their environment. This can lead to the stereotyping of individuals, the basis of which is often questionable, but probably reflects inequalities present in society (Reiner, 2010, pp. 119–122).

The police sense of mission coalesces with a common perception amongst officers that the wider justice system is gullible and operates in a liberal manner to overly protect the criminal (Loftus, 2010). This creates the conditions in which officers are tempted to use the interpretative nature of the law to cross the boundary between legal and extra-legal practice. Not for personal gain but to get ‘justice’ for victims and to punish the ‘guilty’ (Fekjær, Petersson and Thomassen, 2014). Furthermore, police officers are granted the exclusive monopoly to use force against their fellow citizens and are obliged to use it when required (Bittner, 1970). The expectation that they should dominate their beat, their ‘patch’, encourages them to liberally interpret their powers, and use extra-legal practices such as the ‘attitude’ test or ‘contempt of cop’ to confront anyone who challenges their control is grounded in the early policing practices ([see section 2.4](#)) (Waddington, 1999; Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2010). A consequence of these extra-legal practices and participation in ‘easing behaviours’, such as running personal errands whilst on duty, is that officers collude to protect each other from supervisors’ inquiries and complaints from the public, this has been termed the, ‘the blue code of silence’ which critics claim protects officers who have engaged in egregious behaviour (Chan, 1996; Gottschalk and Gudmundsen, 2009; Reiner, 2010). In this environment officers become reliant on each other for guidance, support, and back up from both internal disciplinary actions and external physical threats ([see section 2.5](#)) (Ericson, 2007).

Reiner (2010) includes conservatism in his classic description of the core characteristics of a police officer. Skolnick argues that conservatism is a response to the police role, as those involved in enforcing the law, endorse the law and approve of the social order (Skolnick, 2011). Loftus (2010) in her research into officers’ views found support for orthodox views and a willingness to challenge perceived deviancy. Officers are often protective of the status quo and resistant to reforms promoted by either police managers or outsiders (Chan, 1996; Myhill and Bradford, 2013; Filstad and Karp, 2021).

These factors, the nature of the police role, the shift work, and restrictions on their private lives isolates officers from the wider community. Often, in social situations, officers struggle, to shake off their identity as a police officer which can make establishing and maintaining relationships outside of the police difficult (Skolnick, 2011). Therefore, they tend to socialise with each other and develop an exaggerated sense of solidarity and group loyalty (Loftus, 2010).

In most occupations culture is accepted with little criticism, however police culture has often been framed as a source of negativity within policing, fostering a masculine culture, racism, conservatism and the ‘blue code of silence’ (Haake, Rantatalo and Lindberg, 2017; Rowe, 2017; Filstad and Karp, 2021). Chan asserts that police culture has become a ‘convenient label for a range of negative values, attitudes and practice norms among police officers’ (Chan, 1996, p. 110). Research suggests that there is often a discrepancy between what officers say about different groups when they talk amongst themselves and their actions towards these groups when they engage with them on the street (Smith and Gray, 1985; Waddington, 1999). Their stories exaggerate confrontations with the public and imagine using force against specific groups, acts which are rarely carried out in practice (Smith and Gray, 1985; Waddington, 1999; Loftus, 2010). Storytelling does allow the teller and the listeners to contemplate policing situations with a trial-and-error mentality. Decisions are assessed and either validate or questioned, creating schemas that influence future actions especially amongst new recruits (Waddington, 1999; Rowe, 2017; Brown *et al.*, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). It is argued that this ‘canteen culture’ provides a space in which officers can act out their perception of policing, as crime fighting and action-oriented which is so often lacking in the reality of their role (Loftus, 2010).

This framing of police culture aligns it with other cultures, in that it contains the values, beliefs and rules that guide the informal practices and behaviours used to resolve problematic policing situations (Chan, 1996; van Hulst, 2013). It supports officers, providing a coping strategy helping them to deal with the challenges of the role and to rationalise and validate their actions in situations that lack certainty and clarity (Manning, 1977; Waddington, 1999; Loftus, 2010; Bacon, 2014). It also provides emotional comfort and the opportunity to learn practical skills (Paoline, 2003), police culture encourages a sense of being part of a team that is a source of mutual support in times of danger (Chan, 1996). As Bacon claims,

‘It provides officers with frames of reference, coping strategies, practical knowledge and ‘common sense’ understandings about how to view their external environment and how and why policing should and can be done in any situation’ (Bacon, 2014, p. 104).

Reiner has pointed out that, ‘police culture – like any other culture is not monolithic’ (Reiner, 2010, p. 116). So, police culture while dominant is not universal or unchanging

(Heslop, 2009; van Hulst, 2013; Bacon, 2014). Individual officers have agency and autonomy in how and to what extent they are willing to engage with cultural expectations, they can acquiesce and resist its influence on their own terms (Chan, 1997; Paoline, 2003; Reiner, 2010; Bacon, 2014). It is now widely accepted that there are variations of police culture within different departments, specialisations and with community policing teams and the traditional response role (Young, 1991; Cockcroft, 2013; Myhill and Bradford, 2013; van Hulst, 2013; Bacon, 2014). There are also differences in the occupational cultures of management and street officers (Sklansky, 2007; Cockcroft, 2013). These differences align with the differences between organisational and occupational culture discussed above. The increasing political nature of the role of senior officers means that they are concerned with the wider political aspects of policing, including the media, accountability and effective resource allocation. While street cops remain focused on the traditional, day to day demands of practical policing. In both cases, officers are influenced by their immediate colleagues rather than the wider organisation (Reuss-Ianni, 1982).

Despite these cultural variations, police culture retains a continued dominance because of its efficacy in dealing with the enduring aspects of policing, such as danger and unpredictability through the maintenance of authority and suspicion (Chan, 1996; Filstad and Karp, 2021). Police culture is consistent across different countries and times to the extent that its existence is almost beyond challenge (Loftus, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). Every police officer joins the police as a response constable and are therefore imbued with the occupational culture of uniformed response officers (Skolnick, 2011). Crime fighting, action and danger remain central to perceptions of the policing role amongst the increasing number of female, gay and lesbian, black and ethnic minority officers and university educated officers who continue to identify with these aspects of their policing role (Waddington, 1999; Sklansky, 2007; Loftus, 2010). The differences between sub-culture variants based on rank and specialisations are effectively subsumed within the cultural identity of being a police officer when the role is contrasted with a civilian one (Reiner, 2010; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). Recruits become immersed in police culture when they leave training school and become operational response officers. It is transmitted through on-the-job socialisation, it is expressed, learned and sustained in the conversations and demonstrated in the actions of their experienced colleagues and conveys to them how the job should be done

(Loftus, 2010; Bacon, 2014). Police operational culture prefers traditional policing practices, the maintenance of the status quo, and occupational notions of what define good policing. It is a culture that privileges learning by doing (Filstad and Karp, 2021), and ‘on-the-job’ learning is highly prized by both experienced officers and new recruits who often regard this as the most valuable period of their training. The stories officers tell tend to privilege attitudes found in the informal sub-culture over the managerial policies promoted in the organisational culture (Charman, 2017, p. 118). Occupational culture is influential, the recruits are inexperienced, and they want to fit in and understand how to do the job. Their peers often tell recruits to forget what they have learnt at training school, so they can learn how things are really done, “out on the streets” (Waddington, 2008; Charman, 2017; Belur *et al.*, 2019). The recruits respect their more experienced colleagues and are receptive to their accounts of real police work passed on through “war stories” of incidents, people, and the risks of policing (Gottschalk and Gudmundsen, 2009; van Hulst, 2013). Their colleagues’ stories, in providing real-life examples, fill the lacuna between police law and its application in specific situations. They are vignettes in which abstract concepts of law and policy are reified in concrete situations and provide appropriate and sanctioned responses to the situations they face on a regular basis (Charman, 2017). Waddington argues that storytelling and police talk in the canteen has no influence on how police officers actually behave when they are dealing with the public (Waddington, 1999). However, while officers do have agency in how they perform their role, so police culture cannot be considered deterministic of officers’ behaviour. It does provide common-sense, generalised rationales that inform validated decision-making and understandings of policing situations. It also contains schemas that provide guidance on acceptable ways of dealing with the dangers and uncertainties of policing in a way that would be supported within policing (Manning, 1977; Shearing and Ericson, 1991; van Hulst, 2013; Belur *et al.*, 2019). This is particularly salient for police recruits, as the complexity and contextual nature of police decision-making means that organisational expectations often appear ambiguous and unpredictable and they need support and guidance (Charman, 2017). They often receive little or no specific guidance on how to police diverse communities and they are receptive to the support and guidance provided by occupational culture (Dominey and Hill, 2010; Christopher, 2015b).

Due to its power to influence practice, police culture can undermine reforms that conflict with established values, beliefs, assumptions, and practices (Chan, 1997; Paoline, 2003; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). It is also the case that the culture cannot be understood outside the contexts in which policing takes place, and it endures because the fundamental police role, the enforcement of the law in a liberal democratic society, remains largely the same (Loftus, 2010). However, the continual shifting social, economic, and political forces within society make conflicting and insatiable demands on the nature of policing. In response, aspects of police culture are constantly evolving as officers adapt to accommodate new structures, experiences and ideologies (Reiner, 1992; Bacon, 2014). The variations of police culture found between ranks and specialists' roles and the growing influence of community policing indicate how culture can vary in response to the stresses of a particular policing role. This demonstrates that police culture can facilitate reform that is seen as being effective in answering problems officers encounter in their role (Paoline, 2003). However, research suggests that the rank and file have little interest in organisational change, preferring the status quo to change, unless the change would be beneficial to them (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). The graduate recruits will have a pivotal role to play in professionalism, but it is unrealistic to expect graduate recruits to act outside or to counter existing norms without support from their colleagues and police leaders (Cameron and Green, 2015). Recruits to any organisation often adapt their personal values to achieve a "fit" with the prevailing organisational norms so as to coordinate with other employees (Cable and Parsons, 2001). Police officers, like other employees, identify and express themselves in the context of a role (Blader and Tyler, 2009). In addition, police officers are often conformists, especially in their relationship with their superiors. Conformists tend to collude in their own subordination, pre-occupied in ensuring that they are seen in a positive light by those in authority (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). They value outcomes that make them feel they are competent in their role, that they fit within the organisation, and are recognised as a member of the team (Weick, 1995; Davis and Bailey, 2018a). In policing this means there is strong cultural pressure to comply and acquiesce with existing policy and internal norms and any challenge to this orthodoxy is seen as deviancy (Charman and Tyson, 2024).

The proponents of the professionalisation of the police will have to understand police culture ability to promote or undermine reform, and the nature of the complex and

interconnected internal and external influences that sustain the culture. In particular, they will have to convince the existing police workforce that the proposed reforms are both necessary and appropriate, an improvement on current practices and make sense in the policing world (Bacon, 2014). They will have to embed the ‘professional’ practices, attitudes and beliefs to such an extent that they become accepted as part of the culture providing solutions to everyday problems (McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

Police culture and leadership have a symbiotic relationship in which each influences the other, either in a supportive or undermining manner dependent on the circumstance. The attitude of police leaders will play a key role in the establishing professionalisation, and it is to them that the narrative now turns.

3.3 Police Leadership

Police leaders have a central role in defining the mission and the future vision for their constabularies (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). Therefore, professionalisation, as with any major change, will require active and public support from senior officers, especially chief constables (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). Leek (2020) argues that some police forces have seen the introduction of graduate-entry as a ‘*watershed moment for culture change*’, motivating a move to a more decentralized leadership approach. Empowering frontline staff to take responsibility for day-to-tasks thereby building confidence, ownership, and a shared vision (Leek, 2020, p. 746). However, while some senior officers have acknowledge the need for a change in leadership style, their support for change may be only surface deep (Caless, 2011). It is unclear whether they are truly committed to a move away from a leadership style that they are comfortable with, to one in which they share power with subordinates, and encourage them to challenge their decisions and the status quo (Martin *et al.*, 2017). The successful implementation of professionalisation will also require buy in from supervisory officers. It depends on supervisors actively engaging in and facilitating these changes, and therefore encouraging their staff to take on the role of an autonomous, collaborative decision-maker (Martin *et al.*, 2017; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). Once again, their support is not guaranteed, resistance to change is common at all levels

of policing and there is almost a universal allegiance to the time-honoured rank structure (Davis, 2020).

This affinity to the status quo is again grounded in policing history, from its inception, the Metropolitan Police was organised along military lines with a clearly defined rank structure. Each rank was given specific responsibilities and authority, and discipline was strictly enforced within a command-and-control structure (Reith, 1956; Rawlings, 2002). The first commissioners enforced detailed regulations ([see section 2.3](#)) to ensure that the constables did not abuse their powers and adhered strictly to the law (Reiner, 2010). The current organizational structure of police forces is almost identical to the Metropolitan Police force created by Sir Robert Peel in 1829, with the same clearly defined rank structure from constable to chief constable, (Critchley, 1972; Neyroud, 2011). While some of the more overt militaristic affectations, such as saluting and marching, have fallen away, there is still a reliance on rank as the final arbitrator and an expectation that orders will be obeyed and not questioned (Silvestri, 2006; Davis, 2018; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). This ‘rank knows best’ attitude is accepted by all, including the rank-and-file officers who comply with little resistance or challenge (Silvestri, 2007; Davis, 2020; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021).

Internal promotion became the established practice and continues into the modern era, with virtually all police leaders beginning their career as a constable (Silvestri, 2006). Promotion is open to all officers, yet research suggests that it is officers with better educational backgrounds, or those who have previously held non-manual jobs, that are more likely to be successful (Reiner, 1978). Despite this, internal promotion has achieved almost universal acceptance within policing, with both junior and senior officers claiming that police leaders need operational experience if they are to be effective and respected (Rowe, 2006; Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014).

Police leaders still operate within a military style, hierarchical model, with autocratic decision-making supported by a bureaucracy, and a strict disciplinary process (Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008; Grint and Thornton, 2015; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Davis and Bailey, 2018a). In such traditional hierarchies, leaders are perceived as all-knowing and powerful, they are relied on to provide solutions to problems, to develop policy and practice, with success or failure attributed to their decisions and actions (Flynn and Herrington, 2015; Roberts *et al.*, 2016; Martin *et al.*, 2017). This leader-

centric perspective, views leadership as a personal attribute of the individual, albeit one that is capable of improvement through training and experience (Flynn and Herrington, 2015). Followers are simply passive recipients of their leader's directions. Their ability to contribute to decision-making is given slight regard, their main responsibility being the efficient completion of their allocated tasks (Shamir, 2007).

This rank-based authority is the accepted orthodoxy within policing, senior officers view their autocratic authority as a natural right of rank, which they justify as being necessary in order to respond to the risks and demands placed on an emergency service such as the police (Davis and Bailey, 2018a). The rank-and-file also have a strong attachment to the rank based hierarchy, police leaders are seen as competent decision makers and their orders are rarely questioned (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014; Davis and Bailey, 2018a; Filstad and Karp, 2021). The association between authority and rank is demonstrated daily, not only through the badges of rank worn by uniformed officers, but also in the insistence on the use of formal titles such as 'sir or ma'am.' Through these deferential practices, authority becomes structural and officers learn to 'know their place' and acquiesce with the orthodoxy (Silvestri, 2007; Davis, 2020; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). Rank is the source of the knowledge and decision-making, policies and procedures are imposed without consultation, creating clear demarcations of authority for decision-making within the hierarchy (McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021). This reliance on rank benefits the rank and file, evidence suggests that they have little interest in organizational change, preferring the status quo with its focus on the practicalities of everyday policing, rather than abstract notions of leadership (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). Furthermore, the current reliance on rank as the basis for decisions making does benefit the rank and file. As in other organisations, practices that lessen operatives responsibilities can be beneficial to subservient individuals as it also lessens their accountability (Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007). Fromm (1942) and Baumann (1993) argue that most people have a natural aversion to accepting responsibility and prefer to allow others to make decisions. Followers, assigned a subordinate role, have a tendency to rely on an authority figure for decision making (Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014). Milgram's infamous experiments found that individuals seem to have a natural tendency to obey calm, confident orders given by authority figures, especially if the situation is stressful, or if they are likely to be blamed for any negative outcomes of the decision-making (Weick, 1995; Grint and Thornton, 2015; Drummond-Smith, 2017). This reliance on authority figures is prevalent in policing, junior police

officers often avoid the responsibility attached to decision-making by referring routine decisions up to their supervisors for confirmation of their decisions (Davis and Bailey, 2018a). However, this reliance on rank for decision making also undermines the moral responsibility of junior officers (see section 4.63).

This overdependence on the leader to provide solutions is often unjustified, as leaders tend to rely on proven solutions to known problems rather than on the possession of a unique insight into solving complex issues (Day, 2000; Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007; Shamir, 2007). This type of decision making may be appropriate in emergencies or routine situations that require a technical solution, it is, however, less effective when dealing with novel situations and problems (Flynn and Herrington, 2015; Roberts *et al.*, 2016). Novel problems often require a consultative approach to solve them, this necessitates the building of confidence amongst team members that they have the ability, and a role to play in dealing with these challenges and problems (Day, 2000; Herrington and Colvin, 2016). However, police officers are promoted for demonstrating a flair for taking control and being efficient managers, rather than for being a consultative and reflective leader, able to admit they do not have the solution, and willing to request advice and promote collective decision making (Grint and Thornton, 2015). The Government, the media, and the public readily accept that command-and-control management defines a decisive and effective police leader, an individual, who knows the answers and takes personal control. A police manager who admits that they do not have the solution or requests advice from the team may be seen as weak and indecisive (Grint and Thornton, 2015).

The desire to see the leader as a key driver, and an essential influence, in achieving desired outcomes is not unique to policing. In Western society there is a 'romance of leadership', which tends to over-emphasise leaders as the source of all knowledge and the arbiters of choice (Uhl-Bien *et al* 2014). However, in modern policing, as with other occupations, this romanticised view is unrealistic, as significant outcomes are usually achieved through teamwork involving various participants (Shamir, 2007). A more balanced perspective sees both leaders and followers as co-producers of leadership. There is a growing awareness in leadership studies, that the complexity of contemporary problems means that no one individual can provide all the answers and, therefore, decision making should be a collective activity (Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012). In

contrast the current heroic model of police leadership understands the subordinate's role as one of responding to orders and a reliance on supervisors' decisions for action. This approach often fails to recognize the extent of the contribution that followers could potentially make if given the opportunity to do so.

The limitations of internal promotion have been recognised for some time and the direct entry of individuals who had demonstrated natural leadership talent in other occupations to managerial ranks opened up the police to experienced and talented leaders from the private sector (see section 2.7). However, the programme still promotes a 'leader-centric' approach, assuming that certain individuals have special traits that will make them effective police leaders (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). This retains a focus on the attributes of individual police leaders, rather than on the relationship between the leader and their followers (Haake, Rantatalo and Lindberg, 2017; Davis and Bailey, 2018a; Filstad and Karp, 2021).

It is also the case that, since the days of the Hendon Course, special routes into leadership roles, such as those suggested by the Winsor Review, have remained unpopular with police officers (Weinberger, 1995). In policing, leadership credibility is achieved through 'hard-learned and hard-earned knowledge' gained by 'good street coppers' who can demonstrate a good track record of operational policing (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019, pp. 146 & 150). An experience of practical policing gained by leaders as they move through the ranks is highly valued by junior officers. A background as an experienced 'good copper' is preferred to the talents of Direct Entry or Fast Track officers, who gain rank quickly, through education or experience gained outside of policing (Silvestri, Tong and Brown, 2013; Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). The preference for experience also finds support amongst police leaders, some of whom who have stated publicly that policing is only really understood by those who have done it, with leadership credibility achieved through 'hard-learned and hard-earned knowledge' (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019, p. 146). This has led some to argue that the promotion process is overly focused on current performance and fails to recognise other experiences or skills and tends towards the promotion of a particular 'type' of officer (Tyson and Charman, 2023). The strong preference for a leader who has gone through the ranks and has practical experience of policing is a particularly clear-cut example of leadership as conceived within social identity theory.

Tajfel (1978) defines the concept of social identity as the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership. In social identity theory, leaders and followers are bonded together in an interdependent shared membership of an ingroup, a shared identity of perceptions, attitudes and behaviours (Hogg, 2001; Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins, 2005; Haslam *et al.*, 2017). Leadership takes place in the context of shared group membership, where group members respond to leaders, at least in part, based on the leader's behaviour as a group member. The creation of a collective sense of 'us,' enables the leader to establish their legitimacy by demonstrating they are an exemplar of the collective, possessing the attributes and attitudes valued by both leaders and followers (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg and Giessner, 2007; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). Leadership remains consistent with group ideals, and the relationship between leaders and followers is a symbiotic one (Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014). The prototypical leader 'acts as one of us' demonstrating a social attractiveness and legitimacy (Hogg, 2001, p. 189). This shared social identity enables the development of a mutual understanding of the attributes of a leader and an agreed definition of effective leadership (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg and Giessner, 2007). The saliency of prototypicality is enhanced when the group is faced with a challenge or dilemma, which in turn increases the preference for a leader who shares the group's values (Hogg, 2001).

The relationship between leaders and followers proposed in social identity theory is applicable when conceptualising leadership in policing. While there are maybe differences between them, there is a symbiotic relationship between rank-and-file culture and police leadership. The police have a strong collective identity and have shared goals, values, norms, and sense of reality that guides practice and encourages a managerial style that values stability and predictability through a collective understanding of reality (Filstad and Karp, 2021).

Social identity theory suggests that leaders act as entrepreneurs of identity who create a shared sense of group identity, they act as champions of identity and advance the interests of the group, 'the idea of us' (Haslam *et al.*, 2017, p. 114). This does not mean that their views are deterministic, leaders and followers are mutually dependent on each other and in turn influence each other (Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins, 2005). While leaders have the potential to define group identities including perceptions and values,

they are reliant on their followers to accept and employ any changes, so they are in a position of influence rather than imposition (Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins, 2005). This suggests a dialogue with followers rather than a monologue, especially in circumstances where traditional identities are firmly established or there is active opposition within the group (Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins, 2005). The consensus on what it means to be 'us' is subject to change and negotiation and, therefore, to continue to represent the group the leader must be flexible (Reicher, Haslam and Hopkins, 2005). The prototypicality of the leader may diminish overtime as group members adapt their social identity in response to social change. This could lead to a variation of group prototypicality, allowing others to promote themselves as a more salient leader, better able to facilitate change and provide more effective leadership (Hogg, 2001).

A commitment to police professionalisation could drive an adaptation of prototypicality. Police leaders may have a wealth of experience, but as policing becomes more complex, officers will increasingly be faced with problems for which their experience has no solution (Roberts *et al.*, 2016). Such problem-solving requires innovation which thrives in the atmosphere of consultation and empathy found in the professional milieu, rather than one that is grounded in decision enforcement via rank-based authority (Martin *et al.*, 2017).

Achieving such a change organically is unrealistic and therefore leadership change will need the active support of senior officers who have the vision to see the potential benefits of the professionalisation. This would include a recognition of the contribution that a university educated workforce could make to policing.

Research suggests that the current policing milieu struggles to utilise the knowledge, the critical, and analytical skills provided by a university education, as a lack of rank in the police hierarchy often precludes the opportunity to make meaningful decisions (Gundhus, 2013; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). This can be contrasted with a traditional profession, in which leaders view practitioners as active agents, empowered to make decisions, able to question and challenge existing practice when needed and are recognised for their contribution (Martin *et al.*, 2017). To achieve such a relationship, it is not enough to simply mandate an educational entry requirement, the organization must value and facilitate learning and its application (Roberts *et al.*, 2016). In essence, to become a learning organisation which facilitates open communication, individual

growth and empowerment (Shipton, Zhou and Mooi, 2013, p. 2279). Police leaders need to be aware of the potential benefits and prepare for the demands of a graduate workforce, including the likelihood of well-educated officers becoming frustrated and demotivated by the restrictions of command-and-control management, which presents them with problems but fails to allow them the opportunities to use their skills to solve them (Martin *et al.*, 2017). Police leaders therefore need to be flexible enough to allow graduate officers to ‘thrive and flourish’ (Martin *et al.*, 2017, p. 212).

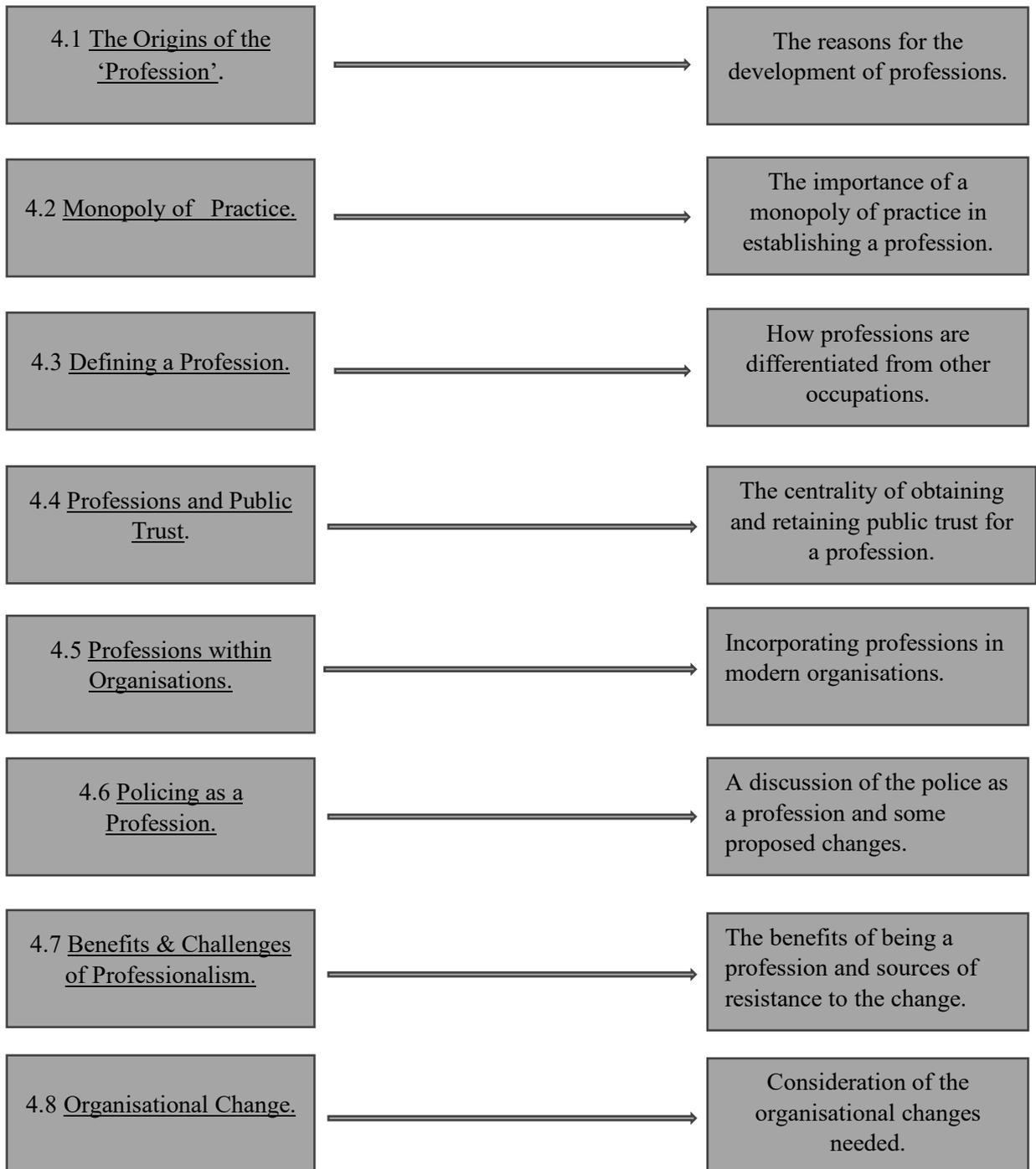
The College of Policing recognises the need to change, that to operationalize the traits of established professions, the police will also have to move from the current hierarchical, command-and-control management style to one that is more inclusive. One focused on empowering all police officers and staff to become active participants, rather than passive recipients of orders (College of Policing, 2015b, p. 19; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Filstad and Karp, 2021). A consultative environment flourishes within a balanced managerial approach, which is neither leader-centred nor entirely follower-centred, but views both leaders and followers as co-producers of the leadership relationship (Shamir, 2007). This approach is hinted at by the College of Policing and others who argue that a future professionalised police service should operate with a flatter organisational structure, with less bureaucracy, and less direct supervision of the workforce (College of Policing, 2015b; National Police Chiefs’ Council, 2016; Filstad and Karp, 2021). This would necessitate the widening out of the current rank-based authority by lateral development as officers are recognised for their skills as well as their rank (College of Policing, 2015). The move away from the established model of omnicompetent patrol officers managed by ‘heroic’ leadership through an intrusive bureaucracy of control measures will require that supervisors and managers have greater confidence in the ability of their officers to manage themselves (College of Policing, 2015b; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Davis and Bailey, 2018a). However, it has not yet been fully articulated how the police organisation, wedded as it is, to a clearly defined rank structure, will accommodate the skills and expectations of graduate officers within the existing customs and practices.

The relationship between police culture and the current leadership style provides potential opportunities and barriers to the professionalisation of the police. An alliance between police culture and leadership against professionalism could produce an almost

irresistible resistance to the changes envisaged, especially in relations to the desire to disperse authority and decision-making through the organisation (Gundhus, 2013). On the other hand, if the knowledge, norms, and standards of professional practice can be established as the prototypical attitudes of the shared collective identity, the powerful influences of police culture and police leaders would, in combination, provide a powerful basis for the development of the police as a recognised profession. Achieving the status of a recognised profession could be advantageous for both constables and police leaders, but to accomplish this, constables and their leaders will have to understand the nature of professional practice and how they could benefit from being a recognised professional (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; Lumsden, 2017).

The next chapter explores the nature of professions, how they came into being, how they are defined, the benefits of being a professional and the controversy surrounding some of their practices. The chapter reflects on how the police as currently formed compares with the definition of traditional professions. It then considers the benefits that could accrue to policing if they were to attain professional status, and the changes that might be required to achieve this.

Chapter 4: Professions



4.1 The Origins of the 'Profession'

The industrial revolution and the accompanying rapid expansion of a wealthy middle class increased demand for and the expansion of professional expertise and professions (Johnson, 1972; Abbott, 1988; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Susskind and Susskind, 2017; Hough and Stanko, 2019). The industrial revolution drove a variety of scientific and social developments, these brought benefits and risks to a public unable to judge their efficacy. This uncertainty led to public demands for the imposition of nationally recognised standards and legal restrictions to ensure a consistency of practice in critical and essential services (Dingwall, 2008).

These demands encouraged a process of professionalisation, which was often initiated by practitioners forming professional bodies (Wilensky, 1964). These associations provided a forum in which consensus could be reached amongst practitioners on the knowledge and practices to be validated as professional practice (Neal and Morgan, 2000; Dingwall, 2008). This body of knowledge would then be used to justify monopoly claims over a particular area of work. These jurisdictional claims might be challenged by other groups, and therefore a group had to possess the authority, expertise and status to substantiate their claim to monopoly control over their area of activity (Abbott, 1988; Collins, Dewing and Russell, 2009). In this process, professions became powerful groups able to dominate other professions, occupations and the public further elevating their status (Wilensky, 1964; Johnson, 1972; Fournier, 1999; Tilley and Laycock, 2014).

4.2 Monopoly of Practice

However, any claim to professional status and monopoly is ineffectual unless it achieves Government support and protection under the law. Professional associations lobbied the Government claiming that it was in the public interest for them to be granted a legally enforceable monopoly of practice within their professional jurisdiction (Greenwood, 1957; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Freidson, 2001). These claims provide one side of a tacit, mutually beneficial agreement between professions and the state. A state must regulate the fundamental services that are needed in a modern society, yet it lacks

the capacity to enforce direct, central control of these services. Therefore, the state licences professional bodies to provide these services, guaranteeing the profession a monopoly, financial rewards and social status. In return the profession provides the services in a way that protects the state, the public, and maintains the status quo (Dingwall, 2008). Monopoly control of practice, by preventing a diversity of provision, is a crucial feature in the development of professions as it allows the professional association to define appropriate standards of practice (Evetts, 2013). It allows professions to accredit appropriate educational standards, including appropriate skills and experience. Only those who have successfully achieved these standards are licenced to practice in the profession (Evetts, 2003). Protection from market forces also allows practitioners to maintain a coherence within their profession, including the development of a professional knowledgebase, and the maintenance of a service ideal, rather than competition and increasing market share (Freidson, 2001). In being a monopoly, a profession gains control over professional judgement in the field. It sets the purpose and conventions of the profession, and seeks to unify the disparate set of interests that are part of any occupational group (Greenwood, 1957; Johnson, 1972; Manning, 1977). In the UK, professions in which the right to practice is legally restricted to those with specific qualifications became known as the ‘regulated professions’ (Bryant *et al.*, 2013). Through their professional bodies these professions are self-regulating and set their own standards. They have the exclusive right to control access to the profession, as they are authorised to take charge of the education, examination, and licensing of the profession’s practitioners (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Dingwall, 2008). However, while market closures can give the public confidence in the quality of professional services and encourage innovation. It can also be exploitative by protecting vested interests, and resisting external competition, so as to maximise economic gain, status and power for practitioners (Greenwood, 1957; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Evetts, 2013; Tilley and Laycock, 2014). Professions often recruit from particular sections of the community, leading to homogeneity in terms of gender and class within the profession, for example, professions tend to recruit more men than women and from the middle and upper classes than the working class (Johnson, 1972; Neyroud, 2008; Collins, Dewing and Russell, 2009; Evetts, 2011b). Some writers have argued that claims by professions that they provide an altruistic public service are simply a smokescreen, allowing self-serving professionals to maintain a dominant position in

their field and society through monopolistic oligarchies, which are sustained by undue political influence, (Johnson, 1972; Dingwall, 2008; Tilley and Laycock, 2014).

4.3 Defining a Profession.

The definition of a 'profession' and how they can be differentiated from other occupations is a long standing, contested, and ongoing debate (Johnson, 1972; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Evetts, 2013; Gundhus, 2013). Early studies of professions focused on the identification of traits that could differentiate professions from other occupations (Neal and Morgan, 2000; Lumsden, 2017; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). This approach identified certain attributes including a professional body, accreditation of practitioners, graduate level education, an established body of knowledge, and a service role as defining characteristics of a profession (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Green and Gates, 2014). However, these traits are commonly found, to a greater or lesser degree, amongst other occupations, who also operate to similar high standards and are trusted by the public to similar degree (Wilensky, 1964; Evetts, 2003, 2006). It is therefore, perhaps no longer appropriate to try to draw a hard definitional line between professions and other occupations based on attributes (Evetts, 2013). For Hughes, the differences between professions and occupations is one of degree, both professions and occupations presume to tell the rest of their society what is good and right for it, and determine the ways of thinking about problems that fall in their domain (quoted in Larson, 1979). Therefore, it may be helpful to imagine all occupations as being on a continuum, sharing similar attributes to a greater or lesser degree. Seen this way, professions are differentiated in a quantitative rather than a qualitative manner (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2013).

The failure to reach agreement on the essential traits for establishing professional status led to accusations that traits were chosen in an arbitrary manner to either include or exclude occupations from professional status (Johnson, 1972; Abbott, 1988; Dingwall, 2008; Collins, Dewing and Russell, 2009). The trait-based approach has also been criticised for failing to explore the inherent power of certain professions, such as law and medicine, or the attraction of 'being a professional' itself (Evetts, 2006, p. 519). Despite these criticisms the traits approach remains a popular way of thinking about and defining professions (Dingwall, 2008).

One enduring distinction between professions and other occupations is that professional practice is grounded in an organised body of knowledge created within the profession. Professional knowledge often claims to be based on scientific theory or foundational knowledge. A difference between a major profession like medicine and a minor professions such as social work is that major professions are grounded in systematic, fundamental knowledge, while minor professions struggle to develop a base of systematic scientific knowledge (Schon, 2016). Regardless of this difference, professional tertiary education and practice rely on a body of specialist, validated and accredited knowledge. A profession requires objective, research-based evidence gathered in a consistent manner to create a knowledgebase that can inform consensual, defensible decision-making within the profession. This helps to legitimate the profession by gaining and retaining public trust (Stone and Travis, 2011; Gundhus, 2013; Sklansky, 2014; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; McCanney and Taylor, 2025). A profession's knowledgebase is created and constantly updated by practitioners, advancing the esoteric knowledge of their profession by a research process that challenges existing professional knowledge with innovations that continually improve the profession's knowledge and practices (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Jaschke and Neidhardt, 2007; Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Belur, Agnew-Pauley and Tompson, 2018). This ongoing research provides a validated, objective consensus on best practice and is the basis for defensible decision-making within the profession (Greenwood, 1957; Ericson, 1997; Stone and Travis, 2011; Gundhus, 2013). This ensures that professional practice is up-to-date enabling practitioners to provide appropriate advice to their clients, and define and defend the boundaries of the profession against challenges by neighbouring occupations (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001).

Professional knowledge is complex and tacit and it is difficult to achieve in a work-based 'on-the-job' apprenticeship (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Neal and Morgan, 2000). To maintain professional standards the professional body demands that professional students undertake extensive, accredited tertiary study to gain mastery over the underlying theory, before they are authorised to undertaking any professional practice (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Williams, Brower and Klay, 2016; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021). The student's knowledge is objectively tested by the completion of accredited examinations, and practical experience gained by working

as a junior member in a professional practice (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Neal and Morgan, 2000). Success leads to professional accreditation which in turn confers the privilege of social status and financial reward accorded to the professional (Collins, Dewing and Russell, 2009). This credentialism, is legitimated in law and provides the benefits of credible competency thereby justifying the profession's claim to monopoly over practice (Larson, 1979; Evetts, 2011b).

Professional knowledge is a combination of the intellectual, the practical, and is of an esoteric and complex nature. Its tacit aspect, as well as creating an aura of mystery around the profession, is necessary for the diagnosis of complex problems and their resolution on a case-by-case basis (Wilensky, 1964; Abbott, 1988; Collins, Dewing and Russell, 2009; Evetts, 2013). The application of abstract knowledge to particular cases is a consistent feature of professional practice (Abbott, 1988; Gundhus, 2013), as Molander and Grimen put it,

‘The requirement for professional status requires both a standardizable and transferable knowledge and indeterminacy in knowledge application’ (Molander and Grimen (2008) p.179 quoted in Gundhus, 2013, p. 179).

Professional expertise cannot be applied in a universal way but must be employed on a case-by-case basis. This is because professional problem solving involves problem definition as well as problem solution. The power to define and solve complex problems is an attractive feature of professional practice (Abbott, 1988; Evetts, 2013; Schon, 2016). The inability to standardize professional problems is a characteristic of professional practice. Professional problems are often uncertain, indeterminant, unique and they lack obvious solutions. Therefore, they require the application of judgement not only in the diagnosis of a solution, but in their definition (Schon, 2016). Donald Schon (2016) argues that professionals do not simply mechanistically apply their specialist knowledge to resolve their client's problems. Resolving these complex and often ambiguous problems in a rational manner requires an understanding of reflective practice, this is a key element of professional practice (Christopher, 2015a; Schon, 2016). Reflective practice enables practitioners to deal creatively with novel problems, consider complex risks, and make autonomous decisions based on evidence informed practices (Christopher, 2015a). It is more than a detached moment of contemplation but is embodied in the actions of the practitioner-in-practice. Reflection in this context is

not abstract musing, but a deliberate and purposeful intention to improve professional understanding (Wood, 2020b). It requires situational deliberation and dialectical thinking that progresses reflections respectively, through contextual, complex, and transformative thinking. To solve abstract problems a practitioner must not only understand the relevant areas of the body of knowledge but the tacit knowledge, gained through experience, of the way problems are defined and solved within their profession (Freidson, 2001). Schon differentiates between reflecting in-action and on-action, in-action reflection is the employment of tacit knowledge and a store of experiences, accumulated through on-action reflection, facilitating the ability to react in a considered manner to evolving and complex situations (Schon, 2016). In essence, it is the ability to choose the most appropriate response in the given situation (Wood, 2020a).

The necessity of professional judgment in the problem-solving process enhances a profession's claim to autonomy and discretion. In the process of problem-solving, practitioners observe self-imposed standards and apply their discretionary judgement in accordance with professional knowledge and accepted standards. This benefits practitioners, the profession, and their clients and means that there is little need for intrusive supervision or externally imposed rules (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2009, 2011b).

4.4 Professions and Public Trust

Occupations achieve professional status by a successful claim that their work is valuable and necessary for society. The claim that their profession is of benefit to the public is internalised by practitioners and is the foundation and justification for their self-esteem and privileges (Manning, 1977). It is the belief that they are providing a 'social good' that influences professional values and norms which, in turn, determine appropriate behaviour in professional situations (Greenwood, 1957).

In any professional relationship the client is at a disadvantage, they need the professional's help. However, the client lacks the specialist knowledge to competently evaluate the professional's advice and the professional therefore has a '*monopoly of judgement*' within the relationship (Greenwood, 1957, p. 48), and is able to define the relationship between the client and the practitioner, (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Abbott, 1988). Due to the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between professional

and client, trust, discretion and competence are vital for effective professional practice. In the past the centrality of trust in professional relationships was made clear by the fact that all professionals were gentlemen, this status assured they could be trusted to act with discretion when providing advice to their clients (Johnson, 1972; Evetts, 2006; Dingwall, 2008). The relationship of professional trust is based on competencies which are assumed to be guaranteed by the education, training and licensing requirements imposed by the professional body (Evetts, 2013). These competencies must initially garner public trust in the profession as a whole, for example, a patient's trust in any particular physician is initially based on a global trust in the medical profession as an institution (Six, 2018). This trust is based on the concept of equal competence in which professionals are regarded by the public as a homogeneous group of equally skilled individuals (Johnson, 1972; Abbott, 1988). To achieve and maintain this status, each individual practitioner must conduct themselves in appropriate ways, demonstrating that they are accountable and responsible to themselves, to their clients, the profession and the wider society (Fournier, 1999).

Professional trust based on a guarantee of competency is supported by a commitment to the service ideal. It is the moral foundation of professional practice, practice must be impersonal, objective, and impartial providing equal universal service to all sections of society (Wilensky, 1964). The client, regardless of their class or status must be confident that the professional will not discriminate against them in the service they provide, but put their client first, and provide altruistic advice. In doing this the professional must act from a service ideal rather than be motivated solely by financial rewards and social status (Greenwood, 1957; Freidson, 2001; Dingwall, 2008; Evetts, 2013).

In order to instil the attitude of service on which trust is based; professions operate within a collegiate structure in which practitioners control the profession through their professional body. Professional identity and norms are established both at a national level through membership of professional associations and at an individual level through shared notions of expertise, problems and solutions (Evetts, 2003, 2013). Professional prestige is established by a positive evaluation of an individual's practice by their peers (Johnson, 1972), so to gain acceptance in their profession, individuals internalise the social values and norms demonstrated by their peers. While individuals avoid open criticism of their colleagues, deviations from the ethical norms described in the code of ethics are rarely supported and the professional association operates a

framework of formal controls and disciplinary processes that are available when needed to criticise or disbar individuals found guilty of malpractice (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2013). Individual practitioners support the professional body in these endeavours because they understand that their behaviour and the behaviour of their colleagues can either promote or undermine the public's trust in their profession and thereby their own status. The collegiate environment encourages practitioners to identify with the profession and maintain high ethical standards to promote themselves, their peers and the profession (Wilensky, 1964; Neal and Morgan, 2000; Evetts, 2013; Bacon, 2014). This is expressed in cooperativeness and supportive knowledge sharing amongst peers, and a collegiate control of the profession, especially when compared to the competitiveness in the business environment (Abbott, 1988). This collegiate mutual interdependence is maintained across generations of practitioners by a recognition of their accredited qualifications and status of new practitioners. They have invested both time and money into their training and accreditation so wish to preserve the profession's good name. They self-identify as practitioners and readily internalise the values and norms of the professional culture (Greenwood, 1957; Freidson, 2001; Evetts, 2006). Accredited entry and the collegiate environment are advantageous, providing a consistency in conduct, experience, and socialisation amongst professionals. This sense of belonging to a distinct profession extends beyond the individual practitioner and the individual profession and serves as an overarching shared common ideal. This membership of the wider professional class not only brings social status and privilege but a reputation which can challenge inappropriate behaviour in both the workplace and in wider society (Vaidyanathan, 2012).

4.5 Professions within Organisations

In modern society, professions often operate within large, often multi-national, organisations and institutions. In these circumstances the traditional 'occupational professionalism' defined as professional practice based on practitioner autonomy and discretionary judgement supported by accreditation and a collegiate environment (Evetts, 2011a; Gundhus, 2013), can be replaced by the internal rules, hierarchical management and the profit motive of the organisation. This 'top down' imposition of professionalism has been described as 'organisational professionalism'. In this

approach, professionalism is used by managers, ‘to convince, cajole and persuade employees, practitioners and other workers to perform and behave in ways which the organization or the institution deem to be appropriate, effective and efficient’ (Evetts, 2003, p. 411). ‘Professional’ practice is based on standardised and detailed work procedures including budget restrictions, performance targets, bureaucratic accountability and other externally imposed standards (Evetts, 2009, 2013). Compliance with organisational standards and targets is deemed as professional behaviour, while failure is seen as acting unprofessionally (Evetts, 2003, 2006, 2011b; Muzio and Kirkpatrick, 2011). Obedience to this organisational efficiency and externally set targets means that discretion is prescribed and autonomy circumscribed and controlled in ways that may be counter-productive to addressing a client’s needs (Fournier, 1999; Evetts, 2006).

The influence of such organisational constraints on professional practice can be mitigated when the organisation is managed by professionals, or when the services of the profession are in short supply (Wilensky, 1964). It is also the case that even when professionals are constrained by organisational demands, they still retain the social esteem of being a professional and they still regard themselves as being a professional (Dingwall, 2008).

In conclusion, professions are the structural and institutional arrangements made by a society, to define and regulate community and service-oriented occupations that require skill, judgement and integrity to respond to serious problems that are relevant to the values of society (Johnson, 1972; Evetts, 2003, 2013). These are situations where inappropriate advice could have grave consequences for the individual and wider society (Dingwall, 2008; Evetts, 2011b; Hough and Stanko, 2019). Therefore, the state intervenes and legislates limiting the right to provide professional services to those with the appropriate qualifications and accreditation by the relevant professional body. Professionals deal with uncertainty and risks of modern life, their practices cannot be standardised and are founded on credential entry, a tertiary education, and a research-based knowledgebase (Freidson, 2001; Evetts, 2003, 2013). The relationship between client and practitioner is central, the discretion, analysis of risk, expert judgement and avoidance of the non-standardised service provision are all employed in the interest of the client in the name of the service ideal and the centrality of trust (Evetts, 2013).

Graduate, accredited entry, a professional knowledgebase, and a service ideal provide a triumvirate of interdependent features that provide professionals with the necessary knowledge, skills and authority to undertake professional practice, and are the foundation for the public's confidence and trust in the profession. Cumulatively, these aspects of a profession are mutually supportive and reliant on each of the others. Each aspect is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition, for a professional to practice and gain public trust. It is only in the interplay of accredited entry, research based knowledge, and ethical practice that an activity can lay claim to professional status, along with the status and public trust that ensues (Abbott, 1988). The established professions have been largely successful in this regard and as a result have tended to improve their prestige and trust amongst the public (Fournier, 1999; Evetts, 2011b, 2013).

4.6 Policing as a Profession

The post-industrial, globalised 21st century has created a British society that is multi-cultural, educated, connected, and at the same time, fragmented by: social media, the internet, globalisation, and localism (Christopher, 2015a; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; Newburn, 2017). Instead of the relatively homogenous, deferential society experienced by previous generations of police officers, today's society is individualistic with personal identity framed in a shifting complex combination of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class. Therefore, contemporary policing is conducted in a complex and constantly changing environment, in which various stakeholders place ambiguous and often conflicting demands on policing (Christopher, 2015b). In these circumstances, the Peelian model of geographically based policing by consent struggles to maintain effectiveness and legitimacy (Neyroud, 2011).

The College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council have recognised these issues and contend that the complexity and challenges of modern policing requires the police service to empower officers at all ranks to become autonomous problem-solvers (Hough and Stanko, 2019), able to use evidence-based practice and act in accordance with a code of ethics to provide policing that is effective and responsive to all sections of the community (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; Holdaway, 2017). Achieving

these ambitions, would see the police service becoming a profession comparable to medicine and the law (Neyroud, 2011; College of Policing, 2016c). Members of these professions are seen as critical thinkers, who act autonomously, using evidence-based research to inform their professional practice and decision making. It is envisaged that professional police officers would operate in a similar manner (College of Policing, 2015b, 2018). It appears from these choices that the College of Policing rejected organisational professionalism in preference for a more traditional occupational professionalism (see section 4.5).

As mentioned earlier the question of whether policing is a profession, or a craft occupation, has been a subject of debate for several years (Chan, 1997; Fleming, 2014; Sklansky, 2014; Lumsden, 2017). Sir Robert Mark, and Peter Neyroud, claimed that the police was a profession comparable to the legal profession (Holdaway, 2017; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). Robert Reiner found similar sentiments amongst rank and file officers, who claimed the police was a profession and that a rejection of unionisation and the right to strike gave the police force a special status (Reiner, 1978).

This debate can be traced back to the early days of policing and is informed by two different perspectives on the nature and function of a police constable. A strike in 1918 amongst Metropolitan Police officers led to the setting up of the Desborough Committee to consider police pay and conditions (Rawlings, 2002). The Committee emphasised the special nature of policing, in particular noting the role was complex and varied, and that the constables therefore needed to have above average intelligence, memory, and powers of observation (Neyroud, 2011). The Desborough recommend that it should be illegal for the police to go on strike and that police pay should be standardised across the country at a rate set by the Home Secretary, and that the rate should no longer be based on the pay of an agricultural worker or unskilled labourer, (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988),

‘the Constable was to be a semi-professional man’ (Critchley, 1972, p. 192).

The Desborough Committee took evidence from several police officers and accepted the special status of the police constable,

‘we are satisfied that a policeman has responsibilities and obligation which are peculiar to his calling and distinguish him from other public servants and municipal employees... the burden of individual discretion and responsibility placed on the Constable is much greater than that of any other public servant of a subordinate rank’ (Committee on the Police Service Minutes of Evidence, Cmd 874, Qn. 3,563 Report, paras. 28-9; (quoted in, Critchley, 1972, p. 191).

This acknowledgement of the special role of the constable is challenged by the insistence of the 1929 Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure, that the police were merely, ‘citizens in uniform’, with little distinction from other citizens in terms of powers or duties,

‘The Police of this country have never been recognised, either in law or by tradition, as a force distinct from the general body of citizens. Despite the imposition of many extraneous duties on the Police by legislation and administrative actions, the principle remains that a policeman, in the view of the common law, is only ‘a person paid to perform, as a matter of duty, acts which if he were so minded he might have done voluntarily’. Indeed, a Policeman possess few powers not enjoyed by the ordinary citizen, and public opinion expressed in Parliament and elsewhere, has shown great jealousy of any attempts to give increased authority to the Police....’ (Rawlings, 2002, p. 153).

These two perspectives encapsulate the debate on whether the police are or should be a profession. Is the police function such a mundane one which anyone is capable of undertaking, reminiscent of the historical Office of Constable when the role required no training or extensive knowledge of the law and was rotated on an annual basis between householders. Or are police officers specialists who possess distinctive personal qualities, esoteric knowledge and skills that are needed to undertake to solve the complex problems for which they are responsible with discretion and professional judgement.

A review of the development of policing provides evidence for both sides of this debate. The argument that the police were created and developed as an artisan occupation is

supported by Sir Robert Peel insistence that the police would not recruit men as constables,

‘...who had not the rank, habits or station of gentlemen’ (Gash, 1961, p. 502).

During the 19th Century, the rise of capitalism and the industrial revolution, which gave rise to the Metropolitan Police, saw the parallel development of several professions, including medicine, the law, surveyors, architects, and accountants (Manning, 1977). While these provided very different services, in the 19th century they had at least one thing in common, they all claimed that their practitioners were gentlemen (Wiener, 1992; Burrage, 1996; Rule, 1996). The status of a gentleman conveyed notions of trust, competence, and professionalism to their middle and upper-class clients so both emerging and established professions employed the image of a gentleman in their claim for professional recognition (Burrage, 1996; Evetts, 2009, 2011a). These were clearly qualities that Peel would have wished to be associated with the new police. However, while Peel may have wanted a force that acted professionally, especially compared to the Watchmen they replaced, he also wanted a force that would be, and be seen as, deferential to the respectable classes. This was a political necessity, if the new police were to become established and to survive. While he could convince the respectable classes they had nothing to fear from a workforce of working-class constables, whose deference was almost guaranteed. This would be difficult to achieve if the constables were presented as ‘gentlemen’ engaged in professional practice. Placing them in a similar, or indeed in some cases, a superior social standing to those being policed. The insistence on a working-class force and a rejection of professional status may have ensured acceptance of the new police from the ruling classes, but it made claims to professional status in the 21st century difficult to sustain.

The artisan argument is further supported by the claim that, when compared to established professions, such as medicine, the police possess a limited body of knowledge (Hough and Stanko, 2019; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). Instead of an underlying professional theory, there is a reliance on 'common sense', the criminal law or policy. This suggests that policing problems may lack the complexity and indeterminacy that define professional problems (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017).

The preference for street-based experience and on-the-job training, means that there is little interest or need for external qualifications or academic study (Lee and Punch, 2004; Neyroud, 2011; Christopher, 2015b). Common sense and control of temper are valued over academic qualifications, and the recruitment of officers from working class backgrounds, may fit with the ‘Peelian’ notion that the constable was a ‘citizen in uniform’, a man of and from the people’ (Critchley, 1972; Lee and Punch, 2004; Jones, 2016), but it does little to support claims to professional status. The lack of a nationally recognized entry requirement suggests that policing could be done by virtually anyone (Bryant *et al.*, 2013), and the continued reliance on a rank-based hierarchy undermines claims of practitioner autonomy and subsequently policing’s professional status (Hough and Stanko, 2019).

Furthermore, instead of the collegiate environment and autonomous practice found in most professions, the early constables were subject to constant and detailed supervision and regulations. Waddington has argued that the ‘dirty work’ of policing and the attendant central control means that policing is a craft (1999, p. 234).

It is also an established feature of a profession that they provide a specific specialist service, delineated by clear boundaries of practice based on esoteric knowledge and skills to all members of society (see section 4.3). The new police did establish a recognised monopoly over crime control and public order through uniformed patrol and a bureaucratic enforcement of the law. However, they failed to establish a limit to their responsibilities, and they undertook a variety of disparate duties that went well beyond their initial mandate of crime control (see section 2.4).

The class-based application of policing means that the police do not always provide a consistent and universal level of service to all citizens, a hallmark of a profession. Instead, they focused on policing the poor whilst acting deferentially towards the wealthy (see section 2.4). Furthermore, the use of force and the coercive nature of policing is somewhat at odds with the provision of a universal public good which is the usual meaning of a professional service (Neyroud, 2008; Reiner, 2010).

It is also argued that police officers are simply public officials operating in a bureaucratic organisation exercising administrative and executive powers, subject to organizational rules and norms imposed by supervisors and managers, just like any

other employee (Lustgarten, 1986). There is little of the 'occupational collegiate authority', which is associated with more established professions (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017).

These various features of policing all seem to frame policing as an artisan occupation without the attributes of a profession. However, there are aspects of policing that would endorse the professional nature of policing.

The claim to professional status for the police is supported by the fact that the police are a public service, with a legally enforceable monopoly over policing which is recognised by the public and the state (College of Policing, 2015b; Holdaway, 2017). Individual police officers have a personal commitment to a service ideal and are self-motivated to behave professionally, rather than being driven solely by policies or codes of conduct (Lumsden, 2017).

Despite his avoidance of professional status Peel's adoption of the ancient Office of Constable as a motif for the new police and some of the initial bureaucratic policies and practices of the Metropolitan Police also provide tacit support for claims to professional status (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988). Peel used the Office of Constable to portray his new constables as a rejuvenation of an 'ancient and honourable office', a creation of common law, that was grounded in the traditions of English community policing. The ancient Office of Constable provided the holder with original powers to act in the defence of the people, while being answerable only to the law. It is also the basis of police discretion as a constable's powers are inherent in the office, 'original and not delegated' thereby providing a freedom from the control of elected representatives unique in the public law (Lustgarten, 1986, p. 25). The constable's application of their discretionary powers are judged in law by the concept of reasonableness (Baxter, 1985). Therefore, if a constable acted in good faith then their actions would be lawful (Lustgarten, 1986). The constable exercises their duties as the independent holder of a public office, they are not a servant of the Crown, and neither have Crown immunity nor can they avoid responsibility for their actions by claiming they were acting under orders (Banton, 1964). Although they operate within a hierarchical organization and are subject to lawful orders from superior officers, they cannot be ordered to use their powers, either by Ministers of the Crown or judicial authorities in any specific circumstance. Statute and common laws continue to confer individual powers on a

constable, so they cannot be ordered by a senior officer or anyone else to use, or not use, their powers, such as arrest or search. Their powers are personal so they must have the requisite state of mind that justifies the use of their powers, as they are personally accountable under the law for such use (Lustgarten, 1986). It therefore follows that the use of their legal powers is at the constable's own discretion, this is a personal discretion for which they are personally responsible. They decide whether to investigate, how to investigate, and viewed from a Continental perspective the scope of their authority and lack of oversight is extraordinary (Lustgarten, 1986). Officers still face restrictions on their personal lives, maintaining the uniqueness of the Office of Constable and setting them apart from other occupations. They cannot join a political party or trade union, and the police disciplinary code applies regardless of whether they are on or off duty (Lustgarten, 1986; Neyroud, 2008).

A core aspect of professional status is discretionary decision making, and the necessity of police discretion is widely accepted and is based, to a large degree, on the varied, unpredictable, complex and ambiguous nature of policing situations. It is often difficult to determine, in advance, what specific actions a police officer should take in any given situation (Rowe, 2017). This aspect of policing has been recognised from the earliest days of policing, and regulations allowed officers used their professional judgement and discretion to consider a variety of factors before making a decision (Lustgarten, 1986; Wright, 2002; Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008; Reiner, 2010). So, although policing operates within a hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational structure, it is generally recognised that rank and file officers have discretion in how they complete their tasks. While an officer's discretion may be limited when dealing with serious or high profile crimes (Lowe, 2011), their response to other offences, such as public order or breach of the peace are open to interpretation and officers often have wide discretion in how they enforce the law (Manning, 1977; Lustgarten, 1986; Rowe, 2007; Reiner, 2010; Buvik, 2016). This discretion is somewhat unique amongst organisations because it increases as you move down the hierarchy (Lustgarten, 1986; Westmarland, 2008). There is little legal review of their decision-making especially when they choose to not take any action, and their senior officers rarely have direct oversight of such activities (Lustgarten, 1986; Bradford *et al.*, 2014; Haas *et al.*, 2015; Lister and Rowe, 2017; Filstad and Karp, 2021). The indispensability of street-level police discretion has been justified not only by the idiosyncratic nature of policing situations, in which the law

must interpreted and applied to specific situations, but also due to the fact that the police could never be provided with the resources to respond to every breach of the law, and it could be inappropriate and perhaps even unjust to apply the law without consideration of the circumstances (Nickels, 2007; Reiner, 2010; Diemer *et al.*, 2017). However, while in traditional professions practitioner discretion is generally accepted without comment, police discretion is framed as problematic. It has been seen as facilitating the subjective and capricious use of police powers against marginalised and minority groups, undermining the public expectation of the fair and universal application of the law in all circumstances (Rowe, 2007; Phillips, 2016; Diemer *et al.*, 2017; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021). The disconnect between the structural due process model of criminal justice proclaimed by the legal system and the subjective crime control application of the interpreted law by the police, consistently places blame for deviancy and malpractice on the police officer ([see section 3.2](#)). This undermines the legitimacy of police discretion and their claim to professional status and will have to be addressed to facilitate the successful introduction of a professional police service.

The validation of officer discretion is, to a significant extent, the crux of the professionalisation agenda. The encouragement of the use of professional discretion to resolve problems is fundamental. It would allow officers to operate as moral agents and should be promoted as the use of professional judgement. This would not allow officers to act in a capricious manner as decisions must be justifiable, validated and normalized in a similar manner to that found in the traditional professions (Wood, 2020c). The necessity of such a change was recognised by Peter Neyroud, he argued for the development of professional discretion and trust in police professionals, a position he claimed was supported by the Government provided it was within a democratic framework of accountability (Neyroud, 2011).

This short review of the professionalisation debate has shown that policing has some attributes which support a claim to professional status and others that undermine it. On balance, the police claim is limited and faces several interconnected challenges. Some of these are addressed by the innovations promoted by the College of Policing which are discussed in the following sections.

The College of Policing has framed their vision of the police profession as a traits-based traditional profession including accredited graduate-entry, a professional knowledgebase and a Code of Ethics. It asserted that achieving these traits would

establish the police as a profession (College of Policing, 2015a; Wood, 2020a; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

So, as part of the professionalisation process, in 2020, the College of Policing introduced three graduate-only entry routes into policing (College of Policing, 2020c; McCanney and Taylor, 2023).

4.61 Graduate-entry

In the early 1960s, the Robbins Report on higher education led to an increase in university places, which allowed people from a wider variety of backgrounds to attend university (Lee and Punch, 2004). A consequence of the expansion of university provision was an increase in mandated, accredited professional training undertaken at universities. Despite these developments, the police retained a preference for their own in-house, non-accredited recruit training (Tong and Hallenberg, 2018). National initiatives, such as the short-lived Trenchard scheme of the 1930s and specialist courses at the Police Staff College and Bramshill, had indicated a move from training to education, and engagement with higher education, but these were focused on developing police leaders, and accelerated promotion schemes (Lee and Punch, 2004; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). The tacit implication being that the benefits of a university education were deemed inappropriate or unnecessary for the lower ranks (Wood and Tong, 2009; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). This approach set policing apart from the established professions. In traditional professions the rationale for mandating accredited and licenced tertiary education, is that it provides the universal benefits of critical thinking skills, reflective practice, and the specific understanding of the profession's knowledgebase. It also attracts higher-calibre candidates, standardises their education, and explicitly ties them into the professionalization process and the profession (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2011b; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; Hough and Stanko, 2019).

Instead, police recruitment maintained a focus on finding candidates who could demonstrate the desired character traits by successful completion of in-house assessments, rather than stipulating minimum educational qualifications prior to employment as a constable (Heslop, 2011a; Lee & Punch, 2004). This preference for in-house training accords with the long-standing belief amongst police officers that

policing is an artisan craft, which is learnt on the streets rather than in an educational setting (Hough and Stanko, 2019; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021).

In response to this educational lacuna, in 2020, the College of Policing, mandated that all police recruits would have to hold a degree in policing before they were confirmed in post (Cox and Kirby, 2018; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; College of Policing, 2019c). Under the rubric of PEQF three new degree level entry routes into policing were created: an apprenticeship route for non-graduates, a degree holder programme, and a pre-join degree in professional policing (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). The College of Policing asserted that the PEQF graduate-entry programmes would help to fulfil an aspiration of Policing Vision 2025, that the police service,

...will attract and retain a workforce of confident professionals able to operate with a high degree of autonomy and accountability... ‘. They go on to claim that ‘the new programmes were designed to enhance a police officer’s ability to adapt to change throughout their service. We did this by including the development of skills in problem-solving skills, critical thinking and analysis, reflection, independent decision making and deploying evidence-based practice.

The curriculum was set at degree level as a formal recognition of officers’ knowledge, skills and the necessity of personal judgement in the resolution of policing problems (College of Policing, 2020b, p. 8). The National Police Chief’s Council (2018) expressed their support claiming that the routes provided national consistency and professional recognition for the educational standards of the service.

The College of Policing working in partnership with police forces and higher educational institutions developed the three new level 6 programmes for police recruits (College of Policing, 2020b). The Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship provides an entry route for recruits who do not have a degree level qualification. They join their chosen force following completion of application process and interview. During a three-year probationary period, recruits complete an undergraduate programme of study whilst serving as an operational police officer. They are paid and the degree programme is financed by the force (Pepper *et al.*, 2022).

Recruits who already have a degree in a subject other than policing can apply to the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP). On this two-year probationary programme, recruits serve as a police officer and complete a Diploma in Policing. This course is financed by the force, and the recruit is paid.

The third route is a Professional Degree Programme, this is a traditional three-year undergraduate university course. The student finances their course, and they are not guaranteed a job in policing at the end of their studies. However, if they are successful in joining the police, they should normally only complete a short familiarisation course prior to full operational deployment. The inclusion of a pre-join degree entry route was seen as a way to deal with issues related to on-the-job training, including the deployment of partially trained recruits due to operational pressures (Tong and Wood, 2011; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; College of Policing, 2020b).

These three routes are deemed to be functionally equivalent, providing recruits with graduate attributes and the skills to undertake safe and lawful police patrol (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; Pepper and McGrath, 2020; College of Policing, 2021b). These new in-service courses were co-created by constabularies and their university partners. The curriculum, mandated by the College of Policing, covers police legislation and practices that were at the core of the previous training programme (White and Heslop, 2012; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). In addition, the new routes emphasised the relevance of evidence-based policing and students are encouraged to create and apply evidence-based solutions to policing problems (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Leek, 2020; Pepper *et al.*, 2022). There are modules on digital crime, criminology, evidence-based practices, victimology, public protection, vulnerability, legitimacy, ethics and procedural justice (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018; College of Policing, 2020b). The curriculum also includes problem solving and the critical reflective analysis associated with tertiary education and professional practice (Pepper, Brown, & Stubbs, 2022; Watkinson-Miley, Cox, & Deshpande, 2022).

A graduate education and a grounding in reflective practice should encourage officers to question the ‘habitus of policing’, the way things are done, and the attitudes and values within policing (Clements and Jones, 2009; Wood, 2020a). To achieve a deeper understanding of the communities that they police, and to take a critically reflective view of their duties and obligations in the context of changing societal norms and a

growing evidential base (Wood, 2020a; Sheldon and Williams, 2022). Participation in higher education could also assist officers in resisting the negative aspects of police culture. Research evidence indicates that officers who have attended higher education institutions are more tolerant of others, communicate more effectively, use less physical or verbal force in their interactions with the public, leading to less complaints and higher levels of public satisfaction (Foster, 1999; Christopher, 2015b; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). This suggests that a substantial increase in the number of graduate officers could play a part in the re-legitimation of the police in the eyes of the public (Punch, 2007; Christopher, 2015b).

In mandating a graduate-entry requirement, the College of Policing went beyond the educational recommendation in the Neyroud report (Neyroud, 2011). The rationale was that a level 6 qualification reflects the reality of policing and provide the qualities and transferable skills necessary for the exercise of personal initiative and decision making in the complex and unpredictable contexts found in policing (College of Policing, 2016c). These expectations align with outcomes set out in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education. This states that a level 6 graduate should have a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field and possess coherent and detailed knowledge of their field, including an appreciation of the limits of knowledge in their area of expertise. Furthermore, a level 6 graduate should be able demonstrate the ability to review, consolidate, extend, and apply their knowledge and understanding. They should be able to critically evaluate evidence, arguments, and data, which might be incomplete, to reach sound judgements, to frame appropriate questions, and to identify a range of options to resolve a problem. It therefore follows that a level 6 graduate is expected to demonstrate the ability to exercise initiative and take personal responsibility and so be willing to make decisions in complex and unpredictable contexts. They should also be able to communicate to variety of audiences (QAA, 2024). These are all skills applicable in professional practice and the new PEQF degree level training programmes are seen as an important step towards elevating policing towards professional status (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; College of Policing, 2018; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). They will also equip officers with the skills and knowledge to develop and use evidence-based practice. Thereby, facilitating autonomous, defensible decision-making without the need for intrusive supervision

(College of Policing, 2016b, 2020a; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

The introduction of the new entry routes signals a move away from recruit training to recruit education. The PEQF entry routes are seen as providing a wider and deeper education than the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) (White and Heslop, 2012; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). IPLDP like previous versions of recruit training focused on achieving specific, uniform, and predictable outcomes that are designed to meet organisational demands. There was often a reliance on a limited body of literature with a preference for texts created by and for the police. This was the case even when there is a large body of literature on a specific topic and the training aims were to bring about attitudinal change, such as race and diversity training (Clements and Jones, 2009). Training has been defined as,

‘a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a learning experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to enable an individual to acquire abilities in order that he or she can perform adequately a given task or job’ (Buckley and Caple, 2004, p. 5).

Traditional police training fits this definition, it emphasises the 'how' of policing, in particular the processes, procedures and powers needed by officers. It equips them to perform their role and follow orders but it often fails to fully employ their potential talents and is unlikely to facilitate change (Clements and Jones, 2009).

Buckley and Caple (2004, p. 6) have argued that education is,

A process and a series of activities which aim at enabling, an individual to assimilate and develop knowledge, skills, values and understanding that are not simply related to a narrow field of activity but allow a broad range of problems to be defined, analysed and solved.

This definition of education suggests that it is likely to be more effective in producing officers capable of policing diverse communities than training. The police have responsibilities both to the community and to the individuals involved in any policing incident. These considerations are the ‘why’ question for policing and necessitates an

understanding of the context in which policing takes place (Clements and Jones, 2009). Academic study could challenge preconceived ideas about levels of offending and typical offenders. An understanding of criminology or criminal justice statistics might provide officers with an insight into patterns of offending and victimisation, which could either support or challenge orthodox thinking within the police (Foster, 1999). Informed critical thinking could avoid repeating decisions that, due to a lack of contextual insight into a policing incident, previously led to the misuse of police discretion and the subsequent issues and scandals that have undermined the police in the past (Foster, 1999; Clements and Jones, 2009; Wood, 2020a). An adherence to the content of the PEQF curriculum could also lessen the variation between the standards and practices taught at training school and the reality of operational policing (Charman, 2017).

Police leaders must have confidence in the pre-employment learning undertaken by their constables and not be tempted to re-train them in force (Neyroud, 2011). While the skills of reflective practice and analysis developed within graduate study are important. Those developing the PEQF curriculums must not lose sight of the need for competency within professional practice. The ability to undertake the required practical requirements is vital to any professional practitioner (Waddington, 2013). It is, therefore, essential that there is an ongoing evaluation of entry programs, to ensure that they are relevant to the constable's role. In 2022, the College of Policing conducted a questionnaire survey of 5,580 new recruits which found that probationary officers were generally positive about their experience of the PEQF entry routes. While some PEQF students did express concerns about the amount of academic study required and the provision of protected learning time (College of Policing, 2022a). The respondents were more satisfied with their training than probationers on the IPLDP programme. DHEP student officers held more positive attitudes towards victims and fair treatment of the public than previous student officers, and both PCDA and DHEP students demonstrated a deeper understanding of evidence-based policing and problem solving than previous student cohorts (College of Policing, 2022a, p. 2). Although it is early days, this is an important endorsement of the program. The concerns around academic study should be addressed perhaps by the provision of academic support for recruits who have demonstrated the personal attributes required but have little experience of academic study. This would ensure that less academic recruits are not disadvantaged as happened

on previous training courses that had a university element (Macvean and Cox, 2012; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

Although the graduate-entry programme is only a part of the wider professionalisation process, the graduate-entry programme is a particularly significant development. A university education brings together three essential aspects of a profession. It provides access to esoteric professional knowledge and develops the critical thinking and analytical skills needed for the complex problem solving commonly found in professional practice (Watkinson-Miley, Cox and Deshpande, 2022). While graduate-entry is not a panacea for all the problems facing policing, some commentators claim it is a major step in the right direction (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018). However, it is perhaps too early to assess the impact graduate-entry will have on policing. It has already faced criticism from police leaders and a non-graduate entry has been retained (see section 4.7) (Clarke, 2023).

Graduate entry and the development and employment of a professional knowledgebase have a symbiotic relationship each supports the other to facilitate professional practice. The possession of a research informed professional knowledgebase is the foundation of defensible decision making within professions (see section 4.3). It is therefore important to consider the status and extent of the knowledgebase in policing.

4.62 A Professional Evidence-base for Policing

The possession of a body of knowledge is a fundamental trait of established professions (Greenwood, 1957; Wilensky, 1964; Williams, Brower and Klay, 2016; Hunter, May and Hough, 2019; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). Professionals use their professional judgement to apply this knowledge to the indeterminate problems presented by their clients and this process differentiates them from other occupations (Greenwood, 1957; Ericson, 1997; Gundhus, 2013). The medical profession is an exemplar in this regard, it has a stable body of specialist knowledge, that underpins practice and is a source of legitimacy and trust amongst the public (Hough and Stanko, 2019; McCanney and Taylor, 2025).

The ambition to transform policing into a profession will require the police to base their decision-making on robust validated scientific evidence, that promotes actions that are

ethical and effective (Neyroud and Sherman, 2013; Lum and Koper, 2017; Mitchell and Lewis, 2017; Mitchell, 2019). Developing a knowledgebase to guide professional practice is a new venture for policing, as traditionally policing has been viewed as a craft (Tong and Bowling, 2006; Neyroud, 2011; Willis and Mastrofski, 2018). A craft does not maintain a codified body of professional knowledge to inform practice but instead relies on practical knowledge and skills learnt in the workplace, under the guidance of more experienced practitioners (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Willis and Mastrofski, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). This apprenticeship approach has been widely accepted in policing with the claim that policing is best learnt by doing it (Neyroud and Sherman, 2013; Charman, 2017; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). Police officers have always been suspicious of advice from outsiders, who are seen as lacking an understanding of the realities of police work. This has limited cooperation between policing and academia, police officers often fail to understand or value academic research, while academics are often critical of policing and its practices (Wood, Fleming and Marks, 2008; Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019). Therefore, most police officers, including those in managerial ranks, prefer to rely on their own experience or advice from trusted colleagues over ‘evidence’ provided by academic researchers who have little or no policing experience (Fleming and Rhodes, 2018; Hunter, May and Hough, 2019; Palmer, Kirby and Coleman, 2019). The reliance on ‘learning by doing’ privileges practice-based decision-making, often employing practical workarounds to deal with complex situations (Roberts *et al.*, 2016). There is almost universal respect for experience, it is the foundation of most officer decision making (Lee and Punch, 2004; Lumsden, 2016b), and there appears to be little interest in building or using a research informed knowledgebase instead (Tong and Bowling, 2006; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). This is despite the fact that an over-valuation of experience can limit innovation and its usefulness is questionable when officers are faced with the novel and complex problems (Roberts *et al.*, 2016). The domination of craft knowledge is rarely questioned or challenged by police officers and is reified through stories that portray the police as crime fighters protecting the public (see section 3.2). Through which, officers, especially new recruits, learn ways of working that are validated within the specific context of the crime fighting role (Reiner, 2010; Brown *et al.*, 2018; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

Despite this lack of interest, the development and application of a professional knowledgebase would provide several benefits to the police. A police workforce that is conversant with a professional knowledgebase would have research-based solutions to use in resolving the complex problems of modern-day policing rather than only relying on experience and rank (Lee and Punch, 2004; Jones, 2016; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; College of Policing, 2018). Adopting such an approach would provide defensible decision-making helping to elevate policing to a profession in the eyes of the public (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; College of Policing, 2018; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

The importance of a research informed knowledgebase has been recognised within policing and the College of Policing currently promotes evidence-based policing (EBP) as the best approach to building a professional knowledgebase (Hesketh and Williams, 2017; Hunter, May and Hough, 2019; Thornton *et al.*, 2019). The College of Policing encourages the use of a systematic body of research-based knowledge to assess policing interventions, and it publishes a range of assessed interventions on the 'What Works Centre for Crime Reduction' section of its website (Sherman, 2013; College of Policing, 2015b; Holdaway, 2017; Martin, 2022). It is envisaged that professional police officers empowered by evidence-based practices could become critical thinkers able to make decisions with a high degree of autonomy and professional discretion (College of Policing, 2015b, 2018).

The concept of evidence-based policing was first articulated by Professor Sherman in 1998, he claimed that,

'police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best' (Sherman, 1998, p. 2).

He proposed that the medical model of research, which relies on the use of random control trials and systematic reviews, should be adopted by the police to produce a scientific evidence base to inform their decision making and practices (Sherman, 1998, 2009; Mitchell and Lewis, 2017). This approach privileges quantitative research methods with randomised control trials, promoted as the 'gold standard' research approach. When these are not practicable, other rigorous designs, such as quasi-experiments are acceptable as valid alternatives to assess police interventions (Mitchell and Lewis, 2017; Ariel, 2019; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). The essence of

evidence-based policing is that police actions should be based on rigorous scientific evaluation of empirical research evidence of policing interventions, rather than the current use of untested practices emotions, hunches, customs and anecdotal experience (Lum and Koper, 2017; Mitchell and Lewis, 2017; Huey *et al.*, 2021).

Evidence-based policing has found support outside of policing, the Government has provided funding through the Economic and Social Research Council, and parts of the university sector have worked with the College of Policing to create and share knowledge about what works in policing (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Hunter, May and Hough, 2019). The Society for Evidence-based Policing (SEBP) was founded by a group of UK police officers in 2010, to promote the use of evidence-based policing and now has over 2,800 members (Hunter, May and Hough, 2017; Murray, 2019). Since then, the SEBP and the College of Policing have become key players in both creating and promoting the use of evidence-based policing (Heaton and Tong, 2015). Some supporters of evidence-based policing (EBP) have gone so far as to claim that it is now unethical for the police to fail to implement evidence-based interventions. They argue ethical considerations demand that police decision-making must, whenever possible, be based on robust, validated scientific evidence (Neyroud and Sherman, 2013; Lum and Koper, 2017; Mitchell and Lewis, 2017).

These developments, amongst others, has led to EBP being recognised by some commenters as a new research orthodoxy within policing (Telep and Somers, 2019; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). However, there has been criticism from both academia and the police that the complexity and variability of human behaviour, found in all policing interventions, means that random control trials, while appropriate in the medical profession, are not well suited to policing (Thacher, 2001; Brown *et al.*, 2018). EBP has been criticised for being overly scientific, too reliant on random control trials and systematic reviews. In particular its privileging of quantitative methods tends to exclude qualitative approaches, which could provide valuable knowledge for policing (Wood, Fleming and Marks, 2008; Lumsden and Goode, 2018; Wood *et al.*, 2018; Telep and Somers, 2019). There is a concern, that while experiments are useful for measuring an intervention's effects (Sidebottom and Tilley, 2020), experiments cannot answer questions that do not have a cause-and-effect basis, such as questions about meanings, perceptions, or emotions (Ariel, 2019). Yet these are just the type of questions that police officers need to answer, as they try to understand how individuals

feel, and act as they try to make sense of their worlds. Such complexity cannot be understood simply in purely statistical terms (Neyroud and Weisburd, 2014; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

These criticisms are supported by the notion of tame and wicked problems. The EBP approach appears to be based on the idea that complex problems are solved by the application of scientific theory and that this differentiates them from other problems. Rittel and Weber in their paper on wicked and tame problems present a different perspective. The science paradigm, the basis of professions such as medicine and engineering, is not applicable in the social professions. Social professions are mistaken in thinking that they can solve social problems in the same way as a scientist solves problems. This is because the problems faced in social professions are fundamentally different from those in science professions. The problems found in science have been termed 'tame' problems while those found in the social world are 'wicked' ones (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Problems in the natural sciences are definable and separable and have discoverable and finite solutions. In contrast, social problems are ill-defined and have no fixed solution. The information needed to solve a tame problem can be found by the professional, for a wicked problem the problem definition is often central to its solution. While tame problems have a definite solution, wicked problems are finalised by considerations outside of the problem, often based on costs or the preferences of the problem-solver. In diverse societies, what is satisfactory to one group may be unacceptable to another, and solutions can give rise to other problems (Grint and Thornton, 2015). The solution to wicked problems can rarely be objectively assessed and so solutions are often described as either good or bad rather than true or false (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Tame problems can be defined in terms of cause and effect, they are amenable to resolution through standard operating procedures, and their solutions become routine (Grint and Thornton, 2015). In comparison wicked problems must be understood contextually, they cannot be solved outside of their context. Any imposed solution will influence and change the context of the problem. They often require input from individuals involved in the problem and require consultation and reflection to solve them. Wicked problems are essentially unique and need to be considered as a potential symptom of another problem (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Standardized responses are rarely available, and considerations may include available resources, the expectations of the public, colleagues and superiors when deciding what action to take

(Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008). Framing police problems as wicked problems, and therefore complex, interconnected problems that need reflective and critical thinking makes them analogous to professional problems and challenges the claim that police problems are mundane and solvable by common sense.

The College of Policing's definition of EBP is wider than that proposed by Professor Sherman. Their definition allows the use of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research to produce evidence for the knowledgebase. The College of Policing state that, 'Evidence-based policing (EBP) means that the best available evidence is used to inform and challenge policing policies, practice and decisions'. They go on to claim that, 'research should be carefully conducted, peer reviewed and transparent about its methods, limitations and how its conclusions were reached',

'Where there is little or no formal research, other evidence such as professional consensus and peer review may be regarded as 'best available' evidence, if gathered and documented in a careful and transparent way' (College of Policing, 2025b).

It has been suggested that the College of Policing's more inclusive definition of evidence-based policing is a recognition that all types of research can be utilised in providing evidence to inform policing practice (Lum and Koper, 2017; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

This definition is a recognition of the importance of practitioner participation in the creation of a professional knowledgebase (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). The inclusion of practical knowledge available from the operational experiences of officers would enrich the knowledgebase, and address concerns that their experiences are ignored in the research process (Hesketh and Williams, 2017). It would also provide a context in which the fractured and fraught relationship between practitioners and academics could be overcome (Bradley and Nixon, 2009), and encourage the use of evidence-based practice in day-to-day policing (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Lumsden and Goode, 2018; College of Policing, 2019a). This reflects a growing acknowledgement in both academia and policing that while a scientific approach to research can create evidence, there is value in other sources of evidence such as qualitative or mixed methods research (Lumsden and Goode, 2018; Hunter, May and Hough, 2019; Sidebottom and Tilley, 2020). Supporters of EBP, such as Neyroud and Weisburd, have

expressed a similar view, stating that while experimentation is appropriate for assessing claims of effectiveness there are,

‘equally, in many other cases, more qualitative designs are more appropriate’ (Neyroud and Weisburd, 2014, p. 289).

Whilst this suggests an acceptance of parity amongst research methods, the examples they provided are all experimental designs with qualitative methods in a secondary, supportive, and explanatory role (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

Despite overt support for a variety of research methods, the reality is that the research published by the College of Policing remains predominately based on experimental designs, particularly random control trials. (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). This is mainly due to the use of EMMIE to assess the effectiveness of policing interventions. The College of Policing uses EMMIE an evaluation framework to assess systematic reviews of crime interventions. EMMIE considers, the size of any effect, how it worked, what factors inhibited or facilitated the effect, implementation issues and the economic costs (Johnson, Tilley and Bowers, 2015; Thornton *et al.*, 2019). To merit inclusion in an evaluation, there must be a focus on crime reduction, a clear explanation of research methods and a quantitative measure of crime reduction on interventions (Johnson, Tilley and Bowers, 2015; College of Policing, 2021a).

The requirements of the EMMIE review process mean that overwhelmingly only experimental or quasi-experimental methods are deemed acceptable for inclusion in the database (Fleming and Rhodes, 2018; Mitchell, 2019; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). This inherent privileging of quantitative methods in the review process, has excluded the ethnographic and qualitative approaches that were the basis of early criminal justice research. Such research has been marginalised and its potential to provide evidence for police practice has been excluded from the knowledgebase because it is deemed to lack the objectivity and rigour demanded by EBP (Knutsson and Tompson, 2017; Lumsden and Goode, 2018; Brown, 2020). This has led some commentators to argue that the current College of Policing validation process operates as a technology of control, legitimating what is, and what is not, accepted as evidence for inclusion in the knowledgebase (Lumsden and Goode, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

Interventions that meet the criteria are published on the College of Policing website in the Crime Reduction Toolkit, this is the genesis of a professional knowledgebase (Hunter, May and Hough, 2017; Mitchell, 2019). To date, there are over 70 interventions listed on the Crime Reduction Toolkit, these include hot spots policing, alcohol pricing, car breathalyser locks, and restorative justice (College of Policing, 2025a).

Research suggests that despite the support of the College of Policing and the SEBP, evidence-based policing interventions have had a limited impact on every day, operational policing practice (Sherman, 2015; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018; Palmer, Kirby and Coleman, 2019; Brown, 2020). Several reasons have been suggested for the failure of EBP to become embedded in day-to-day policing practices. The predominance of experience and craft in police decision making is recognised as a strong and resilient barrier to the acceptance of EBP (Sherman, 2015). There is no consensus amongst police officers and managers on the value of research evidence as a way of improving police practice (Hunter, May and Hough, 2017; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). It has also been argued that the findings of EBP are often too theoretical and abstract to be understood or implemented by practitioners, and that the practitioner's voice is rarely heard within the research (Sparrow, 2011; Lumsden and Goode, 2018; Wood *et al.*, 2018).

The implementation of evidence-based practices may also be facing cultural resistance (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). The development of EBP creates a new source of validated knowledge within policing, which has the potential to undermine the traditional bases of police decision-making, such as gut instincts, hierarchy and tradition (Huey *et al.*, 2021). Those currently in positions of rank and authority have achieved their status by being recognized by a system of promotion that privileges tradecraft, tradition, and policing experience over formal education (Herrington and Colvin, 2016; Roberts *et al.*, 2016). They may see little benefit in encouraging research-based practices as their own knowledge of research may be limited, and they have the power to maintain the status quo by continuing to enforce decisions based on their rank rather than research evidence (Mitchell and Lewis, 2017). As previously discussed ([see section 3.3](#)), officers of rank have the authority to define and validate what is police knowledge and practice, leaving the rank-and-file with little involvement or influence (Davis, 2020). Junior officers have found that their views are often dismissed out of hand or

simply ignored when they present knowledge and research findings that challenge existing practices (Williams and Cockcroft, 2019; Williams, Norman and Rowe, 2019). However, if the police are to become a profession, practitioners must participate in the research process, police leaders must be knowledgeable about research, how it is commissioned and resourced, and how it should be evaluated (Martin and Mazerolle, 2015; Huey *et al.*, 2021). If evidence-based practices are to gain traction within policing, leaders must create an environment in which research and evidence-based practices are understood by all officers, and applied in a routine manner to everyday policing problems (Lum and Koper, 2017; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). It is not clear whether the current police leadership programmes are preparing senior officers for this aspect of their role (Huey *et al.*, 2021).

These issues are not unique to policing, the embedding of evidence-based practice in other professions, such as medicine, was difficult and had to overcome entrenched practices and culture. This is likely to be same in policing, and will require cultural and organisational reform that is unlikely to be achieved by evolution (Palmer, Kirby and Coleman, 2019).

To achieve the move from a craft to a profession, policing will have to incorporate the current idiosyncratic, experiential and ‘authority’ approach to problem solving into a codified and evidentially-based body of professional knowledge that is both scientifically and ethically defensible (Greenwood, 1957; Tilley and Laycock, 2014). Allowing discussion with appropriate levels of dissent, diversity of thought and questioning at all ranks would give officers the agency and the autonomy to question what is going on around them and allow them to participate in the creation and embedding of a police professional knowledgebase (Norman and Williams, 2017; Wood and Williams, 2017; Wood *et al.*, 2018).

In conclusion, the availability of an accredited, research-based knowledgebase provides officers with a reference source for defensible decision making rather than the current reliance on personal experience or whim. Adopting such an approach is likely to increase public trust and legitimacy in policing, as officer could articulate their decision making in terms of an established body of knowledge as is the case in other established professions (Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). It could also bring about a move away from experience, rank and ‘years served’ as the arbiter of knowledge to one that is epistemically based (Bryant *et al.*, 2013; Sherman, 2013; Mitchell and Lewis, 2017).

4.63 Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a common feature of traditional professions, professional decision-making involves the use of an esoteric and complex body of knowledge and professional judgement. This introduces an element of subjectivity, which in turn can make professional decision-making difficult to assess and evaluate after the event. In addition, the client often lacks the knowledge to judge the quality of the service they have received. Therefore, professionals must be able to demonstrate they have observed high ethical standards of practice, and by publishing a code of ethics, a profession informs the public of the values and the minimum standards they should expect from the profession (Kleinig, 1997; Sommerfeldt and Loft, 2018).

The combination of esoteric knowledge and professional judgement means that a professional can only really be judged by another professional. Professional bodies establish procedures to deal with complaints against their members. These are often panels of fellow professionals who will use their professional knowledge and the profession's code of ethics to judge the conduct of their colleagues. Professional bodies are normally empowered to remove a practitioner's licence to practice and effectively disbar them from the profession if they are found to have fallen below the professional standards expected of them.

The dependence on peer evaluation and a code of ethics could be criticised as professions setting their own standards and then judging themselves. However, the process is generally accepted by the public, as they recognise their inability to judge individual practitioners and trust the profession to maintain high standards. The collegiate nature of professions, and the personal investment practitioners have made to enter the profession encourages the development and internalisation of standards of excellence, both personally and within their communities of practice. This collegiate commitment is expressed in the code of ethics, which according to Frankel (1989), 'embodies the collective conscience of a profession and is testimony to the group's recognition of its moral dimension' (cited in Sommerfeldt and Loft, 2018, p. 523).

In 2014, the College of Policing published a Code of Ethics, which had a legal status as a code of practice, and aimed,

‘to support each member of the policing profession to deliver the highest professional standards in their service to the public’ (College of Policing, 2014, p. iv).

The published Code of Ethics recognised that police practitioners undertake difficult decisions and described how it underpinned and strengthened existing procedures and regulations, to give the profession and the public confidence that there is a system in place to deal with unethical practices. The Code of Ethics combined the Nolan’s principles in public life accountability, fairness, respect and honesty, with standards of professional behaviour which originate from the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 covering, amongst others, confidentiality, fitness for work and use of force by officers (College of Policing, 2014). The Code of Ethics was seen as continuing the Peelian ambition to gain and maintain the trust of the public and at the same time a step towards professional status (College of Policing, 2014).

Following consultations in 2024 the College of Policing introduced a new non-statutory Code of Ethics claiming that the original Code of Ethics was aspirational and a guide to decision-making rather than a framework for dealing with allegations of misconduct (College of Policing, 2024f). While different professions do have various procedures to deal with allegations of poor performance or malpractice this change does appear to be a move away from the traditional model.

Regardless of these changes, the basis and effectiveness of such publications as the Code of Ethics to establish ethical policing has been questioned. A code of ethics is in essence a set of minimum standards that tend to focus on poor performance and malpractice rather than on the identification and celebration of ethical professional practices of the majority (Wood, 2020b).

Professional standards are often considered in terms of positional duties and legal obligations, these are the expected tasks and behaviours often described in the policies and practices that are ascribed to a particular role (Simmons, 1979; Wood, 2020b). The police have been described as a ‘punishment-centred’ bureaucracy (Waddington, 2013, p. 8). A focus on professional standards, understood in these terms and focused on the negation of bad practice, rather than moral considerations will not necessarily result in ethical policing. Ethical policing is more than simply doing the right thing; it is doing

the right thing within the context of each specific policing incident (Wood, 2020c). This raises two interconnected concepts, moral agency and reflective practice. The concept of moral agency recognises the moral responsibility that is essential to professional practice. While positional and legal obligations are important considerations, they are not deterministic in moral professional practice. Simmons argues that while positional duties in themselves do not carry moral weight, the voluntary acceptance of the role creates an obligation to consider and fulfil legal and positional duties (Simmons, 1979). So, a police officer should not ignore positional duties or simply follow them in a perfunctory way. They must be cognisant of them and fully understand the reasoning behind them, so that they can critically evaluate their applicability in a particular situation (Wood, 2020b). The moral agent must be willing to act as rational actor and have the confidence to make critical decisions on whether a policy or even a legal obligation is relevant in any specific situation and act outside of these considerations if the situation demands it (MacIntyre, 2004; Wood, 2020b, 2020a). This gives the moral agent the freedom to respond in a specific situation as they see fit. However, they cannot act just as they feel or on a whim, they are bound by their professional practice to act rationally in the best interests of their client, the profession and society (MacIntyre, 2004; Schon, 2016). As any individual judgement is liable to error, they must be accountable to critical evaluation by others engaged in practice or affected by the decision. This is an important caveat as it differentiates a considered critical response from mindless deviancy (MacIntyre, 2004; Wood, 2020b). This critical evaluation is not intrusive supervision or the imposition of detailed rules, but professionals assessing decisions in a collegiate environment of self-imposed standards (Greenwood, 1957; Evetts, 2011b).

The extent of reflective practice, and therefore moral agency, permitted to practitioners is determined by the degree of reflective thinking allowed by the organisation and the wider society (MacIntyre, 2004; Wood, 2020b). Therefore, reflective practice can only operate and flourish in a learning organization (Wood 2020c). Reflective practice involves consideration of experience and education, legal and policy obligations, and the wider social and economic factors that provide the context for the policing situation under consideration (Wood, 2020b). This recognition of the importance of the wider contextual environment of ethical decision making was described by Schon as the frame in which professional thinking occurs. In considering the frame and the purpose of their

activities the professional can avoid unthinking habitual decisions (Kinsella, 2008; Wood, 2020c). This also emphasizes that professional practice recognises that morals are expressed in human interactions and moral agents must have the autonomy to act in accordance with their judgement, as any restrictions imposed on them, through policies and legislation, also negate, to some degree, their moral responsibilities (Wood, 2020b).

A profession's dependence on public trust motivates individual practitioners to act, not only in accordance with their code of ethics, but in an exemplary manner to maintain the good name of their profession. Individual professionals are aware that their own standing in the community is intimately connected to the actions of themselves and their peers. Individuals must reflect on their actions and avoid acting in a way that would be detrimental to the profession (Sonnerfeldt and Loft, 2018). Adherence to accepted standards and a professional moral identity is recognised and celebrated amongst practitioners as a valued internal good (MacIntyre, 1981; Evetts, 2003). Internal goods are only achievable by successful and ethical engagement in the practice. This could be the pleasure gained from being known as a good practitioner or utilizing a skill, the achievement of internal goods is only recognised within the profession. Internal goods cannot be achieved by vice, such as cheating and the individual achievement of internal goods benefits the whole community (MacIntyre, 1981). So, when a neophyte professional initially engages in a practice, they must accept the norms, standards, and history of professional practice, and accept their own incompetence. This recognition allows them to gain first proficiency and then excellence in the practice by repeated engagement in the practice (MacIntyre, 1981).

The professionalisation of the police provides an opportunity for the re-legitimation of the police. In recent years the police have experienced a series of scandals, involving officers committing offences, gross misconduct and allegations of racism and sexism (Tyson and Charman, 2023, p. 2). These incidents often led to public enquiries or investigations which were critical of the police, including the Scarman report into the Brixton riots, the Macpherson inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the Hillsborough enquiry amongst others. All of these put the police in the media spotlight and have brought into question police behaviour, effectiveness, performance, and its accountability to the public (Wood and Tong, 2009; Christopher, 2015a). The egregious case of PC Wayne Couzens led the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Cressida Dick to instigate the Casey Inquiry, a review of into the standards of behaviour

and internal culture of the Metropolitan police by Baroness Casey (Baroness Casey, 2023). Amongst other concerns the Casey report found that the Metropolitan Police did not embrace criticism and officers were unwilling to report wrong-doing amongst their colleagues (Baroness Casey, 2023). If the police are to gain professional status, they must recognise that trust is earned, as Waddington points out,

‘professionals are trusted because they *hold themselves and their colleagues to a higher ethical standard* than those that are externally imposed’ (Waddington, 2013, p. 12 emphasis in the original).

The development of a collegiate environment based on ethical practices and moral agency could be a foundation for change. This could be supported by the introduction of professional registration and licencing for police officers as found in traditional professions (Gash and Muir, 2024). This was an early ambition of the College of Policing but was never implemented. Its introduction would provide police leaders with an effective process to deal with officers who had fallen below the accepted standard and would give officers the confidence that if they complained about the behaviour of their colleagues they would be taken seriously.

Regardless of the issues and criticisms, the introduction of graduate entry, a professional knowledgebase and a code of ethics have been seen as essential if the police are to achieve the necessary traits to claim professional status (Heslop, 2011b; Brown *et al.*, 2018; Hough and Stanko, 2019). At its 2015 annual conference, the then chief executive of the College, Alex Marshall, stated that the establishment of a body of knowledge, the publication of the Code of Ethics, a programme of continuous professional development and the licensing and accreditation of officers had secured the police as a classic profession (Holdaway, 2017).

4.7 Benefits & Challenges of Professionalisation

A professional body, accredited graduate-entry, a validated knowledgebase, and a code of ethics are all independent professional traits that are interdependent and interact in a mutually supportive way (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). Each is a necessary, but not sufficient condition, for a profession to practice and gain public trust (Abbott,

1988). In modern societies professions are trusted as knowledge based service occupations able to deal with the uncertainties of life through the application of complex knowledge and skills, obtained through a tertiary education (Evetts, 2013; Green and Gates, 2014; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017).

Therefore, achieving recognised professional status would bring benefits to the police. A professionalized police service of accredited graduate officers, educated to use research evidence to solve problems, and motivated to act in accordance with a code of ethics could act with autonomy and discretion to make decisions that are defensible and ethical (College of Policing, 2015b, 2020a; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; Hough and Stanko, 2019). Professions encourage ethical practices amongst their practitioners through the application and acceptance of a code of ethics, an accredited knowledge base and the collegiate environment of professional practice. These coalesce to facilitate moral agency amongst practitioners. The police could accrue the benefits that stem from a workforce acting with moral agency especially when officers are confronted with complex and contested issues (see section 4.63).

As with established professions, a reliance on a professional decision-making process could encourage a more collegiate atmosphere. Allowing supervisors and managers to have confidence in their officers' ability to make decisions and manage themselves. This could facilitate a move away from the established organisational model of the omniscient patrol officer managed by 'heroic' leadership and intrusive bureaucracy (College of Policing, 2015b; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Davis and Bailey, 2018a). Facilitating a flattening of the hierarchy, a reduction in bureaucracy, and less direct supervision of the workforce (College of Policing, 2015b; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016; Filstad and Karp, 2021).

The reliance on a professional knowledgebase and accredited educational entry standards gives the public confidence in the profession. The development of professional practice in both nursing and paramedic practice has led to an enhanced professional status and attracted more talented individuals (Khalil and Liu, 2019). While the move to higher education has created a strong professional identity and promoted autonomy, discretionary decision-making and reflective practice within both professions (Fernie, Khalil and Hartley, 2019). In addition, research suggests that in both nursing and paramedic practice degree educated practitioners provide better outcomes for their

patients, they are reflective, and have better problem solving and communication skills that their non-graduate peers (Yam, 2004; Norman, 2014; Khalil and Liu, 2019).

There appears to be no reason why the police could not benefit in a similar way by achieving a recognised professional status. Indeed, it is argued that graduate entry will put the police on par with other professions, increasing their status, improving their image and gain them the recognition they deserve (Ferne, Khalil and Hartley, 2019). The attributes of a profession provide both individuals and the profession with cultural capital, which supports public trust and legitimacy in the profession (Hallenberg, 2012; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). The benefits of professional status should be made clear to all officers and staff within policing to promote its adoption not only amongst PEQF graduates but the entire workforce.

While the benefits of professionalisation should be recognised, there are some structural barriers to professionalism that must not be ignored. The College of Policing is suggesting major changes to many of the central tenets of policing and its implementation faces several interconnected barriers (Lee and Punch, 2004; Jones, 2016).

Police leaders have tended to respond to criticisms in an ad-hoc, formulaic manner with the imposition of bureaucratic process and rules designed to negate future criticisms. This has led to a plethora of legal and bureaucratic policy restrictions, which have coalesced to curtail the discretion of frontline officers, to the extent that they increasingly feel deskilled and effectively ‘micro-managed’ (Rowe, 2007; Flanagan, 2008; Heslop, 2011b; Neyroud, 2011; Lumsden, 2016b; Martin, 2022). Some of these bureaucratic controls are so wide ranging that they are applicable in virtually any policing situation (Heaton, Bryant and Tong, 2019; Black and Lumsden, 2020). They include a positive arrest policy in cases of domestic violence (Diemer *et al.*, 2017; Myhill, 2019), the use of body worn video (Rowe, Pearson and Turner, 2018), and the enforcement of National Crime Recording Standards, which place detailed requirements on police forces and officers limiting their discretion in the assessment of incidents (McFadzien and Phillips, 2019). These policies are enforced through the use information technology, so non-compliance is easily highlighted and challenged by police managers (Chan, 2001; Rowe, 2007; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021).

The imposition of such detailed policies and practices is more in keeping with the organisational professionalism described by Evetts (2011a) as a way of maintaining managerial control and authority through hierarchy, than the collegiate occupational professionalism of practitioner autonomy and discretion promoted by the College of Policing (Evetts, 2009; College of Policing, 2015b; McCanney, Taylor and Bates, 2021).

The traditional authority of senior officers to assess and judge the behaviour of their junior colleagues could be undermined by the application of the Code of Ethics. The current Code of Ethics, while not overtly undermining rank-based authority, does suggest that officers should consider not only constabulary expectations, but also how the community would wish them to act. The National Decision Making Model, which operationalises the Code of Ethics and informs police decision-making, allows officers to act outside of policy in justifiable circumstances (College of Policing, 2013). The extension of officer autonomy promoted by reflective thinking and moral agency could further undermine the reliance on rank, which in turn could be problematic for police leaders who are used to being the source knowledge and authority.

In a similar vein, it is generally accepted that professionals do not need intrusive supervision or monitoring (Evetts, 2013; Bacon, 2014). Policing still operates within a quasi-military rank structure in which the leaders are expected to make the decisions, with little consultation with junior officers (see section 3.3). Police leaders' attachment to this rank-based hierarchy may lead them to resist attempts by graduate officers to influence police practices and act based on knowledge acquired through academic study. How PEQF graduate will be treated by the existing workforce is currently unclear, but evidence from previous research on the experiences of graduate officers is not positive. Serving officers, who undertook academic study, reported a greater understanding of policing, they felt more connected to the police organisation, understanding the 'why' in addition to the 'how' of policing. They were more reflexive in their practice and felt they had developed wider transferable skills. However, they experienced indifference or even hostility from their colleagues and supervisors and were given few opportunities to use their newfound knowledge or skills within their roles ((Foster, 1999; Lee and Punch, 2004; Charman, 2017). Hallenberg and Cockcroft (2017) interviewed officers who had undertaken academic studies in policing at various

levels; in general, the officers' reported that their achievements were either ignored, or met with hostility. One respondent, a constable with a degree in criminology, commented,

'Nothing, it means nothing in the [Police Service] to have a degree as a police officer ...' (p. 280). Another stated that a colleague who has a PhD included this on his email signature only to be told to take it off as it '... means nothing', he went on to say that there was, '... very much a culture of a degree is something that you ought to hide' (p. 281).

Norman and Williams (2017) found similar views among a cohort of serving officers who had completed a BSc (Hons) in Policing, they reported,

'a disconnect between the professionalism agenda coming from the COP [College of Policing] and the operational reality in the organisation ...' (p. 8).

Despite the effort they had put into their studies and the knowledge they had gained, they were frustrated and felt undervalued and deskilled by the top-down decision-making processes inherent in the hierarchy. Tyson and Charman (2023) when researching the reasons why officers had left the police reported that officers felt that their academic achievement or external experiences were not recognised in the promotion process. In 2011, Neyroud found resistance to the notion of graduate-entry from officers at different ends of the rank structure, both constables and superintendents expressed concerns that graduates often lacked practical and common sense and had poor communication skills. He also discovered that the preference for the craft approach to police training is still prevalent in policing, with a superintendent commenting that continued professional development should be achieved on the job, '...learn by doing not by course attending' (Neyroud, 2011, p. 80). Such negative attitudes towards PEQF graduate officers and their achievements may frustrate both the individual graduates and the agenda itself (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Norman and Williams, 2017; Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018)

In addition, concerns were expressed that demanding higher educational entry qualifications would mean that the police only recruited from the middle class and that the concept that a police officer is a 'citizen in uniform' would be undermined by the professionalisation agenda, distancing the police further from the public (Neyroud,

2011). There is also a concern that there is a tension between a professionalised police and the concept of community policing (Bryant *et al.*, 2013).

This resistance has continued and after the introduction of graduate-entry, some Police and Crime Commissioners and chief constables expressed criticisms of the scheme (Clarke, 2023). They wrote to the Home Secretary demanding a more flexible recruitment policy including the retention of a non-degree entry route into policing (Police Oracle, 2022). They claimed that the academic demands of the graduate programme meant that recruits were often unavailable for operational deployment. They also argued that requiring recruits to achieve a degree would discourage some candidates from applying, leading to policing becoming a middle class profession (Police Oracle, 2022). Suella Braverman, the then Home Secretary, agreed with this criticism claiming that,

‘Policing is a difficult job with a simple mission to keep the public safe. That takes considerable skill and a strong character. It doesn’t necessarily require a degree. Since 2021, police recruits have had to have a degree or to join as an apprentice while they earn a qualification. This is a mistake. Insisting on degrees is an example of pointless red tape, and I want to get rid of all such bureaucratic burdens...’.

Braverman went on call for the retention of a non-degree entry route (Braverman, 2023). In response to these criticisms, the College of Policing have announced the development of a fourth, non-degree entry, that will be a non-accredited level 5 qualification route into policing (College of Policing, 2023; McCanney and Taylor, 2025).

This opposition to graduate entry is not unique to policing, research into similar employment sectors has found a perceived undervaluing of graduates and the benefits of a university education (Brooks and Rafferty, 2010; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). Project 2000, the introduction of degree entry for nursing, faced similar criticisms, the requirement was seen as ‘qualification inflation’ and the question was asked ‘why do nurses need a degree?’ (Norman, 2014). It was also argued that it would stop those who cared and people with common-sense from joining, and the graduates would be ‘too posh to wash’ (Fernie, Khalil and Hartley, 2019; Khalil and Liu, 2019).

The rationale behind the retention of non-degree entry raises the question of what we expect officers to do and how should we equip them to do it. This issue is central to the professionalisation debate, do we want police officers to simply have the technical skills and knowledge to enforce the criminal law and maintain social order or do we expect them to have a understanding of the social sciences and the history of the communities they have to serve (Charman, 2017, p. 65). This issue is dependent on the extent of police duties, from their earliest days the police have been given a variety of duties that go beyond their core role of law enforcement (Kleinig, 1997; Waddington, 1999). Such an omnibus mandate is problematic within the professionalisation agenda, as professions must have clearly defined boundaries for both their area of expertise and their responsibilities (see Chapter 4).

In defining a professional police service, it must be established what are they expected to do and how are they expected to do it? Achieving consensus on this is a vital first step will not a straightforward task, as despite extensive debate there is little agreement on the duties of the police in a democratic society (Ellison and Brogden, 2012; Manning, 2016). The extent and nature of police duties is important as they also inform the content and focus of police initial training, and as White argues,

'we get exactly the police officers we ask for, and they behave in just the way they have been trained' (White, 2006, p. 397).

Policing can be considered a 'public good', everyone has an interest in a safe and secure society (Neyroud and Beckley, 2001). Indeed, there is an insatiable public appetite for policing and the protection it provides. This is often manifest in the political arena, as political parties rarely suggest a reduction in the policing mandate and instead often demand more policing. There is scant acknowledgement that the concept of 'good enough' policing exists, let alone any attempt to define it (Bowling, 2007). This position accords with Gortz's argument that the concept of 'the sufficient' is,

'...alien to the spirit of capitalism. No quantity, when serving to measure a performance, can be too great' (Gorz, 1989, p. 113).

In economic terms, public goods are understood as being non-excludable, a universal benefit from which individuals cannot absent themselves, and are non-rival, with individual benefits achieved without cost to others (Bowling, 2007, p. 18). In reality,

policing is only theoretically non-rival and non-excludable as its effective implementation requires that some citizens are controlled for the benefit of others (Bowling, 2007).

This coercive nature of policing must be publicly recognised, policing involves empowering a specific group with the authority to dictate how others should act, interfering in their private lives, restricting their rights and using force against them, the coercion of others is inherent in the nature of policing (Waddington, 1999; Reiner, 2010; Wood, 2020a). The question is not whether policing should be coercive, but how to regulate it to minimise discrimination and oppression. Professionalisation could provide some answers to this question, but to frame the problem it is necessary to explore the character of society's current control of the police.

The police currently operate within a myriad of rules which are either statutory or are the product of police policies. While some are internalised by officers and consistently influence their behaviour (Smith and Gray, 1985). Many rules are regularly ignored or interpreted in such a way that their application can amount to unlawful acts by officers (Smith and Gray, 1985; Ericson, 2007). Rules that demand officers provide an account of their action post hoc are also open to manipulation, as officers can use formulaic phrases to frame an acceptable account for their actions that justifies their actions post event and encourage others in the criminal justice system to accept and ratify them (Smith and Gray, 1985; Ericson, 2007). This manipulation of rules and powers within policing has been termed as using the 'Ways and Means Act', bending the rules to resolve incidents quickly and effectively. The fine judgements required when applying rules to specific situations has been recognised outside of policing. When interacting in an experience, an individual uses tacit knowledge and previous experiences to navigate through the situation. A rule is an abstract concept that the individual must impose on an experience. This is a social practice in which tacit knowledge, the experience, and the rule are simultaneously considered in achieving an effective outcome. This practice is, in effect, an ongoing interpretation and reinterpretation of what the rule really means (Ericson, 2007).

In policing rule adaptation has been criticised as an 'ends justifies the means' approach, officers know their actions are on the margins of legality but if criticised claim that their actions are justified as being in the public interest (Ericson, 2007). These situations

often undermine police legitimacy and reduce public confidence in the police. However, these criticisms address only one aspect of law enforcement as they focus on the how the police have applied the law in specific contexts rather the law itself. It ignores the fact that officers are often not technically exceeding their powers or acting illegally, as the law provides a high permissive legal context in which police discretion can operate (Lustgarten, 1986; Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate, 1988; Bacon, 2014). The law, created by political and legal elites, is often written in a way that allows wide subjective discretion in its interpretation and application (McConville, Sanders and Leng, 1991; Reiner, 2010). The criminal law often uses vague terms allowing wide, creative interpretation by the police when it is applied to concrete situations (Ericson, 2007). Offences such as obstructing the police, breach of the peace and public order offences contain phrases that need interpretation by the police officer before they can be applied in the real world (Ericson, 2007). The Public Order Act also includes terms such as 'reasonable' or 'threatening' which again require interpretation by an officer who must judge whether behaviour crosses the line of legality. Anti-social behaviour has never been given a proper legal definition, it is an extremely vague notion that again allows wide interpretation by police officers in its application (Brown, 2004; Ericson, 2007). This places a police officer in the position of defining what behaviour should be prohibited in the interest of law and order (McBarnett, 1978; McConville, Sanders and Leng, 1991).

Statutes that legislate police powers are promoted as providing a balance between ensuring that officers have the appropriate powers to deal with criminality and imposing restrictions on them to protect the rights of citizens. However, police powers are often based on the officer's 'reasonable suspicion' that an offence has occurred, for example the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, allows arrest and search based on an officer's reasonable suspicion. The Royal Commission on Criminal Procedures (1981) accepted that the criterion of 'reasonable suspicion' was open to wide interpretation but considered tighter regulations as being impractical. Its inclusion in the legislation empowers constables to act based on their individual judgement of a situation which is difficult to challenge after the event (Baxter, 1985; Lustgarten, 1986; McConville, Sanders and Leng, 1991).

In addition to this legislative vagueness, the legal system provides considerable leeway for officers to 'interpret' the rules, with the courts only intervening in particularly egregious or high-profile incidents of deviance. It is arguable that the legislature and the legal profession, while professing support for due process, are often complicit in the tacit encouragement of police officers to interpretate legislation and their powers from a crime control perspective (Brogden, 1985; Reiner, 2010). Officers are implicitly encouraged to 'sail close to the wind' when fighting crime then punished when things go wrong (Waddington, 2013, p. 8). In this process, the police become the 'fall guys' for a legal system which proclaims due process while encouraging its agents to respond to incidents from a crime control perspective (McBarnett, 1978; Reiner, 2010).

The permissive nature of the criminal law influences police culture, discretion, and their response in particular incidents. Officers may turn a blind eye to minor offences; they may encourage deference or promote an over estimation of their powers amongst the public to gain compliance. They might also use an individual's ignorance of the law, or suggest that resistance to their requests could be seen as an admission of guilt (Ericson, 2007).

Policing operates within an unfair society often due to social and economic factors over which the police have no influence or viable solutions (Bowling, Reiner and Sheptycki, 2019). Attempting to provide law enforcement in these circumstances is bound to lead to compromises in terms of justice and fairness. Furthermore, officers often must act and make decisions quickly, decisions that could have serious consequences for all parties involved. To consistently make fast and fair decisions is extremely difficult and this needs to be acknowledged when defining 'good' policing (Bowling, 2007).

This combination of pressures is probably unique within modern professional practice, and it is important for a professional police force to establish a consensus, both within and outside of policing as to what 'good' policing looks like. There are special difficulties in defining and assessing 'good' police work, in other sectors the customer or professional standards define the quality of the service, but the contested nature of policing means that it lacks this single privileged viewpoint. Police performance is judged against policing goals, and these are often political and therefore changeable (Reiner, 1998). In addition, the omnibus nature of policing tasks means that policing goals are various and attempts to achieve one can undermine another. In policing it is

often necessary before we can ask ‘what works? It is necessary to ask ‘what matters?’ (Bowling, 2007, p. 23).

If policing was clearly defined and had visible and measurable outcomes the issues around the low visibility of policing would become less relevant (Reiner, 1998). This would require agreement on the how particular policing tactics are to be assessed. For example, the success rate of stop search, assessed on the basis of arrest following the search, is currently 14% (Home Office, 2024). Research has found little evidence that stop search plays a significant role in crime reduction and has a negative impact on the relationship and the community (Miller, Bland and Quinton, 2000). On the other hand, the Home Office have argued that stop search is an important tool for the police, especially in relation to knife crime (Home Office, 2023).

In a process similar to that used by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for assessing the effectiveness of medical procedures prior to their use in the National Health Service. The use of stop and search could be assessed and a decision made as to whether it was an effective police tactic or not. Clearly this would involve achieving consensus on contested and controversial topics, however the existence of NICE suggests that with the political will these controversial decisions can be made.

Professional status needs clear and definable goals, and these will have to be established for policing. An agreement of what is ‘good’ policing is will necessitate a debate on how the police should interpret the vagueness contained in legislation. As without consensus on this and the validity of policing tactics, the police will struggle to gain the public trust that is central to professional practice.

The resistance and issues described above are perhaps unsurprising given that current policing practices and attitudes are informed, and, in some cases, little changed from the early days of policing. The consideration of the attributes of a profession and the examination of police culture, leadership, and its relationship with wider society have demonstrated the extent of the changes needed within policing to achieve the ambition of professional recognition.

The thesis has illustrated the interconnected nature of policing, leadership, culture, internal and external expectations are all interdependent, with change in one area requiring corresponding change in another. The concept of a profession is also based on interconnected features, professional knowledgebase, tertiary accredited education and

collegiate and ethical practice. This implies that the professionalisation of the police will require an intricate network of interconnected, interdependent, and concomitant changes if it is to succeed.

This will necessitate fundamental organisational change, which is difficult to achieve in any organisation and will need concerted and widespread support from a variety of stakeholders both within and outside of policing. The process of organisational change is discussed in the next section.

4.8 Organisational Change

The change envisaged by professionalisation, from a model based on experience and years served to one based on education and knowledge is likely to meet resistance from a variety of stakeholders (Roberts *et al.*, 2016; McCanney and Taylor, 2023). It is generally accepted that successful organisational change in policing is particularly difficult to achieve (Skogan, 2008; Westmarland, 2008; Myhill and Bradford, 2013). It cannot be taken for granted that the rank-and-file would welcome such a change.

Evidence suggested that they have little interest in organizational change, preferring the status quo with its known duties and accountabilities (see section 3.3). Police culture can resist change and new working practices are only likely to be accepted if they are beneficial to officers and are meaningful in the context of officers' experiences, as Bacon claims,

‘ As a general rule, however, this will occur only if new ways of working are considered to work better than existing practices and make more sense than traditional understandings’ (Bacon, 2014, p. 115).

It is widely recognised within policing that major innovations, such as PEQF, have little chance of success if they do not have the public and sustained support of senior officers, without such support the whole project will struggle to survive (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015; Martin *et al.*, 2017; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). It is unclear if senior police leaders are truly committed to driving the changes needed (see section 3.3). However, even if they are supportive of professionalisation they still face difficult decisions in its implementation. Police leaders could use the natural obedience ingrained in police occupational culture and their power within the hierarchy to simply impose it from the

top. However, any such change may only be surface deep and is likely to be reversed without constant enforcement (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015).

They could implement the development of a consultative leadership style. This would encourage all those in positions of authority to actively support their staff to become active agents and participate in collaborative decision-making (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). While this would be more aligned to the management of professional practice, it may face resistance from junior leaders who are comfortable with the current management style and see little benefit in adopting an approach in which they share power with subordinates and encourage them to challenge their decisions and the status quo (Martin *et al.*, 2017).

It is well established within the business world that successful change, such as is needed for the professionalisation of policing, is difficult to achieve (Burnes and Jackson, 2011). Organisational change theory argues that if employees, such as police supervisors and managers, feel that the proposed organisational change will undermine their authority and influence, they are likely to resist its implementation (Murthy, 2007; Hayes, 2014). Individuals are likely to resist change if they feel that the change will put them at a disadvantage, especially if they feel they lack the skills and knowledge to compete in the new reality (Spector, 2013; Hayes, 2014). Previously the police have not required any formal qualifications from recruits, and so, in comparison, to other professions they have recruited few graduates. A consequence of this is that most officers do not have any experience of graduate study or academic research, how to conduct it, how to interpret it. Officers employed before these innovations may be dismissive of the change, particularly if they see it of little benefit to them personally or as an unwarranted distraction in an already overworked and stressful work environment (Murthy, 2007; Spector, 2013). In addition, police officers are not employees but servants of the Crown, this means that while they are subject to dismissal for gross misconduct they are not at risk from redundancy. Therefore, this threat, which is often a change driver in other industries, is not a factor in organisational change in the police.

The first stage of any successful organisational change process is to motivate people to accept that the change is a necessity. Organisations can become inert, practices and polices become established and routine, a commitment to the status quo develops and the necessity for innovation and change is either resisted or ignored (Hayes, 2014; Cameron and Green, 2015). Organisations, despite facing constant pressures to change,

tend to prefer maintaining their homeostasis. The tendency towards retaining their current state rather than to innovate is often so powerful that the organisation needs to be facing a crisis before the need to change becomes accepted (Schein, 2017). Policing will not face an existential crisis that often ‘unfreezes’ organisations and motivates individuals to accept that the current situation is untenable and that change is the only option (Hayes, 2014). However, the benefits of change are numerous ([see section 4.7](#)) and the proponents of professionalisation must convince officers of all ranks of the need for change and the benefits that will accrue to policing especially around increased public trust and legitimation for policing, and personal autonomy and discretion in decision-making. The criticism of a degree-level entry requirement (Clarke, 2023) and the resistance to evidence-based policing (Sherman, 2013) indicate that there is work to be done in this area. This especially pertinent as a reliance on the efficacy of graduate recruits to foster change is problematic.

When individuals join a new organization, they become immersed in the existing organisational culture, the shared values, beliefs, and assumptions about ‘the way things are done around here’ (Weick, 1995; Cameron and Green, 2015, p. 296). Individuals do not automatically accept all the information they are given; they make choices about what and to whom to pay attention. Newcomers tend to focus on who has authority over them and the policies and practices they are expected to follow (Weick, 1995) A recruit’s sense of their identity is constructed as they interact with their world, they act and then observe the consequences. They value outcomes that make them feel they are competent and part of team and to be recognised as such (Weick, 1995; Davis and Bailey, 2018a). This process is embedded within the existing processes and assumptions of the organisation, and it reinforces the status quo. Habits, procedures, and practices become an accepted pattern of response to particular problems. Sense making creates an externally specified reality in which individuals act within preordained roles that identify and constrain their actions and perspectives (Weick, 1995). In the process individual learn to conform with the actions of others and rely on their colleagues to define situations, provide advice or take charge which enhances social bonding (Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg and Giessner, 2007). These shared experiences and habits evolve a shared understanding within organisations of common interests and in so doing develop a sense of the collective ‘we’ a generic subjectivity. This generic subjectivity creates a controlling structure, that facilitates a

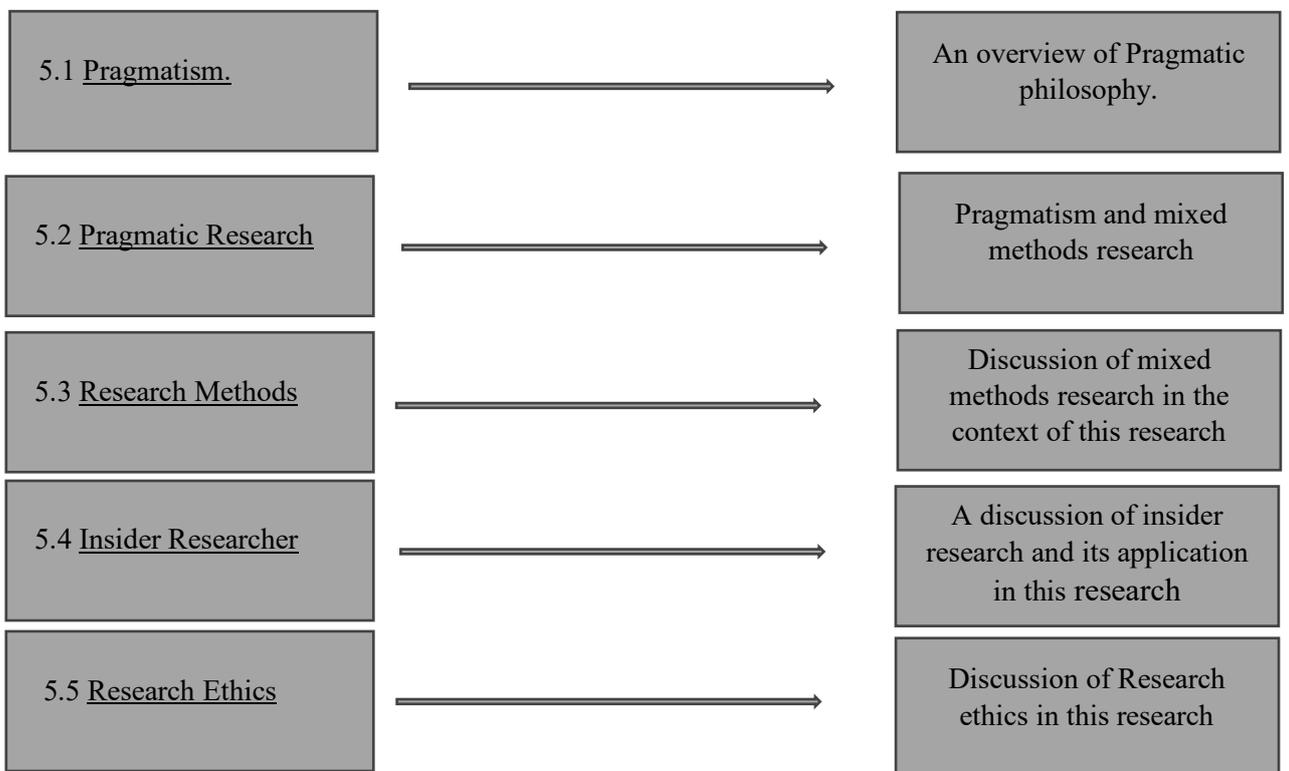
corporate perspective, and as it is independent of any individual, people can leave or enter the organisation without any change to the ongoing world view of how the operational environment works and how it should be controlled (Weick, 1995). While this is generally beneficial it can impose such a controlling influence that it limits innovation and undermines any new world view that reframes the comprehension of the operational milieu of the organisation (Weick, 1995).

This process of sense making and generic subjectivity is clearly a feature of police culture and recruits' initial experiences of policing (see section 3.2). It is highly likely that graduate recruits will be faced with colleagues who are more committed to the existing police environment than promoting change (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). This could mean that the graduate recruits' suggestions for change are rebuffed or ignored. Which in turn might motivate the graduates themselves to reject the notion of professionalism as an unachievable ambition and acquiesce to the status quo (Pollitt and Young, 2009; Filstad and Karp, 2021).

The attitude and commitment of the graduate work force towards professionalisation will, therefore, be a crucial factor in the success of the project, as they are one of the key change agents for the professionalisation agenda. It is, therefore, important to understand the views of the recruits and how they are likely to react to their new role as police officers especially in their promotion of the professionalisation agenda. This is the focus of the primary research which is discussed in Chapters 6 through to 8.

Prior to this the following chapter introduces the philosophy of pragmatism as the theoretical perspective underpinning this primary research. It argues that the real-world problem-solving focus of pragmatism is a natural fit for the research questions considered in this thesis and for other questions under consideration in policing. It proposes that the 'what works' approach of pragmatism would be useful in resolving some of the issues within evidence-based policing. The chapter then describes the research methods used in the three phases of this research project, before considering the insider status of the researcher. It concludes with an account of the research ethics that have guided this research.

Chapter 5: Research Worldview



5.1 Pragmatism.

My research perspective is grounded in the philosophy of pragmatism which adopts a flexible approach towards ontology and epistemology. It privileges the research question; some research questions are suited to a positivistic approach in which knowledge is generated through statistical analysis which can make claims of generalisability. While other questions are best answered from an interpretivist paradigm that generates knowledge through interpretation and aims to generate deep and individualistic meaning and understanding (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Feilzer, 2010). In pragmatism, a search for universal and enduring truth is replaced by accepting truth as fallible and contingent. Knowledge is recognised as true when its application in future real-world situations is successful (Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024).

The philosophy of pragmatism developed out of the thinking of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead in the mid-19th century (Simpson, 2018; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). They did not set out to create a philosophical movement and disagreements amongst them led them to champion different versions of pragmatism (Greene and Hall, 2010; Hookway, 2013; Malachowski, 2013). However, it is generally accepted that pragmatism as a philosophy is anti-foundational, anti-dualistic, and accepts the possibility of multiple realities (Biesta, 2010; Mertens and Hesse-Biber, 2013; Ansell, 2016; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

In pragmatism knowledge is created by an individual intelligently assessing a problem, choosing a possible solution, applying their solution in the real world, and then judging the validity of their solution by the outcome of its application in the real world (Biesta, 2010; Greene & Hall, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This is not solely a mental process, it is an active process of thinking, action, and reflection, it has a physical element, it is literally, ‘something that we do ‘ (Dewey 1916 p. 367 quoted in Biesta, 2014, p. 38).

Problem solving is situated in an existing reality, with a genealogy of problem-solving knowledge that is both communal and individual. This is a layered reality some of these

layers are established and stable while others are precarious and liable to change. This conception of reality allows for objectivity that facilitates predictions and subjectivity that allows interpretative understanding (Feilzer, 2010). Decision making can be creative and novel, but to be cogent it must cohere with previous decision making. This is an iterative process in which successful outcomes from previous experiences are hypothetically evaluated as potential solutions to the current problem situation. Potential solutions are tested, revised, and retested in both a cognitive and a practical process of intelligent reflection (Ormerod, 2006; Ansell, 2016; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism's iterative process and its focus on outcomes has led some critics to claim that it is uncritical and overly behaviourist with a laissez faire approach to power. They claim its focus on expedient successful solutions might lead to the sidelining of more ethical choices. From this perspective pragmatic decisions may overlook moral or aesthetic considerations or provide solutions that are oppressive or unfair to others. Pragmatists have responded that their pragmatic problem solving embeds ethics in its normative approach, thereby incorporating ethics in its practical solutions rather than in abstract philosophical concerns (Ansell, 2016). A pragmatic approach accepts that, because they have been applied successfully in previous problem situations, moral principles transcend specific situations, and provide a general guide to appropriate actions in the future (Hothersall, 2018). At the same time, pragmatism acknowledges that ethical values are created and expressed within social situations, and are, therefore, open to review and revision within situations (Ansell, 2016; Simpson, 2018; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). This is a recognition that there can be genuine ambiguity in moral situations, there will not always be one perfect solution to each moral problem and every practitioner must have the flexibility to respond to the situation as they see fit (Neubert, 2009). Furthermore, pragmatism is an inherently self-correcting process; a successful solution is validated in the real world by solving the current problem. If the solution was based on a previous successful solution then this endorses the original solution as justified knowledge (Ormerod, 2006; Ansell, 2016; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). In such a system it is highly unlikely that solutions that were discriminatory or unethical would be consistently validated as successful outcomes (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019; Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024).

In this validation process some practices become so refined by numerous iterative transactions that they become established truths and although these are not immutable,

they would only be liable to revision by substantial, rigorous, accepted evidence while other claims are novel, ambiguous, less secure and vulnerable to challenge (Hickman, 2009; Neubert, 2009; Feilzer, 2010). Future knowledge creation operates within this layered reality of validated but mutable truths (Reich, 2009; Biesta, 2010). Through this process a social reality becomes established and accepted, but is at the same time open to challenge and change (Biesta, 2010; Buchan and Simpson, 2019; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

Pragmatism is a process paradigm that is founded on activity and experience, which binds subject and object together. It sees the world in terms of interactions rather than as a dualism of subject and object (Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024).

Pragmatism concern with 'knowing as doing' recognises that change emerges out of the relational dynamics of transaction. Inquiry involves a process in which individuals transact with a world, in which they are already situated and embedded. Within these transactional relations the agents both influence the situation and are themselves influenced by other elements in the transaction (Biesta, 2014; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

This foundation in interaction and experiences means that pragmatism accepts that change is inherent in the social world. In a pragmatic reality knowledge is contextual and therefore fallible because it is created within active transactions, in which, because we never know how we or others will act in any given situation there is always the possibility of different actions and outcomes (Hickman, 2009; Neubert, 2009; Biesta, 2010; Feilzer, 2010; Buchan and Simpson, 2019). Therefore, knowledge is not foundational but simply relevant in a particular time and place (Berringer, 2019). In this context Dewey suggests, that instead of aiming for claims of absolute truth, it is preferable to make a claim of 'warranted assertion'. This suggests that a contingent solution might be applicable in other situations but is not expected to be generalisable per se (Biesta, 2010; Greene & Hall, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The concept of 'warranted assertion' recognises that experience includes past achievements and established 'truths', while the notion of 'assertion' acknowledges that the knowledge is contextual, contingent and fallible (Biesta, 2010; Ansell, 2016; Buchan and Simpson, 2019). This is a recognition that pragmatic inquiry relies on previous experience to guide the resolution of the current problem. So, in pragmatism while

knowledge is not deterministic it can guide and influence future decision making (Morgan, 2007; Neubert, 2009; Biesta, 2010; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

The pragmatic approach to truth has been challenged, critics have claimed that it does not offer a commitment to an objective truth and it ignores the possibility that a truth may have an intrinsic value, even without a practical application (Russell, 1961; Hampson and McKinley, 2023; Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024). In response, pragmatism rejects the concept of a universal and absolute truth. Instead, claiming that knowledge can be regarded as ‘true’ if it is tested in real world problem-solving, as this provides an unambiguous, non-relativist criterion for evaluating knowledge (Greene and Hall, 2010; Simpson, 2018; Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024).

To successfully resolve most problem situations individuals must collaborate with others. Individuals interact with others within a pre-existing milieu of mutual meanings and understandings. While knowledge creation can be individual it is often created within joint experience or projects. In these situations, people bring their existing knowledge, values, emotions, relationships, skills, resources and power to problem solving. They cooperate and conflict with each other within culturally established rules and practices. The dynamics of agreement and disagreement provides the basis for creative consideration of possible options for action and the development of ‘warranted assertabilities’ (Ansell 2016; Neubert 2009; Morgan 2007; Kaushik and Walsh 2019).

Interpretations of the world are established within a matrix of relationships and a catalogue of similar past experiences that coalesce to form a schema to interpret the current problem (Elkjaer, 2004). We have a desire to reconcile our beliefs with others and there is a mutual exchange of influence (Stickers, 2009). In considering the various options available the agent imagines the perspectives of other participants. By actively reflecting on these options participants can develop and apply imaginative and co-operative actions. Knowing therefore is a process of learning that is socially situated, those involved are influencing the outcome and are at the same time themselves influenced by the situation (Simpson, 2018; Buchan and Simpson, 2019).

This intersubjective knowledge is both individual and communal and therefore the social world can be neither completely subjective nor completely objective, instead it is pluralistic and changing (Reich, 2009; Biesta, 2010; Simpson, 2018). The meaning of

knowledge is therefore defined within the context of a community and the situation (Biddle and Schafft, 2015). The influence of knowledge is determined by agreement amongst those engaged in making the knowledge, rather than on abstract arguments on the generalizability of knowledge per se (Morgan, 2007). In a pragmatic intersubjective world such agreement is made within ‘communities of practice’. These are groups of individuals who through interest or occupation are competent to research and debate issues in their particular areas of interest. Knowledge is created, used, and validated within these communities (Morgan, 2007; Denscombe, 2008; Feilzer, 2010; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Simpson, 2018). This notion aligns with the concept of research paradigms. Morgan (2007) saw paradigms as,

‘...shared belief systems that influence the kinds of knowledge researchers seek and how they interpret the evidence they collect’ (p.50).

This includes a consensus on what questions should be asked and the most appropriate methods in answering them. Denscombe (2008) reflected that communities of practice had a shared identity, faced common research problems and engaged in formal and informal social networks. A dialectic process of research, debate, and application leads to knowledge that is co-produced and collective rather than individual (Denscombe, 2008; Henry, 2017). Community members in reaching consensus and validating knowledge claims have a shared responsibility for the knowledge which they create (Ormerod, 2006; Greene and Hall, 2010). The concept of a layered reality and the demands of a community of practice means that practitioners cannot believe anything they like or act in capricious manner. They must make decisions within a milieu of previously established and interconnected truths; this encourages a tendency towards an evolution of the existing rules and procedures that are embedded within current practices rather than a revolution and the abandonment of orthodoxy (Neubert, 2009; Reich, 2009; Ansell, 2016; Hothersall, 2018). These qualities make pragmatism uniquely suited as a philosophical foundation to bring theory and practice together (Simpson, 2018; Buchan and Simpson, 2019).

John Dewey claimed that a real world exists beyond our experience of it, this is not static or fixed reality, but one that is continually evolving through an interplay of past, present, and future experience (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). The transactional nature of knowledge creation means that all experiences are equally real and therefore there is no

privileging of scientific knowledge over everyday knowledge, (Biesta, 2010; Greene & Hall, 2010). Pragmatism's acceptance of multiple realities and anti-foundationalism has led to accusations of scepticism or relativism. It is argued that if incompatible experiences of the same phenomenon are equally experientially real, then surely pragmatism is relativist. The pragmatic response is that we cannot begin any inquiry without prejudice, nor can we doubt everything at once, but we can question any individual belief, no matter how strongly held (Bernstein, 1989). If knowledge addresses human interests or needs, then this provides a non-relativist criterion for comparing it to other competing claims (Greene and Hall, 2010; Simpson, 2018; Gillespie, Glăveanu and Saint Laurent, 2024).

Since its conception the popularity of pragmatist philosophy has waxed and waned, and although it has been subjected to criticism (Malachowski, 2013; Wills *et al.*, 2020), it is particularly applicable in research that addresses practical issues and has become popular in education and social world research such as research into policing (Wills *et al.*, 2020; Hampson and McKinley, 2023).

Pragmatism's pluralistic ontology opens the possibility of an 'objective' social world that can be subjected to deductive logic, and an individualistic world of meanings that can be explored inductively (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This reality is not a post-positivistic objectivity in which objects have meaning prior and independent of human consciousness (Crotty, 2015, p. 27). It resonates with a version of a constructionist reality in which meaning is not embedded within an objective reality waiting to be discovered but is constructed by individuals as they interact with the world. This does not lead to a relativistic subjective world with an infinity of meanings but a world in which an individual's consciousness interplays with the objects towards which the consciousness is directed. It is out of this interplay between the objective and the subjective that meaning arises (Crotty, 2015). This social constructionism recognises that the available meaningful interpretations of the world are limited by the historical, cultural meanings that have already been applied to the world (Blaikie, 2007). We are born into a world of pre-existing meanings that guide our understanding, we make sense of the world through a 'system of intelligibility' with a 'system of significant symbols' which are embedded in the cultural lens through which we view the world and which highlights and hides different aspects of that reality (Crotty, 2015, p. 54). Although this constructed reality could be subject to change it is reified by participants to the extent

that they respond and act as if it is an immutable objective, external reality (Crotty, 2015).

The police organisation, in a time of fundamental change, is the subject of this study, its working practices can be traced back to the early days of policing (see Chapter 2), this and its complexity and size mean that it has a reality beyond the individuals who make up the organisation. This is a socially constructed reality at the level of generic subjectivity in which individuals, who share relevant values and beliefs assume a collective identity a sense of 'we', with a shared understanding of the world and schemas to cope with it (see section 4.8).

As Crotty (2015, p. 63) argues, such social constructions are both realist and relativist, social reality exists beyond the control of the individual yet it fails to have the permanency of objects on the physical world and its interpretation is subject to historical and cultural divergence. In researching social reality there are several paradigms to guide the researcher. Amongst these is phenomenology, while there are several versions of phenomenology, a consistent theme is that it aims to understand social reality through the lived, subjective experiences of individuals. Phenomenology claims that people's experiences and understandings are often mediated by social norms that individuals are not always conscious of. To understand the underlying meanings of social reality these pre-existing meanings must be bracketed to allow new meanings to be revealed (Crotty, 2015; Gray, 2017). While this research is interested in the lived experiences of police officers, its focus is on intersubjectivity and the social, rather than an individualistic perspective, nor did it intend to delve beyond the descriptions provided by the participants.

Another useful approach is critical theory, this questions current values and assumptions, it argues that certain groups hold positions of power and oppress and dominate others. These asymmetrical relationships are often either ignored or even endorsed by other research perspectives. Critical theory argues that research is not and should not be value-free, research should challenge traditional power relationships and attempt to bring about change (Blaikie, 2009; Crotty, 2015). However, while power relations within policing feature in this thesis, the research did not aim to uncover or critique these relationships.

A more appropriate concept for this research is George Herbert Mead pragmatic theory of symbolic interactionism which operates at the meso and micro level. It has an affinity with the transactional nature of operational policing, policing historical and social embeddedness and the perspective taken in this research. Its pragmatic insight is how social interaction is crucial in the development of meaning. While realism locates meaning within things and interpretivism sees meaning as emanating from the individual. Symbolic interactionism locates meaning as arising from the interaction of people as they engage in situations with each other (Blumer, 1986).

In symbolic interactionism the individual is a social being, engaged in a variety of situations with other human beings. To make sense of these situations the individual engages in a process of interpretation. This involves a recognition of the type of situation they are participating in, their desires and wants, the anticipated actions of others, their image of themselves and the likely results of any given action. Through these experiences common understandings of situations and objects arise and are generally accepted within the community. To engage in this process of interpretation the individual must be able to contemplate themselves as an objective 'self' and be able to 'take the part of the other' and see the situation from the perspective of others (Blumer, 1986).

These insights facilitate successful interactions by allowing individuals to align their actions with the actions of those around them. Therefore, everyone is engaged in a synchronous process of interpretative interaction (Blumer, 1986). This is not simply the application of established responses, even in routine situations, but a process of interpretation in which meanings established in previous iterations of the current situation may be sustained, transformed or abandoned within the process of interpretation (Blumer, 1986). While it is always the case that an individual has free will and may act as they see fit in any situation. Joint actions are the foundation of human experiences, and to sustain effective society collective meanings are, and must be, established to allow people to act alike (Blumer, 1986).

Symbolic interactionism grounds shared understandings in social interactions. To participate in organised activity, the individual must recognise the category into which an activity belongs. While situations often occur within organisational or group structures, these do not determine outcomes, but they do set the conditions for the

collective actions. They often frame established patterns of behaviour, or common, pre-established meanings that inform the generally accepted and anticipated behaviours for the given situation. These give participants a firm understanding of how they and others should act, and they tend to conform to these patterns. People tend to try to fit their actions, not only with the generalised social attitude, but in line with the anticipated actions of others (Mead, 1972; Blumer, 1986).

However, despite these conventions, joint action is still interpretative, and individuals have free will and can act as they see fit. The self is developed within society, but this does not negate individuality. Societal influences operate in a very broad and general way, that both controls and liberates the individual. In internalising social norms, the individual interprets these norms in the context of their previous experiences and in terms of their own character, allowing for originality and a variety of conduct. (Mead, 1972).

Symbolic interactionism provides a theoretical perspective that reflects the social reality of policing as it is understood within this research. It recognises that officers have agency, but that this agency operates within a framework of norms and understandings that are grounded in historical and cultural practices that have been sustained for generations.

Pragmatism provides an overarching philosophy for this doctoral research which assumes that the intersubjective reality of policing is knowable, with the caveat that any findings are contextual, and generalisable only as warranted assertions. Pragmatism's acceptance of the contextual nature of truth, its notion of a community of practice and its 'what works' approach to problem-solving are useful informing suggestions for changes to policing practices (see section 9.2).

5.2 Pragmatic Research

Pragmatism recognises that all inquiries are undertaken from a particular perspective and serve a particular purpose (Morgan, 2007; Hildebrand, 2013). This 'ends in view' perspective provides a clear benchmark of efficacy by simply asking 'did it work?' (Hothersall, 2018). Therefore, when considering a choice of research methodology, the

researcher should ask ‘what is this for’ and ‘who is this for’ (Feilzer, 2010; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). A contextual understanding of truth allows for a plurality of research methodologies and corresponding validation criteria to be used to inform decision making dependent on the context of the question (Feilzer, 2010; Hildebrand, 2013; Hothersall, 2018). This would allow different methodologies to be validated in ways that are appropriate to their methodology rather than an abstract generalized scientific standard.

Pragmatism’s privileging of the question, advocates that a researcher should choose the method most likely to provide an answer, rather than limiting their choice with epistemological or ontological concerns (Morgan, 2007; Biesta, 2010; Feilzer, 2010; Biddle and Schafft, 2015; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Therefore, the pragmatic researcher chooses methods because they enable the collection of credible, reliable and relevant data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). They are free to employ a single method, multiple methods or a mix of methods depending on which is most appropriate in the situation (Feilzer, 2010; Denscombe, 2017; Hothersall, 2018; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). There is a broad consensus that pragmatism is a natural philosophical framework for mixed methods research (Denscombe, 2008; Creswell, 2018; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). However, it has been criticised by some as a ‘paradigm of convenience’, in which its inherent flexibility makes the quality of research difficult to assess (Hampson and McKinley, 2023, p. 124).

The use of multi-methods has been supported by authors as varied as Lenin and Einstein who have argued that when you are engaged in changing society you should use all the methodologies available to you (Feyerabend, 1993). Despite this, support for the use of multi-methods is not universal. Criticism is grounded in the long running incommensurability debate as to whether qualitative and quantitative data can be combined due to their linkage with different epistemological and ontological perspectives (Burns, 2000; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Bryman, 2016). Researchers adopting the scientific approach, rely on a positivistic philosophy that argues that the social and the physical world are both ‘out there’, external to individual, and that individuals are subject to deterministic processes that influence their behaviour leading to a series of natural outcomes, similar to natural forces acting on the physical world (Neuman, 2011; Denscombe, 2017). The aim of scientific research is to examine and measure this social reality in an objective and detached manner, using a deductive

approach, quantitative methodologies and statistical analysis to test theory and establish general laws that provide a reliable and valid basis for prediction and control of human behaviour (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2009).

Researchers adopting an interpretative perspective see the social world as fundamentally different from the physical world, arguing that human beings give meaning and relevance to their social reality, while physical objects and forces do not (Bryman, 2016). Social reality is created and experienced within interactions that are contextualised by historical and cultural factors, whilst at the same time remaining personal and subjective (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2016). Interpretive research uses qualitative methods to capture and understand the meanings and beliefs that individuals employ within these social interactions (Creswell, 2009; Denscombe, 2017). It is an inductive approach, developing theory as an ongoing part of a research process that accepts the researcher is actively involved in, and influences the research results (Denscombe, 2017). Qualitative approaches, such as focus group, aim to understand meaning and motivation but are unable to produce the generalisable data of quantitative approaches (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Flick, 2011). The subjective nature of the research means that the results are not generalisable but are bounded by context and human caprice (Burns, 2000).

These different ontological and epistemological perspectives have informed the long running controversy about the competency of either of these paradigms to produce reliable and valid knowledge of the human condition. The interpretivist purist views the scientific approach as an oversimplification of the complexity of human experience and meaning, claiming it demeans notions of individual choice, freedom, and morality (Burns, 2000; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). While proponents of the scientific approach claim that the interpretivist approach is unscientific and presents biased subjective opinion rather than credible evidence (Denzin and Ryan, 2007). These differences are the basis of the incompatibility thesis, that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms cannot be incorporated into a single research project and therefore mixed methods is at best superficial (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Bryman, 2016).

Other commentators have argued that quantitative and qualitative methods are not diametrically opposed but share some common ground. They are both striving to find answers to questions that increases knowledge about the human experience. They

operate systematically using empirical processes; to make comparisons and they are open and transparent about their research. (Flick, 2011; Neuman, 2011). This perspective sees qualitative and quantitative methodologies as different ends of a continuum of legitimate approaches to knowledge creation, the results of either being able to complement the other (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2009). Such a continuum would have a third research paradigm in the middle, mixed methods.

As with pragmatism, mixed methods privilege the research question over epistemological and ontological concerns. Each methodology has its own strengths and weaknesses and is suited to answering different types of questions and providing different types of evidence. While there are some enquires where a purely quantitative or qualitative approach would be sufficient to answer a research question. In other cases it will be appropriate to combine research methods to obtain the fullest possible insight into different aspects of the research topic (Denscombe, 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The mixed methods approach uses quantitative and qualitative methods in combination, with a clear description of the sequencing of the methods and which, if any, has priority so that the weaknesses inherent in either approach are compensated by the strengths of the other in order to provide a more complete picture of the research problem (Denscombe, 2008; Feilzer, 2010; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed methods can use deductive, inductive and abductive research strategies to collect credible and relevant data to address the research problem (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023). It has been described as,

‘multiple ways of seeing and hearing’, (Greene, 2007, p. 20).

Although purists on either side of the qualitative and quantitative divide maintain that due to epistemology and ontological differences it is not possible to mix methods (Teddle and Johnson, 2009). Supporters of mixed methods research argue that it can bridge the divide between qualitative and quantitative methods by accepting that research methods are simply techniques of data collection and analysis that do not need epistemological or ontological grounding (Bryman, 2016). Its popularity has grown and it is now often referred to as ‘the third methodological movement’, alongside quantitative and qualitative methods, (Denscombe, 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

5.3 Research Methods

This doctoral research explores the complexities facing the professionalisation of the police, in particular, the implementation of graduate-entry for police recruits. It does this through the experiences and perspectives of experienced officers, and probationers from both graduate and non-graduate training cohorts. It aimed to provide a quantitative account of the prevalence of themes found within the data and to report individual responses to provide meaning and context to the themes and to give the participants a voice. This was achieved by using a variant of the multiphase mixed method design, a series of sequential quantitative and qualitative studies. Each addressing an interconnected aspect of the research topic generating knowledge that contributed to the research topic. This approach allowed publication of each study as it is completed whilst allowing the overall research project to continue. The research had three distinct phases with a particular perspective and purpose. Each phase was given equal priority, was independent and the findings were mixed during the interpretation phase of the research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

The initial phase employed a closed, quantitative questionnaire to explore the views of serving constables. It assumed an intersubjective reality within policing that could be explored by a deductive, quantitative approach. It aimed to understand the nature of the layered reality of decision-making within the constabulary. The focus was on the substance of this reality rather than individualistic meaning. Therefore, the questionnaire hypothesised the effect of experience, graduate education on autonomous decision-making amongst experienced police constables. The results were quantitatively assessed to discover the effect of experience and graduate status on decision-making. This phase is described in detail in Chapter 6.

The second phase of the research used an open questionnaire to inductively explore the views of recruits on their new police role. This open questionnaire was completed at the end of the recruits initial training and prior to their operational deployment. This phase assumed that probationary officers would have individual perspectives on policing but that there would be commonalities due to their successful completion of the recruitment process and their experiences at training school. The subsequent thematic analysis of the data used data transformation to discover the prevalent intersubjective themes amongst the participants. These were then expressed as percentages to assess differences

between cohorts from graduate and non-graduate training courses. This phase is described in detail in [Chapter 7](#).

The third and final stage was a focus group this method was specifically chosen to examine group or intersubjective experiences. It again adopted an inductive strategy and assumed there would be individual perspectives but an intersubjective reality due to common experiences of training and operational experiences. The focus groups were conducted in two phases, sub-groups were created to encourage participation and a variety of responses. Each group produced a poster which were used as the basis of the discussion to try to discover common and prevalent issues within and subsequently between the groups. The data was again subjected to thematic analysis to highlight themes across the different cohorts. This phase is described in detailed in [Chapter 8](#).

Thematic analysis was used in phases two and three of this research to code the data obtained from the open questionnaire and the focus groups. Thematic analysis encompasses a diversity of approaches and perhaps should be viewed as a ‘family of methods’ (Braun and Clarke, 2023, p. 1). It can be employed from a quantitative, post-positivist perspective to a more descriptive, qualitative constructivist worldview (Ormerod, 2006; Nowell *et al.*, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2022). In this research the coding of the data was done in an inductive, descriptive, and semantic manner and from a constructivist perspective.

Initially a large number of themes were developed from the data, these were then refined and combined to produce the final themes reported below (section 7.3) and (section 8.3). The process was inductive in nature with the researcher developing themes from the responses provide by the participants. The responses were coded based on what the respondents had either written or said. There was no attempt to uncover latent meaning within the responses, this semantic approach unlike a latent analysis, where implicit meanings are interpreted by the researcher, focuses at the more explicit level on the words used by participants, so the themes are descriptive and perhaps more superficial (Terry *et al.*, 2017).

The researcher was aware of the possibility of bias and imposing their views on the data and their status as an insider was a factor in the process ([see section 5.4](#)). However, it must also be recognised that a researcher plays a key role in choosing the themes from

the data, and therefore has an influence due to the difficulty of adopting a purely inductive or deductive position (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Terry *et al.*, 2017). To provide a second perspective and a level of objectivity the process and themes were overseen by a second researcher.

One of the strengths of thematic analysis, is that it engages the researcher in an iterative process of reflection on the data, the codes, and the development of themes (Terry *et al.*, 2017). In addition, thematic analysis is not tied to a particular epistemological position and can be used within different research paradigms; therefore, it is a natural fit with a pragmatic research philosophy and is useful in answering a variety of research questions. (Nowell *et al.*, 2017; Terry *et al.*, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2022). It is also seen by some as a bridge between qualitative and quantitative research (Nowell *et al.*, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2022), and therefore is in sympathy with the overall mixed methods approach taken in this research. Thematic analysis is effective in revealing meaning across an entire data set which allows the researcher to discover the collective experiences of participants which is the aim of this research (Braun and Clarke, 2012). In addition to its previously stated aims, this research hopes to provide an exemplar of practitioner research to encourage others. The techniques of thematic analysis are relatively easy to understand and straight forward to use which makes it suitable for inexperienced researchers, such as police practitioners (Nowell *et al.*, 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2022). The research aimed to produce a quantitative account of the views of police recruits and provide direct quotes to give the themes meaning and participants a voice. The use of thematic analysis satisfied both these aims, the analysis provides an indication of the prevalence of themes amongst participants which allows contextual claims to be made about the views of the participants in the quantitative manner that is preferred by police leaders, whilst the inclusion of participants' quotes provides meaning and voice.

5.4 Insider Researcher

'North Force' is a pseudonym for a constabulary based in the North of England, it is one of the smaller constabularies and polices a mainly rural geographical area with some urban centres that have problems connected to unemployment and low incomes. When this research was conducted, I was a serving police constable in North Force and therefore I considered myself to be an insider in the research setting. An insider researcher has been defined as someone who conducts research into a group of which they are already a member (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Greene, 2014). There are strengths and weaknesses to being an insider researcher. The insider has relatively straight-forward access to participants and research environments when compared to the opportunities available to the outsider (Greene, 2014; Kirpitchenko and Voloder, 2014; Stockdale, 2016).

However, this access might be limited and superficial providing only primary access to the research site but not to the specific areas, information or personnel that are relevant for the research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Stockdale, 2016). Organisational status can both facilitate and limit effective access from a research perspective. Researchers holding senior positions may have easy access to their subordinates and confidential information, but they are often excluded from informal networks and conversations that might be relevant to their research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). While junior staff may be denied access to information not available to them in their work role, their access to managers may be difficult and senior figures may be reticent to share their thoughts with junior colleagues simply on the basis that they are acting in a research role (Abalkhail, 2021).

My insider status was beneficial as it provided access to appropriate participants in a setting that was conducive with achieving the aims of the research. This was because during the planning and implementation stages I was employed in a training role at headquarters, my chief inspector was supportive of academic research into the police and readily agreed to officially authorise my request to undertake the research. He also agreed that time would be provided for officers to complete the initial questionnaire whilst they were attending a force wide training course. This level of managerial support was maintained during the subsequent questionnaire and focus groups which

were also conducted while the participants were on duty. This support meant that I had access to enough officers who had the relevant knowledge and experiences to engage as participants in the research. As an insider, I had relatively easy access to police officers willing to participate in the research and meant that the participants trusted and accepted the researcher who understood the language, jargon of policing, all of which can be difficult for researchers outside of the police (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Greene, 2014).

Another benefit of insider status is a familiarity with the participants' situation and shared experiences which provides an understanding of the participants' feelings and perspectives. Participants often recognise this affinity and view the researcher as being knowledgeable, supportive and empathetic towards them (Greene, 2014; Berger, 2015). This encourages a level of trust and a natural rapport between the researcher and the participants. Which encourages greater frankness and openness from participants, and the collection of richer, more in depth data than might be possible for an outsider to obtain (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Berger, 2015; Muhammad *et al.*, 2015). While my role as a police trainer set me apart from the participants who were all operational officers. I was still recognised by the participants as a constable with years of operational experience. I had worked with several of the participants either in the same police station or as part of a force-wide police support unit. I had a more personal relationship with the probationary respondents, I had been involved in delivering at least one aspect of their training, and, for some of them, I had been part of their course leadership team. Police trainers utilise their policing experience in the classroom, so I was accepted as an experienced operational officer amongst the probationer cohorts. Therefore, I believe that I had an established insider status based on my previous role as an operational police constable and my current position as a serving police officer in a training role and that this was recognised and accepted by all of the participants. I believe that I was seen as an individual who had been through similar experiences and that I understood policing and their responses. This meant that I had a generally positive and open relationship with the participants which encouraged a natural willingness to engage with my research.

A further benefit of these shared experiences is that the insider researcher understands the verbal and non-verbal language and jargon used by participants. This insight often

extends to the internal processes, and organisational norms and values that are often unspoken and taken-for-granted within organisations. This inside knowledge is often vital in contextualising and understanding the meaning and significance of participants' responses (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Greene, 2014; Abalkhail, 2021). This insight is particularly relevant in police research because traditionally the police have relied on a belief that a true understanding of policing is only possible by those who have done it (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; Willis and Mastrofski, 2018). The world of policing is also jargon-laden with a never-ending stream of acronyms and abbreviations used to describe everyday aspects of police work. The benefits of an insider understanding was recognised by Young when he conducted ethnographic research into policing whilst serving as a superintendent (Young, 1991). In contrast, McCabe and Sutcliffe admitted they had experienced difficulties whilst researching police decision-making, as they struggled to comprehend officers who they suspected were using a sub-language to exclude the outsider (McCabe and Sutcliffe cited in Young, 1991). I found that due to my policing experience, I was able to comprehend the jargon, conceptualise the setting in which the participants' experiences took place, and the cultural assumptions behind their responses.

The pre-existing relationship with the research environment that is the basis of insider status also brings some unique methodological and ethical issues. The insider must be careful that the views, knowledge and experiences they gained as a practitioner do not influence and taint the research and undermine its scientific reliability and validity (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Greene, 2014). The practitioner experience could, either consciously or unconsciously bias, topic choice, question selection, or selection of participants producing unrepresentative or biased research results (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Greene, 2014). In addition, the researcher's education, position or power in relation to the participants could influence who designs and implements the research and whose voices are heard (Muhammad *et al.*, 2015). In addressing these concerns, I was mindful that the topic choice was driven by changes introduced by the College of Policing's professionalisation process and in particular the PEQF agenda rather than from a personal preoccupation with the research topic. To address concerns of bias in question choice for the questionnaire in phase one I used a pilot survey to gain an insight into the views of serving officers on

the opportunities and the barriers to decision making that they faced, these responses were used as the basis for the questionnaire.

The probationary constables who took part in the second research phase were not involved in the creation of the open questionnaire. On reflection, I decided that they lacked the experience to do so, however in framing the questions I was mindful to keep them as open and generic as possible while maintaining a focus on the research aims. When planning the focus groups, I decided on a two-stage process. The cohorts were divided into sub-groups each group was asked to produce posters of the positives and negatives aspects of their role. I felt that this would encourage participation and ensure that the discussion would be driven by topics of interest to the participants and not the researcher. I believe that involving participants in the creation of the questionnaire, the generic nature of the questions in the probationer questionnaire and the two stage focus groups limited researcher bias as they privileged the views of the participants in the research design.

It is argued that the insider, like most individuals, is so immersed in their milieu with its emotions, contradictions and assumptions that they are unable to gain sufficient distance to enable them to reflect on and understand their situation objectively (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Abalkhail, 2021). It is suggested that this lack of distance can cause the researcher to ignore or fail to explore taken-for-granted understandings and practices that are raised but not explained by participants (Adler and Adler, 1987; Kanuha, 2000; Kirpitchenko and Voloder, 2014). In addressing these concerns, it is important to recognise that achieving an appropriate level of objective detachment and an awareness of their own biases is an important consideration for all researchers regardless of their insider or outsider status. However, due to their close relationship with research environment it is particularly important for insiders to ensure they give due consideration to their positionality and its ability to influence, in both a positive and negative manner, the direction and outcome of the research (Thomson and Gunter, 2011; Stockdale, 2016). This means that they must be aware of their connections to the participants and the need to utilise this closeness to achieve the aims of research, whilst at the same time balancing this with a detached understanding of their research environment (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007; Greene, 2014; Kirpitchenko and Voloder, 2014). This balancing act requires the researcher to reflect on how they are influencing

the research process and the generation of knowledge (Berger, 2015). This should be a continuous, dynamic process of self-awareness in which the researcher considers the influence of their position, their biases, beliefs, experiences, and their power relations with regards to the participants and the research process as a whole. This process of self-evaluation is crucial in terms of the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research (Berger, 2015; Stockdale, 2016; Abalkhail, 2021).

In considering this engaged but detached relationship I recognised it was a widespread, if unrecognised, aspect of policing that I had experienced for many years. A police officer must be impartial and objective in the gathering and presentation of evidence in any criminal case. They must maintain an appropriate relationship with witnesses and suspects to ensure that as much evidence as possible is gathered. As with a research project there are set procedures to be followed to ensure that the evidence is robust enough to put before the court. The experience of working in this way was directly applicable to my role as an insider. I was able to maintain a detached stance when preparing and evaluating my research data as I had previously done when preparing and submitting criminal cases to the court. I feel that my insider identity as a police officer rather than undermining the validity and robustness of the research in fact enhanced the research outcomes.

When reflexing on the potential for a power imbalance to influence the research. I feel there is an important distinction between the research being officially authorized, which allowed officers to participate with the confidence that would not face any sanctions for having taken part and officially mandated which would mean that the officers had to participate. The participants were fully aware of the status of the research and that their participation was entirely voluntary. Furthermore, I was a constable, the same rank as the participants, and my status as a trainer held no kudos for serving officers in fact operational officers have little regard for those in a training or support role (Wood and Tong, 2009). The probationary officers would have recognised that my role as a trainer had an element of 'authority' within the training school. However, the initial questionnaire was completed at the end of their classroom-based training just prior to their operational deployment so any 'authority' that I might have possessed in relation to them was at an end. The focus groups were conducted after the probationary officers had completed a period of operational deployment during which they start to inculcate

the views of operational officers, (Wood and Tong, 2009) so any vestiges of 'authority' were unlikely to influence their responses during the group sessions.

The positions taken by critics and supporters of insider research reflect the dualism between positivist approaches to research which claim that the researcher must be a detached observer who employs scientific procedures to understand the subject, and interpretivists who argue that it is impossible to maintain a level of objective detachment and that the researcher always influences the outcome of research due to the subjective nature of interpretation (Adler and Adler, 1987). Critics of the insider researcher have claimed that this lack of objectivity means that being an insider and a researcher are incompatible, Morse claimed that,

'It is not wise for an investigator to conduct a qualitative study in a setting in which he or she is already employed and has a work role. The dual roles of investigator and employee are incompatible, and they may place the researcher in an untenable position' (Morse, 1998, p. 61).

The concept of indexicality challenges this position by focusing on the highly contextual nature of events. It implies that to understand a given situation the researcher must be cognisant of the identity and background of the actor, the actor's intentions and aims, the setting and the relationships and the history of previous relevant events because people make sense of current events and actions based on their knowledge of previous events (Adler and Adler, 1987). This suggests that outsiders can achieve only a partial or surface understanding as they lack the intimate connections of experience through which a deep and nuance understanding of participants is achieved (Adler and Adler, 1987). In considering this debate and whether an insider and outsider status is more efficacious in research, Fay (1996) questions the notion, 'You have to be one to know one' (p. 9), he goes on to argue that individuals are influenced by such a variety of experiences and personal characteristics, that it could be difficult to know ourselves never mind others. Knowing an experience involves reflection on the experience and being able to translate the experience so as to render it intelligible to others. This suggests that being an insider or an outsider is not the key feature for producing insightful research but rather possessing the openness, and insightful judgement to be able to grasp the significance of an experience (Fay, 1996). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) make a similar claim,

‘the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one’s research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience’ (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 59).

A further complexity to be considered in the insider outsider debate is the claim that we do not possess a single identity that is immutable but numerous identities that are porous and can change over time and place. An individual experiences layers of identities such as race, gender, class all of which overlap and have saliency in multiple ways dependent on the context and their relevancy (Thomson and Gunter, 2011; Abalkhail, 2021). These multiple identities are adopted and shaped by experiences and achieve greater or lesser salience dependent on the situation. This means that while some aspects of identity may be fixed others, such as power relations are unstable and changing and an individual status as an outsider or insider is always in a state of flux (Mercer, 2007; Muhammad *et al.*, 2015; Stockdale, 2016). In some situations the insider instead of benefiting from their relationship with participants, may be disadvantaged if their participants are deterred from sharing with a peer due to a fear they may subsequently judge them (Mercer, 2007). Furthermore, the research relationship can be influenced by personal characteristics, including the researcher’s background and issues of power which could influence the willingness of participants to share experiences (Berger, 2015; Stockdale, 2016). So, as contexts change different statuses are activated or deactivated as the researcher engages with different participants and aspects of the research (Mercer, 2007; Thomson and Gunter, 2011; Stockdale, 2016). Individuals are rarely a match across all characteristics and even those who share several characteristics will differ in the saliency or primacy of their characteristics. This means that a shared identity or experience will also have degrees of distance or detachment for each individual (Abalkhail, 2021). Individuals may not share the same perceptions, so the relevancy of a particular researcher characteristic whether that is being female, gay or a police officer will be dependent on the circumstances and purposes of the research (Mercer, 2007). Group membership may not denote an undifferentiated sameness nor is an outsider completely separated from the group (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

The concept of a layered identity was relevant for me in conduct this research. It is accepted in policing that individuals have multiple identities based on rank and role

(Stockdale, 2016). An officer may have a master identity as a police officer and a salient identity as a firearms officer. This will be their primary identity whilst they are in that role and part of their master identity if they leave the role. I felt that I inhabited the identities of an operational police constable and a police trainer as these were roles that were relevant to my role as a member of the recruit training team. I also possessed an identity as an academic researcher undertaking a PhD and primary research. I felt that the identity of an operational police constable provided an insider identity. While the role of trainer and academic researcher provided the social and intellectual distance between me and the participants and allowed me to gain an analytical perspective (Adler and Adler, 1987).

When considering the multiple identities possessed by the researcher, there is a concern that these roles may have different and potentially conflicting ethical expectations (Greene, 2014). I recognised that this was an issue for me; a police officer is subject to ethical and legal standards that go beyond those expected of the ordinary citizen. I had to consider how my duty as a police officer would impact on my role as a researcher. This potential conflict between the duties of a police officer and researcher was recognised by Holdaway during his covert ethnographic research into his police colleagues. He constantly reflected on how to balance the ethical demands of policing and research (Holdaway, 1983). The overt nature of this research meant that I did not face exactly the same issues as Holdaway, my main concern was that participants might reveal that they had acted in breach of their duties or had committed a criminal offence. I decided that the briefing given prior to the start of the research would include a warning that their responses would be autonomous and confidential, unless the respondents revealed anything that I, as a police officer, had a duty to report. If that occurred, I would report what was said regardless of my duty as a researcher to maintain confidences.

In considering my perspective on this debate I believe that knowledge produced by insiders or outsiders should be viewed as different kinds of knowledge with neither being superior or inferior to the other in terms of objectivity, subjectivity or authenticity (Kirpitchenko and Voloder, 2014). The research question should be privileged when deciding which approach is most appropriate. In this research the focus was on the views of serving police officers and their experiences of policing and how they

conceptualised and understood their role. This is an exploration into the perceptions of police officers, and this may or may not accord with the reality of policing as perceived by others either within or outside policing. For this reason, I believe that an insider perspective was the most appropriate to understand the perceptions of officers, if the ambition of the research had been to explore the outcomes of these perceptions, then perhaps a different approach would be needed.

In addition, being a police officer is a strong and salient insider identity for me and I felt a responsibility to my peers and the police service to accurately represent the research population's perspective and to the honest reporting of my findings (Kirpitchenko and Voloder, 2014). I intended to publish the research findings and I was aware that misrepresenting the participants would undermine my reputation and any possibility of further research opportunities (Muhammad *et al.*, 2015).

Practitioner research has historically often struggled for legitimacy, it has been subjected to criticism and marginalised for a lack of objectivity and validity. Yet, if they are able to bracket their previous experiences then insiders can provide unique insights into the dynamics of individuals, organisations, and the embedded cultural values in the workplace (Adler and Adler, 1987; Abalkhail, 2021). The development of practitioner research within policing has been demanded by academics and the College of Policing both as a way of defining the profession and developing the knowledgebase. This type of insider research is becoming recognised as a means of professional learning and organizational change (Thomson and Gunter, 2011), and should be given a chance to inform the debate on the professionalisation of the police.

5.5 Research Ethics

The research was ethically approved by the associated University Ethics Committee on 22nd January 2017, and written permission was obtained from a senior officer in the police constabulary. Permission to conduct this research was obtained on the basis that officer participation would be voluntary, and the constabulary would not be named in the research, hence the use of the pseudonym 'North Force'.

At each stage of the research the research was explained to the participants, and it was explained that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the

research at any time. Written consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in each phase of the research. They were informed that their responses would be treated confidentially and stored securely and would only be shared in a way that maintained their anonymity. This was subject to a caveat, as the researcher was a serving police officer at the time of the research the participants were informed that if they disclosed that they had committed a criminal offence or contravened police regulations in a way that under the Code of Ethics the researcher, as a police officer, had a professional responsibility to disclose that they would do so, regardless of any responsibility as a researcher.

In the focus groups officers were given the opportunity to discuss their experiences of operational policing. This raised the possibility that officers might reveal personal details of individuals involved in the incidents they were describing. On reflection the researcher decided not to raise this with the participants. The officers were already aware of the necessity of maintaining confidentiality about their experiences both in their professional and private lives. The discussions were being conducted on police premises and all those present were serving police officers. If any personal details were revealed these could be anonymised prior to any publication.

In discussing their experiences of operational policing officers might recall and relive distressing experiences. This could cause them emotional distress or trauma which might necessitate professional intervention. In considering this possibility it was decided to rely on the existing constabulary support. The research was being conducted with the permission of the constabulary, it was being conducted during the officers' working day and on police premises. The constabulary provided an established and professional support services for officers suffering from emotional or mental distress. Officers were aware of these services, and the researcher was not in a position to provide any superior service.

The next chapter covers the initial research phase which was designed to explore the current policing environment in terms of constable's views on their freedom to make autonomous decisions. The rationale for this research was that PEQF graduates would be joining this environment and if it was not conducive to the autonomous decision-making promoted within the professionalisation agenda then it could be a barrier to implementation, with the reverse also being true.

Chapter 6: Discretionary Space Questionnaire

6.1 Introduction

In promoting the professionalisation agenda the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing have claimed that undertaking a policing degree would ensure that police recruits possessed the specialist knowledge and the critical thinking skills required to assess and balance complex policing risks (see section 4.61). Fully conversant with evidence-based policing officers would be equipped to make ethical, defensible decisions that would help to legitimate the police as a recognised profession amongst the public.

This description of the professional practitioner as an accredited, autonomous, discretionary decision-maker is accepted within traditional professions as the natural foundation of professional practice. However, in the context of policing this may be a difficult concept to operationalize. While constables do have discretion in how they perform their role, unlike the medical or legal profession discretion, police discretion is not viewed as the professional judgement of qualified and knowledgeable practitioners. It has also been curtailed by policies and a rank-based hierarchy that limits their opportunities to make decisions (see section 3.3). It within the 'discretionary space' created between rank based decision making, a preference for experience over education and the restrictions imposed by bureaucratic policies that critical thinking graduates will have to establish their professional autonomy and potentially challenge the status quo (Wood and Tong, 2009; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017; Goode and Lumsden, 2018).

The aim of this study was to explore this situation by considering whether police officers in North Force have the freedom and confidence to make the autonomous, discretionary decisions seen as fundamental to professional practice. The professionalisation agenda is predicated on the assumption that graduates will be critical thinkers empowered to make more autonomous decisions than their non-graduate colleagues. It is also possible, given the current structure and management ethos of the police, that those with considerable service may feel empowered to use their discretion

and autonomy, as a result the following hypotheses were generated to examine the possibilities,

H₍₁₎ officers with more police service will differ in their rating of autonomous decision-making opportunities compared with less experienced colleagues.

H₍₂₎ officer who have an undergraduate degree or higher will differ in their perception of decision-making opportunities compared with their colleagues without a degree.

H₍₃₎ there will be an interaction between graduate status and length of service in terms of these perceptions.

6.2 Method

There have been a number of studies into police discretion, e.g. (Rowe, 2007; Myhill and Johnson, 2016; Dymond, 2019) but none have considered discretion in the context of the current agenda of police professionalisation as set out by the College of Policing. A new questionnaire measure was therefore designed to explore how serving officers view 'discretionary space'.

Pilot Study.

To generate items for the questionnaire a purposive sample of 29 constables were recruited for a pilot survey and asked to give their views and experiences of decision-making within policing. All of the participants were operational response constables, selection was based on their attendance on a particular mandatory training programme. They were amongst the first officers to attend the course, and their attendance was organised by the constabulary duty clerks based on officers' shift patterns and availability. The option of using the existing duty rota as a method of selection reduced the opportunity for researcher bias and increased the likelihood that the sample is a

good representation of the target population. Consequently, the participants varied widely in experience and length of service.

The participants were briefed as to the nature of the research, the context of professionalisation of the police was explained, and that their opinions would be used to inform a questionnaire for their colleagues. They were asked to consider and then write down their thoughts on whether their opportunities to make decisions in their role as operational front-line officers was either limited or facilitated by the constabulary. Their responses were themed by the use of thematic analysis (see section 5.3). The employment of similar small-scale qualitative studies to provide the underlying themes for questionnaires has been found to be a useful approach to ensure the relevancy of subsequent question design (Nicklin *et al.*, 2010; Wong *et al.*, 2013).

The main themes identified from the analysis were management and supervisor issues, policy and procedures, and officer discretion. Thirty-eight statements were developed to reflect the themes identified from the participant data; TABLE 6.1 below provides a range of example statements.

TABLE 1: Example statements from the initial questionnaire

Key Constructs	Example Statements
Supervisory Management.	<p>“When a decision is made by an officer, but the outcome is not as expected supervisors do not support officer”.</p> <p>“Often supervisors who are not at the job see a decision differently therefore do not support your decision”.</p> <p>“There is too much involvement from senior managers in the process of lower-level decisions”.</p> <p>“Many sergeants like to micro supervise everything must go through them”.</p>

<p>Officer Discretion</p>	<p>“We don’t get to make that many decisions on our own as there are other departments/officers/processes which monitor and guide our decision-making”.</p> <p>“There are people who are sat in offices making decisions about ongoing jobs telling officers on the ground how to deal with the job.”</p> <p>“Officers no longer seem to be able to use their discretion, pointless arrests”.</p> <p>“Clearly the use of discretion is virtually over. The only time this can be used is if the officer come across it themselves”.</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>“Common sense is limited by incessant policy change and being entirely risk averse as an organisation”.</p> <p>“I often find that I am bound by national guidance that does not meet the needs of the community or investigation that is being conducted”.</p> <p>“Too much bureaucracy while trying to make common-sense decisions or deal with an incident or crime”.</p> <p>“Financial constraints not enough police officers or back-room support”.</p>

To provide an opportunity to check the reliability of the tool, the questionnaire was tested on a further 34 officers selected on the same basis as the initial cohort.

Following reliability testing using Cronbach’s item analysis, the final questionnaire was deemed to have a high reliability $\alpha = .86$. Thirty-eight of the forty-four original statements were retained. These included *‘Bureaucracy prevents a common-sense approach to*

decision making, *'Supervisors are unwilling to make decisions outside of policy'*, *'Supervisors give officers the freedom to handle difficult situations'*, *'My supervisor has a risk averse approach to my decision making'*. The statements included in the questionnaire were grouped to assess the three distinct constructs, Supervisor Management issues: Officers' Discretion, and Policy related issues (see TABLE 6.1 above for examples).

The questionnaire was designed so that participants who felt they lacked opportunities and managerial support to make autonomous decisions would score highly, (Strongly Agree = 5), while those who were happy with their opportunities and support would score low, (Strongly Disagree = 1).

The Discretionary Space Questionnaire

All operational officers at constable rank within North Force, except those participating in the pilot survey, were given the opportunity to participate in the study. At the time the target population was N = 650. One hundred and ninety-seven officers completed the questionnaire while attending the training centre for mandatory training, a further 56 completed the questionnaire in an online format via Online Survey. In total 253 constables completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 39%. There were 14 cases with missing data and a further 4 cases did not include years of service, these were excluded, so 234 cases were included in a two-way ANOVA using SPSS. Respondents included, officers ranging in years of service from 0 to 15+ years. These were broadly classified as probationary (0–2 years, n = 62) or experienced (post-probationary, n = 172), of these 40% were graduates (n = 102) and 60% not (n = 132; the full breakdown for this can be seen in TABLE 2 below).

TABLE 2: Sample group sizes by graduate status and years of service

Graduate		Non- Graduate	
Years of Service	N	Years of service	N
0-2	41	0-2	21
3 -8	24	3-8	32
9 -14	19	9 -14	40
15+	18	15+	39

6.3 Results

Data was coded to calculate the overall total scores for perception of autonomy, as well as the three sub-scales. TABLE 3 details the means and standard deviations for total perceived autonomy scores by graduate status and years of service.

TABLE 3: Autonomy means (and standard deviation) for graduate status and years of service.

The minimum possible score would be 38 and the maximum possible would be 190.

The range of scores (lowest and the highest) obtained for the graduate sample for *Perceived Autonomy* was 68; (minimum of 72, maximum of 140).

The ranges of scores (lowest and the highest) obtained for the non-graduate sample for *Perceived Autonomy* was 85; (minimum of 57, maximum of 142).

	0 -2 (Yrs)	3-8 (Yrs)	9 -14 (Yrs)	15+ (Yrs)	Total
Graduate	97.80 (10.05)	98.04 (13.40)	105.89 (19.75)	105.00 (14.30)	100.64 (14.08)
Non-Graduate	95.00 (14.99)	98.19 (17.27)	105.45 (11.22)	108.64 (12.19)	102.97 (14.58)
Total	96.85 (11.90)	98.13 (15.59)	105.59 (14.34)	107.49 (12.88)	

The descriptive statistics show an overall increase of score across the number of years of service indicating the longer officers are in service, the fewer perceived opportunities for autonomy are seen. This was a similar pattern for both graduates and non-graduates. The data were treated as interval as is typical for Likert scale questionnaire measures (Boone and Boone, 2012). The two-way ANOVA was chosen to explore the effect both independently and in combination of whether an officer was a graduate or not and their length of police service, on how they viewed their opportunities to make autonomous decisions. The graph below demonstrates the increasingly sense of a lack of autonomy as service increases.

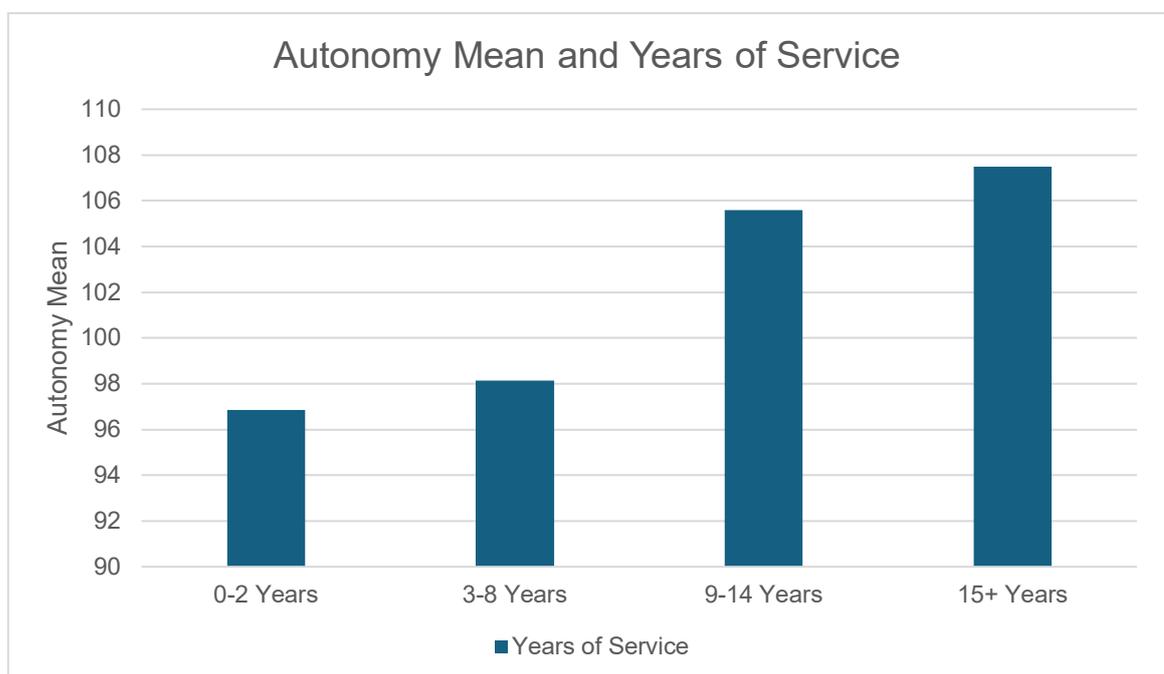


FIGURE 1: Autonomy Means and Years of Service

A 2 x 4 between subjects factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was chosen to allow for the examination of both main and interaction effects of graduate status and length of service on perception of opportunities to make autonomous decisions. The Levene’s test of equality of variance was statistically significant ($p = .002$). This suggests that the variance across the dependent variable is not equal, therefore a more stringent value for alpha was adopted of $p = .01$.

There was a significant main effect of length of service ($F(3, 226) = 7.65, p < .001, \eta^2 .09$). Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons indicated that the majority of the group differences were significant ($p < .01$) with the exception of 0–2 and 3–8 years ($p = .515$).

and 9–14 and 15b ($p = .676$). This finding supports the first hypothesis that the years of service impacts on perceptions of opportunities to make autonomous decisions; with increasing years of service came a perception that there were decreased opportunities to make autonomous decisions.

The ANOVA further revealed no significant main effect for graduate status ($F(1, 226) = .01, p = .944$), indicating there was no difference between graduates and non-graduates in terms of their perception of autonomy, this does not support the second hypothesis of the study. There was also no significant interaction between graduate status and years of service: ($F(3, 226) = .483, p = .695$) which does not support the third hypothesis.

The next stage of analysis involved exploring whether these two factors (length of service and graduate status) impacted on specific constructs within the overall perception of opportunities of autonomy. The questionnaire was designed to examine three underlying constructs based on the issues raised by officers in the pilot study: management and supervisor issues, policy and procedure, and officer discretion. To explore how the length of service and graduate status impacted on these constructs 2 x 4 between subjects multivariate analysis of variance was performed to explore the impact on the combined dependent variable, as well as the individual univariate constructs. Preliminary assumption testing revealed no serious violations of assumptions, except that Levene's test of equality of error variances was statistically significant for the Supervisor Management group, ($p = .024$) and Policy group ($p < .001$). Therefore, a more stringent value for alpha of .01 was used; this along with the use of the MANOVA protected against Type 1 errors. TABLE 4 below details the means and standard deviations for this part of the analysis.

Both the TABLE 4 and FIGURE 2 illustrate a clear increase in dissatisfaction with the capacity to make autonomous decisions across the three different constructs. The table shows that this did not seem to differ very much between the graduate and non-graduate group. Multivariate tests revealed that there was a significant overall effect of length of service on the combined dependent variable ($F(9, 545) = 3.68, p < .001$; Wilks Lambda = .87; $\eta^2 = .05$). The univariate tests were significant for all constructs, supervisor management, ($F(3, 266) = 9.64, p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .11$), officer discretion, $F(1, 226) = 3.87,$

$p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .05$) and policy group ($F(3, 226) = 4.71$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$), indicating length of service impacted on scores on all three constructs.

For supervisor management the pattern was very similar to that described above for overall perceptions, Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons indicated that the majority of the group differences were significant ($p < .01$) with the exception of 0–2 and 3–8 years ($p = .999$) and 9–14 and 15+ ($p = .962$); supporting that the notion that the longer officers are in service, the more dissatisfied they are with constabulary policies and procedures. Officer discretion and policy construct showed a similar pattern, yet the only significant group difference was seen between the 0- to 2-year group and the 15+ group, (for both $p < .01$). This indicates that the more years of service, the more dissatisfied they are with opportunities to be autonomous for these constructs, but these only differ when compared over the longer service period.

The multivariate result revealed no overall significance for graduate status as a main effect, ($F(3, 224) = .82$, $p = .486$; Wilks Lambda = .99), and no significant interaction ($F(9, 545) = .80$, $p = .617$; Wilks Lambda = .97), so the above findings around years of service was similar across the graduate and non-graduate group.

TABLE 4: Construct means (and standard deviation) for graduate status and years of service.

		0-2	3-8	9-14	15+	Total
Supervisor Management	Graduate	34.02 (4.64)	34.00 (7.20)	38.89 (8.99)	38.17 (6.22)	35.66 (6.79)
	Non-Graduate	34.14 (7.48)	34.38 (7.04)	38.78 (5.94)	39.97 (6.00)	37.33 (6.90)
	Total	34.06 (5.70)	34.21 (7.04)	38.81 (6.99)	39.40 (6.07)	36.60 (6.89)
Officer Discretion	Graduate	25.15(2.71)	25.75 (3.65)	26.68 (4.60)	27.06 (3.44)	25.91 (3.50)
	Non-Graduate	24.57 (3.99)	25.84 (4.24)	26.45 (2.96)	27.05 (3.39)	26.18 (3.65)
	Total	24.95 (3.18)	25.80 (3.97)	26.53(3.53)	27.05 (3.37)	26.06 (3.58)
Policy	Graduate	38.63 (3.93)	38.29 (4.65)	40.32 (7.54)	39.78 (6.40)	39.07 (5.35)
	Non-Graduate	36.29 (5.01)	37.97 (7.06)	40.23 (3.98)	41.62 (4.74)	39.46 (5.53)
	Total	37.84 (4.43)	38.11 (6.10)	40.25 (5.32)	41.04 (5.34)	

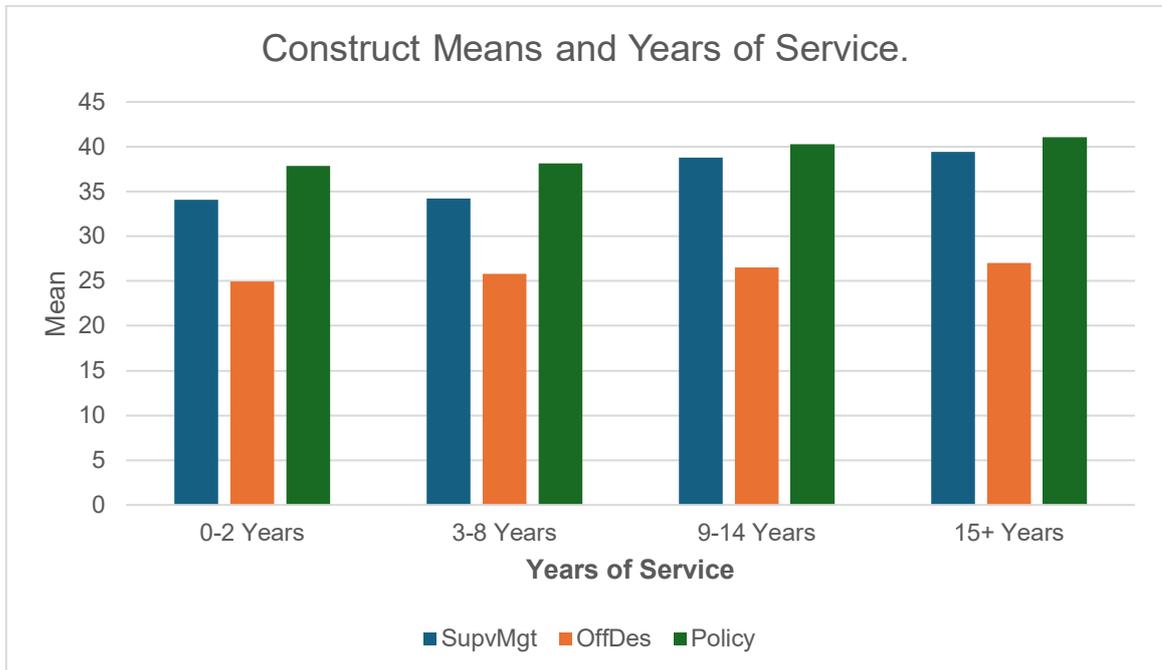


FIGURE 2: Construct Means and Years of Service

6.4 Discussion

The analysis revealed no statistically significant difference in the attitude of graduate officers and non-graduate officers, both groups indicated that they faced barriers to independent decision-making and felt their opportunities to make autonomous decisions were restricted by police management, and policy and procedures. This result suggests that having a degree does not provide officers with enhanced capacity or motivation to persevere in making autonomous decisions in the current policing environment. This finding reflects a position held by Wood and Williams (2017) that whether they have a degree or not appears to make little difference to the performance or employment of currently serving officers. This is perhaps not surprising as it is well established in the literature that police culture and the hierarchical structure of policing coalesce to devalue and undermine the alleged benefits of a university education (Paterson, 2011; Cox and Kirby, 2018; Lumsden and Goode, 2018).

The findings also indicated that experienced officers expressed more negative attitudes towards opportunities for decision-making in the police than their neophyte colleagues. This may infer that coming in to contact with the realities of policing, frustrates and narrows officers' approach to autonomous decision-making. The insistence by police managers on adherence to policy may offer some explanation for why the longest serving group were the least satisfied, however, they were also the least likely to hold a degree. Although this research did not find a significant difference between graduate and non-graduate. It could be argued that, over time as these officers retire, the proportion of officers who are graduates will rise, and this will increase positivity in decision-making. However, previous attempts to encourage organic change via recruit policies have largely failed, for example, the increase in female officers has not led to a fundamental change in police culture (Holdaway and Parker, 1998; Silvestri, 2006).

The effect sizes for the influence of managers and supervisors were large and there was a significant increase in negativity the longer the officers had remained in the force. While this suggests that supervisors and managers are an important barrier to autonomous decision-making it should be noted that they may only be implementing policy and are therefore as constrained in their decision-making as the response officers.

These findings are consistent with the findings of Hallenberg and Cockcroft (2017), that officers with or without degrees seem to have few opportunities to influence practices or participate in meaningful decision-making due to a combination of rank-based decisions and policies that limit officer discretion (see section 4.7), (see also Rowe, 2007; McFadzien and Phillips, 2019). Some senior officers have acknowledged that the current reliance on rank for decision-making has limitations. Ian Drummond-Smith, a senior officer in Devon and Cornwall, argues that while command and control is appropriate in a crisis, for more mundane day to day policing an approach that trusts staff to ask questions, raise concerns, make suggestions and decisions is more appropriate in modern policing (Drummond-Smith, 2017).

Research conducted by Fleming and Wingrove (2017) raised similar concerns about organisational structure and policies restricting the options for change in professionalising the police. This led to demands for police forces to develop procedures, policy and decision-making practices that allow officers to participate in decisions and practice professional autonomy. Including, the development of

organisational justice within constabularies, encouraging officers to inculcate procedural justice in their interactions with the public (Bradford *et al.*, 2014; Haas *et al.*, 2015), or by supporting critical reflective practice as a way of developing police autonomy, allowing officers to critically reflect on all aspects of their role, law, procedures, policies. Such reflection can inspire moral agency, a willingness to question what is happening and self-confidence in personal judgement (Christopher, 2015b; Wood, 2020b). These innovations do not neglect the importance of legislation or police policy, or indeed the rank structure. However, they do require a working environment that allows appropriate levels of dissent, meaningful reflections and a willingness to listen and change (Christopher, 2015b; Wood and Williams, 2017; Wood, 2020a).

While supporting other findings in this area of research, this research does present new insight into the views of serving officers. This research explores the views of both graduate and non-graduate officers and provides insights into the organisational climate that officers educated within the PEQF process will be exposed to. It suggests that a combination of rank-based control of decision-making and polices has effectively restrained individual officer discretion. An occupational milieu in which officers' 'discretionary space' is tightly bounded and shrinking. These are not the conditions in which an occupational style professionalism is likely to take root or organically grow. Professional autonomy requires organisational support and freedom if it develop in the way envisaged by the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council. This research suggests that changes to the organisational structure of policing will have to be made to accommodate to allow the creation of a true occupational profession.

This research phase has provided insight into the environment which graduate recruits undertaking the PEQF entry routes are likely to face once they have completed their initial classroom-based training. If the new recruits are to overcome the barriers to autonomous decision-making by experienced by their colleagues which was described above, they will need a through grounding in professional traits such as evidence-based practice and professional ethics. They will also have to have inculcated a professional identity and be resilient and persistent in using their autonomy and discretion. The following chapter describes the next research phase which explores recruits' views on their role as a police constable. It tries to gain an insight into the extent to which the

new curriculum as inculcated a professional identity amongst the graduate recruits and the depth of their understanding and commitment to the professionalisation agenda.

Chapter 7: Doing the Job Questionnaire

7.1 Introduction

The College of Policing claimed that the three new PEQF new routes would provide recruits with the knowledge and skills to make autonomous decisions, based on a research informed evidence base in a similar manner to established professions such as medicine and the law (College of Policing, 2020b). The curriculum for these entry routes had been developed to facilitate this and included, amongst other topics, evidence-based policing and critical thinking ([see section 4.61](#)).

This is a recognition of the importance of the initial training period as a foundational experience for recruits as it inculcates the attitudes and beliefs towards policing that they will take into the tutor phase and their police career (HMIC, 2002; Charman, 2017; Belur *et al.*, 2019). How PEQF recruits view policing, their role as a constable and the opportunities and barriers that they foresee in their new career will have a profound influence on how they engage with the professionalisation agenda and its ultimate success. This phase of the research focused on the effectiveness of the new entry routes in delivering the College of Policing's ambition by considering the following question.

Does undertaking the new PEQF curriculum inculcate attitudes and beliefs in police recruits that would encourage them to be the confident autonomous professional police officers envisaged by the College of Policing. A workforce enabled and encouraged to both create and employ evidence-based practices to deal with the problems faced by 21st century policing.

This phase of the research was undertaken with student officers who have just completed their initial training programme. It involved the completion of an open qualitative questionnaire which asked them to describe their understanding of their role

of a constable, and the challenges and opportunities they are expecting to face as they go into the operational phase of their training.

The research compares two cohorts of students one cohort undertook their initial training prior to the introduction of PEQF. They studied on the ILDP programme ([see section 2.6](#)). The other cohort undertook the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), part of PEQF graduate programme. The premise of this study is that students from the PEQF programme will express their views on the role of constable, at least in part, in terms of being a professional and the professionalisation agenda. While this perspective will be less evident in the narratives of those students who have studied the IPLDP curriculum.

7.2 Method

At the end of their initial period of classroom-based training, and prior to the start of the operational phase of their training the participants from both IPLDP and DHEP cohorts were asked to complete the same open-ended questionnaire which explored how the recruits viewed their new role, in particular their expectations and concerns. The IPLDP questionnaires were completed in 2018 /2019 and the DHEP questionnaires were completed in 2020. The following questions were asked:

Q1 What does the role of the Constable mean to you?

Q2 What are your expectations of the role?

Q3 What excites you about your new role?

Q4 What barriers or issues will you face?

The participants were free to respond to each question as extensively as they wished.

The questions were devised to avoid any direct mention of the professionalisation process. This was so that the questions were relevant to both cohorts, IPLDP cohorts might have little understanding of the concept. At the same time the questions were phrased to allow participants to include professional traits promoted by the agenda if

they wished to do. So, for example, a participant could state they were excited about making decisions, or that the lack of an extensive knowledgebase might be a barrier. The questions aimed to provide an insight into how much the participants have internalised the notion of the police as a profession before they enter the workforce. This approach to obtaining qualitative data without the responses being 'cued' follows the approach taken by Hoggett (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019).

NVivo software was used to complete a thematic analysis of the participants' responses to identify themes. Each cohorts' responses were coded separately and quantitatively measured so that prevalent themes could be compared across the cohorts and the courses.

The prevalence of each theme was measured by counting the number of participants who contributed to each theme on a question-by-question basis. If a participant mentioned the same theme more than once in response to the same question this was counted as a single contribution to the theme. The results were then expressed as a percentage based on the number of participants for each cohort and then across all cohorts. The findings report the prevalent themes identified and refers to aspects of the professionalisation agenda that were either missing from the responses or were mentioned by a minority of participants.

The results provide a quantitative comparison between IPLDP and DHEP groups and a qualitative insight into officers understanding of their role.

Participants

The sample, which consisted of 102 student officers, is both opportunistic and purposive, the participants were all probationary police officers with North Force and engaged in this research at the end of their initial classroom-based training period. Whilst these officers had no operational experience this was not a disadvantage as this research phase aimed to understand the views of police officers at the end of their initial training period and not the views of experienced operational officers.

All the probationers in the cohorts were asked to participate in the research, so while they were not a random control sample, they did reflect a cross section of recruits in North Force at the time of the research. It is accepted that there will be differences and

similarities between participants in both cohorts, but they all had an ambition to be a police officer and had passed the initial recruitment process. The DEHP cohort was chosen as a comparison with the IPLDP cohort to negate the possibility that studying at degree level, for the first time, could undermine the student's ability to inculcate the professionalisation agenda. The relevant difference between the cohorts is that the participants undertook different courses, the first, IPLDP, a level 3 course that focused on operational competency. The other DHEP, a degree level course, that covered both operational competency and aspects of the professional practice, including topics such as evidence-based policing, problem solving, decision making and discretion, and criminology, these align with aspects of the professionalisation agenda and differ from the IPLDP programme (College of Policing, 2021c). These differences allow meaningful comparisons to be made between the cohorts (Barbour, 2018). Comparing the expectations and concerns of student officers who undertook the IPLDP programme and the DHEP programme will indicate the extent to which the DHEP programme has influenced students in respect of the professionalisation process.

This knowledge will help to inform the debate around the implementation of PEQF by providing insight into students' officers' views and thereby indicate potential changes to existing practice and structures to support their acceptance and adoption of the professionalisation process.

IPLDP Cohorts

This cohort were enrolled on the IPLDP training programme and started their initial training in 2018, prior to the start of the professionalisation process and the introduction of the PEQF graduate-entry programme.

Each IPLDP cohort followed a 20-week initial classroom-based training programme that focused on the criminal law and police procedures at Police Headquarters. Students also participated in an operational shift that introduced them to their colleagues and practical policing. They also completed a community attachment which involved working with service providers in their local community. Both gave the students practical experience of being a police officer.

In 2018 North Force recruited 103 probationary Constables, they all undertook the standard Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) for police

recruits. In total 71 students participated in this research they came from cohorts C18 – G18. TABLE 5 shows number of research participants in each cohort.

TABLE 5: Number of research participants in IPLDP cohorts.

Cohort Name	C18	D18	E18	F18	G18
Number of students	16	17	14	18	6

DHEP Cohorts

The second cohort were one of the first groups of graduates on the Degree Holder Entry Programme. This is part of the PEQF programme, and recruits graduates who hold non-policing degrees into the police. They complete a two-year probation programme and if successful achieve a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice.

The structure of the course was similar in many respects to IPLDP, it is a 22-week classroom-based course covers police procedures and the criminal law, it is delivered at police headquarters mainly by police trainers but also with inputs from lecturers from the force’s university partner on the additional topics described earlier.

There were 31 PEQF research participants from two cohorts C20 and D20, TABLE 6 shows the number of participants from each cohort.

TABLE 6: Number of research participants in PEQF cohorts.

Cohort Name	C20	E20
Number of Students	14	17

7.3 Results

Q1: Now you are a police officer What does the Role of the Constable mean to you?

This question aimed to explore the views that the respondents held about their new role as a constable. As can be seen from TABLE 7 there was some consistency between the two groups. The most common theme was law and order (DHEP 52%, IPLDP 48%),

this theme included keeping the peace, bringing offenders to justice, and supporting victims.

“I am now duty bound to maintain the law and keep the Queens’s peace” (Officer 1 C18).

“The role requires upholding law and order, arresting when necessary and responding to calls for service” (Officer 7 E20).

A related theme that the student officers raised as being part of the role of the constable was protecting people (DHEP 42%, IPLDP 26%), this included notions of protecting the public, especially the vulnerable from harm. It also covered protecting property and creating a safe environment for the public.

“Protecting the public safeguarding children and adults referring children and adults where appropriate arresting and interviewing criminals” (Officer 13 C20).

The second most common theme was serving the public (DHEP 44%, IPLDP 42%), this theme appears to recognise that the police role consisted of more than crime fighting. They saw policing as providing a service to the public, helping, and advising people, supporting people in distress, and putting the public first.

“The role of the Constable is huge, not just dealing with crime, you are expected to be able to help and support the public in many ways, i.e., social, mental aspects” (Officer 11 E18).

“Being a Constable is about helping people when they are at their most vulnerable be this supporting victim of crime, those in mental health crises or in fact offenders themselves” (Officer 9 C20).

These themes resonate with traditional descriptions of police culture ([see section 3.2](#)); they suggest that, regardless of which initial course they completed, the respondents held a very conventional view of what it means to be a constable.

While both cohorts mentioned the professional nature of policing this was more in the context of acting in a professional manner than claims to a profession. They claimed that a constable should act with integrity and be impartial.

It is also of note that the IPLDP cohorts did mention autonomy as part of a constable role, this was a small minority (10%), however the DHEP group did not mention autonomy at all.

“A Constable has to make effective decisions on a daily basis” (Officer 11 D18).

“Being able to apply a range of disposal options with discretion to suit the situation” (Officer 1 F18).

TABLE 5: Responses to Q1: What does role of constable mean to you?

Theme	IPLDP N=71	DHEP N= 31
	Percentage of respondents	
Law and Order	52%	48%
Serving the public	44%	71%
Protecting the public	42%	23%
Pride in the role	27%	13%
Challenging role	24%	3%
Professionalism	15%	19%
Community engagement	14%	10%
Making a difference	4%	13%
Autonomy	10%	0%
Teamwork	10%	0%
Personal development	4%	0%

Q2: What are your expectations of the Role?

While the previous question was attempting to explore the abstract, conceptual notions that the officer held about their role. This question aimed to elicit their expectations of what is involved in doing the job of a police officer. TABLE 8 summarises the main themes and their frequency within each cohort.

Participants in both cohorts thought that the role would be a demanding one (IPLDP 54%, DHEP 32%). It was viewed as being emotionally and physically demanding work, with elevated levels of scrutiny on the individual actions of officers. It was also seen as confrontational often dealing with traumatic situations that have the potential for violence.

“I have not led a sheltered life by any stretch of the imagination, but I expect to be shocked, horrified, potentially traumatised” (Officer 2 F18).

“I feel nervous about the reality of policing in particular being subjected to violence” (Officer 13 C20).

Around a quarter of the samples, (IPLDP 25%, DHEP 26%) viewed the challenging nature of the role as a source of job satisfaction. Describing dealing with the challenges as being rewarding and leading to a sense of achievement and job satisfaction.

“Challenging, sense of purpose, satisfaction from job, tiring, hard work” (Officer 17 D18).

“Physically and emotionally demanding but so rewarding” (Officer 1 E20).

On a more negative note, there was a wide expectation that they would be completing substantial amounts of paperwork, (DHEP 32%, IPLDP 23%) while this was seen as necessary by some it was more widely felt that the time spent completing it would keep them away from the public.

“I expect it to be much harder than I thought to manage the paperwork expectations and what I thought I was coming into which was to make a difference” (Officer 8 C18).

“Quite a lot of time will be spent sorting and submitting paperwork for each job, and we’ll be kept busy” (Officer 10 E20).

The participants expected that the police organisation would be supportive (IPLDP 21%, DHEP 32%) towards them. They hoped to be treated fairly and that they would have support from their colleagues when they needed it.

“Hard work busy nonstop to be supported by colleague's sergeant and inspectors. Supported by the company proper framing to fulfil my role to have faith in the company to support my decision making” (Officer 13 F18).

“Expect to be provided with enough training and support to be able to do the job” (Officer 2 C20).

This supportive theme was extended by a related expectation amongst the participants that there is a powerful sense of comradery within policing. They expect to be joining a close, friendly team that would be supportive, and have similar goals (IPLDP 15%, DHEP 13%).

“Work as part of a close team supporting each other” (Officer 6 F18).

“I have been told that the team will help with this which is helpful” (Officer 10 C20).

The participants were at an early stage of their police training so it unsurprising that they expected to develop further (IPLDP 18%, DHEP 32%). This was expressed as an expectation that they would learn new skills either through experiences learnt on the job or from further training courses.

“I expect to make many mistakes when making these decisions but expect the frequency of these mistakes to drop as I learn” (Officer 1 C18).

“I expect the first few weeks I will just be learning about the actual role and how to deal with situations” (Officer 17 E20).

While the cohorts were consistent in their responses an interesting difference was the theme of variety in the role. This was an expectation that they would be dealing with lots of different issues on a day-to-day basis. It was mentioned by 45% of the DHEP respondents but did not feature in the IPLDP cohort.

“But I like the variety and change of place every day. I expect to be dealing with a lot of different issues and to have my eyes opened” (Officer 6 E20).

The traits of the professional agenda were not prevalent in these responses, a minority of IPLDP respondents (15%) expected to be involved in decision making, within complex and pressured environments, and 4% mentioned professionalism. No one in the DHEP group mentioned either of these in their responses. Furthermore, the responses related to professionalism were in the context of acting in a professional manner rather than any claims to a professional status.

“Being allowed the freedom to go and make decisions and use discretion where appropriate with the full backing of the hierarchy” (Officer 3 F18).

“I must conduct myself in a professional and courteous manner at all times” (Officer 3 C18).

TABLE 6: Responses to Q2: What are your expectations of the role?

Theme	IPLDP N=71	DHEP N=31
	Percentage of respondents	
Demanding role	54%	32%
Demanding and rewarding role	25%	26%
Paperwork	32%	23%
Supportive organisation	21%	32%
Learning experience	18%	32%
Teamwork	15%	13%
Helping People	11%	10%
Law and order	8%	10%
Variety in the role	0%	45%

Decision-making	15%	0%
Heavy Workload	25%	0%
Exciting role	0%	16%
Career opportunities	10%	0%
Unsocial hours	7%	0%
Professional role	4%	0%

Q3: What excites you about the role?

This question was predicated on the idea that employees are more likely to engage in activities that they enjoy. The most prevalent theme across both cohorts was the varied nature of operational policing (IPLDP 59%, DHEP 39%) which was themed as every day is different. All themes and frequency across the two groups are summarised in TABLE 9. Participants were excited that they would not know what to expect when they went to work. That no two days would be the same and they would attend a diverse range of incidents and deal with different people and issues.

“That every day is different dealing with all kinds of different jobs, meeting new people” (Officer 6 E18).

“The challenge and variety are something I find exciting” (Officer 4 C20).

Another consistent theme was law and order (IPLDP 23%, DHEP 26%), participants were excited to be involved in reducing crime and bringing offenders to justice. They also raised the notions of maintaining order in society and protecting people from harm.

“Bring offenders to justice in turn keeping the public safe” (Officer 7 D18).

“Being able to deal with people who have committed offences efficiently and effectively to protect others” (Officer 9 E20).

A theme that was raised in response to the role of the constable question was also raised here and that is the challenging nature of policing. While this was more prevalent in the

DHEP course it did feature in the IPLDP groups (IPLDP 17% DHEP 32%). It was also connected with the varied nature of policing discussed above, participants were excited about the challenging nature of policing, dealing with danger and moving from one incident to another.

“Every day being different and bringing new challenges” (Officer 10 F18).

“The adrenaline rush of going to life threatening incidents and helping people saving lives” (Officer 11 C20).

The themes of ‘working with the community’ (IPLDP 14%, DHEP32%) and ‘helping people’ (IPLDP 34%, 18%) are also connected, in that they were expressed in the context of the wide range of police officer responsibilities. They have been themed separately because they are conceptually different in that one refers to community level actions, and the other is at a personal level. However, they are similar in that they refer to non-crime related police activity, activity that is now accepted both inside and outside policing as legitimate police work.

“Chances to engage and work with diverse individuals and communities” (Officer 3 D18).

“Getting to interact with the public as a wide range of circumstances and being able to help people when they are most in need” (Officer 9 E20).

An interesting difference between the cohort was the theme of action, this refers to emergency response aspects of policing, high speed driving on blue lights and use of force. This was mentioned by 21% of IPLDP respondents while was not expressed by members of the DHEP groups.

“To be involved in large scale ‘jobs’ involving lots of officers, obviously car chases” (Officer 12 E18).

Decision making was mentioned by a small percentage of both groups (IPLDP 1%, DHEP 6%) with these respondents being excited with making decisions and operating with a degree of autonomy, however, it was not a majority view and there were no references to using or conducting research or challenging the current orthodoxy.

“To be able to make decisions based on the facts provided” (Officer 11 D18).

“Having the ability to operate with a certain degree of autonomy is something I also find exciting” (Officer 4 C20).

TABLE 7: Responses to Q3: What excites you about the role?

Theme	IPLDP N= 71	DHEP N=31
	Percentage of respondents	
Every day is different	59%	39%
Law and order	23%	26%
Challenging work	17%	32%
Working with the community	14%	32%
Career prospects	32%	6%
Learning opportunities	18%	13%
Teamwork	11%	13%
Making a difference	15%	10%
Decision-making	1%	6%
Putting training into practice	6%	10%
Action aspects	21%	0%
Meeting people	14%	0%
Sense of achievement	8%	0%

Shift pattern	0%	3%
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Q4: What barriers or issues will you face?

This question sought to understand the participants understanding of the restrictions imposed on their role. The perception of barriers in a work environment can impede any motivation to change and define the possibilities that can be envisaged.

Bureaucracy was seen as an issue in both cohorts (IPLDP 34%, DHEP 48%), the amount of paperwork and red tape required was seen to limit both discretion and the opportunities available to the participants to be out of the office and working with the public.

“Not having as much time to spend actually out and about talking to people due to the amount of paperwork and computer time needed” (Officer 4 D18).

“Excess red tape and paperwork which may keep in front of a computer instead of out on the street helping people” (Officer 11 C20).

Another consistent theme was a lack of autonomy (IPLDP 28%, DHEP42%), respondents felt that their autonomy would be restricted by policy and procedures, the influence of supervisors and senior officers and the current practices of their more experienced colleagues.

“Negativity / different views of other colleagues who may do things differently as a new PC might be swayed into doing it someone’s ways because they have been in the job longer and seen as having more experience” (Officer 5 F18).

“Organisational risk aversion and limited decision making” (Officer 9 C20).

It is interesting to note that the concept of autonomy did not feature in the responses to the role of the constable question within the DHEP cohort, yet a lack of it, is seen as an issue by almost half of them here.

“Supervisors not allowing you to use your own decision making” (Officer 2 C20).

“I think it will be hard to balance wanting to do jobs a certain way when being told ‘how it’s done’ in area” (Officer 2 E20).

In both cohorts the respondents expressed a lack of confidence (IPLDP 35%, DHEP 29%) in their ability to do the job they were about to undertake. Their lack the experience leads to them questioning their ability to apply the knowledge they have gained at training school, and they are concerned about making mistakes and not understanding how to deal with real world incidents.

“Lack of experience in the field. Do not know how to deal with certain things situations which might result in delays” (Officer 5 G18).

“The paperwork trying to remember the legislation having the confidence to do things for the first time without making a mistake.” (Officer 15 E20).

The next two themes raised by the respondents are interconnected, work pressures (IPLDP 28%, DHEP 29%) and lack of staff and resources (IPLDP 41%, DHEP10%). The theme of work pressures describes their expectation that a heavy workload and a lack of time to complete their tasks will be an issue. The participants also expressed a view that this pressure was at least partially due to a reduction in police budgets and the subsequent decline in police officer numbers.

“Pressure from supervisors to meet deadlines due to incoming logs and managing crimes, lack if numbers of officers on the ground to reduce workload” (Officer 2 E18).

“An issue which is preventing myself from doing the job is lack of time” (Officer 7 C20).

TABLE 8: Responses to Q4: What barriers or issues will you face?

Theme	IPLDP N=71	DHEP N= 31
	Percentage of respondents	
Bureaucracy	34%	48%
Lack of autonomy	28%	42%
Lack of confidence	35%	29%
Work pressures	28%	29%
Lack of staff and resources	41%	10%
Lack of CPD (continuing professional development)	10%	6%
Critical public	10%	3%
Gender discrimination	3%	0%

7.4 Discussion

The findings indicated that student officers on both the IPLDP and DHEP associated their role as a police constable with fighting crime and protecting the public. This is consistent with findings by Charman that police recruits identify their role with upholding the law (Charman, 2018). It also accords with the widespread view that crime fighting is the main function of the police (Reiner, 2010; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016). Despite the prevalence of this traditional perspective, there was a widespread recognition amongst both cohorts that the police have a role in helping and supporting people. Whilst there was a level of consistency between the cohorts on the prevalent themes, there were some differences. The theme of serving the public was particularly strong amongst the DHEP participants when they were asked about the role

of the constable (IPLDP, 44%; DHEP, 71%). This was often stated in terms of helping people especially those in need. More participants in the DHEP cohort felt they would be making a difference in their new role as a constable (IPLDP, 4%; DHEP 13%).

There was also a difference between the groups when it came to assessing the demands of the role, with over 50% of IPLDP stating that it was going to be a demanding role while only 32% of DHEP participants agreed. This was articulated in terms of dealing with emotional traumatic situations that may often be confrontational and sometimes violent. The reason for these differences is unclear but may reflect a better understanding of the importance of providing social support in modern policing and a greater expectation of organisational support amongst the DHEP respondents. In considering how they would deal with the pressures of policing both cohorts suggested similar strategies. These included working within a supportive organisation, teamwork and expecting to experience a steep learning curve of how to employ their training in practical situations.

However, the responses from the DHEP cohorts do not indicate that they have any stronger commitment to some of the core tenets of the professionalisation process than the IPLDP cohort. While nearly half of the participants in the DHEP cohort raised a lack of autonomy as a barrier it is surprising that it was not mentioned as part of the role, or as an exciting aspect of policing. It is particularly concerning that decision making did not feature in either cohort's responses. When respondents mentioned professionalism and autonomy this was in the sense of acting professionally rather than any claim to professional status. For most respondents' autonomy and decision making were not traits that featured strongly in their understanding of the role of constable. Nor was there any mention of the importance of evidence-based practice in policing.

While it is not possible to state categorically why autonomy is seen as a barrier, it could indicate that some aspects of the professionalisation are being internalised by DHEP students. They may regard autonomy and decision making as an important part of the role, but do not believe it is a viable option in the current police structure. This attitude is consistent with the view in policing that knowledge creation and the ability to make decisions is based on the rank of the individual, rather than other relevant personal factors (Herrington & Colvin, 2016; Davis & Bailey, 2018). This is at odds with the

professionalisation agenda, as promoted by the College of Policing which encourages decision making and critical thinking at all ranks (Hunter, May, & Hough, 2019).

These results suggest that participation in the PEQF graduate entry programme does not inculcate a professional identity nor ground recruits in the use of evidence-based practices. Again, this is in contrast with tradition professions who use accredited tertiary education to inculcate a professional identity amongst the profession's students (see Chapter 4).

There is evidence that initially recruits tend to have high expectations of the role of constable. They often have a lifelong desire to join, to make a difference and help others. They also have expectations of working within supportive teams (Charman and Tyson, 2023). These claims found support in the results of this research. Unfortunately, these feelings are often undermined by their experience of operational policing which can cause them to feel unrecognised and undervalued (Charman and Tyson, 2023).

The next phase of the research moves on from the training centre to this operational environment and its influence. It considers the effects of operational policing and contact with the police working environment on recruits' perception of their professional role. It aims to provide an insight into how the recruits will describe the operational environment that was explored in the initial research phase and how the student officers will operationalise their learning in the workplace.

Chapter 8: Non-Graduate-Entry: a Retrograde Step.

8.1 Introduction

This research phase compares cohorts of students from pre-and-post the introduction of PEQF entry routes to assess their experiences of operational policing in the context of the barriers and opportunities they face during the probationary stage of their career. This research phase provides an insight into the operational milieu of policing which allows a comparison between the results of this phase and the initial phase. It completes the research and builds on the previous two phases. As discussed above, (see [Chapter 4](#)) professions are grounded in a collegiate working environment, that promotes autonomous decision-making, based on an established body of knowledge and accredited graduate entry qualifications. The initial phase and this final phase consider, from the perspective of the existing workforce and here from the perspectives of graduate and non-graduate student officers, the existence and potential extent of the collegiate environment within policing. The second phase considered the influence of the graduate entry on the views of officers as they left training school. This phase extends this by considering the influence that operational policing has on student officers' perception of themselves as a professional. It also considers the extent to which professional practices are considered and operationalised by recruits within response policing.

8.2 Method

A pragmatic philosophical stance rejects notions of objectivity and subjectivity and instead argues for an intersubjectivity in which individuals have a shared responsibility to consider alternatives, cooperate and develop mutually agreed understandings of the world (Bergman, 2010; Biesta, 2010). This intersubjectivity happens within communities of practice in which individuals develop, apply and assess esoteric knowledge allowing them to agree standards and work together to achieve common goals (Shields, 2003; Hothersall, 2018). To explore and make sense of the intersubjectivity and the community of practice experienced by probationer constables a series of focus groups were undertaken. The give and take in focus groups facilitates the

discussion of topics and issues that are salient and significant to the participants both as individuals and members of the group (Morgan, 1998; Bryman, 2016; Gibbs, 2017; Barbour, 2018).

The relatively unstructured, interactive, qualitative approach of focus groups means that they are well suited to the exploration of a particular experience, such as policing (Bryman, 2016). They can provide insight into the complex and varying processes through which group norms and meanings are shaped, elaborated and applied (Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch, Lewis and Turley, 2014). When participants engage in the discussion as 'members of a group' privileging a particular identity, in this case a policing identity, it focuses the discussion in the context of their typical collective experience (Kuzel, 1999; Barbour, 2018) and often leads to a more realistic account of what people think and more rounded and reasoned responses (Bryman, 2016; Barbour, 2018). While the use of such pre-existing groups has been criticised for introducing existing hierarchies, and taken-for-granted assumptions not being verbalised (Morgan and Scannell, 1998). It is also claimed that participants feel more comfortable with people they know and a naturalistic setting for the discussion and sharing experiences can facilitate debate (Bloor *et al.*, 2001; Finch, Lewis and Turley, 2014). In this research the focus groups were made up of pre-existing class cohorts and were conducted in a familiar classroom setting. This provided a comfortable environment in which the students could feel confident to participate and give their opinions, research suggests that such settings are beneficial for conducting successful focus groups (Krueger and Casey, 2009).

The size of the group exceeded the optimum size traditionally proposed for obtaining in depth data from a focus group (Liamputtong, 2011), this limitation was recognised but involving all potential participants was viewed as beneficial to the research. The group size issue was to some degree mitigated using sub-groups and the creation of posters to encourage participation and provide a topic guide for the later discussion.

Participants

The participants were from two separate cohorts of student officers, one cohort was recruited in 2018 on the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). The other cohort joined in 2020 on the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP). At

the time of the focus groups the participants were all operational police officers from the same police force.

TABLE 9: Number of research participants in each IPLDP cohort

Intake	Number of recruits	Intake	Number of recruits
A18	18	E18	14
B18	8	F18	18
C18	18	G18	9
D18	18		

TABLE 10: Number of research participants in each PEQF cohort

Intake	Number of recruits
C20	20
E20	18

All probationary officers in the cohorts were asked to participate in the research and all agreed to do so. They were not a random sample, and it is accepted that there will be differences and similarities between participants in both cohorts, but they were representative of police recruits in the force having passed the selection process. The sample was opportunistic and purposeful as they were readily available to the researcher and had the necessary knowledge and experience to participate in the research.

On both the IPLDP and the DHEP courses, student officers undertake a probationary period of two years, initially they complete a 22-week classroom-based course, which is followed by an operational training phase. While student officers are likely to have very similar operational experiences during this phase of their training, they differed in that the PEQF students had benefited from a wider, educational initial course than the IPLDP cohort, ([see section 4.61](#)), allowing meaningful comparisons to be made between them (Barbour, 2018).

During their operational training phase student officers return to the training centre to complete a series of short classroom-based courses. It was while undertaking one of these courses that the student officers were asked to participate in a focus group. While the timings of the training courses differ from cohort to cohort all the participants had at least 6 months experience of an independent patrol role and were within their 2-year probationary period.

The student officers return to the training centre in same cohort in which they originally joined the police. So, they all knew each other well prior to participation in the focus group. The participants were briefed on the purpose of the research, the professionalisation of the police was not raised during the briefing so as not to skew the responses in this direction as suggested by Hoggett *et al.*, (2019).

In total nine focus groups were completed, seven IPLDP cohorts and two DHEP cohorts. The focus group session was divided into two stages, the participants were asked to divide into sub-groups and then discuss as a group: their experiences and produce two posters listing the positive and negative features of their role. This was done to achieve as wide a participation as possible and to provide the themes for the group discussion that was to follow.

There were six DHEP sub-groups and twenty-three IPLDP sub-groups. Each sub-group produce two posters, one containing negative issues, the other positive.

TABLE 11: Focus group and sub-group size

Group	Focus Group Size	Number of subgroups	Subgroup size
A18	18	4	4 / 5
B18	8	2	4
C18	18	4	4 / 5
D18	14	3	4 / 5
E18	18	3	6
F18	18	4	4 / 5
G18	9	3	3
C20	20	3	6 / 7
E20	18	3	6 / 7

Once the sub-group phase was completed the posters were displayed, and participants were asked to discuss the topics that been raised either within their own groups or in other groups. This discussion was tape recorded and later transcribed by the researcher.

A thematic analysis approach was used to interpret the data from the posters and the focus group discussions. The data was reviewed in an inductive manner to discover prevalent patterns of response. The prevalence of themes was established by their repetition in the responses of the participants. This is the most common criteria used for establishing patterns within data sets (Bryman, 2016). While there is no agreed figure that determines when a theme becomes prevalent (Braun and Clarke, 2006), those themes mentioned by 50 % of the subgroups were deemed to be prevalent themes across

the cohorts. Themes were also included that were deemed particularly salient to the discussion on professionalisation. As the participants were not a representative sample this is not to claim these results are generalisable however they are illustrative of the concerns of these cohorts of officers (Bergman, 2010). The author's experience as police officer influenced the identification of patterns and whether a pattern was important both to the research question and the participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The author's supervisor reviewed and discussed the themes from an outsider perspective.

8.3 Results

Poster Themes

A thematic analysis of the posters identified 14 distinct positive themes in the IPLDP cohorts A18 – G18, and 18 negative ones. In the DHEP cohorts C20 – E20 cohorts there were 9 positive themes and 13 negative themes. Some of the themes were framed in both negative and positive terms. The themes are listed in Appendix 3.

The most prevalent themes reported were perhaps unsurprising related to the practicalities of everyday policing. Both cohorts expressed concerns about a lack of staff and resources, and the inadequacies of the force's I. T. systems. The IPLDP groups were critical of other agencies such as mental health services, while the DEHP groups expressed concerns about the lack of training available to them. Neither cohort made any specific reference to the professionalisation agenda either as a positive or a negative factor in their role. However, they did raise issues relevant to the professionalisation agenda as displayed in Table 14 below.

TABLE 12: Positive and negative poster themes relevant to the professionalisation agenda

Positive Themes	Negative Themes
<p>Autonomy</p> <p>IPLDP 30% DHEP 67%</p>	<p>Autonomy</p> <p>IPLDP 0% DHEP 33%</p>
<p>Specialist Departments</p> <p>IPLDP 26% DHEP 67%</p>	<p>Specialist Departments</p> <p>IPLDP 65% DHEP 67%</p>
<p>Crime Fighting</p> <p>IPLDP 65% DHEP 0%</p>	
<p>Supervision</p> <p>IPLDP 52% DHEP 83%</p>	<p>Supervision</p> <p>IPLDP 61% DHEP 50%</p>
	<p>Crime Recording</p> <p>IPLDP 65% DHEP 83%</p>

There was widespread agreement amongst the IPLDP groups that their supervisors were supportive, this was replicated amongst the PEQF groups, albeit to a lesser degree,

“Supervisor happy to support” (C20, Group 1).

There were also some criticisms, both cohorts felt there was a lack of contact with their supervisors. While the IPLDP groups claimed that they received little appreciation,

“Not much praise” (E18, Group 2).

The PEQF groups thought that their leaders were out of touch,

“In all honesty feels at time that senior officers are out of touch” (E20, Group 2).

This probably reflects the nuanced relationship between police supervisors and constables. The supervisors are a source of support and at the same time the prevalence of command and control can make them appearance distant and uncaring.

The majority of PEQF groups expressed positivity about their autonomy, the concept was framed into two distinct ways. One was in terms of the management of their individual workloads,

“Left to own devices” (C20, Group 1), the other was in terms of their autonomy to decide the outcome of a particular case,

“Discretionary framework” (C20, Group 2).

The latter conceptualisation accords with the professional notions of autonomy (see Chapter 4). A minority of IPLDP groups were also positive about the freedom they had to arrange their workload,

“Left alone to sort work and manage” (E18, Group 3).

An interesting difference between the cohorts was that a third of PEQF groups described a lack of autonomy as a negative aspect of their role. while this was not a factor for the IPLDP groups.

While departments such as Custody Investigation and policies, such as, street triage, joint patrols of mental health practitioners and police officers dealing with mental health incidents, were seen as beneficial,

“Street triage-enables us to deal with the ‘grey areas’ of mental health and which allows us to continue with our job” (E20, Group 1).

Other departments especially the control room and the Crime Management and Support Unit (CMSU) and the associated polices were seen as undermining officers’ decision-making and led them to feel they were not trusted,

“CMSU – removes power to make own decisions” (C20, Group 1).

“Comms second-guessing us – different when we are on scene to the initial log” (D18, Group 2).

A further difference between the two cohorts is that a majority of IPLDP cohorts were positive about the crime fighting aspects of the role,

“Getting arrests” (G18, Group 3).

This aspect of the constable role was not mentioned by either of the PEQF cohorts.

Focus Group Themes.

The focus group discussions were based on the content of the sub-group posters and therefore focused on similar themes. The discussions provided context and insight into the sub-groups' comments.

The cohorts discussed issues that while pertinent to them were not directly relevant to the professionalisation agenda. Officers found their role satisfying and rewarding, the variety of tasks and incidents that they attended made the role unlike any other job,

“You never know what you're going to come into, what challenges you are going to face, it's quite exciting and motivating in itself. Every day the job is fresh” (B18).

They felt they could let their personality show and were willing to undertake overtime to see an investigation completed,

“Sometimes when you have to stay on, it's quite nice seeing it through to the end or helping because you know you made a difference really” (A18).

Officers in the IPLDP cohorts were positive about the crime fighting aspects of their role, describing driving on blue lights and sirens and responding to emergency calls as exciting,

“You get the blue lights and sirens on, the adrenaline kicks in” (A18).

Officers in the DHEP cohorts discussed how the omnicompetent nature of the response role in North Force differs from other constabularies. They were expected to, not only attend a variety of incidents, but were also expected to submit appropriate paperwork and conduct their own investigations. This meant that they were more skilled than other response officers and while this led to a greater workload, they were attractive as transferees to other forces.

In general, both cohorts found their colleagues supportive, willing to give advice and assistance as needed and that shift moral was good. However, some of the IPLDP groups noted that some of their more experienced colleagues tried to pass work to student officers on the pretext that it would be good experience for them. It also appears that other shifts and their sergeants were less supportive and were uninterested in students that were not part of their shift. Both groups raised the issue of a lack of resources, they felt constrained in engaging in proactive policing due to lack of vehicles, the availability of evidence gathering equipment such as drug wipes and computer terminals (D18, E18),

“The lack of vans impacts the level of service” (E18).

The table below, TABLE 15, lists the topics discussed in the focus groups that are particularly relevant to the professionalisation agenda. These topics impact on aspects of professional development including leadership, policies, autonomy, discretion and the level of acceptance of the agenda within policing.

TABLE 13: Prevalent and relevant themes to professionalisation agenda.

Crime Recording	IPLDP cohorts A18, B18, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18
	DHEP cohorts C20, E20
Supervision	IPLDP cohorts A18, B18, C18, E18, F18
	DHEP cohorts C20, E20
Lack of Staff & Experience	IPLDP cohorts A18, C18, D18, E18, G18
	DHEP cohorts C20, E20
Diary Car	IPLDP cohorts A18, C18, D18, F18, G18
	DHEP cohorts C20
Initial Training & Tutor	IPLDP cohorts A18, B18, C18, F18
	DHEP cohorts C20, E20
Specialist Departments	IPLDP cohorts D18, E18, F18, G18
	DHEP cohorts C20
Response Role	IPLDP cohorts B18, D18, E18
	DHEP cohorts C20
PEQF & Graduate Entry	IPLDP cohorts F18
	DHEP cohorts C20

Crime Recording

The process of crime recording was mentioned by all of the IPLDP and DHEP cohorts as an example of how their discretion and autonomy is undermined by policy and how it is applied.

While officers accepted that the constabulary recorded crimes in accordance with the Home Office National Crime Recordings Standards (NCRS) policy. They viewed the detailed checking of all logs as a process of micromanagement that questioned their integrity and professionalism. They felt that the way the policy was implemented ignored their professional knowledge and that they were disbelieved when they questioned how an incident had been crimed,

“It is also like CSMU and the organisation. Having a bit more respect for what we do. I’ve been to the job. I saw it. I recorded the crimes that I saw, and sometimes the way our crimes are updated. It’s almost as if they think we have gone to the job and wilfully ignored stuff” (C20)

Due to the time restrictions imposed by the crime recording regulations incidents are often crimed, by control room staff, on the basis of the content of the initial call to the police and before an officer has spoken to the caller in person. Officer claimed that when the account they received differed from the account recorded on the log, to the extent that the original crime classification could be questioned, it was extremely difficult to challenge the original classification as the initial account was seen as being a more accurate account of the incident than subsequent accounts,

“If it’s on the log, it’s on the log, so it must have happened” (A18).

Officers claimed that they spent a lot of time attempting to negate interpretations of the content of the police log that they felt did not reflect the actual incident to which they had been sent,

“In HQ, quite rightly, you learn about identifying when a crime as occurred you probably need to spend more time in learning why it hasn’t occurred It is understanding the reverse of that” (F20).

It was claimed in the discussions that offences such as public order and offences and harassment were often applied to incidents either on a purely technical basis or on the basis that the initial caller had responded in the affirmative when asked, ‘were they harassed, alarmed or distressed’ by the incident. Officers suggested that callers were unaware that this would mean that they would be considered the victim of an additional offence,

“In CMR they asked the question have you been harassed, alarmed or distressed, the person on the phone obviously says yeah and that’s it public order” (E18).

Officers described how when they spoke to victim, they would immediately undermine the crime that had been recorded,

“I’m not harassed or anything” (E20).

However, getting such crimes cancelled for not easy or straight-forward. Officers questioned whether the freedom of choice of the individual citizen as to whether to report a crime or not is being undermined by the crime recording process. The NCRS does appear to allocate the responsibility of labelling both the act as a crime and then the caller as a victim and the other party as an offender which could have consequences for the individuals involved.

These concerns have been discussed by McFadzien and Philips who point out that the NCRS states that no evidence is needed to record a crime, but ‘additional verifiable information’ is needed to reverse the original decision (see HMIC, 2012, p. 28). They also point to the large increase in the amount of public order offences that have been recorded nationally and that the circumstances under which a public order offence must be recorded have been extended by the NCRS rules (McFadzien and Phillips, 2019).

It is perhaps not surprising that the implementation of these rules leaves officers feeling frustrated and not trusted,

“It feels like our judgement isn’t trusted. We are the ones getting the information but were not allowed to make the decision it is someone else” (A18).

There were similar concerns expressed in relation to the Diary Car process, an appointment system to deal with low level offences which are described below.

Supervision

The majority of IPLDP and DHEP cohorts reported that their supervisors, sergeants, and inspectors, were generally supportive, approachable and had an important role in maintaining shift morale,

“If you need some information they are always there” (C20).

However, this was not a universal view, some IPLDP cohorts described some supervisors are being rude and unapproachable, demanding that officer show them respect and use their official title when speaking to them,

“Some walk past you without giving you eye-contact you are literally the bottom of the pile” (F18).

In addition, feedback was limited and often only delivered in response to errors or issues. This left student officers unsure if their overall performance was acceptable or not,

“Yeah, you only get negative feedback” (A18).

DHEP cohorts did not report any domineering behaviour from their supervisors, but they did claim that some of them were apt to micromanage, often providing detailed guidance over the radio even when it was not requested,

“My sergeant seems very vocal on the radio, they don’t leave you alone, lots of micro-management” (C20).

Both cohorts discussed that advice could differ significantly depending on the supervisor they approached, and this could lead to them having to complete further tasks without any obvious positive benefit to the organisation or the public. These supervisors were seen as adhering to policy rather than acting as effective decision-makers.

“Yes, there are sergeants that you prefer to go to than others because you know they will give better advice be more accommodating to you let’s say” (A18).

Lack of Staff & Experience

The majority of IPLDP and DHEP cohorts claimed that staffing levels were too low, which meant that they struggled with high workloads and demands for service from the public. There were always outstanding jobs, so they were deployed to incidents immediately after briefing and they had little time to complete their existing crime inquiries or paperwork. They felt that they were going from job to job and were not able to give people a good service. Officers complained that they often finished late and thought about their work while off duty,

“You are dealing with someone and then you have to leave and deal with an IR” (D18).

“There is no time to do all the tasks that have to been done, especially Police Works. This leads to working late and there is no appreciation” (G18).

Staffing level meant that officers often had to attend incidents alone, this was felt to be dangerous especially in relation to domestic violence incidents and incidents in rural locations at which backup was some distance away,

There was also a lack of experienced officers working on response, with many shifts relying on officers still in their probation. This meant that student officers could quickly become seen as a senior member of their shift and asked for advice that they felt they lacked the experience to give,

“Someone comes to ask you what to do, and I’m like I don’t know” (C18).

DHEP officers claimed that there was little desire amongst their colleagues to remain on response, most had, or intended to, apply for specialist posts once they had completed their probationary period,

“I told my supervisor that my intention is to stay on response. It blows their minds that I don’t want to leave after two years” (C20).

This lack of experience includes a lack of specialist officers on response shifts especially Taser trained officers, methods of entry trained officers, officers trained in dealing with the initial response to rape and sexual offences, and officers trained in using drug wipes to test for drug driving. This meant that student officers had to deal with incidents that they were either not trained to undertake, or they felt they lacked the experience to undertake. While it was acknowledged that sergeants would try to send more experienced officers to support them in these circumstances, due to staffing levels this was not always possible,

“The problem is you go to a job and try to make the best of it, and then when you get it wrong someone is going to come down on you for getting it wrong and well I didn’t want to go to this but I had no choice” (C18).

This accords with a concern, described in more detail below, that officers felt they would not be supported by the organization if complaints or errors were made.

Diary Car

The diary car is an appointment system to deal with calls for police service that do not meet an emergency response criterion, officers are allocated the role on a rotational basis. While officers were supportive of the concept, they complained that serious offences were often dealt with via the appointment system which they felt was inappropriate. They also expressed concerns that diary car took priority over other policing incidents that occurred during the shift and that they often picked up several crimes during their diary car shift which increased their workload,

“Sometimes if there not enough staff on, on the day, and you can’t get to the log, they just put it on as a diary appointment for the next set coming in, instead of getting someone on the next set to go to it” (C18).

In addition, due to the requirements of the NCRS officers often attended diary appointments that had already been allocated a crime. When officers attended and spoke to the caller, they often found that the original crime category was inappropriate. They sometimes found it difficult to cancel the original crime category.

“They crime things before you go don’t they – you get there - you are on scene and its completely different when you get there to what’s on the log and it’s already been crimed so you’re having to try to negate the crime that they have done, because sometimes there isn’t one; so I think they should wait till the officers get to the jobs before they put the crimes on then you can do it cause your better suited to do it because you know the proper crack” (C18).

Initial Training and Tutor

IPLDP officers were critical of their initial training which was seen as too focused on legislation and procedures,

“It teaches you legislation, not how to be a police officer” (F18).

Officers felt that the experience was the best way to learn how to be a police officer. They argued that more contact with experienced, operational officers during their initial training would be beneficial as experience of practical policing was crucial in learning the role,

“I think when we learn the legislation stuff here it’s quite sterile and quite clear-cut. When you go out in the real world the application is not sterile and is not clear-cut at all and you only learn how to do that through experience” (F18).

This criticism was not a feature of the DHEP cohorts, but they thought that the lack of specialist skill within response teams could be addressed by including this training in the recruits’ initial training, skills which they argued was part of other forces initial training. They were concerned that vital specialist training, such as driving training, was limited their ability to operate as independent police officer.

Although both IPLDP and DHEP officers were positive about their experiences during the tutor phase of their training, they did feel somewhat abandoned at the end of this phase, stating that they were sent to incidents that they had not experienced when in company with their tutor,

“I’m saying that the tutor was really good, but when you are out of the tutor phase, if you are on your own and there is not one else about, they will just send you to it” (C18).

They recognised that it was not possible to attend every incident type during their in-company phase but that their tutor provided positive advice on how to use their powers and reflect on their options during and after incidents.

Specialist Departments

The status of the response was also reflected in comments, from both cohorts about their interactions with specialist departments within the constabulary. Officers felt that specialist departments and officers had the power to choose whether to participate in a specific incident. The Criminal Investigation Department were described as unwilling to take on cases that appeared to the officers to fall within their remit,

“CAST don’t seem to take anything, then you have proactive and task force which don’t carry crimes so that comes back to response as well” (C20).

In addition, specialist departments had the authority to allocate tasks to response officers, who were unable to refuse nor were they able to reciprocate. They were seen as increasing the workload of response officers while providing little support. Officers described departments such as Custody Investigation teams and Mental Health triage teams as being almost universally beneficial. The view on others, such as the Mobile

Support Group (MSG), and firearms trained officers, was more ambiguous, some officers found these officers supportive and helpful while some argued the opposite. It appears that the difference was simply due to the personality of individual MSG officers, with some being more supportive than others. It was also suggested that the specialist role of MSG allowed officers to avoid routine policing incidents either due to organisational policies or the attitude of individual officers.

The Response Role

IPLDP and DHEP officers described the response role as central to policing, the uniform patrol officer was the public face of policing. They are the first to attend serious crimes, traffic collisions and are pro-active in dealing with criminals. However, the importance of the role appears to be unrecognised within the police organisation and amongst police leaders. Subsequently the response officer's role had little authority or prestige, and managers failed to give the role the kudos and respect given to other departments such as CID or firearms,

“it's not the same sort of kudos or gravitas” (D18).

“If you want to stay on and specialise in response, that's not an option because it is the lowest of the low” (D18).

Officers raised this as the reason why they could be deployed, without their consent, into the police control room or custody investigation teams while specialists such as traffic officers or detectives were not. These roles were unattractive as they did not fit with the reasons that the officers joined the police, there were also financial and travel implications for most of the officers,

“My opinion is that if I wanted to work in a call centre, I'd work for BT, I wouldn't work for [North Force] Police if I wanted to work in a call centre” (E18).

These concerns were also raised by the DHEP cohorts, they described how officers are sent to the control room despite having specialist skills and that officers volunteered to be tutor constables, not because they were attracted to the role, but that being a tutor meant that they would not be deployed to the control room. The DHEP cohorts described how the extensive workload on response drove many officers to apply for non-response roles. It was not seen as a specialist role and there were few career opportunities or incentives to keep experienced officers on response. The opportunities

available to apply for specialist roles after the completion of the probationary period was criticised as it denuded response shifts of experienced officers,

“It’s not viewed as a specialism response, which is an issue because it should be the number one specialism” (C20).

In addition to these prevalent themes several issues were raised that were salient to professionalisation but were not consistent across the cohorts. These were policies and procedures that undermined autonomy and discretion and appeared to have been introduced without any consideration of their impact on response officers.

DHEP officers were critical of a policy which required them to obtain an inspector’s authorisation before they arrested a juvenile. This was seen as undermining their powers as a constable and their professional judgement (C20).

The positive arrest policy in incidents of domestic violence was seen as problematic when dealing with complex family situations (F18, C20). Some officers claimed that this policy not only restricted their autonomy but took away some of their responsibility.

The requirement to obtain authorisation from a traffic officer before they could seize a vehicle being driven without insurance was also criticised (E18)

There were similar criticisms relating to the introduction of new I.T. systems which was done with little consultation or training, and when they reported issues, they were informed it was due to ‘user issues’ rather than system problems, (A18, F18, C20, E20),

“We have told them the issues, and they do not listen” (E20).

“I.T. systems are built and introduced without the advice of the people who are going to use the system” (A18).

These structural and policy issues have left officers to feel conflicted about their autonomy. While IPLDP officers were appreciative of the freedom they had to manage their own workloads and the common-sense approach to resolving incidents found in the discretionary framework. They found that other departments such the control room and the crime recording unit were constantly questioning their decisions,

“We are given independence and yet we are still monitored on what we are doing, and I don’t see how those two are working in correlation with each other” (D18).

“The thing is that they question you as a police officer on your decision-making skills” (E18).

DHEP officers were more positive about their discretion they claimed that they were encouraged to make decisions and then to have the confidence to defend the decision they made to their supervisors or the control room,

“You’re encouraged to back yourself, to make decisions yourself on things with your arrests and with your VAs” (E20).

Officers in both cohorts expressed concerns with high level of bureaucracy which meant the paperwork had to be submitted for virtually every incident. Failure to complete this led to criticism and an atmosphere of risk aversion within response policing. They were constantly advised to ‘cover their backs’ and told that the organisation would not support them if things went wrong (A18, E18, F18, C20),

“I have heard it a number of times that if you have done something wrong the force would throw you under the bus” (E18).

This has developed a ‘what if’ mentality in which officers are driven by concerns about what might happen in relation to an individual or case that might implicate them in some way. This is especially prominent in the context of police contact with vulnerable individuals. These imagined outcomes drive officers to take over cautious actions and take detailed notes of their rationale when dealing with such incidents in an effort to protect themselves,

“Someone is going to come to you, PSD or whatever, why didn’t you do this, why didn’t you do this, what did you do... (E18).

“We have created a culture of fear in case we missed something and it’s always on the officer to negate you put your collar number. If it goes wrong, it’s on yours. If you don’t crime something and it comes back to bite. It’s you, that said that” (C20).

A further interesting disclosure was, when discussing the rewarding nature of their role, some officers described it in terms of supporting and helping ‘genuine’ victims. These were victims who were not also classed as offenders,

“I think we can have a real impact on genuine victims’ lives, we can help” (B18).

This categorisation hints towards the continuance of a class-based policing provision found in the early days of policing (see section 2.4).

Mental Health Incidents

The risk aversion mentioned above may influence how officer deal with the mental health incidents that they faced with every day. Officers discussed the high level of mental health incidents which they attended and the problems that arose between the police and ambulance staff and staff working in mental health crisis services (C18, E18, G18, C20).

“I think we need to change our job title though cause, I wouldn’t say that we are police officers anymore. I would say that we are police officers, nurses, mental health practitioners, social welfare, “We are like everything aren’t we” (A18).

Officers felt that the mental health agencies were not fulfilling their responsibilities towards their patients and that the police were expected to fill the gap,

“We are like the least trained people in dealing with mental health and yet we are the ones dealing with it the most, which is mad” (D18).

Officers reported that they often had to wait with patients in crisis waiting for other services and that when they did arrive, they often refused to fulfil their role and provide services, an example of this given was ambulance crews refusing to transport patients to hospital,

“It’s a constant battle with ambulance and mental health services with the hospital, with social services because no one wants to take ownership of this person and we feel it constantly falls back to the police and realistically we are not specialised in mental health, we are not really, you are trained basically at headquarters you do a few days on it. I would not say that I am an expert in mental health but yet you are looked upon to be an expert in mental health because we deal with it multiple times a day” (D18).

Officers struggled with the responses provided by mental health professionals, people detained under the Mental Health Act by officers were soon released once they had been assessed by medical staff, often quickly causing further problems for the police. When consulting crisis teams about their options for dealing with a particular individual

in crisis, they were often told that that the person was under a care plan and that there was no need for any further intervention by the crisis team. Officers often struggled to reconcile this advice with the behaviour of the individual who was often threatening suicide. Officers thought that this advice was not based on individual's behaviour but on the resources available within the NHS,

"I say are you telling me that I can't do something about someone's mental health because there isn't a bed, and they sort of give you advice against what you really feel like you should be doing" (E18).

These comments may indicate a disconnect between the approach taken by the mental health professionals towards individuals in crisis and the approach taken by police officers. While it is impossible to evaluate these choices. It could be argued that the police are taking a more risk adverse perspective which is informed by their environment and their perception of a lack of support if things went wrong.

PEQF & Graduate Entry

The graduate-entry scheme was raised by one of the IPLDP groups they argued that a degree was not needed to be a police officer, and that the requirement might deter some people from applying. Good communication skills were seen as more important than qualifications,

" Just because you have a degree doesn't mean that you can speak to people" (F18).

A DHEP cohort (C20) discussed PEQF, they found the academic workload high and struggled with the necessity of completing their essay and presentations during their own time. They also claimed that their supervisors had little understanding of the project, or the workload expected from student officers. It was thought that such an understanding of the role was important within the operational environment.

8.4 Discussion

The responses of the student officers resonate with the data obtained from their more experienced colleagues in the first phase of the research. The focus groups demonstrated that the probationary constables were frustrated by policies and procedures that

restricted their opportunities to make decisions and apply their knowledge in specific policing incidents. This adds further weight to the earlier findings that the police organisation is ill-suited to accommodating a professional workforce. It is managed by a hierarchical, rank-based, command and control management style that enforces policies that undermine officers' autonomy and discretionary decision-making ([see section 3.3](#)). In this research phase officers from both cohorts described a series of practices, from crime recording to seizure of uninsured vehicles that undermined their autonomy and judgement. The imposition of such detailed external restrictions is contrary to traditional professional practice. While an autonomous professional may be guided by policies or codes they should not be bound by them, but critically evaluate their applicability in any given situation (Wood, 2020b). This leads to personal responsibility for outcomes and the development of moral agency (MacIntyre, 2004). Instead of gaining moral agency, the student officers felt stymied by the imposition of rules and procedures and interference from supervisors and specialist departments. This is a serious shortcoming as it could be argued that the ultimate goal of any professionalisation process is to produce practitioners able and willing to act as moral agents (Wood, 2020a).

The hierarchical, command-and-control management approach of police leaders not only relies on managers for decision making, it also means that junior officers are rarely consulted before policies or innovations are imposed (Silvestri, 2007; Davis, 2020). This was manifested in this research by a general feeling that constables were not listened to, whether it was in relation to crime recording or the implementation of information technology. Decisions on the applicability of policy was very much the responsibility of managers. Research conducted by Charman and Tyson (2024) into flexible working in policing found similar concerns, in that officers had little voice in the decisions of their managers and that policies were imposed without any consideration of individual circumstances. This lack of consultation indicates the absence of the collegiate environment that is central to professional practice. This is further evidenced by the lack of kudos and authority that the student officers experienced in their role as a uniform response officer. They were subject to direction by other departments and senior officers did not appear to have any esteem for their work and skills. Some respondents reported that colleagues tried to pass work on to them, while others reported supervisors who were dismissive and sometimes abusive. Other

researchers have found similar views and issues, in the Casey report response officers reported feeling undervalued, that their role lacked kudos and was not the basis of career development. While specialist roles benefited from extra resources and were revered by police managers. (Baroness Casey, 2023). In a similar vein, Tyson and Charman (2023) found officers were frustrated by being moved to a new role by their managers without consultation or consideration of their personal circumstances.

The lack of a collegiate environment is problematic as professions rely on a supportive environment to encourage ethical practice and the development of a professional knowledgebase. It is particularly important in student's transition from university to professional practice. As it tends to endorse the importance of their tertiary education and reinforce their nascent professional identity.

In introducing graduate-entry to policing the College of Policing claimed that graduate officers would gain the attributes of a professional (College of Policing, 2016c). A feature of accredited, tertiary education is the instilling of a professional identity amongst students. If the DHEP was successful in this regard it would be reasonable to expect that DHEP officers would describe their role in terms of professional traits (see Chapter 4). They did not do this; there was no discussion of evidence-based policing, or the Code of Ethics and the frustrations expressed in relation to decision-making focus on the problems of policies implementation and not on the potential benefits of professional autonomy and moral agency. This does not imply that the course is without merit, the DHEP cohort who discussed their course expressed satisfaction with it and it does appear that they developed a more positive view of autonomy and expressed greater dissatisfaction with restrictions on decision-making than their IPLDP peers. They also appear to have a wider view of the policing mandate that goes beyond crime control. However, they also described how degree entry and its demands was little understood by their colleagues and leaders. This claim was supported by comments from one of the IPLDP cohorts who stated that degree-entry was an unnecessary requirement for police officers and preferred an ability to communicate in preference to holding a degree. The officers' comments provide other insights into issues around education in policing, an IPLDP cohort expressed dissatisfaction with their course and suggested further contact with experienced officers would be beneficial. A DHEP cohort suggested that increased training in specialist skills such as methods of entry

would improve their course. Both of these suggestions indicate that a preference for experience over classroom education is still prevalent in policing.

This research found few differences between those officers who had completed the non-degree course or the degree course. This indicates that the degree course is failing to inculcate a professional identity amongst the graduate officers. This could potentially undermine the professionalisation agenda as it fails to develop students as professional discretionary decision-makers and moral agents.

The following chapter considers the findings contained within this thesis, both from the literature review and from the primary research. These are used in combination and separately to inform suggestions for changes that might be implemented to either improve the current provision or to provide guidance for the reintroduction of a graduate-entry programme in the future.

Chapter 9: General Discussion

In 2016 the College of Policing claimed that professional status would only be achieved by the police service adopting the traits of established professions. These included a Code of Ethics, accredited graduate-level education, and decision-making based on a research-informed specialist knowledgebase (College of Policing, 2016c). Such traits are common in traditional professions, and it was envisaged that police officers would function in similar way to doctors and lawyers. They would be discretionary decision-makers, utilising evidence informed knowledgebase to make defensible decisions. They would operate within a flatter management structure with less direct supervision and more autonomy.

Achieving professional status has been beneficial to both nursing and teaching, including creating a well-educated professional and accredited workforce with a clear professional identity. This in turn has led to improved recruitment and retention, and enhanced their status and legitimacy in the community (Green and Gates, 2014).

Increased legitimacy would be a substantial benefit for policing as levels of public trust in policing has been falling for several years with numerous police scandals undermining public confidence in the police. In her report, Baroness Casey accused the Metropolitan police of institutional racism, sexism and homophobia. She went on to claim that the organisation was inward looking, with decision making centred in hands of police managers, and driven by a culture that is defensive, lacks humility and a wider perspective. She points out that these accusations are not new and that previous inquiries into the police have raised the similar issues (Baroness Casey, 2023). The report concludes that the Metropolitan police needs,

‘a complete overhaul and a new approach to restore public trust and confidence and earn back consent from women, Black communities and the rest of London’ (Baroness Casey, 2023, p. 19).

The professionalisation of the police is potentially such an overhaul, providing an ongoing, continuous reformation of policing within a professional model. Policing, conducted by a well-educated workforce, supported by a defensible body of knowledge, and committed to ethical standards that go beyond those mandated by the law could

gain the police the levels of individual and general public trust experienced by other professions (Waddington, 2013; Sklansky, 2014).

Achieving these ambitions would not only require individual officers to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge it would also require the police organisation to engage with and support the required structural innovations and changes. To understand these changes and the possible facilitators and barriers that they may face it is necessary to study the current working environment and the perceptions and commitment of those who have a role as change agents within the process.

This thesis aimed to do this by reviewing the historical background of relevant policing practices and exploring the experiences and views of serving officers, IPLDP and PEQF student officers. The key findings from this study add to the literature in this area and also inform possible changes to the professionalisation process (see section 9.2).

9.1 Key Findings

This thesis has demonstrated the interconnected nature of professionalisation, professionalisation is a multi-faceted process, but it should be recognised that graduate-entry is a vital connective aspect of the agenda. Graduates possess critical thinking skills, knowledge of evidence-based practice, and the professional identity that is central to professional practice (Pepper and McGrath, 2020). These attributes connect and operationalise the traits of professional practice. If the PEQF graduate recruits are to be change agents in the professionalisation agenda how strongly they possess these attributes will be a factor in determining how, and to what extent, 'professional' policing is embedded in policing practice. Another factor will be the necessity of a collegiate professional working environment.

This research has highlighted deficiencies in both of these areas that will need to be addressed.

The respondents in the initial research phase did not present their workplace as a collegiate professional environment that empowered them as autonomous practitioners. Instead, they expressed a sense of disempowerment, due to their limited opportunities to make discretionary decisions. They felt micro-managed by national guidelines and

policies, which were enforced by supervisors and managers who were risk adverse and rarely acted outside policy. When officers did make decisions, their supervisors were often unsupportive and expected compliance with the requirements of policy. These findings accord with the literature which have described a variety of restrictions on officers' discretion (Rowe, 2007; Heslop, 2011b; Bradford and Quinton, 2014; Phillips, 2016; Diemer *et al.*, 2017).

The findings of this research suggest that a continued reliance on rank as the basis of knowledge and authority, and an expectation from managers that they should be obeyed without questions still informs police practices (see Davis, 2020). Such an environment is at odds with the collegiate atmosphere engendered in traditional professions.

The second phase of this research attempted to understand the commitment and understanding of PEQF student officers towards a professional identity. The participants had completed the initial phase of their recruit training. They had completed a degree-level course that had included all aspects of the professionalisation agenda and had not been part of earlier training programmes. However, this research found little difference between student officers from the PEQF graduate training programme and those who had undertaken the non-graduate IPLDP process. Respondents in both cohorts held a traditional view of the role of a constable. The majority of respondents, in both cohorts, did not describe the role in terms of autonomy or discretionary decision-making. In fact, not a single participant in the PEQF cohorts described the role of constable in these terms, nor was any mention made of the importance of evidence-based practice. These omissions are particularly concerning, given the centrality of these traits within professionalism. There was no indication from their responses that the participants had adopted a professional identity or a commitment to the professional agenda. These findings are reflected to some degree in research conducted by Watkinson-Miley, Cox and Deshpande (2022) which found that despite some positive comments on their PEQF course student officers were sceptical about the applicability of the academic parts of their course on operational policing.

The results of this research phase suggest that the PEQF initial training programme is failing to promote professional traits nor is it inculcating a professional identity amongst the student officers. These are fundamental aspects of any accredited professional programme and are particularly relevant to PEQF student officers if they are to play a

part in the process of professionalisation. The accredited tertiary course of any profession has a role to play in developing a professional character amongst its students (see section 4.3). Therefore, any initial graduate police training course must endeavour to inculcate a professional identity amongst the student officers. This research suggests that changes might have to be made in the content and delivery of the degree entry programmes to ensure that graduate officers have a foundation in, and a commitment to the notion of the police as an established profession.

The current failure to inculcate a strong professional identity is especially problematic in policing. The current orthodoxy is that the real learning happens on the job, with practitioners preferring on the job training to classroom learning (Wood, 2020a). Previous research has suggested that police recruits are shaped by contact with operational policing and the attitude of experienced colleagues who often tell them, ‘forget everything you’ve been told, this is where you learn the job for real’ (White and Heslop, 2012, p. 344).

Whether this is justifiable or not, this attitude does pose a problem for the professionalisation agenda. Without a firm grounding in the requirements and benefits of professionalism graduate officers are likely to adopt the cultural attitudes of their peers. Especially as there are concerns that police culture and the management infrastructure may fail to support graduate officers and therefore the College of Policing’s aspirations for professionalisation (Ramshaw and Soppitt, 2018).

The final stage of the research explored the relationship between student officers and their working environment. The results reflected the findings of the initial research phase and the complexity of the policing working environment. While neither group made extensive comments about the professionalisation agenda, a single IPLDP cohort criticised the PEQF agenda claiming that a degree was unnecessary for a constable. The process was only referred to by one DHEP cohort, they were positive about the course, but they reported that there was little support or understanding of it amongst their colleagues or supervisors.

Some PEQF officers expressed satisfaction with their opportunities to manage their own workload and that the ‘discretionary framework’ allowed them to use their discretion to resolve some incidents. However, there was widespread disaffection with policies that

were strictly enforced in ways that undermined their autonomy and discretion. These included the positive arrest policy in domestic violence incidents and crime recording standards. The criticism was not that the policies existed but the way that they were enforced. Officers claimed that supervisors and specialist departments enforced policies regardless of the situation or the judgement of the attending response officer. This resulted in officers feeling they were not trusted or that their judgement was valued. They also felt that their role lacked kudos or influence as they were often at the beck and call of other departments and specialist officers. This feeling of a lack of respect and recognition amongst officers has been found in other research, and it has been suggested that it could undermine organisational commitment and lead to dissatisfaction amongst officers (Tyson and Charman, 2023).

Again, this research phase found few differences between officers who have completed the non-degree IPLDP or the degree-level PEQF initial course in terms of the core traits of professionalism identified by the College of Policing. It appears that exposure to the operational environment does not provide an outlet for previously unrecognised professional attributes amongst the PEQF student officers. PEQF students while they failed to describe their role in terms of discretion and autonomy did express a desire for greater autonomy in practice, which suggests that they would be willing to engage in extended professional autonomy and discretionary decision-making if they were given the opportunity to do so. This dichotomy may reflect a lack of clarity over what a professional officer looks like. Wood has argued that the PEQF process was failing to address what it means to be a, 'good reflexive police officer' (Wood, 2020a, p. 375). It appears that officers are frustrated by barriers to decision-making which limit how they would like to police but fail to recognise autonomous decision-making as a fundamental aspect of their professional role.

The College of Policing in their efforts to professionalise the police focused on introducing the traits of established professions into policing. While these innovations were necessary, they are perhaps insufficient. The disconnect between the current policing milieu found in this research and the ambitions of the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council for a professionalised service are unlikely to be achieved without changes to both management practices and policies. This thesis has demonstrated the historical nature of many policing practices and attitudes. These are deeply embedded and taken for granted aspects of policing that can, and in case of the

non-graduate entry routes and the Code of Ethics may have already done so, undermine the professionalisation agenda.

However, there appears to have been little consideration of the existing policing environment and how it might influence the successful implementation of the agenda by the proponents of professionalisation. This study of the contemporary policing environment and the perspectives of student officers has raised concerns that the current professionalisation process may fail to create a professional policing environment that is supportive of autonomous, critical thinking graduate officers as they respond to the demands of 21st century policing.

The next section makes a series of recommendations that address some of these concerns.

9.2 Implications for Practice

The complexity of professionalising the police suggests that effective implementation will need a multi-pronged approach, including changes to the accredited graduate courses and management practices. It would also need a clear definition of what is meant by good professional policing, which is agreed by stakeholders both inside and outside policing. This should also involve a description of the benefits of professionalisation including its potential to influence and change norms, values and practices contained within police culture.

The following are a series of recommendations that are intended to inform the debate on the successful implementation of the professionalisation agenda.

9.21 Development of the PEQF entry route

The PEQF curriculums were designed to provide recruits with the skills and knowledge to operate as professional police officers within the new professionalised paradigm. As discussed above, in traditional professions this initial educational phase initiates the adoption of a professional identity. Professional students start to see themselves as trainee members of their chosen profession. This identity formation is encouraged by

the curriculum content and the teaching style of the course lecturers (Freidson, 1986; Yam, 2004).

In comparison, this research has found that PEQF students, on the completion of their initial training, do not appear to have a strong sense of the police as a profession. This suggests that the current curriculum and its delivery is failing to achieve the levels of professional commitment and understanding attained in traditional professional university programmes.

To address this deficiency, greater emphasise must be placed within the curriculum on the extent of the change necessitated by the professionalisation of the police. The benefits of achieving recognised professional status should be made clear and, if necessary, the curriculum, and its delivery, should be adapted to facilitate the inculcation of a professional police identity. An understanding of the theoretical basis of professional practice is essential so the curriculum should also emphasise the connections between theory and police practice. The use of criminological theory and the statistical research behind the interventions contained within the 'What Works' database should be considered as central to an officer's education as police law and powers. It should be recognised that this will not be an easy innovation. Research by the College of Policing into the experiences of initial PEQF students found that they struggled with the more academic topics in the course such as criminology and sociology and questioned their relevancy in operational policing (College of Policing, 2020b, 2022a). This reflects earlier attempts to introduce academic topics into initial training courses which also struggled to gain acceptance (Smith and Gray, 1985). In both cases students found it difficult to connect the academic learning to their understanding of operational policing. It is therefore important that all lecturers, whether university or police staff, ensure that students are convinced of the significance of theory and the benefits to policing that will accrue from evidence-based practice and the professionalisation of the police. Achieving such a mindset amongst graduate student officers is crucial if professionalisation is to be achieved.

The centrality of reflective thinking and moral agency to professional practice and its potential benefits to policing must be a constant thread throughout the curriculum (see sections 4.3 and 4.63 for detailed discussion). The Competency and Values Framework which is used to assess potential recruits (College of Policing, 2024a) employs a virtue

ethics approach which is supportive of the ethical professional practice. The National Decision-Making Model, the decision-making model adopted within policing, allows officers to act outside of policy if the situation dictates (College of Policing, 2013). These policies give tacit support to moral agency and reflective thinking, but these concepts are virtually unknown within operational policing and to embed professional practice in policing they need to become part of the orthodoxy.

When newly qualified professionals enter profession practice, their nascent professional identity is reinforced by a supportive collegiate environment, in which their more experienced colleagues recognise the value of their prior learning and the skills they gained during their university education. In policing, instead of this supportive environment PEQF student officers are likely to experience resistance, or even hostility towards their graduate status, the learning they have been engaged in, and the validity of professionalisation itself (Norman and Williams, 2017). To overcome this resistance student officers will not only have to be inculcated into professionalism but must be made aware that the fundamental nature of the change they are engaged in is likely to face resistance. To face this resistance, they will need support particularly in the next phase of their training.

9.22 The Tutor Constable

The transition between initial recruit training and operational policing is a key phase for student officers. The tutor constable plays a significant role in defining the recruits' understanding of their new role as a constable. The tutor constable and other shift colleagues act as role models for the new recruits, and recruits often adopt the practices, attitudes and values demonstrated by their tutor and shift colleagues (Charman, 2017). The influence of the tutor constable has long been recognised, Lord Scarman recognised the importance of the role and in 2002, HMIC, recommended national selection criteria, formal recognition and more regular training (HMIC, 2002). In relation to graduate training the College of Policing have stressed the importance of 'selecting tutors who are open-minded about the programme and can serve as advocates for the new routes' (College of Policing, 2020b, p. 17). Some of the participants in this research acknowledged the importance of the tutor in their learning and expressed concerns that

it ended when it did. The importance of practice educators in both nursing and paramedic education was recognised by Khalil and Liu. They suggested that the tutor should have a level 6 qualification and the placement should be overseen by the employer and HEI (Khalil and Liu, 2019). Professional education at training school will struggle to have a significant impact on police practice if it is not supported in the operational environment and the tutor constable has a central role to play. Tutor constables must be committed and fully supportive of the professionalisation agenda re-enforcing the position presented at training school. Therefore, the recommendations of HMIC should be implemented and in addition tutor constables should either be graduates or be studying for a degree.

The College of Policing have recognised the opportunities provided by the introduction of lateral development (College of Policing, 2015b). The introduction of an advanced constable rank was considered, this would recognise the skills and knowledge of experienced constable who are in a position to give advice to others (Wood, 2020a). This advanced constable role could include a financial incentive and give the holder enhanced status in the organisation. The tutor constable would be an obvious candidate for such recognition, the role would be significantly more attractive if it led to increased pay and, perhaps, the opportunity for further study. It would also be an obvious stepping stone for constables considering promotion to sergeant and beyond. These will not be easy changes to implement, these changes are likely to be controversial and costly, however, if professionalisation is to be successfully implemented it will have to be supported at every stage.

9.23 The Excluded Middle

The introduction of graduate-entry and the support given to senior officers to undertake tertiary education has inadvertently created an 'excluded middle' of serving officers who entered the police service without a degree and have not been given the opportunity to gain one (Bryant *et al.*, 2013; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). These officers are the colleagues of graduate recruits. The influence of shift colleagues on student officers is well established, they act as mentors and role models for new recruits (see section 3.2). The research participants recognised their dependence on their

colleagues and that their colleagues had little understanding of the new entry routes. As with the tutor constable, this influential group could be a source of resistance to the professionalisation agenda as they may see little personal advantage in the process. To reduce this possible source of resistance, and as a matter of fairness, serving officers should become conversant with the benefits of a police profession and be given the opportunity to undertake graduate study on a similar basis to those on the PCDA and DHEP entry routes. The possibility of such a programme has been acknowledged by the College of Policing who in consultation with several higher education institutions (HEIs) has produced an Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) online tool to assess the training, skills and knowledge officers have acquired during their police service in terms of academic credits that could be used towards achieving tertiary level qualifications (College of Policing, 2024e). To date, this initiative has failed to generate appropriate ‘top up’ courses within HEIs. The provision of a widespread programme of such courses could encourage, officers, perhaps with financial support, to gain academic qualifications. This would give them an insight into the professionalisation agenda, a personal investment in the change process and create a large number of research projects which could enhance the development of evidence-based policing.

The PEQF programme originally mandated minimum educational standards across all areas of policing including promotion. It was suggested that in the future an inspector would have to be a graduate, promotion to more senior ranks would necessitate a master’s degree or PhD (College of Policing, 2016b). It appears that these criteria faced opposition and are currently in abeyance. If the police are to achieve professional status the knowledge and skills connected with university study must be mandated and become prevalent throughout the organisation. It has been argued that strategies that increase the involvement of junior officers in decision-making and develop organizational contexts that encourage psychological safety amongst officers could help to reduce the them and us distinction and would be beneficial to policing (Schaveling, Blaauw and Van Montfort, 2017; Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). Encouraging academic study throughout the police organisation would create symbiotic relationships between junior and senior officers. Juniors could function as reverse mentors guiding senior officers through their academic studies while the senior officers continue to mentor their juniors in the practicalities of policing. These ‘learning relationships could operate within the communities of practice described below ([see section 9.27](#)). They could also facilitate

the dialogical relationships between leaders and followers described within followership theory (see section 9.24).

9.24 Leadership Development

This thesis has demonstrated the centrality of police leadership in facilitating officers' participation in decision-making, discretion and problem-solving. Research participants expressed concerns that police leaders limited their opportunities to make decisions, either through monitoring their activities or through the imposition of rules and policies (see section 6.3, and section 8.3). These findings suggest that to achieve recognised professional status the current rank-based, command and control hierarchy will have to be substantially altered to accommodate the management of professionalised police officers who have the confidence to make autonomous decisions informed by a research-driven knowledgebase.

Concerns about whether the police need a more inclusive managerial style has been debated for several years. Traditionally, police management has been based on a transactional approach which relies on rewards and sanctions to control employee behaviour, rather than developing emotional connections between employees and their organisation (Shamir, 2007; Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015). Adopting a transformational leadership paradigm has been suggested as a way to improve police management and as a catalyst for cultural change within policing (Mazerolle, Darroch and White, 2013; Cockcroft, 2014). Transformational leadership places more trust in employees and promotes a consultative managerial style that encourages employee participation in problem solving. It is promoted as a way of improving communication between the managers and their staff and developing a more motivated workforce, with a shared sense of the organisation's mission (Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008; Cockcroft, 2014, 2014; Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015). Transformational leadership has been successful in managing change in both public and private organisations. It has often been instrumental in inspiring and motivating performance (Shamir, 2007; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014; Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015; Grint and Thornton, 2015). However, these changes often involved the management of experts, and the achievement of strategic goals, rather than the fundamental changes of identities

and relationships demanded by the professional change agenda (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015).

The consultative aspects of transformational leadership have been found to be beneficial for policing. Officers who were given the opportunity to participate in decision making, developed an increased sense of pride, their commitment to the organisation increased and their performance improved (Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008). Despite this, some commentators argue that because transformational management was developed within business environments it is ill suited to the demands of an emergency service such as the police (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015). It is argued that public sector organisations provide a wider, more complex range of services than most businesses, and their operational practices may present limited opportunities for the development of collaborative leadership (Cockcroft, 2014). Neyroud supported this position claiming that,

‘transformational leadership is an uncomfortable fit with one key aspect of police leadership, notably the requirement to command’ (2011, p. 39).

In reality, and in contrast to the approach taken by many modern organisations, the police have retained a strong preference for a transactional management style (Beech, Gullledge and Stewart, 2015). Therefore, the use of collaborative leadership in policing is limited and tends to be used only in out of sight, low risk situations rather than in public facing or high-risk ones (Davis and Bailey, 2018a). This differentiation highlights a significant limitation of transformational leadership. It remains a leader-centric approach in which the 'leader' sets the agenda, they decide when and to what extent the employee is to be involved. This is manifest in policing when collaborative situations are sanctioned by senior officers with the statement, ‘there is no rank in the room’. The authority to make this statement is a privilege of rank, the junior officers present are unable to make a similar claim (Davis and Bailey, 2018a). The limitations of transformational management mean that while it might be a useful stepping stone to a management style more suited to managing a professional workforce, it is unlikely to be a long-term solution, a more effective approach could be the adoption of followership theory.

Hierarchical leadership legitimizes some individuals as “authority figures” who are seen as more capable and effective than others. This fosters a parallel assumption that followers are less capable and effective, and their only role is to carry out orders without question. When followers inculcate the notion that leaders are responsible for making decisions, solving problems, gathering information, and setting goals they tend towards obedient and subordinate behaviours, often manifested by completing tasks without question or comment (Carsten *et al.*, 2010; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014).

In these situations of unequal power followers may limit their communication with leaders or distort messages for fear of criticism (Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007). They may also minimise their performance to the completion of assigned tasks,

‘Subordinate labels create negative self-expectations that lead to decreased task persistence, poorer performance, and consequently lowered self-esteem, decreased self-expectations, etc. One result of such a cycle could be that subordinates would decline to attempt activities that in reality they could successfully manage’ (Vanderslice, 1988, p. 680).

In these situations followers collude in their own subordination in an attempt to be seen as valued followers in the eyes of the leader (Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007). This research found such acquiescence amongst participants; they were willing to accept the decisions of others even when they thought them inappropriate as they felt disempowered to challenge them (see section 8.3).

Followership theory challenges this traditional view of leadership in which followers are seen as passive and subordinate to an authoritarian leader, who, in turn, makes the decisions and gives orders. Instead, followers are seen as playing a key role in defining and shaping the relationship between themselves and their leader. Followers can both contribute to the leadership process and define the latitude of their leader’s actions. Effective leadership is really only achieved when leadership claims are met with acceptance from the followers (Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014), from a followership perspective successful leadership requires active participation from followers because it is intrinsically relational (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). Followers need to engage in critical thinking and take active participation in problem solving. They must act as moral agents critically and collaboratively assessing their leader’s values and directives

and be willing to resist directives when needed and suggest alternatives (Latour and Rast, 2004; Pillai and Uhl-Bien, 2007). This approach places extra demands on both leaders and followers. The ideal follower must be self-motivated, courageous, honest and credible, and actively engaged in achieving organizational goals (Kelley, 1988; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014). Acting in partnership, followers must assume responsibility, have the courage to serve, to challenge, to act as a moral agent and take moral action.

The dynamic relational nature of followership commits both followers and leaders to make communal sense of situations and construct shared ways of dealing with them within appropriate levels of performance and consultation (Ospina and Uhl-Bien, 2012). A followership approach recognises that leader follower relationships are social and cultural constructions that are relational and collective as well as situationally and culturally defined. This allows followership to be constructed in a variety of ways (Filstad and Karp, 2021). The traits of followership leadership align with the managerial style appropriate for the management of professionals. This open transparent relationship empowers the follower to participate in decision making and to recognise when participation is not appropriate, and they need to follow the leader. Leaders and followers can agree which situations necessitate the granting of leadership that involves obeying or complying with the wishes of the leader, and other situations in which leadership is co-created in combined acts of leading and following (Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2014). In policing this would facilitate the use of command-and-control management in emergency situations while encouraging a collective and collaborative approach in routine situations. The collective and collaborative nature of followership would allow the police service to fully utilise the skills and knowledge of all officers, including graduate officers and employ evidence-based practices.

In the current context of the professionalisation of the police the relationship between managers and their staff is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of the project. Supervisors and managers are particularly influential figures and have the capacity to establish professional boundaries, acknowledge and encourage positive contributions and challenge negative behaviour. If any management change is to be achieved police leaders will need to be active agents in any process of change that involves officers in the decision-making (Hoggett *et al.*, 2019). Sergeants in particular play a key role in this respect as they interpret the operational meaning of official

policies, are directly involved in delivering policing on the ground and supervise the rank and file on a day-to-day basis (Bacon, 2014). Achieving any change in the management culture of the police will be difficult but the adoption of followship theory, alongside the changes discussed above could facilitate a change that supports the ambitions of the professionalisation agenda.

9.25 Development and Application of Evidence -Based Policing

The student officers who participated in this research did not refer to evidence-based policing (EBP) in any meaningful way. This is indicative of the lack of permeation of EBP into the conduct of everyday policing.

Evidence-based policing faces two interconnected issues, the first is the need to develop more research-based solutions to policing problems, including a far wider participation in research development by practitioners. Achieving this would align policing with established professions where practitioners are actively engaged in creating and using knowledge to undertake their professional practice (Wilensky, 1964; Williams, Brower and Klay, 2016). This issue has been recognised by the College of Policing who have expressed a desire that more police officers and staff engage in the process of creating research knowledge to inform professional practice (Brown *et al.*, 2018; Mitchell, 2019). However, police officers currently often lack the confidence and skills to undertake complex research projects, such as the random control trials and systematic reviews published on the Crime Reduction Toolkit (Williams *et al.*, 2019; Williams & Cockcroft, 2019).

Secondly, there is a need for a greater understanding and acceptance of evidence-based solutions amongst police officers and increased use of research-based solutions in the day-to-day practice of policing. The resolution of these issues will require a variety of interventions that coalesce to create and establish evidence-based policing as the foundation of professional police practice.

An enhanced focus, within the PEQF curriculum on the importance and benefits of EBP, and more extensive instruction on how to undertake research would provide a future workforce that was motivated and educated to undertake the research needed to

build and sustain a knowledgebase. The role of being a research constable, should be promoted as equal to that of a response or CID role. This could be supported by the adoption of a pragmatic community of practice in which problems could be debated and research initiated, undertaken and applied within a space in which all officers could participate in the development of evidence-based practices (see section 9.27).

The commitment of graduate recruits to the development and implementation of EBP will unfortunately have a negligible impact if EBP does not gain acceptance amongst the wider workforce. Therefore, police leaders while have to actively advocate the adoption of evidence-based policing as the new police paradigm for providing solutions to problems (Morgan, 2007). The promotion of evidence-based practices that lessen officers' workload would be beneficial, for example, the research from Bland and Ariel (2015) into the efficacy of DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment) forms, could be used to increase officers' discretion and justify a reduction in the bureaucracy around cases of domestic violence, stalking and harassment. This would reduce officers' workloads and as the decision would be grounded in research evidence it would be defensible to wider public. Such innovative practices would demonstrate the efficacy of evidence-based practice and its benefits to the police and to the public.

Another relatively straight forward innovation would be the inclusion of EBP within the promotion process; the promotion interview could include questions about a candidate's knowledge and use of evidence-based practice. For example, in promotion to sergeant the candidate could be asked about what they had read about evidence-based practice. Those applying for inspector roles could be asked what evidence-based practices they had considered or applied to problems they had faced in their sergeant role. For more senior ranks this could be extended to what evidence-based research they had commissioned or supported in their previous roles.

The inclusion of evidence-based questions in the promotion interview could drive a cultural change within policing, so that, instead of academic research being marginalised by experience they could both be collaboratively developed. The current domination of random control trails and similar quantitative research practices (see section 4.62) needs to be challenged to allow greater numbers of police officers and staff to participate in research and to deliver the widest possible knowledgebase for

policing. To achieve this the College of Policing will have to operationalise its claim that it is willing to accept as validated knowledge from other research paradigms.

These changes are clearly interdependent and will have to be brought about in a synchronised manner. This may necessitate a level of coordination, which might be difficult to achieve in the current milieu. Dominic Wood has suggested the introduction of university police stations, comparable to university hospitals as a way of combining, experience, learning and research within policing (Wood, 2020a). This would be an interesting innovation that could be a way of bringing about the changes described above, especially if serving at the station was seen as a specialist posting.

9.26 Pragmatism as a Framework

The successful implementation of the professionalisation process will necessitate the coalescence of several connected strands. Including, the utilisation of the knowledge and skills of graduate officers, and the development and implementation of evidence-based policing. In parallel to these developments police forces will have to adopt management practices that accept and empower these changes, leading to the development of a collegiate environment which is grounded in ethical and defensible practices. These will be difficult changes to achieve and sustain, there will be challenges and choices to be made if the agenda is to be embedded within policing. To guide this, an overarching framework is needed to allow an evaluation of choices and progress to be made. Adopting pragmatism as a philosophical framework could not only underpin the development of EBP but could provide a framework for change in the cultural and managerial aspects of policing that influence practice (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

The utility of pragmatism as a philosophical framework for professional practice has already been recognised in the profession of social work. Social work is a more established profession than policing but it still faces challenges in the development of theory and its subsequent influence on practice (Hothersall, 2018; Berringer, 2019). Pragmatism, with its future oriented perspective and the possibility of multiple methods of knowledge creation has been seen as providing a resolution to the research issues in social work including its influence on practice (Hothersall, 2018; Berringer, 2019).

The challenges facing social work as a profession are similar to those faced by policing, including historical practices based on experience, a need to resolve indeterministic situations in an ethical and moral manner and a drive to incorporate scientific evidence within practice. This suggests that pragmatism could also be a useful philosophy to inform the profession of policing (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

Pragmatism and policing share many attributes; both are concerned with human values and have a focus on solving problems and the validation of knowledge in the real world. In pragmatism knowledge is useful when it is instrumental in resolving current difficulties, with problem-solving influenced, but not determined by past experiences. This accords with current views on the generalisability of EBP. Some commentators have argued that research should be replicated in a variety of locations to ensure validity and local applicability (Sherman, 2015; Scott, 2017).

The pragmatic nature of knowledge creation and John Dewey's notion of 'warranted assertion' are useful within policing as they recognise the contextual nature of operational policing. Officers attend incidents with a compendium of knowledge and experience; they transact with others in the current problematic situation they are faced with. Then, often depending on the reactions and actions of other participants, they act based on the 'warranted assertions' they have formed during their engagement in the situation and the nature of the situation itself (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

In the development of a police evidence base, the pragmatic inclusive approach to knowledge creation allows both academic and practitioner researchers to develop police knowledge using the widest possible research methodology. The opportunity to consider 'what is this for' and 'who is for' as part of a research decision recognises that the consequences of acting in any situation will vary based on the situation itself. If any likely outcome is relatively unimportant or easily reversed, it may be justified to act based on scant data, however in high-risk situations it is best to base decisions on more extensive information (Feilzer, 2010; Hildebrand, 2013; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). This would allow the police to agree different validation criteria based on the research method or the potential cost or risk of harm that is a likely consequence of acting on basis of that knowledge in the real world (McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

9.27 The Pragmatic Community of Practice

This research has found widespread concern amongst officers that their views are ignored or disregarded. This was often due to the application of policies and practices that they thought to be inappropriate in the specific circumstances of the incident they were dealing with (see sections 6.3, 8.3). Professionalism would be enhanced if officers had opportunities to participate in and be consulted on policies and their application.

The concept of ‘communities of practice’ could be employed to provide an environment for the creation, discussion and evaluation of knowledge and problems to influence the creation of policies and practice (see section 5.1). Creating a pragmatic community of practice would provide an arena in which all ranks could participate in a dialectal research process during which knowledge is co-produced and collective (Denscombe, 2008; Henry, 2017). This consensual approach to knowledge and problem solving means that all community members have a shared responsibility for the knowledge and practice that they create (Ormerod, 2006; Greene and Hall, 2010). This could help to mitigate resistance to research knowledge, break down barriers between ranks and encourage a recognition that asymmetrical power relationships limit an individual’s creativity and their ability to participate in knowledge creation (Hansen, 2006; Biesta, 2010; Midtgarden, 2012). This widening of participation is supported within academia and the College of Policing (Fleming and Wingrove, 2017; College of Policing, 2019a; Telep and Somers, 2019).

The police already have a version of a community of practice that could be adapted in their ‘debrief’ model. These are used in police operations and serious incidents; all those attending the incident participate in a debrief meeting during which the positives and negatives that arose during the incident are discussed. These are clearly learning opportunities, but due to the risk adverse nature of policing their findings are rarely disseminated beyond those involved (Hirschfield *et al.*, 2013; Brown *et al.*, 2018; Fleming and Rhodes, 2018). If the debrief model was structured so that the lessons learnt could be codified and shared, in a way that ensures confidentiality for participants, then a relatively untapped source of practitioner knowledge, discussion of failures and ‘near misses’ could be captured and disseminated. A recent innovation has demonstrated the possibility of using technology to facilitate this. As part of an

evidence review into neighbourhood policing the College of Policing undertook two 10,000 Volts (10KV) focus groups. This is described as a web-based debriefing tool that allowed participants to anonymously contribute to an online discussion involving over 300 operational incidents (College of Policing, 2021d). This review was focused on the contribution that neighbourhood policing could make in counter-terrorism, however the approach could be used to collect and then assess practice in a wider or other specific context.

Communities of practice in facilitating discussion, encourage diversity of thought, appropriate levels of dissent and critical questioning which would allow all ranks the agency to challenge what is happening around them, engage in research and make proposals for change (Silvestri, 2006; Norman and Williams, 2017; Wood and Williams, 2017; Wood *et al.*, 2018). Research knowledge could be framed as being beneficial to all ranks and policing as a whole and as an evolutionary process of change rather than a revolution to be feared (Midtgarden, 2012). The framing of pragmatic change as an evolution is supported by the pragmatic concept of a layered reality in which long established and cherished practices could only be challenged by significant and verified knowledge (Neubert, 2009; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022). This provides assurance for everyone in policing that while pragmatism views truth as mutable, change is an evolutionary process and not a revolutionary one. Fundamental changes would need to be backed by substantial research evidence.

EBP has emphasised the need for scientific rigour in the creation of police knowledge which has limited the use of other methods ([see section 4.62](#)). Pragmatism provides an approach that tests knowledge claims in real-world transactions. This ‘ends in view’ perspective provides a clear benchmark of efficacy by asking ‘did it work?’ Adopting such a standard for the validation of police research would not only accord with the police preference for ‘what works’ but allow a variety of research approaches, agreed within the community of practice, to be used (Hothersall, 2018; McCanney, Taylor and Morris, 2022).

The community of practice could also facilitate the evaluation of craft knowledge and professional experience. It is recognised that policing experiences could be invaluable in creating a professional learning environment and developing an evidence-base. This entails respect for the skills and knowledge of all, regardless of rank, and whether the

knowledge was obtained from the policing the streets or from research (Bradley and Nixon, 2009; Martin *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, if EBP is to guide policing practice in the 21st century it will have to incorporate police craft into the knowledgebase. This is problematic as craft knowledge is largely subjective, esoteric, uncodified and unlikely to meet the rigor and validity demanded of EBP research evidence. However, assessing and codifying craft knowledge is not straight forward, the process can create abstract, academic knowledge that it is unrecognisable to those whose experiences were codified (Thacher, 2008). Contemplating craft knowledge within a community of practice could provide an alternative process that, by actively involving practitioners in the evaluation and codification of craft knowledge, preserves the authenticity and praxis nature of craft knowledge. Whilst agreement with the community would validate some practices for inclusion in the knowledgebase and reject others.

The employment of communities of practice across professional policing could be beneficial in developing both EBP and a more followership leadership style. The facilitation of vertical and horizontal learning promotes the embedding of EBP while retaining the valid experiential practices, and at the same time allowing participation from the widest spectrum of officers.

Limitations of the Research

The findings of this research are novel and important; however, it is important to note that there are limitations in this research. Most noteworthy perhaps, is that the research was limited to a single constabulary. There are 43 constabularies in England and Wales, and all would claim to have unique features and challenges. It would, therefore, be beneficial to conduct similar research in other constabularies so that these results could be compared between constabularies of different sizes and in rural and metropolitan areas.

While the rank of constable is important within professionalisation process it is clear that it is not the only rank that is influential in the process. The views of supervisors and junior and senior leaders are also important and relevant. Research into the views of these different groups would be useful in facilitating the successful implementation of professionalism within policing.

This thesis has also highlighted the importance of the relationship between the public and the police. This research was not conceived to explore this relationship, but there needs to be a wide-ranging discussion of the expectations that the Government, the media and the public have of policing so that the parameters of the profession can be defined.

This research, as with most research, is a snapshot of the views of a group of people in a particular moment and context. While such research is informative it must be part of an ongoing exploration and debate on the future to the police and the possibility of achieving professional status. Therefore, further research should be directed towards developing an understanding of how officers from across England and Wales forces continue to understand and interact with the process of professionalisation.

Chapter 10: Final Conclusions

Karl Marx claimed that,

‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past’, he went on to argue that, ‘The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language (Marx, 1852, p. 595).

This insight into the process of change is relevant to police organisations as they face continuing challenges to their public legitimacy. In recent months, the police have faced criticisms in relation to two-tier policing and, following an undercover investigation by the BBC, allegations of misogyny, racism and excessive use of force by officers at Charing Cross in London. These are reminiscent of issues and criticisms faced by previous generations of police officers (see Section 2.4).

In response to the BBC broadcast the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Mark Rowley, issued a statement in which he acknowledged systematic, cultural, leadership, regulatory failings, had allowed misogyny, racism, and a lack of public service ethos had put down deep roots within the Metropolitan Police.

This admission resonates with the early chapters of this thesis, which illustrated that the current mindset, policies, practices and management of policing are grounded in traditions that have continued through generations of police officers with little development or change. These latest challenges to police legitimacy reinforce the relevancy of both the findings of this thesis and the professionalisation of the police.

In the context of the professionalisation agenda the original ambition of the National Police Chiefs Council was to create a professional workforce of,

‘...confident professionals able to operate with a high degree of autonomy and accountability’ (National Police Chiefs’ Council, 2016, p. 3).

While this appears to be an uncontroversial and eminently sensible ambition, this research has indicated that operationalising it is extremely problematic.

The relevancy of the historical embeddedness of contemporary policing practices was highlighted in the findings of the initial research phase. Officers’ responses indicated a sense of disempowerment, a lack of voice, as their discretion was constrained by management practices and a strict adherence to policies. This is reminiscent of the policing practice and leadership found in the early days of policing. While police leaders and followers may be comfortable with this command-and-control approach it is inconsistent with professional practice and the development of moral agency (see section 4.6).

The second phase of this research found that graduate officers did not inculcate a professional identity during their initial training. This is problematic as in traditional professions early identification with a profession is a common and important feature of professional practice (NHS, ND). This research suggests that the current initial PEQF probationer course is unlikely to encourage the development and promotion of evidence-based policing, the use of critical thinking, ethical practice and ultimately the transformation of the current craft of policing into a profession is unlikely to succeed.

Furthermore, the idea that a sea change could be achieved by the influence of an ever-increasing proportion of graduate officers in the workforce has been undermined by the retention of a non-graduate-entry route into policing and it is unclear whether the project has the impetus and support to survive in its current form. The College of Policing and the National Police Chief’s Council have made little public comment on how the retention of a non-degree entry route will affect the professionalisation agenda. However, it is difficult to reconcile a permanent non-degree entry route with a claim to professional status due to the interconnected nature of the professional traits discussed above (see Chapter 4).

The results of the final research phase accord with the findings of the initial research phase. Officers describe similar restrictions on their use of discretion and frustrations with inflexible policies. In the context of the professionalisation agenda it is interesting

to note that having a degree did not change officers' perception of their environment or their response towards it. They also failed to express any commitment to aspects of the professionalisation process, such as evidence-based policing or to the project as a whole. These findings reinforce the notion that if the police are to be a profession the initial entry course must be developed to inculcate a professional identity amongst probationary officers and teach the necessary skills and knowledge to encourage evidence-based policing and research.

These criticisms are not intended to suggest that the project should be abandoned, the professionalisation of the police does have the potential to redefine the police mandate and improve police legitimacy. The development of an evidence-base, the application of the code of ethics and graduate-entry could provide the basis for defensible decision-making, a new professional identity that challenges the 'blue code' of silence and a clarification of public expectations of the police that could re-legitimize the police in the eyes of the public. It will, however, not be achieved by organic change, it needs planned and supported organisational changes that must be recognised both inside and outside of the police as a necessity for the professionalisation process.

This work has made a clear and original contribution to knowledge, it involved the creation of a questionnaire to explore the views of serving constables on their freedom to make discretionary, autonomous decisions. It then went on to assess the influence of the PEQF curriculum by using an open questionnaire to explore the perspectives of both graduate and non-graduate student officers on the role of a constable prior to their operational deployment. The final research phase returned to the milieu of operational policing this time from the perspective of probationary officers. Using a series of focus groups, it considered their positive and negative experiences of operational policing which not only allowed a comparison to be made with the views of their colleagues obtained in the first phase of the research, but also to assess how their experiences might impact the implementation of the professionalisation agenda.

These three phases produced original data that provides a fresh insight into the policing environment in which professionalisation would have to develop. This primary research was contextualised by a review of the history of policing in England and Wales which was undertaken from the perspective of professionalisation. This focused the inquiry into aspects of policing practices that were likely to be impacted by the

professionalisation of the police. A consideration of these two elements of the thesis facilitated a discussion of potential changes to the implementation process to address some of the concerns raised.

It is intended that this work will stimulate discussion and lead to further research. This research focused on the views of constables. While they are a significant cohort, the views of sergeants, inspectors, and senior leaders are equally valuable. Research into these groups could provide important information into their views and concerns on the topic. It is likely, that due to retention of a non-degree entry route and the resistance from some chief constables and police and crime commissioners, that the re-introduction of the professionalisation of the police will become necessary. The views of these cohorts will be vital to those engaged in the planning of a reintroduction of the project. It may also be appropriate to canvas the views of the public to evaluate the attractiveness of the project to them. Such insights could inform the successful implementation of professionalisation and create a police workforce that is truly empowered and willing to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



‘In a professionalized police service will graduate officers find the discretionary space to use their critical thinking skills’.

Participant Information Sheet

About the study

The research is investigating whether police constables believe they have the freedom to make autonomous decisions at work. The purpose is to compare graduate officers with non-graduate officers to see if they have different views on their freedom to make their own decisions to resolve issues at work.

Some questions you may have about the research project:

Why have you asked me to take part and what will I be required to do?

You have been asked to take part because this research is about how Constables feel about their freedom to make decisions. You will be asked to either complete a questionnaire or take part in an interview as part of a focus group during your training at headquarters.

What if I do not wish to take part or change my mind during the study?

Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide a reason for doing so.

What happens to the research data?

The research data will be stored on a password protected computer server, only the researcher will have access to the data. The questionnaire will not contain any information that could identify an individual. The record of the interviews will include a unique identification number that will enable the researcher to identify individual participants, so that follow up interviews can be compared. The interview will be digitally recorded, and the recording will be transferred to a password protected computer server. The original recording will be deleted once the transfer is complete. Only the researcher will have access to this information, and this will be kept separate from the data on password protected computer storage media. Once the requirement for the retention of data from the university have been satisfied then all the data will be destroyed.

How will the research be reported?

Once the research has been completed you will be informed via the Constabulary intranet page. You will be able to access the published thesis via a link. The published research will not contain any information that would allow any individual participant to be identified. If direct quotes from any interviews are used, they will be anonymised. It is expected that this research will be published in academic journals and could be presented at academic conferences, the anonymity of participants will be maintained in any publications or presentations.

How can I find out more information?

Please contact the researcher John McCanney directly, on any of the contact details listed below:

Email: Removed to preserve confidentiality.

Postal address:

Mobile:

What if I want to complain about the research

Initially you should contact the researcher directly. However, if you are not satisfied or wish to make a more formal complaint you should contact Diane Cox, Director of Research Office, University of Cumbria, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 3JD. diane.cox@cumbria.ac.uk

Appendix: B Consent Form



In a professionalized police service will graduate officers find the discretionary space to use their critical thinking skills.

Participant Consent Form

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study? YES NO

Have you been able to ask questions and have enough information? YES NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time, and without having to give a reason for withdrawal? YES NO

Do you agree to participate in a digitally recorded interview? YES NO

Your responses will be anonymized. Do you give permission for members of the research team to analyse and quote your anonymous responses? YES NO

Please sign here if you wish to take part in the research and feel you have had enough information about what is involved:

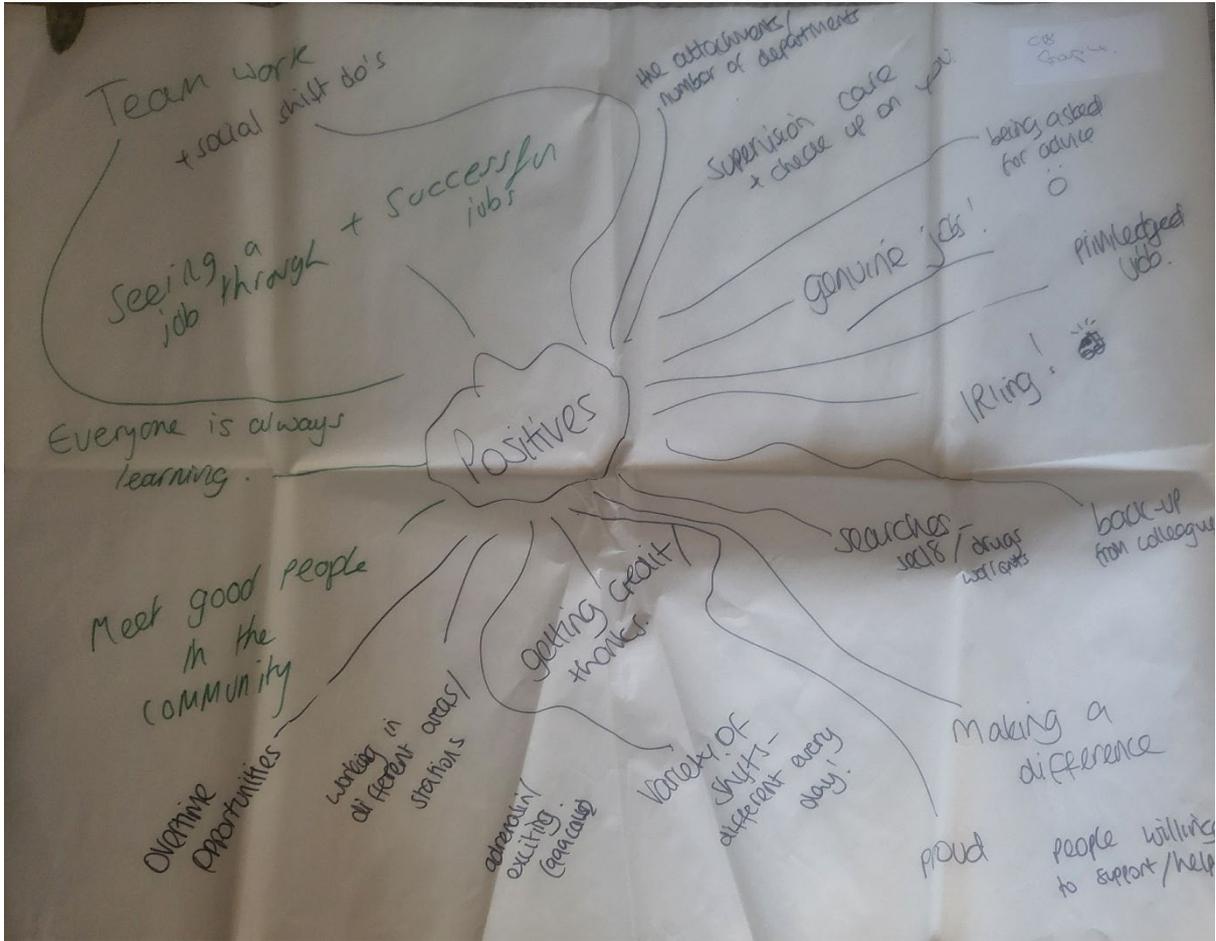
Signature of participant: **Date:**

Name (block letters):

Signature of investigator: **Date:**

Name (block letters):

Appendix C: Example of sub-group poster



Appendix D: List of positive and negative poster themes

IPLDP Cohorts		PEQF Cohorts	
Number of sub-groups 23		Number of sub-groups 6	
IPLDP Positive Themes		PEQF Positive Themes	
Colleagues	83 %	Colleagues	83%
Crime Fighting	65%		
Varied Aspects of the Role	52%	Varied Aspects of the Role	17%
Support from Supervision	52%	Support from Supervision	83%
The 'job' itself	35%		
Autonomy	30%	Autonomy	67%
Equipment	30%		
Career opportunities	30%	Career Opportunities	17%
Helping People	30%		
Job Satisfaction	30%		
Opportunities to Learn	26%		
Support from Specialist Departments	26%	Support from Specialist Departments	67%
Shift Pattern	22%		
Fringe Benefits	17%	Fringe Benefits	33%
IPLDP Negative Themes		PEQF Negative Themes	
Lack of Staff	83%	Lack of Staff	50%
Inadequacy of IT Systems	83%	Inadequacy of IT Systems	50%

Lack of Resources	70%	Lack of Resources	50%
Other Agencies	70%	Other Agencies	17%
Critical Departments	65%		
Poor Supervision	61%	Poor Supervision	50%
Lack of Time	52%		
Lack of support outside in-company phase	52%		
Crime Recording	48%	Crime Recording	83%
Diary Car	43%		
Unsupportive Public	43%		
Lack of Specialist Training	39%	Lack of Specialist Training	67%
Wages	35%		
Bureaucracy	35%		
Heavy Workload	26%	Heavy Workload	33%
Shift Pattern	17%		
Poor Morale	13%		
Stress	9%		
		Lack of Departmental Support	67%
		Lack of Autonomy	33%
		Lack of Experience	17%
		Location	17%
		Autonomy Limited by Specialist Departments	48%

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