

To Degree or not to Degree? An investigation into the impact of Police Culture on the implementation of the Police Education Qualification Framework

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Abstract

The Police Education Qualification Framework was developed to provide a more structured route of entry into policing across England and Wales. It was designed to promote a culture of critical analysis and evaluation that would be valued by all ranks, alongside evidence-informed approaches. With it came three primary routes into policing: the 'Pre-join' Professional Policing Degree, the Degree Holders Entry Programme (DHEP) and the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), all of which meant providing higher education learning for all officers joining policing. The College of Policing hoped officers would embrace higher education, using its methods to tackle the challenges of rising demand and diminishing public trust and confidence in law enforcement. However, the successful implementation of the PEQF has been held back by significant resistance offered by pre-existing attitudes towards higher education within many forces, reinforced by Chief Constables eager to appease a workforce suspicious of change.

McNarma (1967) suggested that newer officers adopt an authoritarian attitude from more experienced officers because they use their behaviour as a model for their own. By way of reducing authoritarianism in police culture, the PEQF was designed to provide officers with a more tolerant and diverse pattern of thinking. Telep (2011) shows that developing officers with these analytical skills helps develop a depth of experience, allowing them to challenge any pre-existing toxic attitudes that colleagues may have. In support of this, Scott (2022) found that degree-level graduates were less likely to have authoritarian attitudes compared to those who were not educated to this level.

However, it is the barriers within police culture which appear to be preventing these advantages from being realised. The most visible of the entry routes created by the PEQF is the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), a programme of study that incorporates both operational practice and academic study. Andrews (2023) explored the experiences of PCDA students, noting that many felt their study, although personally beneficial, lacked the wider support of senior leaders and more experienced members of their teams. Most placed little value on academic study when carrying out frontline policing. It notes a culture which often resists change, viewing academic analysis as unwanted interference. As senior members influence the attitudes within their organisations, they set the standards of behaviour expected. Without their support, the benefits of PEQF programmes such as the PCDA will struggle to be seen in the police. The paper intends to explore the role of police culture in shaping the successful implementation of the PEQF, using an analysis of the PCDA. The paper will further examine what may be going wrong and provide recommendations for change to improve future practice.

Keywords: *Policing, Evidence-Based, Criticality, Education.*

Higher Education and Policing: A Complex Relationship

Education and Policing have long been uneasy bedfellows. The use of specialists to support complex investigations has often proven to be a vital tool in bringing criminals to justice; yet the acceptance of widespread higher education for professional officers and staff has been met with considerable resistance from as early as the 1970s (Brain, 2010). Neyroud (2011) and Winsor (2012) conducted research which suggests that the role of a police officer could be greatly enhanced by developing cooperation between policing and academia, preventing new officers from adopting negative aspects of police culture (Cox and Kirby, 2018). A review conducted in January 2015 by the College of Policing highlighted the increasing demand for policing to change the assessment and education of officers, developing tools to critically reflect upon behaviours and actions, and fostering a culture of continuous development. The review provided the basis for the creation of the Police Education Qualification Framework, designed to clearly identify educational requirements for

officers, encouraging forces to collaborate with universities to promote professionalism and expand essential skills required to meet current and future demands (College of Policing, 2016). One of the routes within the PEQF, which concerns this paper, was the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship, which requires officers to complete their full-time role as a police constable whilst simultaneously studying an undergraduate degree in professional policing practice (College of Policing, 2016). Alongside academic topics, the programme of study would provide context to experiences through structured reflection across all levels of policing (Rowe et al, 2016).

Surviving Contact with Police Culture

When examining scholarly work which explores police culture across England and Wales, the results provide little positivity. From the Authoritarianism style described by Goode and Lumsden (2016) to the harrowing findings of the Casey review (2023), police culture has often proven to promote attitudes which can encourage rather than challenge poor service provision. Before exploring the impact that police culture has had on the implementation of the PEQF, it is necessary to examine police working attitudes. As mentioned previously, the introduction of the Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) in 2016 intended to challenge toxic attitudes through education, professionalising policing by embedding an evidence-based approach (College of Policing, 2022). Chan (2005) identified that the distinctive nature of police resistance to change has always made new initiatives difficult to implement, regardless of the potential improvements which might result from them. Fleming (2010) further identified that there exists a feeling amongst officers that academia is an 'attack on Policing', with critique of practice being immediately devalued to defend colleagues and the 'job'. Brown (2018) suggests that showcasing the positives within academia, such as critical thinking and the expansion of knowledge, can help combat such fears, with Casey (2023) arguing that negative behaviours within police culture can no longer be ignored; officers must be willing to accept and engage with, and change to improve service delivery and improve institutional trust.

Loftus (2009) provides an explanation of police culture as a set of shared informal norms, beliefs and values that underpin and inform outlooks and behaviour towards people. Schein (2004) further argued that organisational culture is a pattern of shared

basic assumptions that are considered valuable and therefore are encouraged across a workforce as evidence of the correct way to operate. This description makes clear how police culture moulds the behaviour of officers, with styles being passed on and accepted by recruits. Sir Robert Peel identified in 1829 that the authority of the police was and is dependent on public approval and confidence, suggesting that if culture is at risk of negatively altering public perceptions of the police, it could jeopardise policing by consent (Peel, 1829). Herbert (2009:67) described police culture as 'replete with individualistic, power-oriented actors who work in isolation', with many believing they are 'agents of expulsion' who should use the public only to gain information on those who are offending. Cockcroft (2007) alternatively described that 'isolation', far from being negative, allows the service to run more competently as officers can focus on building relationships of trust amongst colleagues. Despite Cockcroft's work appearing advantageous, it harshly defies the original groundings of the police presented by Sir Robert Peel (1829). The lack of regard for integration with the public, confirmed by Herbert's (2009) theory, is seen by them as advantageous, but can create an 'us' and 'them' divide, later highlighted by Reiner (2010), with the public being seen as a problem to overcome rather than a source of collaboration for solving issues with crime and disorder.

Rukus et al. (2019) suggest that police attitudes towards crime and punishment tend to be traditional and conservative, with many officers viewing their role as enforcement rather than support. However, applying social representation theory, Feilding identified that although collective narratives exist among officers and staff, conflicting themes emerge based on expertise and knowledge. Macionis (2018) explains how social representations are formed, maintained, and transformed through communication and social interaction. These representations are not merely individual attitudes but shared, collectively constructed understandings that shape behaviours and perceptions.

Turner (2021) suggested that university teaching and traditional police training are fundamentally at odds, with police culture not accepting of higher education because of a culture in which criticism is met with suspicion. Hough and Stanko (2019) argue that Policing and academia are two separate entities, with policing valuing fast and impactful decisions, rather than open and debated decisions. Pickering (2021) shows that many officers do not value academic analysis, seeing no place for a successful integration of frontline experience and critical evaluation. That said, the

continuous growth of evidence-informed practice suggests a clash of cultures, with some reconceiving the importance of data collection and analysis to improve performance (Goode and Lumsden, 2016).

The profound resistance to change within police culture can be used to explain the negativity which has come to surround academic learning (Chan, 2005). Early career officers are more likely to mimic the negatives of their more experienced colleagues, meaning that if education is not valued, many adopt this attitude to 'fit in' (Brown 2018). Cox and Kirby (2018) stress that those studying on the PCDA route are immersed in the influences of experienced officers, resulting in many valuing more practical hands-on experience rather than classroom-based learning. This evidence highlights the challenge of integrating the PCDA alongside a dominant police culture, as work-based attitudes hold stronger authority in shaping the value placed on academic skills (Cox and Kirby, 2018). The study further showed that PCDA learners felt that they belonged more to their workplace than to universities, noting that higher education was seen as a distraction from delivering frontline service. Brown (2018) suggests the integration of academic analysis of policing can be seen as an 'attack' rather than a tool to complement practice. If such negative attitudes are imposed on students through exposure to experienced colleagues, they are likely to become hostile to any academic environment (Brown, 2018).

Watkinson-Miley et al. (2021) identified that even though many studying on the PCDA found it largely a positive and enjoyable experience, many noted that it often isolated them from mainstream police culture, making workplace socialisation more challenging. Hough et al (2018) noted that early career officers want to be accepted by their teams and viewed as a useful and productive officer in front of their colleagues. As such, if there is a culture in which higher education is seen as lacking in credibility, many PCDA learners may choose to adapt these attitudes to present themselves as belonging (Goode and Lumsden, 2016). However, findings from Norman and Williams (2017) contradict some of this perspective, identifying that many forces celebrated PCDA students, identifying them as pioneers of change whilst simultaneously empowering the knowledge and analysis being learnt from studying for a degree. This is positive and shows how higher education can provide confidence for new officers when protected from potential cultural harms. Nevertheless, this is notwithstanding the comments also made, which suggest that due to the structures within policing, many PCDA learners felt that they could not share or apply the knowledge they had gained

due to fear of team isolation (Norman and Williams, 2017). This provides clear evidence that academic study brings limited benefit to individuals or institutions without a change in attitudes within police culture. Watkinson-Miley et al. (2021) identified that PCDA learners noted that their studies often lacked support from those in senior rankings and more experienced officers, with both favouring a reduction in abstraction to ensure a greater focus on developing their skills of street-craft (Andrews, 2023). This was echoed by Nick Adderley, Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Constabulary, in 2021, arguing that officers on the degree programme were 'lacking in life experience' and that the 'seriousness' of policing was not recognised by recruits (Vincent, 2021). This attitude can be found amongst many in senior positions across England and Wales, with Chief Constable of Hampshire Police Scott Chilton expressing that he felt that resources could be 'saved' by abolishing routes such as the PCDA, as officers were spending too much time doing 'unnecessary' academic study. (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, 2023).

Andrews (2023) advocates in his study that having a person in the rank of chief constable supporting the PCDA is often the only guarantee that the programme will be accepted by the force's culture, due to their position as leader and champion of organisational priorities and focus. Similarly, Norman and Williams (2017) suggest mainstream support comes not from top-down but bottom-up, with the knowledge acquired from higher education only being valued when it is accepted by all ranks, and particularly those in supervisory roles. The risks that come with this are a rejection of the values and expected behaviours. If PCDA learners are not feeling supported by the organisation, they may reject its values, which can lead to misconduct and inappropriate behaviour (Norman and Williams, 2017). This is evidenced in Tyler (2011), who stresses that acceptance from leaders within the organisation encourages those who are part of the culture to place value on them, providing a more legitimate organisation and procedural function.

Rukus et al. (2019) conducted a longitudinal study revealing that officers generally adhere to conservative views on crime and punishment to gain peer acceptance and the respect necessary when managing high demand. The study also found that their beliefs are heavily influenced by personal experience, often causing a conflict between what officers think they should say and how they feel about a situation. These findings have implications for police training, with recommendations to expose recruits to a wider range of experiences to broaden their perspectives.

Andrews (2023) argues that much of the Police Education Qualification Framework's introduction by the College of Policing is due to efforts to enhance officers' social knowledge by embedding advanced critical analysis skills into their initial training and early career development.

Methodology and Research Strategy

Initially, the use of primary research was considered by creating a questionnaire to use with PCDA students, to ensure accuracy and examine the attitudes held by officers studying (Byram, 2012). However, the decision was taken not to carry it out, as participants may be influenced by the opinions of others, choosing to give responses which supported the wider culture of their teams (Morgan, 2002) This is important to consider, with culture often playing a significant role in shaping the beliefs, attitudes and values of officers at all levels (Loftus, 2009). It is entirely possible that the answers provided by participants on a culture which they already have preconceived as acceptable values and beliefs of, would mean responses were biased and irrelevant to the study. This would affect the reliability of the research, as it cannot be stated that the comments made are without pressure from the existing culture.

Therefore, it was decided that the quality of the secondary research available would place fewer restrictions and improve accuracy by reducing bias. Eliminating the risks noted above and avoiding more general issues, such as a lack of time and funding, were also considered. Reviewing literature would provide the best quality of data, due to factors such as the ability to access data which has wider and more representative samples (Bryman, 2012). Using secondary sources, such as the College of Policing (2022), ensures the research is more valid than anything that could be produced by one researcher. Winter (2000:11-12) conducted research into the varying definitions of validity, showing that when a researcher accesses all areas which are existing to receive result which are true of the facts available. By conducting secondary research in this project, the researcher has been able to access several different perspectives, with a large variety of information available, and providing more accuracy.

By using thematic analysis, the researcher was able to use a more flexible and adaptable way of thinking. As noted by Braun and Clarke (2012), thematic analysis allows for synthesis of an inductive and deductive approach. Using a mix of these

methods allows researchers to show that the data pre-existing bores relevance to this project, whilst also showing that pre-existing research can support themes developed by the researcher. For example, the researcher found themes such as a conflict between police culture and academia within the data pool searched and then developed this theme into the project, assigning relevance to the initial aims. This is an example of an inductive approach. Opposed to a theme such as Higher education developing officers' critical thinking, which was a theme decided by the researcher and data was then found to analyse this theme, this is a deductive approach.

Within the boundaries of what has been possible during this project, it is essential to understand the limitations which are present within this research. Whilst the PCDA is in full admission in several forces, it is still young in its implementation. This has led to some of the scholarly studies being linked more directly to the implementation of higher education within policing as opposed to specifically the PCDA. In terms of ethical considerations, it is important to understand the impact that analysing the police may have on their perception within the public. To reduce any negative impacts this research may have on this, it has been completed in adherence to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) and with the support of Leeds Trinity's Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics and Integrity Policy (2024:21). To adhere to GDPR, this project has not taken any data from any person directly and has only used data which has been published in the public domain. There is no reference to specific details which could be used to cause damage or distress to any data subject. Due to this being secondary research, the same directives have been adhered to by ensuring that the data used is also in observance of GDPR (2018).

Altering police culture through Critical Thinking

An advantage of both studying for a degree and working in full-time employment is the unique ability to quickly and proactively apply critical thinking to the working world, making changes quickly to improve service delivery (Wood, 2018). Whitson (2019) explains the essential need for officers to be able to approach working practices critically, especially given the unique nature of police work, in which the operational environment and circumstances can change daily. Critical thinking is the ability to skilfully evaluate, analyse, and conceptualise information gathered from observation and experience (Scriven and Paul,1987). In addition, critical thinking is constantly

living, rationally, empathetically and in a fair-minded way, whilst considering the rights of others (Paul & Elder, 2006). Furthermore, it is the basis of continual professional development, reflecting constructively on experiences and applying context to improve practice (Christopher, 2015). Encompassed in this is the importance of understanding different perspectives whilst being fair and open to those who offer an alternative perspective on the same issue. Waddington (1999) suggests that policing by consent is not possible without individuals and institutions embracing critical analysis of their actions, reflecting upon approaches to ensure that they meet the needs of the communities in which they serve.

The collaboration of these skills, defined by critical thinking and their reflection in the code of ethics, shows the advantages of higher education in law enforcement. These new methods of learning can enrich officers with the power to discover their knowledge rather than repeating potentially bad practices learned across teams (Wood, 2018). Furthermore, as Schein (2004) detailed, culture is based on 'a pattern of basic assumptions'; but through the application of critical thinking skills, it can challenge assumptions, which Casey (2023) states are often the cause of toxic cultures to form and continue across forces and shifts. This helps to combat the negative effects of changing behaviours amongst officers (Mezirow, 1991). An institution which fails to recognise poor practices by not adopting a culture of critical thinking risks becoming a hostage to negative behaviours, with many being repeated by early career officers (Scriven and Paul, 1987). Allowing for a collaboration for both culture and critical thinking can extend knowledge and prevent the adoption of a negative police culture (Waddington, 1999).

Improved Police Legitimacy amongst Communities

Providing officers with a higher level of education within their initial training can help to improve public legitimacy within policing (Andrews, 2025). Weber et al. (1978) note that legitimacy is created when citizens believe that the body of authority has the right to dictate appropriate behaviour to them. As policing in England and Wales applies a model of 'consent' in which public trust and confidence in function and capability are necessary, any approach which intends to promote critical thinking to improve service delivery is to be welcomed (Ellezy, 2017). Examples of behaviours such as excessive use of force, abuse of power for sexual purposes and general

misconduct within the service damage the credibility of the organisation to enforce state laws (Tyler, 2011). Upon the release of the Casey Review (2023), which critically examined the organisational culture and working practices across the Metropolitan Police, major reforms have been implemented due to the review identifying that many officers perform duties or are in positions in which they are not qualified to do. The review suggested that to fix institutional problems across the force, officers must receive more frequent and in-depth training, which is matched by productive supervision. Paynich (2009) found that those with higher levels of education within the police do better at adhering to the values of community policing, as they remain focused on critical reflection and are less likely to commit acts of misconduct. Additionally, the study also found that as an officer's level of education increased, they were more likely to agree with the importance of police legitimacy. This shows that providing the officers with a higher level of education will increase police legitimacy, through a process of osmosis, with those early graduates taking on supervisory roles and thus encouraging early-career officers to follow their example.

Moreover, research conducted by Miller and Fry (1978), which examined education and professionalism in law enforcement, found that officers with higher levels of education are often more ethical and professional in their behaviour. It is the downfall of ethical behaviour and incorrect conduct, such as those highlighted in the Casey review, which reduces police legitimacy (Casey, 2023).

When looking at legitimacy and the literature surrounding how to improve public trust and confidence in law enforcement, it is important to consider what a 'good' officer is. This often depends upon a person's attitudes towards policing and the role of an officer, with those valuing physical robustness as a key trait of effective practice less likely to place importance on 'softer' skills. The Casey Review (2023) failed to classify what the expectations are of an officer, as it remains dependent on multiple variables, including geographical location, job role and approaches being pursued by a territorial force. It thus creates debate about what is a 'good' officer, and whether they match the demands of the communities. Roberg and Bonn (2004) examined the effects of higher education on policing, identifying that legitimacy requires an individual's approval; therefore, the qualities expected of a legitimate officer may vary depending on the needs of the individual and or the community. This suggests that researching the behaviours required of 'good' officers is challenging, as even within each separate force, some communities may have different demands, which challenges the view that

education creates consistency in behaviour and helps to improve the public's trust in the police (College of Policing, 2024a).

Whilst not directly about the police, a study conducted into university students found that those who attended higher education settings with strict values and codes of conduct were less likely to commit acts of academic misconduct (Miles et al., 2022). This appears transferable to PCDA; if officers are immersed in a culture of strict academic conduct, they learn this skill and can apply it to their policing role. It provides officers with two experiences, one of academic discipline and one of workplace discipline; the use of both can enable a concept known as self-legitimacy. This was originally seen as a negative within police culture, where officers validate their behaviours and seek approval from inner circles (Debbaut & De Kimpe, 2023). As Casey (2023) highlighted, the behaviour within these inner circles does not adhere to the conduct expected; therefore, by allowing officers to access academia, officers can use this to comply with correct conduct within policing (Miles et al, 2022). As Debbaut and De Kimpe (2023) suggest, those who value procedure are less likely to be affected by the concept of self-legitimacy. Though the stark differences between stand-alone academia and policing must be recalled, as Goode and Lumsden (2016) stated, they are two separate worlds which require opposite demands; the advantages show how change could be made, but there must be an integration of the two entities to allow for this. Despite the negative effects of workplace culture, the advantages of providing officers with a higher level of education can reduce the need to self-legitimise behaviour (Debbaut and De Kimpe, 2023).

Reducing Authoritarianism for Policing in England and Wales

Authoritarianism refers to a person or system that is submissive or suspicious of bureaucratic and democratic processes of governance (Eckhardt, 1999). The concept is commonly discussed in politics and can be applied to a large organisation such as the police (Adorno,1950). Coleman and Gorman (1982) conducted research into Authoritarianism amongst British Police Officers, suggesting that socialisation into police culture leads to higher values of authoritarianism. The explanation for this is that, commonly, those recruited within the police have a lower level of educational qualification, and it is seen that they are therefore more likely to adopt intolerant attitudes (Coleman and Gorman,1982). In addition to this, McNamara (1967) found

that over time, police culture, older officer role models, and peer pressure lead to more authoritarian attitudes, which are passed down to early-career officers. This was stressed within the Baroness Casey review (2023), as previously referred to in this review, she found attitudes of refusal to change, with a culture which encourages officers to all act and behave the same.

One of the main factors within the explanation of authoritarianism is the idealisation of morals within a group. When authoritarianism is found within the Police culture, those who are part of it may idealise the ideologies rather than challenge them (Debbaut & De Kimpe, 2023). Feldman and Newcomb (2020) found that attending higher education allowed for students to re-socialise, creating a safe space in which to take stock and gain perspective on their actions and behaviours. The study found that this re-socialisation caused through study in higher education is largely positive as it promotes debate and exploration of different attitudes, which builds a variety of beliefs and values based upon diverse approaches. Thus, the experience of higher education would provide officers with alternative views outside of the organisational norms, which they could use to challenge toxic elements within police culture (Telep, 2011). Moreover, Scott (2022) conducted research into degree-level graduates and their likelihood of having authoritarian attitudes. Finding that they are, in fact, less likely to have these attitudes than those who are not educated to degree level, suggests the importance of degree-level study to encourage varied and liberal views. More specifically, it was found that attaining higher education has a beneficial impact on attitudes towards police officer abuse of power (Telep, 2011). Challenging views and having a variety of beliefs defy authoritarianism as it is defined; therefore, if higher education can provide these skills, then it will aid in reducing authoritarian attitudes within policing.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that degree-level education provides officers with more ethical, moral, and tolerant values and is open to people's differences (Carter & Sapp, 1990). Relating this to the initial meaning given of authoritarianism provided to the reader in the first part of this section, these behaviours are in direct opposition to those seen as authoritarian. However, if police culture matures, valuing a more tolerant attitude may mean that the degree-level officers are more likely to accept this behaviour. However, the reality remains that attitudes towards higher education across policing in England and Wales remain negative, with the College of Policing conducting research with PCDA learners, identifying that those studying on the programme

continue to value on-the-job learning and anecdotes from more skilled colleagues far more than the content learnt within the academic setting (College of Policing, 2022). For higher education to have a positive effect on law enforcement, the power of academic influence must be greater than the influence of police culture, with chief constables valuing the importance of its role in improving professional standards and challenging toxic attitudes and values. Research suggests that overall, the opportunities provided by higher education are beneficial to policing and combating the issues raised by recent damaging reports. Second, providing higher education to Police officers allows for a new wave of attitude moving away from an authoritarian attitude by providing a more humanistic approach (Carter and Sapp, 1990), which adheres to Peel's (1829) value of the people being the police and the police being the people (Telep, 2011).

Conclusion

As noted previously, policing remains seen as the central agency within the criminal justice sector, with the interconnectivity of the various elements of the criminal justice sector being disregarded by the public. It could be suggested that there is an inaccurate understanding by some as to the roles of various agencies within the criminal justice sector, with the threshold of evidence in courts as significant to a successful prosecution as the investigation carried out by detectives. The common narrative is of policing being hindered by 'external' factors, which overwhelm officers and make it difficult to implement necessary reform. The PEQF was initially seen as the start of a journey towards reform through education, and that, by partnering with academics, the use of evidence-based practice would finally be realised. External factors are indeed important, but it seems clear that the biggest factor which appears to be stopping the realisation of the PEQF is the internal cultures amongst individuals and institutions. The often-unique attitudes of suspicion which dominate law enforcement teams have created a resistance to change which makes reform almost impossible. Instead, forces often favour models which reduce abstraction, seeing higher education as having little value when meeting frontline challenges. However, with the operational environment continuing to grow in scale and complexity, forces are slowly recognising that embracing academia may be necessary and that in

searching for policing by consent, the demands of the public for more self-reflective and analytical officers may twist their proverbial arms.

Recommendations

The section provides recommendations for Policing across England and Wales, identifying factors which prevent the PCDA from reaching its full potential, but provides possible recommendations to tackle these issues.

1. The implementation of transformational leadership will allow for change within policing, allowing the PCDA to succeed, and the advantages to be used to diminish negative policing culture and improve overall public satisfaction.

Aldam (2002) explores how negative police culture shows a protectionist attitude, in which the image of senior leaders is one of defending their hierarchy. It shows a lack of transformational leadership as those in senior positions fail to challenge existing practices or work to produce change. Silvestri (2007) defines transformational leadership as ‘participation, consultation and inclusion’ by actively eroding organisational culture. A change in organisational culture must occur at the top of the hierarchy for effective change to be implemented throughout the organisation (Sackman, 1991). The pre-existing issues argued by Smith (2019) provided evidence that those in positions to make changes did not feel they had the skills or knowledge to implement reform, meaning little was altered as a result. One method which could help foster a better acceptance of the PEQF would be through employing training in transformational leadership. Not only does this method support, as Foster (2003) and Mastrofski (2004), the implementation of reform to challenge negative police culture, it also helps to create an organisation focused on proactively responding to a changing operational environment. Using transformational leadership as described by Mastrofski (2004) means leaders show their workforce that valuing critical thinking as an organisation remains significant in identifying and promoting positive change. Rather than a method of completing tasks for reward, it follows the concept of completing actions because it is procedurally correct and brings the most benefit to the organisation. A similar concept can be found within the College of Policing's Code of Ethics, “Doing the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons” (College of Policing, 2024a NPN). This form of leadership works in cohesion with the

vision of the PEQF. It would allow for an acceptance of academia within policing by changing attitudes, inviting the advantages of higher education discussed throughout the paper. Contrary to the found benefits of transformational leadership on policing, it is important to recognise research conducted by Cockcroft (2014:78), who expresses 'a concern for the incompatibility of transformational leadership within policing due to a culture which places greater value on compliance than challenge. Bass (2006) acknowledged that where culture is deeply embedded, participants in transformational leadership may not have the capacity to practice the skills needed to be functional, such as reflective practice. This further enhances the importance of the PEQF in providing officers with skills such as reflective practice, which can enable a move towards transformational leadership.

An example of this model producing a positive effect comes from policing in Catalonia, where a three-month training programme of transformational leadership is delivered at the Police inspector rank, and is widely implemented at a national level. This has produced positive results regarding public trust, with a rise of nine per cent from 2011 to 2017 (Marques-Quinteiro et al, 2021). More importantly, it was noted that 'Police Officers have learnt to value their talent and the talent of others' (Marques-Quinteiro et al, 2021: PG 2403-2404). This is imperative for the acceptance of higher education, allowing a culture which can allow PCDA learners to apply the skills learnt during their degree. This case study is extremely valuable to evidence the impact that transformational leadership could have on policing in England and Wales.

2. Further research into the success of the PCDA within policing will help to show its power in acting upon Casey's (2023) recommendations.

The Casey Review identified the need for a serious tracking and recording of training to improve standards across policing. The PEQF provision can provide this with a clear curriculum in which officers achieve the full degree if they complete both operational competency and academic assessments. This makes it easier to measure what training is being delivered before officers become entirely competent. Mastrofski (2004) argues that acquiring more information on the impacts of police culture on the integration of academia would be beneficial in proving or disproving a pattern of experience for students, allowing for more effective change to be implemented.

3. The implementation of training which advises staff not involved in the PCDA of the benefits academia can bring to policing in England and Wales.

Before being critical of those who do not accept academia in policing, it is important to consider whether this is due to a lack of knowledge. At present, there is little organisational guidance provided to line managers on the specific requirements for those studying on the PCDA programme, with no information offered to pre-existing members of staff about how academia can benefit their role as officers. This knowledge gap could be a cause of resistance to the programme. By providing them with an information-based training session which applies the advantages found within this project, it allows for a more independent view to be found. Once each officer has been given context behind the use of academia in policing, they can form a better opinion of its use in policing. This also opens an opportunity for forces to examine attitudes before the training is delivered and attitudes after they are better informed. This will give a better understanding of how possible change is, whether pre-existing staff can accept change and the reasons why they may not accept academia.

4. Informing the academic setting of how the PEQF is received by the Police culture.

Sharing research such as this paper within both academic settings and across policing will help promote a more positive understanding of the benefits of higher education to law enforcement practice. The divide found within the research will be closed by understanding. If forces can provide training on the benefits of the PEQF, and academic settings can provide their teaching staff with information regarding the clashes between academia and policing, strategies can be developed. At present, there is often little information (within public view) which shows a collaborative working relationship between forces and their academic provider. As a result of this recommendation, it is suggested that the creation of a liaison role between HEIs and a force learning and development team, whose sole responsibility is to express challenges faced when academia is applied to policing. This would provide the university with the ability to develop its relationships with students and combat the resistance that academics experience.

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