

# **‘They didn’t treat us like professionals’: a case study of police recruits trained at a university**

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This paper challenges widely-held views about university education and its benefits for ‘professionalising’ policing. A collaborative initiative to train police recruits at a local university is shown to be producing ‘unintended consequences’. The social theory of Pierre Bourdieu is employed to examine how the pedagogic practices of the tutors and other aspects of the university programme operated to undermine the development of professional habitus.

## **Introduction**

This paper draws on empirical research into an innovative British police recruit programme to disrupt received views about university education and its benefits for professionalising policing. The Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) was designed to implement ‘modernised’ recruit training and address longstanding concerns around professionalising the police service. One of the most innovative features of the IPLDP is that recruits in several police forces undertake part of their training at local universities where they study for qualifications such as foundation degrees. Whilst there is a growing body of literature on foundation degrees in general (Burns 2008, Morgan Jones & Fitzgibbon 2004, Smith & Betts 2003), and a limited number of (non-empirical) published studies of the IPLDP (Peace 2006, Wood & Tong 2009), there has been a surprising absence of published empirical investigations into police foundation degrees. This paper begins an exploration of this sparsely chartered territory.

A case study was conducted in a police area in England where a foundation degree programme partnership was formed between police force and local university. The aim of the study was to examine the influence of the training on the recruits’ identities as police officers. The research design was longitudinal and the empirical data was drawn from multiple interviews with 25 police recruits. The research found ‘unintended consequences’ (Merton 1936) and in this paper Pierre Bourdieu’s related concepts of field, capital, habitus and symbolic violence are employed to examine how aspects of the university programme operated to undermine the development of professional identity. It is concluded that ‘professionalisation’ is not merely about police officers having an academic qualification, but much more critically it is about the need for them to develop what might be better termed a ‘professional habitus’.

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## **The British police service: professionalisation or McDonaldization?**

Professional(ism) has been identified as combining service, autonomy and specialist knowledge (Eraut 1994) at degree level (Watkins 1999), together with a commitment to learn throughout ones career (Early 2004). Although concepts of professionalism are shifting rather than fixed (Hanlon 1998), it is therefore at best a moot point as to whether the British police service is a profession. As is the case in most public sector organisations in Britain, the police service has, in recent years, been the subject of significant ‘reform’ and ‘modernisation’ (Home Office 2001, 2004, 2008). Principle characteristics of police reform and modernisation have included: changes in police governance, leading to increased powers for the Home Secretary; a narrowing of the police function with emphasis on key priorities objective setting; and performance management using statistical indicators (Hough 2003). A further key feature of the reform and modernisation agenda has been a concomitant argument that there is a need to ‘professionalise’ the police (HMIC 1999, 2004).

However, whilst these goals are perceived by some to go hand in hand, there is evidence of contradictions at play, whereby aspects of reform and modernisation have served to *undermine* rather than increase police professionalisation. Foremost is the argument that performance management regimes designed to modernise have had ‘perverse effects’, eroding the traditional service ethos and thereby public confidence in policing (Hough, 2003). On top of this, the ‘micro-management’ of individual officers across some fields of operational police work has led to a curtailment of traditional police discretion (Rowe, 2007). Under threat is also the traditional idea of the ‘omnicompetent’ police officer (Villiers 2009), which it can be argued, is partly due to changes in working practices following the extension of police support roles under the umbrella of the ‘extended police family’<sup>1</sup>, which has also formed a key plank of the Governments Workforce Modernisation Programme. However, it is contended that omnicompetence in role has also been undermined by the introduction into policing of Fordist principles of specialisation and compartmentalisation which has led to what might be termed the ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer 1993) of policing work. Indeed, when delivering her keynote speech at the 2007 Annual Police Federation Conference, the then Chair Jan Berry, accused the Government of ‘presiding over the systematic deskilling of the entire police service’<sup>2</sup>. Hardly a formula for increasing professionalisation.

### ***Police training and qualifications***

However, it can be argued that that in the last 5 years some progress towards professionalisation of the police service had been made in the area of training and qualifications. Although, once again, when taking a longer term view it is difficult to make the case that the police service is a profession. Whilst there have been ad hoc schemes in some police areas to educate senior officers on university based programmes

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<sup>1</sup> Since the Police Reform Act of 2002, the concept of the ‘extended police family’ has formed an important plank of the Government’s Workforce Modernisation Programme (HMIC 2004). Part of this programme entails the creation of completely new police support roles, such as Police Community Support Officers, and Accredited Financial Investigators, as well as greater civilianisation of existing police functions.

<sup>2</sup> Keynote speech delivered by Chair, Jan Berry at the 2007 Police Federation Annual Conference.

(Lee & Punch 2004), historically, British police recruits have not received any externally recognised qualification, let alone a degree, at the conclusion of their training. However, this had long been regarded as unsatisfactory (HMIC 2002) and the Home Office decided that police forces must train their recruits to a minimum of NVQ level three standard (Home Office 2006). The establishing of a recognised qualification was seen as a foundation for professionalising the police service in England and Wales (ibid.).

### ***Initial Police Learning and Development Programme***

The introduction of an externally recognised qualification for police officers also coincided with the launch in 2005 of the IPLDP, a new and innovative national police recruit training programme. The background to this development was a damning inspection report (HMIC 2002) which concluded that the previous regime of training police recruits was ‘not fit for purpose’ (see Heslop 2009). Although the need for a new system to train recruits was also given urgent impetus of the screening in 2003 of the BBC television programme *The Secret Police Man*.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst British police recruit training had already been restructured on many occasions (see Allard 1997, HMIC 2002), the IPLDP offered a ‘radical change’ (Peace 2006) from previous training programmes. One of the most innovative features of the IPLDP was that police forces were encouraged to collaborate with local universities to enable recruits to study for foundation degrees.

### **Foundation degrees**

In September 2001, the Foundation Degree was introduced into the United Kingdom awards system by the Government as part of a strategy to widen participation and to enhance the development of vocational awards at higher education level. The award was controversially called a ‘degree’, despite the fact that it was only of two years duration and not at honours level. Smith & Betts (2003) argue that :

The origins of the Foundation Degree were less to do with the development of a carefully honed concept derived through recognition of the need for such an award across the academic community, but more to do with the Government’s desire to achieve certain key policy objectives.

To that end, according to Morgan et al. (2004:355), foundation degrees ‘...are another in a long list of government schemes aimed at combining or bridging the academic-vocational divide or at least providing an HE-based curriculum with a vocational content’. The defining characteristics of these vocational degrees include the integration of academic and work-based learning throughout, and the close and continued collaboration between programme providers and employers. Of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, seven are currently believed to be involved in collaboration with different universities. These foundation degree programmes differ markedly in content

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<sup>3</sup> BBC TV Panorama: *The Secret Policeman*, screened October 2003. For a comprehensive discussion of the Secret Policeman programme and its ramifications see McLaughlin, E (2007: Chapter 6).

and structure and when examined nationally the current provision of recruit training across England and Wales can at best be described as inconsistent.

### **The case study and methodology**

The case study was conducted in a police area in England. Whilst a case study is ‘neither a method nor a methodology’ (Bloomer & James 2001) the intention is generally proposed to be to gain an in-depth understanding of concerned phenomena in a ‘real-life’ setting. Such an approach can explore, describe and explain complex relationships and ‘bring to life’ meanings and issues through contextualisation and what Flyvbjerg (2001) calls ‘the power of example’. Darke et al (1998) suggest that a case study approach is useful in newer, less well-developed research areas (such as this one) particularly where examination of the context and the dynamics of a situation are important.

The foundation degree in Police Studies is a joint venture between the police force and university (hereafter the University) and which also integrates aspects of the national IPLDP. In their research into a scheme to send senior officers to study at university on full time degree programmes, Lee & Punch (2004:247) argued that ‘it defeats the purpose if officers take a degree together in a tailor-made programme or if the content is shaped to be overly functional for policing’. Whilst the foundation degree in Police Studies is, indeed, tailor-made and the ‘student officers’ do take it together in cohorts of approximately 40, the curriculum is broadly based and contains subjects underpinned by the disciplines of sociology, criminology, education and law.

The officers attend the university campus for four weeks at the start of their two year training period where there are taught by university tutors. Recently, Wood & Tong (2009) have highlighted a ‘university versus police interests tension’ in these collaborative programmes, particularly over the issue of ‘who “owns” the student officers’. This question is even more complex when one recognises that it is a historical tradition of British policing that recruits are sworn into the office of constable immediately they join the police service.<sup>4</sup> In this case then, the officers attend the university campus as ‘sworn police officers’ with all the powers of a constable, even though at this stage of their careers they may not know how to use them. Following the four weeks at the University, the officers attend the local Police Training School for a further 15 weeks where they receive a traditional policing education based around legislation and procedures. However, in year two of their training period, the officers once again return to the University campus for a further two weeks of tuition.

### ***Methodology***

The methodological strategy employed in this study comprises qualitative data collection and analysis and is grounded in a philosophical position which is ‘interpretivist’. An interpretive approach not only sees people as the primary sources of data but seeks their

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<sup>4</sup> All police officers, regardless of rank, are holders of the office of constable. As such, police officers are not employees; rather they are holders of an independent office under the Crown which confers on them their police powers and responsibilities.

experiences or what Blaikie (2000) calls the ‘insider’ view, rather than imposing an ‘outsider’ view. Consequently, the main research method was qualitative semi-structured interviewing. Kvale (1996:5) defines qualitative research interviews as ‘attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations’. All the interviewees were volunteers and the sampling strategy was designed to encompass what Mason (2004) terms a ‘relevant range’ with respect to gender, ethnicity, background etc. The research design was longitudinal and 25 participants were interviewed at multiple points over their two year training period. These interviews produced a large quantity of rich data and the computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo was utilised to assist with data management and the identification of emerging themes. This analysis was initially informed by a methodology drawing on the ethos of ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser, 1992), though an ‘interpretative’ approach influenced by the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1992) was subsequently adopted (see Heslop 2009).

### **Findings and theoretical framework**

Bourdieu (1992) reminds us that sociological research should involve ‘reflexivity’ based on the belief that the researcher cannot be objective or detached from the research process. Reflecting back to when I started this research, my intuitive feeling was that the University experience would have a positive impact on the officers’ development, and this view was almost certainly shaped by my own experiences, both as a police recruit and mature student. When I joined the police in 1988, police academy training comprised what Rowe & Garland (2003:399) correctly term ‘instruction in legislation and military style drill’. In comparison, the idea of getting paid to debate criminological theory in a university classroom, without being shouted at, seemed appealing.

My own experience of combining university study with a police career has, I believe, had a positive influence on my professional identity. Having joined the police without having previously been to university I went on to study for degrees in politics, sociology and education. For me, this experience was literally ‘transformational’ (Mezirow 1990) and it opened my mind to new ways of thinking about the world. One way was to think about policing and society in more sociological terms. Whilst police officers are not required to be sociologists they do need to have a broad understanding of societies and the complexity of their issues. Perhaps like me police training was previously more inward-looking and in need of some development, but as will be seen, that development needs to be carefully executed.

### ***Unintended consequences***

It is, however, an old saying that ‘nothing ever goes according to plan’. Understandably then, the theme of ‘unintended consequences’ (Merton 1936) has long provided a prime area for sociological research and many commentators have distinguished between the stated purpose or intent of social actions and their sometimes unrecognised but objective, functional consequences. Although many social actions and policies produce positive unanticipated results, sociological discussion of unintended consequences usually refers to the situation of ‘perverse’ outcomes, which may be the opposite of what was intended.

Indeed, it became immediately from the first interviews that rather than being positive, the majority of participants held negative views about their experiences at the University. This was to the extent that there was an overriding theme of *conflict* in the data, and some of the interviewees explained that they had been: ‘talked down to’, ‘looked down on’, ‘patronised’, ‘treated like kids’, and that some of the tutors were ‘condescending’ towards them:

I didn’t think we were treated like police officers.... No I felt they treated us like children (Participant 22).

The style in which the University part was delivered was patronising at best. I understand that they do the same thing every six weeks and so it’s obviously quite tedious for them, but they make us feel like we are inferior to them (Participant 7).

I think the university is trying to bring in community involvement, but by the way they are doing it they’re building up barriers (Participant 11).

I felt like I was bullied by one of the tutors. I don’t know whether you want me to go into that? (Participant 24).

Qualitative investigation can never tell *the* story of a research situation but only *a* story<sup>5</sup> and I realised early on in this study there was another side to this story that warranted exploration. Whilst it not been part of my original research design to do so, I decided to adjust my data collection strategy and sought access to interview the University tutors. Unfortunately, however, the University tutors politely but firmly declined to be interviewed on the grounds of protecting their anonymity. Whilst disappointed, I of course, respected their decision not to be interviewed and in terms of the impact on my study I had to proceed as originally planned. However, a different side to the story did emerge from some of the police officers who explained to me how some of their own colleagues were acting in an unprofessional way:

It became quite unruly at times and I could see that some people were reacting to that and some people just weren’t being professional. They weren’t disciplined. We were fresh off the street ... and we had twenty year old people who were sat in a lecture theatre thinking this is shit I’ll read the paper, and they were reading the paper and it was a zoo some days (Participant 1).

I think people were bored, but people had gone in with definite I don’t want to be here, I’m not doing it. I think some people had definitely gone in with that idea that I don’t want to be here, I don’t think it’s important. So like I say, there was newspaper reading, a bit of silliness whatever (Participant 9).

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, it can equally be argued that quantitative investigation can also never tell *the* story of a research project, though researchers operating under this paradigm often purport to have done so. However, this is a methodological debate that is beyond the scope of the current paper.

There would be people messing about sometimes in the class and I just thought this is like being back at school. So I could understand that they [the tutors] may have been frustrated at that (Participant 22).

In an important discussion of the uses of the concept of habitus in educational research Reay (2004) critiques the ‘contemporary fashion’ of overlaying research analyses with Bourdieu’s concepts, rather than making them work in the context of the data and the research settings. However, the more data I analysed, the more I was presented with an overriding picture of *conflict*, and in trying to interpret this in theoretical terms I was drawn to the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu.

### **The social theory of Pierre Bourdieu**

Although his work *has* been used extensively within educational research (Reay 2004), it tends to be overlooked that Bourdieu is primarily a theorist of class and cultural *reproduction* (Jenkins 1992, Shilling 2004) and that his model of social relations has its roots in Marxist theories of class and conflict. However, Bourdieu argued against the traditional Marxist view that society can only be analysed in terms of class and ideology and much of his work concerns the independent role of cultural and educational factors. In order to understand this sometimes complex body of work it is necessary to engage with his three foundational concepts of *field*, *capital* and *habitus*.

#### ***Field***

Whilst it is tempting to start with his better known concept of habitus, according to Bourdieu it is the *field* which provides the primary area of study for any area of social life (Grenfell & James 2004). Although for analytical purposes the field maybe considered to be ‘bounded’ it is not a static, geographical or spatial entity, but can better be thought of as a series of structures, institutions and activities all of which relate to the people acting within the field. Indeed, Hodkinson et al. (2008) note how Bourdieu’s use of the term has more in common with a ‘force field’ and later in this paper I will develop this physics analogy further by suggesting similarity to a *magnetic* field, where forces act to push against each other. Suffice it here to point out that the field is theorised as a site of *conflict* between individuals or institutions competing for the same stake. That stake is the accumulation of capital as a means of ensuring the reproduction of the individual or institutions class.

#### ***Capital***

However, Bourdieu did not intend capital to be understood in purely Marxist terms and one of his key conceptual innovations was the classification of three different types of capital: economic, cultural and social. The concept of economic capital is readily understood and comprises forms of material wealth. Cultural capital, however, is a concept unique to Bourdieu’s theoretical framework and includes forms of knowledge, taste and education. Whereas cultural capital is based around an individual’s stock of cultural resources, social capital is located in their relationships and networks. For

Bourdieu then, positions in a field are dependent on the kinds and strengths of capital possessed.

### ***Habitus***

The final concept to consider is habitus which represents Bourdieu's ambitious attempt to transcend the traditional division in social theory between agency and structure. It is used to explain some features of social life that he suggests cannot be accounted for simply by understanding the combined actions of individuals, but rather are influenced by history, tradition, customs and principles that people do not make explicit. Habitus is developed by imitation as people unconsciously incorporate behaviours into their lives, imitating other actors within a field through a process of iterative learning (Lane 2000). However, the habitus leads to a wide repertoire of possible actions, simultaneously enabling individuals to draw on both transformative and constraining courses of action (Reay 2004). For Bourdieu, it is the interaction of habitus, capital and the field that generate the 'logic of practice' and he has explained this interaction in terms of an equation: (Habitus x Capital) + Field = Practice (Bourdieu 1984:101).

### ***Fields and conflict***

It was noted above how the field is theorised as a site of conflict, as actors within the field(s) manoeuvre and struggle over power and resources. It is also important to note that for analytical purposes the boundaries between fields are not fixed. Fields both 'overlap' and vary in how much they depend on the characteristics of other fields to define them (Grenfell & James 2004). For present purposes the institution of and activities and relationships surrounding the University are of central structural interest in this field. However, taking this as our starting point, the University is itself part of the wider field of British higher education and in the context of this case study overlaps with the fields of police training and British policing. Consequently, the particular structure of a field is also given by the struggles over authority and legitimacy and boundary maintenance (Bourdieu 1995).

As I explained earlier, the physics analogy of a force field has been used to help us understand this process. At its simplest this acknowledges the operation of energy in space and sees the *relations* between properties and objects as the key to understanding (Hodkinson et al. 2008). However in this case study, it seemed more like the properties of *magnetic* field where 'poles' are pushed apart.<sup>6</sup> Of course, it is possible to push this analogy too far. At an institutional level the fields of higher education and policing had been 'attracted' to and brought together by the partnership between the University and local police force. Examined in terms of capital there is an economic relationship between the parties, but there are also wider issues of *status* at play as well. Whilst training is regarded as a 'low status' activity within the field of policing (Oakley 1994), within higher education, teaching and research are the *raison d'être* of that field.

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<sup>6</sup> It is accepted that there are some limitations to this physics analogy. Magnets have an area around them called a magnetic field. The ends of magnets are called magnetic poles, which is where the force of a magnet is the strongest. All magnets have a north pole and a south pole. Whilst different poles attract each other, like poles will always push away or repel each other.



Although a police training school might build up a strong reputation as a *training* provider, the school and its trainers are unlikely to have the same status as a university and its academics. When it comes to education it is the institution of the University which holds the status and its academics who possess the capital. Looked at from this perspective it is not surprising that the police force is ‘attracted’ to collaboration with the University and the related status this will bring. However, within social science research it is *context* that counts (Flyvbjerg 2001) and at the local level of the case study site things play out in a different way. In this field the individual habitus of the student officers and tutors come into the equation and here there was seemingly as much ‘repelling’ as ‘attraction’.

If some of the academics did ‘look down on’ the student officers then, as suggested above, at an individual level this could be attributed to their previous professional experiences and even prejudices, which form part of their own habitus. In similar vein, the student officers own unprofessional behavior could be attributed to their own background dispositions which they brought with them into the police service. However, it will be remembered that in Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, the medium of all relations within the field is *capital*. All capital - whether economic, social or cultural - is *symbolic* and the prevailing conditions of it shape social practice (Grenfell & James 2004). Whilst social capital may not be of central relevance in this study, *cultural capital*, (or more accurately the lack of it) has great significance.

### ***Cultural capital***

Although many graduates join the British police service, unlike virtually all other professions there is no minimum educational requirement in order to do so. However, prior to the foundation degree education this mattered little because the traditional police training school curriculum was focussed predominantly on police legislation and procedures. Whilst such a curriculum had its obvious limitations, it was, nevertheless, a great ‘leveller’ as a recruit’s previous background provided little advantage. As an institution, the British police service is an archetypal meritocracy and until relatively recently even the majority of Chief Constables were not university graduates before they joined the police (Reiner 1991). However, the fact that new recruits now find themselves on university campuses, where they are required to perform and compete on a much wider academic basis means that background is important.

I just felt at a disadvantage and I would always be playing catch up and you think gosh there’s more pressure on me cos I think half the class have got degrees (Participant 24).

For readers well versed in the literature of the sociology of education, the finding that cultural capital has bearing on a university programme might seem singularly unremarkable. However, it is worth reiterating that many of the officers had been recruited without *any* academic qualifications:

I can't understand why you can join the police with no qualifications and yet you're expected to do a policing degree it's just beyond me that nobody's made that connection. I felt out of my depth (Participant 24).

The above quote highlights how this is also an unusual situation for the University tutors. On the majority of degree programmes, the typical student will have undergone at least some form of academic progression. Of course, teaching students without the usual entry requirements would prove challenging for even the most experienced and competent tutors. However, many of the participants believed that they had not been treated like 'real students'.

I didn't think that they treated us like students either; more like, not second class citizens that's a bit strong, but as if they didn't want to be there and they were under duress to be there and actually teach us. You just constantly got the impression that they thought: oh we are doing this because we have to, they're all thick and they don't understand us (Participant 8).

### ***Neither students or professionals***

If the many of the officers did not feel like they were treated as 'real students' most of them also felt that they suffered the 'double-whammy' of not being treated as professionals. As these officers explain:

We were treated as students who shouldn't have been there is my best explanation. They didn't treat us like professionals (Participant 7).

I don't think we were treated as professional police officers, not in any sense. I never ever got the impression that I was a police officer, you know like you can feel like a police officer by the way someone acts towards you. I never got that impression from [names a tutor], never (Participant 1).

As the last quote from this officer alludes to, professionalisation is not just about police officers having an academic qualification, but critically it is a sensibility about how they as *individuals* think, feel and act. Examining this more theoretically in terms of Bourdieu's framework, it is possible to see how the way they were treated becomes internalised through their habitus as taken-for-granted ways of thinking and feeling (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Recently, Hodkinson et al (2008:41) have developed the metaphor of 'learning as becoming' to help explain this process:

Within any situation an individual may learn, through the integrated processes of participation and their ongoing (re)construction of their own habitus. In these processes, that which is learned can be modified as it becomes part of the person... Learning can change and/or reinforce that which is learned, and can change and/or reinforce the habitus of the learner. In these ways a person is constantly learning through becoming and becoming through learning.

Further to the idea that they were not treated as ‘real students’ or professionals, the data also showed that many of the participants often felt that their own views were ‘minimised’ in the classroom, and that tutors were unwilling to accept their points of view.

They were constantly asking for debates and challenges and trying to get us to interact. But then if you did and it wasn't what they wanted you were shot down in flames. You know, they were asking for your opinion, but if it didn't match with what they were looking for or think, then it was wrong in their eyes (Participant 24).

The data showed that often it was not just the officers' opinions that were dismissed, but their own *practical* experiences of policing situations which did not seem to fit with the tutors' academic and theoretical stance on police work. As noted earlier, in the second year of their training period the officers attended the University campus for a further two weeks, by which time they had accumulated several months of operational policing experience. However, the data showed that this experience still counted for little in the classroom environment:

It's down to things like you express your view point and they instantly dismiss it even if it's from your own experience. They say, well that's not true and you think well I work this job day in day out I know what I see. You don't do this job so you're all right commenting in theory, but the reality is what we see day in day out (Participant 15).

### ***Symbolic violence***

Bourdieu (1977) has argued that educational institutions practice *symbolic violence* on students. By symbolic violence, Bourdieu meant a soft sort of violence which is exercised upon an individual with his or her complicity. It is an act of violence because it leads to the constraint and subordination of individuals, but it is symbolic in the sense that it is achieved indirectly and without physical force or coercion. Symbolic violence is practiced in numerous ways. Bourdieu (1988:4) argued, for example, that it is performed by educators who impose meanings as ‘legitimate by concealing power relations which are the basis of its force’. However, it is contended that it is also a form of symbolic violence to devalue or minimise professional experience and subordinate it to academic perspectives. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is also related to his concept of habitus as it is through the habitus that the effects of the violence become internalised as taken - for - granted ways of thinking and behaving (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

### **Discussion**

Looked at from one perspective, sending police recruits to a university campus to study for a foundation degree follows the well-trodden path of trying to make changes to policing through training and education (Heslop, 2006). However, the foundation degree partnership between the police force and University was innovative in the British policing context. As such, whilst this seemed like a laudable way to professionalise the police service, there were some significant assumptions behind aspects of the new training,

although it was understandable why some of these assumptions came about. Writing about their own research into a scheme to send senior officers to study at university, Lee & Punch (2004:248) concluded that:

Policing needs to be continually enriched with critical, enquiring and challenging minds. Uniformity and conformity lead to stereotypical thought and conduct that undermines this. A sound university education still provides the best basis for this thought.

Before I commenced this research I would have had no hesitation in agreeing with this sentiment. However, in making these assumptions were we failing to recognize that just like the police, universities also have their *own cultures* which are not always positive and that *some* academics that are part of those cultures are also capable of conforming to stereotypical thought and conduct?

In this paper, however, my aim has been to move beyond the individualisation of issues and phenomena, rather, I have sought explanation in broader and relational terms. Whilst there are always various theoretical approaches which can be deployed in any research, in this case the data called out for a Bourdieusian framing. Indeed, were it possible to have consulted Bourdieu, we might well argue that he would have cautioned us against making some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the foundation degree police training. Bourdieu would surely remind us that universities are not necessarily neutral disinterested institutions, but rather are sites of symbolic power and violence.<sup>7</sup> It is concluded that professionalisation is not just about police officers having letters after their names, but much more critically it is about the need for the development of what might be termed 'professional habitus'. If universities are to be involved in education of police recruits, then this is also one of their most important roles.

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<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu (1984), in fact, envisaged education as part of a larger macrocosm of symbolic institutions that reproduce existing power relations.

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