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The Role of Police Culture in the Police Professionalisation Agenda

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Background to Professionalisation

Professionalisation as 'disciplinary mechanism' (Fournier, 1999, p.281) and 'disciplinary logic' (Fournier, 1999, p. 288).

Non-autonomous professionalism and the restraint of police culture (Brogden and Shearing, 1993, p.109)

Professionalisation as an extension of the NPM agenda.

Three Themes

Training/Education

Structure/Culture

New Knowledge Paradigms



Training/Education and the Professionalisation Agenda

Training/education gained traction during the 1960s over issues of legitimacy (Lee and Punch, 2004)

2000s HMIC (2002) police probation training 'not wholly fit for purpose' (p. 10)

Training to Education (Flanagan, 2008)

The making of a profession or the imposition of oversight?

Symbolic benefits - professionalisation to redefine and relegitimize (CF Abbott 1998, Sklansky, 2007)

Symbolic/external facing benefits or upskilling officers?

Structure/Culture and Professionalisation

Inherent contradictions between the structure/culture of police organizations. Hallenberg and Cockcroft (2017) interviewed 30 in service graduates

None of the interviewees found their degree influenced their career.

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

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

Structure/Culture and Professionalisation (cont.)

Malcom Young “Even at the same time as it publicly commends higher education, seeking out the graduate entrant, spending large sums on publicity to this end, and funding access to degree courses on scholarships, it also holds to a central ethic of distrust of the academic. “ (1991, pp. 37-8)

New Knowledge Paradigms

The Rise of Evidence Based Policing

Abstract knowledge base (and monopoly of techniques and technologies) defines a profession (Abbott, 1998)

Enhances claim to knowledge work – shape discourse

Knowledge is abstracted and centralizes method over the practitioner (Wood et al, 2018)

“I want them to tell me what police work is all about. I could care less about the outside speakers or the guys they bring out here from upstairs who haven’t been on the street for the last twenty years. What I want is for somebody who’s gonna level with us and really give the lowdown on how we’re supposed to survive out there” (Van Maanen, 1978, p. 297)

Experiential versus evidential knowledge bases



Conclusion

The long slow death of police discretion?

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