## **Introduction**

Good afternoon, I think it’s important to manage your expectations. When Emma described all of the presenters as ‘immanent scholars’ that doesn’t include me! I’m a second year full-time PhD student at the University of the West of Scotland, just outside Glasgow. In a previous life I was a Superintendent with Police Scotland which shortly before I retired in 2014, included a spell as Head of the Probationer Training Division at the Scottish Police College (otherwise known as Tulliallan).

My PhD research, which is jointly funded by the University of the West of Scotland and the Scottish Institute for Policing Research, is around the role of higher academic education in police professionalisation with a focus on pre and post-entry recruit learning in Scotland, Finland and Sweden. My fieldwork is almost complete and I’m in the early stages of data analysis and would welcome any comments, observations or suggestions which people may have around taking my work through to conclusion.

## **Research Aim (Show slide 2)**

The aim of my study is to understand why Scottish policing has taken a divergent approach to recruit learning, particularly with regards to the role of higher education, compared with Finland and Sweden and the extent to which the different approaches have been shaped by factors such as organisational culture, myths, realities, perceptions and the reconfiguration of professional work.

Rather than repeat previous attempts to analyse the impact of higher education on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of individual police officers, this study focuses on the perceptions of those who influence policy and practice in this area, those who implement it and those who are its intended beneficiaries, namely the police recruits, or potential recruits.

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## **Research Questions (Show slide 3)**

The central research question of this study is:

“To what extent do the different social, cultural and political contexts in Scotland, Sweden and Finland influence the perception of the role of higher education in police recruit learning?”

The study has been further guided by the following supplementary research questions:

1. How has initial police learning evolved in the case study countries?
2. What knowledge, skills and behaviours do ‘policy network actors’ within different social, cultural and political contexts view as desirable in a professional police officer?
3. To what extent are the current approaches to police learning within different social, cultural and political contexts perceived as helping or hindering the development of desirable professional attributes?
4. How do ‘policy network actors’ within Scotland, Sweden and Finland view the impact, or potential impact, of academic education on the professionalisation of new/potential police recruits.

## **Signpost**

In an attempt to share the emerging insights from my data I am going to ask you to suspend belief for the next 15 minutes or so and imagine that this 50 something year old, balding, overweight man standing before you is in fact the slim young man that I was when I first joined the police in 1984 (I know, it’s a stretch!). Then imagine that there are 3 of me, that it’s June 2019 and that one of me has just completed his 2-year probation with Police Scotland, one has just finished his two and a half years basic education with the Swedish Police and the third has just joined the Finnish Police after completing his 3-year Bachelor’s degree in police work.

OK, so the Scottish 19-year old version first.

## **Scottish me (Show slide 4)**

I left school at 17 with a few O levels and a couple of A levels - not enough to get into any of the top or indeed middle-ranking universities but enough to go to one of the more vocationally-focused universities. I actually didn’t need any qualifications to join – I just needed to pass the Standard Entrance Test which comprised a series of relatively straightforward tests including arithmetic and English as well as the physical fitness test, the medical and an interview or two. Unlike applicants in Sweden and Finland, I didn’t get psychologically tested to see if I was suitable. Once I passed all of that and the vetting procedure, I was given a start date to begin my 11-week Initial Training Course at the Scottish Police College. At the time, apart from keeping my fitness levels up, there was no preparation to do – were I to join next year, then I would be sent some of the learning material in advance and be expected to learn it before I start my ITC.

Anyway, I got my start date and on Day 1 arrived in my suit and tie and lined up on the Parade Square with all the other new recruits. The uniformed drill instructor appeared, with a military style drill sergeants’ sash and wooden pace-stick and started barking orders at me. I was OK with all of that side of things because I’d been a soldier in the Army before applying to join the police. It was made very clear to me on the first day that the standards of personal behaviour, hygiene and uniform care were very high, that my boots had to be polished to a high shine and that when walking past anyone in the corridors who wasn’t a fellow recruit I had to look them in the eye and say “good afternoon maam” or “good afternoon sir” and that I had to stand up when the instructors entered the classroom.

In my first week I was sworn in by a Justice of the Peace, to the office of Constable at which point I had all the duties and powers invested in that office. I received a salary and didn’t have to pay for my food and accommodation or uniform, just my boots. I know that the Police Federation strongly believe that if new recruits weren’t paid from day 1, far fewer people would want to join.

I then had 11-weeks of intensive learning…there was very little time during the day to myself. I was either in class where my class instructor, usually an experienced police constable, gave me instruction on legislation around crime, general police duties and roads policing which are reinforced through practical exercises. I also received instruction in officer safety techniques, equality and diversity, and Human Rights. It was so busy during the day, that I usually did my book work in the evenings and at weekends, although quite a lot of my time in the evenings was spent preparing my uniform and practicing drill with my classmates.

Having passed all of the assessments and the final exam, I passed out of the Police College – this was a formal parade with a military band, marching, prize giving and speeches which our family and friends came to. I felt very proud to be part of it and we all felt strongly that we were now police officers rather than civilians, although many of us felt there was too much bullshit that had nothing to do with real policing.

I, like all of my fellow recruits, the instructors and indeed all of my senior managers that I’ve spoken with, firmly believe that the most important knowledge that I need to be a professional police officer is ‘craft’ knowledge and that the best way to learn that is on the street, doing the job. I believe that the 11-weeks initial training at Tulliallan gave me enough of a grounding to go out there and start learning for real. Like them, I don’t’ believe that it should be mandatory to have a degree in order to join Police Scotland (although 38% of recruits do have degrees, most of which are not related to policing). Like them I also believe that we wouldn’t attract the diversity of people that we currently do and that graduates are more likely to leave the police if they don’t get promotion or a specialist role pretty quickly. Like everyone else that I’ve spoken with, I think that policing is a profession on a par with teaching and nursing (but not as high as doctors and lawyers) and I think it’s a profession because it’s a vocation, it’s useful to society – it makes a positive difference and its part of who I am, part of my identity.

I then began the main part of my 2-year probationary period and joined my shift or team at the station I was posted to, where I carried out uniformed, operational response duties under the guidance of a tutor constable. The tutor was chosen by my shift sergeant and hadn’t completed the 1-day national tutor course although he had recently completed his probation. How long recruits stay with their tutor varies, depending on how quickly they are assessed as being ready for independent patrol, whether another recruit joining the shift needs to be tutored….the reasons are many and varied. I had some Open and Distance Learning (ODL) units to complete during the rest of my probation as well as 3 x 1-day assessments at the Scottish Police College.

Once I successfully completed my probation, I was awarded a Certificate in Policing by Police Scotland which has been assessed by the Scottish Police College (which is an SCQF Credit Rating institution in its own right) as being at level 7 (level 5 on the EQF framework). I was confirmed in my role and know that I have a job for life (unless I get into bother, become ill or leave). If I want to climb up the ranks or undertake a specialist role I don’t have to take any academic qualifications (at the moment people have to complete the part time Diploma in Police Service Leadership and Management to get promoted to any rank, but that’s in the process of being scrapped), so no more studying for me (apart from any training courses that I do).

## **The Swedish me (Show slide 5)**

Now this is where you will really need to use your imagination! The Swedish me is now 23, having started my basic police education when I was 20-years old. I finished high school at 19, did my 9 months military conscription and then applied to join the police. I’m slim, blonde haired and blue-eyed and can speak English (as well as other languages) fluently with a heavy Swedish accent!

I have wanted to be a police officer since I was a little boy. I needed to have my school qualifications in order to apply – they weren’t good enough to get me into highly academic courses but they were enough to get me into a vocationally focused university where the basic police education takes place.

The selection process was managed by the Ministry of Defence and was quite tough, especially the psychological tests. I was asked lots of questions to test my personality and my intelligence. Competition for one of the 800 – 900 places which are available each year is fierce, with about 16,000 initial applications being received last year, although about only 4000 got to the formal assessment stage. Mind you, apparently in recent years, they have been struggling to actually find enough people to fill all of the available places!

It’s quite a large force of around 20,000 police officers which polices a population of around 10 million. Apparently, the force is going to increase in size to 30,000 staff by 2024, of which around 7,000 will be police officers. Just like the Scottish Nationalist Party in Scotland, the Swedish Democratic Party’s philosophy is that the more highly educated the population is, the richer Sweden will be both socially and economically, a philosophy it has extended to academic attainment levels within public services. Over the past decade it has commissioned a number of reports to consider whether the basic police education should be a Bachelor’s degree and then another, when they accepted that it should, on how to make that happen. However, last year they lost power and the Conservatives have stopped the reform in its tracks.

Actually, like most of my fellow students, I don’t care whether or not the basic education programme is a Bachelor’s degree. I just knew that in order to join, I had to first complete a 2 and a half-year Policing Programme at one of the 5 mainstream universities which have been approved by the Swedish Police Authority to deliver the programme. The Swedish Police Authority has provided the high-level learning outcomes to each university, but they in turn have quite a lot of freedom to decide the detail of what’s in each programme.

Once I passed the selection process, I chose to attend Umea University in north-eastern Sweden. It was the first university to deliver the basic education programme almost 20 years ago. The other 4 universities have only started delivering the programme in the past few years, once the police training school in Stockholm was closed in 2012.

I knew that I would be an undergraduate student at the university and not a police officer, so I applied for a Govt grant and a student loan to help with living costs. If I had been over 25 and working for a few years I would have been eligible for a higher grant. Fortunately, the police pay each university separately under different contracts to deliver the programme, so I didn’t have to pay tuition fees…we don’t have them in Sweden anyway. I’m told that the Police Authority spend about £70 million each year on the programme.

Although we didn’t get a salary whilst we are at university, it didn’t seem to deter older people (there is a 54-year-old man on our course), those with families (we have mothers) and those with other big commitments like mortgages from applying. It wasn’t uncommon to have students on the programme who already had a Bachelor’s degree. For example, we had a guy on my course who was a nurse…..he spent 3 years getting the degree that he needed to be a nurse but after 8 years in that job decided on a career change.

I spent 2 years at the university learning all about the law, officer safety, how to use my sidearm, drive a police vehicle and such like…the things that I knew would be useful in the field. We also got lessons on communication skills, criminology, sociology and psychology to give us a broader understanding of the people and communities we would be working with and help us to make more informed decisions. At the time, I didn’t think that these ‘academic’ subjects were necessary, but having been on the street now for a while, I realise that they were. In particular, understanding why people commit crime, why they behave the way they do (especially those with mental health problems) has been very helpful. So much of what we deal with involves people in mental health crisis and being told the signs to look for and how to speak with people so that it helps rather than make things worse has been invaluable. So, has being taught some of the science behind how to look after my own physical and mental health, especially stress, has given me a much deeper understanding. We Swedes, like our fellow Scandinavians, like to understand why we are being asked to do certain things in a certain way by our managers, rather than to just blindly follow orders.

All the lesson plans and scenarios that we did at the university were developed by police officers and academics in specialist areas like the law and psychology and they were on hand during the practical exercises to advise and assess us. I liked the relaxed learning environment and the ‘spare’ time that I had to learn deeply and to fill the learning gap myself by researching the answers to assignment questions. I know that when the basic education was moved from the old national police school in Stockholm to Sodertorn University in 2015, the police students felt that they weren’t welcome on the campus by staff and students alike, but I didn’t find that at Umea. We often walked around the campus in uniform, when we are having practical exercises, and it did help us to get used to wearing our uniforms in public. We tended to stick together though rather than mix with the ‘ordinary’ students, but that was mostly because we had formed a tight bond with one another and spent most of our time talking about policing.

After my 2 years of theoretical learning, which some thought was too long (although we are all amazed by the Scottish 11-week initial training course, which we all think is far too short), we began our 6-months field training, which many of my fellow students and many of our teachers and tutors thought should be 12 months. We were given a temporary employment contract with the Police Authority, were known as ‘aspirants’, received a salary and were given the powers of a police officer. My first 3 months were spent doing different inside jobs, under supervision and then I got to go out on patrol with 2 tutor constables. At first, I shadowed the tutors but after a while I got to deal with jobs under the close supervision of the tutors. I know that in Stockholm, about 30% of the ‘aspirants’ have their 6-month period of field learning extended but that in the end most manage to reach the grade. My tutors volunteered for the role, got 5 days training in leadership and coaching and got about £20 extra for every day that they acted as tutors.

We then returned to the university for 8 weeks during which time we worked in small groups to reflect and write about the ethical dilemmas we faced during our field learning. I was very sceptical about the value of this, but reflecting on not only my experiences but also those of my colleagues, was very helpful. It allowed me to be very clear about my personal and professional values and ethical standards and about how I would respond when challenged in the real world of policing.

Once that was over, I ‘graduated’ at a nice ceremony at the university. Unlike the other universities, I was awarded 120 academic credits which I could put towards a Bachelor’s degree if I do extra modules which Umea offers and which would give me the extra 60 credit points that I would need. I know that about 500 experienced police officers applied for the first 25 places when the extra modules were offered for the first-time last year, many of whom were wanting to go on to do Masters degrees so that they could get promoted to senior ranks or do very specialist roles, like child protection.

Like all of my colleagues, I think that policing is a profession on a par with nurses, teachers and the like, but not as high status a profession as doctors and lawyers. I believe that it makes a really positive difference to society and that it’s not just a 9 to 5 job, it’s a way of life, an integral part of who I am. Most of us agree that you need to have a fairly equal balance of theoretical knowledge and ‘craft’ knowledge. I think, as do most of us, that the two and a half year policing programme just gives us the basis for becoming professional police officers and that we will need to develop our craft knowledge through experience of doing the job on the street in order to become an expert, or a professional.

I hear that quite a lot of my fellow recruits will leave in the first few years, largely because the pay is low compared with similar professions. The Police Union is arguing for the policing programme to be developed into a Bachelor’s Degree so that they can make the case for improving our terms and conditions.

## **The Finnish me (Show slide 6)**

Like the Scottish and Swedish me, I left school at 19 with reasonable qualifications, and did my military conscription for about a year. I’m now 23.

I always knew that I wanted to join the police. I wanted a profession which makes a difference to society and one which is highly respected by the public, and like my Scottish and Swedish colleagues I do think it’s a profession, on a par with nurses and teachers, but not as high a status as doctors and lawyers. I know that 95% of the public think that the police in Finland do a good or very good job and it’s very competitive to get in, with only about 10% of applicants getting onto the 3-year pre-entry Bachelor’s degree programme at the Finnish Police University College (POLAMK) in Tampere.

I had to have the school qualifications to get into a University of Applied Science and had to undergo a variety of tests which are challenging, including a psychological assessment to see if I had the right attitudes and behaviours to be a police officer, just like my Swedish colleagues. Once I passed that, I began the first part of my degree at POLAMK, the Finnish Police University College. It was the national police training school but in 2015 it was granted by law, the status of a University of Applied Science, and the old two- and half-year Diploma in policing was extended by 6-months and upgraded to a Bachelor’s degree.

The course was very vocational…I spent a great deal of time learning the law as it governs a lot of what we can and can’t do; officer safety, including how to use my sidearm; how to drive a general duties police vehicle; how to use the various IT systems and databases; how to write police reports to a high standard; how to carry out a scene of crime examination (all Finnish police officers are able to examine and recover fingerprints, footprints, DNA and other physical evidence from crime scenes). We also had more academic subjects such as our role in society, especially how important it is that we don’t behave in a way which undermines the high levels of public trust and confidence which it has taken the Finnish Police 70 years to build up from a time after the second World War when they were a hated arm of the State, poorly educated and violent.

We wore uniform and there were all sorts of other police officers there undergoing learning of one sort or another. We all liked being in this ‘closed’ environment as opposed to our Swedish colleagues in mainstream universities – we felt like we were in the police from the start rather than ordinary university students.

We also got English language lessons (although most of us speak pretty good English having picked it up from TV, films and computer games) and Russian. Some of us elected to do the whole course in Swedish which is officially the second language of Finland, although spoken largely on the west coast only.

The atmosphere was quite relaxed, although some visiting Swedish police students were shocked to see the officer safety instructors shouting at us. Apparently, it used to be quite militaristic (the Swedish students who visited us thought that it still was), but the current Director who took up his post about 7 years ago wanted to create an environment which was more conducive to learning. It was more like a university when I was there which most of us liked, but some didn’t, especially those who had been in the military. They would have preferred there to have been more discipline, such as making students attend all classes and not just when they felt like it. Mind you, most of us felt that if people couldn’t be motivated to attend classes then they shouldn’t have been there and certainly shouldn’t become police officers.

Like my Swedish colleagues, I didn’t get paid during my first 18-months at POLAMK, but I did get a state grant and I could have taken out a student loan – it was just about enough to live on. If I had chosen to rent a room on campus I would have had to pay for that as well as paying for my food. I didn’t have to pay for my uniform and equipment though. Unlike our Swedish colleagues, we didn’t tend to take part-time jobs to help supplement our income.

Like the vast majority of my peers, I believe that to be a professional police officer in the 21st Century I did need to have a lengthy period of theoretical learning and skills development at POLAMK before I began my 11-month field training. I can’t believe that in Scotland they only get 11 weeks at the Scottish Police College. They can’t possibly know everything that they need to know. It’s very risky for them and the force to be going onto the street with such little knowledge. Like them, I would have got a real shock when I went out into the field for the first time.

There are pretty mixed views amongst my fellow students about the value of getting a Bachelor’s degree at the end of it all, but many of us think that it will be helpful in the long run. For example, we will need to have a degree in order to access the Master’s programme which we will need to complete if we want to be promoted to senior ranks. It will also be useful if we decide to leave the police, in getting other good jobs within the security or criminal justice sectors. Unlike in Scotland, our senior managers are quite relaxed about the risk of us leaving. They see it as a leadership challenge to make our careers worthwhile enough that we stay until normal retirement age which is around 65. If we do leave, then they would rather have us leave taking with us a positive impression of our time in the police and thereby reinforcing the public’s positive image of the service. Of the few that have left, most have come back after a few years and of course the knowledge and skills they have learned are useful to the police.

Once I completed my first 18-months learning at POLAMK, I then began my 11-month field training. I undertook a number of roles from front desk duties at police stations to operational patrol. I felt that I was really well-prepared for this phase of the course, as indeed did my tutors and managers. They liked the fact that I was well versed in the latest IT systems and databases, could write well and was willing to ask questions and make suggestions, although I knew that in an emergency I just had to do what I was told. I really enjoyed this bit of the course…I got the excitement that most of us joined for. Like most of us, I want to help people and society and feel that my communications and inter-personal skills are the most important professional attributes that I need, along with a thorough knowledge of the law.

My field supervisors (tutors) were all selected and trained in how to undertake the role. They got paid extra for doing it and were part of a national network of tutors which was overseen by a Chief Inspector and her full-time team based in POLAMK. I got paid a salary during this 11-months, which is 96% of what I now get as a newly-appointed constable.

At the end of my 11-months field training, I returned to POLAMK where I had 20 weeks in which to complete my work-related dissertation. I was taught some basic academic research skills in order to help me do this and had the added incentive that if I completed my dissertation before the end of the 20 weeks, 40% of my student loan would be written off by the State.

On successful completion of the course I was awarded a Bachelor’s Degree (EQF level 8) and was then able to apply for a permanent position. Whilst I knew that completing the Bachelor’s degree didn’t guarantee me a job, there were plenty of posts available and like the rest of my peers, I had no trouble securing one. Those students graduating over the next few years shouldn’t have any trouble either as the are moves to increase the number of police officers from the current level of 7,200 to about 8,000. I know that we have one of the lowest officer to population ratios in north-western Europe and certainly a lot less than the 17, 300 police officers which Scotland has, despite having about the same sized population of 5.5. million.

Unlike in Sweden, very few of my peers will leave the police despite the fact that there are few opportunities to specialise or be promoted. Like most of us, I intend to stay in the police until I retire. I do hope to be able to specialise in criminal investigation work and know that the learning I undertook as part of my Bachelor’s degree means that I can do routine criminal investigation work without the need for any further training, just like my colleagues in Sweden.

## **Some benefits and drawbacks to the 3 models**

Without having yet analysed the data that I’ve gathered, my initial thoughts around some of the comparative benefits and drawbacks to the 3 models are:

**Preparing students or recruits for policing in the 21st century:**

* The lengthy period of pre-entry, undergraduate level learning in Sweden and Finland provides their prospective recruits with a broader and deeper theoretical knowledge required by fledgling professionals than their Scottish counterparts.
* The field training element of the Swedish and Finnish pre-entry learning is 18 and 13 months respectively shorter than their Scottish counterparts. Scottish recruits have longer to develop their craft knowledge through experience, something many of their Swedish and Finnish peers would welcome.
* The Swedish and Finnish students are taught how to undertake and utilise academic research knowledge, especially ‘what works’ in relation to policing tactics. Given that 40% of Scottish recruits are graduates they too should have a similar skill set, albeit not within a policing context.
* Given the exponential rate of change in policing and the impact of budgetary constraints on training, the Swedes and the Finns believe that having a lengthy period of pre-entry learning for potential recruits reduces significantly the need for further specialist training. For example, in both countries officers can become crime investigators or traffic officers without any additional training. The onus is very much on individual officers to maintain their professional knowledge over what for many will now be a 40-year career.

**Maintaining the status of policing as a profession**

* All police officers in this study believe that policing is a profession and that its status is on a par with other ‘new’ or ‘emerging’ professions like nursing, teaching, paramedics etc. These professions have, over the past few decades, become graduate-entry only. The Swedish and the Finnish policy makers and shapers believe that policing should also be a graduate entry profession partly so that it maintains its status with regard to these other professions, but also so that it develops in step with the rest of society against a background of widening access to higher education.
* The Swedish and Finnish police unions support policing being degree entry only. They believe that by raising the academic attainment levels in this way, it has, in the case of Finland, and will, in the case of Sweden, enable them to improve and maintain pay and conditions for its members.

**Reflecting wider society**

* Scottish participants consistently expressed concern that introducing a pre or post-entry Bachelor’s degree programme in Scotland may restrict the diversity of recruits and thereby become less representative of Scottish communities. The Swedes and the Finns argue that whilst the average age of students has been lowered, the number of women joining has increased. All 3 countries continue to find it challenging to recruit from minority and ethnic communities.

**Socialisation of new recruits**

* The Scots and the Finns believe that by having recruits or students undertake their initial earning within the closed environment of the Scottish Police College and POLAMK respectively, ‘civilians’ can more effectively be socialised into police officers, reinforcing desired organisational values. The Swedes argue that their model enables police students to broaden their thinking and minimises the impact of negative aspects of police culture.

**Developing professional, operational competence**

* The Finnish students, and to a lesser extent the Swedish students, feel that they are well prepared for their field training compared with Scottish recruits who feel that after their 11-week Initial Training Course they are “thrown in at the deep end” when they began their field training.

**Laying a foundation for further professional development**

* A more academically focused initial learning approach, especially that which results in the award of a degree, arguably provides an articulation pathway into post-graduate level education in relation to specialist, high-risk areas of policing which increasingly require academic qualifications by which to demonstrate professional competence.

**Providing a scientific basis for policing**

* Whilst there were mixed views amongst participants about the value and timing of the academic research skills element of the Bachelor’s programme, teaching students academic research skills does provide Finnish and Swedish policing with the opportunity to develop their own professional knowledge base, one of the key ‘traits' of a profession.

## **Emerging Patterns, Insights or Concepts**

### Academic qualifications as cultural capital

A pattern emerging from the data suggests that unlike in Scotland where actors from all levels of the organisation don’t support any role for mandatory, pre or post-entry degree level education in recruit learning, strategic actors (the management cops) in Finland and Sweden see it as a key pillar in the professionalisation of policing in their respective countries.

However, amongst junior ‘street cops’ opinions are divided as to the value of a degree level qualification. What the overwhelming majority do agree on though, is that in order to be a professional police officer in the 21st Century, recruits do need to have an extended, vocationally focused, undergraduate level programme of theoretical learning on which to build their craft knowledge through experiential learning and thereby attain expert status (phronesis).

### Making sense of policing as a profession

Every single police officer interviewed so far as part of this study (about 40 something at the time of writing) was of the view that policing is a profession, with a status on a par with nurses and teachers, but not as high as that of doctors and lawyers. This appears to be founded largely on two beliefs: firstly, that policing is a vocation which contributes positively to wider society; secondly, it has high levels of professionalism, which they define as high standards in relation to attitudes, behaviours and competence. ***Not one*** has mentioned a lengthy period of education at degree level, or the acquisition of a degree as a defining feature. Only the academics interviewed so far (well all of them except one) have expressed the view that policing is not a profession and have explained their opinion using the trait based definitional approach.

### Scottish exceptionalism

Scotland is taking a divergent approach to that in many other north-western European countries with regards to the role of higher academic education in police recruit learning, despite many of the ‘currents, tides, eddies and whirlpools’ which Greene used in his 2012 metaphorical framing of the external and internal influences which shape police policy and practice being very similar in Scotland, Finland and Sweden. As Professor Nick Fyfe has suggested, Scottish policing has tended to look towards north-western Europe for inspiration’ but not it would appear, in relation to recruit learning. The data from this study (which has yet to be fully analysed) appears to support the views of Martin and Wooff who, when reflecting on their recent engagement with Police Scotland around the creation of a pre-entry degree route into policing (along with other ‘pathways’), concluded that there is currently “no appetite” amongst Police Scotland policy makers and shapers for higher academic education to have a greater, or indeed any, role in police recruit learning, a view which my data suggests flows deeply and strongly throughout the organisation, even amongst recruits in the first week if the Initial Training Course at the Scottish Police College.

### **Discussion**

So how do I understand and frame the data I have gathered in relation to the role of higher academic education in pre and post-entry recruit learning in Scotland, Finland and Sweden? Well, at the moment I’m attracted to Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’ and ‘habitus’, and also to Greene’s metaphorical analogy of the sea, with its ‘surface currents’, ‘deep currents’ of police culture and institutional protectionism, ‘upwellings’, ‘eddies’ and ‘whirlpools’.

Whilst my study has deliberately avoided a comparison with the impending seismic changes here in England with the introduction of the PEQF, it might be of interest to note that in Finland and Sweden the greater role for higher academic education in recruit learning has evolved slowly over decades and is a ‘deep current’ shaping organisational culture. For example, in Finland the use of higher academic education as a professionalisation strategy was discussed as far back as the 1950s. The introduction of the Bachelor’s degree programme in 2014 was the result of a slow and methodical series of changes around police learning in Finland, which began with the introduction of Master’s degree learning for senior leaders in the late 1990s, and the introduction of a Police Diploma for potential recruits in 1999. A similar time frame was found in Sweden. Only time will tell whether the PEQF becomes a ‘deep current’ within police culture down here, but certainly in Scotland the potential for higher academic learning to have any role in recruit learning isn’t even causing a slight ripple.

## **Conclusion**

From an ‘academic’ perspective, whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to offer a view on whether or not the Finnish and Swedish pre-entry policing programmes result in more professional police officers than the Scottish post-entry model, the perception of the overwhelming majority of the participants in Finland and Sweden was that they provide a solid foundation upon which to develop the expertise required of a 21st professional police officer. A question which still needs to be addressed, as Professor Jenny Brown’s 2018 systematic literature review suggested, is how do we evaluate the role which higher academic education has in developing the types of police officers we need as the 21st century or is, as Betsy Stanko suggested, it’s role in recruit learning more of an article of faith?

And finally…..just in case my Darren Brown-like skills of getting you to suspend belief have been too effective, please listen carefully….when you hear me click my fingers, I want you to slowly open your eyes and try and accept the reality that the 23-year old me doesn’t actually exist….as much as I would like him to!

## **Show Slide 7**