Normalising professional ethics within police practice

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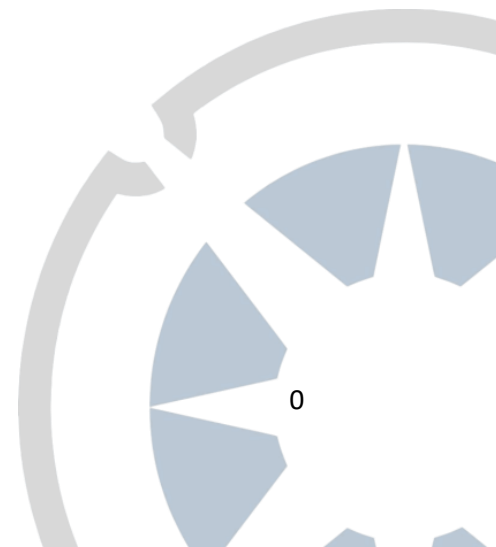
Character and Virtues in Professional Practice

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Abstract

This paper focuses on character and virtues within the context of professional police practice. We argue that currently, the ethical dimensions of police work feature insufficiently in professional police debates, at a time when the contested nature of police work becomes ever more evident. The paper applies a virtue lens, drawing specifically upon MacIntyre's notion of 'practice', to redress this shortcoming. We identify and discuss opportunities to develop reflective, ethical practice as a routine, embedded approach to learning and development within policing through continuous professional development across all aspects of police work.

Key Words:

Introduction

This paper develops upon the findings published in a report by Kristjánsson, Thompson, and Maile (2021), which explored several virtue related matters amongst policing students. These include which virtues are prized and upheld within policing, which virtues policing students associate with an ideal professional, and what kind of moral reasoning they favour. The report also develops upon the work of Morrell and Bradford (2019), and more specifically for the purpose of this paper that of Manning (2019) and Wood (2020), both of whom have previously supported the use of MacIntyre's (2007) formulation of a practice as a lens to understand the potential for the development of *phronesis* and the virtues necessary to improve moral judgement in policing. Wood and Tong (2009) adopted the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* to promote what they believed should be the primary focus of police education and training, drawing upon Grint's (2007, p.237) account of *phronesis* as 'practical wisdom'. Grint (2007) also emphasised a context dependency in understanding *phronesis,* and in applying the leadership qualities associated with practical wisdom to a policing context, he describes *phronesis* as "the wisdom to understand what needs to be done in a particular situation, not just the skills and techniques to arrest the offender . . . nor even just the knowledge of the law" (Grint, 2007, p. 238).

Arguably, this understanding of *phronesis* promoted by Wood and Tong (2009) remains somewhat peripheral in policing, and it is no surprise that one of the key findings from Kristjánsson et al. (2021) was that police trainees associated more with a deontological rule based form of moral reasoning. This is consistent with other empirical findings, where participants believed their source of moral authority is derived from their oath of allegiance to the Queen (now King) and their deference to the rule of law – a matter supported elsewhere by Dixon (1997) and to an extent Raz's (2009) ideas around the authority of law (Manning, 2019). The report from Kristjánsson et al. (2021) made, amongst its key recommendations, a suggestion 'that virtue ethics needs foregrounding more in professional ethics education', and 'more attention needs to be paid to the moral and characterological grounding of policing' (KristJansson et al, 2021, p. 5). A well-timed second research

report has now been published by KristJansson, Thompson, Maile, and McLoughlin (2022) specifically focussed upon a pilot study of a taught *phronesis* intervention which we will also call upon in this paper.

    <u>The problematic nature of police decision making</u>

The idea that ethics and moral conduct should be placed more prominently within police practice is not new and yet, it has still not evolved in the sense that KristJansson et al. (2021) suggested. Kleinig (1996) previously argued that to justify the existence of a police organisation vested with considerable powers requires a moral foundation. This is especially so, as frequently, these powers present moral dilemmas in which police officers are faced with making decisions where all the available options are 'wrong or evil' but may be legally justified as necessary in the circumstances (Kleinig, 1996, p. 55). Policing has historically occurred beyond the supervisory gaze of police managers (Reiner, 2010), resulting in a significant degree of officer discretion despite concerted attempts to reduce it. Examples of this form of lesser evil ethics (Ignatieff, 2004) could include the presentation of contrary evidence at an alleged crime scene where policy may require a positive arrest strategy to be invoked to safeguard children, but where there is conflicting evidence regarding from whom they should be protected. Other occasions involve justifying regular interference with individual rights as detailed in the Human Rights Act, [1998]. In this respect, Wood (2020) highlights the difficulties in preparing police officers to make the right decisions in all situations. The variabilities and nuances of each seperate police instance preclude the possibility of establishing a definitive list of preordained actions to be taken by an officer in this or that type of encounter. MacIntyre (2004) provides examples of why good policing cannot be reduced to simply following orders, or even the laws and policies of the day. Good policing requires reflection upon the link between the facts as they are presented and what a moral, as well as a legal, response would require (Wood, 2020). As Honderich (2005) observes, ethics form the theoretical underpinning for the principles of moral character and behaviour; virtue epistemology is the link between knowing what to do and ethics (Wood, 2020). Neyroud and Beckley (2004) have also recognised the importance for police officers and managers to make the right decisions for the right reasons. In doing so, they acknowledged the need for an appropriate ethical system within police practices with clear links to both individual and organisational moral values. This view was expressed in a report from the College of Policing (2015) concerning the role of leadership in promoting ethical police behaviour, although, the report highlighted some differences of opinion concerning how leadership can impact upon individual moral values (College of Policing, 2015).

We have also seen the promotion of Schön's (1983) understanding of reflective practice in policing (Christopher, 2015), which emphasises not only the reflective capacity of individual officers and their ability to think more deeply about their encounters, but also the extent to which police organisations are supportive in creating professional environments in which learning and understanding opportunities are routinely embedded components of officers' duties (Wood & Williams, 2016). Sklansky (2008) in particular has questioned this aspect of policing, noting that police organisations have not traditionally treated their own employees well. Wood (2020) also emphasises a third dimension within Schön's (1983) articulation of reflective practice, and that is the social contexts within which a practice operates. The police have been, and are still today, criticised for being too slow in responding to changes in society. The moral character of police has been called into question and in particular, police accounts of the moments leading up to the Hillsborough disaster resulting in the death of 97 Liverpool football supporters in 1989, the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the fatal shooting by police of Jean Charles de Menezes in 2005, and the death of Ian Tomlinson following an altercation with police during protests in 2009,

stand out as examples of police attempts to hide or distort the truth. Accountibility and openness are two of the nine principles cited in support of the police code of ethics, and as Wood (2016) argues, the police are increasingly subjected to democratic sensibilities and expectations. This was reflected through the introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in 2012. The PCC role was promoted as an essential means of developing trust and confidence in the police within the communities that serve (Home Office, 2010).

Our interest here is not in the PCC role *per se*, but rather in what it means for ethical policing. The introduction of the PCC role has implications for all three dimensions of Schön's (1983) reflective practice. At the societal level, as Murphy, Eckersley, & Ferry (2017, p.209) note, the PCCs are "*more responsive* to communities than the police authorities that they replaced", but this does not mean that the public are any more involved in shaping police and crime plans. As Manning (2010), Reiner (2013) and Lister and Rowe, (2014) all argue, the democratic credentials of the PCC role are primarily electoral and fall short of more reflective and engaged forms of democracy.

More importantly, from a virtue ethics perspective, the introduction of PCCs raised concerns about the ideals of constabulary independence (Chakrabarti, 2012). This is a consideration at both the organisational and practitioner dimensions of reflective practice. In relation to the organisational dimension, the focus has been on the independence and autonomy of the chief constables. Lister (2013) and Loader (2014) both raise concerns that the electoral pressures on PCCs to get re-elected will lead them to curtail the authority of their respective chief constables. Nothwithstanding one or two high profile incidents, PCCs have not undermined chief constables in the way some imagined, indeed, the chief constable role appears to be more authoriative today than it was 10 years ago. However, we argue that ethical policing cannot be achieved solely through the leadership of policing and the autonomy of police practitioners is critical in this respect. As Wood (2016) argues, we cannot ignore the tension between the democratic impulse to control and direct what the police do, and the liberal ideals of autonomy that invest moral authority in the individual practitioner. Furthermore, as Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) note, the office of constable makes policing unique with respect to the amount of authority invested in those new to the role and operating at the most junior ranks.

Policing and the development of a moral character

Within the College of Policing's 'Code of Ethics' published in 2014 for the police service of England and Wales, the stated intention was to make clear the ethical principles that are expected to guide the conduct of police officers and what will happen if these expectations are not met. The background report cited nine principles: Accountability; Integrity; Openness; Fairness; Leadership; Respect; Honesty; Objectivity and Selflessness each of which should be considered by police officers to underpin every decision and action they take and further, should become embedded in the way police officers think and behave (College of Policing, 2014). Ironically, little mention is made in the guidance to police officers of the moral foundation (Kleinig, 1996); the moral underpinning of these principles (Neyroud & Beckley, 2004); how 'virtue ethics situates ethical reasoning in the moral lives of real people' (Wood, 2020, p. 130); the development of moral character or any link to the virtues necessary to deliver policing as a moral good (KristJansson et al, 2021). This is interesting as the principles mentioned in the code have clear links to virtue ethics and yet, the code implies that a moral character is inherent in all police officers; but how can we know this and what are the mechanisms for knowing? As Brown (2009, p.23) reminds us, Aristotle [c325 BC] observed that 'Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them and are made perfect by habit'. How, then, for there to be any reflection upon moral conduct and *phronesis* in day-to-day decision making, does police education and practice provide the 'nature' or environment which leads to the formation

and habitual use of necessary virtues within police practice. To an extent, the recent report by KristJansson et al. (2022) sought to gather a more detailed understanding of the development of *phronesis* amongst a cohort of police students from five universities engaged in various entry routes across the College of Policing's *Policing Education and Qualifications Framework* (PEQF), introduced in 2016. Whilst lecturing staff presented positive evaluations concerning the intervention, there was evidence that it was difficult to replicate the nature of moral decision making made under the pressure that police officers frequently experience. However, not all failures of moral conduct in policing are the result of poor judgement in high pressure situations, as illustrated in an interim report recently published by Baroness Casey of Blackstock (Casey, 2022). Her report details significant misconduct by officers within the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and reveals a disheartening picture of the scale and breadth of misconduct within the MPS in recent years and how the system which is intended to root out misconduct is failing. Further, this fact is also recognised by serving officers within the report. In respect to repeat patterns of unacceptable or unethical behaviour, the report cites evidence from 'Special Case Hearings' by the London Policing Ethics Panel which demonstrate that the officers who are eventually dismissed 'have a higher number of previous misconduct issues recorded against them whether substantiated or not' (Casey, 2022, p. 10). Another report which followed soon after from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS, 2022) concerning vetting, misconduct and misogyny in the police service, discovered issues in the vetting systems allowing unsuitable candidates to join. It also recognised that too many warnings had been ignored. These reports demonstrate failures in systems and cultures in which opportunities are missed to explore the moral character of police officers and recruits through patterns of previous conduct and behaviour which fall short of public expectations - a moral failure on the part of organisations through poor selection and a lack of rigour in dealing with these issues (HMICFRS, 2022, p.4).

We argue that the motivation for a code of ethics for police came not from a recognition of the moral underpinnings of police work, but rather from a wider programme of professionalization of the police service in England and Wales being pursued at that time by the Coalition Government of the day. This motivation clearly shaped the Code of Ethics that emerged in 2014. In a speech delivered by then Home Secretary, Theresa May, to the College of Policing in 2013, she made explicit the link between this professionalization agenda and the role to be played by the College of Police in setting out the ethical standards for the police service to uphold (Home Office, 2013). The Home Secretary likened the proposed Code of Ethics to the Hippocratic Oath in the medical profession, expressing her astonishment that no such code already existed (Home Office, 2013). Whilst we argue the reference to the Hippocratic Oath missed the point of the value of linking moral conduct and policing practices through ethics, the Home Secretary made an interesting observation concerning police conduct which is worthy of reflection and a positive view of which, could indicate a willingness to influence change. Reith (1948, p.68) suggested many years ago, that:

> 'the moral influence of the country policeman on the community is not less than that of the parson, the doctor, or the teacher, and this can be said with equal truth of all policemen elsewhere'.

Bearing in mind the significant moral dilemmas that officers face every day, does the Code of Ethics provide the necessary guidance to them to reflect further upon the moral underpinning of their practices and the decisions they make? In oral history interviews with 16 retired and serving police officers conducted by Manning (2019), the data suggest not for all:

"They [police officers] are trained when they first get here, they are given the full speech of you are a police officer, this is Code of Ethics, this is the behaviour we expect, do they, do it? No, do they? I do not think some of them realise what holding a warrant card means...at all. I do not think that is even on their radar" (*Elizabeth*).

Despite the good intentions of the College of Policing, and whilst it can be seen in the extract above that the focus of the Code of Ethics was clearly understood to be upon personal standards of behaviour, it was not received as such by every officer. Other observations from participants supported this fact by relating the Code of Ethics to a poster stuck on a police station wall without further explanation. Alternatively, they related to it, having received training, to a 'box of tricks' used in a very instrumental way.

The moral component is important not least because the Code of Ethics was intended to underpin a 'National Decision Model'; the purpose of which was to guide police officers to be more reflective in the situations they confront, and in developing working strategies, including consideration of their powers and policies in a moral as well as legal sense. Unfortunately, at no time are the majority of officers asked to consider the morality of their actions; it is only chief officers who are charged to show moral courage for the decisions they make. A College of Policing (2014) report clearly stated how ethical behaviour is derived from the values, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge that guide their judgements, and linked to the importance of public support. However, their report also implies that this support will naturally follow the conduct without any consideration of the values and beliefs of those citizens whose support, and more importantly, whose consent is required to legitimise police conduct (College of Policing, 2014). This is despite the findings from a plethora of empirical studies on procedural justice and legitimacy such as Jackson, Bradford, Hough, Myhill, Quinton and Tyler (2012); Jackson, Bradford, Stanko and Hohl (2013) and Papachristos, Meares and Fagan (2012) that could have informed the construction of this code. In their first report KristJansson et al. (2021, p.5) also recommended a revision of the Code of Ethics to 'reflect more explicitly virtue ethical considerations'.

The case for embedding ethics in professional police practice

We argue that the Code of Ethics was not underpinned by a proper understanding of the fundamental principles which guide moral conduct in policing and in the police's concomitant relationships with its communities. Furthermore, the code has lacked the proper status it required to embed ethical thinking into police practices through the subsequent professionalisation programme. To an extent this important point was raised soon after the publication of the code in a Report by the Home Affairs Committee (2016), which was critical of the police service in England and Wales for failing to embed the Code of Ethics into their practices despite a number of scandals in policing, and many more have come to light since 2016. The report echoed the assertion by Theresa May, that the status of the *Code of Ethics* should have been the equivalent of the *Hippocratic Oath.* Unfortunately, the Committee sees the Code as a means of disciplining police officers in a punitive way, rather than seeing it as an aspirational, inspiring and transformational tool (Wood, 2020). The report suggested that all police officers should sign a copy which should be recorded and held by the College of Policing (Home Affairs Committee, 2016) thereby, using the signed copy as a stick for subsequent discipline matters. We see the notion of a code more in terms of carrot rather than stick, such that it is used towards developing moral practices through guided learning from the experience of suitable colleagues and managers who are more advanced in acquiring *phronesis*. As Wood (2020, p. 130) observes, police transformation requires moral purpose at its heart:

'police learning, of the kind required for ethical policing, needs to foster such a transformative quality by ensuring that the moral purpose of policing is embedded within notions of police knowledge'.

We argue, therefore, that the direction taken by the College of Policing could have been supported better through links to moral theory, and the positive benefits of embedding ethical thinking into police knowledge and practices. This is exemplified by Loader (2016, p. 428-9), who places greater emphasis upon the social effects of policing and how ordering police practices 'can and ought to help build democratic virtues and culture, underpin and extend civic engagement and the associated life of communities and be a vehicle for generating social trust'. This places greater emphasis upon moral conduct and establishing normative relationships, based upon shared norms and values. In this sense, Macintyre (2007) highlights that the virtues are the goods internal to practices, such as policing, through which relationships between them and their communities are defined and bound together. Here, regular dialogue between police officers embedded in their communities can prepare the fertile ground or 'nature' through which knowledge and awareness of shared norms and values across cultural groups can be developed. Consider as an example, the ongoing debates concerning police stop and search practices. The police will always seek to justify their use of these powers in accordance with the law and usually in response to violent crime. However, such justifications fail to address the concerns of those opposing the use of stop and search. In order for the negative effects of stop and search to be mitigated there needs to be gretaer reflection by the police, in a moral as well as legal sense, and where possible, there also needs to be discussion within communities to foster a form of common moral purpose or normative alignment (Jackson et al, 2013). However, this requires police officers to be *knowing* or *morally aware* and *reflective*, and this requires a shift in contemporary police thinking, ideally through education and proper guidance.

In this respect, the Home Affairs Committee Report (2016) identified another important issue, this being deficiences and inconsistencies in recruitment and the training of police officers, both of which could go some way to explain some of the issues associated with embedding the Code of Ethics into the fabric of policing. Ironically, issues with recruitment of police officers and the associated link to subsequent misconduct has been raised again more recently in the HMICFRS report (HMICFRS, 2022). For these reasons, we argue here that there are fundamental reasons why more teaching and reflection upon morality and ethical conduct in policing should be required (KristJansson et al,2021).

In many respects, the introduction of the PEQF offers the means to achieve this end, but unfortunately it has become somewhat mired in the mud of internal police politics. It has become synonymous with, and restricted to, the new entry routes into policing. The PEQF has its detractors, and in particular the idea that all police officers need to be degree educated. This was evidenced within Suella Braverman's 'common-sense policing' speech delivered in her capacity as the Home Secretary to the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Partnership Summit 2022, in which she called for the College of Policing to consider an entry route into policing for individuals "who do not have a degree or want one" (Home Office, 2022). There is nothing inherently wrong with this sentiment, indeed universities have expended much energy on broadening opportunities for people from non-traditional academic backgrounds. It would be unfortunate therefore for universities to be the cause of reducing opportunities for people to join the police. The problem as we see it, is that the Home Secretary's remarks, irrespective of their intention, build upon existing opposition to the PEQF from chief constables (Police Oracle, 2020) and police crime commissioners (PCC) (Police Professional, 2020).

Here, we wish to reflect upon how the PEQF is missing opportunities to embed notions of ethical conduct throughout police practice. KristJansson, Thompson, Maile, & McLoughlin (2022) illustrates

some of the difficulties in achieving this end without minimising the requirement to do so. It is significant that in a speech to a PEQF conference delivered by Brandon Lewis MP (Home Office, 2017), he began by mentioning the work already completed by The College of Policing such as the delivery of a Code of Ethics and a culture of professional development with a body of professional knowledge. He then declared that the final pillar of professionalisation was the standards of education through the PEQF. Whilst these pillars could have provided fertile ground of sufficient transformative quality (Wood, 2020) for moral as well as educational improvement, they were, in practice, delivered as unconnected and separate entities without a binding narrative. For this reason, we argue that the approach taken with the PEQF and the disconnected nature of the publication and embedding of the Code of Ethics all fell short of providing what could have been an exemplary moral framework for policing (Kleinig, 1996).

Through the lens of MacIntyre (2007), we now argue for a way of thinking that policing is a practice with a number of standards of excellence internal to it which link professional and ethical conduct with technical skills towards morally good policing.

MacIntyre and Practice

MacIntyre (2007) argues that virtues are required to aid individuals in their quest to achieve the standards of excellence internal to practices and in this case, policing can be regarded as an example of a practice. These virtues would include a core from – empathy, honesty, integrity, justice, and wisdom. Millie and Hirschler (2018) argue that many police recruits already identify with such virtues at the time of joining the police. However, this is not so in all cases, which reinforces the question regarding how they can be acquired after joining and from whom.

Here, the study by KristJansson et al. (2022, p.19) is interesting as amongst its aims, it sought to 'practically improve participants levels of phronesis or practical wisdom' whilst piloting a tool to measure the intervention. As mentioned earlier, one of the problems they experienced was the capabilty of replicating an environment which would resonate with officers who have yet to experience, or have limited experience of such situations.This is also interesting as Kristjansson et al. (2022, p.19) indicate that the topic of 'professional ethics' is not a subject taught in the police science programmes they engaged with. It is the case that any such teaching will only be included if the validating university values its introduction and designs a degree course with professional ethics at its core - the PEQF programme does not require it. Kristjansson et al. (2022, p.28) also experienced some issues across their intervention where participants considered the moral language to be unfamiliar or too complex. However, this does not negate the idea that police officers should or ought to acquire a greater understanding that the practice of policing is more than the application of law and policy unto its citizens as passive recipients.

Here we consider an opportunity to approach virtue ethics in a practical way within the tri-part reviews (TPR) that are a core feature of integrated degree apprenticeship programmes (Lester, Bravenboer and Lillis, 2021). The TPRs are used on police degree apprenticeship (PCDA) programmes and bring together the student officer with a tutor from the degree programme and a work-based supervisor from the operational team. Lester et al. (2021, p.10) focus on the TPRs as an opportunity to establish a signature pedagogy for policing, what they describe as a "pervasive and routine feature of education for the profession", in order to advanced a more in-depth, reflective and nuanced understanding of the professional role. However, they also note that in order for this to happen, it is important to establish a shared understanding between the academic and professional partners, and the student learner. This entails "establishing effective triadic working relationships that place the learner at the empowered centre of an occupational community of practice" (Lester et al., 2021, p.26). Moreover, Lester et al. (2021) stress that this 'occupational community of

practice' needs to be established at the very outset. This clearly did not happen in the development of the PEQF and in establishing the current entry routes into policing. The support for the programmes amongst police leaders, police training staff, operational officers and university lecturers has been mixed, often because of a lack of understanding. Also, because of the time delay between someone applying to join the police and them actually joining a police force, many of the initial student officers on these programmes did not realise that they were joining a degree programme, and were clearly unaware of any occupational community of practice.

This clearly presents a challenge because the task at hand is to establish an occupational community of practice after the programmes of learning have started. As Lester et al. (2021) note, at the moment TPRs on policing programmes have been used primarily for adminstrative checks on a student officer's progress rather than for engaging in refelctive and meaningful discussions. However, we see the TPRs has an opportunity to start that journey, by offering all three players in the triadic relationship moments to question, probe and discuss what good policing looks like. This is something that we are exploring from a virtue ethics perspective, by engaging with the TPRs and asking questions that demand deeper, more reflective responses that demonstrate awareness and understanding of the moral responsibilities that accompany the burden of being a warranted police officer.

It is helpful to turn here to MacIntyre's (2007) suggestion that some sense or understanding of the application of a virtue also requires an understanding of what are deemed to be the characteristics of moral and social life in the community in which the practice is taking place. We argue, this could be understood as localised understandings within communities as it is likely that throughout England and Wales, the incongruence of norms and values within communities will lead to a variance in moral dilemmas for policing. What should remain consistent is that, according to MacIntyre (2007), the exercise of a virtue . . . should be informed by the *telos* or the ultimate goal which guides their actions. From this, we argue that it is the virtues internal to the practice of 'good policing' which should guide police officers and citizens towards their telos in which it is possible to determine or agree upon the common goals of 'good policing'. Indeed, Loader (2016) argues that the police represent far more than being agents of crime control and order maintenance; their practices are symbolic of the kind of community they are policing by the way in which they police that community. This requires a different way of thinking about what many police officers consider to be 'police work' where the medium is to apply pure technical skills (MacIntyre, 2007) or applying the law and policy without further regard for those affected and whether they have been treated fairly or with respect and dignity (Bowling, Reiner, & Scheptycki, 2019). There is clearly a need here to question and challenge what Suella Braverman and critics of the PEQF understand to be common-sense policing.

As MacIntyre (2007, p.193) argues *"a practice [in this case, policing] is never just a set of technical skills, even when directed towards some unified purpose".* He defines a practice as:

> "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended" (Ibid. p. 187)

As examples, MacIntyre (2007) suggests, bricklaying is not a practice, architecture is; planting seeds is not a practice, farming is. Applying MacIntyre's (2007) definition of a practice we argue that day-to-day police work (utilising technical skills and legal knowledge) is not a practice in a MacIntyrian sense. However, morally *Good Policing* is a practice through which police officers may strive to achieve the standards of excellence internal to it. These standards are the virtues of good policing and would include many of the standards and core principles cited in the College of Policing 'Code of Ethics'.

By following MacIntyre's (2007) theoretical framework it is possible to further explore whether police officers consider that achieving these standards of excellence plays any part in their reasoning in competing to excel for the good of the wider community who also have an interest in the practice of policing. We argue that this reinforces the requirement to explore when and where there can be agreement upon the virtues of 'good policing' as part of an ongoing dialogue with communities. This would include consideration of MacIntyre's (2007) suggestion that in any practice, those who participate will relate to it in different ways and their perceptions will include consideration of the norms, values, purposes, and standards expected from that practice (in this case, policing) and the relationship of everyone to it. For example, Herbert (1997) suggests, it is in the spatial context of policing the streets where social action between the police and the community takes place and in which, some police officers construct their own notions and strategies of social order'. This can mislead police officers' self-perceptions concerning the 'telos' of policing leading to the internalization of alternative normative orders concerning how they should or ought to act, based upon legal regulation, bureaucratic control and exercising moral supremacy as good over evil (Herbert, 1997). These are, to an extent, the representations of the cultural beliefs observed by Bowling et al. (2019) and Muir (1977). This is a matter which the PEQF and tutoring by officers who have acquired *phronesis* could resolve early in police education. However, there is no specific requirement in the PEQF to discuss these matters in a moral context. Therefore, for completeness, any learning would also require an understanding of the evolving relationship between the police and communities in a moral and social context, but that complexity is beyond the scope of this paper. Although, this would include consideration of the history of conflict and the power dynamics in which the police service defines their relationship to the state and over its citizens, and how these citizens relate to them - Including ongoing dialogue which would allow consultation and agreement upon the virtues of morally good policing in support of their legitimacy.

Concluding remarks: identifying opportunities to foster virtue ethics in policing

We have argued that good policing requires police officers to make moral judgements routinely throughout their professional practice. Officers need to be supported by their own organizations to achieve this end, and this needs to be understood and appreciated within the communities in which officers operate. None of this is likely to happen overnight, and as things currently stand, there are challenges in using the PEQF to move things forward. However, one opportunity we feel that is worthy of further exploration, is to embed a virtue ethics approach to TPRs. We see conducting TPRs through a virtue ethics lens as a meaningful and practical way of embedding ethics in policing. By this we do not simply mean teaching police officers about ethics, or getting them to learn a set of principles or virtues in the abstract. Indeed, in the first instance, the approach must be to get police students thinking ethically and approaching all aspects of their work with an ethical mindset, without necessarily realizing this is what they are doing. Over time, thinking ethically becomes second nature and at that point more candid and explicit conversations about ethical theories can be pursued. However, the focus must always be on the development of an occupational community

of practice for policing, using virtue ethics to enhance police practice. We anticipate a challenging journey but having a place to start is always useful.

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