

Submission to The Commission on the future of Policing in Ireland

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The contemporary landscape of Irish policing could be defined by a collective sense of insecurity, even mistrust in public institutions and government bodies, rooted in the wide breadth and deep level of recent rapid rates of social change. Members of society now question authority in a very different way to when An Garda Síochána was first established. This new reality requires a robust response not only from those in positions of authority, but also from those who have traditionally been excluded from high-level decision-making processes. Change at this rate is unnerving enough, but perhaps what is even more unnerving for those in conventional positions of authority is the journey towards the democratisation of Irish policing; increased inclusion and dialogue with those who are policed. While almost everyone would agree that it is a positive and progressive inevitability that the trifecta of Transparency, Accountability, and Partnership will become a dominant feature of the future of Irish policing it is worth reflecting on why this transformation is taking place. Simply put, the high value we place on Irish policing as a vital public service, what it means to serve, make safe, and belong to our current diverse and ‘new’ Irish communities, influences our ethical duty of care to others - especially ‘Others’. Embedding a Human Rights-based approach to policing, via cultural change, will be the ultimate yardstick for measuring how successful we have been in adapting to our new changing environment. Furthermore, the degree to which we can adapt in the coming months, years, and decades will not only affect the future of Irish policing; it will always be present within the lived consequences of decisions we make now for police officers and members of the public alike on this island. The weight of this responsibility is not a heavy burden to bear or an unsurmountable feat to be feared. It is an opportunity to be proud of.

1. How did we get here?

Ireland has undergone an unprecedented process of cultural change and ethnic diversification. In effect, Ireland could be viewed as a perfect case-study for unfolding inter-racial relations and even more so as a test case for relations between the police and new minority communities. Given its role as a key institution of the state, with primary responsibility for the provision of public safety, national security and immigration control, these changes have had enormous implications for An Garda Síochána. Since its inception into Irish life in 1922 An Garda Síochána quickly became emblematic of an independent, Gaelic and Catholic Ireland and is still considered to be one of the most successful

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institutions of the state involved in nation building. This historical success is inextricably tied to the country's relatively longstanding homogenous social environment. This had the effect of insulating the force from ever needing to adapt to any significant social diversity or from having its cultural symbolism questioned. The recent and rapid demographic transformation of Irish society has, however, exposed certain taken for granted features which must be examined. The force's legitimacy and mandate, for instance, has evolved out of being deeply rooted in what is now an outdated and essentialist notion of 'Irishness'. Only after nine decades is the force rightly facing demands to make fundamental changes as its members engage with a multi-ethnic public for the first time. In short, these demographic changes have brought about a significant policing culture shock and a radical departure from 'business as usual'. They pose significant practical challenges for the force as it undergoes new efforts to develop positive relationships with people and communities that make up the most recent additions to Irish society. These challenges and changes must be properly understood as auspicious opportunities for the force to grow and take its rightful place amongst the most professional and impartial modern police forces in the world.

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the seriousness of the situation An Garda Síochána finds itself in is to situate today's challenges and opportunities within the context of where the force has come from and where it now needs to go if it is to make the necessary shift to realising its potential. Although it may be widely known already it is worth restating again here that after hundreds of years of British rule a divide had developed between the Irish people and the colonial style of policing meted out by the Royal Irish Constabulary. In 1922 the architects of the newly formed independent national Irish police force were well aware of this divide and knew they faced a mammoth task consisting of significant political, social and public relations challenges. As the Civil War became more brutal, Civic Guards were faced with a wide range of practical everyday issues while simultaneously operating under the threat of extreme violence and danger. Nevertheless, the first Garda members were ultimately able to successfully win over the public in large part by demonstrating that real change had been achieved with Independence and that the members of the new Civic Guard/An Garda Síochána belonged to a democratic force that was in essence of, from and for the population they policed.

After the Civil War the force and its members came to hold significant social legitimacy and moral authority. This stemmed in large part from earning the public's trust which, in turn, granted them a mandate. The general consensus from academic research into Irish policing is that for the first time in the country's history the majority of the population came to feel that their values, safety, interests and even their national identity were being reflected and protected by those in uniform. Particular attention must be given here to the importance of the often underappreciated and neglected linkage between the specific style of Community Relations that was adopted and 'real' operational police work that tackles criminal activity. This unique combination defines the Irish policing by consent model. The outcome of this relatively positive relationship between police and public stands as one of the most important long-term achievements of the Irish state and has allowed the force to continue to inhabit a unique position in the day to day life of local communities and the nation. The positive impact of the legacy of the efforts of the original architects behind earning this mandate can still be seen today². In comparison to most other police forces around the world the force remains in high standing. The organisation's legitimacy is largely intact despite the recent downturn in public trust because of reported scandals. Inhabiting this position of trust and social stature has also generated incommensurable authority on a symbolic and national level which continues to yield direct positive

² Despite the sweeping social and cultural changes to the policing landscape since the 1970s -including tensions with certain politically nationalist groups, disadvantaged areas where the repercussions of Heroin and other drug related crime were worst felt and ongoing problems with Traveller communities.

effects on Garda members' ability to police (from gathering pertinent information and intelligence; gaining cooperation and compliance; investigating crime; and enforcing the laws of the land). This status could not have been bestowed on members of the force by the public were it not for the conscious efforts of key Garda decision-makers in the 1920s and subsequent decades to cultivate a positive image and relationship with the general population³.

It is also worth keeping in mind how Gardaí, as the most visible and powerful frontline representatives of national sovereignty, have since the origins of the force been placed in the position of shouldering the immense responsibility of acting as arbiters of social inclusion and brokers of relations between the people and the state. Today, the men and women of An Garda Síochána of all ranks and roles stand at a similar critical juncture in Irish history to that of the first Commissioner and patrolmen. There is a parallel with regard to establishing a new policing mandate. Now, as then, significant gains and losses are at stake as social fault lines have appeared that require an adequate response. The force is again negotiating its way across uncharted waters. And once more in the history of Irish policing An Garda Síochána has the opportunity of playing a pivotal role in either positively contributing to building social cohesion within Irish society or, alternatively, negatively affecting deepening divisions and tensions between segments of the public and the state. The organisation's image and role will continue to face an unfamiliar level of fragility and uncertainty if its members cannot come to reflect and adapt to protecting the new population they police.

Today's pioneers in Garda management must take stock of what is at stake for Irish society in terms of social order and security -in their broadest senses which includes understanding the vital importance of the link between social cohesion, solidarity between the public and the police and that providing effective professional modern law enforcement must be simultaneously balanced with traditional ways of 'keeping the peace'. Fortunately, Irish policing has an opportunity which most other jurisdictions with longer histories of immigration and cultural diversity, and the baggage that came with colonialism, never had. Today in Ireland we have the luxury of making decisions based on the avoidance of pitfalls witnessed in so many other countries where serious problems have developed between police and the public, especially marginalised ethnic minorities.

Against this backdrop, and in recognition of the successes achieved by Gardaí of all ranks and roles in the past and more recently, the Integration Centre sees no reason why today's members cannot champion the traditional democratic founding ideals of An Garda Síochána in their everyday work and repeat the force's historical success with today's more diverse public. Renewing genuine efforts to replicate the positive symbolism, public image and social bonds of the past is the only way to appropriately and proactively greet this welcome next stage of evolution in Irish policing and in Ireland's journey toward ever increasing diversity, democracy and equality.

This submission may only represent the tip of the iceberg regarding introducing improvements by building on existing good practice but, nevertheless, it hopes to make a valuable contribution to the future of Irish policing in the following overlapping ways:

- It focuses on how best to approach establishing, maintaining and evaluating positive relationships between local Gardaí and ethnic minority members of local communities to the benefit of all.
- It emphasises an understanding of training and continuing professional development as presenting the force with an invaluable opportunity to avoid the disastrous social consequences of policing mistakes made in other jurisdictions.

³ For instance, decisions were made about the police uniform and it was altered to signify that Gardaí were a civil force, rather than a military one, with insignia and symbols instantly recognisable as 'Irish'. Also, the decision not to arm uniformed Gardaí has been widely accepted as a vital part achieving of a particular vision of Irish policing that helped establish the force's mandate.

- It introduces a fresh approach to developing ways in which An Garda Síochána can continue to provide a professional politically impartial service to today's diverse public.
- It provides a sustainable long-term way of thinking about **1.** how existing limited resources might be reorganised and redirected in order to do more and to do better with less; **2.** how the potential of the force's greatest asset, the rank and file members themselves, might be harnessed more fully to achieve better outcomes for Garda members, the organisation, and ethnic minority members of the public alike.

2. What works and what doesn't

In short, the current challenges -and ways of overcoming them- remain largely unchanged since the now defunct Integration Centre's [*Roadmap to Integration 2013*](#). It recognised the progress made by An Garda Síochána, as well as adding some very practical ways of building on that ground gained. Below explores a number of the most pertinent areas which still require attention and reflection.

Building positives ties with ethnic minority communities: avoiding mistakes made elsewhere.

It is vital to keep in mind how important a strong public mandate is on an immediate practical level for local Gardaí/An Garda Síochána in order to police effectively within a democratic policing by consent model. There is no short cut to achieving this legitimacy nor would it be desirable or in anyone's interest to deploy stop gap measures or a look for a short-term fix. Successful professional police practice in Ireland has traditionally been secured through earning a degree of moral authority and social acceptance over decades. This has been achieved via An Garda Síochána becoming an organisation that not only espouses policies of law enforcement, based on maintaining state security and social order, but also as an organisation whose members' actions have overall consistently manifested values of respect, fairness, inclusion and impartiality. In order to maintain and replicate this traditional positive bond with the public, which has remained largely intact since the force's inception into Irish life, a new updated understanding of who makes up today's Irish public is required. Genuine recognition of the demographic changes to the Irish policing landscape must be reflected in renewed and sustained efforts to reach out and establish spaces for positive interaction with those more recent additions to the population.

These efforts to reach out and establish spaces for positive interaction must not be reduced to paying 'lip service' or be new ways of merely 'ticking boxes' to fulfil some criteria for claiming to be a human rights-based democratic police force. These efforts to secure a high level of legitimacy should be understood in terms of the significant tangible and immediate benefits they can afford everyday police work, as well as a social investment, that will yield direct dividends for members in all roles and ranks of the force at local and national level. Trust, confidence and positive community relations is already understood by most Gardaí as an invaluable resource for tackling crime, making communities safer and keeping the peace. Having positive relations with the local community produces 360 degree benefits for all stakeholders, not least for local Gardaí.

In order to effect any changes that might be needed, and to build on all the good Garda practice that exists, the practical dimensions of the immediate everyday working world of Gardaí must be one of the main lenses through which issues and ways forward are looked at. In order to gain the required level of understanding of the issues being faced, and then make knowledgeable decisions on policing priorities for 2018 and beyond, an important first expectation is that some kind of focused research would be conducted into what members in various roles and at various ranks themselves understand as

being the most important issues regarding policing ethnic minorities. The reasons for this recommendation are

- A. There is still an information vacuum in the area of Garda-Minority relations that is failing all stakeholders. If transparency and accountability is to be achieved in a meaningful way then there has to be new knowledge generated to help stakeholders understand the breadth and depth of the challenges faced.
- B. Important decisions around setting policing priorities must be made on the basis of an evidence-based and linked-up logic or rationale.
- C. If operational members who come into contact with ethnic minorities on a daily basis are involved in the consultation and relevant decision-making processes (which takes into account their experiences of policing ethnic minorities at the coalface) a result would be that any improvements which need to be made to policy and practice will have higher buy-in from the rank and file. Ownership and implementation will follow. Furthermore, their involvement in establishing a knowledge-bank that can be utilised for developing Human Rights-based ‘formulas’ to difficult policing circumstances –providing moral reference points / ethical guidance for the officers making difficult daily decisions- will better facilitate Garda members’ ownership and implementation of any future changes. Any significant real change on the ground will depend on the level of their buy-in and ownership of that change process. Members need to know that they are change-agents. This mental shift is not only empowering in a ‘soft’ sense, it can only be effective; producing the kind of hard results which police and public demand in the Twenty First Century.

After sustained research and in-depth needs analyses have identified any implementation gaps between theory and practice, decision-makers will be better appropriately armed with an evidence-base for informing a fresh course of policy-actions that will have the ability and flexibility to identify the existing methods that work well versus those which simply duplicate and waste limited police resources. Before such knowledge can be produced there are a number of areas that can be discussed here and now -based on research already carried out in Ireland and in other jurisdictions- that have addressed issues surrounding the policing of ethnic minorities. These areas for discussion include the following:

- I. Community Policing has consistently been criticised, by academics and police officers alike, as amounting to not much more than ‘a slogan without action, style without substance, and rhetoric without reality’⁴. One possible bridge to bring theory and practice closer would be if higher ranks were to more **formally recognise and appropriately reward so-called ‘non-measurable’ activities and achievements of officers working on the ground/at street-level, i.e. making it not only understandable or acceptable for Guards in specific roles to ‘have the cups of tea and a chat’ when invited into a citizen’s home but for that time spent to be identified as an investment in preventative and investigative detection methods, albeit one that may only pay dividends at some future unknown point in time in relation to incidents and people of interest further down the line/within the life-course or ‘crime-cycle’ of said community and district.** It is therefore suggested here that the narrow criteria of counting arrest rates; collecting warrants and fines; issuing adult cautions and so on –as the only ways of objectively measuring Guards’ ‘return of work’ and performance– requires review. Garda

⁴ (Maguire and Katz 2002, 504)

management and the Department of Justice ought to measure the force's success not only in metric terms -of how many people are arrested and how many kilos of drugs are seized and so on- but also, for instance, by how maintaining a Garda presence and Guards' activities are locally understood and received by the ethnic minority members of any given community. 'Disorder', 'deviancy' and crime must be understood as a function and relationship of factors within a social ecosystem. **An Ecological Systems Theory approach⁵ to 'keeping the peace' would be of great to mutual benefit to police and public, 'the brass' and 'the mule'. This paradigm shift has already occurred in numerous other areas such as social work, early intervention strategies, health and crime, where innovation and holistic understandings have been required to produce an answer to mapping new social territory⁶.**

- II.** In terms of on the ground issues related to police-minority relations: nationality, race, religion, gender, social status and/or class can play a potentially disastrous role in Irish police officers' conceptions of and practices towards ethnic minorities. **Stereotyping and racial profiling sound warning bells to anyone aware of the longstanding conflict and controversy police have experienced with ethnic minorities in other jurisdictions.**
- III.** Guards are themselves already aware of, and indeed have experienced, what it can be like to be perceived negatively based on the actions of a few in uniform, of being 'tarred with the same brush'; of being put on trial by the media; of the public forgetting that an individual, a person, wears the uniform; of how 'outsiders' often do not understand that, as a group, Guards are made up of very different people in very different roles with multiple identities, and how they are not always only a police officer. This is only one example of the kind of approach that can be taken to building positive ties with ethnic minorities: where it is possible to make all stakeholders conscious of parallels and shared interests and experiences that form a common ground or foundation for solidarity and collective action to make everyone safer and freer from crime.
- IV.** Internationally and historically speaking, public opinion and policing practices have unfortunately and wrongfully been informed by linking immigrants and ethnic minorities, as some kind of deviants and pollutants, with high criminal activity and rates of offending. This has always been based on unwarranted xenophobic fear and prejudice rather than on any valid evidence or empirical research findings. This has led to devastating consequences for inter-ethnic relations, general social harmony and justice across the world. **The negative consequences of such profiling must be understood better by all ranks and be included in some aspect of continuous professional development of management and training for relevant roles.**
- V.** Police-minority relations are still very much in their infancy in Ireland. The lessons learned in other jurisdictions have made clear what is at stake if we do not make the effort to understand the importance of issues surrounding crime, policing, race and immigration. That Garda-minority relations are only beginning to take shape here means Ireland still has the opportunity to avoid much of the conflict and controversy experienced by minorities, and of course police officers, in other countries. **The positive ground gained and the advantageous head start Irish policing has had over other jurisdictions will be quickly lost, however, if the state and An Garda Síochána do not further undertake and continue to make integration, interculturalism, inclusivity and knowledge-based policy decision-making a serious**

⁵ See BELLAIR, P. E. (1997), SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNITY CRIME: EXAMINING THE IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBOR NETWORKS. *Criminology*, 35: 677-704.

⁶ A General Theory of Expropriative Crime: An Evolutionary Ecological Approach, Lawrence E. Cohen and Richard Machalek, *American Journal of Sociology* 1988 94:3, 465-501

priority. With all this in mind the Integration Centre cannot recommend in any stronger terms that more resources and priority be given to the Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO). We will reap what we sow if GRIDO is not invested in appropriately. There is no reason to think we will somehow manage to avoid similar issues faced by police forces in France, the UK, and across the USA in the form of protests and violence as a way of venting anger and frustration with policing, criminal justice systems and poor relations with the state.

- VI. If positive ties with ethnic minority communities are to be built up -and barriers to providing a more inclusive, professional and effective police service are to be broken down- then Ethnic Liaison officers, in particular, require increased local level support directly from immediate superiors for the work they carry out as well as nationally from the force as a whole.** Such things as Compol Units and Schools Programmes must also continue to be a priority as one of the main avenues for making contact with, establishing a level of familiarity and rapport with the children of immigrants. This will avoid future issues with ethnic minorities that have been integrated but feel rejected by mainstream society for being different. Likewise, continued support and recognition of the value of Multicultural Policing Forums –and the role they play in ensuring An Garda Síochána avoids the mistakes associated with a lack of dialogue and consultation made elsewhere- must continue to be a local and national priority.

Training and Personal Professional Development (TPPD)

TPPD should not be about how much is taught/learned but about how well members absorb knowledge and benefit from it. Another way of expressing this approach is how quality should be seen as more important than quantity. In essence this boils down to the following:

- I.** What is learned in Templemore, while necessary at that stage of a new recruit's development, often bears too little resemblance to what is picked up 'on the job' and absorbed from senior colleagues about street-level police work. Rather than 'adding' to or including 'more' modules on anti-racism and human rights **what is needed is a shift in emphasis and replacement of things that do not connect with the everyday reality of street-level policing.** Do's and Don'ts may still be essential for the lowest common denominator in a class but reasons for 'best practice' and knowing why racism harms everyday police work, as much as it harms individuals and communities, is crucial.
- II. Ongoing professional development throughout the career of a member and throughout the lifecycle of a unit is vital.** 'Refresher' workshops that are bespoke to the rank/unit/role of members/at the given stage of their career and type of policing they carry out must form part of any policing plan's strategy on regional/national priorities related to training and anti-racism/policing ethnic minorities. These workshops would be opportunities to continue steering the ship in the right direction; should be peer-led as much as possible; and only occasionally facilitated by 'an outsider'.
- III.** A 'learning group' within Compol Units should be established. Learning is not based on absorbing and assessing the implementation of policies/charters etc alone but on practical everyday policing experiences and sharing information and advice on helpful approaches and good practice. Guards are already masters of sharing important useful information to help each other be more professional and stay safe. **The aim is to build on what Guards are familiar**

with doing and already do well in order to help them to ‘connect the dots’ between best-practice policy and everyday situations they find themselves in and need support with.

- IV.** These meetings should be a safe space for raising issues/problems/questions surrounding race/ethnicity/local minority populations. Peer-led and management supported group meetings can also be **an opportunity for gathering evidence of how local Compol Units are adapting, coping, struggling or improving as part of a broader effort to increase their professionalism.** One key indicator, for example, of improvement would be Garda members feeling that they have a handle on how to deal with incidents involving ethnic minorities.
- V.** **It is necessary to place a high priority on recruits learning how to see the connection between the long proud history underpinning the Irish policing by consent model, it’s achievements on a symbolic level, and the everyday benefits members enjoy because of it.** For instance, members’ general safety, their authority being respected, the level of compliance and cooperation they receive; intelligence and information offered/collected from the public are all influenced by their everyday relationships and the more abstract symbolic relationship between ‘The Police’ and ‘The Public’.
- VI.** Training can be strengths-based: a pre-existing strong policing ethos and subculture that continually refers to using members’ common-sense, showing people ‘a bit of respect’, and always trying to remember that they are dealing with a person first and foremost places individual members, and the organisation, at a huge advantage compared to other police forces. **Already existing attitudes, beliefs, practices, values of Gardaí (Garda subculture) can be tapped into to eradicate racism and improve police practices. This can be done by members themselves making the connection between how everyday police work can be made better by learning about the negative consequences of racism.** Likewise, practical advantages can then be understood as being related to seemingly abstract principles and values around anti-racism, impartiality, etc. There are already a number of natural instinctual Garda dispositions that lend themselves to fighting racism within the ranks: a thirst to know who you are policing and who lives in your patch, assessing whether an individual is ‘decent’; a genuine concern for and a priority placed on the safety and protection of more vulnerable people; an ability to ‘meet people halfway’, to give and receive respect; using an informal approach to conflict resolution; taking a community-centred approach to dealing with the local public; placing a high value on relationships for gathering intelligence and cooperation in investigating crime etc.
- VII.** **A major recommendation would therefore be to make seemingly ‘abstract’ concepts related to cultural awareness (and policing issues specific to ethnic minorities, such as recording and investigating racially motivated/hate crimes) more immediate to Guards during their training by using everyday practically applicable examples.** While outside non-Garda speakers have a vital role to play here, these examples also need to be drawn from other officers’ street-level experiences and presented by operational Guards in their own shared vernacular, making use of and tapping into Guards collective idioms and ‘insider’ perspective to properly bring home the significance of the relevant issues in, perhaps, case-study format, role-play and storytelling (a methodology employed as Sociodrama to increase empathy between people, empower them and to create a common culture of Human Rights within other sectors).
- VIII.** Furthermore, although specific sections of ‘the public’ may be viewed by many Gardaí as the blanket source of crime and problems for police, training must make it more apparent to Guards that their attitude and behaviour directly affects the ‘good will’ of the public, and that this good will is vitally important because it translates into a variety of hard assets/resources for

combating crime such as witness cooperation, information and intelligence, compliance, ‘respect’ and many other necessary resources that Guards rely on and utilise to fight/solve crime, protect the innocent, and bring the guilty to justice and so on. **In summary, the dots must be more clearly joined together during their training so that Guards see an immediate advantage, a medium-term benefit and long-term gain to behaving professionally, being familiar with and aware of issues related to policing ethnic minorities and how this will pragmatically help them and their colleagues to do their jobs better.**

- IX.** The relevant long established subcultural values, norms and dispositions regarding the pride and unity of purpose which officers display are already in tune with the democratic principle of policing by consent. Recruits, Reserve members and more experienced members could however be reminded of this connection as an advantage –where both the public and police are understood as having an equal stake in promoting integration, inclusivity, transparency, accountability, consultation and dialogue mechanisms. This might be achieved to a large extent by fostering an ethos centred around a pluralist ‘civic nationalism’ where belonging and identity are open to everyone participating in Irish society rather than on one dominant ethnicity or religion. This ethos reasserts, places a high value on, and makes clear to officers the importance of the policing by consent model. This ethos should be inculcated into all Recruits and form an integral theme that runs through many dimensions of a Garda’s training experience.

3. Our Future

Recruitment

Past commissions and inquiries in other multicultural jurisdictions on race relations and policing have reported that a lack of representation of visible minorities in particular is a significant factor that hinders the effectiveness of police work (especially in major urban centres)⁷. Although An Garda Síochána has made proactive efforts in this area there is clearly still room for considerable improvement if the force is to become properly representative of the diversity of the communities it serves.

- I.** **Greater effort through a variety of different initiatives and campaigns must be made to create a force with a membership that reflects the current demographics of the population it polices.** ‘Positive discrimination’ -also popularly known as ‘affirmative action’ in the USA- is widely maligned and misunderstood and should not be a barrier to introducing a similar approach in Ireland. Such approaches are thought to introduce a policy of recruitment and promotion criteria that give unfair advantage to minorities. A fuller exploration of why this is a misconception goes beyond the scope of this submission, however it is important to state that when properly understood and implemented, and underpinned by principles of equality and inclusion, the playing field is levelled appropriately so that the best man or woman does in fact get the job/promotion based on merit. When applied correctly it should simply act as a safeguarding mechanism against factors that unfairly inhibited a person’s opportunities.
- II.** Impartiality and accommodating the needs of minorities do not need to be contradictory/mutually exclusive as long as the principles underlying both are inclusiveness, respect and fairness. **Therefore, policies such as those around altering the uniform must be**

⁷ For example, see *Recruitment, selection and promotion of visible-minority and aboriginal police officers in selected Canadian police services* by Harish C. Jain, Parbudyal Singh, Carol Agoos in *Canadian Public Administration* Volume 43, Issue 1, pages 46–74, March 2000.

revisited and approached more objectively. Decisions made either way must be based on evidence and not on fears that accommodating certain needs would open ‘flood gates’, or any other such evocative metaphors that do not necessarily have any basis in reality. Similarly, an example of simple but meaningful change is to revise how new recruits are sworn in. It is no longer appropriate for a Christian bible to be used in this way by a civic force in a diverse republic.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation (IME)

IME provides tools with significant potential for helping An Garda Síochána to achieve sustainable results in the area of policing ethnic minorities. An Garda Síochána’s future initiatives to embed equality, interculturalism and Human Rights must involve qualitative evaluations that measure progress. Developing fit-for-purpose criteria in touch with street-level operational policing must take precedence over ‘box ticking’ exercises and paying lip service to these vital areas. IME must be taken into account at the earliest design stage of any new policy in order to know what works; when certain outcomes have been achieved or not; how to leverage on the learning from bad and good practice so improvements can be made sustainable.

- I.** The IME process is not purely a management tool. It should be introduced in such a way so that it can be ‘owned’ and ‘bought into’ from Inspector and Sergeant rank downward. **IME should be a way for frontline operational members to identify their own personal/their unit’s strengths, weaknesses and for recognising areas of professional achievement.** This approach to IME, of reflecting on ‘how well we are doing and what we can improve on’, must be linked to making the everyday lives/work of members easier in a practical sense as well as more professional in general. It should also be understood as a way to improve systems-level and organisational practice -not to be used for auditing individuals/assessing if they are hitting targets or meeting quotas. This only perpetuates a top-down blame culture, an ‘Us versus Them’ sentiment, and the perceived need to cover up mistakes made by close colleagues. This negatively results in the organisation’s image being maintained through sacrificing ‘rotten apples’ but not in correcting systems that may have contributed to the mistake being made in the first place.
- II.** **IME should be tied in with gauging whether certain actions and attitudes either increase or damage Guards’ moral authority/perceived legitimacy.** While such areas initially seem too abstract to gauge, this increased focus on accountability is possible to assess, monitor and would allow members to re-understand ‘performance appraisal’ as a way of learning from mistakes and avoiding future ones so that they themselves benefit in immediate ‘non-tangible’ ways as much as the organisation’s symbolic and moral standing in society does.
- III.** Similar to best practice regarding trust between any individuals, the relationship between public and police must be understood by members as a symbiotic one that requires ‘both sides’ to understand that they are part of the one process concerned with keeping each other safe from falling prey to criminal activity. Likewise, with discrimination, if there are racist practices and attitudes occurring then the first step is for Garda colleagues and higher ranks to acknowledge any wrongdoing in order to progress matters to a place where open transparent honest dialogue can then create a solid foundation for rebuilding positive relations between public and police. **The protection of whistle blowers is the ultimate litmus test for any organisation genuinely aiming to be accountable and transparent. Those who come forward must be understood as helping to make the force better and more democratic.** Garda members must understand that the ultimate outcome of increased accountability, transparency and partnership is gaining the public’s confidence, cooperation and compliance in everyday frontline settings. This

simultaneously plays a vital role in maintaining and strengthening the force's image and legitimacy in the eyes of the people from whom they receive their mandate to police.

- IV. Training and procedures that protect and support members that are wrongfully accused of racism is equally as important as identifying instances where a Guard has acted in a racist manner.** Appropriate action regarding a claim of racism must result in either disciplinary measures -that may involve education and awareness training- or full exoneration so that the accused no longer feels there is a question mark hanging above them.
- V. Good practice and interventions that have been undertaken at the station level in various parts of the country should be captured and disseminated within An Garda Síochána. Knowledge sharing already forms the 'bread and butter' of Irish policing. New types of information concerning best practice should also be shared where appropriate and possible.**

Inter-agency collaboration and multilateral mutual partnership.

Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) and Multicultural Policing Forums (MPFs) already work within a model of partnership that involves inter-agency information sharing, joint decision-making and open lines of communication which achieve more by acting in concert on issues raised by its members. The issues raised are dealt with from various angles and at different levels. While this works well for most members at local level other kinds of regional and national stakeholders need to be identified and included to this process as appropriate. The circle of those that need to be involved and that must share responsibility for making communities safer and contribute to positive meaningful ties between Gardaí and ethnic minorities must be broadened where possible. This does not mean that the local nature of JPCs and MPFs identity and ability to achieve local outcomes become subsumed into national strategies with a cumbersome membership. It simply means that there should be a two-way process of learning and informing occurring between agents operating at the level of national strategies and polices and those working on local ground-level actions and outcomes. This would allow for achievements in one locality to be replicated in others and for early warning systems to alert other JPCs and MPFs to potential challenges so they might avoid them.

In light of this it is crucial for An Garda Síochána to continue to identify areas of common interest and shared purpose with organisations such as the Integration Centre, Immigrant Council of Ireland, the Migrants Rights Centre, Amnesty International's Irish section, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Garda Ombudsman (as well as relevant statutory bodies such as the Equality Authority and government departments such as the Irish Youth Justice Service and the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration). Of course, improving and maintaining positive Garda-minority relations must be a mutual and reciprocal 'two-way street' defined by partnership. In this spirit of shared collective civic responsibility, any steps taken by An Garda Síochána must be matched by efforts of those organisations and groups representing ethnic minority interests to break down barriers with local police. These efforts should include ongoing awareness campaigns and developing dissemination of information within ethnic minority communities that are aimed at increasing levels of knowledge about, and respect for, Gardaí as well as creating opportunities for positive interactions with local Guards.

Regarding the above, improvements to existing structures need to be formalised adequately for clarifying Terms of Reference, Memoranda of Understanding and the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. The purpose of this is to make structures more democratic, transparent and accountable. This does not mean that business cannot continue to be conducted in an informal way. In fact, another invaluable advantage Gardaí already

naturally have related to their general default position of adopting an approachable personal manner when dealing with stakeholders and partners. Some members of JPCs and MPFs have come to Ireland from places where the police are very much to be feared and where an opportunity to meet with a police officer above the rank of sergeant is unheard of, never mind being on a first named basis with them. Current ways of conducting business that assume each participant is part of the same team, rather than as being on opposing sides, have already had a positive effect on creating and maintaining JPC and MPF members' unity of purpose. The sense of shared mission that has evolved within these structures reflects the new reality of us all sharing the same hopes for an Irish society without discrimination and with effective protection from crime. This ethos must continue to underpin how JPCs and MPFs are conducted and how policing priorities are set.

Conclusion

Police officers are arguably the most visible and omnipresent arbiters of the relationship between the nation and the state. This double-edged sword puts them in a very powerful social and cultural position while also placing a massive social and civic responsibility on their shoulders. As well as having significant consequences for Irish society in the long term, increased cultural diversity presents profound ramifications for the symbolic standing and cultural role of the force. It is crucial that today's decision-makers are fully aware of their responsibility in this regard and understand that both Gardaí and members of the public must become more attuned to issues surrounding policing, diversity and interculturalism. If the force is to genuinely deliver an impartial professional service to everyone equally it must carefully manage how it adapts to diversity. In many other jurisdictions the police represent the vanguard of a system that oppresses and often violently excludes certain groups from full membership and equal participation in society. Irish policing can avoid deepening this situation by playing a vital role as a positive broker of inclusion and integration.

In adapting to the current social reality there are a number of dominant positive dispositional traits of Gardaí that ought to be recognised, valued and promoted by Garda recruiters, trainers and managers. These traits stem in large part from an awareness that being a Guard means having a serious civic and social responsibility to those whom you police, i.e. from doing one's best to protect and serve the public by being 'reasonable', 'fair', 'decent', 'respectful', and by having the ability to use one's 'common-sense' to see how complex circumstances fit into 'the bigger picture'. The more these core features of Garda subculture are nurtured and promoted the less concern there is that Ireland will follow the same negative path which so many other countries have gone down. Recognising and promoting the fact that there is significant overlap between Garda best-practice and the values underpinning Human Rights and Equality policy will help to harmonise those core principles of being an Irish police officer with simultaneously being an agent against racism and for interculturalism. Indeed, there are already Gardaí that are ahead of the rest in terms of setting a good example and leading the way forward for policing and broader society. The route to embedding all of the above is through learning more about how Garda organisational culture and local Garda subcultures work.

Taking a long-term perspective regarding how future generations will judge the Commission's work and today's decision-makers, it can be said that the recent demographic shifts and increase in cultural diversity have placed current Garda management in a similar position to that of the original architects of the force. The decisions they make today and the strategies and approaches they support into the future will once more have a major historical long-term impact on what is to be lost and gained by the force and the society they are a part of. In a significant and immediate way, adapting to change is first and foremost in the interest of Garda members because the losses incurred if the force does not once again champion its own founding vision to police by consent, will be experienced by frontline members as they struggle to effectively and professionally police a more hostile society.

Fortunately, as previously indicated, Garda decision-makers can still seize the opportunity of learning from the mistakes and successes of police forces in other jurisdictions. If the issues raised in this submission are taken seriously and given local as well as national priority then hopefully one day soon the policing culture that develops on this small island, now made up of so many diverse peoples, will set the international standard for best practice and provide police forces across the world with a model to work towards.