

The Realities of
Policing Diverse
Communities from
Minority and Police
Perspectives

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By

David J. McInerney

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PREFACE

From a sociological perspective, debates about policing and race were not a concern in Ireland until it witnessed an extraordinary increase in immigration from the mid-1990s. An Garda Síochána's response to such a rapidly changing and diverse society was to launch the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (GRIO), and later appoint specialist Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELOs) of garda and sergeant rank to liaise with, and reassure minorities of garda services, whilst also assisting garda colleagues deliver a non-discriminatory police service at local garda station level. This book views the new role of ELOs as state agents having to adapt their habitus in their endeavour to build relations with minority communities in the face of the realities of racialisation. It explores the emergent practices of ELOs through their own lens, that of their colleagues, and members of minority communities, through triangulated research embodying quantitative comparative analysis of ELOs nationwide, and a corresponding number of front-line officers. Four separate case studies focus on individual garda initiatives: ELOs conducting a weekly "after-prayer garda clinic" at a Dublin mosque; ELOs engagement with Black minority community members in the aftermath of a racist murder in a west Dublin suburb; ELOs working with Travellers in the context of family feuding in the midlands, and ELOs engagement with the Roma community in the course of a joint Roma/garda anti-discrimination training project in the aftermath of a report into garda individual discrimination against Roma during 2013. The resulting analysis points to minority individuals favouring the direct face-to-face specialised ELO-type contact and method of policing, while ELOs, through their exposure to, and engagement with minorities indicate they have developed more positive opinions and perceptions of minorities in comparison to their front-line officer colleagues. The original contribution to knowledge, as a result of the research, found that ELOs apply discretion that favours human rights considerations over and above strict adherence to legal compliance, notwithstanding nation state and police institutional racialisation, in pursuance of anti-discriminatory policing techniques. Overall, ELOs have a positive impact on relations between police and ethnic minority communities, and on the organisational culture of An Garda Síochána. This is a unique example of how any police organisation worldwide can

eliminate institutional racism through simple application of face-to-face specialist police contact with minority ethnic communities.

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I wish to acknowledge those specialist garda ethnic liaison officers who develop positive relations with minority communities. Their selfless endeavour to ensure fair and balanced policing in Irish society, in the throes of huge demographic changes, goes some way to instil cohesion and stability in the communities they serve. I acknowledge with much thanks the support and encouragement of Garda management who facilitated and funded the research from the outset.

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Special thanks to my wife Jacqui, through her love, patience, support and belief in me, I have been able to complete this journey. To my daughters Jennifer and Laura, for their amazing consideration and all the sacrifices they made on my behalf, and for motivating me to complete this work.

Much has happened in the time I've been involved with this project, especially for my family and my mother, Celine, who during this time endured the loss of my younger brother Robbie (May he rest in peace). She is an inspiration for her strength and support to the family. To my brother John, for his patience and hours of proof-reading, and to my sister Claire – for her encouragement that set me on the PhD road.

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CHAPTER 1

FACING THE REALITY OF POLICING A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

One of my earlier encounters with the intricacies associated with diversity and society, intercultural communication, different value systems, and the reality of racist crime, was when I was requested to attend Trinity College Dublin to address a gathering of distressed Chinese students who were traumatised following the news at the alleged racist murder of one of their colleagues, Mr Zhao Liu Tao in Dublin on January 24, 2002. As newly appointed sergeant in charge of the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (GRIO), I was then encountering what was widely reported as Ireland's "first racially motivated murder" whereby the victim was hit repeatedly on the head with an iron bar after youths hurled racial abuse at him (Lentin and McVeigh 2002, 1).

My efforts to reassure the group of their safety and of the fact that those suspected of being responsible would be apprehended and brought to justice, did not appear convincing, nor did it alleviate their despair. Many answers were demanded regarding the rights of suspects in this jurisdiction and I was met with horror on explaining that every person charged with a criminal offence had the right to remain silent and would also be deemed innocent until proven guilty by a court of law. It was obvious that my attempts at reassurance were futile, because those students did not understand the safeguards that were built into the Irish criminal justice system, while neither did I understand about Chinese culture and their legal and human rights value system. **This is** the reality of the "clashing" of Asian and Western cultures, which required knowledge, tact and skill to negotiate various intricacies in order to afford a police service that could accommodate difference in a respectful manner to a vulnerable minority group.

Five youths were arrested for the attack on Mr Zhao Liu Tao, and were subsequently charged with the crime of manslaughter. On September 29, 2002 they appeared before Dublin's Circuit Criminal Court, where four of the youths received suspended sentences and were released from the court.

The fifth youth who admitted to striking the victim over the head with a metal bar was sentenced to four years imprisonment on a charge of manslaughter, with the last two years of the sentence suspended. The judge, in handing down sentence, remarked that the mitigating factors in the case were the accused's tender years (18 years old at the time of commission of the offence), and that it was his first offence. No reference was made by the court to the racialised aspect of the crime. The victim's family were left in turmoil.

Encounters with the reality of racialisation for non-Irish nationals come into play on a daily basis. In the course of writing a PhD thesis, I received a timely reminder on observing a newspaper headline reporting the conviction of two men for a violent racist attack on a 23-year-old male Zimbabwean. A University College Dublin (UCD) PhD Engineering student, Mr Mapfumo Cuidzambwa, was set upon by two youths, one of whom was shouting "*Do you want to see me crack a nigger's skull*"?, prior to repeatedly smashing the iron end of a golf club into the victim's head, resulting in catastrophic injuries—fracturing the skull, and breaking all facial bones leaving the victim permanently disfigured and blind in one eye. Luke Casey and Stephen Mooney were handed down prison terms of four years and three years respectively on conviction (*Evening Herald*, 2013).

This incident occurred on 1 October 2006, when the assistance of the office was sought by a garda Ethnic Liaison Officer (ELO), who was part of the investigation team into the attack. The crucial issue for the ELO was the fact that the victim had no relatives in Ireland. He was in Ireland on a student visa. The ELO learned that the victim's parents were actually resident in the United Kingdom, but were categorised as "illegal immigrants". On eventually making contact to break the news of his son's fate, his father pleaded that neither he nor his wife could come to Ireland as they would be prohibited from re-entering the United Kingdom due to their "illegal" status. The question of the family returning to Zimbabwe was unthinkable. The reality was that neither he nor any other family member could come to Ireland to be at their critically ill son's bedside. The stress and grief level suffered by the victim's family was acute. I pondered on how we could negotiate that barrier in order to ensure that the victim's family could get to see their dying son.

Representations were made to the British Embassy and the Irish authorities to allow a family member to visit the victim, but all pleas for leniency were struck down. Seeking to find a solution, we suggested to the father

that he locate some relative or friend to travel from the United Kingdom or Zimbabwe on a temporary visa, while in the meantime we would secure some form of witness expenses to defray all costs of the visit. An uncle of the victim agreed to travel to Ireland, and he was assisted by the ELO for the duration of his visit. The issues that come to the fore in this case are real for the police, in that human rights attaching to non-Irish nationals vary according to status and categorisation of human beings. Members of An Garda Síochána require understanding of how to come to terms with such intricacies when dealing with those who are perceived as unequal in society, and how to communicate effectively with individuals and/or groups who suffer the wrath of racialisation.

In both the aforementioned cases, the priority needs were for gardaí to have systems to enable navigation of cultural barriers, gaining intercultural communication skills, clearly understanding the vulnerabilities associated with difference, and understanding racialisation and how to negotiate its impact on minorities. These priority needs were reflected in the daily challenges of gardaí having to come to terms with the rapidly changing demographics, as the population of immigrants was increasing at a fast rate, which was proving to be extremely challenging as many officers reported on their inability to communicate effectively, especially with black Africans, various Muslim communities, and the Roma community, with whom they were now coming into contact on a daily basis in most cities and towns across Ireland.

Rex states that a sociologist is expected to “understand relations that exist between groups” (1999, 335), however, as a police officer it is also imperative to understand what McLaughlin refers to in the context of policing multicultural society as “the conceptual connection between the structural features of state racialisation and the control of poor and minority ethnic groups” (2007, 58). Entering GRIO was the start of a journey on the road to understanding the vulnerabilities pertaining to those who are classed as “different” in society. These vulnerabilities I did not have a deep understanding of during the earlier part of my career from 1980 to 2001, while attached to the more action-orientated Garda National Drugs Unit and Serious Crime Squad, primarily working within the “crime control” arena. However, while serving as a United Nations Civilian Police Officer/Human Rights Violation Investigator among forty-two other nationalities in the former Yugoslavia and in Mozambique, I witnessed at first hand the effect of discriminatory policing, and the sad fact that racialisation pervades police practices throughout the world.

This book focuses on those who are somewhat more visible in society—marginalised, racialised and thereby vulnerable, i.e., Blacks, Muslims, Roma and Travellers, and the fact that An Garda Síochána, through specialist Ethnic Liaison Officers, built positive relations through regular contact with those minorities that are not only visible in society but whom can often be perceived by police to be somewhat problematic due to the impact of racialisation, marginalisation, prejudice and bias.

Setting the Scene

With regard to expanding multiculturalism, for Ireland ethnic diversification occurred through a relatively short period of immigration, and so the two issues were often conflated in public debate. Ethnic diversity was therefore equated with non-Irishness and specific immigration statuses. In the space of twenty years, seventeen per cent of the population were deemed non-Irish born (CSO 1995-2017). Ireland has, in such a short period, become a plural ethnically diverse multicultural nation. Comparing this to the United Kingdom, seven per cent of the population were deemed ethnic minority, and this took place over a period of approximately fifty years, 1949 to 1999 (Phillips and Phillips, 1999). Hence the significance of understanding state categorisation in Ireland. Ireland has had higher levels of ethnic diversity within a shorter time frame, in comparison to the United Kingdom, therefore there is quite a clear link drawn between ethnic diversity and immigration in Ireland, that some within the collective regarded as a period of mono-cultural rapid decline.

Increasingly multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan, the emerging pattern of Irish cultural heterogeneity and diversity with immigrants from 188 countries was, and is unprecedented. As a result of EU enlargement and this increase in migration from the accession states, the majority of immigrants arriving in Ireland in the mid 2000s were EU nationals. However, at this time a more “negative” focus centred on the arrival of asylum-seekers from African states, Muslims from Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and Roma from Eastern Europe, mainly due to their prominent visibility. There were thirty-nine applications for asylum in 1992 which increased to 11,634 in 2002 (Begley et al., 1999). The foreign born population stood at three per cent of the total population in 2002, and by 2006 this had risen to over ten per cent reaching twelve per cent in April 2011 (CSO, 2011). O’Sullivan and O’Donnell stated that “by the beginning of the twenty-first century, Ireland was being described as the most globalised country in the world” (2003, 42).

Ireland was a country that had a history of emigration rather than immigration, so that when immigration did occur it was against a very homogenous background of religion and ethnicity. The Catholic Church was the predominant religion and its principles were enshrined in the 1937 Constitution. There was very little presence of other races in Irish society so that when an influx of immigrants and asylum seekers entered the state, settled in towns and rural villages and were clearly identified on the streets of our cities by their colour and dress, it was a “culture shock” for the majority white population. Culture shock is described aptly by Galvin as a “state of anxiety, disorientation and stress that an individual may experience when in a new or unfamiliar cultural environment” (2000, 315). This could be described as dual culture shock as it was being experienced both by the majority community and the new ethnic minority residents.

Added to this was the fact that immigrants had varied religious and cultural backgrounds and more often than not had only a limited knowledge of Irish culture. Public policy at that time was largely unprepared for an influx of this proportion. Immigrants were mainly Muslims, black Africans and Roma from Romania. These groups were the most visible in white Irish society and were the minority individuals who usually came into contact with An Garda Síochána on a daily basis. That contact was mainly through crime control and routine police services—detention, arrest and subsequent prosecution before the courts for alleged crimes (Walsh, 1998).

Focus of this book

The focus in this book is on the role of Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers, which was an initiative I developed as a response to cope with policing problems in contemporary, multicultural Ireland, with its complexity of cultures, differing beliefs, attitudes and daily-life cultural practices of minority communities. This new policing role was envisaged as a means of building trust and confidence in minority communities regarding the delivery of policing services in the rapid demographic change which was taking place in the 1990s, when Ireland changed from being principally a country of emigration to one of immigration. This demographic change was not unique to Ireland but it occurred here later and more rapidly than in other countries. McDonald refers to the fact that police forces worldwide had to adapt to change in response to societies’ expanding

diversity, which he describes as a “paradigm shift” in the theoretical framework for policing:

The old paradigm was about maintaining order by keeping people in their place, both socially and geographically . . . The new paradigm is about integration, not segregation, equal protection, not domination, mutual respect, not deference. In the old paradigm, enforcing the law was the highest value. In the new paradigm, enforcing the law is still important but increasingly is being placed second to maintaining racial and ethnic harmony. (2003, 234)

Loyal (2011) contends that immigration is one of the social processes that, by its nature, is conflict-ridden, heavily contested, and embodying a variety of political complications. His view is replicated by Schmidtke (2012), who describes the paradox within Europe, where most political parties in the centre left and right, endorse migration in principle as beneficial in socio-economic terms, while a number of political elites continue to engage in a political backlash against multiculturalism. In this process, the distinct emphasis in public discourse on economic benefits, combined with the marginalisation of immigrants, can itself trigger a negative feedback loop, reinforcing negative stereotypes of migrants and further fuelling anti-foreigner sentiment. Both Loyal’s and Schmidtke’s contentions definitely impact on the role of state agents (police) in their dealings with migrants, and amount to the implanting of conscious and unconscious bias in the minds of the indigenous majority population, especially in those employed directly by the state. These issues have the propensity to place hurdles on the path to respecting diversity in any society, especially in Ireland, where immigration has changed the face of society.

Understanding Migration

Loyal remarks that the “framework for understanding migration is the nation state through which discourses of nationalism presupposes a homogenous demarcated population whether civically, ethnically, culturally, racially or linguistically” (2011, 8). Given that this book focuses on the development of positive relations by specially appointed Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers, with the Black, Muslim, Roma and Traveller Community, it will shed light through the result of empirical research on ELOs in endeavouring to develop relations with minorities, that they do in fact circumvent the nation state framework for understanding diversity, that Loyal alludes to. Such racial state influences

impact directly on those employed as state agents, being the members of Ireland's state police institution. Importantly, Malešević's assertion that "the nation state has become the dominant form of social organisation", and that "nationalism has established itself as a principal source of state legitimacy worldwide" (2012, 193), underlines the need to place the ELO service within the context of the racial state.

This book draws on a combination of Bourdieu's political framework of distinction that seeks to grasp the interaction between two contrasting strategies embedded within state-civil society interactions, i.e. "between the left and right hand of the state" (1999: 2), (i.e.: An Garda Síochána as an agent of the state on one hand, deportation of migrants by Immigration Officers attached to the Garda National Immigration Bureau (*GNIB*), and on the other hand, endeavouring to improve relations with minorities by Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers (*ELOs*). Bourdieu (1990) points out importantly in this regard that the state through its institutional discourse determines one's identity on the basis of what they are or upon what they have done—all which influences agents' psyche towards difference.

Bourdieu's theory of practice in organisations (1989, 1990b), whereby occupational culture determines personality of the workforce, and the notion of "habitus" as a system of acquired dispositions and connections between everyday culture and power, neatly fits into the policing context. It is indeed in the policing context that the institutional cultural influences highlighting Bourdieu's theory of practice are drawn upon. Crucially, it is the occupational culture of the police—especially within the lower ranks—which has received considerable attention within the social sciences while racism has been defined as one of the most central and problematic features of police culture (Chan, 1997; Loftus, 2009; Reiner, 1978, 2000). The framing of racial categories and the social construction of racially defined experience (Winant, 2002), and Goldberg's theory on race, social science and the state (1990, 1993, 2000, 2002), provided further firm foundation in assisting data analysis.

Bourdieu's (1990b) theory of practice can be applied to police practice in terms of the interactions between the social and political context of police work, in the area of improving relations with minorities (the field), the institutionalised values and perceptions (the habitus). The gains from using this framework is its ability to account for the existence of an institutional occupational culture and its capacity to theorise about change enforced by external demographic factors in the case of Ireland and subsequent impact on the garda organisation. The field, which consists of structural relations

between An Garda Síochána and minority groups, has not been researched thoroughly in the theorising of police culture and its impact on developing police and minority relations in Ireland.

Nation State Effect

A compounding factor, which impacted on the gardaí's understanding of the meaning of respect for different ethnicities and cultures, was their attachment to the nation state and the citizen. This concept of "nation state" is the dualism of the state in terms of its protective and social aspect and its repressive and penal aspect (Loyal, 2011, 48). Loyal applies this concept of dualism to Bourdieu's political distinction between the "right hand" and the "left hand" of the state and considers it in an Irish context. With this in view, Loyal considers that the Departments of Social Welfare, Health and Environment constitute the "left hand" of the state, competing against the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Finance on the "right" (*ibid*, 50).

The attachment of An Garda Síochána to the "nation state" is evident in Allen's description of the Irish police force from its foundation in 1922. He calls it "an ethnocentric organisation", remarking that Eoin O'Duffy, Commissioner from 1922 to 1933, encouraged members to espouse nationalist ideals. Allen states that members were "pioneers" [members of a temperance organisation] who disrupted the poitín trade [locally brewed spirits in illicit stills], spoke Irish, played national sports and were devout Catholics" (1999, 62). His predecessor, Commissioner Michael Staines, encouraged the fledgling garda force to join their local Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) club. This ethos of cultural nationalism, more than any other single decision or policing policy, is the fundamental rationale of the closeness of An Garda Síochána to the people they serve.

The ingraining of the "nation state" in the mindset of members of An Garda Síochána played a primary role in policing consciousness and impacted on their discretionary law-enforcement techniques. Malešević's observations reflect the Irish situation in a global context when he comments that "the nation state has been the prevailing norm of political organisation, while the politicisation of culture has proven to be the essential source of its internal and external legitimacy" (2013, 227). The "politicisation of culture" he refers to impacts on the policing of a massively expanding ethnic minority community, directly or indirectly. In Ireland, the appearance of so many non-Irish nationals was the first policing experience of multiculturalism for most members of An Garda

Síochána and represented a new beginning in the application of anti-discriminatory policing techniques to communicate effectively with diverse groups.

Implications of State Categorisation of Immigrants

The role of An Garda Síochána in protecting the sovereignty of Ireland's borders, and how such a racialised policy could impact negatively in the minds of police officers and leads to development of stereotypes is important in the context of delivering an anti-discriminatory policing service. To this end, the Garda National Immigration Bureau are charged with the responsibility of overseeing state-implemented laws and carrying out functions to ensure protection of state borders. This duty of preventing various categories of people from entering the state caused strained relationships between immigrants and the gardaí from day one.

With regard to immigration and expanding multiculturalism, for Ireland, ethnic diversification occurred through a relatively short period of immigration, and so the two issues were often conflated in public debate (i.e. ethnic diversity was equated with non-Irishness and specific immigration statuses). In the space of twenty years, twelve per cent of the population were deemed ethnic minority (CSO 1995–2011). Ireland has in such a short period become a plural ethnically diverse multicultural nation. Comparing this to the United Kingdom,— where seven per cent of the population were deemed ethnic minority, which took place over a period of fifty years—1949 to 1999 (Phillips and Phillips, 1999), hence the significance of understanding state categorisation in Ireland. Ireland has had higher levels of ethnic diversity within a shorter time frame, in comparison to the United Kingdom, therefore there is quite a clear link drawn between ethnic diversity and immigration in Ireland, that some within the collective regarded as a period of mono-cultural rapid decline.

This negative thinking may impact garda perceptions about ethnic minorities, and again would have been exacerbated by a high profile government policy and initiative to remove illegal immigrants from the state entitled: “Operation Hyphen”. This became a garda mounted operation on the direction of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 2001. That direction imposed collateral damage to all immigrants in the state at that time as negative perceptions pervaded majority opinion. Two hundred Gardai were assigned to this operation, conducting a “sweep” of premises suspected of housing illegal immigrants. This resulted in immigration in general being associated in

people's minds with "illegal immigration", and may also have played a part in the shaping of police behaviour towards ethnic minority individuals.

Loyal emphasises that the various statuses assigned to immigrants have considerable effect in both shaping the migrants' objective position in social space, and their own self-perception. He points out that the function of state borders is to keep a selection of categorically defined individuals outside the territory on selective grounds, and this profiling, over time, has become a normal aspect of state activity. He alludes to the fact that the state has a central role in nation making and the physical embodiment of the imagined community each nation is held to comprise (2011, 65). His points are directly relevant in the sense of placing barriers in the path of developing relations with those from minority groups who are categorised within the lower end of the scale of migrant, i.e.: non-EU national, refugee and asylum seeker. All immigrants come into contact with members of An Garda Síochána at points of entry into the state and this is a crucial site where opinions are formed and/or reinforced between ethnic minorities and the police. The lower categorised group is instantly stigmatised and prone to bias due to state categorisation.

Bourdieu's (1984, 1989, 1990, 1990b), arguments about power of state classification in shaping the objective position of social space of migrants, as well as self-perception and perception, serves to enlighten this book. Loyal emphasises that the act of state classification—the placing of migrants into specific legal and political categories or differentiated immigration statuses as having a "profound effect on the lives of migrants" (2011, 42). These classifications "reify individuals and shape how migrants are seen by others and see themselves" (2011, 43). Hence, the importance of the role of ELOs in circumventing fallout from the negative effect and impact on society from state categorisation of migrants.

Ethnic Liaison Officers as "Change Agents"

In 2000, the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office (GRIO) was set up to coordinate the policing of multicultural Ireland. In taking up office as sergeant in charge, I quickly observed that this stand-alone unit based in the headquarters of the gardaí in Dublin could not possibly deliver services at local level without specifically trained gardaí with a direct link to the office. I proposed that the role of a Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer (ELO) be considered by the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána in order to

facilitate the delivery of a professional policing service to a rapidly increasing minority and ethnic communities. Subsequently, in 2002, 145 members of An Garda Síochána were appointed as Ethnic Liaison Officers with their defined role being to “liaise with representatives of minority groups including the Traveller community and to reassure them of the garda services available to them” (H.Q. Directive, 24/02). This was a starting point in coming to terms with the policing realities associated with Ireland’s changing demographic environment in that ELOs of such a manageable number could receive intensive appropriate professional anti-discrimination and cultural awareness training by the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office.

Wood, et al. remarks that participants who adjust their beliefs when confronted with innovative practice and new ideas regardless of where the innovation had come from are individually capable of changing their working environment and in effect, become “change agents” (2008, 84). In effect, ELOs have the potential to be regarded as “change agents” within An Garda Síochána, and by minority groups, as they are intended to facilitate ease of access to the garda institution, thereby possibly instilling confidence in minorities that Ireland’s police force is non-discriminatory and dedicated to openness, fairness and transparency in the delivery of service. A related dimension of ELOs is that their very existence could act as a challenge to racism within the institutional occupational culture. It was anticipated that ELOs could directly challenge the sub-culture of lower ranks that are mostly responsible for injustices perpetrated against vulnerable people (Waddington, 1999a, 287).

The ELO initiative centres on garda members building their capacity as specialists through professional instruction by GRIO in conjunction with minority representatives, in the area of policing minorities and ultimately, at local level, to act as teacher-trainers of cultural awareness and anti-discriminatory policing techniques in their own right. The assumption was that this cohort of specialist officers would coach other members in how to come to terms with diversity in the community. This was based upon skills acquired in performing their role through positive interaction with minorities while at the same time increasing their understanding of difference and vulnerability.

Daily Policing of Minorities

Many of the practical policing issues faced on a daily basis are clearly associated with the effects of racial state influences and various

occupational cultural characteristics that can act as a barrier to improving minority relations. These barriers to relations building are described clearly in the literature on policing multicultural societies; cynicism (Reiner 1998, 2001), the use of public space (McLaughlin 2007), racialisation of minorities (Holdaway 1991, 1996, 1997, 1998), investigation of hate crime and racism (Bowling 1998, Bowling, Parmar & Phillips 2008), police racist attitudes to minorities (Bayley and Mandelsohn 1969), negativity towards minority communities (Young 1993), staid or military forms of policing of minority communities and negative attitudes of police to minorities (Lea and Young 1991), lack of professional diversity training for police (Oakley 1989, 1993), the attitude and behaviour of police towards black communities (Waddington 1999a, 1999b), disproportionality in policing (Garland 2001) institutional police culture and its racialised elements (Chan 1997, 1999, 2001, 2007), and contemporary policing concerns in relation to diverse societies (Loftus 2011).

The “Liaison Officer” Concept of Improving Relations

The specialist liaison officer concept of policing permeated most police forces in England and Wales and was regarded as potentially important in terms of improving relations between the police and ethnic minorities. For example, in a survey of all forces in England and Wales completed in 1989, Holdaway found that “over ninety per cent had a specialist or race relations branch and some other level of their organisation” (1996, 109). However their effectiveness was neither clearly tested nor evaluated through research. Chan (1997) also conducted an extensive study of racism, Ethnic Liaison Officers and reform in Australian New South Wales Police. Again, she noted that “whether the reforms have achieved better service or better police-minorities relations is far from clear” (1997, 220). Part of the reason for this confusion is the lack of internal or external monitoring and evaluation.

Cherney and Chui reporting on their research conducted in 2007 with Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) in Queensland, Australia, stated that the PLO programme “made an important contribution to the capacity of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to respond to internal diversity issues (e.g. improving cultural understanding among uniform police and ensuring the QPS workforce is ethnically and racially diverse) and external diversity issues, relating to providing police services that meet the unique needs of ethnically and diverse communities” (2011, 186–187). The officers they refer to were not in fact police officers but individuals from

minority communities employed to work as auxiliaries within the police, and lacking the same statutory powers and having different responsibilities compared to their uniformed sworn colleagues.

In this regard the separation of specialist liaison officers from the mainstream workforce means that rather than helping to change how police organisations engage ethnic communities, liaison officer positions simply “ghettoise” community engagement as not part of normal police work (2011, 187). Neither would they be ingrained in the institutional culture of the police nor have to contend with and navigate state “left” and “right” hand challenges. This is totally the opposite in Ireland, whereby ELOs are fully sworn police officers who act as a conduit between the service and local ethnic and cultural minorities, without minority ethnic ties, thereby increasing their perception of impartiality within the community.

Eighteen years has elapsed since the appointment of ELOs within An Garda Síochána. The number of ELOs has now increased to 222 from 145, in the aftermath of the adoption of the Garda Diversity Implementation Plan 2009–2012.¹ In 2004 research was conducted into the development of the role of the ELO. The findings disclosed a haphazard approach to the initial appointments of these officers to their new add-on role. Respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the lack of management support for carrying out their role and allocation of actual duty time to perform it. They indicated a demand for more training in the area of policing multicultural society. Qualitative interviews with external minority groups indicated various levels of satisfaction, while other interviewees stated they never heard of the role (McInerney 2004). That study however, did not extend to the testing of a hypothesis that ELOs, as change agents, may positively influence police culture to develop positive relations with minorities. Since then, no other research has taken place to evaluate the effectiveness of ELOs as change agents in the internal and external workplace. The study described here goes some way to fill this void.

¹ This plan made way for the incorporation of all nine strands of diversity as laid down in the Equal Status Act 2000; Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Race, Religion, LGBT, Marital Status and Membership of the Traveller Community. As a result, the name of the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office was changed to the Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO) thereby portraying the organisation to represent all nine strands of diversity. ELOs have received instruction to the effect that their liaison brief has extended, and are now required to engage with representatives of the nine strands of diversity per the Garda Diversity and Implementation Plan 2009–2012 (H.Q. Directive 42/2012).

Results of the Research

This book reveals the results from empirical research which set out to gauge the effectiveness of community police ELOs in terms of the impact they have on attitudes on ethnic minorities, and on their colleagues' attitudes and behaviour in providing a police service to a multicultural community based on a central question: "Do ELOs improve relations with minority communities in Ireland?"

The answer to the question was developed through exploration of the ways in which attitudes of garda staff and minority communities evolve in relation to the role of ELOs within An Garda Síochána. To this end, a three-strand approach was adopted to add to the robustness of the results, as follows:

- (A) Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELOs)
 - Describing the manner of appointment and role of ELOs and to explore ELOs' perceptions of their effectiveness;
 - How were ELOs appointed to the role?*
 - *What do ELOs actually do?*
 - *What impact do ELOs perceive their role or activities have on minority communities?*

- (B) Front-Line Officers (FLOs) and Garda Management
 - Describing the perception of Garda colleagues as to the effectiveness of the ELO role on their attitudes to minorities.
 - *How do their Garda colleagues (Front-line Officers and management) perceive the ELO role?*
 - *What impact do they think the presence of ELOs at station level have on relations with ethnic minority communities, and on organisational culture generally?*
 - *What level of commitment do local garda management have to the ELO initiative?*

- (C.) Ethnic Minorities
 - Exploring the perceptions of minority individuals in relation to the effectiveness of ELOs.
 - *How do minority individuals (including the more "hard-to-reach" sections) perceive the role of ELO, and how does it impact on them and/or their community?*
 - *Do they see the ELO role as mere "window dressing" by the authorities to placate those alleging prejudice and racism against*

the police, or as a sincere effort by the police institution to develop good relations with minorities?

- *Do ELOs directly or indirectly cause a reduction in racism in the external and internal work environment?*
- *Do ELOs assist the garda institution negotiate state racialisation?*

To address these issues this book draws on quantitative and qualitative analysis of the views of selected representatives of minority groups, garda management, community front-line gardaí and the ELOs themselves. Data is captured from the quantitative and qualitative insights in settings that are contentious in time and context, to wit: ELOs developing relations with Muslim communities in Dublin City “Citylands” (at a time of increased bias due to perceived terrorism); ELOs developing relations with Black communities in a Dublin suburb “Suburblands” (in the aftermath of the alleged racist killing of a local youth); and anti-profiling training of ELOs by Roma and garda trainers (in the aftermath of the forcible removal of two “blonde haired” children by gardaí from two separate Roma families in October 2013).

Bearing in mind the localised settings, the outcomes have implications for the wider debate nationally and internationally in police and minority relations and police institutional culture. This book provides an innovative and original contribution to knowledge focusing on such contentious areas of sociological significance within the daily operational policing multicultural environment.

The book also explores the reality of relations-building with ethnic minorities from an institutional perspective already deemed somewhat prone to racist overtures, both covertly and overtly. Eighteen years have elapsed since the appointment of ELOs within An Garda Síochána.

Their numbers have now increased from 145 to 222, in the aftermath of the adoption of the Garda Diversity Implementation Plan 2009–2012. The ELO initiative is an important response to massive social change in Ireland, and this book is the first systematic attempt to disclose its impact on relations with ethnic minorities and on the police organisational culture generally.

Manning remarks in policing terms: “*what counts can’t be counted*”, in his discussion regarding lack of interest by police management in community policing. This lack of interest in community policing he points out is a worldwide phenomenon due its effectiveness in *preventing* crime

rather than leading to *immediate crime detection*. He states that the essence of policing is the detection of crime. Those officers who have a good record when it comes to arrests rise through the ranks as their work is recognised by all—management, the media and the public. In other words, the work of these officers can be counted.

Meanwhile, the prevention of crime, and building relations with the community by the actions of community-based police officers reassuring the community, do not yield instant results, and are therefore not valued by management, and subsequently not counted as “real” police work. Yet, Loader and Mulcahy, (2003,192), conducting research on the relationship between English policing and culture declare that “it is beat patrolling that remains pivotal to the idea of English policing, subscribed to by the majority of those we interviewed.” In this book, beat patrolling and face-to-face community policing engagement with a rapidly increasing diverse population in this jurisdiction, is proven, through empirical research, to be the best method to adopt in developing positive relations with minority communities who suffer the effects of state racialisation and discrimination, whether perceived or otherwise.

Notes — Chapter 1

1. G. Allen, *The Garda Síochána Policing Independent Ireland 1922–1982* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1998).
2. P. Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1984)
3. P. Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, J.G. Richardson, *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Capital* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 241–248.
4. P. Bourdieu, “Social Space and Symbolic Power”, *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), 1989): 14–25.
5. P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).
6. P. Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essay towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1990a).
7. P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1990b).
8. P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).