CULTURES OF DIVERSITY   SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA   DCU

A REPORT BY
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cultures of diversity

SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN
AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA

2012

GARDA LGB NETWORK ESTABLISHED

DIVERSITY STRATEGY

2009

ETHNIC MINORITIES RECRUITED   2005   RESERVE ESTABLISHED

HOMOSEXUALITY DECRIMINALISED   1993   EQUALITY ACT   2000

1970   CIVILIANS ENTER THE WORKFORCE   1959   WOMEN RECRUITED

1922   AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA ESTABLISHED   1925

CIVIC GUARD – MALE ONLY

DCU

Cultures of Diversity
Sexual Orientation in An Garda Síochána

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to all LGB people who have been a member of An Garda Síochána's workforce since the foundation of the state:

I'm a Garda. I'm proud to be a member of the force for so many reasons. I'm also comfortable being gay, both as a human being and also as a member of the force. It wasn't too long ago that Gardaí were responsible for arresting gay men and bringing them to 'justice'. Today, as an openly gay man, I serve with the men and women of the force day by day, night by night, and I try to be the best I can be, both to myself and the uniform I wear, the badge I swore upon and the honour of the position I hold.

Acknowledgments

The research team would like to thank the following people who facilitated this research in various ways:

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Table 1: Name, sexual orientation, female or male, urban or rural setting by year of service

List of Abbreviations

CID   = Criminal Investigation Department

EOE   = Equal Opportunities Employer

EOP   = Equal Opportunities Policies

FGIM   = Focus Group Interview Men

FGIW   = Focus Group Interview Women

HMIC   = Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

HRA   = Human Rights Audit

LGB   = Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

RIC   = Royal Irish Constabulary

RUC   = Royal Ulster Constabulary

The social, historical and cultural context

The lived experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB)[1] Gardaí is situated in their organisational context of diversity and clearly, being LGB is not necessarily *visible* in terms of diversity. The term or label of diversity has historically referred to ethnicity and has since been widened to include, for instance, gender, disability and sexual orientation in the workplace. For the purposes of this research diversity is understood not only in its surface sense such as sexual orientation but also deep-level diversity (Harrison, Price, & Bell 1998) which encompasses factors such as attitudes, beliefs, values and life-style (Laio, Chuang, & Joshi 2008). Both surface and deep levels of diversity affect everyday interaction in the workplace and are of concern in relation to a particular group of individuals, particularly when such a group has legislative protection from equality legislation. Diversity itself has received varying definitions, or none (Point and Singh 2003; Unzueta, Knowles and Ho 2012), depending on an organisation's interpretation of the term, understanding of its role and willingness to advance institutional change where necessary. Triandis (1995) cautions that a definition of diversity is socially and historically constructed and its relationship to a particular organisation is particularly dependent on setting the organisation into its wider sociocultural context. This caution is of particular relevance to this research and is applied in this report as diversity includes inclusive behaviour (Rosenzweig 1998) in an organisation, the chief concern of this study.

Though current sociocultural and legislative contexts frame this research, it is also situated in the social and cultural legacies of the foundation of the state, which was accompanied by the setting up of an unarmed police force by the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State in 1922. As an unarmed body, the 'Civic Guard' was clearly differentiated from the semi-military policing of the RIC by being a civilian body. In September 1922, Michael Staines, TD, told this new policing body that "The Civic Guard will succeed not by force of arms, or numbers, but on their moral authority as servants of the people."[2] O'Duffy became Commissioner in October 1922 and he issued guidelines which stated that the Civic Guard was to be unarmed. Additionally, they were to be non-political, were not agents of repression,

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[1] This research is focused on sexual orientation. As such we did not seek the participation of transgender officers in An Garda Síochána. Consequently, the term used in this report is LGB rather than the usual acronym of LGBT (Lesbian, gay, Bisexual, Transgender)

[2] McNiffe (1999 p.26).

and were to discharge their duties with impartiality, and, armed only with moral authority, were to gain acceptance and respect by the citizens of the new state. There was no discrimination regarding recruitment, an important consideration in the context of the turbulent foundation of the state. By 1925, all policing was conducted by the Garda Síochána.

There is very little published work on the *social* history of the force as opposed to works which tend to examine the political contexts of its role.[3] Organisational practices of An Garda Síochána reflect the social and cultural values of the state, which are also reflected in the wider society. In the years from 1922 to 1952, all recruits were male and were generally: unmarried, over 5 feet 9 inches tall, mostly aged between 19-27 years and had primary education. The majority came from the western part of the country and had a farming background. 98.7% were Catholic and 1.3% Protestant, including Methodists and Presbyterians and probably Church of Ireland.[4] Overall, as McNiffe states, "they reflected the religion, occupation and education of the vast majority of the people of the state".[5] What is interesting, however, is the minimising of difference. In 1923 O'Duffy sent the following instruction to all stations:

> Where members of different creeds are in the same station, care will be taken to avoid religious discussions.[6]

In effect, if it is not possible to discuss difference, then no *language of difference* arises to make such discussion possible through the teasing out of language in a spirit of mutual enquiry. Such language, accepted by all sides, does not create offence but legitimates discussion around a potentially controversial topic. The 1937 Constitution created a Catholic ethos, strongly reflected in the *Garda Review* of the time, and, as McNiffe notes, just as there was strong support in society from 1922-1952 for the Catholic Church, Gaelic games and the Irish language, so this support was also evident among management and the rank and file of the Garda Síochána.

McNiffe considers that by 1952 the Garda Síochána had changed very little in terms of its organisation, administration and in the Garda's policing duties.[7] There was also great discontent in the force regarding pay and living conditions. However, some change began in

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[3] See page 2 of Liam McNiffe's (1999) introduction to *A history of the Garda Síochána*.
[4] See McNiffe (1999 p.39 and p.5).
[5] McNiffe (1999 p.5).
[6] McNiffe (1999 p.139).
[7] McNiffe (1999 p.65 and p.108).

1959 when Gardaí were able to vote and were also able to avail of arbitration mechanisms. Women were also recruited and received equal pay by the late 1970's. They also no longer had to retire on marriage and by 1979 the marriage ban was removed for men and women entering An Garda Síochána. There were 35 women in the force in 1977 but by 1983 there were 300 and this figure includes three inspectors and eight sergeants. By 1996 there were 10,700 members in the force of which approximately 7% were women and in 2009 women comprised 23% of An Garda Síochána (Clancy 2009).

A full assessment of pay and conditions since 1922 was only set in place in 1968 under Judge John Conroy, following significant discontent in the Garda Síochána. Additionally, there had been no change in the administration and the structure of the force and Professor Louden Ryan headed a committee of inquiry into the force and published its report in 1979 advocating major change in relation to recruitment, training, promotion and management as well as pay.[8] Garda training was examined by a committee chaired by Dr Thomas Walsh in 1985 which created a significant level of training reform. However, McNiffe sums up the era in the years 1952 to 1997 as one where, despite changes in pay and conditions:

> The job has become much more complex and difficult, and Gardaí still operate in an organisation whose basic structures have not been changed since the foundation of the state.[9]

Change had proceeded on an ad hoc basis in contrast to a long-term perspective. One exception to this, however, has been the opening up of recruitment to ethnic minorities to be more representative of a rapidly changing and diverse society.

Sexuality

Other changes have also taken place in the wider society of which the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the 1993 Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Bill is the most pertinent. Senator Norris had initiated a case in 1977 in the High Court against the Attorney General. Having lost this case, Norris appealed to the Supreme Court which also ruled against him 3:2 in 1983. With his legal counsel, Mary Robinson, he proceeded to take the case, *Norris v. Ireland*, to the European Court of Human Rights in 1988. As part of his submission, David Norris stated that he had "suffered deep depression and loneliness on realising that he was

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[8] McNiffe (1999 p.167).
[9] McNiffe (1999 p.174).

irreversibly homosexual and that any overt expression of his sexuality would expose him to criminal prosecution."[10] Additionally, he also revealed that he had been advised by a psychiatrist to leave Ireland and live in a country where laws on homosexuality had been reformed; he had revealed his sexuality publicly on television in the mid-1970s after which he was the recipient of verbal abuse and threats of violence. He also considered that his mail had been tampered with.

The Court ruled in their favour and the judgment stated that Irish laws contravened Article 8 of the Convention on Human Rights which considers that:

> everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

The Court considered that there were no grounds for keeping the status quo as:

> such justifications as there are for retaining the law in force unamended are outweighed by the detrimental effects which the very existence of the legislative provisions in question can have on the life of a person of homosexual orientation like the applicant. Although members of the public who regard homosexuality as immoral may be shocked, offended or disturbed by the commission by others of private homosexual acts, this cannot on its own warrant the application of penal sanctions when it is consenting adults alone who are involved (ibid. p. 24, para. 60).[11]

These highly publicised events, occurring in the context of the criminalisation of homosexuality, were mirrored in actions taken within An Garda Síochána as recounted in The Garda Review. [12] A now-retired Garda sergeant was, in his own words, 'interrogated' at his divisional headquarters on his sexual orientation: "Are you a homosexual? Did you ever have sex with a woman? Do you know any other 'homos' on the job?" This instance of non-normative behaviour in An Garda Síochána is reflective of the heteronormativity of the state through its institutions. This police officer never applied for further promotion as he felt he could not face questioning again. Both the questioning and its consequences in relation to progression should, or indeed, could not occur in the current legislative context.

Equality legislation

The Equality Act of 2004 which encompasses the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 sets out the following nine grounds where discrimination is illegal:

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[10] ibid

[11] http://www.humanrights.is/the-human-rights-project/humanrightscasesandmaterials/cases/regionalcases/europeancourtofhumanrights/nr/602

[12] Garda review May 2006 p.44.

1. Gender,

2. Civil Status,

3. Family Status,

4. Age,

5. Race,

6. Religion,

7. Disability,

8. Sexual Orientation,

9. Membership of the Traveller community.

The Act requires all work places to create a culture of diversity so that the nine grounds outlined above are fully integrated into organisational culture. The Act also requires all members of an organisation to adhere to it, a point of significance for this study relating to diversity in An Garda Síochána.

However, legislation alone cannot shape attitudes, particularly where they are deeply ingrained in organisational culture, where they go unnoticed, and thus unchallenged. This ingrained aspect of organisational culture and accompanying behaviours negates the potential for a cultural shift in the organisation as a whole. *Ad hoc* challenges by individuals to statements or actions do not have the same effect and are piece-meal, leaving an organisation exposed to a tolerance of practices which can contravene the law. Equally, the *ad hoc* challenge is itself exposed to those negative tolerant practices. This negativity may not be the intent, and the legal consequence of certain actions may not be readily understood. As such this research is timely as it highlights precisely this un-evenness in institutional practices across An Garda Síochána.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Research aims

The aim of the research is to examine lesbian, gay and bisexual people's experiences of being a member of An Garda Síochána's work force. The main objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the experience(s) of lesbian, gay and bisexual people of being a member of An Garda Síochána's work force;

2. Investigate the meaning(s) that lesbian, gay and bisexual people construct of that experience(s).

These objectives are particularly important in the context of the Garda Síochána Diversity Strategy (2009), as the forward states that "Difference includes issues such as Gender, Marital status, Family status, Age, Religion, Disability, Sexual orientation, Race and Membership of the Traveller community", thus reflecting The Equality Act of 2004 which encompasses the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 requiring all work places to create a culture of diversity. This study therefore, proposes to unearth the experiences of individuals who are working members of An Garda Síochána relating to sexual orientation.

The methodology chosen for this study is from the qualitative framework which enables us to obtain an understanding of lesbian, gay and bisexual individual's experiences of being a member of An Garda Síochána's work force through the stories that they tell. What a lesbian, gay or bisexual individual says is happening in her/his world is happening as s/he experiences and lives it:

> It is in the co-disclosure of the shared world that issues of voice, reflexivity, identity, and understanding reveal themselves (Kavanagh 2006 p.252).

It is through the voices of lesbian, gay and bisexual people that we can begin to understand their experiences of working in An Garda Síochána.

The work environment of An Garda Síochána represents a unique space whereby individuals rely and trust each other more so than other work places; work is an area which represents an important part of people's lives where they also encounter diversity. Work also plays a major part in the experiences of people, giving them a sense of self, value and achievement. It provides an individual with a sense of who they are in society, through their membership of

communities (Morgan 1999) and organisations. As such, identities are linked to work, as they enable individuals to interact within society as workers, consumers and citizens (Morgan 1999).

Gathering the data

This research required one sample: lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals who either chose to be interviewed on a one-to-one base or in a focus group. Lee (1993) informs us that when one undertakes sensitive research, it has implications at every point in the research process. He further argues that threats to the person can come in the form of intrusion into an individual's life and social space; it can take many forms, from the perception of, to actual reality of, physical threat (Lee 1993). These are considerations that lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals take into account when deciding whether to participate in a study. In this study lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals were self-selecting.

Each step of the sampling and data gathering requires the researcher to take steps to protect their participants and to disguise the identities of the lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals so pseudonyms are used. Nineteen people took part in the one-to-one interviews: seven of whom were lesbian women; ten were gay men and two were bisexual men. They ranged in age from 25 years to over 45 years; they had a total of two hundred and twenty years of experience of working with An Garda Síochána and this experience ranged from less than one year to twenty eight years. This level of experience displays a commitment on the part of lesbian, gay and bisexual people to An Garda Síochána. Out of the nineteen people interviewed, seven, namely, two women and four men worked in a rural Garda station.

Table 1 gives the pseudonyms of individuals who participated in the one-to-one interviews, by sexual orientation which indicates male or female, years of experience and whether working in a rural or urban Garda station.

Data gathering took place between October 2011 and February 2012. A mobile phone was purchased for the sole purpose of the study, as a mode of contact that no one else had access to.

Table 1: Name, sexual orientation, female or male, urban or rural setting by year of service

Name of participants	Age range	Range of years of experience	Lesbian women	Gay Men	Bisexual Men	Urban	Rural
Alvy	25-29	0-4	√			√	
Arlana	25-29	5-9	√			√	
Blayne	40-44	20-24	√			√	
Casidhe	30-34	5-9	√			√	
Dealla	30-34	0-4	√			√	
Gweneth	40-44	20-24	√				√
Melvina	40-44	20-24	√			√	
Abram	35-39	0-4		√		√	
Baird	30-34	10-14		√			√
Breck	30-34	10-14		√		√	
Conlaoch	45-49	25-29		√			√
Devnet	25-29	5-9		√		√	
Esras	25-29	5-9		√		√	
Forbes	35-39	10-14		√		√	
Hoyt	40-44	20-24		√			√
Lugh	30-34	5-9		√		√	
Naoise	20-24	0-4		√			√
Merritt	45-49	15-19			√		√
Rylie	30-34	0-4			√	√	

One-to-One interviews were conducted and the interview schedule consisted of one question which invited participants to reflect on her or his experience of working in An Garda Síochána:

- Can you describe your experience as a Lesbian woman or Gay man or Bisexual woman or man working in An Garda Síochána?

Dinkins (2005) points out that the interviewer is the instrument through which data is collected. The initial contact between the potential participant and the interviewer created the space to provide details about the study and what we would like them to talk about. In this way the lesbian, gay or bisexual person could think and reflect on their experiences in their own time and space prior to the interview. It also acted as a buffer zone for potential participants to remove themselves from the study if they so wished.

During the course of the interview, further questions arose from the information the interviewee imparted. These questions acted like prompts to enable the individual to develop her or his story. They were not used in every case. The questions are:

1. When did you realise you were LGB? Would it be possible for you to indicate which you are? Could you give some context around the circumstances over time?

2. Did you come out to family and friends? How did all this happen? Again give the context over time.

3. Are you currently in a relationship?

4. Can you tell me about becoming a Garda? If it is ok with you I would like to know what attracted you to being a Garda. How long have you been a Garda? What does it mean to you to be a Garda?

5. Can we turn to the area you work in the organisation? Are you out and open? Do you think other people you work with are aware of your sexual identity? How does that make you feel?

6. Are there ever conversations in your area of work about LGB issues? What kinds of things are being said? How does that make you feel? Do you engage with the conversations?

7. Are there negative incidents that spring to mind in relation to talk/to any event around LGB with colleagues?

8. Are there positive incidents that spring to mind in relation to talk/to any event around LGB with colleagues?

9. Could your area of work improve in relation to LGB issues?

10. Do you go out with others in the Force? How do you know each other? For example, there's G-Force so how do you feel about it and why?

11. Overall, what is the effect on your everyday activity as a Garda of being LGB?

12. Overall, what hurts you most in relation to being LGB and a Garda?

13. Overall, what pleases you most about being LGB and a Garda?

14. Finally, is there anything else that you would like to add?

When the interview consisted of focus groups, of which there were two, each participant reminded and clarified for each other what was being said. In some cases the interviewer asked very little as the lesbian, gay or bisexual person began to tell their story speaking freely.

Through interviews, the voices of lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals can be heard, offering us an insight into their "ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (Reinharz 1992 p.19). Interviews ranged in duration from sixty to one hundred and twenty minutes. Interviews took place in a number of ways:

1. A room in the School of Nursing & Human Sciences, Dublin City University;

2. Email interview;

3. Phone interview;

4. Venue of choice.

In this way the participant was facilitated through their choice of location and mode of interview.

Focus groups interviews on the other hand took place in Dublin City University. There were two: one for men and one for women. Nine men took part and two women. Within the report they will be represented as FGIM (the identifier for male participants) or FGIW (the identifier for female participants) and as such no other identifiable markers are used. The questions posed were similar to the one-to-one interviews. In total 30 lesbian, gay and bisexual people took part in the project.

A consent form was signed by each participant, and a plain language statement of the study (appendix A), was given to each participant. Each participant retained a signed consent form, which clearly states that they can remove themselves from the study at any stage.

Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from Dublin City University Ethics Committee. This research project was proposed after the Committee of G-Force, An Garda Síochána's LGB employee support network, made enquiries into the academic literature available on LGB Police Officers. A lack of research on the area was identified. Out of courtesy permission was also obtained from An Garda Síochána even though the force was not sponsoring the project in any way. The private and personal social world of lesbian, gay and bisexual people who participated in this study will be presented to An Garda Síochána in the form of a report, at the 6th European Gay Police Association Conference which will be held in Dublin and to academic audiences through presentation and publications in journals, so bringing into public gaze, lives that have been hitherto unnoticed. These reasons dictate that the researcher must protect participants from identifiers.

Consequently, there are ethical considerations to be taken into account at every juncture of the research process and Sorrell and Dinkins (2006) inform us that:

> ethics is concerned with the suffering humans cause one another and the related capacity of humans to recognize and address this suffering through empathetic virtues of sympathy, compassion, and caring (p. 310).

These ethical considerations have been held into account during the data gathering process and interpretation of the data.

Data analysis

As the interviews were conducted in a number of ways, the data was also collected to reflect the mode of interview. The data was collected on an ipod, and downloaded onto cd or memory stick (and destroyed post-analysis). The team spent time with the data through the spoken word, listening to lesbian, gay and bisexual people describe their experiences. As a team we listened to the voices individually first and then came together as a team. When we came across issues in the voices which triggered a thought of a way of thinking we would consult them to develop our interpretation further. Both processes go hand in hand.

Describing how the interpretation of the data came into being is not an easy exercise as Smythe et al (2007) suggest that "working with the data is an experience of thinking". It is a difficult task to unravel how the thinking happened. This study required the discipline of writing, reading, re-writing, rereading until a text materialised. The initial writing was the first superficial interpretation (Smythe et al, 2007) but, through the process of rereading,

other interpretations emerged. However, this was not a linear process but one of going backwards and forwards until a text surfaces.

Emergent themes were not necessarily similar for all participants; rather they represented "an understanding that we have something that matters significantly, something that we wish to turn the reader towards" (Smythe et al, 2007). It is something important that necessitates thinking about and gives an invitation to the reader to think further.

Diversity struggles in the creation of a police force

The Garda Síochána is no stranger to the requirement to revise and analyse its recruitment policies and address staffing concerns. Its first incarnation as the Civic Guard brought with it disputes over the placement of former RIC officers in prominent positions in the force. While this may not constitute a diversity issue in the sense that the dispute was not predicated upon ethnicity or sexuality, it may be seen as an instance in which political stance and perhaps political diversity came to the fore. Former members of the RIC whose policing experience was valued by the government of the day were opposed by a number of the rank and file as they preferred to see ex-IRA members in prominent positions in the organisation (McNiffe 1997). As well as this, the early days of the police force saw some preference given to pro-Treaty individuals as a result of the civil war. These practices excluded a large portion of the population and may serve as an example of the suggestion that "the existence of a police force itself is an acknowledgement that the existing forms of social organisation are not in the interests of everyone they subsume" (Lynes 1996 p.494). Further recruitment to the Gardaí took place between 1922 and 1926 and again in 1931. In the ten years from independence to the 1932 general election 8,230 people joined An Garda Síochána and all initial recruits were male, "a stipulation so widely taken for granted that it did not even feature in any of the entry requirements" (McNiffe 1997 p.52). The vast majority of these were ex-IRA members selected by pro-Treaty IRA officers, and so may be suggested to be figures who exemplified hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005). The vast majority of early recruits therefore had some form of military background.

The manner in which recruitment proceeded may have conspired to create a force, which may not appear today to be representative of the population, with the vast majority of recruits coming from the West of Ireland. Fifteen counties along the eastern seaboard contributed only thirty per cent of the force (McNiffe 1997). The importance of the body to the Garda Síochána is made clear through the restrictions on height and chest size at that time. Physical bulk was important, although not always enforced as many of De Valera's recruits did not meet such requirements (McNiffe 1997), with the argument seeming to be that physically imposing police officers would be able to exert greater control on law and order. This may also have been evident in the restrictions placed on women, with the assumption being that women lacked physical bulk and thus were not as capable as police officers (Balkin 1988). In

1959 women were recruited to the force for the first time. They did not normally do night duty, but instead had long hours of stand-by duty at night time. Women received less pay than their male counterparts and their role was perceived as dealing with children and young girls who got in trouble with the law. Not only were restrictions in place with respect to women, there were also restrictions in place with respect to men who did not meet the criteria for membership. This may be said to reflect the emphasis placed on muscularity in the context of hegemonic masculinity (Drummond 2010), where individuals who do not achieve a particular level of muscularity are subordinated as a result.

While the situation after the treaty cannot be said to resemble the current recruitment situation in the Garda Síochána it may be argued that it resembles the notion that achieving a representative police force constitutes taking a critical stance towards staffing issues at all times and from a variety of levels, be it the early ex-IRA recruits, De Valera's new government, the ethnicity imitative or LGB Gardaí. The way in which such groups, specifically the LGB group, negotiate with policies and the culture and sub-cultures of the force is of interest in this study.

An Garda Síochána's diversity vision

The recent *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan* (2009) would appear to aim at this goal with its suggestion that:

> Diversity...is not only about difference in terms of nationality or ethnic background. For An Garda Síochána, Diversity is about recognising, acknowledging and respecting difference. (pp.i)

which is said to include:

> gender, marital status, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the travelling community. (Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan, 2009 pp.i)

The argument made in this document is that a diverse police force will be better able to serve its community. It is suggested that An Garda Síochána should reflect the diverse society it serves, with an implicit assumption perhaps being that the mere presence of members of minority groups within An Garda Síochána will make it appear to minority members of this diverse society that they are also being served by this police force. There is a danger, however, that such members of An Garda Síochána may become special case Gardaí who are called upon when issues arise involving the minority groups that they represent. For

example, a sensitive case involving women, children or rape,[13] may lead to a female member of An Garda Síochána being called upon. While this may be necessary in some instances, it may undermine efforts at equality, leading to differentiated work practices. Such practice may create a work place environment in which women are only seen as suitable for dealing with situations involving other women due to some perception that they embody an ethic of care, as one researcher terms it (Rabe-Hemp 2005). For example, Worden (1993) maintains that female officers are more comforting to victims of crimes, with a particular focus on women and children. This may be a heteronormative assumption about appropriate female behaviour, positioning women officers in a motherly role, as care givers. However, this finding has been refuted by De Jong (2004) who found few differences between the behaviour of male and female police officers when comforting citizens. This notion has been studied by a number of researchers, with the suggestion being that female police officers conduct their jobs differently because of biological or socialisation differences (Garcia 2003). For instance, earlier research on biological difference had suggested that female police officers were not as effective in their jobs as men due to a lack of physical strength (Balkin 1988).

Other research, meanwhile, has considered that female officers use less force in arrests than male officers (Schuck and Rabe-Hemp 2005) but similar levels of force in general interactions with citizens (Paoline and Terrill 2004). In addition, Rabe-Hemp (2008) has found that women are much less likely to use extreme controlling behaviour but cautions that there is no evidence that this reluctance to use extreme force has negative consequences. In contrast it has been found that the exertion of greater force is associated with injury to citizens and officers to a greater degree than situations in which 'not enough' force is exerted (Schuck and Rabe-Hemp 2005). Further, Rabe-Hemp (2008) also found that male officers were more likely to engage in caring behaviours than female officers and so it may be the case that the rationale for using female officers in situations in which it is supposed that a more caring approach is necessitated is based on a gender bias or assumptions around biological or socialisation differences. Therefore, it may be more suitable that it be left up to the individual involved to decide whether they wish to speak to a male or female officer in the instance of rape. In any case, there may be a risk of minority groups becoming type-cast into particular roles. Certainly, O'Duffy, when calling for the recruitment of female Gardaí,

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[13] This could lead to the assumption that only females can be raped thus negating the law, or another reading could be that women are better with individuals in crisis regardless of their gender.

highlighted their utility in 'sensitive cases' (Ferriter 2009). While recruitment drives to increase representation of minority groups in the force may be something to be welcomed, the diversity of this force may be called into question if these Gardaí are merely used as an appendage to the force to help Gardaí deal with problem groups, or groups which are seen as not being responsive to An Garda Síochána in its current guise.

It is important too that individual members within An Garda Síochána feel that they are supported by their superiors as female officers can feel less organisational support from their supervisors and colleagues (Rabe-Hemp 2006). While there may be equality legislation in place this does not necessarily mean that all participants feel supported within their workplace. It would be necessary for senior management within An Garda Síochána to be active in ensuring that equality legislation is upheld. However, in an organisation that holds masculine ideals, such as physical strength, in such high esteem it may be that the culture of the organisation requires attention, from the bottom-up. Regardless of the policy espoused by the management of the organisation, the rank and file may negotiate their own understanding of what is involved in being a member of An Garda Síochána. They will make use of their own frames when analysing the organisation (Goffman 1986).

The "Diversity" document (2009) produced by An Garda Síochána does, however, appear to be aware of such issues and addresses them through the suggestion that the focus will be on individuals rather than groups. It would appear from this that the aim is not merely to increase the representation of minority groups within An Garda Síochána but to eliminate barriers, perceived or actual, to members of minority groups joining the ranks of An Garda Síochána and actively encourage such individuals to join. Further, the statement: "We all help to make up the Diversity in our communities, not just those of us from minority groups" would appear to highlight a desire to democratise the organisation and undermine the assertion that the minority groups that An Garda Síochána seek to recruit would be special case Gardaí. While the "Diversity" document makes mention of sexual orientation, its primary focus is that of ethnic and racial differences which is disappointing from the point of view of the current research. Also, while the document maintains that racial and ethnic issues "bring a greater number of opportunities and challenges for policing" it is worth bearing in mind the suggestion of Burke (1994) that homosexuals are the social group most disliked by police.

In the *Human Rights Audit* (2004) of An Garda Síochána LGB issues are further ignored. No

LGB organisations participated in the audit which may explain why the document has little to say about this group though The Irish Council for Civil Liberties makes mention of the existence of hate crimes against members of the gay and lesbian community. The Commissioner of the time, Pat Byrne, released a booklet aimed at new minority communities in Ireland to aid attempts to serve the community irrespective of matters such as creed, ethnicity or sexual orientation. However, while this booklet may have been well intentioned, there was no mechanism in place in An Garda Síochána to ensure that policy and procedures reflected human rights values, as well as no mechanism to monitor the implementation of human rights procedures and policies, according to those who put together the audit.

The report identified a large gap between what senior managers believed to be the case with respect to human rights and what general staff believed to be the case (HRA 2004). Senior managers were more positive about what had been put in place to tackle human rights issues but staff did not share their interpretation of the situation. Ruvolo (2007) suggests that the values espoused by an organisation or the goals it sets for itself may not be supported by the organisational culture that exists and this appears to be the case here, while also suggesting a disconnect between management and the rank and file.

Community groups who were consulted maintained that An Garda Síochána do not have a human rights culture in place (HRA 2004). They saw it as a very authoritarian organisation with a rigid hierarchy. They also raised concerns over staffing levels in the Human Rights Office and the Racial and Intercultural Office, which at the time had only three staff members between them (this may also act as an explanation for the neglect of LGB issues). Community groups expressed concern over the complaints system, stressing the need for an independent commission. There was a fear of reprisals among some groups and a suggestion that the Gardaí regarded all complaints as a burden. Thus, while An Garda Síochána stated its aims with respect to human rights and diversity, the reality of its interactions with the community may be said not to have achieved these aims in practice.

The auditors also maintained that knowledge of human rights provisions was very low amongst Gardaí. Staff were split between those who desired to know more and those who felt that human rights were common sense; the latter considered that this common sense approach coupled with the legislation that was already in place would be sufficient (HRA 2004). The focus here was on ethnic minority issues and so it may be that understanding of issues relating to sexual minorities may be even worse, with this suggestion based purely on the fact

that there is little mention made of such groups in the *Human Rights Audit* (2004).

Many Gardaí reported not having read the organisation's *Declaration of Professional Values or Ethical Standards*, suggesting that they were merely presented with this document and not offered any support or explanatory information with respect to how it should be interpreted (HRA 2004). They complained that the wording of this document was vague and hard to apply in practice, which may resonate with the experiences of some ethnic minority participants in Wang's (2010) study who maintained that the way in which Gardaí enacted policy very much depended upon the Garda who was working on that particular day.

The human rights audit also provided a review of An Garda Síochána as a human rights employer which provided an insight into the experiences of female Gardaí but not an insight into what LGB Gardaí could expect to encounter (HRA 2004). It was mentioned in this report that there was a certain amount of bullying engaged in by the senior ranks with respect to the rank and file Gardaí. Einarsen et al (1994) consider that bullying cannot simply be identified according to the nature of the acts that are engaged in. One must also take account of the frequency, the power differences involved, and the way in which the victim interprets the intentions of the offender as these may cause as much anxiety and suffering as the actual conduct involved (Einarsen et al 1994).

The *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan* (2009) has a timeframe which runs from 2009-2012 so that there is as yet no published evaluation of its implementation, in contrast to the evidence contained in the *Human Rights Audit* (2004). Though the 2004 audit is now several years old, it is not in the remit of this academic review to discuss published policies or strategies, such as the report on *Policing in Ireland* (2007) or the Garda Síochána Corporate Strategy 2007-2009 titled *A Time for Change* (2007) but rather focus on research of relevance to this study. However, the *Annual Report of An Garda Síochána* (2010) mentions two achievements in relation to the *Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan* (2009). Firstly, at the Annual Gay and Lesbian Awards (GALAs) which took place on 24 September, 2010, An Garda Síochána received an "Employer of the Year" award. The annual report notes that the award was "presented in recognition of the work that has been done in An Garda Síochána in recent years to support lesbian, gay and bi-sexual (LGB) employees (2010 p 14). Secondly, the report states that "a Diversity Office was established within the Civilian HR Directorate, Athlumney House, Navan" (2010 p 14).

Diversity has also featured in articles in the Garda Review, as for example articles on diversity training for some 250 staff in readiness for the first student Gardaí from ethnic minorities joining *An Garda Síochána* in 2006 to articles ranging from transgender and policing to ethnic diversity in 2007. However, given current financial constraints in the public service, the *Annual Report of the Audit Committee of An Garda Síochána 2011* (2012 p 5) notes that some staff training was "curtailed and delayed," a point of concern in relation to diversity strategies which are still clearly new.

Gender and sexual harassment

The 2004 audit also examined the role of gender and several women who took part in the human rights audit also suggested that they would not complain about sexual harassment or bullying as they had no independent person to talk to and because of the fact that "complaints follow the female wherever she goes" (HRA 2004). In an overview of policing, Brown (2000 p 92) considers that evidence points towards "the universal resistance to women's entry into policing, wide-spread occurrence of sexual harassment, differential deployment and blocked career progression" and that this phenomenon can be examined cross-culturally due to the development of robust conceptual tools for cross-cultural comparison and analysis. Brown's (2000) study focuses on a cross-cultural comparison of discrimination and women police officers in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and England and Wales. Her findings indicate that the Republic of Ireland fares best in relation to sexual discrimination and sexual harassment. The figure of 63% of women officers reporting incidents of sexual harassment contrasts with some 70% in England and Wales, 80% in what was the RUC and around 88% in Scotland.

All these figures are, nevertheless, very high and Brown (2000) noted that women in An Garda Síochána were the least likely to complain of harassment, a point of interest for this study. This aspect of organisational bullying was reported in D'Cruz and Noronha's (2012) study of the experiences of bullying in India; individuals who were being bullied made complaints and were subsequently treated as if they were the problem by senior management. It was maintained that they were problem staff members and were being treated in a way that was warranted. Such incidents and follow-on actions help to convey the hierarchical structure of the organisation and its problems with gender. It would seem that stating the goals of an organisation is not enough to ensure that these goals become enshrined in the organisation at all levels (Ruvolo 2007). The culture of the organisation in which it is hoped

that these goals will be achieved needs to be altered. There are, however, signs of change with regard to sexual harassment as reported in court cases in the Irish Times.

Gender and career progression

The explanations offered to account for differences in career progression between male and female members of the force may serve to further illuminate the attitude to women in An Garda Síochána, in that many senior officers suggested that: "Females gravitate to a different style of career due to family commitments" (HRA 2004). The implicit suggestion here is that the family is primarily the concern of the woman. Presuming that male members of the Gardaí also have families, there is nothing to say that they would not be prompted to gravitate to a "different style of career" due to their own family commitments. This serves as an example of the way in which the male members and senior management of the Gardaí frame the role of women within the organisation (Goffman 1986). Even though they are working outside the home they are still seen as 'motherly' and suited to take particular roles as a result of this.

This framing is further supported by the suggestion that men cannot deal effectively with rape cases (Brown 2000). These and other cases involving a more 'caring' approach are the preserve of women who are deemed to be more skilled in that regard. Female Gardaí, therefore, are seen as being likely to shy away from the more rough and tumble work due to family commitments (O'Hara 2011) and are also judged to be more effective at the 'caring' work as a result of their gender. Therefore, as well as being more likely to gravitate towards such work they also happen to be more suited to it, according to the male Gardaí who make use of 'natural' frameworks to interpret their behaviour.

Recruitment and diversity

Senior officers in the Gardaí agreed with the need to recruit Gardaí from more diverse communities. However, the focus on the Human Rights Audit (2004) was on ethnic minorities and community relations in relation to the Council of Europe's pan-European programme, *Policing and Human Rights 1997-2000*, and sexual minorities do not appear explicitly to be part of its remit. However, the audit (2004 p 1) quotes the preamble to An Garda Síochána's *Declaration of Professional Values and Ethical Standards* which is of relevance to this study:

> An Garda Síochána, being the national police service of the Republic of Ireland with a public mission, and acting in the public interest, has a fundamental role in protecting

and vindicating the personal dignity and human rights of all members of the community.

As all those who work for An Garda Síochána are, first and foremost, members of the community, it would appear that they too are protected within this mission statement.

It must be noted, however, this audit took place before the establishment of G-Force in 2009 and so may reflect the fact that members were unaware of the presence of LGB Gardaí at this point. The fact that no mention is made of the need to recruit from such populations may be suggestive of the fact that for the Gardaí interviewed as part of this study, LGB individuals did not fit within the frame that they had reserved for An Garda Síochána (Goffman 1986). Their absence from the conversation on diversity in this audit is telling in that it would appear that LGB Gardaí occupy an unimagined and unimaginable space for these Gardaí. 'Unimagined' here refers to Anderson's (1991) conceptualisation of the 'imagined community' of the nation with, currently, no openly acknowledged or fêted lesbian, gay or bisexual historical heroes in the Irish case.

It is a disappointing feature of the human rights audit that LGB issues are ignored completely with respect to employees within An Garda Síochána though a passing mention is made of dealing with LGB members of the community. The Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009) goes some way toward rectifying this, however, as one of its intentions is to actively recruit from LGB populations as well as monitor the levels of representation in the force.

Organisational Culture

Schein (1992) suggests that an organisation's culture is a shared set of assumptions and values that guide the everyday behaviours of organisation members and consists of a framework which instructs individuals how to think and feel about internal integration. Essentially, efforts at recruiting LGB individuals and developing more inclusive policies with such individuals aim at altering the culture in the organisation. De Witte and van Muijen (1999), however, consider that organisational culture develops in interaction between the individual and the organisation, and any efforts at creating a more inclusive environment for LGB individuals should focus as much on the individuals who compose the organisation as on the policies espoused by the organisation. It has been suggested that the most important function of organisational culture is that it stabilises behaviour (Banens 1995), so that culture, transparent and stable norms and values have an important function organising individual

behaviour and providing organisational members with structure (DeWitte and van Muijen 1999). This is not to say that all individuals within the organisation share the same beliefs as Hope and Henry (1996) recognise the potential existence of different sub-cultures in one organisation, a point of relevance for this study.

Organisational culture can be seen as a value system which helps to sustain the activity of organisational members (Vandenberghe and Peiro 1999). Rousseau (1990) demonstrated that satisfaction oriented norms were positively related and security oriented norms were negatively related to satisfaction with an organisation and with an individual's intent to stay. It may be said, therefore, that organisations that aim to create a culture with employee satisfaction at its core are more likely to retain employees. In the case of LGB individuals perhaps it is the case that organisations that aim to create LGB-friendly organisational cultures are also better able to retain staff than other organisations. The work of Cable and Judge (1997) considers that the personal values held by employees exert an influence on their own behaviour. For example, the values of concern for others and empathy were found to predict positive behaviours engaged in towards other individuals. O'Reilly et al (1991) have reported that individuals who perceive that their values are in line with those espoused by the organisation are more likely to display a positive attitude towards the job. As person-organisation value fit is a key construct in the job decision process (Judge and Cable 1997), perhaps the very fact that An Garda Síochána purports to espouse LGB-friendly values will lead to the attraction of individuals who share such values to the organisation whether they are straight or LGB.

However, the culture of an organisation may not support an organisation's stated goals and values, and Ruvolo (2007) makes use of NASA as an example of this: while the organisation maintained that safety was to be its primary concern in all future missions following the Challenger disaster, the culture that existed in the organisation meant that safety concerns went ignored in a similar manner in future missions. The group charged with investigating the Columbia crash claimed that the culture that had led to the Challenger crash remained intact (Ruvolo 2007). There is disagreement over the extent to which organisational culture can be managed, with some authors suggesting that it is quite easy to do so (Anthony 1994), while Burack (1991) maintains that it is more difficult and is made difficult by the presence of sub-cultures among other things. Smircich (1983) suggests that culture is part of what an organisation is, rather than something it has. Researchers in this vein would suggest that organisational culture can only be influenced in an indirect way and is the result of

interaction between the individual and the organisation.

Ruvolo (2007) cautions that if the goal is to integrate a particular group into an organisation, it is important that organisation members are not simply left to their own devices to ensure that integration takes place. She found that the organisational members had a vision of integration that deviated from that stated by the organisational managers (Ruvolo 2007). Most participants in her study were of the opinion that in order for integration to be successful, it was necessary for the organisation to take on staff members that most closely resembled the current staff members of the organisation. It was not generally accepted that integration would result from all members attempting to understand and value differences among them. In the case of An Garda Síochána, the notion that there is an ideal police officer who achieves the hegemonic masculine ideals espoused by some members of the force may lead to those who do not achieve such ideals being excluded so that a model of behaviour suggested by Ruvolo's study means recruitment being interpreted as those 'like us' and not 'different to us'. This course of action also plays into maintenance of the status quo as it is a replaying of the reproduction of 'those like us'. Such reproduction is a key aspect of institutional habitus (Bourdieu 1989) where habitus is the lens through which an individual views and engages with the world (Bourdieu 1989) as habitus is generally reproductive rather than transformative. Current Garda staff would, therefore, need to consider that integration and diversity requires a commitment from everyone involved to develop a culture that is accepting of difference and can incorporate the language of difference into work practices including everyday talk.

De Witte and van Muijen (1999) hold that a number of different variables exert a constant influence on organisational culture and that effective management of organisational culture depends upon the organisation being aware of these variables. Such variables include the national culture, the stakeholders, professional associations and the evolution of the organisation. An organisation is suggested to need leaders at all levels, as opposed to simply at the top. Gordon (1991) considers that in order to realise organisational change, it is necessary to change the leadership of the organisation as these individuals generally have more experience in controlling the current situation than effecting change. In contrast, Gagliardi (1986) suggests that whether or not new leadership is required depends on the nature of the change desired. If incremental change is desired the current leadership would serve, whereas if substantial changes are desired it may be necessary to make more drastic changes to the leadership.

Encouragingly for An Garda Síochána, it has been claimed that a top-down approach to organisational culture change is possible if the focus is on changing behavioural norms as opposed to assumptions (DeWitte and van Muijen 1999), a point of significance for this study. It is suggested, however, that such approaches may simply lead to compliance but not actual acceptance by staff so that the prevailing culture may not change and heterosexism may remain. De Witte and van Muijen (1999) propose a combination of top-down rules as well as feedback sessions which involve participation from staff members in order to establish behavioural norms. Kilman (1985) reinforces this view by suggesting that symbolic gestures by management are an insufficient stimulus for cultural change. He claims that culture change will only take place when work group members encourage each other to be receptive to other groups. In this way, while it is encouraging for LGB individuals when an organisation makes proclamations surrounding LGB rights and enacts policies that are supportive of this, it may still be the case that a culture exists within an organisation that is not open to such ideas. Conversely, a culture could exist which welcomes LGB individuals in the absence of actual policies in support of these individuals.

The Impact of Organisational Policies on Minority recruitment

While the foregoing section maintains that organisational policies may do little to alter organisational culture, such policies may have an impact on pre-entry intentions to join the organisation in terms of being an Equal Opportunities Employer (EOE). Career commitment is an effective attachment to a chosen career or defined line of work (Lee et al 2000), which is expressed in an ability to cope with setbacks and obstacles in the pursuit of career goals. Equal Opportunity Policies (EOP) serve as an indication to potential recruits that an organisation is committed to diversity (Parker, Baltes and Christiansen 1997). If considered in light of Goffman's (1986) approach to the framing of experience, it may be suggested that an EOE policy may help to expand the frame in which individuals generally see an organisation.

In the context of An Garda Síochána it may be the case that it has traditionally been seen as an organisation which is not open to the recruitment of LGB individuals and such individuals may have decided not to apply to this organisation as a result. However, a policy which actively targets members of this group to encourage them to join may help to alter that perception so that individuals will not necessarily associate An Garda Síochána with a staunch heteronormativity as a result of such efforts. Ratz et al (2002) found that EOE

policies increased the attractiveness of an organisation to female applicants. Carless (2005) found that EOE policies and perceptions of person organisation fit and person job fit were positively related to pre-entry career commitment and intentions to remain in the organisation. The higher the person-organisation and person-job fit, when found in conjunction with the presence of EOE policies, the higher the scores for career commitment and intention to remain in the profession, again a significant point for this study.

Where these policies are opposed it may be the case that individuals within such organisations believe that women or other minority groups are ill-suited to the tasks required by the job (Heilman 1983). This may explain the differential treatment of female Gardaí with respect to the assignment of cases, where they are seen to be more suited to 'caring' situations rather than other tasks as reported in Brown's (2000) and O'Hara's (2011) study of women officers. Therefore, while EOE policies may encourage such individuals to apply to organisations they may still be subject to practices which do not match the EOE policies once inside the organisation. Such issues would have to be addressed at the deep level of the culture of the organisation.

Representation of social groups in police forces and its impact on policing

The argument for diversity in An Garda Síochána hinges on the assumption that the closer the match between those individuals the force represents and the composition of the force the more effective they will be in tackling crime. There is also less potential for conflict between the organisation and the groups that they serve (Lynes 1996). However, Lynes (1996) maintains that the continued existence of tensions between police forces and the communities they police would suggest that the source of tension cannot simply be put down to representation. While it is necessary to recruit from across communities to end discriminatory practices, the notion that this will automatically lead to more effective policing may be naive. Mastrofski (1988) suggests that police practices must take account of the community they are policing and what they expect from a police force, suggesting that police must take account of the frame through which a particular community evaluates policing behaviour (Goffman 1986).

Lynes (1996) maintains that police cannot claim to be 'of' the community if it requires a concerted effort to remain abreast of the expectations of that community. Their frames of reference differ and so it is important to acknowledge that police and citizen roles are not

interchangeable. As such, Leighton (1991) suggests that community policing claims that crime and disorder are the joint property of the community as 'client' and the police force as service provider. However, if there is to be equal partnership in the management of crime and disorder it may be necessary for communities to be equal partners in the establishment of the social order.

LGB Gardaí

An unpublished report in the experiences of LGB Gardaí (Franey and O'Loinsigh 2009) has suggested that the majority of such Gardaí feel unsupported within the organisation and would have reservations about coming out. This research touched on the self-reported experiences of a number of Gardaí, helping to shine a light on what it is like to be an LGB identified member of An Garda Síochána. While a number of policies have recently been initiated that may help to alleviate the burden placed on LGB members of the Gardaí, it is important that the issues involved in being an LGB member of the Gardaí be examined from the ground up as well as in terms of policy as issued from above. It may be the case that, while there is favourable policy in place, how this policy impacts upon individuals at a local level may differ from initial expectations. The stories produced by LGB Gardaí about the nature of their experiences are an invaluable resource in the analysis of the operation of heterosexist and homophobic practices. There is evidence of sexist behaviour, of antagonism to certain groups in society, as well as of a machismo culture encountered by students in a quantitative study (Nally 2009) of organisational culture in An Garda Síochána. Such practices have been associated with negative mental health outcomes by a number of researchers, including D'Augelli and Grossman (2001) and Waldo (1999). Connell (1987) links policing to hegemonic masculinity, with Messerschmidt (1993) suggesting that this association is implicated in the sexualisation of women and homophobia.

Heterosexism has been defined as a system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual behaviour, identity, relationship or community (Herek, 1992). There is a body of literature which documents negative social attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (Herek 1994) where homophobia and heterosexism have been found to impact on the quality of service received by LGB individuals with respect to psychotherapy in Ireland, for example. In this context Meyer (1995) maintains that LGB people's position as a minority group within most social environments makes them vulnerable to minority stress resulting from exclusion, discrimination, violence and isolation from members of their

cultural group. Herek et al (1996) have found that experiencing anti-gay hate crimes was significantly related to increased symptoms of depression. This is not to suggest that gay individuals are subject to more psychological issues than others but that their membership of a minority group that is subject to stigma results in stress precisely because of the stigma rather than the membership of the group.

LGB individuals are often a minority group in working situations, with this resulting in direct and indirect discrimination by staff members who may assume that everyone is heterosexual. Heterosexism has been reported in everyday interaction in An Garda Síochána (Franey and O'Loinsigh 2009), one individual in the study reporting that:

> I heard a lot of derogatory remarks about gay men such as "queers", "faggots", "shirt lifters", and "Paedophiles" etc.... Listening to this made me feel uncomfortable and placed a lot of strain on my emotional state. (Franey and O'Loinsigh, 2009, p. 19)

The strain that this individual experiences (one of several in the study) may be understood according to the framework of minority stress (Meyer 1995) and highlights how individuals in such situations can experience adverse consequences as a result of their social environment. However, the study on the experiences of LGB Gardaí does serve to convey how it is not simply the case that being a minority results in minority stress, as a number of individuals reported positive experiences despite their minority status.

One further incident mentioned in the study of the experiences of LGB Gardaí was of a gay member of the force who was subjected to a full day of anti-gay comments by a senior member of An Garda Síochána (Franey and O'Loinsigh 2009). Whether or not this heterosexism was intentional or unintentional is unclear; the officer concerned also intimated that the individual to whom he was speaking was homosexual; this was confirmed by the Garda in question, though it was unclear whether this confirmation was heard by the senior officer. The heterosexist comments caused discomfort for the Garda listening to them and so it may be understood as contributing to minority stress. It may be significant that this individual described this day as the worst at the particular stage of training being described. This Garda's assessment did not relate to any crime that was encountered but rather related to abuse and discomfort at the hands of a staff member. It may be argued that there is a culture of heterosexism within the organisation but with individuals willing to stand up in support of their LGB counterparts it may be that a critical stance can be taken to this culture so that a place can be negotiated for difference within it. This certainly seems to be the case in the following experience in the same study:

> When I was a phase II my sexuality was known in my station and it was never a problem. As a Garda my sexuality was also known and I have never experienced any difficulties. (Franey and O'Loinsigh, 2009 p. 24)

Consequently, it would appear as if the experience of minority stress is dependent upon whether or not individuals feel supported in their positions.

This view may be taken as being supportive of Perry's (2006) suggestion that the best way to manage an organisational culture of diversity is by giving it importance at the recruitment stage. To a certain extent this may be managed through the recruitment of a diverse workforce; however, it may also be helpful to ensure that all recruits are open to such diversity regardless of background. As Waldo (1999) suggests, few LGB individuals have a choice about who they work with and this leaves them open to minority stress. However, those in a position to exert control over the composition of the workforce may have a role to play in ensuring that LGB individuals are not subjected to unnecessary stress due to heterosexism and homophobia.

Even if it is the case that the approach to the elimination of heterosexism does not fully centre on the management of recruitment, Lewis (2009) suggests that being open to all questions regarding sexuality can help to dissipate heterosexism. She believes that not engaging in open and honest conversations may result in heterosexuals lacking understanding of LGB identities and a distancing from individuals with such identities as a result (Lewis 2009); such distancing may only serve to compound the problems that are already there. As well as distancing on the part of heterosexual officers, Lewis (2009) states that non-heterosexual officers helped to perpetuate heteronormative practices by refusing to be open about their private lives in situations where heterosexuals were revealing details of their own. Lewis (2009) also maintained that many heteronormative practices were not intentionally exclusionary but went unnoticed due to their familiarity, again a point of significance for this study. Highlighting these practices and their occurrence can lead to attempts on the part of heterosexual counterparts to address such issues. Importantly, heterosexual officers also made use of the vocabulary provided to them by the researcher to find non-offensive words to use in future conversations, again a significant issue for the current research. While Lewis (2009) attempted to focus on the positive aspects of the organisation in her study she did not suggest that there were no issues which needed attention, rather the non-heterosexuals in the organisation were happy that attempts were being made to address the issues.

Waldo's (1999) study suggested that heterosexism would be more prevalent in workplaces

with higher proportions of men, as they are suggested to exhibit more anti-gay attitudes. It may be that workplaces which place greater value on masculinity and hegemonic displays of masculinity, such as the police and the army, may be more hostile to practices that may be seen as a threat to these ideals. Connell (1992) suggests that hegemonic masculinity depends on the devaluation of all femininities as well as subordinated masculinities, including gay masculinities. If this is taken to be the case, it may go some way toward explaining the negative experiences reported by some Gardaí as evidenced, for instance, by court cases in relation to harassment. It may also serve to explain the harassment experienced by some women at the hands of male officers and the differential treatment of female officers in terms of task deployment. However, it is also important to focus on the positive responses reported by individuals and what they can teach us about how to create a culture of diversity including incidents where individuals who would like to provide support to their LGB colleagues are prevented from doing so as a result of inadequate training.

Waldo (1999) also considers that LGB individuals who believe that their organisation is more tolerant of heterosexism are more likely to experience heterosexism, whereas those who believe that their organisation is less tolerant of heterosexism are less likely to experience it; management who make it clear that heterosexism is not tolerated may help to reduce its occurrence. Waldo (1999) also found that gender mediated the direct heterosexism experienced by an individual but not indirect heterosexism and postulated that indirect heterosexism was more ubiquitous and, therefore less dependent on gender. Waldo (1999) also found that the presence of policies did not serve as protection against heterosexism and claimed that this would suggest that a more 'proactive' response may be required. Certainly, in An Garda Síochána, despite the presence of policies that aim to protect the female members of the force *(Human Rights Audit* 2004), a situation appears to exist in which it is understood that complaints are frowned upon and are not made (Brown 2000), as the complainant would appear as a troublesome individual. Certainly, studies of women officers in An Garda Síochána (Brown 2000; O'Hara 2011) do present findings where promotion is identified as a problem area. As such, the approach adopted in Waldo's (1999) study in which the identification of factors is attempted may obscure the complexity of the relationship by eliminating the context that Triandis (1995) advocates.

Waldo's (1999) findings also indicated that the experience of heterosexism was related to higher levels of psychological distress, decreased job satisfaction and stronger intentions to leave jobs and higher absenteeism. LGB individuals working in a majority context experience

stress when their minority status is emphasised and stigmatised. Waldo (1999) suggests that LGB individuals try to choose to work for an organisation that is not tolerant of heterosexism and postulates that an over-representation of men in an organisation may lead to an increased likelihood of the experience of direct heterosexism.

Diversity as a business model

Openness to diversity in the workplace has been claimed to be of importance in making effective use of the human capital available to an organisation according to a report published by GLEN (2010). The report proposes that positive diversity policies help to reduce the number of sick absences as people will not be avoiding heterosexist work environments; it also maintains that individuals who feel free to be open about their sexuality in the workplace perform better than those who do not. However it is reported by Waldo (1999) that those who are more open about their sexuality experience more direct heterosexism than closeted peers. The extent to which this is the case, however, may depend on the policies adopted by the organisation. Potentially, those organisations whose policies are more LGB friendly have a less heterosexist environment than organisations in which the opposite is the case. In Ireland, workplace equality was found to be the most important issue facing LGB people (Denyer et al 2009) which is of concern to this study of LGB members of An Garda Síochána. Denyer et al (2009) consider that enacting LGB friendly employment policies opens up an organisation to a wider market, leads to greater employee performance and retention, as well as ensuring that companies are not perceived as having negative views of LGB individuals, which may lead to customer (and profit) loss. The cost of training replacements for individuals who leave due to discrimination highlights how the LGB market may be a lucrative one for companies to tap, by suggesting that the annual income of LGB people in Ireland is €8.75 billion (GLEN 2010). By framing the issue in terms of cost and benefit GLEN hopes to encourage organisations to adopt policies of their own volition, rather than as a result of an obligation to comply with the law.

Cooper (2006), in her article on local government and local lesbian and gay politics, suggests that:

> treating non-hegemonic sexualities as commodifiable provided a major way of incorporating lesbians and gay men, positively, within local government's new agendas (Cooper, 2006 p.930).

and of legitimating this incorporation. Cooper (2006) suggests that advocacy groups make

use of whatever discourses are currently popular to argue for equal opportunities for LGB individuals. This current focus on LGB individuals as a resource, while it may be effective, focuses only on the utility of this group, rather than their right to equal treatment as human beings. The focus is on LGB friendly policies making good business sense. Therefore, such a business-oriented approach for the inclusion of the LGB community makes use of a social framework (Goffman 1986) where the inclusion of LGB individuals or communities is the result of a guided doing which suggests that enacting inclusive policies demonstrates business acumen. By contrast, the justification for exclusionary practices with respect to women in An Garda Síochána also draws on natural frameworks which imply that women do not have the physical bulk to assert themselves in threatening situations.

Cornick (GLEN 2010) provides an interesting example of the terms in which LGB inclusion is now justified when he suggests that:

> the diversity journey is about leveraging all differences and creating the environment to maximise talent. (GLEN 2010 p.17)

The argument presented in this statement may be viewed according to Goffman's (1986) proposal that we:

> feel that intelligent agents have the capacity to gear into the on-going natural world and exploit its determinacy. (Goffman, 1986 p.23)

Business can create an environment where talent can be maximised, so that as much talent may be accumulated as possible. One way in which this can be achieved is through the welcoming of diverse perspectives, with LGB individuals embodying diversity in this case. While the goal may be to establish an environment in which equal opportunities may be achieved, this argument, as well as encouraging the recruitment of LGB individuals, also gives implicit support to an economic system that considers continuous growth can be achieved through opening oneself to diversity. Diversity, therefore, is secondary to financial acquisition. Presumably if it was found to be the case that companies that are openly supportive of diversity realise no positive outcomes result from it they would see no reason to continue with such policies, or at least to go beyond legal compliance.

Being 'out' at work means that an LGB employee does not have to disguise his or her sexual orientation (GLEN 2010). However, this does not make such individuals immune from heterosexist or homophobic comments or practices. As related by a number of individuals in the study of the experiences of LGB Gardaí (Human Resource Management, 2009), sexuality

was often used as an explanation for particular occurrences, such as the giving of wrong directions. This incident resulted in one Garda framing the issue in terms suggesting that the mistake was a natural consequence of his sexual orientation:

> If he wasn't sucking so much cock then maybe he would have known where it was (p.18).

The gay man in this scenario is presented as being over-sexed and consequently incompetent. He is presented as being driven solely by his sexual interests and is unable to perform his job effectively as a result. The way in which the Garda in this instance organised behaviour according to a natural framework, as in Goffman's (1986) theory of frame analysis, allowed the Garda to subordinate that individual and this practice of subordinating one group by referring to their inability to exert control over themselves has been made use of in a number of historical situations. Consequently, it is unlikely that, simply because a particular law or organisational policy has been enacted homophobic practices will disappear. Just because something is de jure illegal or forbidden does not mean that it will de facto be the case. For example, it may be necessary to introduce training to help dilute predominant heterosexist beliefs and practices and possibly to help alter the framework through which LGB individuals are viewed so that their actions are not seen simplistically as an extension of their sexuality.

If diversity is politicised in a way that empowers those who were traditionally excluded, it may challenge the ways in which existing power regimes perpetuate this exclusion. This is similar to the approach by Fleras (2010) to multiculturalism in Canada; multiculturalism can proceed in ways that challenge existing power relations rather than reproduce them if it is exploited as a critical discourse. It may be argued that the same could be said of Garda culture. While policies may be produced that promote the inclusion of LGBT individuals, it may be the case that the currently existing power relations, reproduced as institutional habitus (Bourdieu 1989) serve only to continue to disempower individuals. Thus, it may be that the power relations that exist at the core of the organisation need to be challenged if inclusion is to be successful. Perry (2010) maintains that training current staff is not sufficiently effective in its attempts to alter power relations in the Canadian police force; she suggests that efforts must be made to recruit appropriate staff from the outset and highlights recruiting individuals from social science backgrounds as an example.

Experiences of other minority police groupings: Women

In an overview of the studies into the experiences of female police officers, Brown (2000)

indicates a universal resistance to women's entry into policing including the Republic of Ireland. It may be argued that in Ireland there was a certain degree of ambivalence to the idea of women's entry into the force. Eoin O'Duffy considered that female members of the force would be useful for more sensitive matters, whereas Stephen Roche, secretary of the Department of Justice, expressed scepticism as to the utility of female officers (Ferriter 2009). In Britain Whitaker (1979) reports that police staff associations disputed the application of the sex discrimination act to the police force, arguing that it was an unsuitable profession for women. Officers were reticent to deploy female police to situations that were potentially violent, presumably under the impression that such women would not be as physically capable as men (Brown 2000). With respect to the Gardaí, Crowe (1997) reported that in 1977 that An Garda Síochána was deemed to be an exclusively male preserve. Eoin O'Duffy's suggestion that female officers be selectively deployed appeared to be the approach adopted by a number of forces, with female police in the RUC performing all duties except those of a security nature (Cameron 1992).

The human rights audit of An Garda Síochána reported the claim by a number of women that it was relatively common for them to be cajoled into doing administrative work (HRA 2004), with this tallying to a certain extent with Brewer's (1991) claim that women were viewed as making good administrators due to an 'instinct for tidiness'. It would appear that the behaviour of women was still being organised according to a social frame which designated them as housewives with their responsibility being to take care of the domestic duties of the police force (Goffman 1986). This notion can also be carried forward to analyse their deployment in more sensitive cases, involving women and children, forcing them into the role of care-giver (O'Hara 2011). In a similar way to the Sensei, (Goffman 1986), who was unable to deal effectively with a woman's body in a context other than that which is sexual, those who were responsible for deploying female police officers were unable to do so in a way which deviated from the notion of women as care-givers. Bennett and Wilkie (1981) found that in Scotland doubts existed about the abilities of female police officers in all situations in which they were deployed, leading to an atmosphere of protectionism. The HMIC (1995) found that there was a limited presence of women in traffic, training and CID work with an over-representation in child abuse work. Walklate (1996) claimed that specialist domestic violence units in England and Wales resembled the work carried out in the old Policewomen's departments prior to integration. Female Gardaí believe that there is an unofficial quota in operation with respect to the promotion of female officers (Garda Review

2000; Brown 2000; O'Hara 2011).

Female RUC officers felt particularly exposed to sexual harassment (Brewer 1991) and Brown (2000) found that women in the Garda Síochána were least likely to report sexual harassment. If this is placed alongside the claims of some women in the human rights audit (2004), it is likely that these incidents are simply not reported for fear of being labelled as troublesome, rather than being non-existent. Significantly, the Gardaí are far behind the police forces in England, Scotland and Wales in terms of the recruitment and integration of women (Brown 2000) and the Gardaí were the furthest behind the other forces she reviewed in terms of employment equality.

As mentioned, it appears as if female officers are still viewed through the frame of the housewife, mother and caregiver. This is a notion that is explored by Rabe-Hemp (2008) in her article examining the ethics of care and how it relates to female police officers. Her analysis found that women were no more likely than men to use supporting behaviours in their encounters with citizens, and in some situations men were found to display more of these behaviours. It was found that women were less likely to use extreme controlling behaviours in arrest situations but Rabe-Hemp (2008) felt that there was no evidence to suggest that this had negative consequences. In fact, in a previous study, Schuck and Rabe-Hemp (2005) found that the exertion of too much force actually resulted in greater incidence of injury for both citizens and police officers. However, Rabe-Hemp qualifies the suggestion that women characteristically make use of less force in arrest situations, claiming that the differential assignment of female officers may help to account for this. Their deployment as community police officers, for instance, may explain their decreased use of force.

Bullying in the workplace

Wilson (1991) suggests that harassment may be seen as a severe form of social stress at work that can sometimes manifest as symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Bullying cannot simply be identified by the form it takes in terms of the acts that are engaged in; rather, it is constituted by the frequency of acts, situational factors such as power differences and the victim's attributions about the offender's intentions (Einarsen et al 1994). The power differential between offender and victim is highlighted by a number of researchers (Einarsen 1998; Einarsen and Skogstad 1996) and eighty four per cent of victims in one study reported being bullied by a superior.

Leymann (1990) points out that the victim may often be seen to be the problem and third parties may view the treatment of a victim as fair treatment of a neurotic individual. Ashforth (1994) has suggested that in some organisations harassment is institutionalised as part of the leadership and managerial practice. Finally, Brodsky (1976) maintains that for harassment to occur, the elements must exist within a culture that permits or even rewards such behaviour. The organisational tolerance of bullying is communicated by those sanctions, or lack thereof, enacted towards people violating informal norms and values, a point of relevance for this study.

Concluding Remarks

This review of the literature relating to the organisational culture of policing has highlighted research issues of concern to this study of LGB members of An Garda Síochána. As such, this review leads naturally into the following four chapters of data analysis. These four chapters discuss, firstly in chapter 4 the discovery of the self as an LGB person; chapter 5 details findings in relation to organisational culture in An Garda Síochána; chapter 6 concerns organisational culture and LGB people working in An Garda Síochána; chapter 7 details the everyday experience of diversity in An Garda Síochána.

Chapter 4: A Bridge to be Crossed

Coming to terms with the self

> Their story, yours, mine - it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them (Coles 1989 p.30)

This chapter paints a picture of the lives of lesbian women, gay men and bisexual women or men (LGB) before they began working in An Garda Síochána. Prior to becoming working members of a society, in this case An Garda Síochána, LGB people are socialised into the culture of their society (Hilliard 1992). Within an Irish context the Catholic Church had gained power and authority in society since the foundation of the State (Smyth 1995), up until the watershed moment with the announcement that a Bishop had fathered a child in 1989. Since then the hold of the Catholic Church began to diminish as one crises after another hit the Church. However, prior to this, in the intervening years of the Irish Free State there was a willingness to enshrine the morality of the Catholic Church into the legislature, which led to the subservient status of both women and men (Inglis 1998). It also led to the creation of an identity for women and men based on Catholic ideology and social teachings. One of the prime aspects of Catholic social teaching was that of sexual morality (Ryan 2012), particularly heterosexual morality, thus negating any other form of sexual expression. Milotte (1997), Nic Ghiolla Phádraig (1995) and others have written about the consequences of non-normative heterosexual behaviour in Irish society whereby they clearly illustrate the mechanisms utilised to steer women and men on the path of normative heterosexuality. Through this, homosexuality was couched in silence and secrecy as no other sexuality was perceived to exist within the realm of Catholic social teaching (Duffy 2011). However, it was hoped the deregulation of homosexuality in Ireland in 1993, would lead to a destigmatised status in all areas of life. While the legislation has changed, attitudes are much harder to alter. Deregulation of homosexuality, related to gay men only, as lesbianism was given no recognition in the regulation, suggesting there is a difference of experience between lesbian women and gay men. Rose (1994) enthusiastically suggested that deregulation of homosexuality opened the possibility for lesbian and gay people to construct an Irish identity that was inclusive of their sexual orientation. It is within these shadows that the emerging Irish lesbian women, gay men, bisexual women and bisexual men surfaced.

This chapter will analyse key themes from the stories that surfaced from interviews with LGB people working in An Garda Síochána. The themes that arose are 'becoming aware of one's

sexual orientation', ''coming out' to family and friends' and 'choosing to work in An Garda Síochána' as, (a) a reserve member or, (b) a Garda. For the purposes of this research there will be no distinction made between the two. The process of 'coming out' as a lesbian woman, gay man and bisexual woman or man is the point of knowing who they are (Duffy 2010), with no such comparable practice for heterosexuals in society (Bradford, Ryan and Rothblum 1997). For most lesbian women, gay men or bisexual women or a man, 'coming out' is a life-long process, facilitating the need for self-affirmation, validation and acceptance by others (Higgins et al 2011). It involves making decisions on whether to disclose or not to disclose, based upon the lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man's comfortableness with the self, situations, and in some cases, upon the past experience(s) of disclosure(s) (Duffy 2011). Research has shown that 'coming out' in a work environment is important, resulting in the visibility of the lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man (Enszer 1996). It can equally negate the possibility of being manipulated, thus rendering the individual vulnerable, and 'coming out' also results in the building of trust relationships, in the workplace (Duffy 2010). All these issues emerge in the interviews as they are linked to 'coming out'.

This chapter is divided into four sections: the first deals with being a lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man in Irish society; the second with becoming aware of one's sexuality; the third reviews the experiences of the lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man 'coming out' to family and friends; and finally, the fourth reviews the choice to become a member of An Garda Síochána.

Being a lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man in Irish society

Lesbian women, gay men or bisexual women or men confront the reality of being LGB every day in Irish society. They exist within a predominately heterosexual society whereby the institutions reflect heterosexual norms (Ryan 2012), such as family (Hug 1999), education (Laytte 2006), religion (Kenny 1997) and health care services (Duffy 2011) all of which reinforce heterosexual society, placing LGB people on the margins of that society. Friendship in the workplace, therefore, becomes problematic as at some stage it must demand disclosure thus creating not only true friendship but also strong working relationships particularly for personnel at the coalface. Police officers rely on each other to 'mind their backs' to a greater extent in the workplace than for example we the authors as academics who do not face life-threatening situations. In addition, legal recognition of same-sex

relationships only became a reality in 2011, thus offering an alternative avenue for constructing an Irish LGB identity. However, it must be stated that while Civil Partnership offers legal recognition of same-sex couples, it does not confer the same status as heterosexual marriage within a legal framework (Fagan 2011) and by extension society.

In their day-to-day living, lesbian women, gay men or bisexual women or men in Ireland know how to act, react and behave to exist within society, having developed what Draucker (1999 p.361) calls 'everyday skilful coping'. These well-tested understandings and ways of being (Claassen, 2005), are normal ways of being, that enable them to negotiate the culture they exist in. This is evident in the stories that LGB people tell of working in An Garda Síochána from the perspective of joy in that one can be oneself and pain, which results in stress, particularly when the self has to be hidden out of fear of disclosure.

Becoming awareness of one's sexual orientation

The majority of the interviewees indicated that they became aware of their sexual orientation or had feelings that they were different to other students when they were between the ages of 12-14 years. It is in this period that they are in second level education, which in Ireland takes place in a multitude of environments, with traditional single-sex schools changing in the 1960s and 1970s with the development of coeducational settings (Tovey and Share 2003). Through education, normative heterosexuality is encouraged, and issues pertaining to lesbians, gays or bisexuals are generally excluded from the curriculum. This situation reflects the secrecy/silence of alternative sexualities to that of marital heterosexuality. It would appear that those who embrace difference and diversity are at best tolerated, if hidden from view (Lodge and Lynch 2003), and at worst discriminated against (McSharry 2009), even to the point of being physically attacked (Samara 2004). However, Lodge and Lynch's (2003) work shows that the system of segregated education based upon issues such as religion, gender and membership of an ethnic community, has led to inexperience on the part of students in dealing with diversity. Equally, the silence around sexual orientation within the educational system, has led to a vocabulary deficit in dealing with non-normative sexuality. This situation may have led Rylie to suggest that his early adolescence was a confusing period for him:

> Just to clarify there was a rather confusing period between 13 years and 14, because I am not in fact gay, I am bisexual. That was an odd period. There was, I think, sort of, we, at the time when I was 12 or 13 we were living in X. And as a result of a variety of things we moved Y... It was around that time that I became aware it was a

possibility and the arrival of the internet. Because it was a relatively easy way of acquiring information, lead to that realisation. So I'd say between the ages of 13 and 14 [*Rylie*]

While Rylie speaks of discovering he was bisexual, the place that enabled him to discover the reality of his true sexual orientation was that of the internet and not the educational establishment he attended. This would be in keeping with earlier studies which suggest that the educational system had a deficit in communicating difference.

Single-sex boys' schools were more willing to deal with gay issues, single-sex girls' schools were less inclined to raise the subject of lesbianism (Norman, Galvin and McNamara 2006). However, while there may have been silence around the subject of lesbianism it did not deter Casidhe from having those feelings. For her it was simply a matter of:

I fancied everyone around me I suppose. I was in an all-girls school. [*Casidhe*]

Or, as another woman put it:

I realised I was gay very young, about 12 to 13. I knew I was attracted to females. [*Dealla*]

In the case of males discovering their gayness, it was also around a similar age as this example illustrates:

I knew from an early age that I was different and saw things differently. . . I suppose it was mid-teens, 15-16, that I started realising that this difference was that I was attracted to other boys or men and had no real attraction to women. [*Baird*]

While schools are reticent about implementing the RSE programmes around issues pertaining to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (Norman, Galvin and McNamara 2006), the respondents in this study reported the age they experienced becoming aware of their sexual orientation is reflective of earlier research (Gleeson 2009; Mayock et al 2008; GLEN and Nexus 1995). Equally, it would suggest that silence around the subject does not curb the feelings of young people. It also suggests that speaking about these issues does not create homosexuals. But what it does lead to is confusion and isolation of LGB young people who turn to alternative sources for information such as the internet as Rylie did. Abram's reaction to the initial realisation of his sexual orientation was:

Starting secondary school at 13 and 14 I kind of started thinking to myself that things are not right here. What's going on? And even to make it worse I went to an all-boys school as well. It was at that age that I said yes there is definitely something here but for myself and from the background from home and stuff like that it was just pushed

aside. And you just say to yourself no don't be stupid, it is wrong won't be having it. For a long time it was pushed back. But again maybe around 13-14 mark I first noticed it. [*Abram*]

Therefore, it would suggest that even though decriminalisation had happened there are still restrictions on the availability of knowledge on the subject of LGB. Controlling knowledge around issues of sexuality in schools does not stop students from feeling different, leading to some to push it aside as it did not fit with their knowledge and experience of relationships. However, in some cases when seeking knowledge, the internet today is one source that young people are skilled in manipulating to facilitate their needs.

The experiences of the lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man of 'coming out' to family and friends

The progression in acknowledging who you are, called 'coming out', in particular 'coming out' to the self, is the initial aspect of the process. From the discussion above, it is clear the majority of respondents in this study experience this in early adolescence. However, 'coming out' is a precarious affair whereby lesbian women, gay men or bisexual women or men choose when, where and to whom they relate their sexuality. This is a process of owning their sexuality. It involves making decisions on whether to disclose or not to disclose, based upon whether it is safe to do so or not, resulting in the process being fraught with the unexpected, from social acceptability to rejection. In some instances lesbian women, gay men or bisexual women or men's family members have been unwelcomed by family and friendship groups. 'Coming out' is not a singular activity, but requires indicating one's sexuality time and again (Duffy 2011).

'Coming out' is not a process that has a neat beginning and end, but one that continues throughout the life cycle. It may begin as early as 13 years (Clunis et al 2005) of age, or as late as the thirties or forties depending on the availability of knowledge, that is, if sexual orientation is spoken about, or literature is available within a community and society (Meem, Gibson and Alexander 2010). There are other personal and social factors that influence the 'coming out' process such as the internalisation of homophobia (Duffy 2011) and coming to terms with the social stigma of being a lesbian woman, gay man or bisexual woman or man (Layte et al. 2006). In the case of An Garda Síochána it would appear to be a heterosexual force even though it did have a dedicated LGBT officer which has now been subsumed by the role of the Equality Officer. This would suggest that An Garda Síochána is an open profession for people of different sexual orientations.

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LGB people experience 'coming out' on numerous occasions with family and friends. This enables them to know who they are, and by informing others it reinforces the self:

> I came out when I was 17. My mom and dad were brilliant, my brother and sister said they always knew. It was just one of those things. There was a power cut in the house, my mom was lighting candles and made reference to weddings and candles and asked would I like lots of candles at my wedding...I said I didn't think I would be getting married and she said "awe well, women can marry women nowadays"....that was it! [*Dealla*]

'Coming out' is not an easy matter because it involves informing one's parents that you neither fit into society or their way of being:

> The hardest thing I have ever had to do in my life was tell my parents. They were sitting down in the front room of the house on a Sunday night, I was going to bed and I just got the courage from somewhere to tell them. My parents are very supportive but their response probably summed up their knowledge or experience of homosexuality. My dad said "that's not an easy choice of lifestyle" to which I replied it wasn't a choice, and my mum said "you won't get into the Gards" and I said "don't be stupid of course I will". I had at this stage of my life already decided that all I wanted to do was be a Garda. [*Esras*]

While Esras found that his parents had concerns about the kind of life that he had 'chosen' and they voiced concerns about the possibility of his chosen career path being blocked to him. Through voicing their concerns about his career choice, Esras' parents illustrate an understanding that State organisations such as An Garda Síochána may require personnel who are heterosexual and a mistaken understanding that An Garda Síochána would require compliance with this.

On the other hand, Gweneth summed it up as:

> Parents took it badly, family fine and friends partly guessed anyway. [*Gweneth*]

She goes on to explain that it has taken a long time for her parents to accept who she is:

> It has taken 20 years but things are fine now. [*Gweneth*]

Twenty years is a long time to negotiate parental disapproval. Stigma (Goffman 1963 p.28) has a relevant application here, as Gweneth must 'face unwilling acceptance of her[him]self by individuals who are prejudiced against persons of the kind s/[he] can be revealed to be'. Therefore, in some cases lesbian, gay, bisexual women or men must maintain the performance of being heterosexual, but, crucially, they must prevent a 'discovery' of their true sexual identity which would discredit them. This is particularly true in the workplace for

those members of An Garda Síochána who live in fear of being found out. This requires them to be alert in everyday conversations in the workplace with regard to self-disclosure.

Living in a heterosexual society with the expectations for women and men to be heterosexual was reinforced for some respondents.   Not only is there no reality that there 'could be another way' of being, but there is also the simultaneous questioning of the nature of being a man. This normative socialisation was so overwhelming that it led to reinforcing normative heterosexuality:

> Strange, when I was growing up I kind of had thoughts, but I grew up in a strict religious house in the 70's and the 80's and you kind of just went with the flow. I was a bit of a rebel at times and that didn't help matters. But I never really explored it kind of thing, it was, how do I put it? Daydreaming thoughts, drifting off, come and go, not particular….and I discovered women, girls then women. I had a pretty good success rate if that doesn't sound too cocky. So basically it was buried away. I was always quick to fly off the handle verbally at times at home or with relationships. And maybe looking back burying something had a lot to do with that. I met my wife. Got married [*Merritt*]

For Merritt, workplace crises led to a reviewing of the self and acknowledging that for him there was another way of being:

> I felt very isolated so to speak …… A whole pile of things and I ended up having to take time off. And was flicking through Sky one night. There was a particular channel on devoted to men. And I know it sounds crazy, it kind of came to me then that I was hiding something. [*Merritt*]

Non-acknowledgement or silence surrounding other forms of sexual orientations can lead to the prolonged search of the self, particularly the sexual self. Merritt found himself married prior to discovering his sexual orientation. Had there been knowledge available to him in his youth he may not have chosen the heterosexual norm. However, sometimes the need to 'fit' one's society can be so overpowering that being different is not an option no matter how much 'the rebel' one is.

Making the choice to become a member of An Garda Síochána

Making the decision to join the workforce of An Garda Síochána for some was a natural progression from school. It was the thing to do:

> I was in Templemore a few months after doing the leaving cert. At the time the usual thing was you got the bank, go to college. I saw an ad for the Gards. There was no plan. It seemed to be the more because I wasn't confined to a building. The bigger decisions we make in life are on a whim really. [*FGIM*]

This suggests that some young people make choices about work based on what is available at a particular moment in time. If it interests them they will apply. On the other hand others took into account the security a permanent job gives to people and also the financial rewards associated accepting a certain status in life:

> The options I had was that it was going to be secure job. That was a huge consideration for me and that is the reality of life. And for a lot of people I'd say it is a secure job, you will never be rich but never be poor. [*FGIM*]

As another participants indicated it was all he wanted to do. There was no realm of possibilities in relation to his life path:

> I always wanted to be a Garda. I remember growing up playing cops and robbers. It is not nearly exciting as you think it is. You have one good day and 20 boring days. The Public Order is grand. You can be one day out and then a month in the station but I enjoy it though. [*FGIM*]

Another participant indicated:

> I joined the Gards to help people. I always wanted to. I don't know why the Gards, should have probably gone to the army. I grew up in a working class area. You grew up and there were families where you knew the kids didn't have a chance. But I just wanted always to help people and the community, feeling working with people like a theme thing that kind of attracted me. [*FGIW*]

While there may be no correlation between the dream and the reality, becoming a Garda still lived up to expectations. The most salient one was that of enjoying one's work.

The majority of respondents spoke in various ways of taking pride in work, of being useful, helpful, but most of all, of giving services to the public:

> In some ways it means everything. It is like at this moment in time I couldn't imagine not being a Garda and it was the right decision to do. The idealistic, of people looking to you for help and you being there to be able help and being in a position to help people. You can do that as a normal citizen anyway. But I suppose just having that extra bit of responsibility that people expect you to do what is right, as well as the permanent job and all that comes with it. There is a lot of pride in it as well. [*FGIM*]

This theme of pride is all encompassing; no matter what the day-to-day activities may throw an individual's way, it still reduces itself it to how one feels about the uniform, the organisation and the people working within it:

> I think there is a sense of pride in a lot of people. I find going to the job, and I am in it 13 years now, that a lot of people won't admit it but there is a pride in the uniform and in the job. I remember on the 75th anniversary of the Gards and I was in the college a short while and we did a march through the city and then it came into Dublin Castle. I

> pretty much made up my mind after that, the ceremony, the whole lot, there was a tremendous pride being involved in all of that. Now, I suppose as I have gone through a period of time in the organisation I see its pitfalls, advantages but every organisation has those. I still have that pride to be a member and I wouldn't be ashamed to say it to anyone. [*FGIM*]

This centres on group activity, on the ceremonial face of An Garda Síochána being part of an organisation with roots and history. As a member, participating in such events leads to a heightened sense of belonging, of knowing why one joined and the overpowering sense of being part of something that is greater than the self. An event like this reinforces the reasons for joining and captures the essences of being a Garda.

While a ceremonial event elicits pride and belonging, the day-today encounters can equally endorse the reasons for joining:

> Pride would be one and privilege would be another word I would use. I get to see people's lives, I get to see reality like they do but I get to see it almost from a different mountain top and a different angle. With that privilege comes responsibility to take certain courses of action. And still there is always a pride element of it. They'd ring the Gards for anything. They'd ring the Gards to get you to ring an ambulance. So the wonderful thing is we have a unique insight to everyone's life. First call could be a domestic violence incident with a member of the judiciary, and the next incident could be an overdosing teenage girl at home with a heroin needle, literally within minutes of each other. And you are invited into their lives because of the assistance you bring. That is a huge privilege. [*FGIM*]

This participant captures the trust the Irish public places on the people who work in An Garda Síochána and is a source of pride for this Garda. Then, knowing that no matter what, when all else fails the people within the force will assist:

> I agree with the lads. I am very proud to be a Garda and have always wanted to be one. I find it interesting when you go into people's houses you often see families and how they talk to each other, like as if you are not there. I'd be thinking 'jeez I'd never speak to my mother and father like that', a complete stranger. People not only see you as a stranger, they see the uniform and that is it. I think it is the best job and the worst job. As long as you have more good days than bad days it is a good job. I think we are all very lucky, to be a Garda. There are a lot of people that want to be a Garda and can't. I'm proud of it. [*FGIM*]

This participant articulates the place of An Garda Síochána in Irish society which has been cemented from the struggles of its foundations to the changing nature of its make-up today. They are invited unquestionably into the most intimate moments of people's lives.

The next chapter, therefore, examines the organisational culture of An Garda Síochána.

A proud organisational history of diversity

A striking result from the study is the pride taken in the history of An Garda Síochána; there is particular reference to the vision of its founders. This vision of being an unarmed force at a time of instability for a newly emerging state provides a unique history to An Garda Síochána, particularly in light of the instability that continued well into the 1930s. Additionally, An Garda Síochána was envisioned as a police force that drew its members from all strands of society, again an extraordinary innovation in relation to diversity at the time. There is a sense of tradition and what it means to be a serving police officer. Participants also alluded to the fact that being a police officer also brings behavioural responsibilities whether in or out of uniform, and as a reserve.

The sense of history, of service, of an *ethos* is expressed by a focus group participant:

> No, those men had it. Public service policing. It was unique in the world. People bring it into disrepute. We have all had incidents here where people, members of An Garda Síochána who should not be members of An Garda Síochána because they do not subscribe to the ethos of it and they let the organisation down because they are selfish. They are only in it for themselves and I think if at the beginning you are made aware of this is where it started, these men, an unarmed police force, members drawn from the community, by community you mean every member of the community. [*FG1M*]

Being a productive member of society and the role that An Garda Síochána plays in society is emphasised by Gweneth:

> What do I like about the job? I am good at it. I like the role that the Gards play in general in society. Like the good that we do, the respect that we get and I like being in a position that I can actually do something positive. [*Gweneth*]

Interview participants such as Esras are proud of their role and contribution to modern policing in a changed social landscape:

> I'm a Garda. I'm proud to be a member of the force for so many reasons. I'm also comfortable being gay, both as a human being and also as a member of the force. It wasn't too long ago that Gardaí were responsible for arresting gay men and women and bringing them to 'justice'. Today, as an openly gay man, I serve with the men and women of the force day by day, night by night, and I try to be the best I can be, both to myself and the uniform I wear, the badge I swore upon and the honour of the position I hold. [*Esras*]

This strong sense of loyalty, inclusivity and of '*personal self-honour*' [*Rylie*], however, contrasts with participants who genuinely felt that it was not possible to be a Garda and be gay before joining the force (see chapter 4). Consequently, some participants delayed joining the force or hid this aspect of the self on joining, after having lived their lives openly as gay.

There was also a very strong sense of being made to 'tick boxes' in relation to diversity and that such an exercise played no role in advancing Garda culture in relation to diversity in the modern Irish social context. Overall, participants considered these management exercises as neither meaningful nor supporting nor driving change in twenty-first century policing in a diverse police force. This relationship between a historical legacy and current organisational practices will be discussed in relation to diversity and equality in this chapter.

Training: learning to be a member of the group

A contributory factor to the handling of potential questions of diversity and equality is evidenced in aspects of Garda training. Participants report that it had been drilled into them in Templemore to keep their head down and emerge at the end of their training as an unidentifiable member of the rank and file:

> …'don't draw attention to yourself', that is what is drummed into you, that is what is said to you from day one in the college. There is how many thousand windows here and there is always someone looking out at you and don't draw attention to yourself. I don't know how many times it has been said. It is constant. Reiterated the whole time. Then you come out and now I find myself saying it to other people the whole time. [*Arlana*]

Arlana both experiences this aspect of training and also perpetuates it so that she reinforces a key aspect of both training and her daily work experience. She also reinforces normative ways of being with others. Though it is clearly an essential characteristic of being a Garda to be able to respond as one to everyday challenges, including the dangerously unexpected, such responses should not lead to the negating of the self. A group of Gardaí still retain particular aspects of their individuality regardless of training to be a cohesive unit. Therefore, a trainee has to learn to negotiate the self, both as a member of the group self and the self of the individual. This distinction may be lost in training, particularly in organisations that emphasise the group over the individual and yet individuals are responsible for each other as reflected by 97% of respondents in Nally's (2009) quantitative study of Garda organisational culture.

At the same time a Garda is also expected to 'sort out situations' both on a private and public platform. A focus group participant demonstrates how he engaged with a colleague who had earlier made negative remarks about his sexuality:

> next thing the panic button was hit and he called for assistance and …… I was first at scene. And he had his baton drawn and was about to go clattering so I drew my baton too. And literally stood at his back to give him support and keeping people back. And that was it; it was never spoken about again. He was never discourteous or anything because he then knew no matter who I was I literally had his back. [*FGIM*]

The Garda has dealt with the problem most competently by demonstrating solidarity with a colleague, has not drawn attention to himself negatively as a gay man, and also managed to improve relations with a colleague. Therefore, knowing a colleague's difference is not a weapon to force conformity, rather it is part and parcel of being human. Once this is accepted, then the colleague with a difference becomes a member of the group, in this case a Garda.

While this focus group participant, FGIM, was presented with a solution to his problem, not all LGB individuals are afforded such an opportunity. This may lead to keeping things 'under the radar' which is significant in the context of institutional habitus as such a course of action does not involve anyone else. Consequently, by not flagging an issue the status quo prevails and remains undisturbed as there is no sign of need for change. One example of keeping things 'under the radar', even when an offensive act has been carried out is stated by Casidhe:

> sure I could make an issue out of it but some fool would get in trouble and they'd have to go through the cameras to see who did it and they could be a nice guy but just wrote something stupid. [*Casidhe*]

Consequently, loyalty to the group, understanding of and tolerance of actions, no matter how foolish they may appear, does not negate the recognition of the perpetrator's humanity by the lesbian, gay or bisexual person.

Reinforced masculinity

One aspect of Garda organisational culture is an emphasis on the masculine. This is reflective of an organisation that was originally all male, and even if it wishes to embrace diversity, it needs to review and understand diverse masculinities, thus embracing equality. As Merritt says:

It seems to be a tone that is just there. It is a macho organisation even though we are in the minority in our station. Even the women would be………. It would be, I don't know, whether it is rural Ireland or what, but there just seems to be this sort of machismo tone about it. [*Merritt*]

Being a gay man is also viewed as being a sign of weakness; thus, this lack of understanding of masculinity in all its forms can lead to a perception that being a gay man equals being weak. This can be viewed as a weakness in An Garda Síochána's armour for the criminal fraternity to exploit, hence the following proposition: I am an out gay man, thus not exploitable, and by extension An Garda Síochána's armour cannot be breached. The dilemma occurs when being 'out' is not deemed to be possible because of fear for the self in the organisation (Nally 2009).

Institutional habitus: perpetuating the organisational culture

Institutional habitus incorporates the static self-perpetuating nature of organisational culture which is evidenced here by a focus group participant:

We kind of work in a job that the work practice has been handed down from generation to generation. We do things, and I think it is fair to say, that have been done from the very first day that the Gards were set up. Methods we use, the way we do paperwork, the way we converse with ranks in paper and all this kind of stuff. And I think it is fair to say that attitudes are handed down from generation to generation. [*FGIM*]

Research participants refer to the difficulty of changing any aspect of Garda culture unless there is clear action from senior members. One particular aspect of this is the tick box mentality alluded to where paper exercises do not create change. However, at times when change is organised, rank and file can also be resistant unless there is demonstrable leadership in relation to change. There is certainly comfort in not changing and this partly stems from a sense of belonging, of established knowing, of rootedness in history and tradition. This rootedness is evidenced in Nally's (2009) quantitative study where 65% of student Gardaí report experience of it in Phase 3 of their training.

This issue of change is a key aspect to this study due to the difference of experience in relation to being LGB from a spectrum that ranges from positive to negative. This range of difference can lead to unequal treatment, regardless of whether such treatment is unintentional, thoughtless or clearly discriminatory. A change in organisational culture through clear leadership from higher-ranking staff can have a clear effect in achieving full understanding of the Equality Act in relation to diversity. Such understanding may imply

change in certain commonly held assumptions or everyday actions, in other words, practices which have not changed since legislation was enacted and are no longer legitimate in their purpose.

Participants do discuss organisational change and state that it would be extremely slow, a view endorsed by a focus group participant:

> The wheels move unbelievably slow in our job no matter what change needs to be brought in. That is what I have found over the years. If you are looking for change in our job you are going to have to hang on for a while. Because they are totally resistant to change in the job, in the organisation. They'll break out in hives at the thought of change. [*FGIM*]

On the one hand, such resistance might be expected from an organisation which has to deal with the law for example where everything has to be 'done by the book'. On the other hand change demands new ways of approaching a matter and includes a shift in thinking and doing, including the self-correcting of habitual courses of action, which might be easier to avoid by adhering to the status quo.

Casidhe, for example, states that a certain type of language is used in her presence despite the fact that:

> everybody knows about me, and they'd still say faggot and stuff. And I say "don't say that word", and they'd be "why not" and I'd say "cause I am here. Would you call a black person the N word? If they were sitting beside you. I take it personally so don't use it". And in fairness to them …… they do stop but it can be embarrassing as well. [*Casidhe*]

Clearly, this is a small change, namely to consider others and the potential for offence but it is left to Casidhe to continuously point it out. Homophobic language has the potential to hurt and to lay the foundations of discriminatory acts. After all, Casidhe states that her colleagues still say 'faggot' even though she suggests they know she is lesbian. The suggestion is that her lesbianism is not clearly seen but if her skin colour was 'black' she would be visible and those around her would curtail their comments. As loyal colleagues, LGB members of An Garda Síochána should not be expected to take this role upon themselves; rather, all members of An Garda Síochána, from management to rank and file, should know the full implications of the use of certain terms in the context of diversity in modern policing, both within An Garda Síochána and with the communities that are policed. Diversity is always present even if it is not always visible.

Indeed, the visible presence of LGB Gardaí is commented on by Forbes:

I suppose the first problem that was there starkly up to very recently was invisibility. There weren't any queers. They didn't exist and all of a sudden you have visible people within the organisation. You have a certain number of role models within the organisation that have put their head above the parapet and shown leadership from the gay and lesbian community within. [*Forbes*]

However, it is clear that the style of management is a reactive rather than a proactive one as diversity, which is always present in a society or organisation, regardless of a self-view of homogeneity, has not had any meaningful importance attached to it. Consequently, after all exhortations to be 'invisible' and to 'keep the head down', it is up to individual members to raise this particular issue of LGB Gardaí as Forbes explains:

It wasn't management initiation. I suppose that is the disappointing thing, that all the developments have been from ground up developments, they haven't been management developments. The courage had to be shown by members on the ground. Gards, members of Garda rank had to stand up there and have their photograph taken in the Gay Community News or in the Garda Review to remove that invisibility to address these issues. Because Garda management didn't have the foresight or interest to make those moves themselves. [*Forbes*]

One particular issue is that sexuality in Irish society has been a taboo subject so that no appropriate language has developed in which to discuss this fundamental aspect of the human condition. Such a vacuum allows for the continuity of silence, for discrimination to flourish and remain unchallenged (particularly the position in Irish primary and secondary education so that this behaviour is reproduced in the workplace), for a paucity of imagination in relation to diversity and a reluctance to act.

An Garda Síochána have taken some steps to change this situation. However, differentials in the treatment of LGB members which have arisen in the course of this study mean that a further consolidated step has to be taken to remedy the situation and avoid any potential future legal embarrassment in relation to LGB issues. Institutional habitus is difficult to change but it is possible to change. Very often meaningful change can occur with a slight shift in emphasis; such a shift normalises what has previously been considered unmentionable or viewed as threatening because of ignorance of others and lack of knowledge. Such ignorance prevents full understanding of who exactly a lesbian woman, gay man, bisexual woman or bisexual man is. Additionally, anyone heterosexual sympathetic to diversity and who speaks up may be side-lined for having dared to disturb the status quo.

Gender

The role of gender is a key issue on this study and is a complex one relating both to a historical dimension and to current attitudes towards men and women in An Garda Síochána. Firstly, the historical dimension relates not only to the opening up of policing as a career for women in Ireland but also to the relatively few numbers of women until fairly recently, though there is still a huge disparity in numbers:

> The gender thing is very big still. It is only really in the 80's that women started joining in big numbers. God I've had so many Gards telling me Banners[14] are crap and I actually had a Garda rant at me a few weeks ago ………………….. and he was saying lots of people think like I do and I believe him. I think we are there to be hit on. The gender issue is still a very big issue in the Gards. So it hasn't balanced itself out yet. But the type of job it was it took a long time for a lot of girls to apply for it. [*Casidhe*]

This statement has to be understood in light of the trickle of women that entered the Gardaí from 1959 onwards and even in 2009 only 23% of An Garda Síochána were women (Clancy 2009).

Significant promotion for women also only appears to have taken off in the 2000s so that a long history of taking women into a male preserve does not mean immediate change throughout the organisation:

> It used to, they tried to even up the numbers, it used to be totally men up until about I suppose 8 years ago and a lot of women got promoted. Then they were taking on a lot more women too onto the job. In the Gards, if you got promoted and you were a woman they would say it was because they were evening up the numbers. They wouldn't give you credit unless you were an extremely good worker 'in fairness she deserved it.' But a lot of girls now in fairness didn't get much credit for getting promoted. But if I went for it I'd have as much chance as the rest of them. I do as much as the rest of them. They wouldn't begrudge me I must say. [*Blayne*]

A participant, Casidhe, considers that attitudes towards women have not changed significantly:

> It wouldn't have changed a huge amount. If a Banner Garda is considered good it is an anomaly. It is Banners are terrible, such and such is good, but Banners are terrible. But it is not the usual. [*Casidhe*]

Considering that women have been recruited into the Gardaí since 1959 there still appears to be a view that they are somehow not fully a part of the police force and are not fully equal to men. Research participants have encountered this view in the behaviour of their male

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[14] A reference to a female police officer being called a 'Ban Garda'. The term is no longer in use.

colleagues who still adhere to an all-male organisational culture which has not yet fully subscribed to equality legislation and its application in the workplace. In addition, facilities for women, for pregnant women, or women wishing to express milk, are not necessarily in place as Melvina says:

> technically there is no facilities. If you look at....... my understanding is that you are supposed to have a rest room, a female rest room for such incidents but there just isn't. I'd like anyone to try it where I am. There just isn't the facility, there isn't the space. That is in........ well now the newer, some of the newer stations would have female rest rooms. [*Melvina*]

However, it must be noted that a general lack of facilities affects both women and men.

Part of this perspective that policing is a male domain is because of a presumed strong differential in gender roles, a sense of being 'very old school' which, it is implied by participants, appears out of step with Irish society as a whole by some twenty years. Importantly, participants in this research also indicated that they are called on to perform 'female' roles specifically because of their gender, a matter which highlights their role as 'housewives' in that they make good administrators or are suitable for dealing with rape or other types of sensitive cases. Such an attitude side-lines women as it does not automatically see them as equals, regardless of policies and gender gains made in intervening years and is consistent with research findings highlighted in the literature review in chapter 3.

Gay research participants also encounter a culture where, on the basis of their sexual orientation, they are deemed competent to deal with a gay member of the public:

> If we had a drunken prisoner and there was ten men sitting around and he was crying to himself saying he was gay nine of them would step back in order for me to deal with it. Because none of them would know what to do. [*Hoyt*]

This begs the question: is the prisoner really gay or is he being astute, knowing that if he cries 'gay' he will be one step removed from normative heterosexual masculinity as he, the prisoner, perceives the Gardaí to be. On the other hand, training in Templemore is understood to be policing the community, whoever that community may be in its entirety.

Differences in experience between gay men and lesbian women

A differential in attitudes to men and women also colours attitudes to lesbian/gay women leading to differences in the experiences of LGB women and men. Firstly, there are very comfortable experiences in relationship to being a Garda and gay for both women and men.

However, there are clear differences for women and men with the women interviewed considering that it is probably easier to be gay in the Gardaí as a woman:

> The Gards are a funny set. I am not treated any differently. There are other gay fellas in the division. They are not treated any differently. They might be talked about behind their back but you are always going to get talked about. It is just one thing to talk about. But the Gards can be very fair to people they work with, but as an overall they forget and they are not talking about you. They are talking about The Gays. They don't consider me in a weird way gay in their minds. I don't know how it works. They have a whole different idea of what lesbians are. And even though they know that I am gay and know I have a girlfriend and I talk about her all the time, blah, blah. I don't think they really believe it, it is weird. [*Cashide*]

Cashide considers herself as belonging to the Gardaí and, therefore, is treated differently as a lesbian woman than a lesbian woman who does not belong to the work place. She has become the exception to the heterosexual rule. It would appear to suggest that 'if I know you, you are ok or indeed one of us'. It is the unknown that is treated differently. However Cashide draws a distinction between talk in front of the person and talk in the person's absence. She draws attention to this as there is a clear distinction between the appearance of acceptance to one's face and the reality of this when one is not present. This is justified by saying all members of the workforce are treated in the same manner. Conlaoch on the other hand gives a different point of view:

> There is a huge kind of macho culture. It is a lot like......... I am a very independent person and very strong minded. I'd have a confidence and a belief in myself that some of my colleagues hadn't got ……afraid because it is such a hierarchy organisation. I would be 'I don't particularly agree..' I'd have the confidence to say that. A lot of the others wouldn't. The point I'm making and I know it has been remarked if I met someone now that I worked with 10 years ago they'd say 'you were always your own man and always did things your own way'. I'd know where they were coming from, I would have been seen and have interests, I wouldn't be the run of the mill. But that gave me power and set me apart. With the result I kind of gained the 'well that is what he does' whereas all the others have to be part of the gang or one of the lads. I'm quite content if there is a group 'sorry I don't want to be part of your group'. [*Conlaoch*]

Being a man in An Garda Síochána demands a certain way of being. Conlaoch's use of the term 'macho'[15] carries with it a cultural connotation of manhood. To subvert this culture a person must be confident with a strong personal belief in the self. Having these tools enables

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[15] The term macho is defined as a exaggerated male pride and a display of what is thought to be maleness

him to rise above the cultural hierarchy of the organisation to become his own person and live out his own way of being. His independence has resulted in him being labelled different, not because of his sexual orientation *per se,* rather because of his ability to be independent minded and being able to follow through. Conlaoch perceives being set apart as powerful as it enables him to live his own life outside of the group. He implies that within An Garda Síochána there is 'group think', 'group action' and 'group behaviour' which enables people to 'fit' into the organisation giving them a sense of belonging.

While Conlaoch has created a way of being for himself in the Gardaí, where to a point he may almost be viewed as an eccentric, this is not the situation for all gay men. However, a participant in the male focus group suggested that the situation for gay men has the potential to improve with time:

> All this is still in its infancy, we have only decriminalised since 1993. Take for instance something I have always had in the back of my mind, the United Nations had an actual prediction of where women would be and they said yes women will be equal to men in 500 years' time. Nuala O'Faolain, who was one of the most articulate feminists in the country, and she wrote an article saying this was the best news she's heard. And she said there will come a time when we will be equal. So in the same way, could things change? My god, of course they could. Could X walk in and they not ask him the orientation of your wife or partner. That it is a non-issue. That all these things are non-issues: that you can go to the Christmas party with whoever you want to go. It is very simple everyday little things. In the cold light of day we are just starting. There is this awareness being absorbed by osmosis, but as for total realisation, that is yet to come. [*FGIM*]

There is a realisation that it is in the everyday minutia of things that equality and diversity exists. It is not the big issues but the small. This segment suggests that Cashide may be viewing the situation of men through rose-tinted glasses. It could also be suggested that when a person is in the midst of a misogynistic discriminatory situation, the other side always appears to be faring better. The participant in this focus group clearly indicates that there is a long way to go for parity of esteem between gay men and heterosexual men and by extension lesbian women and heterosexual women. However, the light on the horizon is that it has begun, while on an abstract level the integration of diversity will come in time.

The women's focus group elicited responses that were very different from Cashide. They considered it more difficult for gay men:

> I would think so definitely. More difficult for men. [*FGIW*]

> I'd say absolutely. [*FGIW*]

While they did consider it difficult for gay men they perceived the homophobia comments, actions and beliefs within An Garda Síochána as being more directed towards men:

> I'd say they are more homophobic for men. [*FGIW*]

However they would appear to fit in with Conlaoch's observations about the macho culture in the organisation of An Garda Síochána which are echoed by other participants:

> the organisation, it is very macho. And the men see a lesbian and they think 'well I can sort you out all you need is the right man'[*FGIW*]

> And they get turned on I think about two lesbians. [*FGIW*]

For the participants in the women's focus group homophobia is considered to be an issue mainly for gay men; however, they do consider that the stereotypical perception of lesbianism as a precursor for heterosexual male pleasure is always present. Coupled with this is the notion that when a woman found the 'right' man she would see the error of her ways and return to the fold of heterosexuality. It is this knowing that beneath the surface bubbles views of lesbian women that are reflective of a heterosexist environment. This is in complete contrast to Cashide's experience.

While the female focus group participants relate homophobia to gay men their accounts of being lesbian women and knowledge of what lurks beneath the surface suggests that homophobia is also an issue for women. However, they try to make sense of the conundrum by the suggestion that heterosexual men may find gay men a threat:

> they look at the sexual side of it [lesbian women]. Whereas a guy they feel a little bit threatened and it is a lot more difficult for the guys. I genuinely think it is a huge difference for the guys [*FGIW*]

This is the ultimate difference between gay men and lesbian women's experience in this study. For lesbian women it is the sexual but for gay men it is the threat they pose to masculinity, and, more importantly, the macho culture of the Gardaí. This underlying threat is reflected in homophobic actions whether through speech or action.

Rural and urban divide

Though a rural/urban divide clearly exists and is referred to by participants, the experiences across this divide are mixed. Some participants work in rural areas and have had no problems in relation to their sexual orientation or to partners. However, in general there is a

perception that being LGB in a rural setting is difficult. One of the participants in the women's focus group provided a clear illustration of this

> I have a brother in X and if there is any story about any Garda in the country they'll all get it at the same time. Nothing is like the Gards for the communication system. [*FGIW*]

It would appear that the bush telegraph is alive and well amongst An Garda Síochána despite the lack of technological advancement within stations. While this participant clearly points to the negativity of communication systems within the Gardaí, Rylie points out that there is a clear distinction between behaviour in rural and urban areas:

> I would say the fact that I don't drink beer more than anything else but I mean put it this way, the people that would give me that abuse [*relating to his sexuality*] are the people that I work with every day and let's just say the people in work that have a genuine problem with me would not use that [*his sexuality*], they would go after me for the failings that I would have in the job. Or when I have done something particularly stupid or idiotic. I've noticed that the sort of slagging of difference is something that only happens in the primary group in the unit. In that it wouldn't be something that would happen outside the circle of friendship. I have heard of that happening, I think one of the lads in my unit, one of the lads in his class got dogs abuse in a rural station for being queer. And I know the stuff that was being talked about was really outrageous. And he basically applied for a transfer, he stated his reasons and they said ok, no problem. I think he is in an urban area now. It is not something, as a means of blowing off steam in the group is something I have encountered, as a means of genuinely bullying someone is not something I have seen. I have heard of it but never seen it. [*Rylie*] [Italics are inserts by us as a clarification]

Awareness of the difficulties of being LGB are recounted amongst friends and stories are shared as a mechanism of both warning and understanding in how to cope with situations. Within this story Rylie suggests that if a station exhibits homophobic attitudes and actions to such an extent that it completely inhibits a person, then they can ask for a transfer.

However, the problem is that in seeking such a transfer they must be open about the reason for such a request. This request requires the LGB person to 'come out' at a difficult time which may lead to misinterpretation and may have consequences for the individual. The individual in this story transferred out but it would appear that the problem of homophobic bullying has not been addressed. Equally, while Rylie suggests that he himself was never subject to such bullying, he has experienced derogatory comments in the form of 'slagging'. Slagging, therefore, becomes the acceptable vehicle through which an LGB person can be degraded but yet there are no consequences for the perpetrator(s). There is an implication that within the Gardaí members form an 'in group' that is 'friendship circles' through which

an LGB person will accept behaviour and comments under the rubric of 'slagging'. Likewise, those on the outside, that is the 'out group' become unacceptable and consequently, slagging in relation to such 'outsiders' can be deemed to be homophobic bullying. Additionally, it is clear that those on the 'inside' only remain so by being able to take the slagging which is meted out to them.

Both Rylie and the female participant of the focus group have pointed out that communications within An Garda Síochána may be questionable at times. Hoyt points to the fear that exists for some:

> I know specifically a member who is in the country in a country town who god forbid anyone ever find out he is gay. The repercussions. He is terrified. And I have another guy who lives down the country in the X area but working in Y and Jesus I'd be afraid to think what would happen if it was found out. [*Hoyt*]

This segment illustrates the depth of concern for others within the LGB community in the Gardaí. They hold stories to themselves and hope that disclosures do not occur. While Hoyt does not develop what he thinks might happen, Blayne's story below illustrates a possible outcome. The decriminalisation of homosexuality may have led some gay man to consider it safe to approach others but as Blayne explains this is not necessarily the case in rural areas:

> But I suppose the job I do is a lot of murders and you find a lot of the victims can be gay, and it is 'oh, he's a gay, it's a gay crime'. Especially in the country. Oul fellas can have forced themselves on other guys and it is retaliation. They are not great stories. Never positive stories….. That really annoys me. So any of the gay guys that have been involved in murders, it is negative stuff which doesn't help. [*Blayne*]

However, an understanding of the Irish social context is required to understand this difference that Blayne highlights between the urban and the rural. Ireland has had a history of hiddenness and secrecy relating to sexual orientation and difference. Heterosexuality did not escape censorship as the Magdalena homes point to an inability to deal with non-normative heterosexuality, while on the other hand LGB individuals were either criminalised (prior to 1993) or pathologised (1990 removal of homosexuality as a mental illness by WHO) in Irish society. Older LGB people have had to live with this reality but also the knowing of the consequences of being LGB (Higgins et al 2011). In some instances older LGB people may not have had a relationship of any sort such as friendship(s) with another person like them. This can lead to social isolation and indeed as Mayock et al (2009) suggests mental health issues, or, as in the case discussed here, a terrifying need for human contact which is enacted through force and subsequently avenged through murder. However, it is present-day

members of society who have to live with the social consequences of the past in relation to the expression of sexuality.

From participant's stories it would appear that there is a divide between working in an urban or rural environment. However, they do point to a deep-seated homophobia within the Gardaí that can be explained on one level through the notion of 'slagging' (Nally 2009), or the easiness of providing an LGB person with a transfer. In the organisation such actions avoid dealing with the issues which necessitated the transfer.

Everyday talk

Everyday interaction through talk in the workplace creates difficulties for some LGB people. It is here that one's difference can be experienced:

> Overall I can't be myself. I've to be careful in what I say. I find I don't engage in much conversation around the table or I don't bring up topics of conversation for fear someone might suggest … or that a gay thing might come up, I don't generally involve myself in conversations. I'd be quite sociable generally and that affects my everyday life in work that I don't converse with people that much, maybe because I am afraid of falling into a hole and not being able to get out of it. I don't like confrontation or I don't like it if somebody was wrong, I'd just rather not deal with than deal with it if it was a lesbian or gay issue. [*Breck*]

Breck experiences his differences on a daily basis; he does not take part in conservations because he fears that by doing so he will expose who he is: a gay man. In this way he places his colleagues as being an other through which he can judge himself but more importantly be judged (Sartre 1969). By not participating fully with day-to-day conversations with colleagues he denies himself an authentic relationship with his colleagues.

He has become socially isolated from his colleagues, as they never encounter or share who he is. In some ways he feels that this hinders his work as the sociability side of the self is not engaged with. Breck keeps to himself thus presenting a self that is not fully in keeping with his knowledge of who he is. Through the concealment of the self Breck keeps his 'gayism' hidden. He invests both emotional energy and time into concealing his sexuality. This results in him allowing his 'fear' to surface and not 'engage in much' situations where he should have been comfortable. After all he is a professional Garda but is socially isolated because of his sexuality. However, he also suggests that the integrity of the self would be exposed if his colleagues knew he was a gay man.

Breck articulates awareness that his colleagues hold stereotypical views of what it is to be a gay man; he makes sure that he is not the object of this attitudes. Devnet on the other hand illustrates what happens when someone suspects that a colleague may be a gay man:

> But in terms of conversations, a couple of times there have been a couple of incidents, in my presence there have been derogatory remarks made about homosexuals, bisexuals or lesbians. I have pulled them up on it whether they realised or not that I was gay. There is one guy who I know for definite knew I was gay made a remark, there was something on TV. And he made a remark about homosexuality being wrong or being sick and I pulled him up on it. [*Devnet*]

What this segment reveals is that Devnet has heard his colleagues hold stereotypical views of gay men, as well as their presumed ability to know they were in the presence of one. It is these negative comments which have led Devnet experiencing the privileging of heterosexuality in that derogatory marks may be made about differences without impunity. He is made to feel that he does not 'fit'. However Devnet chooses to deal with the comments by 'pulling them up on it'. Duffy (2011) suggests that coming out is embedded in social context and Devenet's story illustrates the social context as being steeped in tradition, beliefs, norms and values of the culture of An Garda Síochána. Devnet states that 'I know for definite knew I was gay' but he has neither confirmed nor denied that he is gay.

On the other hand Alvy reinforces Devnet's experience of heterosexual normativity in the workplace:

> Because oddly enough the station I am in is a small station. But I think there are about 10 gay people there. The majority are men. Some of them have about 25 years' service and from the moment I started there I'd hear them laughing and joking about the men. They'd say that one of the men wasn't coming to work because he was gay. That is why he is out sick, because he is gay and people were laughing at him and bullying him. But on my own unit a lot of people would know the girl I was seeing because they would have seen her coming around my workplace and they put two and two together quickly. And I just said it to the vast majority of them because she'd be saying, don't be hiding me. And they never would say anything out of the ordinary to me or pass smart comments or anything like that. [*Alvy*]

Alvy's experience is that on the one hand, behind people's backs, gay people are the butt of jokes and stereotypical comments. However face-to-face work colleagues are more careful. Alvy came out in her work place because her girlfriend wanted an open relationship.

Cashide explains from her perspective what can happen when knowledge about one's sexuality is known in the workplace:

> I think because I am there the conversation changes a bit and it gets directed towards me. So I don't know if I get the real conversation. If they talk about it they tend to ask me questions so I don't really hear normal conversations because they are all interested in it. They'll admit it to me but they wouldn't talk about it between themselves. If they do I don't know. [*Casidhe*]

Cashide's role as a member of the work force changes to that of an LGB educator whereby she is seen as the reservoir of knowledge others can dip into. While her colleagues use her to teach them about diversity she views it as mechanism through which she can enable the LGB community to be understood. Lewis (2009) suggests that individuals do not have ready access to appropriate vocabulary with which to describe and discuss diversity in particular LGB issues. She is an advocate of LGB individuals in the workplace being out and open about themselves and having discussions about LGB issues. In this way LGB employees act as educators by assisting their colleagues in developing both a vocabulary and appropriate ways of acting and behaving in relation to diversity issues:

> Yes, they are constantly asking me questions. Or I talk about it. My way of trying to help the whole community is to talk about it. [*Casidhe*]

In this way Casidhe has become an activist. She also perceives it as a role other LGB people in An Garda Síochána should take on:

> No, no it doesn't bother me. Sometimes it is annoying that it has to be an issue. That I have to do that. But it doesn't really bother me. I suppose you have to do something and I'm not exactly standing out there with placards. My view is that if everyone did that it would be easier for all of us. [*Casidhe*]

While Cashide may suggest that all LGB people in An Garda Síochána should become spokespersons on LGB issues, she also hints at the burden of doing so when she says 'I have to do that'. In this way she recognises that by doing so the workplace may not be an easy environment for LGB people to work in.

This is one of the conundrums in the literature: whether or not an LGB person should be the educator in the workplace. It would appear to place a burden on the shoulders of that person to be a 'representative' for the community which calls into question the notion of a 'good LGB' person or a 'bad LGB' person. It creates the problem of who becomes the judge of this; after all heterosexual people do not 'come out' or have to engage in a comparable process of being a spokesperson on behalf of all heterosexuals. If diversity in the workplace is embraced, then sexual orientation or indeed difference of any kind becomes a moot point.

One of the participants in the women's focus group suggested that curtailing one's conversation may not be about not coming out but rather about developing professional integrity:

> I think you are more concerned that people get to know me and not judge me until. Maybe it is the Gards more than anything else. You want them to be like, I can do my job and that. And I suppose in a way you do kind of hold back a little bit. [*FGIW*]

This participant wants to develop a reputation for being a professional and doing her job. Her sexuality is not the issue but rather her work practices. Another participant in the women's focus groups acknowledges that she does not talk about her private life or her relationship:

> I still wouldn't talk about my partner. And I'm sure that is a cop out. I'm sure they will ask in time and I'm sure they know but I don't like anything in my face either, straight or gay, I want people to get to know me. It doesn't define me, I'm gay. It doesn't make me a good or a bad person. Definitely get to know me first and judge me for that and then we'll take it from there. [*FGIW*]

From this perspective this focus group participant considers that she cannot be judged if colleagues do not know her and by extension cannot talk about her as they do not know her: she has not told her story. In this way this participant controls what her colleagues see and know about her; it is through the knowledge she gives, that her colleagues can come to know her. Both of the participants in the women's focus group illustrate an understanding that their colleagues can only come to know them if they sanction such entry into their lives and who they are as lesbian women.

Breck, Alvy, Cashide and Devnet point to the fact that LGB is very visible in the An Garda Síochána work environment through jokes, stereotypes and gossip. Indeed, this is in keeping with Nally's (2009 p 8) findings whereby 77% of Phase 3 student Gardaí admitted to "nicknames created and used either personally or for a group either inside or outside the Garda". In contrast, invisibility exists through either self-imposed or socially-imposed closeting. Equally, Casidhe recognises this but suggests that it is the responsibility of the LGB personnel to change this. However all of the participants leave the reality of their difference by the choices they make in the conversations to be either a full participant in or not in the workplace.

The dual existence

Pre-gay liberation discourses suggests that competency as a LGB person is portrayed in an ability to successfully pass as a heterosexual. However post-gay liberation perceives this as a failure to be an LGB person. The shift then came to be about the self, more importantly, an authentic self rather than a closeted self that 'fits' into a heterosexual world. This discourse presents problems for LGB persons who work in environments that were traditionally masculine and heterosexual in nature. Breck presents the conundrum of this situation:

> What hurts me most is not being able to be myself in my job and I know it sounds like a bit of a contradiction, my private life is my private life, my work life is my work life. If I had a choice and wanted an easy life I would be happy if people were more, if I was out and people were like as if it didn't make a difference and was just treated normally. I can't say that I would or wouldn't because I'm not at that point. It kind of hurts me because I have to be careful what I say and everything is a secret and I don't say what goes on at the weekend or what I do after 5 o'clock. A lot of people are like that, they are not necessarily gay but private people. I would be a private person anyway and always have been but it is stopping me making friends and getting close to anyone. [*Breck*]

Breck chooses the closet even though he knows that life may be better with more authentic relationships at work if he 'came out'. Even though he makes a choice, he perceives it as not being a choice, as for him normality is being heterosexual. LGB has not been 'normalised' and, therefore, he cannot afford to be openly different. One effect of this is not socialising with other work colleagues or developing friendships at work because of his knowledge of day-today interaction in the work environment and the necessity of being careful about what he says.

A commonality amongst participants who were living a dual life was that in public, that is the workplace, they were in the closet while in private they are out. Similarly to Breck, Arlana stated:

> I wanted to keep my private life private and my work life private. [*Arlana*]

On the other hand Blayne reasons that there are different types of LGB Gardaí that he constructs from an age perspective:

I think there are two types in the Gards. You have a lot of younger Gards who are really out and they'd bring their girlfriend out or their boyfriend out to everything and everyone knows about it and they'd be kissing in front of them. And then you have, I know, people 10 years older than me, they are nearly at retirement age and they'd say 'no, no one knows at work'. They'd be sergeants and stuff. I know people do know about them because I have heard but I wouldn't be saying that to them. So depending on which type you are, you are either very open or very private, but you are missing out being too private as you are not giving all yourself to people. I'm getting there. [*Blayne*]

It would appear that Blayne is advocating all LGB people in the workplace 'come out' of the closet, as from her experience 'people do know'.   This implies that it is almost impossible to have a public persona which is completely divorced from the private one. In this way the private and public spheres of the self collide in the workplace even if not openly.

Stress

For the LGB person stress comes in many guises. As seen above, conversations at work do not invite openness about a person's life and for some participants it can lead to a 'correcting' of views about LGB people. Equally, living a dual existence can be very stressful and has many consequences.   In 2009 the Health Service Executive produced a report on LGBT health issues. One of the key finds was that there is 'a high incidence of depression, anxiety, substance misuse, self-harm and suicide' (p.7) amongst the LGBT population. Merritt spoke of the stresses in his life which had led to experiences:

of being stressed out, mildly depressed and on occasion harbouring thoughts of self-harm but never serious thoughts of self-harm. [*Merritt*]

Not being able to be oneself in the workplace can lead to stressful situations and, equally, to the questioning of one's life:

People who spend their whole life lying would be very stressed people. People who spend their whole life pretending to be something they are not and listening to this homophobic crap all the time. They are liable to be sick; they are liable to be drinking endless bottles of vodka or whiskey or beer or whatever their tipple might be. They are going to be drunk; they are going to find coping mechanisms that may not be appropriate to the role of a member of the Garda Síochána. And they do that because they are working for an environment where they can't be themselves. They are working for an environment that isn't healthy for them. And that has huge costs for the organisation and also huge costs at a very human level. [*Forbes*]

Forbes points to the pitfalls of living one's life in the closet. He suggests that a healthy life can be achieved through being open about the self and who one is.   However Forbes understands that the working environment in An Garda Síochána may not be conducive to an

LGB Garda's health. This would suggest that the environment of An Garda Síochána is heteronormative with normative concepts of masculinity and femininity. Stress can be alleviated through openness with the self and others. Hoyt indicates that this can be viewed as a normal process for LGB people as he recognises it as something he did and sees it in others:

> I would identify things in people that I would have identified before myself that other members mightn't be so aware of. Just keeping to yourself or lying, well not lying but if someone says 'where are you going?' just excuses for everything. Rather than feel comfortable saying what you do. We are very sociable that way that we all know what we are all at, weekends and days off and stuff. And I would see members there that wouldn't be giving out as much information. ……. They wouldn't get too involved with other members in the station. They kind of lead a very reclusive life. [*Hoyt*]

This segment identifies the fact that humans are social beings. They need others to survive and if there is no interaction it can lead to social isolation which, in the extreme, results in someone becoming a recluse. There is also the fact that the Gardaí are a social profession through interaction with the public as well as sociable interaction with colleagues. Through the lack of interaction with work colleagues, people are denying their humanity and thus the possibility of being themselves with others. However, Arlana found a solution and an avenue to deal with her stressful situation:

> After a few months the pressure was building and building because I wasn't going out drinking with my unit, because I wanted to keep my private life private and my work life private, but I figured out that the unit I was on that wouldn't work. Because there is a particular woman who is there, I heard back that she was saying that I was a weirdo and I was too quiet and wasn't getting on with it. Even thought I was doing the job perfect she didn't know anything about me personally other than I'm from Y ……. She wasn't all up in my business it didn't suit her. So I was under pressure to go out. So I went out with them and I made the decision that I was going to come out at work to them to take the pressure off me. I knew I had to get her on side and I knew that she was a big mouth and that I couldn't trust her so I told her. So I was a bit cute in it anyway so that she thought 'oh she confided in me, she trusts me etc'. She went and blabbed to everybody else and she did my dirty work for me. If that makes sense? [*Arlana*]

Arlana articulates that when it came to her work she did not have an issue with it as she considered herself a good worker. She did not socialise with her colleagues because she wanted to maintain a private life. For her life was not all for public consumption. This led to stress in her life as she felt under pressure to reveal who she was: she decided to take a risk and trust someone and so she disclosed the self. It would appear that Arlana had found someone who would hold the information safely. However, as her story turned out, she chose

someone who would inform others; as Arlana puts it 'she did my dirty work for me'. She allowed herself to become the subject of gossip and it would appear neither confirmed nor denied the rumours.

Within this study the majority of participants experience what is known as minority stress. Such minority stress is the result of the 'negative impact on health and well-being caused by a stigmatised social context' (Mayock et al 2009 p.16). Within this study the negative social context is that of working as an LGB person in An Garda Síochána.

Banter: being one of the boys

Banter serves several purposes: the release of feeling under stress, passing the time, creating camaraderie. Banter also testifies to the inclusive nature of a group. Devnet draws attention to the role of banter as part of the workday experience and its use as a coping mechanism:

> It is the job we do and the situations we encounter, we can come across pretty gruesome stuff, traffic accidents suicides, we deal with death a lot or domestic violence. One way of dealing with it is to see the funny side of it. If anyone was to listen in to us talking about some of the situations they would just think we were sick and probably get us sacked for it. Just a mechanism that you develop as a Garda. It is something we have in common and a way we deal with the trauma of it. We come in on suicides the only way is to talk about it and to get it out there, especially for the macho men in the Gards, is to talk about it or to make light of it. [*Devnet*]

In stressful professions, where death is faced on a daily basis, humour is used as a coping strategy. The humour filters out the pain of the work; used in this way as a coping strategy, humour is not to be confused with a dehumanising of the person but rather is retention of the self as a human being. It is a necessary coping device that rarely gets public exposure, and when it does, it can be misunderstood, with serious consequences for the individuals involved.

However, this positive effect of banter can subsume other matters such as banter turning into derogatory comments and actions. Melvina remarks on the prevalence of black humour and 'slagging':

> I think within the Gards you can't have a thin skin, you have to have a thick skin because there is so much, there is black humour and there's slagging about absolutely everything. [*Melvina*]

The problem is that a comment may be made and after hearing so many of them, there is disappointment with colleagues' attitudes. However, Hoyt does note that when slagging gets out of hand there are colleagues who are brave enough to apologise afterwards:

a lot of those guys have come back and apologised to me because they know I don't tolerate it to a certain level. Slagging someone because they are overweight, or slights where they are from. It is funny to a point but to come to a point where enough is enough. [*Hoyt*]

This is in contrast to the experience of a focus group participant who recounts some of the banter and slagging encountered and also considers it to be a reproduction of organisational culture in practice:

We all train with the people, we all work at stations with senior members. Lads will listen and look at the way the lads do things, the way they converse, the way they talk and the lingo and the attitudes are picked up by the younger lads and it is just carried on. [*FGIM*]

As such, the 'lingo' becomes a communicative device which visibly reinforces cultural stereotypes, in this case LGB people, as well as perpetuating this aspect of organisational culture with its accompanying attitudes.

'Ringing ahead'

Participants in this research discussed coming out to family and friends and research has shown that this action is fraught with both negative and positive consequences. However, when an individual chooses to impart personal knowledge, the expectation is that the holder of this knowledge will treat it with the respect and dignity which it deserves. After all, a work colleague was chosen to be told as she or he appeared to reflect certain values that would include the dignity of the person. Nevertheless, participants in this study are acutely aware of the long-term consequences of placing trust in their colleagues. Research shows that on a personal level, and on a mental health level, LGB individuals who are out and open live less stressful lives. In spite of this, it becomes questionable, the validity of this way of being in a police force when the LGB person knows that their identity can be compromised by a phone call, colloquially known as 'ringing ahead'.

Esras said:

the station knew in advance that I was gay and I felt a bit uncomfortable, believing people might pre-judge me. [*Esras*]

Hoyt also has a similar experience:

There was a phone call made before I got there. 'Just letting you know'. Marking my cards and marking territory. Letting you know what you are getting. And then let them build up their perceptions based on that information. [*Hoyt*]

Gweneth also considers that someone of rank would also have enquiries made:

> More so lads would be checking to get the run of the mill for a …… coming. And I would say yeah, he got the heads up that I am gay, you know? [*Gweneth*]

This practice removes from the LGB person the right to self-determination and the full ownership of who they are, including their sexuality.

Encountering prejudice or bullying on the job

In a similar way to the above, ringing ahead can be interpreted as prejudice or bullying or both. However, the participants did not label it as such, as the experience recounted by Esras suggests:

> On several occasions I was due to be working with say x or y, but when I came in for work the book had been changed by them so I was working with other people. This didn't bother me as I was just as happy to work with the others on the unit but I did feel like they hadn't given me a chance to prove myself as a competent officer and they were prejudging me because of my sexual orientation. [*Esras*]

Judgements are made by the non-examination of personally-held attitudes which are played out in the workforce through normative judgements. Bullying is not a gender issue and both lesbian women, gay men and bisexual women and men are susceptible to it. This is further compounded by interference as FGMI notes:

> A number of years ago it was my first experience to the Gards, I would have had nothing prior to that. G was coming for a particular issue that had happened and they also were gay. And this had become an issue because they were out on work related stress. But I got a phone call from a Garda Inspector, I wouldn't have known, 'I want to know.....' and, as I said to the Garda Inspector, I am bound by the code of ethics and said, well you know I can't tell you anything. And he got really aggressive on the phone. I said I can go to court for you if you like but all I can see is this person for this period of time. But his attitude was really 'we want to know..... what he is and we want it in writing'. And I was very shocked by it.

The participant in this segment was helping a man because it came to his attention by chance. However, without the ethical code by which this participant works, the individual he was helping may have found her or himself exposed at work to continuing harassment. This is not the only instance referred to in the interviews in terms of bullying, and what would cause concern is a reference to the inability to deal with both the bully and interference at a senior level in relation to an individual's sexuality. It would appear to be management's responsibility to deal with these issues, but if LGB individuals are not recognised in the

workplace then a blind eye can be turned towards behaviour in the workplace which is also contrary to law.

The role of the superior

Throughout the interviews there are references to the role of the station sergeant or supervisor who sets the tone for a station and allows what is permissible and what is not in terms of behaviour and everyday conversation. The role a sergeant plays is highlighted by Arlana:

> The first sergeant I had was a very tough man but I have massive respect for him. He is retired now. But he ran a tight ship and there was no bitching and no back-stabbing when he was running it and I think I was very lucky that I landed on the unit when he was there. I think I had him for 9 or 10 months and he really got me through very well and he set high standards for me. And I wouldn't be as good a Garda as I am (and I'm not being cocky saying it) if I didn't have him as my sergeant. [*Arlana*]

Those in authority, therefore, have the ability to make a clear difference in the workplace and 'run a tight ship' based on equality. Having clear rules, regulations and boundaries of behaviour based upon respect and dignity for the human being can lead to a satisfying workplace environment as Arlana has clearly indicated; the side effect of this is that she was allowed to grow and develop into the Garda she wanted to be.

 Participants who are in positions of authority discuss their role in preventing homophobic language, so preventing the use of terms that appear to be common currency such as 'faggot', 'shirt lifter' or 'bum boy' to be normative. At the same time there is awareness that the stresses and tensions of policing also need relief so that allowances also have to be made for such occasions as well as the camaraderie of banter.

Lugh is the most senior in his unit and so:

> the lads look to me for guidance and support and you know they had no issues at all, and we talk about what our relationships are like and who we are seeing and stuff, and I am just the same with their straight friends and all, and they've no issue. [*Lugh*]

He is in the fortunate position of setting a tone which is inclusive without having to listen to the constant repetition of homophobic language which other participants endure daily.

Promotion

Work plays a major part in the experiences of people, giving them a sense of self, value and achievement. This is vital for LGB people particularly for those where other institutions of society such as family and religion are not avenues open to them to legitimise their sense of

self, value and worth. Work provides an LGB person with a sense of who they are in society and their membership of communities. Promotion in the workplace reflects the ability of the LGB person not only to get on in the organisation but also to fit in and establishes a coherent sense of accomplishment.

Within this study a variety of experiences were reports in relation to promotion with positive experiences as well as participants who live in fear of being open about their sexual orientation because of concern around promotion. In a sense this can be considered as being reminiscent of the 'glass ceiling' that feminists fought against in relation to women in the workplace. It appears that LGB people working in An Garda Síochána experience a similar 'glass ceiling' (Clancy 2009) or imagine that such a one exists. Baird, for example considers the effect of homophobic members of the force and their use of power:

> There are people in the job that don't like gay people and would discriminate against you because they know or think that they know that you are gay. I still believe that there are people like that. And they can have a detrimental effect on your promotions or on your day to day like getting a transfer. People might take a negative view because you are gay. I'm not so blinkered as not to see that might be the case. People on the whole are quite open-minded. But there are people in positions of power that are not friendly towards the gay cause or gay people and would go out of their way to affect their prospects in the job. [*Baird*]

It is this knowing that Baird articulates that is reflected in a number of the interviews. It can lead to LGB people remaining in the closet for fear of raising one's head above the parapet in case of discovery. In the end participants in this study have said that they stay below the radar and, when they have interactions with people in power, they undertake a process of self-surveillance. Lugh muses on these issues and the desire for fairness and honesty of the process is tinged with the reality that being open about one's self may not lead to promotion:

> Promotion is an issue in the Gards I feel. People are promoted because, well, you hear people promoted because they have a relative or parent who is a high ranking officer and they got that because of that job. And you do see it in a job where people are brought up because you know they shouldn't have, because there are better people, I think, that are more suited to the job you know, whereas being gay or lesbian or bisexual and being promoted. I hope not. I am only, I haven't gone for promotion yet. I hope to go for …… sometime but I would hope that in this day and age it wouldn't be an issue and they would look at my work record, or you know, that my work is what is most important. It is hard to tell. I mean you don't know who is on the panel of people that judge you, don't know what their experience is like. You don't know whether they can be gay themselves or if they, you know, I'd hope that they are professional enough that they don't want to do it, that they don't take note of that. Obviously it is not a question that is asked in promotion. But word of mouth comes out, I mean you know there aren't that many.........it is a small......... you know many

> Gards in the job and people know people and they talk. I'd hope thought that it wouldn't be an issue for people when they go for promotion. [*Lugh*]

Lugh points to knowledge that is born out of 'people talk' the word of mouth effect that gets related from one to the other.   In this way LGB people learn whether they can trust the system or not, but equally, and more crucially, the net effect is to keep LGB people in the closet.   While Lugh suggests that he hopes that this is not the case, the reality of his experiences and that of others, which have been related to him, is that this is the case. Promotion then may not necessarily be based upon ability but rather ability to present a certain image of An Garda Síochána to the public, namely a heterosexual image.

However this does call into question whether people are promoted in An Garda Síochána because they have the capacity and ability to do the job Blayne indicates that in some cases this is the reality though not all of the time:

> Now in fairness some people do get their jobs totally on their ability and stuff but you probably still have to have a bit of pull. You could have five people with ability and one person with pull and that person will get the job. I suppose it is like that in most jobs but you could get someone with no ability and pull and someone with loads of ability. So that happens with promotion in the job and internal interviews. Hence the amount of clowns that are voted. [*Blayne*]

The comfort for Blayne is the possibility that if she had another job this would also be the reality.   Thus, from this perspective An Garda Síochána is a microcosm of society. Conversely, Baird, Lug and Blayne are uncomfortable with the reality that if your face does not fit then promotion is not a possibility.   This results in what Blayne indicates are 'the amount of clowns' who are, therefore, not fit for purpose.   Devnet's perspective is that regardless of 'pull' it boils down to nepotism as who you are matters more than what you know or do:

> But again come back to the nepotism, there are people that are going to be sergeants no matter what, whether they deserve to be or not, because of who they know. [*Devnet*]

On the other hand Arlana experiences mixed messages about promotion:

> She said that down in X it is completely different, it is done fairly and that there is competition and if you don't deserve it you don't get it, whereas in the Y and Z it is a different ball game entirely. Like I have friends stationed in H and two of them are after getting onto the W and it was done through competition. It was done fairly by interview and they got it and they deserved it as well because they are good workers. Whereas, if they were out here they wouldn't be getting a sniff of anything. [*Arlana*]

Arlana's experience in her current place of work is that of bias and unfairness in the promotion process. However, from her friendship group she knows that not all workplaces are operated in the same fashion of unfairness but rather are based upon equality and fairness. This unevenness of application of procedures across the organisation of An Garda Síochána results in a perception that the system cannot be trusted.

Hoyt in some senses was the exception to the rule amongst the participants in this study as he recounts a positive experience stating:

> It didn't hinder me in the job. I got promoted. I am seen as one of the lads. I think they have a perception that this lad is going to come here and prance around the office maybe. And they all stand back and just watch and see. And once they see you are able to do your job I think they are happy enough then. [*Hoyt*]

Hoyt characterises his success in terms of fitting in, being one of the lads, though this does not necessarily mean that it is enough to always guarantee a positive experience. On the other hand it requires pleasing those in authority and power. The suggestion here is that in some way being seen to be able to do the job may negate the knowledge about a person's sexual orientation. It would appear that to be someone other than that you are facilitates movement through the ranks. If Hoyt was not a gay man, he would not have had to prove himself to the extent that he did, to obtain the promotion. Hoyt's freedom to be a gay man is constrained by a profession constructed on heterosexuality rather than diversity.

Being one's self

Being one's self means full acceptance so that being gay becomes a non-issue in the course of everyday talk. Conlach for instance would enjoy being open about himself, but only in the context where it would be taken as normal behaviour, with no negative comments or comeback:

> I'd love to say......... I'd a brilliant weekend, met Dave, had a few jars and went back to his and we are meeting again. What did you do .... that's what I'd love and that is not happening. That is the sad thing about it. We are a long way away. That is where things need to improve. [*Conloach*]

Participants have hesitated in being open and part of that hesitation has been due to homophobic terms in use in everyday banter and general 'slagging'. A hesitation creates a barrier to being fully open in the workplace so that Blayne says:

> I suppose it is up to myself to talk to everybody else and make sure they do know. But I don't want to make them feel stupid. It is a kind of hard thing to bring up. But, yeah I suppose if it was more open. Talk to me, don't be hiding it. That is all. They are decent. [Blayne]

Interestingly, Blayne feels that all the effort is placed on her shoulders so that the whole issue of being able to enjoy the workplace becomes a burden placed on her, even if this is inadvertent and thoughtless in terms of the majority.

Additionally, participants in this research have found slight deviations from the everyday culture of An Garda Síochána being questioned. Participants have mentioned trying to create different spheres of activity for the self so that, for example, work and private life are not intertwined. Some participants have not felt the need to go for a drink after work. However, such examples of difference can be viewed with suspicion. If private and work lives are kept separate, then it is not a threat to a group but is rather an example of the diverse ways that people manage their lives; equally, not drinking with colleagues is not necessarily a sign of something wrong but that people are different.

It is also distressing where participants have come out to colleagues in confidence, only to find the news relayed round so that everyone has knowledge of a personal matter. There is a mixture of sadness and fear as Lugh says:

I am afraid that the worst case scenario is that I go in and I say something, and someone says something back or someone says something spiteful in front of everyone else. And then there is an issue where other people are present and there is like, do I stand up for myself now in front of these people, do I make an issue of it or do people just go 'oh god here he goes again'. It is just I don't want confrontation; I don't want confrontation regarding my sexuality in the workplace. It shouldn't be there. [*Lugh*]

Such confrontation is not necessary if difference is part of the everyday of the organisational culture. Additionally, fear of confrontation in the workplace should not have a role in the everyday experience of a member of An Garda Síochána.

Diversity surface and deep

Social attitudes have changed and Irish society has undergone rapid transformation. However, Baird states:

I think attitudes in the Gards, likewise with all aspects of society, attitudes are changing for the better. But you are always going to get certain people that don't like it for whatever reason, but overall my experiences have been positive. That is not to say I could go out tomorrow and somebody could abuse me from a height cause they know I'm gay. [*Baird*]

This uncertainty is troublesome as it leads to an unsettled peace due to its inconsistency for both Baird, and by extension, all LGB people.

In addition, it is also evident that the wider level of diversity introduced under Malcolm McDowell has had an impact in making difference visible. Forbes considers that there is a hierarchy in relation to diversity in An Garda Síochána:

I suppose there is a hierarchy of diversity in the organisation which I would say is the same hierarchy of diversity in every organisation in Ireland. Race and ethnicity comes first. Gender comes second and LGB will come third and that is the way it will be dealt with. I suppose one thing that helps the race issue is race is generally quite visible. You can see the black guy coming in; you can see the Chinese guy coming in. You can see the difference in men and women in that men are men and women are women. The gay and lesbian person, they aren't visible. You can't see them and you don't have to deal with what you can't see. We had to deal with the race issue because we knew they were coming to Ireland and we were policing them on a daily basis. And we were policing issues and those communities and the government forced us to recruit a few of them. [*Forbes*]

Overall, it appears that a surface level approach to diversity is a norm and as sexual orientation is invisible, it has been ignored. Consequently, an inclusive approach to diversity requires more than the tick-box mentality that participants refer to and a full consideration of organisational values in relation to diversity at both surface and deep levels.

In relation to diversity in society and the organisation's response to that diversity, Lugh says:

> Common practice if a gay person asked and obviously there is no problem with that and I would be happy to deal with it. But I hope as well that you know a straight person is just as capable dealing with a gay issue as I am dealing with a gay incident. A Garda is a Garda, it doesn't matter what sexuality you are. [*Lugh*]

This reference to a Garda from a diversity perspective is the crux of the matter in relation to this research. On the one hand, an LGB person is probably invisible; this invisibility does not mean that there are no LGB Gardaí. On the other hand, a lesbian, gay or bisexual Garda whose sexual orientation is no longer any cause of extraordinary concern in the organisation becomes: a Garda.

Contribution specialist knowledge as a gay member in everyday policing

Being LGB raises the possibility of making a special contribution on occasion when working with the public. For example, Merritt has had to struggle to come to terms with his life as a bisexual man. From this experience he says he was able to help individuals who were suicidal:

> But I was able to sit down and say listen I have suffered stress; I have been close to the edge for my reasons. And I have been able to tell them how I felt. Didn't say the reason. But I have been able to tell them how I felt and they are not alone. Look at me: I am wearing a uniform and working and out there. You think you are hopeless, you are not, and nobody is hopeless. [*Merritt*]

However, Merritt, who is clearly providing a service to the public over and above the call of duty, was saddened by the fact that he was not able to tell colleagues why he was able to work so well in such distressing circumstances.

Awareness of diversity at a deep level

One matter which was raised was the level of ignorance in relation to sexual orientation and the fact that sexual orientation is not a matter of life style or for a gay man is not because such an individual did not go out with enough girls to turn him heterosexual. As Hoyt says, talking about sexuality appears difficult in Irish society and there are significant levels of ignorance:

> It is very hard to speak to someone about sex and sexuality, which Irish people don't do in general. But speak about sexuality openly in a relaxed way, that you could, say, refer to me and I would have a coffee and chat with them for an hour. That is all they might need. It is just the chat. [*Hoyt*]

Organisational culture here is rooted in society's attitude to sexuality as a taboo topic so that it is problematic to have a straightforward, mature conversation in comfort.

Ignorance also relates to legal matters as Arlana highlights in relation to Civil Partnership:

> The time of the Civil Partnership was in the papers, the papers are dropped into the station in the morning, and you are on the early shift and it is quiet in the first 10 or 15 minutes, you would be flicking through it. I remember one of the detectives came in and he'd be in his 50's and he said 'sure why wouldn't they be allowed'. And he didn't even know I was in the room which I thought was great. I have massive time for him because of that. I had anyway but I thought 'fair play to you'. There wasn't anyone else saying anything about it but it started a discussion. And I came in and one of the lads said it to me then later on. They didn't realise that we couldn't get married up until then. They didn't even know that. I suppose they were educated that day no more than myself. So that was alright. [*Arlana*]

The tone for a serious discussion was set by a senior person in the organisation through a display of leadership in everyday talk relating to knowledge of diversity.

Change in everyday talk

The main issue in relation to everyday talk and banter is the visible presence of diversity in the organisation, that is, diversity at the surface level. However, Forbes indicates that deeper levels of diversity, such as attitudes, are evident in changes in everyday talk when diversity is visible. The dilemma for LGB members of An Garda Síochána is the difficulty around disclosure:

> If you are out, people aren't going to generally use homophobic language in front of you. If you are not out they are going to use it in front of you all the time because they are working on the supposition that you are straight. Racist language against the Chinese would have been quite common in the Garda station ………….. until the Chinese guy arrived. Now you don't hear it. If people are ordering a Chinese they wouldn't say 'are you going for a slanty guy?' meaning are you going for Chinese food, that is just gone now …….… It just wouldn't be said. Because all of a sudden there is a person working in their environment that that's offensive to. People still in most stations, and in most sections of the organisation, think everyone that works around them is straight so they think it is ok to use homophobic language. [*Forbes*]

The assumption of heteronormativity would therefore present a challenge to change as would the continuing dilemma for those individuals who do not feel it is safe to reveal their sexual orientation to colleagues.

However, an openly gay Garda can challenge behaviour, including that of a superior:

> who brought in the daily gay joke even thought I was openly gay at the time. It came to a point when I ……. it came to a point where I just had to stop and say 'enough is

enough'. A joke is a joke but that would have been old school. I'd say it is more an issue with sergeants of older rank and stuff like that. [*Hoyt*]

Setting the tone from above is important as Lugh says:

> and you know people, whether they like it or not they do listen to what their supervisors say and you know when it comes down from the top it does affect lower and middle management and us as well. Because they realise that if they top brass are talking about this now, we have to accept it because this is who we work for, and this is what needs to be done in practice. [*Lugh*]

As such, Lugh clearly indicates that change is possible once that change is indicated at senior level.

Retaining members of An Garda Síochána by creating a safe environment

One area where an enormous difference has been made has been the opportunity to socialise with LGB peers and so reduce the stress of isolation:

> And for a lot of people, particularly senior people in the organisation, the opportunity to network and get peer support from other gay and lesbian people in the organisation has changed their lives. I have seen people turn around from being petrified that anybody in a small town that they work in would find out that they were gay, to a couple of years later bringing their same sex partner to a wedding in the same town. And that is a huge transformation in someone's life. [*Forbes*]

The level of trust that is created can make all the difference and Gweneth considers how her own superior officer helped her enormously in a time of crisis:

> when I got promoted I got transferred far from home and my partner had …… at the time. I had a superintendent and I told him directly, no bones about it. And he was extremely supportive. So much so that when I texted him to say my partner was sick and that I needed a night's leave, he said to me' look don't worry about the leave, stay home and look after her'. So an hour later there was a fatal accident back in the station and the lads rang me. Obviously I should have been ……. So I rang the super and I said 'look I'll make my way back there, it will take me about two hours'. 'Don't worry about it, I'll look after it tonight. You can take over the investigation in the morning'. Now that is kind of unheard of between a superintendent and a …… to exchange roles like that. (*Gweneth*)

Gweneth notes that this superintendent has since retired. However, she is still in contact with him and clearly continues to value his example, particularly as he had no difficulty in stepping outside the confines of the hierarchical nature of the organisation and dealing with matters in a humane way. Unfortunately, participants in this research do not all experience the same level of understanding in relation to such personal crisis.

Equality of treatment

There are instances where LGB members of An Garda Síochána are not treated as their heterosexual colleagues. One clear example is that of ringing ahead to indicate, as one participant said, 'the queer is coming'. There is no comparable issue in relation to heterosexual members of An Garda Síochána. The anomaly of identifying female officers by their number has ceased so it is not clear as to why a phone call has to be made in relation to an individual's sexual orientation. Such an action, again possibly so ingrained in terms of organisational culture (Nally 2009) does, however, go against equality legislation so it would seem to be an instance of organisational culture where such differentiation should not take place either in its current form of phoning ahead or by a mechanism which would circumvent this practice but still carry it on in another way.

Secondly, Hoyt brought up the issue of different treatment in relation to LGB partners and their families in contrast to heterosexual ones. He states:

> … everything is there if you are married or if you are having kids. You get paternity leave. There are different things there. But if you actually went up and said my partner's mother has just died, it would be like 'so right, so fill out the annual leave'. Whereas if it is my mother, it is three days off. If it is an immediate member of family you can get time off. (*Hoyt*)

In this instance, there is a difference between two kinds of families, those with heterosexual children and those with LGB children.

Also, there are mechanisms in place to deal with work-related stresses but not sexuality. Hoyt says:

> If your parents are sick and you are looking to get transferred home it is very easy just to ring your welfare officer and say 'look my mother is sick and I need to get home' …. Very roll off the tongue. It is easy to talk to someone about that. But to talk to someone and say 'I am a lesbian, I live at home with my parents; I travel to work and am very stressed out'. I would never refer them to the welfare officer. (*Hoyt*)

It appears as if the role of the welfare officer is not considered to be particularly relevant, whereas it is a key role for individuals searching for someone to talk to, to confide in, and, equally, in making a person feel accepted and understood.

Equal Opportunity Employer

One issue which concerned participants in this research is the format of an Equal Opportunities form currently in use in An Garda Síochána. This form provides the

opportunity for a Garda to state her or his sexual orientation. However, the form also expects a Garda to identify her or himself by contributing their identifying number. It would appear that new recruits do not understand that this form is a requirement of the Public Appointments Service in monitoring the equality of opportunity recruitment. In this way, the form is an anonymous gathering of statistics on the make-up of diversity in An Garda Síochána. From the interviews it is wrongly perceived that this information is owned by the organisation and could follow her or him throughout a career of some thirty years in An Garda Síochána.

Concluding remarks

This is the final chapter of data analysis and chapter eight, which follows, presents a summary of the main findings before making a set of recommendations based on these findings.

Chapter 8   Conclusion and Recommendations

This report on the experiences of LGB people working in An Garda Síochána unearthed both positive and negative lived realities. It sits within a rich tradition of robust qualitative research, both national and international, that gives a voice to those who ordinarily may not be heard[16]. All those who are member of An Garda Síochána or members of the reserves expressed an informed decision to join the Gardaí. They did this while recognising that they were different to others. Yet they all expressed their pride in being police officers.

The following is the list of the main finding of this study:

1. Pride in being a serving police officer or a reserve.

2. Invisibility of LGB people with the exhortation of not raising ones head above the parapet. This is akin to the now defunct American policy of *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*.

3. All of the participants expressed an ownership of their sexuality which became untenable at times in the face of gossip or prejudice. At present, this study suggests

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[16] Within an Irish context the following studies have been undertaken by both authors:

Clarke, J, Corcoran, Y and Duffy, M. 2011 *The dynamics of sharing professional knowledge and lay knowledge: A study of parents' and professionals' experiences of childhood interventions within a Marte Meo framework*, Dublin City University.

Duffy, M. 2011. *Voices from the Hinterland: Lesbian women's Experience of Irish Health Care*, Lambert Academic Publishing.

Duffy, M. 2011. Lesbian Women's Experiences of Being Different in Irish Health Care. In Thomson G., Dykes F. and Downes S. (Eds.) Qualitative Research in Midwifery and Childbirth: Phenomenological Approaches, 79-95.

Duffy, M. 2011. Lesbian women's experience of coming out in an Irish hospital setting: a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 8, 4, 335-347.

Duffy, M. 2010. Diversity in the Irish Workplace - Lesbian Women's Experiences as Nurses. The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities And Nations, 10, 3, 231-241.

Duffy, M. 1993. Positive Proof!: The Emergence of HIV/AIDS and the Irish Response. Sociological Association of Ireland monograph.

Sheridan V (2009). A refugee tale from Hungarian to English, in Donovan, P and Rascaroli, L (Eds) – *Claims of Cosmopolitanism*, 357-374.

Sheridan, V (2008). Diversity – the old in the new: tracing the long-term process of cross-cultural adaptation among members of the Vietnamese community in Ireland, *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*, vol 7, no 6, 303-309.

Sheridan, V (2008). With loneliness and satisfaction: narratives of Vietnamese refugee integration in Irish society, in Farago, B and Sullivan, M (eds) – *Facing the other: interdisciplinary studies on race, gender and social justice in Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 108-122.

Sheridan, V (2007). With loneliness and satisfaction: Vietnamese refugee integration in Irish society, in Pearson-Evans, A & Leahy, A (eds). *Intercultural Spaces*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 203-217.

Sheridan, V (2007). Tuyen: caught between two worlds, in Fanning, B (ed,) (2007). *Immigration and social change in Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 129-152

that tolerance of such behaviour can only be accepted by the upper echelons of the hierarchy of An Garda Síochána. As such practices have not been removed from the workplace and are rarely challenged, they appear to receive an official seal of approval. However, if there was clear awareness of the outcomes of the recommendations in the Human Rights Audit (2004), then these practices would not be tolerated.

4. Homophobic behavior impacts negatively on the self of an LGB person and leads to repression of the self. This can manifest itself later in many types of stress.

5. Homophobic language is accepted as the expression of common behavior in the workplace. This language is reflective of the schoolyard, thus displaying an inability to accept difference by some members of An Garda Síochána. Under the recommendation of 'Protect the human rights of its staff' in the Human Rights Audit (2004 p 140), the procedures suggested should be utilized to eradicate homophobic language.

6. There is clear evidence of the difference of experiences based upon gender.

7. While it is evident that there have been a number of initiatives undertaken by the organisation of An Garda Síochána, the culture itself is slow to change as evidenced by previous reports and studies mentioned in this report.

8. Within this report participants related experiences of different treatment from one Garda station to another, pointing to an overall lack of consistency relating to diversity.

9. There is a lack of leadership or initiatives at management level to visibly support LGB persons (see chapter 6).

In conclusion this report finds that being out and openly gay is not fully acceptable to An Garda Síochána. This is evidenced by the fact that participants remain closeted, or if open, are fearful of a lack of career progression. As such there appears to be a 'glass ceiling' in relation to LGB persons serving in An Garda Síochána. The organizational message appears to be one of no change, and, if anyone is different they should keep their head under the radar, thus remaining invisible.

Recommendations

We advocate that the following recommendations be implemented with immediate effect. This will benefit all members of An Garda Síochána irrespective of sexual orientation.

1. **Promotion**

- We recommend that work should be undertaken on the perception amongst LGB people that their promotion is halted through the 'glass ceiling' effect if they are out.

2. **Diversity Training**

- We recommend that An Garda Síochána implement a diversity training programme for *all ranks*. This programme should be inclusive of the nine grounds of equality as stipulated in the equality legislation.

- We also recommend that all those who are promoted should show evidence of having undertaken a diversity training module.

- We recommend that all senior management undertake every five years a refresher course on diversity.

3. **Taken for granted practices**

- There are many taken for granted practices which may fall under the heading of being well-intentioned but actually lead to discrimination. Examples are normal every day conversations that entail banter to talk that may become abusive. There is a fine line at times between banter and abuse.

- The practice of 'ringing ahead' should be abolished immediately.

- We recommend that the practices of the PSNI in outlawing prejudicial and discriminatory terminology be implemented.

4. **LGB legislation**

- We recommend that all new legislation be incorporated in an open and transparent manner which is easily accessible for all LGB people working in An Garda Síochána.

- Matters relating to the current legislation on Civil Partnership as it pertains to LGB people working in An Garda Síochána should be made available in all Garda stations

by HR such as changing the nominated next of kin, pensions and, of course, disclosure of people who are enacting a Civil Partnership.

- We recommend that all HR matters which deal with complications of prejudice and discrimination be dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner. To this end we recommend that all existing and new HR personnel receive training to enable them to respond effectively and efficiently.

5. Integration of diversity

- We recommend that HR take responsibility to ensure that LGB people feel safe working for An Garda Síochána.

- Difference is not a threat or a weakness to being a Garda, a Garda reserve or any member working for An Garda Síochána. Cognisance should be taken of this in relation to diversity and equality in the workplace.

- We recommend that the knowledge gained from women entering An Garda Síochána and the fact that the organisation did not crumble be applied to sexual orientation.

6. Leadership

- We recommend that leadership is seen as leading by example across all echelons of the organisation to ensure equality and diversity is visibly promoted. As such leadership should be pro-active rather than reactive.

7. Openness to change

- Those working in An Garda Síochána are reflective of society, thus embracing a culture of diversity. As such we recommend that this is in fact the experienced reality for all people working in An Garda Síochána.

- In relation to the above we recommend that cognisance be taken of good practices in other jurisdictions be incorporated into An Garda Síochána. Examples of best practice can be found with the following police forces:

  - Hampshire Constabulary
  - South Wales Police
  - British Transport Police

- Merseyside Police

- North Wales Police

Recommendations for diversity training

- Continuous professional development training should include a diversity module.

- A module for all senior management on diversity.

- Diversity training and illustration of competence should be mandatory for all promotional applicants.

Recommendations for future research

A. We recommend that an in-depth study on inclusivity be undertaken in An Garda Síochána.

B. We recommend further research regarding taken for granted practices in An Garda Síochána.

C. We recommend that a research study be implemented to evaluate the promotional strategies utilised in An Garda Síochána.

D. We recommend that research be carried out to evaluate diversity training within An Garda Síochána.

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Appendix A

Appendix A consists of the consent form used in the study followed by the plain language
statement.

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Study Title: Cultures of diversity: sexual orientation in An Garda Síochána

Dr. Mel Duffy, School of Nursing and Human Sciences & Dr. Vera Sheridan, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Clarification of the purpose of the research: This research will explore the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual members of An Garda Síochána. This study will use one-to-one interviews and focus groups to explore the experiences. 3 focus group interviews (FGI) will be conducted with lesbian, gay and bisexual Gardaí, group one (lesbian Gardaí), group two (gay Gardaí), group three (bisexual Gardaí). The interview schedule for the FGI will consist of one statement, which will invite lesbian, gay and bisexual Gardaí to reflect on their experiences of being a member of An Garda Síochána:

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement	*Yes/No*
Do you understand the information provided?	*Yes/No*
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	*Yes/No*
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	*Yes/No*

I CAN WITHDRAW FROM THE INTERVIEW OR ANY PART OF THIS RESEARCH AT ANY TIME.

Every effort will be made to ensure both anonymity and confidentiality within the research process. For instance all transcripts will be returned to participants for comment and editing. Each participant will be given a pseudonym and there will be no identifying markers in the work. Audio tapes will be destroyed within two years of completion of the study.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

Cultures of diversity: sexual orientation in An Garda Síochána

Research by Dr Mel Duffy, School of Nursing and Human Sciences & Dr Vera Sheridan, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual members of An Garda Síochána. This study will use one-to-one interviews and focus groups to explore the experiences. 3 focus group interviews (FGI) will be conducted with lesbian, gay and bisexual Gardaí, group one (lesbian Gardaí), group two (gay Gardaí), group three (bisexual Gardaí). The interview schedule for the FGI will consist of one statement, which will invite lesbian, gay and bisexual Gardaí to reflect on their experiences of being a member of An Garda Síochána:

- Describe your experiences of being a member of An Garda Síochána.

One-to-one in-depth interviews are being used to obtain in-depth lived experience gay, lesbian and bisexual members of An Garda Síochána. As with, the focus group, the individual interviews schedule will consist of one statement, which will invite each participant to reflect on her/his experience.

- Describe your experience of being a member of An Garda Síochána

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY

YOU MAY LEAVE THE STUDY AT ANY TIME

1. This research is undertaken with the aim of investigating the lived experiences gay, lesbian and bisexual members of An Garda Síochána
2. Focus groups and one-to-one interviews are used on an anonymous basis.
3. All interview transcripts will be returned to participants for comment and editing.
4. Each participant will be given a pseudonym.
5. There will be no identifying markers in the work such as names of town, place names, rank or family/relatives names.
6. Audiotapes will be destroyed within two years of the completion of the study

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

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