Conclusion

The Garda Siochana organisation was established quickly on the formation of the new Irish state in 1922 and set up as a ‘community based’ policing service to try and re-unite divided communities. The new organisation faced major difficulties with little or no finance, facilities, and training and/or proper management structures. The organisation was also heavily influenced by the nationalistic policies of the new country, the government and those who originally led the organisation. Much of the thinking of this generation as Allen (1997) stated was shaped by the events that followed Ireland’s independence than by those that brought it about.

Views on Northern Ireland and on the Anglo-Irish relations were strongly conditioned as stated by Herlihy (1999) in the sequence of events of Irish history, beginning with the signing of the Treaty in December 1921. As the new state evolved the Garda organisation evolved slowly and methodically due to subjugation by government. This subjugation still remains to this day and to ensure continuity of this position, the government’s power is now enshrined in statute by the Garda Siochana Act 2005.

The original ethos of ‘policing by consent’, for a fledging state, was implemented by the leading statesmen in the pro-treaty (winning) side of the civil war to address many concerns. What can be regarded as political foresight became ‘the’ valuable tool for the government of the day. The treaty that should have healed the long years of struggle to bring about an independent state divided the country from top to bottom and created the foundations for two bitterly opposed political parties that led to an immediate and savage civil war.
This ethos of ‘policing by consent’ as stated by McGarry (2007) was used to try heal major divisions in society and in families and portray the Garda Siochana as a unifying social-body. To create and develop this mentality of public service, a decisive disciplinary recruit training programme was adapted and adopted from the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) to mould and unify a public service/law enforcement agenda to policing.

As Ireland, and the majority of countries languished for many years in dire financial constraints after the First World War, so too did the Garda Siochana, as stated in Brady (2000). The organisation was left in a state of neglect through a lack of finance with little or no training for decades. The 1st recruit programme was based on strict discipline and at times bordering on a semi-military regime that lasted over 60 years with little development. This clinging to the old ways was not just an Irish problem, the literature on other police forces in the UK and Northern Ireland, Canada and Australia has also shown that a disciplinary/semi-military regime of recruit training was prominent and existed within the same timescale without major developments. A serious lack of investment in all police forces, mainly through economic downturns was continued after World War Two. This lack of development led to a continuation of a recruit/trainee based on disciplinary measures which in turn created a ‘reactive’ rather than a ‘proactive’ approach to policing.

From an Irish perspective, this redolence in training left the Garda Siochana and the organisations members’ static in development and in individuality. The old training
practises of the first programme demanded a ‘certain submission’ from Gardaí to ensure assimilation into the Garda organisation is well and truly gone. The findings of the Patten Commission (1999) on RUC probationary training and the HMIC (2002) report findings into the UK training of probationary constables are also comparative on the above mentioned areas of discipline, rote learning and how each trainee/recruit programme had a major emphasis on physical education.

The current competency based Irish trainee programme and those police organisations under research are now far removed from the old disciplinary/semi militaristic style training of their 1st training programme. However, from an Irish perspective regardless of changes in the trainee programmes produced by Walsh (1985); Keating (1999), Nolan (2009) found Garda trainees were still under-trained and incapable at times of coping with a fast moving technological Irish society due to internal and external changes to trainee programmes. Analysis of the findings in Walsh (1985) and Keating (1999) reports states that failure to produce development in the trainee programmes shows the Garda organisation is failing to live up to the ideals of the original ethos of community service, and is in fact still striving to achieve the correct format to support the organisations new 2010 community based credentials in policing.

The findings of this work support the Nolan (2009) report which also confirmed under-development took place in the current programme (2003 to present). This was due to a policy of accelerated recruitment that produced (yet again) a pedagogical approach to trainee development which in turn had a domino effect through the trainee programme. It can also be concluded from the findings that the use of didactic methods of teaching/instruction was the main format of delivering the trainee curriculum in the 1st and 2nd
programme. This method was regarded by recruits/trainees as non-developmental because it was teacher/trainer centered rather than recruit/trainee centered. In the 2nd and 3rd programmes, teacher/trainers state Garda leadership contributed to this reversal by allowing a lack of quality control and continuous Garda staff transfers in and out of the training environment, this prevented continuity. It also allowed systems failure to develop throughout the trainee programme.

In both programmes there was a constant rotation of staff every 18 months to 2 years which was an internal Garda HRM transfer policy. This failure ensured that any progress that was made through the ideals of a social studies programme and an experiential learning environment was lost in the 2nd programme. Analysis of the findings state clearly that over a short period of time the quality of the programme eventually reverted to teacher/trainer centered as in the first programme.

A policy of accelerated recruitment doubled trainee numbers in the induction environment of the current programme. This forced a reduction in the facilitative mode of teaching from teacher/trainers that caused a reduction of normal skills acquisition for trainees. The debate between purely vocational or purely educational in police induction (produced in chapter 2), in Ireland is not entirely finished as yet. Analysis of the national and international literature review suggests integration of both sides would seem the logical answer. It can be concluded based on the findings in this work that the 2nd and 3rd Garda trainee programmes over a period of 25 years failed to deliver this integration; this is supported by the findings from the new Irish Nolan (2009) report.
It can also be concluded that with the implementation of accelerated recruitment in the current programme the recommended emphasis on using adult based educational strategies and methodologies was not realised and/or properly established. This programme after several months in 2003 was forced to lose the majority of its facilitative methodology. The programme within 5 years became like the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} programmes; bogged down in red tape, a lack of quality assurance measures and teacher/trainer centred. This allowed systems failures in quality control, infrastructure, IT and the experiential learning environment.

The anticipated reform measures of the Keating (1999) report did not take place as expected in the current trainee programme. Teacher/trainers stated full development failed at times, including their own continuous professional development which was needed to support trainee competency development. The Government policy of accelerated recruitment overshadowed and pushed any reform expected from the introduction of competency development to one side for this period. The greater reform demanded by the 2005 Garda Siochana Act side tracked the Garda Siochana; the organisation took ‘its eye of the ball’ in the induction/training environment.

This change in perspectives has shown quite clearly the laudable objectives of the competency development were lost over time. This was due to Government and Garda leadership failure to make sufficient resource investment to accommodate the exceptional intakes before it was implemented. The affects and changes to the current programme caused by accelerated recruitment was a constant and repetitive theme from all respondents in this period. The changes required due to accelerated recruitment caused
tensions between academic and vocational methodologies which eventually prevented the objectives of the competency development programme being completed.

The experiential learning diary is regarded as an excellent learning tool depending on how and where it is used for development. The use of the diary in the confined phases of the trainee programme in the Garda College was regarded as non-developmental compared to the diary’s developmental use in the experiential learning phases in the operational field of policing. The findings show that Garda College failures are linked to a lack of supervision by college staff which ensured trainees were not properly instructed in its potential/developmental use. The Garda College failed to invest and modernise an exceptionally important education tool and in turn failed to provide support in trainee development.

The use of classroom work and/or tutorials is the preferred learning environment given the ‘hands on development nature’ of the competency programme. The current programmes subject(s) delivery methods were designed for facilitation in small classroom environments which ensured discussion and analysis. The majority of subjects had practical and scenario based elements however, these were eliminated as they were time consuming in favour of delivering the majority of the programme in the lecture theatres.

This was not the first accelerated recruitment drive by the Garda Siochana; there was a previous drive in the early 1980’s. The only verifiable data available is the numbers recruited in this period which stands at about 2,000. Analysis of the data from teacher/trainers who were involved in induction training in this period stated it was obvious no
lessons were learned by Garda leadership on that period. Teacher/trainers stated if Garda leadership had, they would have known the problems that were going to appear considering very little has changed in the infrastructure and accommodation at the Garda College.

Under development of trainees took place at various times in certain subject areas in the second and current programmes. Teacher/trainers continually stated this underdevelopment of trainees was due to a lack of quality control in both programmes and in the current programme the effects of accelerated recruitment. There was a deterioration of teaching standards a lack of communications between teacher/trainers and trainees, a shortage of teacher/trainers at certain periods, a lack of integration of curriculum modules on phase three in the current programme, the overuse of lecture theatres in the current programme, a lack of skills acquisition in trainees’, a lack of classroom work and tutorials, an emphasis on theory based learning. Teacher/trainers also stated their professional role was also suffocated by the sheer volume of trainee numbers and finally, there was a lack of continuous professional development. All teacher/trainers stated these problematic areas were discussed at faculty and college meetings however, they were not heeded by Garda leadership.

Trainees’ lack of development in the college phases was supplemented by extra support from operational staff in the experiential learning phase. However, this in turn caused trainees to merge themselves into the work-place environment which is more powerful in shaping attitude and skills (individual characteristics, pre-college attitudes and/or pre-college education and training) towards policing than obtained from the training environment personnel (Chan et al 2003). Analysis of the findings in this work states this
was unknowingly enhanced by the provision of a trainees’ development list geared fully to “operational experiences” as an essential element of a successful experiential training programme.

The phase two competency progression list identified the various developments through police and community activities that a trainee must complete during experiential training. The importance of experiential learning according to all respondents was in the knowledge that it was an extension to the curriculum to assist development and the assessment of a trainees’ competence. The findings in this research shows conclusively that skill based training in the experiential learning environment was the preferred development option of trainees’ in both programmes.

It can be concluded from the literature review that modern police training and the operational work of policing in Ireland and internationally is facing a number of central developments: accountability and more professionalism, reformation of administration and management, the embracing of new technologies, more cooperation with all communities and finally a changing police culture. All experiences in multi-national training and policing confirms this, the challenge for police is to adopt even more developmental ways of administrating their organisations, securing meaningful trainee development and problem solving.

Based on this hypothesis, police trainee development means academic and training integration to take note of changes in policing. From an Irish perspective and central to this thesis is ‘what type of reform is taking place’ and ‘is it the correct reform’ to ensure meaningful trainee development. The findings state it is not the correct type of reform,
due to a ‘too’ strong relationship between trainees and organisational culture in the Garda College. This happened through Garda teacher/trainers attached to the legal/policing section for trainees’ initial period (phase one) in the trainee programme. Applying this to the phases/time scale, this strong relationship was reinforced in the experiential learning environment with strong bonds to operational Gardaí. The initial cause of this dependence was the production of a weak college programme for phases one and three that ensured certain subjects became “peripheral” which in turn caused underdevelopment.

Further to this underdevelopment in the Garda College phases, trainees’ experiential development on phase two in the operational field was achieved with an over-reliance on operational Gardaí. This over-reliance allowed trainees’ build towards their own operational independent status outside of the correct measures laid down by the training programme/environment. This dependence on operational staff was forced on trainees’ due a succession of ‘forced’ changes on teacher/trainers to adapt and then adopt a pedagogic approach which is the counter-opposite to the facilitative approach of the competency based programme. Over the course of this study the trainee programme syllabi remained the same but was delivered in lecture theatres in the Garda College and through an over-burdened teacher/trainer working environment in the operational field.

These changes are attributable to Garda leadership’s position of accepting Government policy over and above the needs of trainee development and teacher/trainers facilitation of the programme. Similar to the 2nd programme there was no proper accountability and measures were pushed through as demanded by government. As a leadership body it might be that the hierarchy of the Garda Síochana has a fear of government, and/or the
ability to say no when the circumstances are not right. This fear or not being able to say no is very applicable to the Garda Siochana training environment, as soon as a new trainee programme is underway instead of an integrated approach being allowed to develop, policy changes for whatever reason are soon implemented and it is out of the game.

‘If we don’t change the direction we are headed, we will end up where we are going’

(Chinese proverb)