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## Policing and Social Influence: Procedural Justice and Compliance Dynamics in the Work of Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers

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**Policing and Social Influence: Procedural Justice and  
Compliance Dynamics in the Work of Garda Juvenile  
Liaison Officers**

A thesis submitted to the Dublin Institute of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of  
Masters (M.A.) in Criminology

by

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2013

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material which is submitted in this thesis towards the award of Masters (M.A.) in Criminology is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any academic assessment other than part fulfilment of the award named above:

Signature of candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Word Count: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the role of social influence, in the context of the professional relations between Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs), and the young people they work with. Of specific importance is the concept of procedural justice, and its relation to perceptions of legitimacy and compliance dynamics. The aim of the research was to investigate whether the particular interaction patterns, enabled in the context of the JLOs professional role, could be found to have a positive impact upon young people's levels of compliance with legal authority, in and of themselves. In order to examine this element of lived experience, five semi structured interviews were conducted with serving JLOs in the Irish context. Findings were codified thematically and subjected to an integrated process of inductive and deductive reasoning, informed by existing literature on social influence, procedural justice and compliance theory. Results suggested that patterns of procedural justice are central to the work of Garda JLOs, and are essential to their ability to develop positive relations with the young people with whom they work. Evidence was found to suggest that this dynamic promotes the perception of JLOs as legitimate figures of authority on the part of young people, providing an important forum through which young people's resistance to the Gardai as an institution can be addressed, and internalised respect for legal authority can be promoted. The knowledge gained through this study provides information relevant to police training and service provision, highlights the importance of the JLOs role in securing behavioural compliance from young people, as well as the Gardai Youth Diversion Projects themselves, and adds to the existing body of literature regarding social influence on compliance dynamics. Furthermore the research has highlighted some specific areas for further study, the pursuit of which would serve to deepen understanding with regards to this particular contextual aspect of behavioural motivation.

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## **1. Introduction Chapter**

### **1.1 Research Focus and Context**

Similar to other states with comparable jurisprudence, the Irish juvenile justice system is distinct from the adult model, in the greater efforts that are made to combine welfare and justice ideologies in the treatment of minors who commit criminal offences (Griffin 2003). This increased amalgamation of conflicting ideologies, distinguishes much youth justice initiatives from the more adversarial context of the adult system. One such initiative that starkly encapsulates both the sanctioning as well as the restorative elements of youth justice is the Garda Juvenile Diversion Program.

Formed through the 2001 Children Act, the stated aim of the Garda Juvenile Diversion Program is to provide young people whose behaviour brings them into contact with the Gardai with a second chance. This is provided through the frameworks designed to deal with them, in such a manner as to prevent their being charged and processed via the regular criminal justice avenues ([www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)). This initiative is provided in cognisance to the fact that the acquisition of a criminal record has a significant punitive effect, and efforts should be made to re-orientate and divert young people's behaviour away from criminal activity, in effort to prevent such a detrimental outcome. Furthermore, research suggests that many of young people who engage consistently in petty criminality will in effect grow out of it, so long as stabilising influences such as employment and relationships are acquired (Robinson and Crow 2009).

The aim of this research is to examine the significance of the interaction patterns between young people dealt with by way of the Juvenile Diversion Program, and the individual Gardai responsible for its implementation. Specifically, the purpose is to examine any impact the interaction may have in and of itself, on young people's compliance with set behavioural standards, and the relevance of processes of social influence rather than the threat of sanction. Members of the Gardai who undertake to work with young people and administer the Juvenile Diversion Program, are specially trained for the role and referred to as Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs)

Qualified JLOs are assigned to designated areas and review all cases of young people who have committed a criminal offence in their jurisdiction. They are responsible for making a

recommendation to the director of the Garda Youth Authority as to whether a young person should be charged in the Juvenile Courts, or whether they should receive a formal or informal caution. The former takes place at the local Garda station and is considered more serious, while the latter often occurs verbally at a child's home in the company of parents/guardians. Under the terms of the Criminal Justice Act 2001, the issuing of a formal caution carries with it a period of twelve month supervision whereby the activities and behaviour of the young person is monitored by a particular JLO, to a level at the individual officers discretion ([www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)).

In practice, Garda JLOs often also operate in a bridging and supportive capacity. Developing insight into young people's situations and requirements, and working to focus any needed supports with the aim of addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour. This is primarily done through formal and informal contact with young people and their families, as well as consultation and liaison other professionals who may be aware of particular young people's needs, such as teachers or social workers.

The role of Garda JLOs is relatively unique insofar as they combine the office of a sworn member of An Garda Síochána, with many of the professional functions that might more commonly be associated with a social worker or even a youth leader. Furthermore, the patterns of interaction associated with the work of JLOs, starkly diverges from the more common contexts in which young people interact with members of An Garda Síochána. This includes the relatively informal patterns of contact characterising much supervision work, leadership roles in Garda Youth Diversion Projects, and the need to develop an understanding with regards to any underlying causes of offending behaviour. All of which necessitate a more personal and sustained form of interaction than is usually enabled by the demands of regular police work.

## **1.2 Rationale**

The particular nature and dynamics of JLOs interaction with young people is worthy of consideration, due to the body of research that suggests that socially based influence exerts a powerful effect upon personal attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately behaviour (Tyler 2010, Myers 2013). In recent decades, efforts to control criminal behaviour have focused on a manipulation of physical environmental factors in effort to make criminal activity as

unattractive as possible (Maguire et al 2007). Examples of such initiatives include the increase of CCTV surveillance coverage in urban centres, the growth in security orientated architecture, and punitive deterrence based sentencing strategy.

This focus upon manipulating the physical environment to make criminal activity an unattractive proposition is sometimes termed ‘instrumental deterrence’ (Maguire et al 2007). Despite the emphasis on such methods in the policy and practice of western nation’s criminal justice systems, evidence suggests that the influence of more subjective, socially constructed motivations, are responsible for exercising a far stronger control over behaviour (Tyler 2006, 2010, Kassin et al 2011, Hough et al 2011). An important facet socially based motivation arises due to individuals perspectives regarding the inherent legitimacy of legal authority, and the societal value of legal regulation (Tyler 2011). Gaining a greater understanding into the role of these social motivations is of huge relevance to the promotion of law abiding behaviour and effective service provision.

A strongly suggested determinate of many individuals orientation toward legal regulation, stems from their reflections regarding instances of contact with legal representatives, arguable the most visible of which are members of the national police force (Hinds 2007, Tyler 2011). The role of Garda JLOs puts them in a position by which they are often in sustained and personal contact with young people who have engaged in offending behaviour. This provides an excellent context through which to examine the influence of socially based factors on general perceptions of An Garda Siochana as an institution, and internalised perspectives of law and order.

To date, there has been insufficient qualitative research in an Irish context on the more subjective dynamics of social influence, and the manner in which it pertains to police work. This thesis seeks to address this omission, and provide the groundwork for further study.

### **1.3 Aims of the Research**

The general aim of the study is to examine the dynamics of JLOs interaction patterns with young people, in order to assess their importance with regard to the promotion of non-offending behaviour. Consequently the specific aims of the study are as follows:

- To examine the factors which promote positive relations between JLOs and the young people they work with.
- To examine if the development of positive relations between young people and JLOs have any wider significance on perceptions of fairness regarding the criminal justice process and An Garda Síochána as an institution.
- To examine whether there is evidence to support the contention that interaction with JLOs, is influential with regards to the development of a more internalised sense of legal responsibility on the part of young people.
- To make any relevant recommendations based on the findings, relating to effective service provision and further research.

#### **1.4 Technical Terms**

At this point it is necessary to briefly define some of the technical terms that are used in the wording of the research questions. These terms and the theory behind them are examined comprehensively in the literature review which makes up chapter two:

*Relational Interaction* – For the purposes of this study, this term refers to a pattern of continuing, affable, social affiliation between two individuals. In colloquial terms, it could be defined as an amicable acquaintance.

*Procedural Justice* – In this context, this term refers to perceptions of fairness regarding the methodology of legal enforcement, and the manner in which legal representatives wield their authority.

*Perceived Legitimacy* - This term refers to assessments regarding inherent moral authority. In this context, that of the law and Irelands national police force, An Garda Siochana.

*Normative Compliance* – This term refers to personal behavioural regulation, stemming from an internalised set of standards or moral code. It is defined in contrast to ‘Instrumental Compliance’, whereby behaviour is regulated in response to the presence of external rewards or sanctions.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

Three research questions have been drawn up in an effort to provide a framework to the research:

1. What factors contribute to positive relationships between Juvenile Liaison Officers and the young people they work with?
2. Do positive relations with Juvenile Liaison Officers increase perceptions of procedural justice and the legitimacy of An Garda Siochana on the part of at risk young people?
3. Do positive relations with Juvenile Liaison officers contribute to the development of more normative patterns of compliance within young people?

### **1.6 Research Methodology**

The methodology utilised in this research took the form of qualitative semi structured interviews with five serving JLOs. The results of which were subjected to a process of

thematic analysis and an integrated process of inductive and deductive reasoning. Given the focus of the study on elements associated with subjective social influence and the role of perception, it was decided that this form of research was the most suited to addressing the stated research questions.

### **1.7 Delimitations**

This research examines the dynamics of interaction between young people and serving JLOs. It is however important to clearly highlight the fact that the findings are based solely on the perspectives of officers. This is primarily due to practical constraints on the researcher, arising due to the increased ethical issues regarding research involving minors, and access issues associated with the sensitivity of interviewing with young people who have been subject to the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2001. Additionally, as with much qualitative research the sample size is necessarily small, containing feedback from five serving JLOs located in the East and North East of the Country. However, it is felt that the depth of the study serves to provide richness and relevance to the findings, despite the admittedly specific nature of the sample. Furthermore it is hoped that the examination of procedural justice dynamics in this policing context, will serve to highlight possible avenues for further research.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Thesis**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the research and outlined the focus and rationale, provided a breakdown of the studies aims and research questions, explained some technical terms, outlined the selected methodology and explained some delimitations.

Following this, chapter two addresses the existing theory and research relative to the study by in the format of a literature review. Research is presented pertaining to the role of interpersonal dynamics in belief and attitude formation, the nature of much youth-police contact, perceptions of legal fairness and legitimacy, compliance theory and criminal justice policy, and finally, the role of relational interaction in the promotion of a sense of procedural fairness.

Chapter three outlines the methodology which was utilised in this study, detailing the research method and design, issues of access and consent, addressing ethical questions and examining the strengths and limitations of the research. The theoretical basis behind social science research of this kind is further explored and a short reflective piece by the study's author is included.

Chapter four presents the findings gathered during the fieldwork phase of this study, it is divided into three sections relevant to the three research questions and is supported by selected quotes taken from interview transcripts.

Chapter five engages in an in depth, inductive discussion of the findings, drawing on relevant theory from the literature review to interpret the feedback in light of the underlying research aims and codified questions. The implications of the findings are then considered.

Chapter six then concludes the work by seeking to specifically answer the research questions and suggest possible avenues for further study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following chapter presents an overview of relevant existing research, in effort to provide a framework through which the study's findings may be considered. It begins by briefly examining research from social psychology pertaining to the manner in which beliefs and attitudes are socially constructed, and the relevance of this to the promotion of law abiding behaviour. Building from this, issues surrounding the nature of much police – youth contact are then addressed, examining the problems that can arise from the recurrence of highly adversarial situations. The theoretical framework of procedural justice is then examined, and its importance to citizens perceptions of legal institutions as being legitimate. This understanding is then contrasted with the manner in which the promotion of law abiding behaviour is usually pursued in western society. Finally, the role of relational interaction between authority figures and the public in the promotion of procedural justice is examined.

### **2.2 Interpersonal Dynamics in Belief and Attitude Formation**

Research from the field of Social Psychology, suggests that direct experience with other human beings plays a large part in how individuals come to interpret the world around them and their place within it. Processes of social influence such as the urge to conform and the need for social affiliation, affect everything from the self-concept to political orientation (Myers 2013, Kassin et al 2011). This is important because beliefs and attitudes developed in a social context have been observed to emit a powerful influence upon behaviour. Hence, what individuals believe with regards to the importance of law and order, and their views regarding institutions such as the police, will fundamentally affect their motivation to comply with the law and co-operate with the police (Tyler 2010).

As Tyler (2006) has noted, societies which utilise a democratic model of governance, and consequently policing, rely in practice upon the willing co-operation and consent of citizens with regards to law enforcement. Quantitative research conducted in the European and North American context, suggests the majority of adults view abiding by the law as

being to a greater or lesser extent a question of moral imperative (Tyler 2010). As researchers such as Tyler (2006, 2010) and others (Hough et al 2010, Bottoms et al 2001) have suggested, this motivation stems from the fact that from a young age the majority of people are socialised into obeying the law and viewing legal code as a necessary institution that works in the favour of all.

This socialisation process occurs similarly to the way that other social norms are acquired and developed, through interaction and the internalisation of behavioural patterning via contact with others (Kassin et al 2011, Myers 2013). However what makes orientation towards law and order separate from other areas is the increased opportunity for direct contact with the agents of criminal justice. This ensures that individual's perspectives regarding the law, stand to be socially influenced not only by their peers, family and community, but also by their direct interaction with fellow citizens who are employed as representatives of the justice system.

Arguably the most visible group who fall into this category, are those who make up the uniformed national police force (Newburn 2007). The police occupy a special role in society given their relatively extensive powers including the ability to deprive people of their liberty, as well as their authorisation and duty to use regulated violence as an expression of the nation states internal monopolisation of force (Maguire et al 2007, Riener 2010). This power is coupled with a relatively high level of discretion afforded to individual police officers, albeit with various frameworks for accountability and control.

The primary period for social conditioning occurs during the formative years of childhood and adolescence (Smith and Mackie 2007, Aronson 2008), and the most visible agents of the criminal justice system are the police. Given what is understood about the importance of social interaction on attitude formation, and attitudes and beliefs upon behaviour, the dynamics of contact between young people and the police is an area that requires close attention.

### **2.3 Youth – Police Contacts**

Published research in the Irish (Feeny 2009) and international context (Hurst 2007, Hinds 2007, Dirikx et al 2011) indicates that in the developed world, adolescents tend to hold

more negative perceptions of the national police force than their adult counterparts. Younger people consistently rate their police forces significantly lower in terms of trustworthiness, professionalism, ethicality, respect and restraint. As Dirikx (2011) points out these findings are consistent even when variables such as ethnicity and relative deprivation are controlled for.

Hinds (2007) notes that the consistent finding with regards to this discrepancy, is that the nature of police – youth contacts is a significant determinate of young people’s attitudes. Adolescents have a higher likelihood of being engaged in adversarial and confrontational interactions with police officers. This is due in part to the tendency of young people towards the increased use of public space for socialising (Loader 1996, Hurst 2007). Policing practice associated with monitoring public space and constraining the activities of youths, routinely incorporates tactical methods which can often lead to adversarial and confrontational contact. Such tactics include move on directives, stop and search and the use of identity checks (Reiner 2010). As Hinds (2007) notes the nature of these encounters foster negative attitudes towards the police, stemming primarily from young people’s disillusionment at what they perceive as unfair victimisation.

It has been suggested that this perception by young people of being victimised in large part arises due to the fact that negative police – youth contact is often initiated by the police (Fagan and Tyler 2005, Hinds 2007), with for example, officers responding to noise complaints regarding groups of youths. Hurst (2007) has noted that strongest determinate of negative attitude towards the police on the part of young people, stems from negative or adversarial contact initiated by police officers. Furthermore, negative attitudes once formulated by young people can lead to them engaging in confrontational behaviour towards police officers, in turn prompting more adversarial contact and perpetuating a cycle of hostility (Dirikx et al 2012).

Furthermore, researchers have suggested that young people may be more keenly attuned to perceived slights or disrespectful behaviour on the part of figures who command social or legal authority (Tyler 2006, Hinds 2007). This is theorised as being connected to the fact that adolescents as a rule, have generally not yet achieved markers of status associated with adulthood such as employment, material wealth or qualifications. They therefore are more likely to suffer from a measure of status anxiety, and can display self-identification as a socially marginal group (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler 2006). This is coupled by the

fact that people generally do not develop to the point where their personal self-identity is stable until their early twenties (Myers 2013). Such a state of personal and situational turmoil regarding identity and status can create a situation in which adolescents are more sensitive to perceived disrespectful behaviour.

In their qualitative research into Flemish adolescents attitudes towards the police Dirikx et al (2012) found that direct or vicarious experience of negative police contact was an important predictor regarding juveniles overall attitudes toward the police, with direct experience being the most important factor. Furthermore, as Reiner (2010) has noted, anger and resentment among youths resulting from the use of adversarial control and monitoring tactics by the police, has been a contributing factor to episodes of widespread social disorder. Such as the UK experienced during the 1980s in the Brixton and Toxteth riots, and the events in the US city of Los Angeles in 1992.

The prevalence of negative views toward the police on the part of young people is a cause for concern given that attitudes developed in childhood can often translate into lasting effects on adult perspective's (Easton and Dennis 1969, Dirikx et al 2012). Adolescence in particular is a crucial period in the socialisation process during which social norms and values are developed and reinforced. Attitudes towards legal authority and the police which develop in this period can have profound consequences, affecting attitudes and behaviour later in life (Dirikx et al 2012).

## **2.4 Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy**

Dirikx (et al 2012) have defined three main perspectives regarding the most crucial institutional attributes, through which people develop positive or negative attitudes towards their national police service. The first is the *performance based perspective*, which holds that people's attitudes towards their police service are mostly shaped by their assessments regarding the forces success at controlling crime. Secondly the *distributive justice perspective* suggests that people base their assessments primarily on their views regarding the fairness with which policing services are distributed across communities and demographic variables. Finally the *procedural justice perspective* states that the most crucial factor lies in peoples assessments regarding the fairness with which the police make judgements and exercise their authority.

Though each factor has relevance, research indicates that it is the ‘Procedural Justice’ question that is the most crucial in securing public support for the police (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler 2006, Hinds 2007, Dirikx et al 2012). Researchers such as Hinds (2007) and others (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Hough et al 2010) have made the case that perceptions regarding the legitimacy, or inherent moral authority of the police is most likely to be developed and maintained by young people when police officers carry out their duties in a manner that is viewed by young people as being procedurally fair. Research by Tyler (2006, 2010) indicates that individuals’ assessments regarding procedural fairness are based primarily on a number of factors including

1. Being given reasonable opportunity to explain ones actions, opinions or views prior to an authority figure making a decision affecting them
2. The consistency and neutrality of decision making on the part of authority figures and legal frameworks
3. A trust in the benevolence of the authority figure’s motives
4. Being treated with dignity and respect

Tyler (2006) further notes that when legal authorities display patterns of decision making that are seen to be procedurally fair, individuals are more willing to accept the outcome of these decisions even if these outcomes are unfavourable.

This underlying legitimacy and moral authority of the legal institutions themselves, enhanced by patterns of procedural justice, hence motivates compliance and co-operation from citizens resulting from a sense their having an inherent moral authority (Bottoms 2001, Tyler and Huo 2002). As Tyler (2011) and others (Hinds 2007) have pointed out, this dynamic is of special importance in the case of the police who rely upon public co-operation in their efforts to counter criminal activity. Additionally, evidence suggests that favourable perceptions of the police on the part of citizens rely on perceptions of their

being trustworthy and fair as well as, and perhaps even more than appraisals regarding their technical ability to confront crime (Mulcahy 2006).

Tyler (2006) has examined a number of theoretical models which attempt to codify the dynamics of the procedural justice framework in more detail, and develop a greater understanding regarding the ways in which procedural justice affects individuals. The model of procedural preference stems from theories of social exchange, according to which people maximise personal gain in their interactions with others and behave in ways that further that goal. Accordingly, when individuals display positive responses to police displays of procedural justice, they do so based upon perceptions that such open patterns of interaction increase their feelings of having a measure of control over any final decision. Hence individuals should only feel the benefit of being given a chance to state their opinion if they feel they are having an influence over outcomes.

This perspective can be contrasted with what of the value – expressive position, which holds instead that rather than procedural justice creating a sense of individuals having a measure of control, the behaviour of authority figures towards them instead affirms their self-worth and sense of social standing. Under this model what is most important is that citizens feel they are being treated with impartiality, in good faith and consideration is being taken of their views. The emphasis here is less on individuals perceptions of practical control and more to do with their overall perceptions regarding the fairness which is on display. Individuals desire in their treatment by authorities to be dealt with fairly and in such a way as affirms their personal sense of self-worth.

This process however, should not be conceptualised as operating in a vacuum. Braithwaite (2003, cited in Murphy and Cherney 2012) has questioned the impact that procedural justice process have upon the attitudes of those who view the very existence or purpose of Criminal Justice Institutions as unmerited. She draws a distinction between those who display attitudes and behavioural patterns of ‘resistance’ and ‘disengagement’. The former describing an agreement in principle with the need for institutions of criminal justice but disgruntlement with processes, while the later characterises a position that rejects the notion that these institutions existence is required. Similar questions regarding the situational variables are raised by Mandak (1993) and Gibson (1989), who contend that

more instrumentally based concerns have been observed as being the dominant factor regarding participation in the court process.

## **2.5 Compliance Theory and Criminal Justice Policy**

What makes the perceived legitimacy of the police so important is the impact of this upon levels and patterns of co-operation and compliance demonstrated by those they come into contact with. Tyler (2010) has noted that when individuals view legal authorities as having moral legitimacy by working to promote security and stability in society and communities, they are more likely to display a form of behavioural patterning known as 'normative compliance'. This form of law abiding behaviour is characterised by an individual's adherence to legal regulation due to a perception of the inherent social value and legitimacy of criminal justice institutions, rather than a fear of punishment (Tyler 2006).

Despite this research on the power of social influence, the image of the person that has informed criminal justice strategy in recent decades, is based in large part upon the preconception that behavioural patterns are motivated primarily by the presence of rewards and punishments (Garland 2001, Newburn 2007). This model of 'instrumental compliance' views individuals as being primarily influenced by the manipulation of their immediate environment. It is connected to underlying conceptions regarding human beings as fundamentally rational actors, who make their decisions based upon a hedonistic calculus designed to maximise personal happiness and gain (Einstadter and Henry 2006). In part this represents the extension into the legal arena of economic models, and assumes that law abiding behaviour is governed by the same sorts of calculated judgments that individuals make with regard to their material assets (Tyler 2006)

This social control theory has been reinforced by the emergence of public choice perspectives into Criminal Justice policy studies (Maguire et al 2007). The outcome of this perspective has been a focus in recent Criminal Justice policy upon the ability of the authorities to influence the personal costs of law breaking, as well as a substantial literature on the subject of deterrence (Braga and Weisburd 2012). The study of deterrence in practice has indicated the ability of instrumental manipulations to affect behaviour, most particularly in regard to resource based crimes such as burglary (Newburn 2007) and when there exists a substantial risk of being apprehended and punished (Bottoms et al 2001).

However, it has been observed that this rather simplistic model of authority is in isolation impractical to pursue as it requires an unrealistic ability upon the part of the state to benefit or sanction behaviour in accordance with legal requirements (Tyler 2006). Furthermore it has been suggested that such a far reaching level of deterrence ability would be unfeasible in the context of a democratic society (Giddens 1971). The legal processes in free societies function because citizens co-operate with those in authority and for the most part adhere to the norms of society that are codified in the Criminal Law (Tyler 2010, Hough et al 2011).

Tyler (2006) makes the case that strategies of law enforcement relying heavily on methods of instrumental compliance are less cost efficient, less sustainable and less effective than those which seek to promote normative patterns of regulation. Theory such as this has helped to inform policing practice associated with shifts toward community based policing and a focus on officer interaction patterns with the public (Murphy and Cherney 2012, Hough et al 2010). As Tyler (2006) has noted the concept of community policing epitomises the ‘service model’ of policing. This model conceptualises democratic police forces as essentially citizens in uniform who provide a wide range of services to the community.

## **2.6 Relational Interaction as a Vehicle for Procedural Justice**

Relational interaction is defined as a pattern of continuing affable social affiliation between two individuals, who have become to a greater or lesser extent personally familiar over a period of time. There is a significant body of evidence to suggest that positive, relational patterns of contact between authority figures, and individuals they come into contact with, can enhance perceptions of procedural justice.

McIvor’s (2009) research into the Scottish Drug Courts model directly tied the relational interaction between professionals and those on remand, to increased perceptions of procedural justice on the part of those involved in the system. The efforts made on the part of supervisors to promote and encourage positive steps taken by the participants, as well as displays of concern and empathy were identified by the researcher as reflecting key features of procedural justice. This behaviour was cited as reflecting both ethicality, and efforts on the part of those in authority to behave fairly and with regard to representation. The author argued that this positive relational interaction served to increase the perceived

legitimacy of the overall court process and worked to promote more normalised patterns of compliance within participants. The mutually respectful dialogue patterns were cited by the researcher as being central to the participant's perspectives of the overall system.

Research into the importance of the probation officer – probationer relationship, in the facilitation of desistance and behavioural regulation, suggests a similar effect may occur in this context. Displays of ethicality, respect and concern on the part of the officer can serve to promote compliance with directives on the part of probationers, stemming a sense of internalised obligation to the supervising officer as response to the fair treatment (Rex 1999, Burnett and McNeil 2005). Such effects have also been noted in the context of juvenile correctional facilities (Jones 1964).

In the policing context, Feudenberg (1986 cited in Hurst 2007) suggests that the increased support for police among rural youths could be due to the increased likelihood that they know individual officers on a more personal basis, due to the smaller, more enclosed and less transitory nature of rural communities. Research in the US context suggests that the facilitation of positive informal interaction via police officers involvement in youth groups, can serve to increase levels of trust and improve the general image of the police on the part of young people (Thurman, Giacomazzi and Bogen 1993).

However issues with the development of relational interaction patterns, in the context of very one sided power structures have been identified. Crewe (2011) has noted that in circumstances such as prisons there may be instrumental reasons underpinning the relational interaction, including the pursuit of dynamic security policies on the part of the authorities, and attempts to by prisoners to ingratiate themselves to officers with the power to shape a parole boards opinion.

As Crewe (2011) points out the presence of such power dynamics can render artificial any increased informal interaction with authorities, leading to a perception that it is simply an exercise of 'soft power' and fundamentally disingenuous. This most likely to be the case with those who harbour a deep seeded mistrust of authority figures typical of those to who Braithwaite (2003) assigned the category of 'disengagers'. Furthermore, as Dirikx (et al 2012) have noted the majority of evidence relating to the primacy of the Procedural Justice perspective in shaping public attitudes, was conducted in the context of ethnically Anglo

Saxon, or English speaking western countries. This consequently, has implications regarding the generality of this model to other societies within the developed world.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented some background theory and research relevant to this studies research aims. The role of social influence upon the formation of attitudes and beliefs has been addressed, as well as the relevance on this with regard to behavioural patterns. With this research in mind, the dynamics of youth – police contact were then addressed and the problems that can arise from persistent negative interaction were highlighted. The importance of procedural justice to perceptions of police legitimacy was then examined, and consideration was given to the value of promoting normative compliance as opposed to an instrumentally based pursuit public order. Finally the role of relational interaction in the promotion of procedural justice was considered.

It is important to note that despite the wealth of existing research on these issues, there is a distinct lack of research in the Irish context as well as more generally, on the importance of relational interaction to perceptions of procedural justice in the policing context. This thesis is intended to address this discrepancy, and assess whether the particular dynamics of police officers operating in the context of JLOs has significance regarding the above issues. The following chapter will outline the methodology of this particular study, and provide the framework through which the research questions will be addressed.

### **3. Methodology Chapter**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the selected methodology utilised in the course of this study. It begins by addressing the qualitative methods used and the design of the research schedule, before moving on to issues with access, sampling and the data collection procedure. The method by which collected data was analysed, as well as ethical considerations of relevance to the study is then addressed. Following this, specific strengths and weaknesses of the research are considered, the chapter concludes with a short reflective piece by the researcher.

#### **3.2 Research Method and Design**

Silverman (2011) makes the point that the underlying question and research objectives should dictate the method of data collection and analysis utilised. As this topic deals with the nuances of interpersonal relations, and the more subjective social motivations that can underlie action, the decision to engage in qualitative data collection was made to ensure the data gathered was subjected to adequate analysis. Quantitative research methods were viewed as being ill-suited to this studies aim of conducting focused in depth research into experientially based issues, concerning changes in perspective and behaviour (Bell 1999).

As the topics under consideration deal with issues of human experience, perception and behaviour, the requisite method of data collection had to necessarily enable examination of the subjective social experience in which they are framed (Powell and Renner 2003). Central themes of the study such as perceptions of justice and legitimacy, focus on lived experience and internalised conceptions of reality. Consequently a constructivist epistemology is central to the research design (Campbell 1955, Powell and Renner 2003), as well as a phenomenological paradigm with regards to role of individualised experience. Constructivist research such as this, which attempts to analysis the layers of meaning humans denote to experience, is heavily associated with several differing fields within the humanities such as cognitive and social psychology, as well as sociology and anthropology (Myers 2013, Macionis 1997).

Methodologically the research design is such that data was analysed by a process of interpretivism, aided by the tool of thematic coding. Data consisting of interview transcripts and any related notes taken immediately post interview were analysed in order to identify common patterns in the feedback, and to enable their organisation into individual categories. As Powell and Renner (2003) point out this stage is the crux of qualitative analysis, insofar as it codifies the data into relevant themes through which the research questions can be addressed.

Awareness regarding the importance of this phase influenced the decision to adopt the semi structured interview format for use in the data collection phase of the study. A key benefit of this model is that it enables a degree of contextual grouping from the outset, as the pre prepared research schedule works to group similarly based feedback into categories from the outset (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

The format of the semi structured interview was selected due to the fact that it strikes a balance between the regimented, sometimes restrictive format of the survey and the wide variability that can occur in totally unstructured interviews (Bell 1999). This format was intended to provide the interviewer with more control over the subject matters discussed in what is a wide ranging area of research, and permit greater levels of comparability between interviews (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

This format however, is designed to retain an element of fluidity and two way communication to the interviews. An aspect which is one of the key strengths of the semi – structured interview method, as it permits the interviewee to elaborate upon a topic as they see fit and pursue any important threads which emerge during the course of the discussion (Bell 1999, Corbin and Strauss 2008). The structured questions (see appendix) served as a guide to the interview and helped ensure all relevant topics were covered. Follow up and probing questions were also utilised in order to help the discussion develop.

There was an effort on the part of the researcher to design the questions and conduct the interview in such a manner as to permit the interviewee to challenge any underlying preconceptions, and to address the issue from within their individual frame of reference. This was done in order to preserve the emic perspective in the research, rather than to promote any underlying etic perspective during the discourse. Awareness of these effects

is important insofar as there can be a possibility of the researcher implicitly suggesting preferred responses, through the manner in which questions are framed (Campbell 1955).

Findings were derived from a hybrid process of necessarily inductive and deductive reasoning, with existing theory on procedural justice and compliance dynamics heavily influencing the analysis. As with all qualitative research this raises issues regarding the researcher being the primary analytical tool of the study, this issue is addressed more thoroughly in the ethics section.

Within the design of the research schedule, careful consideration was given to the underlying research questions. The set of nine questions was selected to build upon one another, with the first two being important in the building of rapport and general 'settling in' phase to the discussion. The depth and focus of the questions gradually increased with the last three dealing specifically with compliance dynamics. In practice, during the course of a number of interviews, the topics raised by later questions were adequately covered in the course of prior discussion. In these cases the redundant questions were skipped with the consent of the interviewee, to prevent them feeling obliged to repeat themselves.

### **3.3 Access**

An Garda Síochána have developed a framework through which they vet all applications for academic research concerning the organisation itself or its members and staff. This process entails the completion of an access form with details about the study, its aims, methodology and basis, and correspondence on any areas of detail with members of An Garda Síochána's Templemore based Research Unit. This process entailed the initial stage of the access process and ensured an additional level of ethical scrutiny was administered to the studies proposed methodology.

### **3.4 Sampling and Research Participants**

Five serving members of An Garda Síochána were interviewed for this study, all of whom served in the capacity of Juvenile Liaison Officers. They can be described as key informants given that their experience levels were extensive varying from seven to over

twenty years in the role. Their expertise and the focused nature of their role permits data of greater value to be gathered from a smaller sample (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

All were male, one individual held the rank of Sargent, while the remaining four were regular officers. Access was made predominantly through the use of gatekeepers and a degree of snowball sampling. Although the Juvenile Office in Harcourt Street supplied a list of work related email addresses for serving JLOs once the organisation had provided clearance to proceed with the study, emails to officers accounts only garnered one reply. This is likely due to the researchers status as an outsider, which was overcome by the assistance of gatekeepers. Two of whom were serving members of An Garda Siochana themselves.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

A copy of the interview schedule and an information sheet regarding the studies aims, methodology and theoretical basis, was forwarded to respondents in advance of the meeting. This was done in order to ensure they had a full appreciation for the structure of the interview, as well as the aims and background to the study, and to provide them with sufficient opportunity to raise any queries they might have. This phase of access was important in the initial building of rapport which is vital to the success of interviews, as essentially conversations with a purpose (Silverman 2011).

Before commencement of the interview, a summary of the studies aims and theoretical basis was once again provided and respondents were given another opportunity to raise any queries or seek clarification. Respondent's permission to record the interview via Dictaphone was reaffirmed having been previously sought during written correspondence, and the recorder itself was placed between the interviewer and respondent to enable the interviewee to physically terminate the recording at any point. The primacy of respondent's anonymity was once again emphasised and respondents were invited to fill out and read the DIT research ethics form to ensure they were happy with the particulars.

Cognisance was paid to practical issues such as dress sense, body language and the building of rapport through informal conversation prior to commencement of the interviews, in order to promote a relaxed yet professional atmosphere. All interviews

occurred by prior arrangement at Garda stations in the personal offices of individual JLOs, lasting for an average of 49 minutes. Interviews were concluded with respondents being given the opportunity to clarify or add anything they wished, and by thanking them for their time and participation.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Interviews were recorded by means of a Dictaphone so as to enable later transcription, the text of which formed the raw data for this study. Analysis of the data collected during the field research was conducted using the tool of thematic coding. Once the interviews had been transcribed and initial familiarisation with the research was complete, the feedback was demarcated into segments relevant to each of the three research questions. After which, information in the three contextual groupings was further divided into distinct themes relevant to the overall questions. In this manner the data was arraigned into topics and sub topics, and analysed in its entirety in order to attain as informed a set of conclusions as possible (Powell and Renner 2003).

Groups of data codified into collective themes and subthemes were recorded and analysed collectively adding structure to the findings. Emerging themes were developed with cognisance to existing theory surrounding topics such as social influence and procedural justice ensuring an integrated form of analysis, combining inductive and deductive reasoning (Powell and Renner 2003, Silverman 2011). Important also to the data analysis process, were the field research notes recorded immediately after the interviews. Reference to which enabled any factors of particular contextual importance to the recorded answers to be considered.

### **3.7 Ethics**

The preservation of participant anonymity was very important during this study, even more so due to the fact that participants referred to their personal professional experience, and engaged in what could be defined as narrative constructivism (Silverman 2011). There was the added concern regarding the need to retain the anonymity of any of the young people with whom individual JLOs have worked. Great care was taken to provide no information

that could lead to the identification of individual participants in the research (Wiles et al 2008).

The standards endorsed by the British Society of Criminology provided the ethical guidelines adhered to during the course of this thesis (British Society of Criminology 2013). The proposed study received clearance from the DIT Research Ethics Committee in the preliminary stages before any fieldwork preparation had commenced. Additionally the research cleared An Garda Siochanas institutionalised vetting process, with members of the Templemore based Research Unit reviewing and engaging in correspondence on areas such as the proposed methodology and access arrangements.

Data was held in the strictest confidence and secured in a password protected file, hard copies of transcripts were destroyed after the analysis was complete. No one other than the researcher had access to transcripts at any time.

Informed consent was ensured through prior contact with respondents which detailed the studies aims, methodology and theoretical basis. In many cases this was done initially via telephone contact, but all participants were also emailed documents summarizing these aspects of the study in a word document, as well as copies of the research schedule (see appendix for examples). This was done at least a week in advance of the interview dates in order to provide sufficient time for respondents to review the information.

Care was taken to ensure that respondents understood the format of the semi structured interview and were aware of what to expect, the format was outlined by the researcher as being akin to essentially a structured conversation. Additionally, respondents' right to withdraw at any time was made clear from the outset. A copy of the research findings will be made available to An Garda Siochana, as well as to the individual participants in the study.

As the instrument of data collection and analysis was necessarily the researcher, this raises ethical questions regarding bias and objectivity of the findings (Silverman 2011). Every effort was made on the part of the researcher to record and analyse the data in the most objective manner possible. Attention was paid to the framing of questions and patterns of interaction to ensure that the researcher is not imposing preconceived notions or opinions upon the participant. Care was taken to allow the interviewee to answer from within their own frame of reference and to state their own opinion and views regarding the subject.

This extended into the transcription phase of the study to ensure that issues of punctuation and sentence structure that arise when converting dialogue to script, were addressed in such a manner as to preserve the original meaning behind the words (Powell and Renner 2003).

Consideration was further given throughout the data analysis stage to possible epistemological issues raised relating to individual constructionism or emotionalism on the part of both the researcher and participant (Silverman 2011). These issues were considered in order to acknowledge any underlying assumptions and present the data in as clear and unfiltered a manner as possible.

### **3.8 Strengths and Limitations**

The specific nature of this study inherently limits the generalizability of any findings and precludes the development of any statistical claims. The fact that all respondents were male should be additionally considered as a qualifying factor through which to view the findings. Precluding as it does, any gender based comparison regarding varying perspectives and approaches which may or may not arise. Furthermore it could be argued that in the exclusive focus upon officers and not young people themselves in the study, presents only one side of the coin regarding the underlying issues. Further research, examining the perspectives of young people who have been supervised by JLOs, or possibly a form of observation study would serve to enrich the perspective provided by this thesis.

Additionally, there are some limitations inherent to the research design itself, which require cognisance. This form of qualitative research carries with it an unavoidable reliance on self-reported data, this creates a concern regarding the possibility of social desirability bias influencing the feedback. This effect occurs when the natural human desire to portray oneself in a good light, leads interviewees to answer questions in a manner designed to create a favourable impression, creating obvious consequences for objectivity (Bell 1999, Silverman 2011). Attempts were made on the part of the researcher to minimise the risk of this effect, by stressing anonymity and confidentiality in effort to emphasise the fact that they would not be identifiable in the finished study, and consequently nothing they said would be personally attributable. Furthermore, the care was

taken to ensure that participants understood the goals of the research, and the importance in objectivity regarding the findings.

While it must be admitted that some of the reasoning behind the research design is in response to practical considerations there is an inherent benefit to conducting qualitative research with a smaller sample and focusing on participants from a similar category. The focused nature of the study and the opportunity to compare individual perspectives arising from similar working environments provided a rich set of data through which to address the research objectives (Corbin and Strauss 2008). It is felt that the depth arising from the focused nature of the research, counterbalances the specificity of context and respondent profile. Furthermore the lack of similar research into this aspect of the JLOs role ensures that this study breaks new ground into examination of compliance dynamics in response to procedural justice practice.

### **3.9 Reflexivity**

Conducting this research was an interesting experience insofar as it provided me, the researcher, with the opportunity to interact with, and conduct research into the professional roles, of individual members of this country's national police force. Coming in as an outsider served to be a slightly intimidating experience as interviews were conducted within Garda stations themselves, and the research vetting process impressed a sense of official formality. However every member of An Garda Siochana I interacted with was exceedingly friendly, and went beyond what I would have reasonably expected in terms of helpfulness to a third level student. It was especially enjoyable on a human level to speak with JLOs about their work, and get a sense of their enthusiasm and commitment.

Although they can sometimes be factors in this type of qualitative research, I did not get the sense that personal aspects, such as my relative youth, had any significant impact on the manner in which respondents interacted with me. There were no gender based issues arising, nor were any underlying attitudinal views especially significant. I got the impression that individual JLOs enjoyed having the opportunity to speak about their work, and were genuinely interested in engaging in with the study.

### **3.10 Conclusion to the Methodology**

This chapter has examined issues related to the particular methodology utilised in the course of this study. It has examined areas of research design, data collection and analysis, sampling, access, ethics, offered some analysis related to the studies particular areas of strength and weakness, and has included a reflective piece by the researcher. The following chapter presents the findings which were recorded by this process of research.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The use of the semi structured interview format allowed for a comparison of the data gathered from the five interviews. Thematic analysis of the data indicated a number of themes related to the study's areas of interest and the theoretical framework provided by the literature review. These findings are presented below, categorised into the three subject areas addressed through each of the research questions. The factors important in establishing positive relationships between Juvenile Liaison Officers and the young people they work with, whether these good relations increase young people's perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy regarding An Garda Síochána, and whether they contribute to more normative patterns of compliance on the part of young people.

### **4.2 Factors Important to the Promotion of Positive Relations**

Regarding the factors that contribute to positive relationships between Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) and young people, respondents highlighted a number of key themes as being important in their securing of positive relations with young people. These were communication skills, non-adversarial patterns of contact, positive informal interaction, honesty and forthrightness and the displaying of procedural fairness in decision making.

#### ***4.2.1 Communication Skills***

Communication skills were cited as being of key importance by all respondents. Officers A and D noted their training in mediation skills as being an asset when dealing with fraught and emotionally volatile situations involving groups. Respondents indicated that their ability to put young people at ease and communicate in a way that did not intimidate, was crucial in eliciting positive rapport. This in turn enabled them to properly assess any requirements young people may have which might help counter their offending behaviour, such as educational support or the increased structuring of free time:

*'Communication, organisation, rapport with a young fella if you rub his back up the wrong way, if he doesn't trust you, no one wants to be getting phone*

*calls from the Guards saying I'll see you at 7 o'clock and that but it leaves it a lot easier if the young person has met you and built up some sort of an understanding about you, about what your role is, the way you're gonna talk to them, address them and that sort of thing' (Officer E)*

The ability to listen and show patience when interacting with young people was noted by officers as being a factor when dealing with reticent or hostile young people:

*'You have to be a good listener, you have to have a good way or to achieve a good way of getting on with people' (Officer C)*

*'In building up a good relationship you have certainly got to be a good listener and not to miss something and then to build on that' (Officer D)*

#### **4.2.2 Non Adversarial Contact Patterns**

All respondents noted the importance of non-confrontational and relaxed interaction with young people to their role, and their ability to develop an understanding of the young person's situation and possible requirements for support:

*'I am not coming in to give them a stick or they are not coming in to get shouted or roared at. I am coming in to give them facts relating to his future, relating to what offences will result from his actions. It's not a roaring and shouting match' (Officer E)*

Officers A and C noted the fact that JLOs work in plain clothes as being a positive factor in their development of relationships with young people. Noting that the presence of an adult in a uniform can have an intimidating effect upon some young people and, in some circumstances, can act as a barrier with children whose social circumstances have instilled in them a culturally learned hatred for authority:

*'I think it's a uniform thing you know, kids are very suspicious of anybody in a uniform. I think perhaps it's a bit of a barrier, I work in plain clothes as all JLOs do and I think that kind of endears us a bit to the kids' (Officer A)*

Additionally, respondents cited the inherent role of JLOs as being more akin to providing a service than enforcement, this contributing to their ability to develop good relations even with young people generally antagonistic towards the Gardai:

*'I suppose it would be fair to say that a lot of the kids around (location redacted as an identifier) don't have a lot of time for the uniformed Guard because you know they are stopped and searched and they have their names taken out on the street a lot, now on the other hand when I call I'm different. I'm not there to stop and search them or write their names in a notebook or anything like that, I'm there to help them'. (Officer A)*

#### **4.2.3 Positive Informal Interaction**

Respondents credited opportunities to interact with young people informally in the community or through Garda Diversion Projects as being key to developing relationships. It was generally held that this tended to have a humanising effect, leading to young people connecting with Officers on a more personal, everyday basis. Conversations about topics of mutual interest such as sport, games of pool in youth work centres and affable interaction such as is referred to colloquially in Ireland as 'having the craic', all served to provide for patterns of social interaction disconnected from officers professional roles. Officer B noted his work with Garda Youth Diversion Projects as being an important environment in developing his relationship with the young people he supervised:

*'When they come down fishing, I do fishing with them and I cook burgers on the barbeque and the skill set there is they see me as kind of an adult and a figure kind of a grandfather figure that they can ask questions to and trust to help them out', (Officer B)*

Similarly officer E noted that he would make a point of speaking with young people about everyday subjects and engaging in friendly dialogue unrelated to anything regarding his

professional role. He further emphasised the importance of encouraging young people on positive behaviour or noting and praising achievement in extra-curricular activities such as sport.

#### ***4.2.4 Honesty and Forthrightness***

The importance of treating young people with respect and preventing any sense of falseness in relating to young people was further highlighted. Respondents indicated that any sense of falseness or perceptions of manipulation on the part of young people would inhibit their ability to develop a good relationship. Expressing a genuine desire to help young people while remaining forthright with regard to behavioural standards and consequences, was seen as the best way to achieve a positive and beneficial interaction:

*'I don't think you could be a JLO if you were full of yourself, I don't think it would work these guys and girls are not stupid they will read you like a book and some of them are very clever .... they will sound you out like and they may decide "Well I'm not so sure about him", so I think just being honest like and telling it to someone like it is, and even if they don't like hearing it, you have got to be straight with them' (Officer D)*

Officer D related that even with regard to potentially very difficult advice such as to cease contact with delinquent peers, young people tend to appreciate the genuine intent behind directives:

*'You have got to be realistic and say," look I know you are not looking forward to this and I appreciate that and I know its gonna be hard but I have to tell you its gonna be like this". So the honesty and straightforwardness like' (Officer D)*

#### ***4.2.5 Procedural Fairness***

Respondents expressed an understanding that young peoples offending generally stems from identifiable causes such as negative peer groups, a lack of healthy structuring regarding pastime, educational difficulties or problems with family support structures.

Practices of procedural fairness displayed by the officers in examining the totality of young people's circumstances and needs, was cited as a factor that helped to break down barriers which had developed through socially cultivated attitudes or previous adversarial contact with Gardai. :

*'We look at everything so that the young person can turn around and say hold on a minute these people are getting me, like you know they are giving me a help out here and that is very important in compliance and it works' (Officer B)*

This display of procedural fairness was cited as being crucial to officers ability to both develop positive relations with hostile or reticent young people, and to adequately assess what supports they required. The importance of procedural fairness in practice was heavily emphasised by all respondents.

### **4.3 Procedural Justice and Perceived Legitimacy**

Relational interaction was reported by JLOs to be strongly associated with perceptions of procedural justice on the part of young people. This factor was found to be crucial in the acceptance of JLOs by young people and their families. Some limited evidence was recorded suggesting a possible link between this and to increased perceptions of An Garda Síochana as a legitimate institution.

#### ***4.3.1 Procedural Justice***

Key tenants of procedural justice practice were cited by interviewees as being indispensable to their role and dealings with young people. In many cases, they were indistinguishable from the relational, non-confrontational patterns of interaction the officers adopted with young people as part of the course of their work. Important aspects cited by respondents included displays of impartiality, consistency, respect and providing the young person with a chance to explain themselves and have their case heard:

*'You have to let the person you are cautioning know why he's being cautioned, you have to tell him this behaviour, "Look you are not going to keep getting away with it maybe once or twice more", and you have to say what's the underlying causes of this?' (Officer C)*

*'Again you nearly know straight away when you meet a young person their attitude toward you and their body language, it could be fear it could be intimidation, so you put them at ease, "I am not here to judge you or give out to you I am here to discuss what happened and give you information related to your future" '. (Officer E)*

Respondents emphasised that recourse to the juvenile courts was reserved as a final option, only resorted to once all other avenues had been exhausted.

Two officers related how it was beneficial to adopt an impartial non accusatory tone even when they were convinced that a young person was not being truthful, explaining that in order to develop the relationship and find out what sort of supports would be needed for the young person they had to earn the young person's trust, in so far as they needed to feel what they said to the officer would be taken seriously:

*'So to develop the relationship you say, "Look I believe you but how are we going to deal with this situation? ". So you get them kind of half around to saying, "Well yea I was there and I did take a pull of it (joint of cannabis) but I wasn't", next thing you have him half telling the truth so then you have developed some sort of relationship' (Officer B)*

Several officers spoke about how they would seek to emphasise the consequences of criminal behaviour to young people, and would appeal for them to consider their futures and the repercussions that continual offending will have:

*'You just explain to them, "Look if you keep down this road you are gonna end up an alcoholic or in court or your schoolings gonna be affected, and your futures gonna be affected", now theres always that small percentage you don't get through to but they go through the system that fast that its very hard to do anything for them'. (Officer C)*

### **4.3.2 Perceived Legitimacy**

Respondents stated that they sought to promote the legitimacy of the national police force, as well as the need for regulatory authority and boundaries in a more general sense, in their interaction with young people. These appeals were only made on the strength of the trust that had been previously developed through the building of relationships and the adherence to tenants of procedural justice therein. This was noted by respondents as being of increased importance in areas where there existed what they described as a ‘cultural hatred of authority’.

Officer B related how he utilised a Garda Youth Project outing as an opportunity to direct traffic in his uniform so as to give the young people a direct example of police work serving in a beneficial function. As well as to reemphasise to them that he was a full member of An Garda Síochána, as they would be accustomed to seeing him in plain clothes:

*‘I put my uniform on and did traffic duty, and I was directing the buses and cars and telling them where to go and all, but I did that so the kids could see me in uniform and they get a buzz out of that, they thought it was great you know. But that whole exercise was to show them we are Guards, but we are Guards for a reason, and I constantly throw that back at them when we do the group projects and say, maybe, “Ok if there was no police then how would things work?” ’ (Officer B)*

Respondents related how they would seek to explain and justify the regulatory actions of Gardai in a manner that emphasised to young people the necessity of the services provided by a national police force. They further prompted the young people to view incidences such as public order disturbances from the perspectives of those charged with keeping the peace:

*‘You must outline the legal side of it to them too, that these people are only doing their job and they cant be taking abuse from you. I mean they can take so much but look at the other side of it, if someone was standing over the other side of the road and was roaring and shouting at you or have drink on them people would be looking on and saying well, “Why isn’t the Guard arresting*

*him he's causing a nuisance to the Guards and to everyone else", so they must take action' (Officer C)*

Several Officers explained how they related police work to other regulatory function in society an effort to portray An Garda Siochana as a legitimate institution of authority, and would seek to humanise individual Officers to young people. A consistent theme was the manner in which the JLOs served to absorb and engage with criticism of the Gardai or their colleagues' conduct. Respondents felt it was an integral part of their role to present a considered and impartial representation of the force:

*'All hellfire and brimstone let loose on you and you carry that for the rest of the force and its fairly hard but after a while you get a thick skin and you get used to it...I have to sit there and say," Look I wasn't there I don't know whether you are right or wrong but I am going to listen to you and I'm going to accept what you are saying but if want to do any more about it you go elsewhere."' (Officer D)*

This interplay regarding the connection between procedural justice and legitimacy was reported as being of relevance to the securing of compliance from young people.

#### **4.4 Patterns of Compliance**

In response to questions regarding the dynamics of compliance and securing it effectively from young people, interviewees related some limited evidence of normative compliance patterns developing in young people in response to their contact with JLOs. Other evidence emerged of compliance eliciting from more Rational Choice based areas such as the deterrent effect of the Criminal Justice System, and more informal social checks and controls associated with the shame and stigma of committing a criminal offence.

#### ***4.4.1 Normative Compliance***

Several Officers related how they would, during their interaction with young people, routinely make appeals designed to encourage more normative frameworks of compliance from young people. This was done through a number of strategies including, promotion of reflection with regards to behaviour, emphasising behavioural norms associated with respect for others, prompting young people to view events from the perspective of others and attempts to relate the function of policing to other contexts in which behaviour is regulated:

*‘If you are told to move on by a Guard there is a reason for it, someone is after ringing up and saying, “There is three lads out drinking on the green and we are trying to get the kids to sleep”, or maybe, “My granny is living with us and she’s not well and we don’t need this at one o’clock in the morning” ’ (Officer D)*

The starkest example of the development of internalised codes of behaviour in response to the influence of a serving JLO, was provided by Officer B. Officer B related an incident from his career that suggests evidence of a young person internalising a sense of ethical obligation to the officer in question. According to Officer B, he had an experience whereby a group of four young people were captured on CCTV breaking into his parked car and stealing items from within. The culprits were quickly identified by the footage, one of whom turned out to be a young person under this Officers supervision. This individual was quickly arrested in the area and Officer B related what occurred when he confronted him in a Garda holding cell:

*‘He was down there in the cell and I came in and said, “Jesus, what, what’s going on here?”, and he started crying and he was saying, “You’re the only one who ever did anything for us and I dunno why I was with them lads”, and blah de blah. So he was crying down there in the cell and I said, “look”, I was in a rush and I says, I have my ID card I use as a wallet...and if that goes missing then I’ll have to write a big report and that so I says, “Will you go out and get the wallet back and half an hour later he rang and says we have that for you” ’ (Officer B)*

Officer B related how he felt the young person's shame at his behaviour in stealing from a person who was seeking to help him, was an important lesson in accountability and how subsequent to this event three of the four young people involved sought to make restitution:

*'In fairness three out of the four of them came down with an envelope with 400 quid in it to pay for the damage. So that's telling me look the damage to the car was bad enough but the after effects three out of the four lads came back, in fact two of the four have completely quietened down'. (Officer B)*

#### **4.4.2 Deterrence and Informal Social Controls**

Regarding the issue of what motivated compliance, respondents highlighted two other key factors which served to constrain young people's offending behaviour. These were the deterrent effect of the Criminal Justice System itself, and the effect of informal social controls and stigma. Several respondents described young people's apprehension regarding the consequences of a criminal conviction for employment and travel opportunities. This legitimate fear was something officers would emphasise when delivering cautions, in an effort to highlight to young people the value of the reprieve they were receiving:

*'I think outlining the consequences is an important factor, the fear of going to court is a big one for a lot of them...you know the majority of young people don't want to go to court the majority of young people want to have a future'. (Officer C)*

Furthermore, officers A and B related the importance of informal social controls, such as shame and an appreciation of the stigma of criminal behaviour. They explained that many young people receive a shock when the seriousness of their actions was brought home to them and can be deeply affected by perceptions of disappointment and shame on the part of their families:

*'You would be surprised how many ladies will go into Pennies and steal something, and then when they get caught and the whole mayhem subsides, potentially most of them never do it again' (Officer B)*

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the findings garnered from the qualitative field research conducted in regard to the stated research questions. Factors identified as enhancing relational dynamics included communication skills, non-adversarial contact patterns, positive informal interaction, honesty and forthrightness, and the demonstration of procedural fairness. A strong correlation was found between relational interaction and perceptions of procedural justice, with key aspects of procedural justice practice being central to the reported standard practice of respondents. A suggested link was found between the adoption of procedural justice practice and the perceived legitimacy of individual officers with more limited evidence recorded as to its effect on perceptions of the force in general. Some limited evidence regarding the development of normative behavioural frameworks in young people supervised by JLOs was found. Appeals to normative constraints on behaviour were found to be central to many JLOs efforts to promote behavioural change.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews and discusses the findings presented in the previous chapter, in light of underlying research questions and the literature on the topic presented in Chapter 2. The reported importance of relational interaction to perceptions of procedural justice is discussed, and framed within the existing body of research on these issues. Evidence regarding the impact of these processes on perceptions regarding the legitimacy of An Garda Síochána is further examined. Finally, analysis is offered regarding the implications these issues may have, on the ability of JLOs to promote more normative patterns of compliance within young people.

### **5.2 Dynamics of Relational Interaction and Procedural Justice**

The findings indicate that key aspects of procedural justice practice, are essential to the professional goal of building positive relationships with young people and is of central importance to the work of JLOs. The emphasis placed on facilitating collaborative two way dialogue, and the importance of showing young people respect, suggests that in this context, some core tenants of procedural justice practice may be effectively indistinguishable from everyday patterns of affable interaction. Such interaction patterns based on mutual regard and respect, are designed to develop normal, positive social affiliation (Kassin et al 2011). This being the case, it is difficult to distinguish whether perceptions of procedural fairness increase on the strength of young people's relational interaction with officers, or whether these perceptions are required to develop relational patterns of interaction in the first place.

Given the requirements of a supervisory role, such as is proscribed by the position of Juvenile Liaison Officer, it is somewhat difficult to separate specific procedural justice practice from healthy, respectful patterns of interaction that human beings adopt when seeking to develop relationships based on mutual regard. In many cases the display of procedural fairness is essential to this, insofar as healthy personal relations can only develop when individuals develop a degree of trust in one another's motives and become familiar (Kassin et al 2011). Furthermore respondent's lack of emphasis on more

authoritative approaches with regards to their supervision work is notable, and the general agreement between Officers that young people must be made to see the error in their behaviour through their own reflection rather than external monitoring and punishment.

The relational nature of the interaction as well as being built upon key tenants of procedural justice such as ethicality and respect, also provided a context through which factors such as consequences could be outlined in detail, and the procedure of officers' decision making process could be demonstrated. This provides opportunity for the wielding of authority to be viewed in a context which is open and accessible to young people, and counteracts the situational dynamics that can be present in adversarial encounters, such as may occur when young people are moved on from an area by the Gardai (Hinds 2007).

The heavy emphasis on personal consequence made by officers in their discussions with young people regarding their behaviour, is likely to promote within young people perceptions regarding the benevolence of these authority figures motives. Promoting such a view on the part of citizens, has been cited by researchers such as Tyler (2006) as being of crucial importance in developing views regarding fair procedure. Prompting individuals to assess their experience with regard to questions of 'distributive justice', or situational assessments based on perceptions of how even-handed the authority figure is trying to be in relation to all parties concerned.

Respondent's description of the minority of young people whose behaviour remained unaltered despite intervention work, could be indicative of a profile such as that described by Braithwaite (2003) as 'disengagers'. This term is used to describe individuals who fundamentally reject the authority of legal institutions such as the police, and consequently are extremely resistive of any attempts by such bodies to impose behavioural regulation or sanction. Such a profile might be applied to adults who have a politically driven objection to the legitimacy of a given police force (Mulcahy 2006), or who have constructed a self-identity which is adversarial to the police as an institution (Braithwaite 2003). In developing adolescents this resistance more likely stems from a rejection of authority and boundaries in their totality, resulting perhaps from prior negative experience or strong social influence (Kassin et al 2011).

Young people who responded more readily to the efforts of JLOs, especially to the displays of procedural fairness could be more in line with a profile that Braithwaite (2003) described as ‘resisters’. These individuals are distinct from ‘disengagers’ in so far as they do not harbour any deep seeded rejection of the police or legal authority in principle. However they display a willingness to transgress established behavioural boundaries, and displays of behaviour that could be described as being antagonistic towards authority figures. This group has been suggested as being more open to attitudinal change upon viewing displays of procedural justice on the part of agents of legal authority. Such a description may be applicable to young people who are happy to engage in dialogue with JLOs regarding their grievances or complaints associated with the Gardai, and who are willing to alter their views or behavioural patterns in response.

One of the core conclusions made by researchers who have examined the dynamics of compliance, is that when patterns of procedural justice are displayed by authority figures during the decision making process, individuals are more likely to abide by resulting decisions or directions, even if they find these to be unfavourable (Tyler 2006, 2011, Hind 2007). The findings of this study are generally in line with this suggested effect, with officers reporting that young people tended to respond to the genuine underlying intent that lay behind directives. Even when the stipulations made could be assumed to be very unfavourable to teenagers, such as suggestions to cease contact or refrain from social interaction with peers exerting a negative influence. Such a human response to expressions of concern made on the part of authority figures, was found to be an important factor motivating compliance in McIvors (2009) study in to the dynamics of the drug court model.

Furthermore, it is likely that such patterns of interaction and the willingness of officers to engage with young people’s claims even when they harbour reservations about their truthfulness, can lead to what Tyler (2006) refers to as a value – expression effect. This term is used to describe the importance to individuals of having their views taken into consideration by authority figures, and their perceiving of their input as being of more significance than as an empty pacifying exercise. As psychological research suggests, individuals tend to place a great deal of importance on whether or not their views and opinions are respected and taken seriously. This is because such an assessment serves as an indicator of one’s standing within a social group or context, and has implications regarding

the maintenance of a positive self-image and sense of personal worth (Aronson 2008, Tyler 2006).

Research into the effect of social motivations regarding behaviour has consistently found that individuals are more likely to comply with behavioural regulations, if they view the authority that issues these regulations as being fundamentally legitimate. That is to say being intrinsically worthy of respect, and commanding a level of moral authority (Tyler 2006). Perceptions regarding this legitimate status are based upon situational assessments regarding this authorities behaviour, and in particular the standards of fairness and neutrality exhibited by its agents in the course of their duty. Displays of neutrality, ethicality, respect and consistency combined with benevolence of motivation creates a perception effect known as Procedural Justice. Such a perception is key regarding individuals assessments of the legitimacy of legal institutions. The findings suggest that such practices are central to the professional practice of Garda JLOs. Possible implications for perceptions of Garda legitimacy regarding individual officers, and the organisation as a whole, are now examined.

### **5.3 Legitimacy Promotion and the work of JLOs**

The findings indicated a strongly suggested link between the practices of procedural justice, in the context of relationally based interaction, and the receiving of JLOs as legitimate figures of authority by young people and their families. JLOs ability to form positive relations with young people and families generally antagonistic towards Gardai, likely stemmed from them being viewed primarily as an aid or someone there to provide a service. This stood in contrast to general connotations regarding Gardai operating in enforcement or sanctioning capacities, a distinction made clearer by the fact that JLOs operate in plain clothes and drive unmarked vehicles.

Seeking to avoid conjectural extrapolation, it is difficult to make any wider claims regarding the importance of JLOs in enhancing perceptions regarding the legitimacy of the institution of An Garda Siochana. However research from the field of social psychology suggests that direct personal interaction with representatives of an organisation, can have a profound effect upon views taken by individuals regarding the wider bodies they operate on behalf of (Kassin et al 2011). This occurs due to the human tendency to frame

perceptions through the context of human interaction, and the importance of this type of experience regarding individual's formation of conceptual models through which to interpret their environment (Myers 2013). This effect has been well documented in the context of market research regarding customer service and its effects upon consumer's wider perceptions of a commercial entity (Tyler 2011, Myers 2013).

In the policing context, the emphasis on community forms of policing that arose during the 1980s in much of the English speaking world, was in part due to a realisation regarding the importance of facilitating positive interaction between officers and the public. This effort came to be recognised as all the more vital due to the need to counteract the alienation felt by large sections of the population towards the police (Newburn 2007, Riener 2010). Judging by the findings, it could be suggested that the role of the JLO provides an extremely useful function for bridging the gaps between disillusioned sections of the public and the Gardai. It is likely to have a similar effect upon perceptions of institutional legitimacy, as has been observed through community policing practice in other jurisdictions and contexts (Newburn 2007).

As has been previously highlighted, researchers have suggested that young people may be more keenly attuned to perceived slights or disrespectful behaviour on the part of figures who command social or legal authority (Tyler 2006, Hinds 2007). However the reported professional approaches by officers, presented in the findings, would in all likelihood serve to act against such a perception. The emphasis on honesty and forthrightness in dealings with young people is likely to develop a positive social affiliation, due to its likelihood in creating a positive impact on their self-perception (Kassin et al 2011). The respect shown for young people's views and the willingness to take their positions seriously may emphasise perceptions of procedural fairness, while reiteration of personal consequences and encouraging success may well have the effect of instilling a perception of benevolent motivation on the part of officers towards young people (Tyler 2006). All these are key features in the procedural justice model of building legitimacy and may well explain why JLOs, tend to reportedly enjoy such good relations with the young people and families they work with.

Tyler (2006) has noted that a key feature regarding conceptions of legitimacy on the part of legal authority is the work of direct experience. This effect is referred to as the 'political effect' of experience, and refers to the way in which assessments regarding the moral

authority of legal institutions, are in large part based upon interactions with their representatives. Findings indicate an awareness of this connection on the part of respondent officers, given their statements regarding the duty to show a 'human face' of the Gardai. The importance of which was seen as increasing in the aftermath of citizens having adversarial contact with their colleagues.

Findings indicated that the opportunities for informal interaction created by social contact in Garda Youth Projects, served as settings through which to prompt debate and discussion regarding the role and necessity of a national police force in society. Such interaction could be seen as a likely forum in which positive perceptions of the Gardai as an institution may be promoted. Judging by the fact that young people are prompted to think about the necessity of law and order, as well as the generally agreed upon need for a uniformed and organised body of people with specific powers to enforce it. Findings indicated a generally positive response on the part of respondents, regarding their observed impact of these types of discussions on young people's views and attitudes.

The findings indicate that individual JLOs are perceived by the majority of citizens they work with as legitimate wielders of authority, insofar as they are accepted and respected by young people and their families. A measure of this behaviour is doubtlessly due to instrumental concerns associated with young people's fear of the formal Criminal Justice System, and regard for the legal power inherent in a JLOs status as a sworn police officer. However it is unlikely that this would account for the level of positivity in relations that is reportedly enjoyed by JLOs, or their ability to garner co-operation from individuals who are generally antagonistic towards Gardai. It is highly likely that their increased success in these areas is related to the perceptions of procedural justice imparted in large part through more relational, continual patterns of interaction. This effect serves to enhance their personal legitimacy, and quite possibly the legitimacy of An Garda Síochána as a whole. The impact of this effect upon compliance dynamics will now be addressed.

#### **5.4 JLOs ability to promote patterns of Normative Compliance**

Findings indicated that officers utilised the particular relational dynamics of their interaction with young people, as an opportunity to promote an understanding of behavioural regulation, which could be identified as having its base in a normative model

of compliance. Specifically with regards to emphasises such as having respect for others, and viewing ones behaviour in the context of social responsibility. This was reportedly done through the framing of incidences such as public order offences, in a manner that drew attention to the distress and discomfort caused to innocent individuals by violent or disorderly behaviour. Findings indicated that officers would seek to encourage young people to view such incidences from the perspective of innocent members of the public unwillingly affected, or alternatively members of the Gardai responsible for maintaining peace and public order.

Findings indicated that such conversations occurred in the context of discussions with young people under supervision, in locations such as local youth groups or during meetings at residential homes. In so far as they were framed to the researcher in the manner of an amicable discussion, it is safe to assume that they are somewhat reliant on the presence of trust and affiliation previously developed through the relational dynamics hitherto discussed. Such a sense of personal responsibility in relation to the wellbeing of others is profoundly normative in nature. Behavioural modification is not being made due to the necessary presence of a utilitarian scale of punishment or reward, but through appeals to solidarity with others in the wider community and social group, prompted at a basic level by a need for social affiliation as an end in itself (Aronson 2008, Tyler 2011, Kassin et al 2011).

Developmental theorists such as Lawrence Kohlberg, understand such socially based behavioural constraints as being associated with later stages in individuals moral development. Such perspectives are held to develop in large part through the context of positive and healthy social relations, based upon mutual respect and a shared social consensus (Aronson 2008). In so far as JLOs from the position of serving police officers are making appeals based on such normative grounds, the potential attitudinal adjustments regarding the moral authority of legal frameworks should be considered.

Findings from the interview with Officer B, indicate that he views the shame exhibited by the youth caught breaking into his car, as arising from this young person's regard for the fairness and ethicality with which he had previously been treated. Such an internalisation of moral obligation to others is generally held to be distinct from instrumental concerns regarding personal reward or punishment. It is seen as connected instead to the manner in which humans as social animals, develop affiliation based on behavioural patterns of

mutual reciprocity (Aronson 2008). Researchers such as Tyler (2006, 2011) have convincingly demonstrated the importance of these forms of motivation to individual compliance with the law. The particular opportunity for JLOs to promote such behaviour, as members of An Garda Síochána who often operate in such a sustained and relational context with young people, is an area that merits further study and discussion.

## **5.5 Implications of the Findings**

The implications of these findings are outlined below. Knowledge garnered through this study has possible implications with regard to service provision and training as well as for the importance of the Garda Diversion Program and resource allocation.

### **5.5.1 Implications for service provision and training**

This study echoes research done in the Irish (Feeney 2009) and international context (Tyler 2006), highlighting the importance of procedural justice practice in the work of criminal justice professionals. As the specific nature of this study concerned policing practice, it may have implications for training procedures, insofar as new officers should be made aware of the practical link between displays of procedural fairness and compliance with the law.

Doubtless the importance of professional conduct and citizens' rights, is as a rule strongly emphasized in the training and standards of An Garda Síochána. However, individual officers interviewed in the course of this study did not seem to be aware of the evidence for the effect of these attributes on generalised perceptions of legitimacy and patterns of compliance. All respondents emphasized the importance of aspects such as respect, professionalism, and fairness, but evidently had not been informed about the wider and deeper implications of this for issues of legitimacy and normative compliance.

Given the wealth of research into these areas, it seems remiss that those on the front line are not sufficiently informed about the degree of influence on a more subjective social level, they can have when they adhere to practices of procedural justice. At a time when Garda morale in general is reported to be low, such an emphasis may well serve as a

source of encouragement and serve to bolster efforts to display procedural fairness in service delivery.

Furthermore, while An Garda Síochána enjoys very high levels of support and approval among the Irish public, an area of consistently more negative response is in such matters of cordiality and respectful conduct (Feeney 2009). While it is important to remain realistic about the difficult, adversarial, and confrontational nature of much police work, education on the body of research into procedural justice and compliance should be provided to officers. This should be done to ensure they understand the larger scale importance of citizens' perceptions in any given encounter, and to the practical impact of engaging with citizens in a manner that displays the core tenants of procedural justice.

### **5.5.2 Highlighting the Importance of the JLOs Role**

The findings of this clearly demonstrate the centrality of procedural justice practice to the work of Garda JLOs, and the importance of this in to their ability to develop positive relations with the young people they work with. Furthermore, findings have highlighted the hitherto underemphasised aspect of the JLO role in so far as it serves to provide a forum in which young people can engage with members of An Garda Síochána in a relational context. Given the research indicating young people's relatively poorer relations with Gardai (Feeney 2009), as well as the negative nature of much police-youth contact (Hinds 2007, Tyler 2011) and its possible consequences (Kennelly 2011), this aspect of the JLOs role requires increased attention.

Furthermore, the strongly suggested link between the dynamics of JLOs interaction patterns and increased perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy on the part of young people, provides support for on-going community policing efforts to strengthen ties between citizen and the Gardai (Garda 2013). An effort that is especially important in marginalised and deprived communities. The findings suggest that the particular nature of the JLOs role may be of wider significance to the larger, on-going effort to bridge divides between certain sections of the populace and the Gardai.

### **5.5.3 Implications for resource allocation**

This research provides further evidence of the importance and impact of the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programs and the significant contribution that they and the individuals who work in them provide to Irish society. During the current challenging public funding situation it is important to emphasize the role these programs play and the need for professionals like Garda JLOs to have sufficient resources with which to work. It should be noted that as the Diversion program operates in a preventative capacity, withdrawal of public money in the long run will in all likelihood prove more expensive to the state in the long run given the increased number of young people who will end up in some stage of the formal criminal justice system.

### **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the findings of this study in relation to the underlying theory as presented in the literature review, and has presented some suggestions based on a methodology of interpretive reasoning. The development of positive relational interaction patterns in the context of JLOs sustained contact with young people was found to be reliant in large part upon defined processes of procedural fairness. Accordingly when assessing the importance of relational interaction to increased perceptions of procedural justice, the two issues appear to be intrinsically linked, as the development relational interaction in and of itself, appears to be reliant upon processes of procedural fairness. Regarding the legitimacy question, findings provide strong indication that JLOs are viewed as legitimate figures of authority by the majority of citizens they have contact with. A study of this size and nature cannot provide authoritative assessments regarding the wider impact of this effect upon perspectives of An Garda Síochána as an institution. However given the established evidence regarding the importance of procedural justice practice to perceptions of an institution as a whole, it could be suspected as having an impact on wider perceptions. Furthermore the

potential of JLOs to promote more normative patterns of compliance with the law, by virtue of their particular position and role, has been examined. Finally the possible significance of these findings has been presented. The final chapter in this study will now

assess this information directly in the context of the stated research questions and seek to offer suggestions for further study.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study was gain insight into the interaction patterns which occur between JLOs and the young people with whom they have professional contact. This was done in an attempt to examine what impact this interaction may have with regards to young people's perceptions of procedural justice, the legitimacy of An Garda Siochana and the Irish Criminal Justice System, and upon patterns of compliance.

Three specific research questions were drawn up in order to frame the research. Findings relating to each of these three questions will now be summarised along with some brief implications and recommendations for further study.

### **6.2 Factors Contributing to Positive Relations between JLOs and Young People**

This study has found that in the context of JLOs relations with young people, much of what is defined as procedural justice practice is effectively indistinguishable from the patterns of positive social interaction, consciously adopted by JLOs in the course of their work. The feedback on this issue could be grouped into four categories:

- Respectful two way patterns of communication
- Honesty and forthrightness in dealings
- Opportunities for positive informal interaction
- Displays of procedural fairness

### **6.3 Positive Relations, Procedural Justice and Legitimacy**

The study found strong evidence to suggest that the patterns of relational interaction adopted by JLOs in the course of their work with young people, contributed positively to perceptions of procedural justice and Officers own personal legitimacy as authority figures. More limited indication was found, suggesting that this effect contributed to the perceived legitimacy of An Garda Siochana as an institution.

### **6.4 Positive Relations and Normative Compliance**

Evidence was recorded to suggest that JLOs included in this study, seek to promote behavioural regulation based on normative frameworks, within the young people they work with. Some limited evidence was found to suggest that interaction with JLOs can develop more normatively based compliance patterns in young people, as a response to displays of procedural justice and young people's experience of positive, ethical treatment by Officers.

### **6.5 Implications and Recommendations for further Study**

Findings from this study suggest that the role of Garda JLOs and the particular patterns of interaction they engage in with young people may, in and of themselves emit a considerable effect upon the attitudes and even behaviour of at risk juveniles. The research indicates that the relational, sustained (in the supervision context) and procedurally fair manner in which officers deal with the young people referred to them, may well lead to a situation whereby they are in a position to exert a considerable socially based influence over young people's perceptions.

This finding is significant because of the existing body of research that indicates the level to which perceptions of legal authority can influence behaviour (Tyler 2006, Hough et al 2010). This study however utilised a relatively small sample of officers and further research on a larger scale is required to adequately address the issues raised in a broader context. In particular, the perspectives of young people and individuals who have gone through periods of supervision under a JLO after receiving a formal caution should be explored in order to investigate the significance of these findings further.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Schedule**

1. How long have you served as a Juvenile Liaison Officer in An Garda Siochana?
2. What motivated you to work in this area of policing?
3. In practice how different are your professional responsibilities from the work of a regular member of An Garda Siochana?
4. Does your supervisory role require the extensive use of any particular skillset?
5. What factors are important in establishing a good relationship with the young people you deal with in a professional capacity?
6. Do you feel that more relational one to one interaction has an effect upon how you as an authority figure are perceived by young people?
7. In your opinion, what factors play an important role in securing compliance from young people?
8. In the context of your professional relations with young people, how important do you view positive interpersonal interaction as being in the securing of compliance?
9. Do you feel that positive relations with authority figures have a general benefit for at risk young people?

## **Appendix B: Document providing general Information on the Research**

[A copy of this document was forwarded to all prospective participants along with the interview schedule.]

### **Further Information on the Research Project**

#### **Study Aims**

The study intends to examine whether the particular nature of the interaction between JLOs and young people, specifically the more personal and sustained nature of the relationship, has any effect upon young people's attitudes towards the police and patterns of behaviour. I am particularly interested in what motivates compliance with the law and authority in general, and what (if any) role interactions patterns between authority figures and those they work with have to play in motivation co-operation with set behavioural standards.

In this research I would like to examine whether the elements of the JLO role, such as extended supervision of young people, can be shown to have an impact on attitudes and co – operation in a more subtle way than would generally be envisioned through the use of deterrence and punishment. I want to examine whether the perception of being responsible to an individual, being treated fairly according to ones efforts and the continued connection with a human face of authority can have an influence on behaviour.

#### **Study Methodology**

The format I would like to utilise would be that of the semi – structured interview. In essence this means that we would have a structured conversation wherein I would seek to glean the benefit of your experience in addressing the above issues. The feedback I receive from participants would form the hard data for my study which would then be analysed in relation to the study's aims.

Please see the attached interview schedule for a breakdown of the themes I would seek to cover. Due to the format of the research these questions are not intended to be formulaic, but as a means of providing structure to the discussion, while enabling us to explore any themes which arise in the course of the conversation. If there is any topic you are uncomfortable exploring or see any area you would like to skip over, please feel free to simply point this out to me and we can avoid it. Needless to say you can terminate the interview or withdraw consent to participate in the study at any time. With your permission interviews would be recorded via Dictaphone to enable ease of

later transcription. Again it is your prerogative to stop the recording at any time. Your anonymity and that of any individual you have worked with is absolutely guaranteed, no information enabling identification of participants will be included in the finished study.

### **Publication of Results**

The finished study would be utilised in a solely academic context, and submitted as part requirement for the MA in Criminology from Dublin Institute of Technology. It may be placed in the college library located at the DIT Mountjoy Square campus, and online via the DIT arrow database, which can be accessed through the DIT website.

### **Contact Details**

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information on the study. Please see below my contact details as well as those of my supervising lecturer at DIT as well as the member of the Gardai Research Unit in Templemore with whom I was in contact to secure permission to conduct this study.

*Eoin Morrison* – (redacted)

*Dr Sinead Freeman* – (redacted)

*Patrick Kennedy (Garda Research Unit)* – (redacted)