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International Experiences in Policing Multicultural Societies

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Abstract

Despite exemplary initiatives by many police organisations to promote good relations with ethnic minorities, the history of policing in multicultural societies often seems little more than a litany of accusations of police racism. In order to address this concern, the *Rotterdam Charter: Policing for a Multi-ethnic Society* is currently being implemented throughout Europe.

This article provides an overview of international experiences in implementing initiatives similar to those recommended by the *Charter*. They indicate that progress in building better relationships has proved to be slow and that a wide gap still remains between the police and ethnic minorities.

International Experiences in Policing Multicultural Societies¹

John Casey

1. Introduction

In June 1996, a conference of experts on policing practices in multicultural² societies was organised by the Rotterdam police and RADAR, a non-government anti-racist organisation. This conference resulted in the drafting of a statement of principles, *The Rotterdam Charter: Policing for a Multi-ethnic Society* which, under the auspices of the European Union, is now being adopted by police services in a number of European countries.

This article provides an overview of international experiences in implementing programs to strengthen police-ethnic community relations, similar to those contained in the *Charter*. It concentrates on English-speaking countries, with particular emphasis given to the U.K., Australia and Canada. These countries have a higher percentage of immigrants in their society than most industrialised countries and a longer history of addressing issues regarding policing diverse societies.

After providing a short background on police relations with immigrants and native minorities in industrialised democracies, this article will describe the principles outlined in the *Charter* and analyse the experiences of countries in implementing programs consistent with them.

2. The Police in Multicultural Societies

A recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in the U.K. noted that:

"It must be recognised that racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, and harassment are endemic within our society and the police service is no exception." (HMIC 1997, p2)

The starting point, therefore, for any discussion of policing in a multicultural society is an analysis of wider social and political responses to diversity. Essentially, we need to examine whether diversity is regarded as a reality to be appreciated or one to be feared (Omaji 1999) and how these attitudes are translated into government policies.

In many European countries, the presence of immigrants is seen by significant segments of the community as a threat to the economic well-being of European citizens, and the attempts by immigrants to maintain their cultural heritages is seen as a threat to the unity of the existing majority culture. This sense of threat is often translated into political rhetoric and into government policies, which are hostile to the presence of immigrants, and to their expressing their cultural heritage.

In contrast, in countries, with more of a commitment to multicultural settlement and integration policies, there is less resistance to diversity. Countries of relatively new colonial settlement such as Australia and Canada have, since the 1970s, based government policy on normalising a multicultural reality in both the construction of

¹ An earlier version of this article, in Catalan, appeared in *Policia catalana i multiculturalitat* published in January 2000 by the UNESCO Center of Barcelona and the Catalonia Police Academy to mark the adoption of the *Rotterdam Charter* by police services in Spain.

² The word multicultural is used to designate culturally and linguistically diverse societies. In this article, the focus is on multiculturalism in industrialised democracies that has resulted from the presence of both native/indigenous minorities and foreign immigrants.

their national identities and for delivering public services, while European countries such Britain, Holland and Sweden have also adopted official policies that endorse and celebrate diversity.

It must be acknowledged that, given their positive policy orientation to diversity and policies which guarantee social and political rights to minorities and immigrants, these countries are in a much stronger position for addressing the issues relating to policing a multicultural society. The emphasis in these countries has moved away from discussing the merits of police being sensitive to diversity and shifting to strategic issues such as how to understand the dilemmas presented by this diversity, how to implement effective operational changes and how measure the outcomes. Yet, as we shall see in this article, even these countries continue to have problems in effectively dealing with the issues.

It is also important to note that the issue of who is a minority, and more importantly who is a discriminated minority, is highly variable between countries. Moreover, the multicultural reality in many countries is not just an issue of immigration as there are native minorities, such as Aborigines and Romany, some of who suffer more discrimination than immigrants and often have the most intractable relations with wider society and the police. What is celebrated as the new diversity created by immigration is often treated with some suspicion by existing native minorities who rightly do not see themselves as just one more group of the new "ethnics". Instead of celebrations of diversity, Aboriginal populations in Canada and Australia have sought a process of reconciliation that addresses the historic dimension of the invasion and discrimination they have suffered.

At the same time as we accept that policing is influenced by the wider incidence of racism in society, we must acknowledge that police present a particular case study in the relationship between minorities and the wider society. Police are in a contradictory situation: they are the guardians of democratic values and they are called into protect and enforce laws which seek to ensure the rights of minorities, but they are often also seen as the one of the primary instruments of institutional attacks on minorities and, on a more personalised level, are frequently regarded as a recalcitrant conservative bastion of majority society, more disposed to rejecting minorities than embracing their participation in society.

Despite many important initiatives by police organisations to promote good relations with ethnic minorities and the exemplary work of many individual officers, the history of policing in multicultural societies often seems little more than a litany of accusations of police racism. Numerous commissions of inquiry, operational reviews and other reports document institutional and individual police behaviours that serve to discriminate against minorities (Chan 1997, HMIC 1997, 1999, 1999b). These include physical violence, discriminatory law enforcement practices that lead to over-policing and procedures which deny minorities equal access to justice and insensitivity to language and cultural differences.

The standard fall-back position has been that police are "only doing their job" and engaging in good policing, which may have an unintended consequence of adversely affecting certain minorities (Chan 1997, Waddington 1998). But studies indicate that stereotyping and discrimination do in fact affect policing (see Section 3.6. below) and this reality, compounded by the impact of a small minority of true racists in the police creates a vicious cycle that militates against good relationships between police and minorities. Socio-economic factors appear to be reinforced by discriminatory practices and become self-fulfilling prophecies that lead to over-policing or inappropriate policing.

Police relations with minorities are also seen as a product of the loose amalgam of background, professional isolation and ideologies often termed "police culture" (Chan 1997). This culture is often seen as rooted in a conservative, macho-based worldview which is seen as lagging behind wider attitudes and reluctant to accept diversity, whether it be due to gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

There is consensus in police organisations in industrialised democracies that the current situation must change. Changing relationships with minorities are often linked to other reforms such as the introduction of community and partnership policing, the "civilianisation" of many police tasks and the greater emphasis put on crime prevention. Concepts such as "consultation", "accountability", "police professionalism" and even "customer satisfaction" are become more prevalent in policing as integral components in the strategic management of police *services* (as opposed to police *forces*), and closer links with minorities are seen as essential elements of achieving the goals that are being set (Comrie 1995).

Racism and discrimination among police has shown itself to be remarkably resilient to reform. Chan (1997) documents how the State of New South Wales in Australia, despite being a leader in police reform, with internationally-recognised radical and innovative programs, in a country that has the highest percentage of immigrants per capita in the developed world and is a recognised leader in integration policies, continues to display entrenched racism and problems such as a high number of deaths of young Aboriginals in custody.

It can be a long and arduous task to achieve acceptance for diversity among police offices and change can be slow. The HMIC report Winning the Race documents reforms in the U.K. dating back to the recruitment of the first three officers from visible minorities in 1965 and the first introduction of race and community relations subjects in initial police training in 1973. This report offered specific blueprints for improving relations with ethnic communities, but a second report in 1999, Winning the Race Revisited, while acknowledging that many good initiatives are taking place, came to the conclusion that "progress has been less than satisfactory with many of the recommendations [from the 1997 report] being 'sidelined' and few forces place the issue high on their agendas." (HMIC 1999b, p. 7)

Moreover, the second HMIC report coincided with the McPherson inquiry into the response of the London Metropolitan Police to the death of a young black man, Steven Lawrence, which found widespread institutional racism (McPherson 1999). The findings have been disputed by some sectors of the British police and some deny institutional racism exists (Fuller 1999), but even those who argue against its existence, agree that the British police have to regain the trust and confidence of the ethnic minorities (Policing Today 1999).

Documents such as the *Charter* are important milestones along the road to reform, but it is important not to underestimate the commitment needed to implement its recommendations or the complexities involved in bringing together the different elements that must be part of reform. Chan (1997) offers a conclusion that should be seen as the background to the best practices presented in this article.

"[S]trategies such as cross-cultural awareness training and community-based policing are ineffective on their own. They must be accompanied by appropriate structures of police accountability and legal regulations as well as social reforms ... Sustainable change can only be achieved through a combination of external pressure, organisation leadership and political commitment." (Chan 1997, p.14)

Unfortunately, all too often reform takes place only in the context of major scandals such as the death of Steven Lawrence, the bashing of Rodney King, captured on video in Los Angeles, and the public broadcast of a documentary on police in Sydney that showed them using racial epithets as a matter of course.

3. Rotterdam Charter Principles

The 1996 conference which laid the groundwork for the *Charter* brought together practitioners from around Europe who described the best practices in their jurisdiction, and distilled these into operating principles in five areas: the necessity for an integrated and coordinated approach; recruitment and retention of minorities; implementing anti-discrimination legislation; relations with ethnic communities; and, crime statistics and stereotyping.

These areas are similar to the operating principles previously identified in countries with a longer history of immigration. The Australian police services, for example, in 1990 held a National Conference on Police Services in a Multicultural Australia which led to the subsequent creation of a National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau (NPEAB) in 1993 as a joint initiative of the Police Commissioners of the eight Australian jurisdictions and the Australian Multicultural Foundation. The NPEAB produced a document, Governing Principles for Policing a Culturally Diverse Australia (which was later used as a model for the drafting of the *Charter*) that stated:

"While our diversity makes Australia an exciting, colourful and vibrant society, it also present challenges to service providers such as police to deliver services that are relevant, culturally sensitive and easily accessible to all Australians irrespective of their backgrounds."
(NPEAB 1994, p. 2)

The remainder of this article will follow the structure of the *Charter* to review of the experiences of other countries.

3.1. The Necessity for an Integrated and Coordinated Approach

As recognised in the first section of the *Charter*, commitment is necessary at the highest level of government and policing, with clear benchmarks established. Police organisations must clearly indicate their commitment to equitable policing and that they regard the behaviours of officers who show discrimination and prejudice towards the community or their fellow officers as unacceptable.

The Corporate Plan of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police indicates how a commitment to diversity can be expressed:

"The Government of Canada recognises cultural diversity as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and, as a federal institution, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is committed to providing effective police services that are appropriate, sensitive and equally responsive to all segments of Canada's diverse society.

The RCMP is committed to policies and practices which reflect all laws, regulations and government commitments confirming and dealing with cultural diversity, including all laws prohibiting discrimination on any ground, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion and gender.

The RCMP is committed to a membership which is representative of Canadian society and to promoting and supporting equity within its employment practices." (RCMP 1999)

At the same time, there must be ongoing operational planning and regular reviews. In some jurisdictions in Australia, the police services are required to submit Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements to the heads of their government and police-ethnic community relations is a standing item of the Conference of Commissioners of Police, Australasia and South West Pacific Region. In the U.K., the HMIC recommends that jurisdictions carry out a Community and Race Relations audit, and their 1999 report provides a checklist for carrying out such audits (HMIC 1999b).

While such reports are an important element, critics note that they can become a paper exercise and their aspirations are not put into practice (HMIC 1999b). The commitment must go beyond mere words and written policies. As the HMIC noted, "There was clear evidence that even competently-written policies and strategies can in themselves do little to change attitudes, perceptions and working practices. There must be unequivocal and visible support at the highest level and supported by effective leadership and the superintendent level and appropriate first-line management interventions." (HMIC 1997, p.2)

Most importantly, any of the areas covered by the *Charter* will not in isolation meaningfully address issues. There is a tendency of police organisation to emphasise one area, such a training or recruitment, to the exclusion of other areas and in the absence of real management commitment this strategy has led to failures.

Unfortunately, the wider police organisation is often held hostage by the attitudes of a minority of officers and, as the HMIC notes, the racist attitudes of one officer can destroy the goodwill built on the non-discriminatory efforts of hundreds of others (HMIC 1997). It is therefore necessary that police services be in a position to document and to communicate to the public their work in dealing with diversity. The *Charter* provides a good basis for creating specific indicators to measure quantitatively and qualitatively if the agency is working effectively with minorities. The HMIC Race and Community Relations audit model mentioned earlier and the ten-point checklist for identifying how an agency is dealing with cultural diversity developed by Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has created (in Omaji 1999) are examples of benchmarks used in other countries.

3.2. Recruitment and Retention of Minorities

While there are many examples of exemplary recruitment campaigns which seek to attract minorities through the use of the ethnic media and networks, and it remains a core strategy in improving relationships with minorities, it has proven to be difficult in most countries.

At the most basic level, there are practical and environmental difficulties. With immigrant communities, there are often citizenship considerations, but this is less of a barrier in countries that provide relatively quick access to citizenship for permanent residents or allow non-citizens to be police officers. Education levels of immigrants and native minorities often also prove to be barriers and some police services have provided specific bridging courses to provide essential pre-recruitment training.

The use of civilian staff from minority backgrounds, such as specialised liaison and reception staff, has proven to be one way of bringing much needed skills into police organisations through the non-uniformed ranks. The roles and

responsibilities of this staff need to be well understood and there are often complaints that they do not receive the resources or support to do their job and that they were accorded low status job categories within the organisation (Chan 1997).

But the biggest barriers to minority employment have proven to be the intangible aspects of attitudes from both sides. Policing may not be seen as a desirable profession among minorities, given past relations with the police, and there may be fear of ostracism from their own community who may view them as “traitors”, combined with a fear of being treated harshly by biased serving officers or with disrespect by some citizens. There may also be fear of retribution to recruits and their families if there is an expectation that the recruit will be used in undercover work with organised crime elements in their community.

There is also often resistance from sectors of the policing profession who, while often avoiding direct expressions of racism, manifest responses similar to those which met the earlier recruitment of women. They express their “concern” that minorities would lower standards, usually physical or educational standards, and that the use of staff who have accents or do not speak a standard version of the official language would make communication more difficult.

Recruitment, community education and information campaigns must address these attitudes among the general public, and internal training must address the resistance of police officers to cultural diversity in their ranks in order to ensure better retention of minority officers.

Experiences in many countries have shown that retention is as difficult as recruitment, and minority officers have a higher dropout rate. The reasons for this dropout include: pressures from outside, from their own community; harassment and name calling from fellow officers; rejection and lack of respect from the general community. Therefore, police services who make a commitment to recruitment must make an equal commitment to retention, as each disenchanted officer who drops out often acts a disincentive in their community (Fuller 1999).

Studies on retention have shown that some supervisors displayed little awareness or understanding of harassment and discrimination issues, and there was a lack of faith in the grievance procedure by many individuals (HMIC 1997). Many serving officers from ethnic backgrounds felt unsupported by management and were left to rely on support from colleagues of similar background, often forming professional associations or interest groups. In Britain, a Black Police Association was formed in 1994 and while there has been some hostility to its existence from some quarters, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary “welcomed its formation” (BBC News Online 1998; HMIC 199b).

It should also be kept in mind that the presence of minority police officers is not a panacea for problems in policing those communities or for changing attitudes within the police organisation. The mere presence of police officers from a minority background will not have an immediate impact. Studies show that they tend to take on the working personality that is prevalent in the service and tend to accept much of the discriminatory behaviours and racist jokes as simply a part of the price they have to pay to work in a non-traditional field (Chan 1997).

Nor will the designation of these officers to work in areas where their community lives necessarily ensure a good relationship with that community. While research suggests that it can be a good strategy to send recruits to police their own community, the following problems have also been found:

- they are often young and inexperienced and may not show the good judgement of more senior officers;

- they may even be too hard on those they feel are bringing shame to their community;
- the community may simply stigmatise them as traitors and ignore them;
- they may become demoralised if they consider that the organisation marginalises ethnic officers to ethnic duties and they don't get the professional opportunities of other officers (Omaji 1999).

Factors such as these, when combined with principles of equal employment opportunities, make it highly undesirable to designate minority officers to their own communities unless they express a specific preference to serve there.

Finally, it is important to create work processes that do not disadvantage minority police officers. A common complaint of Spanish speaking police officers in New York City is that when they were called in to assist and interpret in matters related to Hispanic citizens, the time and effort spent on this work was only credited to the originally attending officer and so they were getting low work production reports.

3.3. Training of Police Officers

Almost all jurisdictions have some form of training in cultural sensitivity issues. For example, the Northern Territory in Australia has twenty hours of material on Aboriginal and ethnic affairs presented over ten weeks as part of their basic training.

But as training tends to be aimed at new recruits, many long serving officers do not participate. A recent survey in Australia indicated that only 41% of police responding to a survey had participated on some cross-cultural training (NPEAB 1997). Efforts must therefore be made to extend the training, but to also target officers newly designated to areas with high diversity and front-line supervisors who can have a direct impact on the behaviours of officers.

Studies have shown that training must be delivered with great care as it can often serve to confirm existing prejudices. A course which provides only information about the culture in the country of origin of immigrants will do little to equip the police with the cognitive tools need to carry out their work equitably and may even serve to reinforce stereotyping. Instead, the training must be relevant and applicable to the operational experiences the police will face and help police to examine their own assumptions and perceptions about ethnic communities and seek to create contact between new recruits and communities with whom they may not have had much previous contact (Etter 1994).

Courses should teach basic information such as cultural difference, cross-cultural communication, use of translators, and laws and policy in regard to diversity, but they must also provide the opportunity to analyse personal and society attitudes to prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination through analysis of cases related to issues such as the investigation of race-related crime, the use of stop and search, and the addressing of inappropriate behaviours by officers (Oakley and Radford 1998).

The courses cannot be delivered in traditional presentation style and should involve case studies, group work, debates and even visits with community organisations. It should involve a team approach with the use of community organisations and other teaching professionals. Courses in Victoria, Australia include visits to ethnic community organisations and police in Queensland have been sent to live in remote Aboriginal communities.

There must be also efforts made to not marginalise minority issues to particular modules or subjects, particularly if they become non-assessable

components. There should be review of all training materials to ensure that cultural issues are included in a wide number of areas and a “golden thread” of these issues can be traced throughout all the training provided to police officers.

Training is about changing attitudes, but there has also been the increasing demand on police organisations to select recruits who are able to deal effectively with diversity, and new emphasis is being put on creating recruitment procedures that screen out candidates who hold racist and prejudiced views. The Institute for Forensic Psychology in Melbourne has developed a system for selecting police officers that is used in over 350 jurisdictions in the US and Australia (Byrne 1998) and assessment centres for recruitment and promotion in many British jurisdictions now ask specific questions of candidates as to how they would deal with inappropriate language or racist behaviour (HMIC 1997).

3.4. Implementing Anti-Discrimination Legislation

Police organisations have a first priority to vigorously deal with discrimination that comes from within police ranks.

A number of jurisdictions have tightened their rules to ensure that police operations reflect the principles of equity and equality towards minorities and to ensure that particular communities are not targeted for extraordinary policing measures. Intimidation, harassment and racist violence by police must be considered serious breach of duty and attract severe penalties. The key to maintaining good relations with minorities is to eliminate all suggestion of racist motivation through the unrelenting insistence on the highest professional standards. Waddington, (1998) argues that it can be done and gives the example of the change from the 'drinking culture' that existed in many police organisations.

As noted in the *Charter*, a key issue in demonstrating that police take discrimination seriously is the rigour they show in enforcing legislation which seeks to protect minorities from discrimination and racial attacks. There tends to be under-reporting and confusion about reporting racial incidents and a common complaint is that police ignore the racial dimension of crime against minorities. Police in a multicultural society must take racial incidents seriously and pursue them sensitively according to the law. The British Association of Chief Police Officers adopted a standard definition in 1985 and a set of policy principles for dealing with racial incidents and has put into place mechanisms for monitoring racial incidents (HMIC 1997). These principles have to take into account the victims' point of view, including the heightened sensitivity that may be engendered to even relatively minor depredations (Waddington 1998).

3.5. Relations with Ethnic Communities

There is no doubt that there is a gulf between police and many minority communities, based not just on current experiences of police prejudice or insensitivity, but also on a negative perception and distrust of the police as a result of experiences from their country of origin, in the case of some immigrant groups, or because of a long history of strained relations, in the case of native minorities.

Therefore, initial efforts at "building the bridges" mentioned in the *Charter* may be met with skepticism and suspicion. Even police who are genuinely seeking to work effectively with minority communities often express bewilderment and some resentment at not being trusted by those communities or at being kept at a distance.

As the *Charter* indicates, building bridges is an essential task. Experiences in a number of countries indicate that the following elements are key to improving relations.

a) Liaison. Police organisations must constantly seek direct contact with minority communities to inform them, to dialogue with them and to develop realistic proposals through mutual understanding and partnership.

The use of special liaison units that visit schools, businesses and families and maintain links with agency and community groups is common. In Footscray, a suburb of Melbourne Australia, the unit is located away from the police station to provide a less threatening environment. This received a considerable level of community support and when there were attempt to close the unit due to cost-cutting the community protested at the Minister's office and funding was restored.

Use of liaison committees, or forums, exist in almost all jurisdictions as important vehicles for consultation, often with the involvement of local authorities such as councils. These committees have the aims of promoting positive relations and developing joint policies between police and ethnic groups and, as well as creating systems of reporting crime. There are a number of possible structures and levels of committees. The Victoria police, for example, has Aboriginal and Ethnic Communities policy advisory committees at the highest policy levels, and Aboriginal and Ethnic Affairs Advisers working across the whole organisation, as well as Liaison Officers working at a local level and ethnic specific forums that work with one community group (Comrie 1995).

There is also work being done to break down barriers through leisure activities and sport. Victoria Police have run holiday camps with Aboriginal youth and police officers have played football against ethnically based teams, and the police make wide use of the ethnic media.

b) Sensitivity to addressing ethnic community crime issues. The police must demonstrate that they can intervene sensitively in crimes that may be particular to specific communities in order to break the wall of silence and mistrust that often develops. Two areas of activity that are commonly dealt with are:

i) Organised ethnic-based gangs preying on their own community through protection rackets and labour exploitation. These groups often act quite openly in new immigrant groups, taking advantage of people's distrust of the police. Some jurisdictions have set up targeted task forces that provide protection to shop owners of a neighbourhood where extortion was widespread.

ii) Problems with the criminal justice system that result from cultural practices that are at odds with the customs or laws of the host nation. These often involve the status of women and the two most often cited issues are forced marriages and female genital mutilation.

West Yorkshire police in the U.K. has appointed a civilian police liaison worker to deal with issues relating to forced marriages, including cases where the women are stranded in the country of origin. He attempts to facilitate mediation between the women and their families and to assist the women. According to the observation of the worker, forced marriages should be distinguished from arranged marriages and intervention should take place only where coercion and violence takes place. While cases where violence is involved are clear and the perpetrators are dealt with under existing laws, other cases that involve more subtle coercion can be more complicated. The efforts of the worker have generally been praised, but he has also been criticised

by some sectors of the immigrant communities for not involving the community sufficiently in cases that should be mediated instead of being handled with police procedures (Police News 1999).

Female genital mutilation is one of the classic examples where police must work with sensitivity. It is rejected in all Western countries but still widely practiced in some parts of Africa. It has been made a criminal offence in some Western countries, but others argue that such specific legislation targeted at the cultural practices of an immigrant minority can be counter-productive as it can usually be dealt with by existing laws. By specifically criminalising the cultural practice of an immigrant group, it can be driven underground and brand all immigrants from that area as "savages" (Buhagiar 1997; Fraser 1994).

Through the liaison structures mentioned earlier, there must be ongoing work to explain laws to the different communities and to establish how best they can be policed within each community. At times, dealing with cultural sensitivities may lead to practices that are viewed as preferential treatment -- for example, when violence incidents in a community are dealt with in conjunction with the established leaders or elders of that community -- but an essential part of working in a multicultural community is finding a balance between the "law is the law, and everyone is treated the same" and "treating people fairly and with respect in the bounds of the law" (Omaji 1999).

c) Language Services. Communication is often a matter of language, and given that many minorities may have less knowledge of official languages this means the use of foreign language materials and interpreters can be the key to good relations.

The use of language cards, which identify languages and give a few basic phrases has become standard practice in most jurisdictions with a high concentration of different language groups and some officers take classes in the languages spoken by immigrants. In areas where there is a predominant new language, this becomes more prevalent. In most areas of California, police recruits are required to master "street level" Spanish during basic training (Cronkhite 1997).

The use of on-site or telephone interpreting is also now seen as a standard procedure, at least in theory. Studies in Australia indicate that even though there is an official policy to use trained and accredited interpreters, there is often a reluctance to use them in order to contain costs and avoid delays, but also because of an inadequate understanding of language and cultural barriers that may exist even with citizens who have some conversational knowledge of the official languages (Chan 1997).

3.6. Crime Statistics and Stereotyping

Probably the single issue that creates most tension between the police and minorities is the common complaint that police unfairly target visible minorities. In all countries, minorities indicate that they are harassed and intimidated through spot checking, stop and search, and intrusions in peoples homes (Fuller 1999).

It is clear that some minorities will be over-represented in all stages of the criminal justice system due to their socio-economic status, and because they live in areas that are the target of policing, but it is important that police procedures are analysed to examine whether, as many claim, police are "just doing their job" or if they are in fact unfairly discriminating. Much of the research is inconclusive given

the number of intervening factors and the difficulty in documenting motives of the police, but at the same time there is real evidence of discrimination.

In a rigorous study of stop and search in an English borough which controlled for a number of possible intervening factors, Marlow and Maddock (1998) found that visible minorities were significantly more likely to be stopped and searched. They concluded that: "Given that ethnic minorities tend to be over concentrated in [the cohorts most likely to be involved in crime] some over-representation is to be expected. However, this factor is not a complete explanation for our findings" (p. 324). They argue that discrimination and stereotyping accounts for the difference in stop and search and, while they acknowledge that some stereotyping may be an essential working tool for police officers, they go on to quote Reiner:

"The crucial issue is not [the existence of stereotyping], but the degree to which it is reality-based and helpful as opposed to categorically discriminatory in a prejudiced way -- and thus not merely unjust but counterproductive for the police force's own purposes." (in Marlow and Maddock 1998, p.325)

4. Conclusions

The *Charter* provides an excellent blueprint for assisting the police in European countries to become more responsive to the reality of a multicultural society. The principles contained in the *Charter* reflect best practice in countries that have had a long history of immigration and response to the rights of native minorities.

The police have a special mandate to ensure that their practices promote the equality of opportunity for all in a multicultural society. However, as this article has shown, it can be a long and slow process, so police organisations must be prepared to make a long-term commitment and to dedicate the time and resources needed to effect change.

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