

**The role middle management play as change agents within  
An Garda Síochána**

**Martin Geraghty**

**MA in Human Resource Management**

**National College of Ireland**

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## **Abstract**

### **The role middle management play as change agents within An Garda**

**Síochána - Martin Geraghty**

This research explores the role middle management namely Superintendents within An Garda Síochána play as change agents. It sets out to assess how effective they are at implementing change, if a level of resistance is present within the rank of Superintendent to change and to what degree their ability to occasion change is impacted by organisational culture.

Through qualitative research conducted by way of semi-structured interviews the author also explores if it is possible to identify what factor's impact on middle managements capacity to deliver change, what training they receive to help them occasion change and how they can become more effective agents of change. This method was utilised as the author felt that it was better able to contribute to the existing data through the rich narratives obtained through the interviews.

The author concluded that middle managers are enthusiastic about change but that it is vital that they are supported in their efforts through appropriate training, resourcing, communication and consultation.

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# **Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

An Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force translated as Guardians of the Peace) was formed in 1922. From the outset its first Commissioner Michael Staines determined that “The Garda Síochána will succeed, not by force of arms or numbers, but by their moral authority as servants of the people” (An Garda Síochána, 2016, p.9). It can legitimately be argued that An Garda Síochána have lost some of this moral authority as a result of the Morris, Barr, and Lyons tribunals into alleged Garda malpractice and have been struggling to regain it in recent years (Conway, 2010). Through its Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 – 2021, An Garda Síochána commits to “build on the best elements of our culture, while changing behaviours to deliver a professional policing and security service that meets the expectations of the people and communities” (An Garda Síochána, 2016, p. 7). While acknowledging that culture has been predominantly viewed within the organisation in a negative context in recent years the document goes on to stipulate that

Culture is how we do what we do. It’s the sense we have, within an organisation, that this is what we stand for and what we won’t stand for. It’s the mind-set behind what we do, the assumptions underpinning how we do it, and sometimes the prejudices that skew both. (An Garda Síochána, 2016, p. 8)

The Garda Síochána Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021 which will hereafter be referred to as MRP was launched on the 9th June 2016 to both the media and the public at Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. TRUST is placed as the central theme of this programme. The organisation strives to build upon the trust of the communities they serve while also strengthening the trust of its own membership. An Garda Síochána are committed to becoming a modern, professional policing service, one in which the public can trust and the membership themselves are proud to serve in. The programme seeks to reform An Garda Síochána over the next five years to ensure that the organisation can meet present and future needs. There has been a significant buy in from the Government with funding of almost €270 million awarded by the Government in its Capital Plan (2016-2020) with €205 million earmarked to upgrade technology and support systems and a further €46 million to upgrade the Garda fleet of vehicles. Through the implementation of the renewal programme An Garda Síochána desires to experience a renewal of its culture, and will focus on living up to its values, and will listen to and learn from its partners (An Garda Síochána, 2016). Incidentally

the core values of the organisation are honesty, accountability, respect and professionalism. The author will argue throughout this research that the success of the Modernisation and Renewal programme 2016 – 2021 will depend upon the ability of middle management (Superintendents) within the organisation to effectively manage change.

## **1.2 Rationale for study**

The author proposes to critically analyse the latest change management programme designed for An Garda Síochána as referenced above. This document outlines a number of short, medium term and longer term goals and targets. As a serving member of An Garda Síochána at the rank of Sergeant this topic is of particular interest to the author. It comes on the back of many previous change management programmes which originated initially in response to The Morris Tribunal of Inquiry (2002-2008), and other Tribunals of enquiry which followed thereafter. These coupled with new oversight and governing bodies, The Garda Síochána Complaints Board, The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission, The Garda Inspectorate and The Policing Authority which have all been introduced to “police the police” each of which has required a level of change within the organisation. The fundamental question being asked by the author is what role middle management within An Garda Síochána must play in guaranteeing The Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016-2021.

Through its Transformation and Renewal programme An Garda Síochána commits to renewing its culture, focusing on living up to its values, and listening to and learning from its partners. Crucial to its success is that the organisation listens to and learns from those within the organisation, in addition to external agencies to ensure the “buy – in” of each and every member of the force. McInnes and Meaklim (2012) found in a review of leadership development within the PSNI that very often large scale transformation programmes result in “change fatigue”. They further found that leadership did not properly prepare for cultural resistance which had consequences on the effectiveness of change over time. While acknowledging the buy-in of staff as being fundamental to change as highlighted by Corcoran (2012) the author will argue also that without the correct guidance, direction and talent management from managerial levels, proposed change is doomed to failure.

### **1.3 – Objectives of the research**

The objective for this study is to identify the important role middle management, namely Superintendents within An Garda Síochána have to play in change management programmes and underline the obstacles which currently stymie them from being effective. As a result of this the author will examine the impact Superintendents within the force have on the success of transformational change programmes. To date there has been much research on why transformational change fails (Beer and Nohria, 2000) and the resistance to change within organisations, together with guidelines as to how to effectively engage middle management in the process, but currently there is a dearth of research on how to enable them to be effective. Research into why change management programmes fail, reveal the majority fail on precisely that which they are attempting to transform; the hearts and mind of employees and management. (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

“People don’t resist change. They resist loss. They resist insecurity and they resist threats, to their positions of power” (Kenny, 2006, p. 6) Kenny further argues the greatest barrier to change was a lack of cohesion in managerial teams, which he stated emerged often from either simple disagreements or from those in managerial positions protecting their job positions.

### **1.4 Main Research aim**

1. To establish what role middle management play as change agents within An Garda Síochána and how effective they are at implementing change?

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

1. Establish what level of resistance to transformative change (if any) exists within middle management in An Garda Síochána? What steps can be taken to address this?

2. Examine to what extent middle managements capacity to effect change is impacted by organisational culture?
3. Is it possible to identify what factors affect middle management's ability to deliver transformative change within An Garda Síochána?
4. What level of support or training are middle management currently receiving to assist them in occasioning change within the organisation?
5. What could better assist middle management in becoming more effective change agents.

## **1.6 Dissertation Structure**

An overview of the dissertation is presented in Chapter one. It presents the research aim and associated research objectives that support the nature of the research. It provides a background and rationale for this dissertation and offers validation as to why this is a subject worthy of research.

In chapter two, an analysis of the relevant literature associated with this subject is presented. A number of change management programmes are critiqued before the one thought most appropriate for this research project is validated. Thereafter relevant theories and concepts are appraised and consideration is given to the manner in which the extant literature impacts upon and shapes the study.

Chapter three details the research methodology. It stipulates why this approach was undertaken and offers validation for this approach while also listing limitations associated with the chosen approach.

Chapter four presents an analysis of the research findings.

Chapter five discusses the research findings relative to the existing literature while also remaining cognisant of the research aims and questions outlined at the outset.

Chapter six contains the conclusions and recommendations.

## **Literature Review**

## **2.1 Introduction**

How should change initiatives be led within organisations? One view is that leadership is the sole driving force for change. The burden therefore rests with one, or a handful of leaders at the top of an organisation who have both the knowledge and experience to drive change. Beer and Nohria (2000) believe that change initiatives have to be led from the top. They compared leaders to generals on battlefields who sitting on the top of the hill, had a panoramic view of all below them, and that having the allegiance of their troops they could lead them to success.

Bennis (2000) considered that organisations are increasingly becoming more and more knowledge intensive and technologically sophisticated. As such he believed that it showed a considerate level of conceitedness to suppose that an individual or small group of leaders, at the top of an organisation can possess the necessary acumen to solve all of the problems for which an organisation must find solutions. He believed instead that “top executives must instead learn to walk in the crowd of leaders that exists in any organisation” (Beer and Nohria, 2000, p. 98).

Conger (2000) held an opposing view that top led organisational change has a much greater chance of achieving change than bottom up change led from lower levels. His main justification for this argument is that in his view change initiatives are more frequently occurring in response to changes in corporate strategy, and as such have many far reaching consequences throughout organisations. By virtue of their position at the top of organisations middle and senior management are much better positioned to lead organisational change of such scale (Conger, 2000).

When referring to a top led approach Conger (2000) includes the team of senior executives. He believes that the CEO and his executive team must be willing to be challenged and further be willing to reward people who challenge their views for exactly that which they themselves may have been punished. He does not advocate dissent but rather that the engagement of lower levels within an organisation is critical to the success of top led change efforts in that the lower levels are best positioned to convert corporate strategies into operating goals.

During times of major change Boselie (2010) argues that it's critically important to pay attention to one's employees in tandem with managing them effectively in order to achieve organisational success. He argued further that for change to be successful people's



behaviours, attitudes and cognition had to be changed. In essence it depended upon changing their hearts and minds. Wilder (2014) believed the reason many change efforts fail is that the organisation's culture is not aligned with the change initiative. He argued that while managers appreciated the importance of culture in the day to day running of organisations they neglected to include it in the new change initiatives. On first sight this does not appear to be an area of concern with MRP as one of the main goals of the programme is that through it An Garda Síochána commits to renewing its culture, living up to its values and listening to and learning from its partners.

Throughout the following literature review the author will review some of the literature published surrounding change management, paying particular attention to models laid down by leading change exponents. Attention will also be paid to why change efforts are perceived to fail, resistance to change engendered within change programmes and the elements of change fatigue that result. As the author is examining the change management model being introduced within An Garda Síochána the theme of Middle Management will be examined paying particular attention to the police context. Change programmes introduced in other jurisdictions will also be reviewed.

## **2.2 Change Management Models**

While conducting the literature review for this research project the author reviewed several change management models. These will be briefly summarised before the author suggests which model he believes is most closely aligned with MRP. While there are many change management models in existence the following will be briefly examined and critiqued. Reference will be made to others, but to examine and critically evaluate all would be beyond the scope of this research project.

### **2.2.1 Kurt Lewin's three step model of change**

Lewin's (1947) three stage theory of change is commonly referred to as Unfreeze, Change, Freeze (or Refreeze). The theory has often been criticised for being too simplistic and it's argued that the world has changed unrecognisably since the theory was originally proposed in 1947. However, many others argue the Kurt Lewin model is still extremely relevant and many modern change models are based on the 3-stage Lewin model.

#### **Stage 1: Unfreezing**

It's first stage is about preparing ourselves, or others, for change and if possible creating a situation in which the change is welcomed. It involves moving outside our current comfort zone and appreciating that change is necessary. The more one feels that the change is necessary, the more urgently it is perceived the greater the motivation to change will be. The majority of people are hesitant of change and prefer the status quo, resulting in them being uncomfortable or suspicious of change. In order to surmount this, there has to be an unfreezing period where the forces pushing for change are stronger than those resisting it, thus organisational change will occur.

Unfreezing and getting motivated for the change is essentially about weighing up the pro's and con's and determining if the pro's outnumber the con's before one takes action. This is the basis of what Kurt Lewin termed "Force Field Analysis".

Lewin believed that there were lots of different factors or forces for and against making change and that we need to be aware of or analyse these. If the factors for change were greater than the factors against change then the change would occur. If not, there is a resultant low motivation to change, and if people feel pressured to change in those circumstances resistance occurs.

#### **Stage 2: Change - or Transition**

Transition is a process that naturally occurs within everyone. There is no set time limit for transition as each of us are different; this phase is complicated as people are learning about and experiencing changes and need to be given the requisite time to achieve this. Communication and support are of vital importance throughout this period, this support can

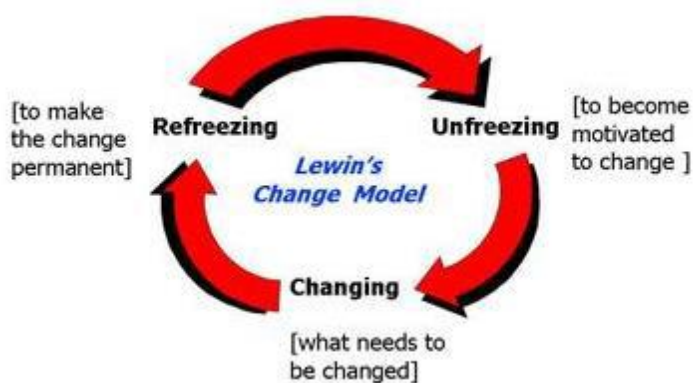
take the form of training, mentoring or coaching and mistakes should be expected and accepted as part of the process. The more the benefits of the desired change are communicated to staff the easier the process will be.

### Stage 3: Freezing (or Refreezing)

Lewin referred to this stage as freezing although others refer to it as 'refreezing'. This stage is about ensuring stability once changes have occurred. The changes have now been accepted and become the new norm. People have formed new relationships and become comfortable with their new routines.

In today's world where change is so pervasive there is simply no time to settle into comfortable routines. Lewin's freezing stage does not align with the current thinking that change is a continuous, often chaotic process through which vast amounts of flexibility are necessary.

One of the main criticisms of the Lewin model is that it suggests that the change has an end point. The reality of change though would tend to suggest that rather than a journey with a beginning, middle and end as suggested above, the change process fundamentally doesn't have an end, it's constant and ever moving.



**Figure 1. Lewin's three stage model** *Lewin's 1951 Change Model*  
[http://ic-pod.typepad.com/design\\_at\\_the\\_edge/organisational\\_change/](http://ic-pod.typepad.com/design_at_the_edge/organisational_change/)

### **2.2.2 John Kotter's eight step model**

John P. Kotter is widely perceived to be one of the leading exponents of change management. He wrote a seminal article in 1995 entitled “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail” which was followed up a year later by his bestselling book *Leading Change* (1996). Kotter believed that irrespective of the size of the company, the industry within which it operated, or the terminology used to describe the change effort taking place, the basic goal was the same “to make fundamental changes in how business is conducted in order to help cope with a new, more challenging market environment” (1995, p. 59). He proposed that in order to achieve success the change process must go through a series of steps which usually required a considerable investment of time and effort, and that skipping steps rather than speeding up the process merely created the illusion of speed and never produced satisfactory results. He also contended that critical mistakes in any of the phases could have devastating consequences. Therefore, great care had to be taken on each stage of the process. While Kotter refers to making fundamental changes to how business is conducted, many authors have endorsed the usefulness of this model in various sections of the public service, namely higher-education environments (Borrego & Henderson, 2014), dentistry (Guzmán, Gely, Crespo, Matos, Sánchez, and Guerrero, 2011), and nursing (Springer, Clark, Strohfus, and Belcheir, 2012). Therefore, as the author will assert it is also appropriate for approaching change management within An Garda Síochána.

#### **Step 1 – Establish a sense of urgency**

Organisations frequently explore the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of change without addressing the most fundamental question of ‘why’? Kotter argues that change will fail unless employees are aware of the need for and the urgency for change, essentially ‘why change now’? This must be communicated to them through open, honest dialogue. In Kotter’s view in order for the urgency level to be sufficiently high 75% of a company’s management need to be convinced that the status quo or business as usual is unacceptable.

#### **Step 2 – Create a guiding coalition**

Before deciding upon exactly what the change will be Kotter argues that in order for it to be successful, the formation of a leadership coalition is necessary. While senior management will form the core of this coalition, successful teams are also typically composed of key

customers, board members and even influential union officials. Kotter sees it as crucial to include people outside the executive. This is very similar to Collins (2001) advocating getting the right people on the bus. As a result of the open nature of the coalition, groups can function as a sounding board which facilitates open communication.

### **Step 3 – Create a vision for change**

By formulating a clear vision all staff can better appreciate the changes the organisation is attempting to achieve within the time frame set down. Kotter recommends that employee's ideas are incorporated into the vision thereby ensuring that they will accept them more readily.

### **Step 4 - Communicate the change vision**

According to Kotter this is arguably the most important step in the eight step process in order to engender support and acceptance among staff. This can only be achieved through communicating the new change vision to employees at every opportunity. Kotter argued that “without credible communication, and a lot of it, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured” (1996, p.63). Of equal importance in his view was taking the views, opinions and concerns of employees seriously and addressing them.

### **Step 5 – Empower others to act**

Ensure that employees have the necessary skills, tools and systems to occasion the change necessary. In order to do this its necessary to identify as far in advance as possible what barriers are in place, be they resistance to change, change fatigue, employee skill sets, organisational structure and so on and set about removing and remedying them.

### **Step 6 – Generate short term wins**

Kotter argues that short term wins on route to long term change can help overcome resistance and build momentum. Generating short term wins essentially keeps people motivated.

### **Step 7 – Consolidate change and produce more change**

Kotter warns against giving up too soon or declaring victory too early. Change resistance can re-emerge later in the change process as the pace of change slows. He argues that it is necessary for leaders to keep the sense of urgency high, encourage employee involvement and continue to focus on the strategic vision.

## Step 8 – Anchor new approaches into the culture

In order to make the change “stick” it is vital that new employees see it as being part of the culture and existing employees see that it is an improvement on the previous status quo. Kotter argues that a common misconception amongst organisations undergoing change is that if you don’t change the culture, nothing really changes. Therefore, most change initiatives are predominantly focused on changing culture. Kotter however believes that changing culture first is a mistake and it’s more prudent to change the structures processes and behaviours first and then cultural change will occur arising from these changes.



Figure 2. Kotter’s eight step model – Adapted from Dr. John Kotter’s 8 Step Process for leading change <http://www.kotterinternational.com/ourprinciples/changesteps/changesteps>

### 2.2.3 Beer and Nohria’s Theory E, Theory O Model

Beer and Nohria (2000) recognised at the turn of the century that the stakes of dealing with change in organisations had not been so high since the days of the Industrial Revolution and that most traditional companies accepted “in theory at least, that they must either change or die” (Beer and Nohria, 2000, p. 133). They found however, much like Kotter that few companies managed change as well as they would like and that “about 70% of all change initiatives fail” (p. 133). From their 40 years of experience of studying and examining the

nature of corporate change, they found that while each organisation's change initiative is unique to them, they suggested two main theories; Theory E, change based on economic value and Theory O, change based on organisational capability which covered in their opinion organisational change in all organisations.

Theory E is regarded as a hard approach with shareholder value the ultimate organisational goal. Change typically results in job losses, downsizing and restructuring. Theory O is a softer approach to change, the goal being to develop "corporate culture and human capability through individual and organizational learning – the process of changing, obtaining feedback, reflecting, and making further changes" (Beer and Nohria, 2000, p. 134).

They argue that most companies attempt to employ a mix of both, but that it is a difficult skill to manage as in their view employees are inherently suspicious of managers who alternate between "nurturing and cutthroat behaviour" (2000, p. 134) but that if companies can successfully combine hard and soft approaches to change, the benefits for the company can be huge and they are much more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

The authors themselves accepted that both theories have their limitations, those leaders who employ and must conduct E-style choices necessarily distance themselves from employees to lessen their own feelings of guilt and these leaders are thereby less inclined to adopt O-style change strategies. Similarly, leaders who employ predominantly Theory O strategies can find that their loyalty and commitment to employees can prevent them from making tough decisions to the detriment of those employees.

In order to build an organisation capable of adapting, surviving and prospering over time the authors argued that the two strategies must somehow be combined and outlined General Electric under CEO Jack Welch as the beacon for such strategy. Beer and Nohria (2000, p.138) do stipulate that "sequenced change is far easier if you begin, as Welch did, with Theory E. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that E would successfully follow O because of the sense of betrayal that would involve". They also hold up the grocery chain ASDA as an example of a company that has successfully managed to adopt both strategies simultaneously. It achieved its success chiefly as outlined in the table above through confronting the tensions between E and O goals, acknowledging them and establishing clear lines of communication. Further, while direction was set from above, engagement was sought from below; the CEO actually sought out and encouraged advice and disagreement from staff so that all could voice their concerns and ideas. In essence a good idea could and did come from anywhere.

Dimensions of Change	Theory E	Theory O	Theories E and O Combined
Goals	maximize shareholder value	develop organizational capabilities	explicitly embrace the paradox between economic value and organizational capability
Leadership	manage change from the top down	encourage participation from the bottom up	set direction from the top and engage the people below
Focus	emphasize structure and systems	build up corporate culture: employees' behavior and attitudes	focus simultaneously on the hard (structures and systems) and the soft (corporate culture)
Process	plan and establish programs	experiment and evolve	plan for spontaneity
Reward System	motivate through financial incentives	motivate through commitment – use pay as fair exchange	use incentives to reinforce change but not to drive it
Use of Consultants	consultants analyze problems and shape solutions	consultants support management in shaping their own solutions	consultants are expert resources who empower employees

**Figure 3. Theory E, Theory O Adapted from Beer, M. and Nohria, N. (2000) ‘Cracking the code of Change’. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(3): p 137.**

### **2.2.4 The ADKAR Model**

The ADKAR model was developed by Hiatt (2006) following research he had conducted with over 300 companies who had undertaken major change projects. As a goal orientated change model The ADKAR model allows change management teams to focus their activities on specific business results. Hiatt initially developed the model to determine whether change management activities such as communications and training were achieving desired results.

Some of the praise for the model is that it simultaneously captures both the business or process dimension of change and the individual dimension of change. It also provides management with a clear checklist when undertaking change programmes. The corollary however, is that it misses out on the role of leadership and the fundamentals of project management to generate clarity and afford direction to change.



## Prosci's ADKAR Model



More at : <http://www.change-management.com/tutorial-adkar-overview.htm>

Developed in 1998 by Prosci, after research with more than 300 companies undergoing major change projects. ADKAR is a goal-oriented change management model that allows change management teams to focus their activities on specific business results. The model was initially used as a tool for determining if change management activities like communications and training were having the desired results during organizational change.

**Benefits**

1. It encapsulates the business/process dimension of change and the individual dimension of change
2. Provides a clear management checklist to manage change

**Limitations**

1. Misses out on the role of Leadership and principles of programme management to create clarity and provide direction to change

Figure 4. ADKAR Model <http://www.change-management.com/tutorial-adkar-overview.htm>

### 2.2.5 Justification for Kotter's eight step model

Organisations wishing to implement change may use these four models as a guide as no one 'perfect' model exists for any organisation. They all indicate the need to make people aware of change and that change is necessary. Table 1 shows that there are commonalities between the four Change Management Models outlined while Table 2 lists some of the advantages and disadvantages of each model. While all models handle change in a similar fashion all four contain components of organisational change that are not found in the other models. They all emphasise different aspects of change. Three models have a linear progression with a clear beginning, middle and end to their model. Beer et al on the other hand considers the post change environment adding a requirement that organisations need to monitor progress and adjust its plan in response to problems.

For example the ADKAR model focuses on giving employees a desire to change rather than providing them with the knowledge to change as emphasised in the Lewin Model. Kotter

focuses on senior management becoming change agents rather than focusing on the individual or employees. In contrast to Lewin and ADKAR who seek to reduce resistance to change, Kotter focuses on leading, not managing change. He highlights the need to explain why change is necessary and creating a vision and strategy to be communicated.

In a world that is constantly changing, Kotter’s model aims to continue improving the vision of change as the organisation continues to move forward into the future. Having examined all four models the ADKAR model is the most simplistic model as each step is explicitly laid out. Lewin’s model in contrast while lacking in detail although it is a model that has been adopted by many businesses since its conception. The advantage of the Lewin Model lies in its many suggestions to overcoming resistance. It is the author’s opinion that Kotter’s model is the best fit for An Garda Síochána as middle management are responsible for the implementation of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme. Kotter’s model is specifically focused at leading not managing change and the need for management to become agents of change.

Table 1: – Commonalities of Change Models.

<b>LEWIN Model</b>	<b>Kotter Model</b>	<b>Beer et al</b>	<b>ADKAR Model</b>
<b>Unfreeze</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine what needs to change</li> <li>• Ensure there is strong support</li> <li>• From upper management</li> <li>• Create need for change</li> <li>• Manage and understand the doubts and concerns</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a sense of urgency</li> <li>2. Form a powerful coalition</li> <li>3. Create a vision for change</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commit to change through joint diagnosis of business problems</li> </ol>	<b>Vision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define future state</li> <li>• Assess current state</li> </ul>
<b>Change/Move</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate often</li> <li>• Dispel rumours</li> <li>• Empower action</li> <li>• Involve people in the process</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Communicate the vision</li> <li>6. Empower action</li> <li>7. Build on the change</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Develop shared vision</li> <li>3. Consensus, competence to enact and cohesion around new vision</li> <li>4. Spread through all departments without push from the top</li> </ol>	<b>Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage primary sponsor</li> <li>• Form and prepare project team</li> <li>• Select deployment strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Refreeze</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Anchor new approach</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Institutionalise through formal policies etc.</li> <li>6. Monitor and adjust in response to problems</li> </ol>	<b>Implementation</b> <p>Build project plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create change mgt plan</li> <li>• Create and present business case</li> <li>• Implement integrated plan</li> </ul>

Sources: Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1951; Prosci, 1998; Beer and Nohria, 2000.

Table 2: - Advantages and Limitations of Models.

Change Models	Lewin Model	Kotter Model	Beer et al Model	ADKAR Model
Advantages	Simple and easily understood.  Fewer steps.	Step by step Model Easy to follow  The focus is on acceptance and preparedness for change	Direction set from above while engagement sought from below.	Model suited to incremental change  It is an effective management checklist.
Limitations	The focus is on attacking opposition head on which uses up a lot of energy in the early stage of change.  It requires full participation of everyone involved.	Top down Model.  Not everyone is involved in the co-creation of model.  Steps cannot be skipped.  Takes a lot of time.	Does not drive change. Uses outside experts rather than empowering employees.	Fails to distinguish between ‘incremental’ change and ‘step’ change.  Fails to distinguish between roles and functions of leadership.

Sources: Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1951; Prosci, 1998; Beer and Nohria, 2000.

Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) contend that while no study has examined the full scope of Kotter’s model there is nonetheless substantial literature endorsing the processes laid down by him and the various stages of the process. From a consideration of the change management programmes reviewed above and others not possible to include here due to the restraints of this research project, the author professes that Kotter’s eight step model is most closely aligned with the Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 – 2021 and similarly is most closely aligned with the author’s view of how change management programmes should be conducted. While Kotter’s model of change management is often criticised for being based on his personal business and research experience and not referencing outside sources (Sidorko, 2008) nonetheless it is held as one of the key references in the field of change management. As already referenced above Kotter’s model has been adopted on numerous occasions in the public service, in areas such as higher-education (Borrego & Henderson, 2014), dentistry (Guzmán, Gely, Crespo, Matos, Sánchez, and Guerrero, 2011), and nursing (Springer, Clark, Strohfus, and Belcheir, 2012).

In their (2011) review of Kotter’s eight step process Appelbaum et al were of the view that an organisation which strived to evolve and implement change initiatives can have a major determining factor on both its short and long term success. Much like Beer and Norhria, Appelbaum found that failed organisational change initiatives varied from between 33% and 80%. In their paper which critically appraised Kotter’s eight step model Appelbaum et al

(2011) contended that his model created in 1996 had as much relevance in 2011 when they wrote their paper as it had in 1996 when first proposed. They argue however, that the model has limitations as it was never meant to be applicable to all types of changes.

They suggested a number of examples where the model would not be applicable without modifications. One such limitation suggested was the prescriptive nature of the model and the need to follow each step in sequence. Therefore, they argued if the first step was not implemented properly it would make it relatively impossible to implement the remaining steps. However, (Kotter and Cohen, 2002) determined that the problems that people faced when attempting to implement the eight steps were never as a result of a failure to implement strategy, structure, culture or system but instead were largely down to changing the behaviour of people.

### **2.3 Middle Management**

What is meant by the term middle management? Herzing and Jimmieson (2006) contended that they were the individuals positioned below the senior management team. The senior executives are responsible for developing strategy which middle management must adopt and execute. Young (1990) defined middle management as the group capable of linking both vertical and horizontal levels within organisations. Middle management do not typically create policies but rather interpret and implement them (Mills, 2000).

Traditionally, middle management was not included or considered when planning or executing company policy. Balogun (2003) asserts however, that a middle manager's role has grown and adapted over the years and that middle management are now expected to manage change as well as the day to day activities of an organisation. Empowered middle managers must make inroads into the rank-and-file system by exploring the urgent context (Kotter, 1995). As the staff directly involved in day to-day functioning, rank-and-file feedback is essential when exploring if a change is truly critical for firm survival. Empowered middle managers should work directly with rank-and-file employees, cascading empowerment by deriving a mutually acceptable action plan (Kotter, 1995)

As is borne out in the literature middle management has an active and vital role in implementing change policies. Their role has evolved and grown over the years and the benefits they can bring to bear on the change process are widely recognised. Resulting from their positions in organisations they occupy a key position between senior management and executive level while also maintaining key relationships with the workforce. Increasingly this position is viewed as being crucial to delivering upon successful change programmes as well as managing the day to day running of organisations. However, Kotter (1996) cautions that the basis for change must be soundly established within the organisation, otherwise middle management may resist structural changes if they do not perceive enough urgency, a clear sensible vision or a dedicated team above them. In essence it is a case of they don't care, why should I?

Hartel, Butarbutar, Sendjaya, Pekerti, Hirst and Ashkanasy, (2014) argued that middle management were often viewed by their teams as the personification of the organisations culture, that they were a barometer of the culture and their actions and behaviours were closely monitored by employees. Therefore, if middle management are regarded as the embodiment of their companies culture to their employees it's imperative that they constantly exhibit the values associated with said culture.

### **2.3.1 Organisational structure of An Garda Síochána**

An Garda Síochána is an hierarchical organisation possessing a rank structure as follows:

- Commissioner.
- Deputy Commissioner.
- Assistant Commissioner.
- Chief Superintendent.
- Superintendent.
- Inspector.
- Sergeant.
- Garda.
- Reserve Garda.

In addition to this the Commissioners Management team or Executive comprise:

- Deputy Commissioner in charge of Policing and Security
- Deputy Commissioner in charge of Governance and Strategy
- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- 12 Assistant Commissioners
- Executive Director of Finance and Services
- Executive Director of Information and Communication Technology
- Executive Director of Human Resources and People Development
- Director of Communications
- Chief Medical Officer

In summary the Commissioner is responsible for the overall management and control of An Garda Síochána and is appointed by the Government and directly responsible to the Minister for Justice. The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Executive Directors comprise the executive level of the organisation with Chief Superintendents regarded as senior management and as being the most senior operational team leaders.

There are two Deputy Commissioners one having responsibility for strategic and resource management and the other for operational matters. There are currently 10 Assistant Commissioners, six with responsibility for Garda Regions and four others having responsibility for Human Resource Management, Strategy and Services, National Support Services and Crime and Security. Also there are five Executive Officers and a Chief Medical Officer as detailed above. Each Region is comprised of a number of Divisions; there are 26 Divisions in total in the state each under the leadership of a Chief Superintendent. Each Division is further sub-divided into 112 operational Garda Districts under the management of a Superintendent who is responsible for all aspects of policing within his/her district. Districts are further divided into sub-districts which in turn are managed by Inspectors or Sergeants.

### **2.3.2 Middle Management within An Garda Síochána**

For this section the author drew largely upon the work of Doyle (2015) who had conducted research into how middle management can be effective change agents within organisations. While Doyle conducted his study into the Telecoms industry this author posits that it is equally applicable to the context of An Garda Síochána. According to Doyle (p.15)

Middle management implements the decisions taken by the company executives. They provide feedback and are a soundboard for the senior management team to gauge the temperature of the workforce. Middle management turns the executive's vision into reality.

The structure of An Garda Síochána shows that the Force is a hierarchical structure, with a very narrow managerial apex comprising less than 2% of Officer rank. This essentially means that 98% of the Force are non-Officer Corps and are below the rank of Superintendent (Lynch and Kennedy, 2007). Therefore, this positions Superintendents at the top rank of middle management.

The policing area of An Garda Síochána is geographically divided into 28 Garda Divisions spread throughout the 26 counties, which are further sub divided into 112 operational Garda Districts. Each District is managed by a Superintendent, who is responsible for managing day to day policing in his/her District.

Applying Doyle's definition of middle management to the context of An Garda Síochána, Superintendents shall be responsible for implementing the Transformation and Renewal programme 2016 – 2021 within their respective districts. It will be incumbent upon them to become "change agents" within the force as articulated by Ulrich (1997). He argued that human resources (HR) in organisations should be re-organised into three separate distinct components namely the HR service centre, the HR centre of expertise and the HR business partners. Boglind, Hallsten and Thilander (2011) argued that Ulrich's three legged stool is not a one size fits all model, but that it required tweaking or adaptation to fit into a specific organisational context. One of the tasks of this research will be to examine if Superintendents will see themselves in the role of change agent. Applebaum et al (2011) expanding on Kotter's coalition model believe that the coalition should be made of people on the basis of four key characteristics namely position power, expertise, credibility and leadership. None of

these characteristics necessarily must come from senior management, indeed people with expertise, credibility and leadership qualities could occupy any rank in the organisation. Nonetheless, the success of the change initiative is incumbent of continuous and visible support from the top of the organisation.

Likewise Kotter (1996) contends that regardless of how good or effective the managers in a coalition are, without effective leadership the change initiative is doomed to failure.

This sentiment is echoed by Caldwell (2003) who argues that

“change leaders are those executives or senior managers at the very top of the organization who envision, initiate or sponsor strategic change of a far-reaching or transformational nature. In contrast, change managers are those middle level managers and functional specialists who carry forward and build support for change within business units and key functions”. (p. 291)

## **2.4 Garda Organisational Culture**

Deal and Kennedy (1982) define culture as “the way we do things around here”. Whilst possibly an overly simplified definition it is nonetheless a useful starting point. Handy (1985) argued that culture is something that is perceived or felt and therefore cannot be successfully defined. Bellingham (2000, p. 35) suggests that “police culture is unique and it is this phenomenon which gives rise to its particular resistance to change”. Corcoran (2012) argues that while looking at a definition of organisational culture within An Garda Síochána we need to ask, what does culture do? What is its function, how did it arise and how has it evolved and changed over time?

As already alluded to above, culture that is engrained within An Garda Síochána is “how we do what we do. It’s the sense we have within an organisation that, this is what we stand for and what we won’t stand for” (An Garda Síochána, 2016, p. 8). Corcoran (2012) chose to draw upon MacGreil’s definition of culture as “being the interrelated set of learned created and borrowed beliefs, ideas, values, norms and symbolic meaningful systems, which characterise and influence the human behaviour of people” (1996, p.33). For the author’s



purposes in this research it fits for the same reasons articulated by Corcoran (2012) namely that this definition of culture is malleable, human and is capable of being learned, passed on, and possibly even changed.

Organisational culture can be viewed as a set of interrelated sub-cultures that cannot be removed from the social environment from whence they originated. All organisational knowledge, whether scientific or based on common-sense, derives from the inter-subjective nature of social life and the application of meaning to actions (Tucker, 1988). Foster (2003) through his research suggests there are important differences within and between a variety of policing subcultures, street and management, uniform and detective, response and community and there are differences arising from history, traditions, leadership. Some of the sub cultures within An Garda Síochána can be categorised through groupings such as rank, role, gender, geographic location, and whether members are attached to uniform or detective branch. This diversity may indicate that there is no single and dominant culture in An Garda Síochána, and arguably the culture that predominates may do so as a result of a mix of smaller sub cultures. (Nugent, 2006) points out that some of the values and attitudes people hold have been formed before joining the organisation, while others have developed since they joined, which makes deciphering the common culture a more difficult, less reliable process.

Lynch and Kennedy (2007) found, An Garda Síochána as an organisation has a strong culture with all the benefits this brings including camaraderie, loyalty and unity of purpose. They noted as well in a survey conducted that members of the organisation themselves when asked, accepted that there were both positive and negative aspects to Garda culture. 90% of those surveyed accepted that Garda culture needed to change (pp. 11 -12). The challenge for An Garda Síochána is to maintain and enhance the positives that impact on the culture while minimising the negatives. According to Brown (1998) every organisation has sub-cultures where the beliefs, values and assumptions may be competing with the dominant culture. Bellingham (2000, p. 35) argues “police culture is unique and it is this phenomenon which gives rise to its particular resistance to change”. How then will middle management manage this resistance to change and overcome it?

## **2.5 Barriers to Change**

Dopson and Stewart (1990) argue middle management can be perceived as barriers to change as they may have a vested interest in resisting or feel threatened by change in some way. Kenny (2006) similarly argues the greatest barrier to change was a lack of cohesion in managerial teams. Likewise Scase and Goffee (1989) argue that the image of middle management of being reluctant to introduce or propose change pervades. On the other hand, Herzing and Jimmieson (2006) state that middle management have an important part to play in the change process.

Huy (2001) states that middle management is a “fertile ground for creative ideas about how to grow and change a business” (p.73). However, he also goes on to say that as senior executives inherently know that middle managers resist change, they only pretend to listen to them. Middle management in turn quickly appreciate that their concerns won’t be listened to or taken on board so they adopt the role of a compliant child. They hide their change efforts knowing they will only be penalised if they fail. Therefore, it becomes a self-perpetuating cycle which needs to be broken if transformational change is to be achieved.

Many authors make reference to disruptive change (Strebel, 1996; Abrahamson, 2000; Christensen and Overdorf, 2000). Employees view the change as being disruptive and this can and often does tear organisations apart. Strebel (1996) suggests that managers must place themselves in their employees’ shoes to gain a proper understanding of their fears and concerns. Christensen and Overdorf (2000) contend that managers must comprehend that a company’s capabilities are distinct from people capabilities. A company’s capabilities they argue are people, processes and culture, while people can change processes are not supposed to and values and culture in well established organisations are the most difficult to change.

Other commentators such as (Schein, 1985; Juran, 1988; Burnes, 1996) articulate that many change efforts fail as a result of the inability of managers to follow the criteria for successful change prescribed in literature. Indeed Burnes (1996) contended that “where such prescriptions run counter to the organization’s culture, they will either be ignored or be ineffective” (p. 15). Beer, Finnstrom and Schrader (2016) in their research found there were a number of re-occurring barriers to change including staff being unclear of the organisations direction on strategy and direction due to a lack of communication. Senior staff not exhibiting

that they themselves are committed to the change or exhibiting an indifference to the change, insufficient time and effort given by management to talent issues and staff fearful of approaching management with suggestions on how to remove barriers preventing successful change.

## **2.6 Communication**

Kotter (1996) stresses the importance of having a clear vision from the beginning of a change process and stipulates that it is vital to success. He states that a successful vision should be capable of being articulated in five minutes, and recommends that in order for the message to become embedded it must be frequently communicated. It should be spoken of at every opportunity and that by keeping the message fresh in everyone's mind they will remember it and respond accordingly. Importantly, he points out that it is also necessary to demonstrate the behaviours associated with the change (Doyle, 2015). Applebaum et al, (2011) echo Kotter's view that every avenue of communication should be utilised to communicate the change effort and infer that the more often change is a topic of conversation the more important it will be viewed in the eyes of the company's employees. The authors also make reference to a CEO travelling to various company locations or outposts to discuss the need for change. On top of the message being delivered this also reinforces to staff the importance of the change process as the CEO is investing time, effort and resources to deliver the message personally.

Huy (2001) states that there are typically two stages in the change process, conception and implementation and he argues that it is the latter at which the process normally fails.

Successful implementation requires clear and compelling communication throughout the organization. Middle managers can spread the word and get people on board because they usually have the best social networks in the company. Many of them start their careers as operations workers or technical specialists. (p. 76)

In their paper Larkin and Larkin (1996) stipulated that when communicating change, only facts should be communicated. They advocated that a change booklet should be created to

guide communication and that this communication should only occur through face to face meetings, not through newsletters, meetings etc. Supervisors should be canvassed for their opinions which would then be incorporated into change programme and they would thereby be empowered and much more likely to reinforce the change. This theme is supported by Augustine (1997) who advocates that when engineering a change programme managers must “communicate, communicate, communicate”. He qualifies it by saying that managers must be completely candid and unequivocal with employees and that leaders that are perceived to offer blood, sweat and tears get far more out of their followers. In essence they walk the walk as well as talking the talk.

Dehmlow (2016) contended that employees can cope with most changes once the change is explained to them and sufficient time is given to helping them explain said changes. He further believed that “stability is reinforced through consistency in messaging. Not only in individual consistency, but also team consistency, and upper management consistency”. (p. 2) This view is echoed by Dutta and Kleiner (2015) who stressed it was “essential for stakeholders of an organization to understand exactly what change will be implemented, how it will be implemented, and what benefits the change will bring about to the organization” (p. 7). Kotter (1996) believed that if a vision was clearly defined and communicated at the outset it made it easier for employees to understand and accept, regardless of how difficult the change process would become. Further Washington and Hacker (2005) in their paper stipulated that managers who clearly understood the change effort were more likely to be excited about the process and less prone to believing the process would fail.

## **2.7 Training**

Dutta and Kleiner (2015) believe that in order for organisations to successfully change organisational culture, the change must occur throughout the organisation and it must start from the very top. From there it must cascade down throughout the organisation to be truly effective. “If all the stakeholders of an organization can embrace the new culture of the organization, then that company will truly see the benefits of its efforts” (p. 8). To do so they argue that training must be given to employees especially the managers who will be leading the change and that they should receive the necessary training to enable them to tackle any resistance that may present itself within the organisation.

Ponzo and Zarone (2012) argue that if training is adequately structured “the training could lead to the spread of a proactive attitude to change” (p. 159) but that this requires a strong commitment from management in order to bring about the change. They argue further that the training needs to be structured and designed to address areas seen as being deficient.

Training however, cannot be seen as a quick fix but must be seen as a long term strategy to successfully achieve organisational goals. Kotter (1996, p. 112) contends that there are two main reasons why outside of the basic training personnel receive during an initiation or induction period they subsequently do not receive any meaningful training. Firstly, not enough thought is given to the behaviours and skills needed when major change is initiated. Secondly, the type of training needed is not correctly recognised but when translated into time and money organisations frequently deem it prohibitive and it is therefore not undertaken. Ponzo and Zarone (2012) believe there is merit to designing training programmes tailored to “enable high-ranking public servants focus on their abilities and giving them new opportunities to use their competencies” (p. 168).

Beer et al (2016) in their article explored why despite many years of evidence outlining that training does not work as a change strategy organisations still persisted with it. Many organisations found that even though various training programmes were deemed to be transformative while being undertaken the resultant change they were expected to achieve had not become embedded in organisations. The main reason organisations invest in training is to make both their managers and organisations more effective. Dehmlow (2016) goes further by stating that “training helps build confidence and competence for staff, reducing anxieties and providing some added engagement in the process” (p. 3).

Beer et al (2016) found that most managers and supervisors reverted back to their pre-training beliefs, the exception being those whose direct supervisors practiced what they preached and adopted the new leadership style themselves. As well as financially being a waste of money, failed training programmes also have the result of making those employees below senior management cynical (Beer et al, 2016). They suggest a number of steps to counteract this including receiving feedback from employees to establish barriers to change, and subsequently redesigning programmes to overcome these barriers. Therefore building in review periods and using the information gained in a proactive manner. They also advocate using a consultative process to enable staff to be more effective by using coaching or

mentoring and utilising training where necessary. As Kotter (1996) claimed it is impossible for an organisation to expect to change habits built up over years without training.

## **Research Design & Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in conducting this research. It will provide an overview of the different methodologies considered by the author while exploring the relative merits and disadvantages of each with regard to the research topic. It will outline how the research was conducted and provide justification for same. Additionally, the procedures adopted to analyse the collected data through the primary research will also be outlined. It will explain how the data was treated and considers the ethical implications concerning the data secured and the limitations of the research methodology employed will also be explored.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

Research is primarily conducted to further ones knowledge having regard to a particular subject. Many commentators including Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) believe that one's research philosophy contains "important assumptions about the way in which you view the world". They further suggest that these same assumptions will corroborate your research strategy and "the methods you choose as part of that strategy" (p.108). There are three main ways of considering research philosophy namely ontology, epistemology and axiology. Each contains important aspects which influence the way the researcher considers the research process. Saunders et al (2009) caution against falling into the misconception that one philosophy is necessarily better than the other. They suggest each is better at doing different things, and which is better in a particular context depends on the research question(s) one is attempting to find answers to.

Ontology concerns the nature of reality. According to Saunders et al our ontological viewpoint as researchers raise questions concerning the assumptions we have of the "way the world operates" and the commitment with which we hold particular views (2009, p.110).

There are two aspects of ontology namely objectivism and subjectivism. The objectivist position stipulates that "social entities exist in reality external to social actors" (Saunders et al, 2009, p.110). In explaining this phenomenon Saunders et al provide a useful analogy of



management in an organisation being perceived as an objective entity and that a researcher could adopt an objectivist stance in order to study specific managerial aspects in specific organisations.

However, if one was more concerned through their research with how the managers themselves attached individual meaning to their own jobs and how they perceived that those jobs should be undertaken, then this approach would be more closely aligned to the subjectivist view. The subjectivist viewpoint stresses that social phenomena are created as a result of the approaches and subsequent actions of social actors. Saunders et al (2009) also considered the objectivist/subjectivist with regard to culture stipulating that objectivists tended to view culture as something that an organisation has as opposed to the subjectivist viewpoint that would argue that culture is something that is constantly evolving and changing as a result of social interactions and physical factors and “it is the meanings attached to these phenomena by the social actors within the organisation that need to be understood in order for the culture to be understood” (Saunders et al, 2009, p.111).

Epistemology concerns the researchers view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge regarding that which is being studied. Bryman and Bell (2015) consider that a fundamental question when considering epistemological considerations is whether the social world should be studied “according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences” (p.26). There are a number of epistemological viewpoints to consider namely, positivism, realism, and interpretivism.

Those researchers seeking to imitate the natural sciences adopt an epistemological position known as positivism. Positivists contend that only phenomena and knowledge that can be confirmed by the senses can legitimately be called knowledge. This knowledge is arrived at by gathering facts which form the basis for laws.

Realism while retaining many positivist perspectives recognises “the subjective nature of research and the inevitable role of values in it” (Fisher, 2010, p.20). Realist researchers will still seek to offer common place explanations but unlike positivists they are far less likely to offer predictions. There are two types of realism; empirical and critical. Critical realism is a philosophical approach which seeks to describe a uniting of the natural and social worlds. Empirical realism proposes that objects discovered through science are things in and of themselves.

Interpretivism takes the standpoint that all knowledge is a matter for interpretation. Researchers taking this position “believe that reality is socially constructed” (Fisher, 2010, p. 22). Researchers who adopt an interpretivist stance often exhibit

A preference for research methods that elicit participants’ world views in relation to the topic of interest, and for analyses that ground concepts and connections between them in the words and elicited perspectives of participants. (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 30)

From an ontological perspective this research was conducted from a subjectivist standpoint in that the author found it necessary to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of the Superintendents interviewed in order to be able to understand their responses. From an epistemological perspective the author adopted an interpretivist standpoint for the reasons espoused by Fisher (2010) namely “interpretive research seeks people’s accounts of how they make sense of the world and the structures and processes within it” (p.59). The author felt that this ontological and epistemological position were best able to answer the main research aim posed by him above namely what role middle management play as change agents within An Garda Síochána and how effective they are at implementing that change?

### **3.3 Research Approach**

Saunders et al (2009) contend that the extent to which a researcher is clear about theory at the start of a research project will raise questions paramount to the importance of their research design. There are two approaches to research, deductive and inductive. A deductive approach will first develop a theory or hypotheses and design a research strategy to test said hypotheses. The inductive approach on the other hand involves the researcher collecting data and developing a theory resulting from the data analysis. Deductive research is seen as being highly structured whereas inductive is more flexible.

The author proposes to undertake an exploratory, inductive approach as he believes that this method is flexible enough to allow respondents to reflect upon and articulate their views and

it will capture the experiences and feelings of the respondents on their own terms. Exploratory research is often equated with qualitative techniques.

### **3.4 Research Design**

A research method is simply a technique for the collection of data. Baker (2000) identified three main primary research methods namely Observation, Experimentation and Survey Research. Survey Research was chosen by the author as he deemed it most suitable to address the research aim and questions posed. Much like Saunders et al (2009) Domegan and Flemming (1999) argue that it is the responsibility of the researcher to choose a research design which is best suited to answer the problem at hand. In justifying the selection of a survey research method the author drew upon Baker's (2001) view that surveys could be utilised to gather data on almost any problem which involved individual behaviour, norms, or attitudes whether in an individual or organisational context.

### **3.5 Justification of Qualitative Research**

Quantitative research usually focuses on the amalgamation or collection of numeric data. It is frequently viewed as being deductive from a research perspective and as being situated within a positivist framework (Quinlan, 2011). As outlined above this author is concerned with an inductive approach to research in order to formulate theories from the collected data. Qualitative research is more focused on words and associated with a research strategy which is inductive, subjective and interpretivist in nature. The author has highlighted above his reasoning for adopting both a subjective and interpretivist approach and qualitative methods of data collection are deemed to best answer such approaches. Othman (2011) stresses that the primary purpose of qualitative research is to discover new ideas or theories through the interpretation of data. The author felt that qualitative research was better able to contribute to existing data as a result of the in depth interviews which were conducted. This is endorsed by

Merriam (2009) who opined that qualitative research was the best method to undertake when trying to secure and analyse data based on knowledge and experience.

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

The author opted to undertake a qualitative approach for the reasons specified. There are many research instruments utilised for the collection of data such as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, observation, documents, and databases to name but a few. The research method employed in this instance will be a mono method employed by way of in depth, semi structured interviews with respondents. The author proposes to utilise qualitative data collection methods for the rich narratives (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) that they are perceived to offer. Further as Hakim (2000) maintains the in-depth interview should be flexible, accessible and ideally illuminative of the often hidden aspects of human behaviour and belief.

In-depth semi structured interviews are proposed for this very reason, as structured interviews impose a certain rigidity (Bryman and Bell, 2015) while semi-structured interviews allows the researcher the flexibility to modify the interview as needs arise and developments emerge. The author is cognisant also of the possibility of interviewee sabotaging, where interviewees can give false or misleading replies for a variety of reasons.

The research time horizon was cross sectional in that interviews were conducted with respondents who were in position at the time the research was conducted and the research problem was explored with them at the point in time during which the interviews were conducted.

### **3.7 Research Sample**

Having regard to the research aim and objectives set out earlier, members of Superintendent rank occupying the top tier of middle management and sitting directly below senior management in the ranking structure of the organisation were chosen as the research sample

group. They were selected as the author proclaims that they are best placed to answer the research aims and objectives articulated above. A sample was obtained from this cohort and the author posits that it is a reasonable reflection of the population. Table 3 details how Superintendents are allocated throughout Ireland. Due to geographical constraints the author decided to interview Superintendents within the Dublin Metropolitan Region and specialist sections operating within same. As can be observed from the table all national and specialist sections operate within the Dublin Metropolitan Region and hence serve to bolster numbers.

The author believed that exploratory research conducted with participants at Superintendent level would provide insights into and answers to the research aims and objectives posed above. Due to time constraints and the impracticality of interviewing everybody of Superintendent rank within the force a simple random sampling framework was employed.

An email and cover letter (Appendix 2) was sent to every Superintendent operating within the Dublin Metropolitan Region which numbered 77 in total who were in charge of districts and various specialist sections operating out of Garda Headquarters and Harcourt Square in Dublin inviting them to take part in the research. Eighteen replies were received. Fourteen agreed to participate in the research project and an appointment was made to conduct the interview. One declined due to workload constraints and another was out of the jurisdiction on a course for the timeframe suggested for conducting the interview. Table 4 outlines the profile of the research participants including their length of service, tenure in the rank of Superintendent and whether employed in a detective or uniform capacity.

Following the transcription of the interviews it was felt by the author that there was an unfair bias towards male Superintendents. While this wasn't by design but merely as a result of the responses received by the author to letters of request to participate, the author nonetheless was conscious to remove the actual or perceived bias towards a male viewpoint to the interview questions posed. Two of the female Superintendents who initially were unable to participate were again invited to participate in the research and one agreed.

Table 3: Allocation of Superintendents throughout Ireland

Superintendents	Dublin Metropolitan Region	Eastern Region	Western Region	Southern Region	South Eastern Region	Northern Region
Male	64	18	17	20	18	13
Female	13		1			1

### **3.8 Profile of Research Participants**

Table 4: - Role Profile of Research Participants

Interviewees	Length of Service	Years at Superintendent rank	Uniform(U)/ Detective(D)	District Policing(DP)/Specialist Function(SF)	Male(M)/ Female (F)
Respondent 1	39	5	D	SF	M
Respondent 2	35	2	D	SF	M
Respondent 3	27	1	D	SF	M
Respondent 4	26	1	U	SF	M
Respondent 5	33	2	D	SF	M
Respondent 6	35	1	D	D	M
Respondent 7	27	7	U	D	M
Respondent 8	35	7	U	SF	M
Respondent 9	36	7	D	D	M
Respondent 10	27	2	U	D	M
Respondent 11	32	5	U	D	M
Respondent 12	31	4	U	SF	M
Respondent 13	39	9	D	SF	M
Respondent 14	27	1	U	SF	M
Respondent 15	28	2	D	SF	F

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

At the outset the author anticipated that due to the sensitivity of the topic the subject of this research, and possible implications should respondents be identified in any way as a result of same, issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity were likely to arise. The author provided clear assurances to each and every participant that any data collected would remain strictly confidential and that such data would only be held for so long as was necessary to analyse and publish results. Assurances were further given that the data would be presented at a sufficient level of generalisation to ensure anonymity, and would be properly disposed of when no longer required. To this end a respondent information sheet was given to each participant giving this guarantee in writing (Appendix 3) at the beginning of each interview and each respondent was requested to sign a respondent consent form consenting to take part in the research project (Appendix 4) which all readily agreed to.

### **3.10 Data collection**

As previously outlined the author has adopted a qualitative approach to data collection. This can take a number of approaches varying from ethnography, focus groups, action research, case studies, interviews or language based enquiries (Quinlan, 2011). For the purpose of this research and in order to answer the research aims posed above the author decided to conduct exploratory, in-depth, semi structured interviews with officers of Superintendent rank within An Garda Síochána. These interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. A respondent information sheet (Appendix 3) was provided to each interviewee outlining to them the purpose of the research, assurances concerning anonymity and confidentiality and that they had the opportunity to withdraw at any time from the process. This was reiterated in the formal introductions prior to the conduction of the interviews.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2002) stipulated that when considering issues surrounding interview based approaches to primary data collection within organisations great care must be given to ensure that participants do not inadvertently identify respondents who raise rich topics ripe for discussion on the condition of anonymity, as to do so may have

harmful repercussions for the individual concerned. With this in mind while the author has used quotes from the respondents interviewed, he has not included the transcripts to such interviews as appendices hereto as it was felt to do so would almost certainly identify the respondents in question. The respondents participated and spoke freely on the condition of anonymity and the author has honoured their wishes in this regard. A copy of the transcripts have however been shown to the research supervisor and are available for inspection by college supervisors at any time if necessary.

### **3.11 Data Analysis**

Once the interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed, data analysis was conducted using Thematic Analysis. In order to do so the author drew upon the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Maguire and Delahunt (2009). This method was chosen as “it offers an accessible and flexible approach to analysing qualitative data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 77) “which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Thematic analysis is a means of illuminating themes within qualitative data. Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that it is the first method of qualitative analysis that should be learned as “it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis” (p. 78)

As is the first step with any qualitative analysis multiple readings of the transcripts were conducted in order that the author was intimately familiar with the entire data set. Next the interviews were coded to reduce the large body of data “into smaller chunks of meaning” (Maguire and Delahunt, 2009, p. 3). As did Maguire and Delahunt (2009) the author used open coding, thereby developing and modifying codes as he worked through the process. This involved working through hard copies of the transcripts with pens and highlighters coding each section of text deemed to address a research aim or question.

Once the coding was complete the author searched for themes or patterns in the data. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2009) “themes refer to patterns in the data that are important or interesting in terms of the research question” (p. 4). Once identified these were again reviewed, refined and modified if necessary. The data associated with each theme was



re-read to establish whether the data did support the themes. While doing so the author was conscious of the advice given by Maguire and Delahunt (2009)

Themes should be coherent and they should be distinct from each other. Things to think about include:

- Do the themes make sense?
- Am I trying to fit too much into a theme?
- If themes overlap are they really separate themes?
- Are there themes within themes (subthemes)?
- Does the data support the themes?
- Are there other themes? (p.6)

However, the author was equally conscious of the advice given by Braun and Clarke (2006, to not becoming obsessed with endless re-coding as the generation of “themes could go on ad infinitum” p.92). The themes and sub-themes were arrived at following this process and the findings will be discussed and outlined in the following chapters in a coherent, logical narrative.

### **3.12 Limitations of research**

The author was conscious at the outset of undertaking this research project as a practitioner researcher working within the organisation the subject of the investigation that it could impact upon the outcomes of the research. The author was aware that he had to utilise the access afforded to him as a practitioner researcher wisely. While conducting the research in familiar surroundings and on familiar themes the author had to be cognisant of the impact his lack of cultural shock or surprise may have had on research findings as a result. It came back to the age old problem of remaining both impassive and impartial. As the researcher was not a stranger and was working within the organisation the researcher was cognisant that the respondents were likely to be more candid and revealing in their replies than they would necessarily be to an outside researcher. Likewise the author was conscious that the forthrightness of the respondents was largely attributable to the fact that they were guaranteed anonymity at the outset and that this had to be protected at all costs. Lastly the author had to be observant of the possibility of interviewee sabotaging, where interviewees can give false or misleading replies for a variety of reasons.

As already outlined at section 3.7 above due to time and geographical constraints it was neither practical nor possible to interview every member of An Garda Síochána. As evidenced in table 4 referred to Section 3.8 the respondents were equally divided between uniform and detective positions ten worked in specialist functions (SF) such as National or Specialist Units, while the remainder were responsible for the day to day running of Garda Districts (U). The author contends that while not perfect, this is a reasonable representation of the population.

In terms of validity, reliability and replicability the author feels that while only 15 interviews were conducted the views expressed by the respondents were nonetheless broadly representative of the force in general as will be borne out in the research findings below. The majority of respondents had served as Superintendents both in rural Garda Districts and in Garda Districts within the Dublin Metropolitan District. Equally as will also be borne out below the issues and concerns raised by them were almost uniform across all respondents.

## **Findings**

## **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the themes running throughout the data set. The author undertook at the outset to establish the role that middle management within An Garda Síochána play as agents of change. Presently, there is a major change management programme being undertaken within the force namely the Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 -2021 which promises to bring about in excess of 100 changes within the timeframe of the programme.

As already stated 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of Superintendent Rank stationed in the Dublin Metropolitan Region. These members ranged in length of service and tenure of rank as outlined in Table 2. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis as discussed at section 3.11. Following a lengthy data analysis procedure, the interview responses were coded and four themes were discovered to run throughout the data set, which will be further discussed and expanded upon below. Each of these themes will provide data for examining barriers that may prevent middle management within An Garda Síochána from being effective change agents. Similarly, data will suggest where middle management are positively engaging with and occasioning change. Where deficiencies are encountered, suggestions as to what the organisation can do to remedy these will be provided. This will then organically lead on to a discussion based upon the findings both within the literature and the data corpus.

## **4.2 Modernisation and Renewal Programme**

The change programme itself understandably is one of the overriding themes emerging from the data. It was defined by all respondents as improving upon the way that An Garda Síochána conducted its business, “improving what we do well and maybe reconsidering what we do badly” (Respondent 5). “To plug those gaps where we may be seen to be faltering or not delivering on our commitments under our vision and under our values” (Respondent 4). As highlighted by many it was to make An Garda Síochána a beacon for 21<sup>st</sup> Century policing.

The predominant sentiment emerging was that while each of the respondents interviewed welcomed the introduction of the change programme, the majority were not seeing its impact almost two years into the life of the programme. “I want to see change, I want to see it happen , but I don’t feel the change. This is going on for two years now. I haven’t seen anything that has changed my daily job” (Respondent 1).

Those employed in specialist sections accepted that “there will be probably somewhat of a lag in National Units from those interacting directly with the public. There are discussions about major change and they will have a very big impact.” (Respondent 2) Others were experiencing “nothing at the moment. Crime management is what I’m involved in. I feel that key areas of large scale criminal investigations, if this Modernisation and Renewal Programme comes in it could streamline and help a lot of that”. (Respondent 9) Those involved in District Policing did experience more of an impact mainly through the introduction of Property and Exhibit Management System (PEMS) as did those respondents who were business owners of some of the change initiatives.

The majority (13 out of 15) saw the programme as being overly ambitious and that it was not achievable to deliver over 100 projects in the timeframe laid down. The remaining two felt that while “extremely challenging in that timeframe, it is achievable” (Respondent 14). “I know we’re coming out of a period of austerity and there’s a cost involved. I recognise all that but you cannot have a 21<sup>st</sup> century policing service if it’s built on a 19<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure” (Respondent 7). Others felt that “every project will have delays and I suspect a lot of them will be delivered but you know we’re open to the economic climate. If there is a downturn next year this whole programme is gone”. This respondent also felt that “personnel is a big issue as well. A lot of these are not achievable in the short term because you don’t have the personnel” (Respondent 8). Respondent 10 felt

“the big problems are facilities, resources, money for equipment, trying to get laptops. The two biggest changes that are needed are a new PULSE system or whatever you want to call it and a national CAD system and they should all be the one system. Your talking probably half a billion to one billion [Euro]”.

“I’d love to see it. Realistically I don’t see it as achievable. To put the infrastructure in place for the IT, vehicles, transport, housing, offices” (Respondent13). Others felt that while the change may happen “we’re rushing it. We’re rushing it too much. We have no resources here,

that's not a whinge or anything, the demand is put on you to do something but if the resources aren't there it will fail" (Respondent 11) or as another put it "I think we will change, but I think people have to realise that it can't happen as quickly" (Respondent 3). This issue of resources will be further expanded upon under the section on Barriers below.

As Respondent 1 alluded to above the message isn't getting out there, another believed "there has to be something tangible, seen, let it be the palm tops for the patrol cars, let it be the soft caps or polo shirts for the uniform, but let it be something tangible so that the people on the ground who you're trying to get buy in from, can say this is part of the Modernisation and Renewal plan. Small things and people will buy in" (Respondent 9)

Another criticism of the programme was as Respondent 1 put it

"There are 13 different areas. One of them slightly touches on people and I think people are our gold. I'm not sure there's enough emphasis on that and I don't think we make enough of them. I don't think the boss or the various bosses come out enough to talk to the guard on the ground. To tell him they value what he's doing and to tell him the important job he's doing, because he and she are doing huge jobs".

### **4.3 Middle Management**

Another major theme that emerged was quite understandably the role of the Superintendents themselves or middle management. All (15) felt that they had a vital part to play in the change process. (13) were of the opinion that members of Superintendent rank (middle Management) were effective at bringing about or occasioning change. This was quantified by a number of respondents saying "in so much as they were let". "Good in so far as they're allowed. Within the allowances that they have as regards personnel, equipment, resources and the finances that are there" (Respondent 12). Again all (15) respondents felt that they had greatly increased responsibilities at Superintendent rank as compared to what they had at Inspector rank. While they had responsibility for portfolios at Inspector many (Respondents 2, 6, 8, 11 and 12) referred to the buck stopping with them. Despite the rank and role responsibility of the role of Superintendent not one of those interviewed resented the

additional responsibility of overseeing this change management programme within their respective Districts. On the contrary they saw themselves as the “drivers of change” “I think it all revolves around us. I think we’re the drivers. I think we have to do it” (Respondent 1). “You’re constantly changing people. Trying to change people’s behaviours. I expect a certain standard from myself. I expect a certain standard from my own people” (Respondent 6). Another felt that “you have to drive it. As Superintendent it’s not good enough to talk it, you have to be seen to do it too” (Respondent 7). Respondent 14 felt it was critical that Superintendents themselves bought into the change programme as if they didn’t “demonstrate, support and advocate it and champion it then it’s not going to happen. (R14)

However others also felt that there was far too much being foisted upon Superintendents and this added responsibility was “just the job again gathering everything in and putting it on the District Officer’s desk” (Respondent 1). “You’re picking up slack, you’re trying to cover holes” (Respondent 1). “There’s a lot of balls to be juggled in the air. Again it’s probably too much in one role” (Respondent 3). “I think we overburden the Superintendent rank with regard to rank and role responsibilities” (Respondent 4). However he hoped that the functional policing model being introduced as part of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme would help alleviate some responsibility. “When you are a Superintendent in charge of a District you’re literally 24/7” (Respondent 7). “I think the Superintendent is the perfect rank for senior management to land everything on and for junior staff to push everything up. I think a Superintendent now is swamped with every responsibility you could ever imagine” (Respondent 5).

Asked whether they had personally encountered problems implementing changes, eight hadn’t, they largely felt that if the message was communicated properly and staff were engaged in the change then there were no issues. Of those that had three had experienced a level of resistance, and another felt that the level of bureaucracy in Garda Headquarters was the greatest inhibitor to change.

#### **4.4 Culture**

Culture was another major theme to emerge from the data. As a renewal of the Garda culture was one of the goals of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme each Superintendent was

asked for their own definition of culture or more specifically Garda culture. While the definitions varied a little they were based along the following lines. “The culture in the Garda Síochána is a can do attitude. We go out there and we do the business no matter what”. (Respondent 1) “Organisational culture is the shared knowledge, values, beliefs that we all have and that has developed to what it is over time”. (Respondent 14) “Culture is a set of values that an organisation or group of people work to. It’s what they believe are their norms and beliefs. There are certain very good aspects about Garda culture and there are certainly some aspects that we could get rid of” (Respondent 7). “We’re involved in all sorts of activities on the ground within communities, so people see us as part of the community. Somebody that you can turn to and trust and I think that’s a real measure of our culture” (Respondent 4).

In terms of culture and organisational culture 3 out of the 15 respondents interviewed felt that there was one overarching dominant culture in An Garda Síochána. The remaining 12 were of the view that there were several different sub cultures present within the organisation. While many accepted that the organisational culture needed to change they cautioned against “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” (Respondents 4, 7, 9, 13 and 15).”The culture needs to be more flexible and I feel the culture needs to change but I wouldn’t change us completely and I also wouldn’t be in favour of modelling ourselves on other police forces” (Respondent 9). “I think there’s been a great culture in the organisation in all my period. I don’t see it all as negative. Ok I see we should refocus but I don’t think we should throw the baby out with the bath water, because there’s been a huge amount of good work done over the years” (Respondent 13). Respondent 12 felt that one aspect of the Garda culture that needed to change was the “overarching requirement to keep everyone happy at the penalty of losing your good staff. We’re the greatest exponent of saying yes, we have to learn to say no” (Respondent 12).

#### **4.5 Barriers**

Naturally, when discussing a change management programme one of the main themes to emerge were barriers to change. Three sub themes were found to be present within this theme namely human resource issues, training and communication and each will be discussed hereunder. The main barriers to change discussed by the Superintendents were resistance to



change, change fatigue and lack of resources in terms of personnel, infrastructure, finances and so on. “When you haven’t got the resources to make the changes that you want you become a little bit more cynical. I think for change to be good something has to keep happening” (Respondent 5). Again the author got the impression that the Superintendents wanted to occasion change but were hampered in doing so. “Yeah but it’s quite frankly doomed without resources. If you give me the resources here we’ll do everything and anything. Without resources your hands are tied” (Respondent 11). “I think financially it’s going to be a huge problem” (Respondent 3). The biggest drawback I see is if you put in change you must put in the architecture to support that change. If one goes without the other it’s doomed. (R13)

While change fatigue was explored the majority of those interviewed felt that it wasn’t an issue as “there isn’t I don’t believe, because we haven’t done that much change. How much change have we had? (Respondent 1). Similarly while change resistance was discussed it wasn’t seen as a major problem by those interviewed. The views they expressed were along the following lines. “You have people who don’t like change, simple as that” (Respondent 10). “There is and I’d say its fear, fear of what changes will bring, and fear of the unknown” (Respondent 9). All respondents interviewed were of the opinion that communication was key to resolving this issue which is discussed further below and in the next chapter.

Some of those interviewed expressed that there was an element of resistance present at their own rank too and two reasons were proffered for its presence. “There is some resistance. You know maybe where a portfolio is reduced or where they feel that the profile of the district is changing to the detriment of the district. There would be selfish reasons maybe to try and steer change differently” (Respondent 2). “It can be viewed both ways, it can be viewed by some Superintendents as losing some control and power. It can be viewed as positive by others as I now have a more defined role” (Respondent 4). Other interviewees believed that resistance was down to “length of service rather than rank structure. I’d say no matter what rank you are if you’re in the organisation 25 years from then on your resistance to change is stronger” (Respondent 9). “I think as you get older you get more cynical and resistant” (Respondent 3).

### **4.5.1 Human Resource Issues**

As referenced above many respondents intimated that a lack of resources during the previous decade had negatively impacted on the ability of An Garda Síochána to provide a quality policing service. “What’s happened in the guards over the last 7 or 8 years, has been impacted by the moratorium, by budget constraints, by all of that” (Respondent 1). “The disinvestments that have happened during the austerity over the last 8 to 10 years. It has had a serious effect on the ability of An Garda Síochána to deliver” (Respondent 4). “There’s no doubt we’ve lost senior members, we’ve lost more balance” (Respondent 3). “We have no resources, it’s crazy, you’re in a situation here where you have Superintendents running Districts with very few staff and they’re expected to be enthusiastic about a big project that somebody up in an office up in the depot has... probably being pushed by someone like Accenture who have no concept of the rest of it” (R 5).

A major issue referred to by several Superintendents and also linked by them to austerity and the moratorium on recruitment was the lack of supervisors and those at Sergeant rank in particular. “You don’t have a Sergeant on every unit, a huge huge problem. Who is supervising, people need to be supervised, they need to know when they’re doing something right, they need to know when they’re doing something wrong” (Respondent 6). “The lack of supervision is a huge risk, I don’t think I have any Sections Sergeant here now, that’s a huge risk” (Respondent 10). “I have sent off reports looking for additional people here and there and two years later you could be sending the same report off again” (Respondent 13). “There are definitely not enough supervisors to ensure that our members are provided with the protection necessary to do their business” (Respondent 14).

### **4.5.2 Training**

All Superintendents were asked if they had received guidance or training at their current or indeed any rank to assist them in implementing change initiatives. Only three felt that they had received adequate training to enable them to be effective change agents. Incidentally this training came about from external degree and masters qualifications they had undertaken which contained modules in relation to change. However none felt that there was sufficient

training in the organisation and all bemoaned the loss of Continuous Professional Development or CPD as it will hereafter be referred to.

“I think losing CPD over the years has been a massive loss for the organisation” (Respondent 1). “The annual in service training was very good and should be brought back. That has to be brought back” (Respondent 2). “Training is a big big thing and it’s something that should have a pivotal role in relation to keeping people up to standard” (Respondent 5). “I think we missed a huge opportunity during the austerity times. One thing that we could have kept going was CPD. I think we would be in much better shape today had CPD continued”. He went on to say in relation to buy in “I think you have to empower them. I think you have to engage them in the process. You have to listen to them and I also think you have to provide the education and the proper training” (Respondent 4). “There is so much legislation after coming out in the intervening years I don’t know how we still have our heads above water, we’re just managing to cope, and it’s just by the skin of our teeth” (Respondent 12).

Respondents 6, 7, 8, 10 and 15 spoke of conducting their own training with staff. “You know during the austerity years training went down to zero. At the end of the day I do training outside with my own people” (Respondent 8). While acknowledging that they were not receiving adequate training themselves nonetheless they were not keen on attending for training without somebody picking up the slack while they were away, thereby reinforcing the rank and role responsibilities they already had. “Without backup no, because when I go on a day’s training the day job is still here, so I come back to a double day’s work when I go on a training course” (Respondent 8). “I’d welcome more but there has to be a space made for that time to train. If I go to two day’s training when I come back I’ve two days work waiting” (Respondent 11).

### **4.5.3 Communication**

Without exception communication was seen by all respondents interviewed as key to ensuring the buy in of staff and to further ensure that staff were brought on the change journey. “I think its communication. I think the biggest thing is people don’t understand the reasons why and what you’re doing here. I think if you sit down and explain what you’re doing and the reasons why. I think you need to be looking for feedback off them because it’s

suspicion and mistrust at the start that's probably the biggest thing" (Respondent 3). "I talk to them. I explain myself. I explain the process and I explain the benefits to both them and us" (Respondent 1) "Well you have to make the new culture better than what was there and that everyone can see it. You have to explain it to people" (Respondent 2). "You have to bring people along with you, you have to sell things". Properly communicating and consultation" (Respondent 5).

Again all saw this preferable to imposed change and many referred to diktat's being sent down from Garda Headquarters or the Depot (Colloquial term for Garda Headquarters). This again went towards the perceived disconnect from the Executive and frontline staff. "I'm always concerned about change that's imposed. Although it might sit better in the end it doesn't suit everybody. You have to bring people along with you, you have to sell things. Properly communicating and consultation. Consultation is what it's all about" (Respondent 5). "You can't just issue a diktat and leave it hanging there and expect that it will be accepted. Diktat's are like a cottage industry, you send them out and we're protected. If someone does something wrong in 6 months, well we told you" (Respondent 8). "Sending out a written diktat is not the way to do it. I talk to them, I brainstorm" (Respondent 9). "There most certainly is (a disconnect) between the depot and the stations" (Respondent 10). I would be very strongly of the view that nothing is changed by way of a HQ directive (Internal Garda instructional document). A HQ directive doesn't change anything, it sets down a set of rules to protect the organisation but the change only takes place when you change the minds and hearts" (Respondent 11).

## **Discussion**

## **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the research alluded to above while remaining cognisant of the research aims and objectives and how they compare to the literature review undertaken. The main research aim at the outset was to establish what role middle management play as change agents within An Garda Síochána and how effective they are at implementing change? Borne out throughout both the literature review and the research findings is that middle management occupy a critical position having regard to occasioning or implementing change. Each respondent interviewed acknowledged that they were responsible for driving change, however, some quantified this by saying in so much as they were let. This referred to their rank and role responsibilities, the time that they would have to devote to bringing about change and also the level of autonomy they had to occasion change in an hierarchical organisation. As evidenced above many referred to a disconnect or a remove from the executive of the organisation and day to day policing. Some referred to “diktats” being issued without accompanying explanation, communication or consultation. This will be referenced further below.

## **5.2 Resistance amongst middle management**

Another of the research objectives was to establish if there was resistance to transformative change within middle management in An Garda Síochána and to examine if their capacity to effect change is impacted by organisational culture. The majority while recognising that aspects of Garda culture needed to change, were of the view that there was a very good culture in the organisation and desire to serve the public as envisioned at the foundation of the Force, and saw the culture as being a can do attitude and policing being that of service to the community. None had encountered significant problems in occasioning changes, of those that had, some resistance and lack of resources were cited as key barriers, which were surmounted through communication with regard to resistance, the resources however was a bigger stumbling block.

All fifteen interviewed recognised that they had a key role to play in the transformation process if it was to be successful, and if change was to bed in which correlates with the

literature of Herzing and Jimmieson (2006) who felt that middle management had a role to play in the change process. Thirteen felt that members of Superintendent rank were effective at occasioning change and those that didn't expressed that they weren't due to the pressures of the workload and expectations of the rank.

There were those who were of the view that the longer somebody was in the rank of Superintendent the more cynical they became, as they strove to introduce changes to negative effect previously, and had received no assistance in doing so. Indeed respondent nine felt that it was length of service in the organisation rather than rank that made individuals more resistant to change. This could be interpreted as what Huy (2001) viewed as senior executives inherently realising that middle managers were resistant to change. However, it could equally be viewed as what Beer et al (2016) alluded to in their research of one of the barriers to change being staff not being made aware of the organisations direction on strategy due to a lack of communication from senior executives.

### **5.3 Communication**

The theme of communication was a thread that ran across all interviews. All interviewees saw communication, consultation and feedback as being critical to organisational success. They saw that by talking, explaining the advantages of the change both on a personal and organisational level it was possible to bring people with you. This echoes (Kotter, 1996) (Augustine, 1997) and (Appelbaum et al 2011) that every and all avenues of communication should be utilised at every opportunity. However, despite recognising how vitally important communication was many alluded to a perceived distance or disconnect between the executive in the organisation and mainstream policing. Many referred to "diktat's" or HQ circulars being sent down from the executive without explanation or communication and with the express direction of being acted upon immediately. The author got the impression of exasperation from some interviewees with regard to them having sought clarification on certain issues only to be met with what they perceived to be silence. Some respondents referred to communication been passed from office to office before being answered, thereby rendering it obsolete when received as it was often time sensitive.

This perceived disconnect could be attributable to the rank and role responsibilities of the executive level within An Garda Síochána. Those interviewed referred repeatedly to the increased responsibilities placed on Superintendent Level and the buck stopping with them. Therefore, while not quantifiable or possible to establish through this research it would be reasonable to assume that the executive likewise have greatly increased rank and role responsibilities. However, despite this it is vital to the success of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme that the vision and purpose of the programme is communicated properly and effectively to Middle Management as it is they who will drive the change. As referenced by (Kotter, 1996) and (Washington and Hacker, 2005) if change is clearly articulated to and understood by managers at the outset then they would be more enthusiastic agents for change. This together with a lack of resources, manpower, supervisors, infrastructure and finances addresses research question number three namely what affects Middle Management's ability to deliver transformative change.

#### **5.4 Training**

The issue of training was one that was broached with all interviewees. Out of the fifteen interviewed only three felt they had received adequate training to assist them in occasioning change. The three who felt adequately prepared had undertaken third level qualifications which consisted of modules relating to change management which they felt would be beneficial to them. While welcoming additional training some did so with the caveat that somebody else would have to assume some of their workload when they were absent for training, otherwise they would have twice as much work to do on return. Some anticipated that this would be achieved under the new Functional Policing Model proposed under the Modernisation and Renewal Programme which suggests that an Assistant Principal Officer will assume all administrative functions of a Superintendent.

All interviewees bemoaned the lack of CPD in the organisation and that it had ground to a halt. All saw it of vital importance and incidentally some were delivering their own training to staff in their respective districts. While this answers the fourth and fifth questions posed at the outset the author believes it is necessary to go further. As Ponzio and Zarone (2015) articulated training must be seen as a long term strategy designed to address deficiencies in



order for organisations to successfully achieve their goals. It cannot be seen as a quick fix. As articulated by Kotter (1996) it is naive for an organisation to believe that habits built up over years would be changed without training. It's imperative as referenced by Dutta and Kleiner (2015) that the managers leading the change receive the necessary training to enable them to successfully tackle any barriers to change that may arise in order that the change may be allowed to cascade down throughout the organisation. However, it is imperative that the training is structured and adapted to suit the organisational context (Beer et al, 2016).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

## **6.1 Introduction**

As is evident from the research middle management within An Garda Síochána are enthusiastic about change. It is crucial though that they are assisted in being effective at doing so. Many of those interviewed expressed the opinion that the biggest corporate risk to An Garda Síochána through the Modernisation and Renewal Programme was the reputational damage if it failed. It is acknowledged that the programme is ambitious in attempting to deliver over 100 projects in the timeframe 2016-2021. Perhaps it is necessarily thus, perhaps the bar has to be set high to reach such transformative goals. However, the proviso is, as was referenced by several interviewees that there needs to be quick wins in order to keep everyone on the ‘bus’ (Collins, 2001) as short term wins build momentum and maintains motivation (Kotter, 1996).

Another potential stumbling block as referenced by several interviewees was the lack of infrastructure or as respondent seven quite succinctly stated, “you cannot have a 21<sup>st</sup> century policing service if it’s built on a 19<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure”. Without the necessary infrastructure to support the changes necessary to enable An Garda Síochána to become a beacon for 21<sup>st</sup> century policing, the model is doomed to failure almost before it starts. The author has not been able to find any financial costings in the literature on the Modernisation and Renewal Programme to fund the necessary infrastructural changes. As referenced by many interviewees, many Garda Stations were not fit for purpose and to modernise them all to the required standard would cost conservatively in the hundreds of millions. To give an example the new purpose built Divisional Headquarters station at Kevin Street in Dublin is expected to cost €31 million (Brophy, 2015). Similarly the Government has committed to spend €80 on upgrading Sligo and Clonmel Garda Stations, re opening Fitzgibbon Street station in Dublin and building a new purpose built Headquarters for National Units in Dublin (Loughlin, 2017). In addition, should there be another economic downturn it is a consensus that the money committed to the Modernisation and Renewal Programme would be greatly diminished.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Superintendents within An Garda Síochána have progressed through the ranks to their current role. It is incumbent on them to utilise the various networks they have established over their careers, to exchange views about the change process and extol its benefits and virtues at every opportunity to members within the force. In so doing they will cement the change process within the organisation.

In regards to the Modernisation and Renewal Programme and attempting to effect its desired outcomes, one couldn't but argue that if middle management received a level of confidence as agents of change with the necessary competence and training in change, and effecting change processes it would benefit the programme and its delivery.

As well as conducting training to middle management to assist them in implementing and leading change it's incumbent on the organisation to roll out CPD training once again. The costs for this could be reduced by using the skill set of retired members and they could be utilised to deliver the training. They already have the organisational awareness and knowledge and would be ideally positioned to deliver such programmes.

It is essential that review periods and periods of reflection are built into the Modernisation and Renewal Programme. These are not evident at the moment. With the two most recent large scale changes to the organisation, namely the roster changes and the introduction of PULSE (Garda computer system) there were meant to be review periods built in. However, as highlighted by numerous respondents no review period came and four years after the introduction of the roster system, many Superintendents are left with roster systems that do not suit their purposes in their respective districts and have no recourse as the rosters were imposed upon them.

There is merit to looking at the promotions system within An Garda Síochána, which is currently based upon performance at a competency based interview. As highlighted by a number of respondents the candidate is already carrying out the role before they or the organisation discover whether they have the ability and aptitude for it. Perhaps suitably qualified candidates could be placed on a panel, receive the requisite training to perform the role they are applying for and if not successful in training or not reaching a desired level of competence they can then be removed from the panel.

The area of succession planning also needs to be addressed. As already highlighted some of the respondents interviewed had previously served in rural Garda Districts. The Mayo Division was highlighted as one which in particular required attention. One respondent referred to a Chief Superintendent and two Superintendents arriving from Dublin on promotion. Their natural inclination is to return to Dublin at their earliest opportunity. It's a priority to continue to promote internally from within the Division members of Sergeant and Inspector rank to fill vacancies that are and will arise in the future. Cognisance must be taken of members who are due to retire, that proper replacements are identified, and put in place prior to retirement to accommodate proper succession planning, and ensure that there is a seamless handover, ensuring that vital information and knowledge gleaned over thirty years service is not lost to the organisation. Whether this is done through a mentorship or coaching programme is an area for further research.

### **6.3 Areas for further study**

Another area for further research that emerged from this research was managing the expectations of new recruits within An Garda Síochána. They are joining with the promise and expectation of career advancement. In a hierarchical organisation such as An Garda Síochána this is neither possible nor achievable. For example, looking at Superintendents, there are currently 165 in the organisation. In a force of approximately 13,500 this represents only 1.2% of the population. What will happen when the realisation sets in that it is not possible for all to achieve the career progression that they may have been promised at recruitment? Will they remain in the organisation? Will they become disgruntled and demotivated? How will An Garda Síochána as an organisation manage this?

Another area for possible further research is exploring why so few females are represented within the rank of Superintendent. Presently there are 15 female Superintendents within a cohort of 165. This represents 9% of the rank. More worryingly, however, 13 of the 15 Superintendents are stationed within the Dublin Metropolitan Region, with only one in the Northern region and one in the Western Region. There are none in the Eastern, Southern or South Eastern regions. This appears an area ripe for further investigation, firstly, as regards the representation of females in the rank and secondly, in terms of geographical spread.

## **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1: Interview Schedule**

1. Can you outline how much service you have within An Garda Síochána, including at your current rank?
2. How many staff are you responsible for within your district, Garda and civilian?
3. Can you tell me what the main focus of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 -2021 is?
4. What impact (if any) is it having on your day to day running of your district?
5. The Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 – 2021 commits to renewing its culture, living up to its values and listening to and learning from its partners. I would like to explore this statement with you in greater detail.
6. How has your level of responsibility changed from your role as inspector?
7. Do you think the public perception of An Garda Síochána has changed in your time in the force?
8. How effective to you believe middle management within AGS (members of Superintendent rank) are at occasioning change? Are members of Superintendent rank resistant to change or do they embrace it?

9. Do you believe that your capacity to occasion change is in any way impacted by organisational culture?
10. What are the barriers (if any) to effecting change are as you perceive them to be within your role?
11. Do you believe you have an important role to play in the change process?
12. What recent change initiative have you introduced within your district and was it your own initiative or as part of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme?
13. Did you perceive a level of risk in this change initiative? In your opinion have you become more or less risk averse, the longer you have been in your current role?
14. What difficulties have you personally encountered in implementing or attempting to implement change?
15. What other difficulties (if any) can you envisage in implementing some of the changes outlined within the Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016 – 2021?
16. How will you communicate your vision of change within your district?
17. Do you give feedback? Do you seek feedback?
18. What level of interaction would you have with members within your district on a daily basis?
19. Do you believe there is a disconnect or distance between management (middle) and those engaged in frontline policing?



20. What guidance or training do you receive or have you received in your current (or any role) to assist you in implementing change initiatives within your district?
21. How do you personally insure the buy in of staff?
22. In your opinion can staff be brought from a mindset of working through a sense of compliance to one of co-operation in which they increase the level of talent and commitment they bring to their role on a daily basis?
23. Any other observations?

## **Appendix 2: Invitation to Participate in Research**

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Martin Geraghty. I am a serving member of An Garda Síochána currently working in the Special Detective Unit, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2. I am currently engaging in a research project to be submitted as part of a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland, Mayor Square, Dublin 1. I have chosen to examine the area of Change Management within An Garda An Síochána d more specifically the role that members of Superintendent rank play as change agents within the change process. I would like to impress upon you that An Garda Síochána has in no way commissioned this research, albeit, official approval has been sought.

As part of this research project it is necessary to interview a number of officers of Superintendent rank. I require your assistance in this matter. I fully appreciate the demands of the job and it is with this in mind that I propose to conduct interviews of no more than an hour's duration at a time and place convenient to you. It is my hope to complete interviews in the next month. Before considering your participation I wish you to know that your anonymity will be protected by this researcher and confidentiality will be of utmost importance. You will be free to decline to answer any question posed without offence or inference being drawn from such a decision.

I propose to record the interview digitally. The recording is strictly for data processing only and I give you full assurance that any recordings will be stored securely. I will be the only person with access to any recordings during the research stage and thereafter the recording will be destroyed immediately. Should any quotations from our interview be later used in the final draft of my dissertation, there will be no details linking that quote to you the interviewee.

A copy of the finished dissertation will be made available to you should you wish to read it. The research results will document the changing nature of policing under the Modernisation and Renewal programme 2016-2021. It is hoped that your participation will provide valuable insight into the role of Superintendents as change agents and it will be utilised to inform future change policies within An Garda Síochána.

I would appreciate a call to arrange an interview either by email or telephone, both of which are provided below.

Thanking you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Martin Geraghty

Detective Sergeant.

Special Detective Unit,

Harcourt Square

Dublin 2.

+353 1 666xxxx

(m) 086 828xxxx

Email: [martinxxxxxxxx@garda.ie](mailto:martinxxxxxxxx@garda.ie)

### **Appendix 3: Respondent Information Sheet**

National College of Ireland

MA in Human Resource Management 2016/2017

Student: Martin Geraghty

Student No: 15015688

Module: Dissertation

Research Project

#### **Working Title:**

‘The Role Middle Management play as change agents within An Garda Síochána’

#### **Purpose of Research?**

To determine how Middle Management within An Garda Síochána can be more effective at implementing change. To establish what level of resistance (if any) to transformative change exists within middle management in An Garda Síochána.

#### **Who is undertaking this research?**

Martin Geraghty.

#### **Is this research commissioned, funded or sponsored ?**

No.

#### **Who are the participants?**

Members of Superintendent Rank within An Garda Síochána.

**What type of data will be required?**

Qualitative Data ; Experiential reflections of the respondents.

**How can you contribute?**

By way of personal interview.

**Interview duration?**

One hour approximately.

**Target dates to conduct research?**

April/May 2017.

**Is participation in this process voluntary?**

Yes.

**Has the Respondent the right to omit or refuse to answer any questions?**

Yes.

**Can the Respondent withdraw at any time?**

Yes.

**Are there any perceived consequences to taking part in this research as a respondent?**

The positive consequences are the enhancement of the academic and experiential learning of the researcher. No negative consequences are anticipated.

**What steps are taken to ensure complete anonymity?**

Without any identifying information research will be collected without compromising anonymity. Respondents will be identified solely as Respondent 1, Respondent 2 and so

forth. Each respondent's details will be only known to the researcher and only disclosed to a college supervisor should clarification be sought. The college Supervisor is the only other person that may view a transcript of a full interview. Once the dissertation is submitted The College Policy in relation to confidentiality will prevail. Once the dissertation is complete and assessed all audio recordings will be erased.

**How will the finding of the research be disseminated?**

A 20,000 word dissertation will be prepared for submission to National College of Ireland.

**Contact for this research project.**

Martin Geraghty, Special Detective Unit, Harcourt Square, Dublin 2. Phone: 086 828xxxx

Email: [martinxxxxxxxx@garda.ie](mailto:martinxxxxxxxx@garda.ie)

## **Appendix 4 Respondent Consent Acceptance Form**

### **Respondent Consent Form**

National College of Ireland

MA in Human Resource Management 2016/2017

Student: Martin Geraghty

Student No: 15015688

Module: Dissertation

### **Research Project**

#### **Working Title:**

‘The role middle management play as change agents within An Garda Síochána’

#### **Respondent Consent**

- ❖ I have read and understood the Respondent Information Sheet supplied for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. Yes/No
- ❖ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason. Yes/No
- ❖ I understand that while every effort will be undertaken to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by me, this is only done within the limitations of the law. Yes/No
- ❖ I agree to take part in this research project. Yes/No

Name of Participant:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Name of Researcher: Martin Geraghty.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 5: Personal Learning Statement (CIPD Requirement)**

This dissertation has marked the culmination of two years of work in the completion of this Masters programme. It has been a return to learning for me after a break of almost 20 years since obtaining my primary degree. It has certainly reengaged my love of learning and ensured that I remain on the lifelong learning path. While the completion of this dissertation has been a demanding process it has nonetheless been an enjoyable and rewarding one. Undertaking this Masters programme on a part time basis while working full time has finely honed my organisational and time management skills.

When undertaking this research project I had not anticipated how time consuming the transcription of the interviews and the subsequent thematic analysis of the data would be. From a learning viewpoint if undertaking this type of analysis in the future I would certainly attempt to allow much more time for this process in the future. From a further learning point of view with regard to keeping track of references, I fully appreciate now how vitally important it is to keep a clear note of them while progressing through the project. I have learned this the hard way after scrambling to find references in the past few days while putting the finishing touches to this project.



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