

Chapter 14

New Zealand Police Cultural Liaison Officers: Their Role in Crime Prevention and Community Policing



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Introduction

Relationships between the police, and indigenous and ethnic minorities have a long history of being tense, often involving violent encounters and accusations of police violence, bias or victimization (Pearson et al. 1989). The relationship between the New Zealand Police and the country's ethnic minorities, especially Maori, is no exception (Hill 1989; Newbold 2000).

The implementation of community policing through the establishment and development of community relationships and partnerships and the criminality of ethnic minorities are a topic of discussion and concern around the world. Of particular concern, is the countering of terrorism and the investigation of sexual crimes and domestic violence (Collins 2005; Goodman and Ruggiero 2008, Hunter and Dantzker 2005; Rasche 1988), and the maintenance of policing legitimacy and policing by consent in minority and ethnic communities. Police legitimacy and community relationships have become even more important as a result of the tragedies experienced in Ferguson, Missouri and New York in 2014. However, although research has been undertaken in the United Kingdom that examined the role of Police Community Support Officers, there has been no research that examined Police Cultural Liaison Officers that work specifically with minority and ethnic communities.

Police Community Support Officers (PSCOs) were introduced in England and Wales to increase visible police patrols (Loveday and Smith 2015) and to reposition community safety as a government priority (Brown 2017). According to Johnston (2005) however, the use of PSCOs by the police was to also 'extend' the police family and to increase the diversity of police employees. PSCO's were identified as having a vital role in neighbourhood policing, building social capital and, as a result,

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235

police legitimacy in high-crime areas (O'Neill 2014a). The establishment of PSCOs has led to the police being more 'outward-focused', open to collaboration and a change in organizational culture (O'Neill 2014b).

An alternative to PSCOs, is one approach adopted in the mid-1990s by the New Zealand Police. As a part of their community policing model, the New Zealand Police established a specialist unit of indigenous and ethnic officers to assist with building relationships with the indigenous and ethnic communities. Since its inception, this unit has increased in size and has changed its emphasis from focusing solely on New Zealand's indigenous population, Maori, to also establishing relationships with other ethnic and religious minority communities from the South Pacific, South East Asia, China and India.

Ethnic Liaison Officers are a part of the Police Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services, which has staff in each police district,¹ but is managed and coordinated from New Zealand Police National Headquarters. The role of this unit, the advice it gives, and the performance of its Liaison Officers has not been evaluated or examined. This article examines the role of Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services Liaison Officers, the reasons why these officers choose to enter this specialized area of policing and their understanding of their role. In particular, the research seeks to answer the following three questions:

- What is the role of New Zealand Police Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Officers?
- How do New Zealand Police Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Officers contribute to developing relationships with the community?
- How do New Zealand Police Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Officers perceive that they contribute to the New Zealand Police Prevention First Operating Strategy goals of reducing the level of reported crime and to reducing the number of cases referred to the justice pipeline.

The article discusses these three areas primarily within the context of Maori, with minor reference to other ethnic minorities. This approach has been adopted because of the unique position that Maori hold in New Zealand, the relationship of the New Zealand Police with Maori and the development by the police of *The Turning of the Tide*, a specific strategy for Maori, which is more mature in comparison to other strategies that relate to ethnic minorities.

The article begins by describing criminal offending by Maori and then discusses the strategic response of the New Zealand Police to this major social issue. The main strategies used as a response by the police are examined, and the findings of a survey of Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Service officers, which was conducted in early 2016, are presented and discussed.

¹The New Zealand Police are a national police and are structured into 12 geographical districts.

The Issue of Maori Offending/Crime in New Zealand

According to O'Reilly (2014), the policing of Maori accounts for a large amount of police time. This is because Maori are at a greater risk of involvement in violent behaviors, are more likely to be victims of crime, and experience repeat victimization (particularly for domestic or family violence and child abuse) (Fergusson 2003; Statistics New Zealand 2010).

While Maori make up only 14.9% of the total population of New Zealand, they comprise of 45% of police arrests, 38% of court convictions and over 50% of sentenced prison inmates (New Zealand Police 2016; Statistics New Zealand 2010, 2013). Speirs' (2002), research revealed that Maori are significantly more likely to be re-convicted and re-imprisoned² than non-Maori.

The over-representation of Maori in the criminal justice system can clearly be seen in Fig. 14.1. The figure shows Maori as a proportion of the total population and the proportion of Maori in progressive stages of the criminal justice system: apprehension, convictions and imprisonments. Maori, as a proportion of the total population and in the criminal justice system, is compared with that of New Zealand European (who, as a group commit a similar numbers of offences), who are also in the criminal justice system. Maori are disproportionately represented across all stages of the criminal justice system, and particularly in the case of imprisonment (Department of Corrections 2008). One in every 47 Maori males, aged between 15 and 40, is currently in prison (among Maori prisoners, 80% were first imprisoned at age 24, and 57% were imprisoned before the age of 19 years). According to the Ministry of Justice, these figures are exacerbated when they are adjusted for age. The age-adjusted imprisonment rate for Maori men is approximately seven times that of New Zealand European men, and for Maori women, it is approximately nine times the rate (Ministry of Justice 2009).

The high rate of Maori offending is also prevalent in youth apprehensions. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of arrests of people under 18 years are Maori (O'Reilly 2014). One reason for the high percentage rate of Maori youth apprehensions, according to O'Reilly (2014), is the high rate of repeat apprehensions among Maori youth. A further reason is that Maori have a youthful population, with a median age of 23.9 years (Statistics New Zealand 2013).

In recent years, Maori and the New Zealand Government have expressed concerns at the high rate of Maori offending and as a consequence, entering the criminal justice system. According to one researcher, one of the reasons for the high number of Maori entering the criminal justice system is institutional bias (Morrison 2009). According to Morrison (2009), this bias can take the form of direct discrimination and/or indirect discrimination, for example, through policies which appear

² Over three-quarters (78%) of Maori are reconvicted within 2 years of their release from prison, a rate around 10% points higher than that for New Zealand European (68%) or Pacific Peoples inmates (66%). At 2 years from release, the reimprisonment rate for Maori is 43%, around 10% higher than New Zealand European (31%) or Pacific Peoples inmates (32%) (Speirs 2002; Nadesu 2009).

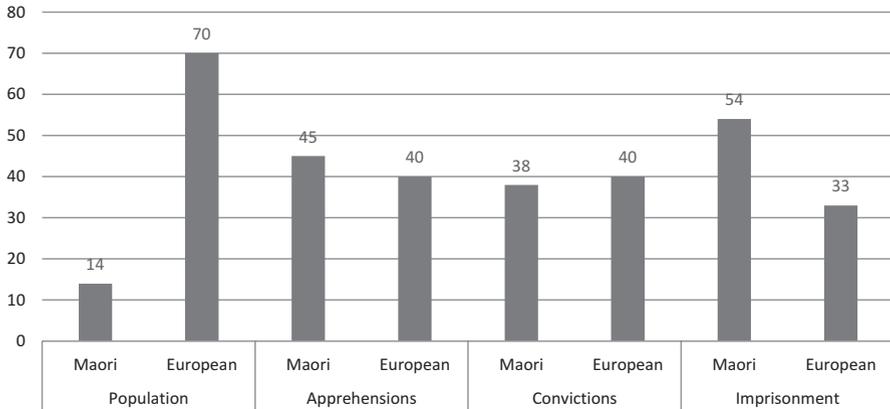


Fig. 14.1 A Comparison between the percentage of Maori with European and different stages of the criminal justice system. (Source: Statistics New Zealand 2013)

neutral but actually create a non-intended bias, such as not granting bail to people who are unemployed.

The possibility of institutional bias within the criminal justice sector is compounded by other social ills experienced by the majority of Maori. Researchers have, for example, identified a number of adverse social outcomes that are experienced by Maori, including mental and physical ill-health (Statistics New Zealand 2013), unsatisfactory progress in housing and health intervention measures (Flynn et al. 2010), lower educational achievement (Ford 2013), and Maori receiving lower salaries (Pack et al. 2016).

The social variables or influences that contribute to conviction rates for crimes and other anti-social activities in New Zealand are poorly understood. To understand the variables that adversely impact on Maori, it is crucial to understand the relationship between the law and the criminal justice sector and the community and the character and the situation of those who break the law (Hook 2009a, b, c).

The Police Response to Maori Offending

As a response to the increasing awareness of the inequitable involvement of Maori in the criminal justice system, an increase in the number of minority immigrant communities and the importance of relationships and partnerships, the police have developed and implemented a number of actions to increase the community's confidence in its procedures and service delivery. Police acknowledge that it is important for the community to have confidence in their ability to work with other government agencies and to achieve the social outcomes set by the government.

A 'commitment to Maori and the Treaty,'³ was a core institutional value of the New Zealand Police in the mid-1990s, which recognized that one of its most critical community relationships of the police was that with iwi⁴/Maori (O'Reilly 2014). Comprehensive strategies, procedures to improve the recruiting of Maori and minority police officers, the establishment of advisory boards, and the establishment of the Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services within the police were all introduced to improve the organization's commitment to the Treaty.

In 1996, the Police Commissioner expressed his concern that the response of the police to the over-representation of Maori in the criminal justice system could be perceived as the police not being committed to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (New Zealand Police 2014a; O'Reilly 2014). To ensure that the police would succeed in accomplishing its vision of 'Safer Communities Together', the police would establish, maintain and develop problem-solving partnerships with Maori (O'Reilly 2014). This reasoning led to the development of the strategy 'Responsiveness to Maori', which became the overarching document for the development of strategies relating to the ethnic minority community and Maori.

In late 1996, the police developed Te Urupare Whitiki, a foundational document, which was designed to build strategic relationships and partnerships with Maori. The document outlined three key objectives for establishing effective partnerships with Maori:

1. the police were to gain a greater understanding and acceptance of the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi to Maori and to New Zealand;
2. the police were to learn how to bring the voice of Maori into policing decisions and operational procedures; and
3. the police were to implement strategies that were designed to reduce the incidence of and the impact of offending by Maori (O'Reilly 2014).

The vision was to consult and share the development of policy, and leadership with Maori, and to recognize cultural perspectives in police practice. To develop this vision, two research projects were commissioned in 1998: 'Maori Perceptions of Police' (Te Whaiti and Roguski 1998) and 'Police Perceptions of Maori' (Maxwell and Smith 1998). As a result of the implementation of the projects and the commissioning of the research, the police were one of the first government agencies to develop a formal strategy for engaging with ethnic and minority groups, including Maori and Pacific peoples (New Zealand Police 2004). The strategy was documented in 'Working Together with Ethnic Communities – Police Ethnic Strategy Towards 2010', which created the platform for police actions to be taken in relation to its responsiveness to ethnic communities.

³The Treaty of Waitangi is a treaty between the Government (originally British and now the New Zealand) and Maori signed in 1840 that established a British [Governor of New Zealand](#), recognized Māori ownership of their lands, forests and other properties, and gave Māori the rights of [British subjects](#)

⁴Iwi is an identifiable Maori community and is often a tribe or part of a tribe.

The strategy, which was to be achieved by 2010, outlined the procedures to be followed and the objectives to be achieved in conjunction with ethnic communities (New Zealand Police 2004). The initial strategy suggested that proactive community policing for ethnic communities should be introduced to reduce the ethnic communities' fear of being a target of crime and to increase their confidence in the police. It recommended a specific direction, key priority areas for action, and two policing outcomes:

- Outcome 1 – Police have the capability and capacity to engage with ethnic communities
- Outcome 2 – Culturally appropriate strategies are implemented with ethnic communities that increase community safety, prevent and reduce crime, road trauma and victimization (New Zealand Police 2004).

The document also provided practical steps as to how these strategies and areas would be implemented nationally and in relation to frontline policing (New Zealand Police 2004). In 2011, this strategy was replaced by a more targeted strategic document that concentrated specifically on Maori, called 'The Turning of the Tide'.

The Turning of the Tide was developed by the Commissioner's Maori Focus Forum and the Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Service set specific targets for reducing the disproportionate representation of Maori in offending, victimization and crash statistics.⁵ The strategy consolidated the earlier work on iwi-led, crime-and-crash reduction community developments, programs and plans. A key feature of The Turning the Tide was the recognition of the role that iwi and Maori agencies, groups, whanau⁶ and communities had in achieving these objectives and outcomes (O'Reilly 2014).

According to the police, a 20% reduction in repeat offending among Māori between the introduction of The Turning the Tide in 2011–2025, could translate into:

- savings of up to \$800 million for the criminal justice system;
- earnings of up to \$300 million for Māori households and a tax revenue of up to \$40 million for the government; and
- a \$3.6 million saving in social costs for every fatal crash prevented (New Zealand Police 2016).

To ensure that the voice of Maori was being included in the development of police policy, the police in 1998 established the Commissioner's Maori Focus Forum. In 2000, this forum was replicated in the 12 police districts with the

⁵The Turning the Tide targets to be achieved by June 2014 were: 15 percent reduction in prosecutions of Maori, 10 percent reduction in Maori repeat offending, a 5 percent reduction in Maori first time offenders, 10 percent reduction in Maori repeat victims and a 10 percent reduction in Maori victims of fatal and serious vehicle crashes. Similar targets are in place for Turning the Tide phase 2, which are to be achieved by June 2018 (New Zealand Police, 2011a, 2011b).

⁶Whanau is an extended family or community of related families who live together in the same geographical area.

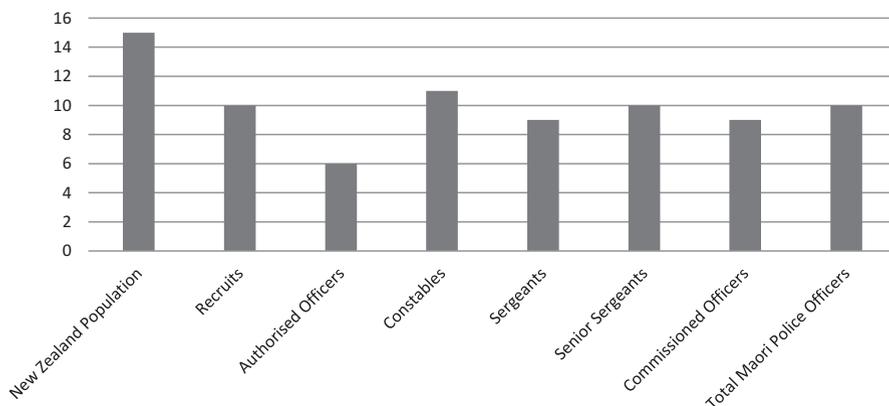


Fig. 14.2 Percentage of Maori at each Police rank in 2013. (Source: New Zealand Police People Group (2015))

establishment of Maori Advisory Boards. These Advisory Boards mirrored and complimented the work of the Commissioner's Maori Focus Forum and comprised of Maori community representatives, academics and cultural advisors. The forums provided a Maori perspective on policing issues and provided an avenue for the police to receive feedback on the service it delivered (O'Reilly 2014).

The third political strategy that was adopted by the police was increasing the number of minorities and Maori recruited to become police officers. This was not only to ensure that the ethnic population of the police reflected the make-up of the wider population, but to secure and maintain the public's trust and confidence, and ensure police legitimacy. Targeted advertising and the development of relationships with education providers has led to an increase in the number of Maori police (an increase of 31% since 2004) and Maori police officers now constitute more than 10% of the total constabulary (New Zealand Police 2015).

Figure 14.2 shows Maori as a proportion of the general population and of the New Zealand Police in rank, and in total. While 9% of commissioned officers (Inspector and above) are Maori, two of the 42 Area Commanders are Maori, but there are no Maori District Commanders. At the executive level, the Deputy Chief Executive: Maori and one of the Deputy Commissioners are Maori (O'Reilly 2014).

New Zealand Police Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services

The final strategy developed in 1996 as a response to the over-representation of Maori in the criminal justice system was the establishment of a network of Iwi Liaison Officers throughout the 12 policing districts. The intention was that Liaison

Officers would support the relationship of the police with iwi/Maori and other minority communities in an effort to reduce offending and victimization among Maori and minority communities.

Despite the initial negative reaction to the selection and appointment of Iwi Liaison officers, demands have been made for increasing the number of appointments made to this role. This has come from, not only the Maori community, but also from minority communities and from within police (Haumaha 2003). As a result of the increase in immigration since 2000, the number of the Liaison Officers has increased to 50 officers and now includes a number of different Asian, Indian and Pacific ethnicities.

The Response to Maori and the Link to Prevention First

The Policing Excellence and the Prevention First strategies commenced in August 2010 and were a series of operational initiatives that were designed to enable the police to perform preventative policing activities, which were specifically directed toward reducing victimization and offending, and improving public safety (New Zealand Police 2014b). Prevention First focused on five areas of risk: families, youth, alcohol, organized crime and drugs, and road policing (New Zealand Police 2014b). Maori, unfortunately, are disproportionately represented across all five areas.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study, based on a survey of the New Zealand Police Cultural Liaison Officers. To answer the three research questions, the study surveyed police members who were currently performing the role of Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services Liaison Officers. The survey consisted of 31 questions which explored the reasons as to why the respondents had become a Liaison Officer, what type of training they had received, what they thought the role entailed, how they undertook their role, what the main strengths and weaknesses of the role were, and how the role could be improved. The survey questions are presented in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was emailed to 50 officers who were performing the role of Liaison Officer in November 2015, and a reminder was emailed to those officers who had not replied to the initial email in late January 2016. Fourteen officers (28%) returned completed survey questionnaires by 28 February 2016.

The methodology adopted for undertaking this research was partly informed by Parker's (1992), critical discourse analytic approach. This approach focuses on a greater analysis of macro-level influencing factors such as relationships, discourses and structural or systemic racism. Parker's micro-level approach was used to examine the role of the survey respondents and their reasons for becoming Liaison

Officers. The method of analysis used by Parker was based on the respondent's discourse, and repeatedly used themes and phrases, which were compared to texts and comments to find emerging premises and theses. As a result of the analysis, the discourse was interpreted and analyzed, along with each of the respondents' explanations, accounts and attributions.

How the respondents undertook their role and developed relationships with minority communities was the focus of this research. The information received from the survey respondents was divided into broad thematic areas using preliminary coding. Discrete coding was then conducted; the texts examined, read and reread, and compared and contrasted and grouped according to codes that defined a single idea (Potter and Wetherell 1987). The procedure used to define and discuss the role of Liaison Officers was to lay out, in separate, but at times, overlapping themes, which were identified by the participants. These themes pertained to relationships, culture, support and community are discussed in the following section.

Survey Results

The results of the survey are summarized and discussed below using the three main survey headings.

The Organizational Profile of a Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Survey Respondents

Approximately 28% or 14 Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Officers, responded to the survey. The demographics of the 14 survey respondents are summarized in Table 14.1. One respondent was of Samoan ethnicity and thirteen were of Maori ethnicity. While the Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services includes members of Indian (2), Chinese (3), Korean (2) and Vietnamese (2) ethnicities, no members of these ethnicities responded to the survey.

All of the survey participants were long serving and widely experienced police officers when they became a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer. The least amount of service of a survey participant was 9 years of service and the longest was more than 36 years. Three of the participants had more than 30 years of service and a further three had more than 25 years. The majority of the participants had between 10 and 20 years of service. In relation to the participants' service as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer, this ranged from between 1–13 years, with more than 70% of the participants having more than 5 year's experience as a Liaison Officer.

Two of the participants were non-sworn (civilian) members of the police and the remaining 12 were sworn members. Both of the non-sworn members were retired sworn officers. Of the sworn participants, eight were Constables, two were

Table 14.1 Survey participant information

Participant	Ethnicity	Rank	Years of police service	Years as a cultural liaison officer
1	Maori	Constable	12	8
2	Maori	Sergeant	36	8
3	Maori	Sergeant	34	13
4	Maori	Constable	15	7
5	Maori	Non-sworn ^a	9	9
6	Maori	Senior sergeant	16	8
7	Maori	Non-sworn ^a	11	5
8	Maori	Senior Constable ^b	35	2
9	Maori	Senior Constable ^b	25	6
10	Maori	Non-sworn	17	13
11	Maori	Inspector	27	1
12	Maori	Senior Constable ^b	25	10
13	Maori	Constable	10	7
14	Samoan	Senior Sergeant ^c	11	2

^aRetired police officers prior to being Cultural Liaison Officers

^bAutomatic rank after 14 years' service

^cPromotional rank

Detectives, one a Sergeant and one an Inspector. The least amount of police service for both groups prior to becoming a Liaison Officer was 3 years. One sworn member had 4 years of service prior to becoming a Liaison Officer, while three of the participants had more than 20 years of service, with another having more than 33 years of service.

Research by Wehipeihana et al. (2010), examined the strategies that were used to increase the recruitment of Maori into the police. They found that one of the main factors for Maori to join the police was that a recruit, upon graduating from the Royal New Zealand Police College, would be able to return to the district or the geographical area of their iwi or whanau. Only three of the respondents had to transfer to another police district to become a Liaison Officer, while the other eleven had either completed all of their police service in the district where they became a Liaison Officer or had transferred to the district prior to taking up the role.

All 14 respondents gave similar reasons as to why they had become Liaison Officers. Only one of the reasons given was not for altruistic reasons, being for promotion. The other reasons given included "to give back to Maori", "to make a difference", "to intervene and prevent issues from arising in the community", and "to improve the police relationship with the community".

Training to Become a Liaison Officer

To develop the skills of Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Liaison Officers, the police delivered a 2 week theoretical in-class course. Ten survey respondents had completed this course, but this was some time after they had become a Liaison Officer. Only one respondent had completed this course prior to becoming a Liaison Officer, while two respondents were given some training in culture and language prior to taking up their roles. In defence of this situation, one respondent stated:

“I knew what the role was and the expectations of an iwi liaison officer and knew at the time of taking the job that I was facing a huge battle to reduce Maori offending and victimisation” (Respondent 2).

The respondent appears to have an understanding of the fact that they would have problems in reducing Maori offending and victimization. Liaison Officers were not provided with the skills that would enable them to develop police relationships with Maori, nor were they provided with the skills that would enable them to identify a specific problem, develop a response or implement a chosen response. In other words, they were not given any training in how to analyze and solve problems. One respondent commented:

“The introductory course was extremely valuable, but it left many questions unanswered about the iwi liaison officers role” (Respondent 10).

The Role of a Liaison Officer

The respondents were asked what they perceived the principle elements of their role as a Liaison Officer were. The majority of the respondents thought that their role was to liaise with minority communities in general, attend events and celebrations, gather and share intelligence, and undertake community and preventative policing. One respondent considered their role to be “a conduit between the cultures” (Respondent 3). Another respondent summarised their role in detail:

“The main role or purpose as an iwi liaison officer was to reduce Māori offending and victimisation. The role was about working with the Maori community, working alongside government departments and non-government departments, working with the sub tribes, iwi, Māori wardens and families within the community. Handling land disputes, handling deaths and to make sure police staff were trained to work with the families who had a mother, father, grandparent, uncle or aunty or grandchildren or children die as a result of an un-natural death and where a PM [post mortem] was required as a result of the death” (Respondent 2).

Another respondent had a more police-centric perspective:

“You need to be across all matters Maori and know your business. Building partnerships with not only Iwi but Police staff and that trust and confidence. I have to be across any structural or logistical changes in Policing and again that I know that side of the business and can explain to Iwi if needed. There has been a fear within Police regarding tikanga

(customs) and Marae⁷ protocols. The reverse being explaining to the staff to gain their trust and confidence. I'm mindful that it can be a balancing act between dos and don'ts both on Police and Iwi space" (Respondent 7).

As liaison and relationship building were perceived to be large components of the work of Liaison Officers, survey participants were asked as to how, or what methods they utilized to expand their relationship networks. All 14 respondents revealed similar relationship building methods, including using face-to-face meetings with minority community groups and leaders; building trust with the community by providing communication, presence and through attending events; holding and establishing public forums and regular meetings; and through working with Maori and other community service providers. One respondent commented that the best way to build relationships was:

"By getting to know who was in my community and who the key contacts were, making contact and from there establishing trust, confidence and a relationship. You could say 'it's the cup of tea' of community policing, where it starts out very informal just meet and greet and then this grows. A lot of hard work to establish some of the harder to reach communities i.e gangs, at risk whanau etc." (Respondent 12).

The most significant difference in the responses from the survey participants was from the question pertaining to how much time in an average week they spent on seven specific activities. The seven activities and the percentage of time spent on each is presented in Table 14.2. While there may be a problem with defining of each of these activities, or that the respondents "bundled up" all of their time into one activity, the responses clearly identify a difference in how the Liaison Officer role is delivered or perceived to be delivered by an individual Liaison Officer. The second point of interest from this question is that all of the respondents stated that they would work between 45 and 50 h in an average week, and working more than 50 h per week was a common occurrence. One respondent noted in relation to the workload:

Table 14.2 Average time liaison officers spend on specific activities

Specific liaison officer activity	Percentage of time devoted to activity	Mean	Standard deviation
Liaison with minority community	0–75	14.0	7.7
Crime and investigation issues	0–5	9.4	6.3
Events and celebrations	0–25	10.5	5.2
Intelligence related	0–15	13.3	6.1
Relationship building	0–60	25.8	13.9
Community policing	0–5	12.2	6.1
Preventative policing	0–100	20.8	21.3

⁷A marae is a communal or sacred place that serves religious and social purposes in Polynesian societies

“The role is very diverse and covering a number of streams, 1 ILO [Iwi Liaison Officer] for a community of 25,000 Maori would be maximum. Frequently the role requires to work outside of hours and to be oncall 24/7, there is no toil or oncall available, only the reliance on the member’s passion and commitment to the job” (Respondent 6).

Personal Expectations of Liaison Officers and Possible Improvements for the Role

The final section of the survey included questions as to whether the participant’s expectations of the role had been met and what could improve the Liaison Officer’s role. The majority of respondents stated that their expectations were met and, in most cases, they were exceeded. One respondent, for example, stated:

“Absolutely! Probably above and beyond, as I’ve seen it evolve and improve over the past 10 years. The organisation is always assessing and analysing to see how things can be done better and creating new policies and strategies, which includes the Turning of the Tide, which I believe has been one of the most important documents!” (Respondent 12).

However, one respondent claimed that their expectations were not met, saying:

“No it was sadly lacking across the board as far as engagement/implementation and sustainment. Our own organisation has and still has a long way to go to change the mindset of meeting the treaty commitments and looking to a preventative model through Turning of the Tide” (Respondent 4).

The second question participants were asked was whether they found the role rewarding. It was presumed that owing to most Liaison Officers remaining in the role for a long period of time and that all of the participants had become Liaison Officers for specific cultural altruistic reasons, the majority of officers would find the role rewarding. The question generated a variety of responses. All respondents found the role extremely rewarding, especially because they were able to work with Maori, and because, as more than half of the respondents noted, they were able to establish leadership roles within their communities and that they were able to solve the issues that the community presented to them. The level of value and reward is clearly demonstrated in the following comment made by one of the respondents:

“Yes. Personally/for the organization – How have you found it rewarding? Just job satisfaction, the fact that you are called upon to do jobs others can’t or haven’t been able to. The fact my behaviour and attitude have made it a pleasant job. It has its issues with the fact you are challenged by police staff as opposed to iwi as to what and why you do what I do.” (Respondent 9).

Participants were also asked as to what could be done to improve the role of Liaison Officers. This question also generated extensive comment, and while two respondents commented that the police needed to increase their commitment to partnerships with minority communities, all of the respondents commented on the need to improve the training given to Liaison Officers. Concerns were also raised

about the lack of a career structure. The absence of a career structure means that officers with experience and skills are not retained and that Liaison Officers need to apply to other areas of the organization if they are seeking promotion.

Discussion

The comments from the participants of this research demonstrate that in their view they are making progress in establishing relationships with Maori and other ethnic communities, and that they are influencing the participation of Maori in criminal offending. As a result of their perception of establishing these relations, the participants also felt that they were contributing to the New Zealand Police Prevention First Operating Strategy goals of reducing the level of reported crime that involved Maori offenders. There may be some justification in the participants perception as the number of arrests of Maori for a criminal offence has decreased from 230 per 10,000 in 2009 to 159 per 10,000 in 2014 (Statistics New Zealand 2018). This trend is presented in Fig. 14.3.

The survey participants' comments also support the earlier research undertaken on behalf of the police by Wehipeihana et al. (2010). This research examined the factors as to why Maori join the police and found that Maori join the police because of a passionate desire to serve Maori, and a desire to create positive change in their communities and with police interactions with Maori, particularly Maori youth (Wehipeihana et al. 2010).

The Wehipeihana et al. (2010) research determined that while the establishment of the Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services had been reasonably successful in creating and maintaining relationships with Maori, and in some cases, the establishment of partnerships with Maori, there is a need to extend the same to other ethnic minority

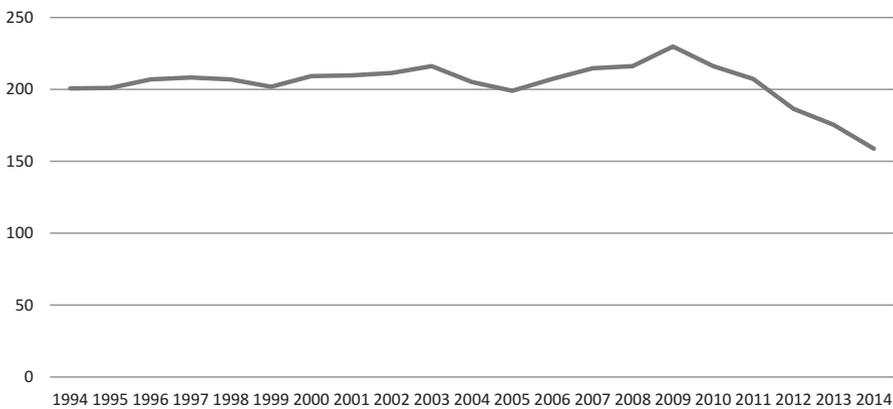


Fig. 14.3 Apprehension of Maori for a criminal offence (per 10,000 population) from 1994 to 2014. (Source: Statistics New Zealand 2018)

communities. This gap in police service to ethnic communities also applies to the role of Liaison Officers, in that while all of the research participants enjoyed their position, there is little formal training or on-going training provided to assist Liaison Officers with identifying methods for developing relationships with communities.

The organizational identity of Liaison Officers and their management and the clash between being of a specific ethnicity and the police culture is an institutional weakness of the current structure of the Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services. Increasing the number of Maori or officers of a different ethnicity, for example, will not lead to a change if the culture of the organization does not allow officers to be 'Maori' or of another ethnicity, for example, for officers from a minority culture to use their native language. Such officers are recruited by police because of their ethnicity, but if these officers are not able to make use of their specific skills in ethnic areas, their recruitment will add little to legitimizing the police or adding to the community's confidence, especially the confidence of minority communities.

One group of researchers do not agree with recruiting individuals of specific ethnicities to become police officers. According to Bartkowiak-Theron and Asquith (2014), assuming cultural competency from an individual's cultural identity "devalues the significant skills required to operate successfully in multicultural and cross-cultural encounters" and using such officers to develop and strengthen the police-community relationship "compromises them in the eyes of both their communities and their police peers" (p. 95). This perspective however, was based on an analysis of recruitment quotas introduced following the Macpherson (1999) report that examined the murder of a Western Indian youth in London and was an examination of police liaison roles that have been designed to work with minority communities.

The results of the research discussed above does not support the view posed by Bartkowiak-Theron and Asquith (2014). As a number of long serving Liaison Officers argue, other police officers were initially skeptical when the roles were created in the mid-1990s. However, over time, the role has become accepted and its specialist skills are called upon by generalist police officers. Furthermore, the Liaison Officers stated that they are capable of maintaining and building on existing police-community relations and with providing an avenue for undertaking other policing roles within indigenous and minority communities.

Conclusion

There are three limitations in this research. The first is that there is very little research undertaken in New Zealand relating to the police relationship with Maori and other ethnic minorities, which means a context for analyzing this research is hard to develop. The second limitation relates to the limited number of participants involved in this research and as a result, the generalizability of the research result. The third limitation follows on from the second limitation in that all of the survey participants were of either Pacific Island or Maori descent and none of the other

minority ethnicity officers answered the survey. This means that the results of the survey may only apply within the context of officers of Maori or Pacific Island descent not to the perceptions of officers of other ethnic minority descent. These limitations could provide a basis for future research pertaining to the policing of minorities in New Zealand and Australia.

The majority of the survey participants identified their role as developing the police relationship with the Maori community, principally through attending events and celebrations, and as implementing community and preventative policing initiatives. All of the participants identified the importance of attending public forums and regular meetings to build trust and communication.

The strategic approach and the practical experience discussed in this research illustrates the need for a balanced, holistic and coordinated approach to combating and preventing Maori crime, and for **improving police-community relationships**. While some progress has been made in recent years towards this goal with public having 78% of full or substantial trust in the New Zealand Police in 2009 and 2014⁸ (Gravitas Research and Strategy 2009, 2014), there is still significant fragmentation of approach, effort and resources within the police and across the government departments in relation to the over-representation of Maori in the criminal justice system. The principle problem for the police in relation to Maori is how to increase the profile of its Liaison Officers and ensure that these officers are able to undertake their role with the support of police management. In parallel to this problem is the need to increase the number of ethnic liaison officers. Currently, the ratio is one staff member with a specialized focus on Maori to approximately 14,000 resident Maori population (O'Reilly 2014). This figure does not take into account other minority communities and the need for further Liaison Officers in these communities.

This article has presented one model of community policing that is capable of building relationships with indigenous and minority communities. The role of a Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Service Liaison Officer is part of a comprehensive and multi-level strategy for increasing the legitimacy of the police in indigenous and minority communities, and further research is required to identify its suitability for adaption by other police agencies to use to improve their relationships with their communities.

New Zealand Police Cultural Liaison Officers – Survey Questions

1. Respondent Current Rank (or retired)
2. First Name of Respondent (to contact for clarification, if required)
3. Current Position Title (or retired)

⁸This figure has remained at 77 percent in 2015/16 and 2016/17, but went from 65 percent to 67 percent for Maori over the same period (see New Zealand Police, 2017, p. 36).

4. Total Length of Service as a member of New Zealand Police (or Length of Service at Retirement)
5. Length of Service as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer
6. Email Address (to contact for clarification, if required)
7. Phone Number (to contact for clarification, if required)
8. Position Title and Rank prior to taking up your role as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer
9. Length of Service at the time of your appointment to your first Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer position
10. Location as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer
11. Did you transfer to take up your appointment as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer? Yes or no
12. What was/were the reason(s) for applying for the role
 - (a) Promotion/advancement, end of career, interested in role, cultural, give back to your specific culture
13. Were you given any training/briefings prior to taking up the role
14. If so, what did the training entail? Culture, language, other
15. If so, was this training adequate?
16. Were you advised/told as to what the role would entail prior to taking up the role – yes or no
17. If yes, what were you advised as to the main purpose(s) of the role – liaison, crime, events/celebrations, Intelligence gathering/sharing, relationship building, community policing, preventative policing
18. During your term as Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer – what did you perceive the principle elements of your role - liaison, crime, events/celebrations, Intelligence gathering/sharing, relationship building, community policing, preventative policing
19. When you needed assistance from PHNQ, did you receive support? Did this support meet your needs?
20. When you needed assistance from District, did you receive support? Did this support meet your needs?
21. Did you supply information/intelligence to PNHQ? Was this CT, Drugs, Immigration, Other Crime, events/celebrations, community policing, preventative policing
22. On an average week, what percentage would you have spent on - - liaison, crime, events/celebrations, Intelligence gathering/sharing, relationship building, community policing, preventative policing
23. On reflection. Did the role meet your expectations – How or why not
24. When you took up your posting did the NZP have relationships with local Maori, Pacific or other ethnic groups? Yes or no
25. If no to Q25, have you since established this relationship?
26. If yes to Q25, were these relationships adequate for you to undertake/complete your role? If not, why were they not adequate?

27. Did you see your role as building and/or improving the NZP relationship with local Maori, Pacific or other ethnic groups? Yes or no?
28. How did you expand your relationship network?
29. Did you find the experience as a Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer rewarding? Personally/for the organization – How have you found it rewarding? why or why not
30. What could be changed to improve the Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer role in the future? For the individual/for the organization
31. Is there any further comment that you would like to make in regard to your Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer role or in regard to the role of Maori, Pacific or Ethnic Liaison Officer?

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