

Pearls in Policing

Policing Fractured Communities

Medellin, 24-27 June 2018

Executive Summary

20 law enforcement leaders and academics from 13 countries met in Medellin, Colombia between the 23rd and 26th of June 2018 for the 12th annual Pearls in Policing conference. Pearls is an international think-tank where participants share ideas, experiences and knowledge in a purposely small-scale, collegial environment. Participants have the unique opportunity to participate in deep, concentrated discussions of global police issues while building and nurturing their global network.

Hosted by the National Police of Colombia in cooperation with the Pearls curatorium, the conference theme this year was Policing Fractured Communities.

As they do each year, Pearls participants engaged in discussions on the future needs of policing and how best to forge the collaboration that will allow law enforcement agencies to meet those needs. Through its presence, programs and strategies, the police have a role to play in reducing the gap in social, economic and security disparities affecting too many communities around the world. Grounded in the present but with eyes to the future, Pearls has established a firm tradition as a unique forum where police leaders from around the world can discuss and debate the key challenges they face at all levels.

International Action Learning Group

Modern policing is continually confronted with friction and conflicts resulting from societal changes and new developments. Migration, globalization and technology are at the origin of growing fragmentation and conflicting situations. All regions experience challenges, tensions and shocks related to diverse cultures, socio-economic problems, political fragmentation and evolving forms of criminality.

The task of the 2017-18 International Pearl Fishers Action Learning Group (IALG) was to work together to respond to global police issues by sharing local and regional challenges, initiatives and solutions.

Through their work over the past year they were tasked with:

- Identifying and analyzing the range of problems confronted by geographic regions;
- Defining and discussing fractured communities and the impact that they have on policing globally and locally;
- Sharing case studies from across the globe to highlight both problems and solutions; and
- Presenting solutions and best practices that include cross-sector representation and collaborative approaches.

At the Pearls conference, the IALG gave an interactive presentation which shifted to a focus on the future, and the implications for policing at the local, national and international levels. The presentation began with an emotional video that showed many of the problems faced by police in fractured communities around the world. Following its presentation, the IALG asked the plenary to break into groups to ask how police should respond to fractured communities and what intervention should be taken at the local, national and international level.

To aid the discussions, the IALG defined fractured communities as ones that are disconnected from part or all of the dominant community around them, or from the state and the police. Every community across the globe is different; however, communities share common values and beliefs such as culture, economic, technical, political views, ethnicity, class structure and other common interests. Some communities are divided from the state and/or the police due to these shared values.

The presentation raised several key drivers of fractured communities that applied to local, national, international and even police situations. This included migration, social isolation, organized crime, religious and political extremism, globalization and technology. Of course, fractured communities are found all over the world. These drivers have two main characteristics in common. The first is history: the fracture has been well defined over time and can be linked to a historic trait whether it's culture, ideological, economic, geographic, or ethnical. The second identifies the loss of trust in the police state's ability to protect and treat the community fairly.

The fractured communities currently posing the greatest challenges to police are the ones in which new unprecedented drives are surfacing and or when old drives are being given increased influence through social media, new technology, international inter-state conflicts and migration, globalization and the internet. It was also pointed out that the police and/or the state themselves may be the drivers of fractured communities. Proactive law enforcement strategies may drive greater fragmentation in fragile communities. Corruption within the police may also diminish trust with the community.

The group identified some current strategies that are considered to be innovative in addressing the challenges. They are summarized here though more detail was in the presentation and even more in the excellent report that delegates were handed prior to the presentation.

First, it is not just a policing problem, the issues are complex. In Molenbeek Belgium, the former home of recent terrorists, the integration process of the Muslim community failed as municipal authorities had missed opportunities to engage with the migrant community. Here, more bridges need to be built.

Second, the police need to build trust through community partnerships. The IALG learned from the Colombia police about initiatives in former Farc territory, where police officers study local cultures before coming to the region and then staying for months to build trust and relationships.

Third, police need to strengthen partnerships on international, national and local levels. An excellent example from Norway has demonstrated that police working with municipalities and local agencies can act proactively to reduce youth crime. This model has been adopted by Denmark with great results.

Fourth, engage with social media, a powerful communication tool and accessible to almost anyone. Examples from New York and Hong Kong were given on how police in those cities are engaging communities to build relationships and positively – from a police perspective – gather intelligence.

And the fifth strategy, ensure that police community practices diversity and reflects the community in which it serves. Northern Ireland's reform that required a 50/50 split between catholic and protestant recruits has seen the number of catholic police increase from 10 to 40% since 2011.

The IALG concluded by saying in order to be effective at policing fractured communities, it is imperative that the police establish trust with the community and collaborate with other agencies, government partners and global partners. Police should move away from the short-term solution of hard policing and utilize some of the strategies outlined in the presentation. Furthermore, police should consider what the problems of tomorrow may be. Change is inevitable, so it is critical for police forces to embrace change to better understand its relationship to crime and community.

Communication is a key driver for change, trust building and building bridges with and within the communities. While there are tons of reasons why police should use social media to facilitate police work, the objective is simple and clear: to reach the unreached, which means using social media to reach out to the polarized social media communities and to rebuild the social fabric.

Presentation on security policy in Bogotá

Presentation by Mr. Daniel Mejia Londono, former Secretary of Security of Bogotá

New evidence-based security policies in Bogota are showing signs of success, the Pearls delegates were told by the former Secretary of Security of Bogotá. The security, coexistence and justice policies are based on four main strategies: crime prevention, crime control, restorative justice, and for youth in jail, a treatment and resocialization program.

A significant component of these strategies is the role of rigorous impact evaluations. These impact evaluations are an important policy tool to understand the effect of

certain interventions on desired outcomes. The presentation looked at several impact evaluations that used differing strategies such as public surveillance cameras, youth therapy and providing police with soft skills training to help them better communicate with citizens.

A significant success story was the hotspots policing strategy. Like in most major cities, crime in Bogota is very concentrated geographically. Between 2012 and 2015, all homicides in Bogota took place in less than 2% of the total street segments in the city. Other forms of crimes are similarly clustered. The strategy combined the efforts of policing and municipal services. The intervention consisted on increasing police patrolling in hotspots from an average of 55 minutes per day to about 90 minutes. At the same time municipal services also increased with the repairing of streets lights, clearing non-artistic graffiti, and a higher frequency of garbage collection. Results were significant. Crime decreased around 13% in hotspots that received increased patrolling and 10% in those that received municipal services only. 2 Hotspots policing combined with municipal services had a larger and statistically significant effect. Total crimes reported decreased by 46% in hotspots that received both interventions. Results suggest a decrease of about 100 homicide and sexual assault cases, as a result of the intervention (a reduction of about 8%).

The combination of these efforts with others has been welcome in Bogotá and has reduced the murder rate to its lowest since 1973.

Working Visit to the Police Station Belén

Pearls delegates travelled to the Police Station Belén in Medellín to learn how the National Police of Colombia has drastically reduced crime and re-engaged with fragmented communities across the Aburra Valley. The location of the briefing was significant. The station is a new initiative by the city of Medellín and the police to change the image that police buildings have on the community. The goal is to turn police buildings into role models and bridge the gap between the institution and the people, making this one of the most important police stations in Medellín.

The objectives of the new station reflect the strategic work the Colombian police have undertaken over the past several decades to significantly reduce the violent crime that gained Colombia international infamy. Senior police leaders responsible for Medellín delivered a sobering presentation beginning with the violent apex of the Colombian drug cartel era of the early nineties and ending with the Medellín of 2018. The report demonstrated how new strategies over the years have made huge impacts on crime and violence, in particular the reduction of the murder rate by 90 percent from its highpoint in 1991.

The presentation outlined five stages of the police's transformation from a passive, reactionary force into one that is now community focused and seen as more respectful of residents. The successful coordination of preventative police measures and community outreach activities now work to encourage civil coexistence, respect for others and provide younger people more options. A key tactic in the outreach to communities is the development of short movies that highlight the work of police officers in building communities and helping residents. Clips from three movies showed how they are using inspirational stories of officers bonding with civilians, including in one case a Brazilian who survived a plane crash.

Presentation Working Group 1:

Police autonomy, what is the question?

Presentation by Mr. Stephen Howard, Officer in Charge Executive Support Section,
South Australian Police, Australia

Co-driver: Belgian Federal Police

Politicisation of policing is ongoing around the world, this is a safe assumption. Disagreements between police chiefs and politicians, ending, sometimes, in resignation of one or both, can easily be identified. So where does political control end and police autonomy begin? It's a grey area as the Working Group discovered. In examining the nature of the link between police autonomy and political oversight it made three specific observations:

- One: It is not feasible to draw a clear line between appropriate police autonomy and political oversight that is suitable for all contexts.
- Two: It is not necessarily a problem that this is not feasible.
- Three: Police can articulate the reasons why police autonomy is important, identify related challenges and, consider specific ways to maintain autonomy.

The scope of autonomy

The fact that politicisation is an ongoing challenge is important. But how can police hope to maintain their autonomy from politics if it is not entirely clear just what the scope of that autonomy should be? As the working group pointed out, the relationship between police and politicians is, to some extent, "fluid and context-driven". In fact, there is reason to think that it is just a necessary feature of the relationship.

The spectrum on which the relationship exists is broad and the working group pointed to two English examples from different ends. One, based on a 1968 court decision determined police are accountable only to the law and thus judges. According to the working group, this view gains little traction in an age that increasingly stresses democratic participation. The second, is determined by democratic influence, however it comes with its own challenges. The introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England and Wales in 2011 may challenge police autonomy because the line between operational matters and the objectives and priorities set by the elected PCC is not clearly set out.

Perhaps outside of a few relatively clear-cut cases police should simply accept that the scope of their autonomy is and will continue to be fluid and context-driven. Perhaps it is incapable of precise definition and is necessarily subject to ongoing negotiation between police chiefs, politicians and judges. It seems plausible that police autonomy may require different things in different times and places.

Defining autonomy

Very few would be brave enough to publicly dispute that police autonomy is important and worth defending. But how is autonomy defined? There are continuing debates on many key issues such as, how do police distinguish between operational or policy matters; or determine if a political request is for information or an attempt to influence police; and finally, who is best placed to exercise political oversight over police in an increasingly complex operating environment?

The working group highlighted a 2016 report which identified eight areas of police decision-making. The responsibility of two areas lay with politicians – funding police

and the appointment of senior roles. The responsibility of two other areas – the promotion of junior officers and specific operational decisions, resides with police. But responsibility of four key areas remained up for grabs according to the report. They are: organisational structure and management decisions, organisational policy decisions, priority setting decisions, affecting the deployment of resources, and deployment decisions, in general or specific circumstances.

The importance of police autonomy

Politicisation of police may not necessarily be a problem, so long as it is acknowledged that police autonomy is important. Indeed, police autonomy should be defended and by articulating the reasons why police autonomy is important police can identify challenges to that autonomy and gain a deeper understanding of just what it is they should be defending, and why. This may aid police in navigating the fluid and context-driven political landscape within which they find themselves.

There are three reasons that speak to the importance of police autonomy. These reasons are the rule of law, the separation of powers and recognising police expertise.

The rule of law

Although they do much more, police do serve the law. Police are not intended to serve the narrow, and partisan, political purposes of the government of the day. There are many examples throughout history where doing so became dangerous to the public. Police are vested with significant means of coercion. Given this fact, police ought to be 'above' politics, at least narrow, party political politics.

But they are accountable. This distinction was made by the Patton Inquiry into events in Northern Ireland. It determined the importance of police operational responsibility rather than police autonomy meaning, police had the right and duty to make decisions free from political influence but not free from review after the fact. The recommendations of the Patten Inquiry will not necessarily be appropriate for all times and places. After all, as has been noted, context is important. But the distinction it draws between operational responsibility and autonomy may prove to be important for police organisations in the future.

Separation of powers

Politicians, and other powerful people, sometimes act unlawfully. As politicians make the law it is dangerous for them also to apply it. This is a basic principle of checks and balances. The role of the police is not, of course, to adjudicate the law. This is the job of the Courts. But it is also important that law is enforced independently, and this is the responsibility of police. This cannot be done effectively if politicians can unduly influence investigations that become uncomfortable to them.

Undue political influence on police can take many forms. Sometimes politicians can place pressure on police to delay or even cease investigations that would harm them. Such pressure may take the form of direct orders, penalties or more subtle means of influence. Sometimes influence seeking can be difficult to identify. It may be challenging to clearly identify influence seeking because it may look a great deal like information seeking.

The challenge for police is to provide and receive information from politicians without being unduly influenced in operational matters. One way of addressing this challenge

may be to require elected politicians to put directives to police in writing, for parliamentary scrutiny.

Recognizing police expertise

Police have considerable expertise and professionalism. They perform specific, and important, functions of maintaining and enforcing the law, upholding the peace and securing the rights of citizens. Police are the experts at doing this. It is most efficient to allow experts to make decisions relevant to their area of expertise. Of course, there is room for debate about where police expertise ends and political expertise begins.

By identifying three reasons why police autonomy is important it is hoped that police are better equipped to enter their own “fluid and context-driven” context and defend an ideal worth defending.

It is certainly the case that police should be aware of the challenges of growing politicisation, and the reasons why police autonomy is an ideal worth defending. As has been suggested, the context within which police operate is important and abstract ideas, while important, must be translated into concrete means of navigating a fluid and context-driven political environment in practice.

Presentation and discussion on the Holistic Model for Police Leadership

Presented by Colonel Juan Carlos Nieto Aldana, Deputy Director of Human Talent, National Police of Colombia

The scientific policing concept incorporates personal, institutional and community elements to policing with the aim of optimising police service as a whole and mobilizing the institutional culture against the backdrop of the social context and complex dynamics within Colombian society.

The objective of this model is to contribute to the modernization and transformation process within the police culture. This is achieved through the implementation of best practice with police leadership. Achieving this effectively is through application and consolidation of a more human, integrated, disciplined and innovative police body that is closer to the public and committed to meeting the fresh challenges regarding security and peaceful cohabitations in the country.

The presentation stressed that there are leadership qualities in all officers. This is encouraged by identifying young police officers who have demonstrated skill and acuity and training them to reach the management level.

Working Visit to the Memory House Museum

Presentation on behalf of the Mayor of Medellín, Federico Gutiérrez by: Dr Andres Tabon,

Pearls delegates received further education on how far Medellín has come in repairing fractures in its communities through both a presentation at the Memory House Museum and a transit tour of a neighbourhood that was, just ten years ago, off limits to the police.

Dr Tabon's message began with the familiar and depressing historical statistics of murder including his view that no other city in the world has ever reached Medellín's past level of violence. But it is in remembering the victims that provides the most help in breaking the cycle of fear that had fractured Medellín. The upcoming demolition of a once notorious bunker-like apartment building and former home of Pablo Escobar will provide a site to honour the victims of three decades of violence.

Providing hope and opportunity is also playing a significant role in the city's rebirth. Through the development of holistic strategies of education, economic development, public transit and policing, Medellín is fighting back. The need to provide options for citizens from turning to gangs, crime and violence is constant. Simply giving residents the ability to turn to government and social agencies for support instead of criminals has made a huge difference. The strategies employed have given children safer schools, entrepreneurs start-up funding, and new transit that has broken down barriers by connecting whole communities to the rest of the city and the social and economic opportunities that can then be reached.

But there are always openings for crime to take hold and the police have been vigilant and part of the plan. The Mayor's community safety strategy is based on a three-pronged approach of preventing crime, destroying crime, and filling the void with public services. It is a process that will continue to be worked on. But it also comes with the belief that the only people who should be afraid are the criminals. For the public, trust in the government and a growing sense of safety and opportunity are strengthening the new Medellín.

Presentation Working Group 2:

Corruption; the impact on policing in vulnerable times

Presentation by Ms. Jannine van den Berg, Chief Constable of the Central Division at The Netherlands Police and Mr Jorge Hernando Nieto Rojas, General Director of National Police of Colombia.

Colombia and The Netherlands are completely different countries: in their respective systems of government, their history, economic situation, their internal unrest, the number of inhabitants, the governmental anticorruption and integrity policy, the governance of the police organisation, and many others. But as Pearls delegates heard, the two countries do have one unfortunate thing in common: the drug industry and the impact it has on government and the police.

The drug industry and the economy it creates, undermines every aspect of society and threatens the legitimate economy. It also threatens the standards, values and security of both countries. The drug economy can be linked with killings, money laundering,

fraud, the weapon industry, environmental crime, human trafficking, threats – the list can go on.

But there is another side to this. The dangers of drugs are downplayed. Many equate using drugs with having fun. Such perceptions often stem from naiveté, and sometimes from cynicism. Even in the most affluent parts of society, too many people associate drugs with having a good time. A couple of lines at the weekend. A pill or two at a club. They'll even tell you drugs help you perform better at work. Drugs are just a part of life.

Police are not immune. This social acceptance has its influence on the people working in the police organisation. The force cannot exclude that there are police officers that use drugs. And from that there are colleagues who are tempted to sell police information to criminal groups for money or turn an eye when family members grow hennep at the attic. It is just one example of potential corruption inside a police force.

The question is how do police get a grip on this when it happens, for whatever reason? What consequences does corruption have on an organisation and officers? What is the effect on police work, the effect on the trust of civilians in the police organisation?

Both presenters looked at how their police forces are working to remove corruption from their forces through greater awareness of risks, the reinforcement of institutional values, and tools and training to help staff deal with challenges that may crop up during their career.

The Dutch police are fighting potential corruption from the start of the hiring process. The force raises awareness on the topic of corruption and related crime to people entering the police organization. It also constantly promotes four core values that describe the desired police behavior: integrity, trustworthiness, courage and connectedness.

The Dutch have protocols and arrangements that reduce the risks of corruption in day-to-day work. The type of risks that would encourage an officer to follow the wrong path differs for each position and therefore there are protocols for specific situations. For example, there is the four-eyes principle in the case of seized goods, maximum terms for certain positions, the use of two detectives per informant for criminal intelligence and a business etiquette that governs interaction with suppliers to prevent conflicts of interest.

During the past twenty years police culture in the Netherlands has significantly changed. However, there is still a lot to improve when it comes to creating a safe culture, where the learning process is the most important and where discussing dilemmas is enshrined in daily practice. It is about learning what is going well and what can be improved in dealing with integrity risks that are inherent to police work.

From the Colombian perspective there is a great awareness of the temptations crime, drugs and the related economic opportunity can bring on its officers. These risks remain ever present.

To help its officers, the force has developed a comprehensive transparency policy that promotes police integrity. The policy combines a series of preventive measures that

help guide officers on issues of integrity through training on codes of conduct and ethical principles. The policy includes a focus on conflict resolution, accountability, and human rights that provide a support system during the police officer's career. Of course, there is also a disciplinary code of the National Police that becomes the ultimate deterrent or, in worse cases, the handing down of punishment.

By focussing on the mechanisms of prevention and institutional transparency, the Colombian police believe they have the institutional capabilities in the fight against corruption.

Pearls in Policing 2019

The 13th Pearls in Policing conference will be held in New York City in June 2019 and hosted by the New York City Police Department.

IALG 2018-2019 Assignment – Policing in a digital world

Over the next year, IALG participants will meet three times, in locations around the world, to work on their assignment. Their assignment giver will be Mr. Kwok Yam-shu, Oscar of the Hong Kong Police Force.

Working Group One: The United Nations