**POLICING IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY**

**Multiculturalism and Culture-Oriented Perspective in Police Training and**

**its Effect on Professionalism:**

**Turkish Police Academy Experience**

Dear Esteemed Participants,

Before starting to my speech I would like to express my pleasure to be in this meeting. It is really great honour form e to address distinguished audience as you. This is first time fodr me to attending INTERPA meetings and I hope this will not the last.

As you see that the main theme of my presentation is policing in a diverse society. Under this main headline I want to mention about the place of multiculturalism in police training as a special issue and the effect of culture-oriented training perspective in professionalism of the police. When I try to explain this issue also I want to share experiences of Turkish Police Academy in this field.

Before the mentioning about special training needs of policing in a diverse society first of all I want to clarify what I mean by diversity. Because unfortunately there is still no coherent theoretical framework for diversity and it is not adequate to think of diversity in terms of the ‘way in which people are different’ or ‘the avoidance of monoculture’. So, diversity is much more than that. Many commentators will delimit diversity in terms of differences between people that are likely to lead to prejudice or discrimination.

United Nations attempted a definition of diversity in the following terms:

*Diversity takes many forms it is usually thought of in terms of obvious attributes- age differences, race, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion and language. Diversity in terms of back gruound professional experience, skills and specialization, values and culture as well as social class is a prevailing pattern.*

We can see potential richness of what a definition of diversity may include. There are undoubtly many aspects of difference between humans that can and lead to discrimination. Social class, education, even accent would be examples. So what diversity in society relates to the police? Firstly we know that the police comes from the society itself and the police is also the part of existing diversity. On the other hand, a diverse social phenomenon is crucial for the policing in the society as making law enforcement duties more complex and difficult. Different cultural and ethnic values can be bound to complicate many police procedures and encounters with citizens. So there must be a basic acceptance of culture diversity on the part of all law enforcement agency to improve interpersonal relations and contact across cultural and ethnic. Also as another issue, experiences of prejudice, discrimination and unfairness are led by diversity in a society.

In terms of policing, today I want to mention about four main strands of diversity are recognized as those in most need of action. I beleive that these main strands broadly correspend to the current special needs of police training.

**1. Race (or ethnicity**):

Race as a diversity issue seems to have been a preoccupation fort he police for many years in the world and it is evidenced by the community and race rilatins training that was being conducted in the police service as far back as the 1970’s. In Turkish society we do not face to any harsh racial diversity of course. In addition to racial diversity ethnic diversities in the societies is increasing day by day in the societies with the impact of globalization.

In terms of racial or ethnic diversity, we should know that a police service that is more representative of the people it serves is more likely to gain the trust and confidence of the broad spectrum of ethnic groups of which society is comprised. In other word, representation of different ethnic groups in police service is very important fort he consent of society to the policing.

A representative police service will give greater confidence that all sections of society feel able to join the service and that no section of society needs to feel excluded from policing function. As part of the operational response to policing problems will involve an in-depth awareness and understanding of cultural difference.

Police officers who themselves are drawn from culturally different backgrounds can contribute to this understanding. In a democratic country, police need to be seen not as an armed occupation but as a group of representative citizens who police with the consent of the people. If the police are seen to be more representative for the people they serve, then consensus is more likely to be achieved.

So especially police officers in management positions will need to clarify to subordinates when reliance on racial, ethnic or religious characteristics is permissible, and thereby reduce the risk of differing interpretations as well as reliance on stereotypes and prejudices.

In Turkish society we do not face to any harsh racial or ethnic diversity. On the other hand different ethnic and religious groups have lived together in Turkey for centuries. Also there are a lot of minority groups in Turkey. In recent years TNP training system have taken the challenge to adapt their policing strategies to meet the changing needs of Turkish society. For example for the first time some languages of minority groups in Turkey such as Kurds, Armenians are added to Turkish National Police Academy curriculum. A lot of police student participated to those lessons and learned those languages.

On the other hand, as an important reform this year our Police Academy accepted a lot of police students from different minority groups in Turkey. Of course this is an important reform in terms of applying multuculturalist perspective and democratic principles to policing for our country.

**2. Gender:** Gender inequality is a problem in society generally as much as it is in the police service. While the gender discrimination legislation addresses discrimination against men as well as women, it is the disadvantage that women experience that is the main preoccupation. The inside perspective on gender and policing involves understanding disproportionality with the familiar themes of recruitment, retention and progression. There is an additional theme which is less significant in the other strands that of deployment. In other words, how women are used in the various roles within the policing.

In Turkish National Police the percentage of women in police service is 5.5%. The average rate of women police in the world is approximately 10%. So it is possible to say there is a gender discrimination in police services. To handle the gender problem this year Turkish Police Academy is accepted women police candidades in rate of 35%. This rate was the highest level in our Police Academy history.

**3. Disability**: Disabled people, as other minority groups, may suffer discrimination and hostility as well as being the subject of prejudice and sterotyping. As a diversity strand, we need to consider disable people as users of police service, including mentally disordered people who are detained as suspects. Police attitutes towards disabled people is very important, so in communication skills in service training in Police Academy we try to give this ability to the police.

Also in terms of police responses to victims and suspects with a mental disbility police should be aware of this specific condition and communication way. On the other hand unfortunately according to our legislation the inclusion of disability in police service in not so equal, only in civil service disabled people can work not as a police.

**4. Religion, faith, belief** : As an issue of diversity, religion, faith and belief has gained increasing prominence over the last decade in all over the world. Discriminatory ethnic profiling involves:

treating an individual less favourably than others who are in a similar situation (in other words ‘discriminating’), for example, by exercising police powers such as stop and search;

where a decision to exercise police powers is based only or mainly on that person’s race, ethnicity or religion.

As based on our experience, for the special training needs about religious, faith and belief discrimination key issues are as follows:

Patterns of faith and religious belief in Turkey generally and locally,

Hate crime towards religious froups and individuals based on histility towards people with a certain religious belief,

The inclusion of religious belief in police service equality,

An understanding of cultural differences in arious faith goups to enable an appropriate service delivery (Cultural relativism)

Policing is profoundly dependent on the cooperation of the general public; however, if confidence and trust in the police is damaged, then cooperation becomes less likely. Law enforcement authorities rely on the public not only as witnesses for the investigation of crimes but also for the prevention and detection of incidents. Without public cooperation, law enforcement officers rarely identify or apprehend suspects, or obtain convictions.

Our policing researches show that where members of the public feel unhappy about encounters with the police this has a negative impact on public confidence and cooperation with enforcement authorities. This is because individuals concerned may share their experience with family members, friends and associates.

**In conclusion;**

My presentation refers to developments in multi-culturalist and culture-oriented approaches and strategies related to Turkish National Police training system. All aspects of police training and development should consider and respond to the implications for diversity. Equality and diversity should be a common feature of all thinking about policing in its wider sense. On the other hand the processes of selection, assesment, management and support for trainers delivering diversity content should be improved.

In recent years TNP training system have taken the challenge to adapt their policing strategies to meet the changing needs of Turkish society, which is increasingly comprised of different cultural and linguistic groups by training in ethnic languages, decreasing of anti-military and traditional policing training approaches. In some instances, substantial changes to the police organisation, including recruitment, training, philosophy and style of policing, have been initiated. Traditional policing emphasised arrests and charges, fast cars and random patrol, as well as an "us vs them" mentality between the police and the public. The new vision of policing is increasingly one of being accountable to the community and establishing a partnership with the community in policing. It recognises the ineffectiveness of traditional policing methods as well as the resourcefulness of the community in matters of crime prevention and social control.

Law enforcement training has to account for the needs and increasing diversity of the communities police officers serve. An inherent aspect of that service is an officer’s cultural understanding. Law enforcement personnel must understand and have an appreciation for the diversity of their communities and its implications for members of the police profession.

Training should have various aims: educating officers on the law relevant to discrimination; challenging stereotypes and prejudices; raising-awareness of the consequences of discrimination and the importance of public trust; and practical advice on how to communicate with the public. In particular, governments have agreed, through the European Code of Police Ethics, that ‘police training shall take full account of the need to challenge and combat racism and xenophobia’ within the police organisation itself.

Certain types of training are already well-instituted in some countries, such as ‘diversity training’ or ‘sensitivity training’. Diversity training tries to address personal feelings about ethnicity, difference and stereotypes, and how these infl uence our daily lives. However, some diversity courses do not necessarily discuss discrimination.

Some studies argue that cultural and diversity training can in fact single out and reinforce differences, increasing, rather than reducing, stereotyping. ‘Cultural sensitivity training’ (as opposed to general diversity training) tries to educate officers about the culture of specifi c ethnic groups that officers frequently encounter but with whom they are not are not personally familiar. This training addresses ‘do’s and don’ts’ and provides guidance on politeness viewed through different ethnic, religious or national perspectives. Cultural training is most effective when developed and delivered with the assistance and participation of persons from the relevant communities.

The process of diversity training is an element of the model that has themes from the data which are neither objects nor the specific act of training but relate to the conditions under which training is taking place. As turkish Police Academy, we set our training approaches on decreasing disadvantages of ethnic, religious, gender and disability diversification in the society.

Thank you for your interest and patience.