

ROLE OF THE POLICE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first Canadian police officers recorded in the history books worked in Quebec City in 1651 and their duty was to act as night watchmen for the community. Today, policing in Canada is carried out at three levels: federal, provincial and municipal. The RCMP operate at the federal level in all provinces and territories (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). At the provincial level, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Quebec Police and the Newfoundland Constabulary operate as provincial police services. At the municipal level, as of 1994, there were 570 police services in operation (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1996, p. 13). In addition to these police services, there are several others operating in Canada. The Native Harbours Board Police, the Canadian Pacific Railways Police and a variety of Native police services are just a few of the many policing services in Canada.

Although perceptions of the role of police are changing, crime control and order maintenance are still viewed as primary police roles by the public and the officers themselves. Despite this widely held perception, a considerable amount of research indicates that "crime control activities generally occupy less than 25% of police officers' time, and for most officers, this percentage is considerably lower" (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994, p. 71).

Community-based policing represents not so much a new policing alternative as a re-emergence of the original approach to urban public policing practised in 18th century England. The central principle underlying community-based policing is that it involves a full partnership between the community and its police in identifying and ameliorating local crime and disorder problems (Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994; Grinc, 1994). Crime and disorder, in other words, are the joint property of both the community and the police, and this joint effort is carried out within an interactive, cooperative and reciprocal relationship. Many police administrators are attracted to the idea of community-based policing, however, the biggest issue in police management today lies in the implementation and operation of community or neighbourhood policing.

The Edmonton Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Program represents a return to the tradition of the earliest days of policing where citizens are expected to police themselves. The program was started in 1987 in 21 of Edmonton's busiest neighbourhoods (Ministry of the Solicitor General, Correctional Services of Ontario & Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada (SG, CSO & SGC), 1993, p. 27). The program's objectives are to reduce calls for service, improve public satisfaction, increase officers' job satisfaction and solve community problems (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994; SG, CSO & SGC, 1993). An evaluation of the program, conducted between 1991 and 1993, found that property related offences decreased 26%, insurance claims for break-and-enters decreased 17%, calls placed to the dispatch centre decreased 39% and the number of reports taken over the phone decreased from 54,000 to 11,000 (Cassels, 1994, p. 73). The program evaluation also made several recommendations, including that the foot patrol program be expanded into high crime areas, the store front stations be kept open longer by staffing them with volunteers and that constables be provided with training in volunteer coordination and problem solving techniques.

The increasingly multicultural nature of Canadian society is having an impact on Canadian policing. Complaints about the police by members of ethno-cultural and visible minorities include over-

policing of their communities, random stops and searches, discrimination in the use of police power, “blaming the victim” when the victim is a member of a minority group and underrepresentation of minorities within police organizations (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). The federal government has embarked on a number of initiatives that address police-minority relations. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, the 1984 Multiculturalism Directorate, cross-cultural training for RCMP officers and the 1989 RCMP sponsored conference, Policing for a Pluralistic Society.

Canadian policing could be described as having reached an intersection consisting of three critical variables: social behaviour, criminal behaviour and police infrastructure. In order to understand how these variables might determine the future of Canadian policing, it is important to determine what resources and technology will be available and what behaviours will be considered criminal in the future (Rossmo & Saville, 1991). One of the more recent proposals, Police Challenge 2000, addresses issues surrounding the future of policing. Police Challenge 2000 considers issues ranging from proactive policing and problem-oriented practices to the changing role of the police and community. The future of Canadian policing, according to this initiative, is in the direction of community-based policing in which the community and police have equal roles in crime prevention.

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian society has undergone vast changes since the formation of the first official police service in Toronto in 1835. But to what extent has the role of police changed to cope effectively and efficiently with the current complex social problems of society? The objective of this paper is to explore the role of the police in today's changing society, to determine its relationship with the community and to explore possible future trends in Canadian policing.

THE ORIGINS AND OPERATION OF CANADIAN POLICING

Modern Canadian policing has its roots in many of the traditions and practices of the night watch system developed in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. The official establishment of modern policing began with passage of the Police Metropolitan Act of 1829 in London, England. Among the most important elements of the Act were the call for citizen responsibility for law and order and the consolidation of the crime prevention and law enforcement powers of local constables. Also presented were the basic principles of law enforcement, written by Sir Robert Peel who also introduced the Act. These principles are still in effect today, having been adopted by the Canadian police as the basis of modern professional police services (Lamontagne, 1972).

The first Canadian "police officers" recorded in the history books worked in Quebec City in 1651 and their only duty was to act as night watchmen for the community (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). By the late 1830s, however, it was evident that crime was on the increase and it could not be controlled by self policing or volunteer policing. From this resulted the 1835 formation of the first Canadian police force in Toronto (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). To this day, the basic strategy for deploying police personnel is the watch system, or preventive patrol. Although questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the watch system, officers are still assigned to patrol large districts, based on the premise that they provide a police presence which deters offenders and allays citizen fears about crime (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

Policing in Canada today is carried out at three levels: federal, provincial and municipal. At the federal level is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). Established in 1873 as the North-West Mounted Police, it was responsible for policing the western plains, which had been purchased by the Canadian government from the Hudson's Bay Company (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). Changed to the Royal North-West Mounted Police in 1904, it was not until 1920 that it became known as the RCMP. The RCMP operate in all provinces and territories to enforce the Criminal Code of Canada and such federal statutes as the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Food and Drugs Act and the Indian Act. The RCMP provides municipal and provincial policing under contract and also operates under special agreements in the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

Although all provinces are authorized under the Constitution Act of 1867 to operate provincial police services, only three provincial services are operating in Canada today (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). The Ontario Provincial Police, the Quebec Police Force and the Newfoundland Constabulary are responsible for policing areas outside municipalities and for the enforcement of provincial laws and the Criminal Code. While provincial police services may also be involved in policing municipalities under contract, in all provinces except Quebec and Ontario, this is done by the RCMP (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

Municipal police services account for the largest number of police officers operating in Canada. In 1994, there were 578 municipal police services operating in Canada. Independent municipal services accounted for the largest portion (364) of the total, while the RCMP (201) and the Ontario Provincial Police (13) comprised the remainder (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1996, p. 13). These municipal services range in size from units of one or two officers to the 6,000-member Montreal Urban Community Police Force (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). They enforce all laws relating to their jurisdictions, including the Criminal Code, provincial statutes, municipal bylaws and, more recently, certain federal statutes such as the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Rather than establishing and maintaining their own police services, many municipalities have chosen to contract with a provincial police service for municipal policing services. In all provinces except Quebec, provincial police services are involved in municipal policing; in Ontario, municipal policing is carried out under contracts with the Ontario Provincial Police, while in the remaining provinces the RCMP, acting as the provincial police force, contracts to provide municipal policing (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

There are several other police services in Canada in addition to those operating at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. The National Harbours Board Police protect property owned by the National Harbours Board, while the Canadian Pacific Railways Police and the Canadian Pacific Investigation Service provide a similar function for the railway. In addition are several separate Native police forces. The two largest are the Amerindian Police Service in Quebec and the Dakota-Ojibway Tribal Council Police Force in Manitoba. Smaller, autonomous band constable programs cooperate on the Kahnawake reserve near Montreal and on several reserves in Alberta (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

THE ROLE OF POLICE

The history of the role of police strongly indicates that as societies increased in diversity and complexity, policing systems based on self policing and individual responsibility deteriorated. Generally, the public has gradually abdicated its role in peacekeeping and law enforcement and increasingly expected police to take on these responsibilities which were once a citizen's civic duty. There has also been increasing pressure on police to intervene in civil matters. The emerging role of police in the 1990s is one characterized by expansion and change. Therefore, "there is considerable uncertainty on the part of both the police and public about the role of the police in Canadian society" (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994, p. 70).

Nonetheless, while there has been an expansion of the police role, the activities of police forces are still discussed in terms of three major categories:

1. crime control - responding to and investigating crimes and patrolling the streets to prevent offenses from occurring;
2. order maintenance - preventing and controlling behaviour that disturbs the public peace, including quieting loud parties, settling domestic disputes and intervening in conflicts that arise between citizens;
3. service - the provision of a wide range of services to the community, often as a consequence of the 24-hour availability of the police, including assisting in the search for missing persons and acting as an information/referral agency. (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994, pp. 70-71)

Even though the police perform an increasingly wide range of functions, it is crime control which remains uppermost in the perceptions of the police role in the minds of both the police and the public. Despite the widely held perception that the police spend the majority of their time detecting and apprehending offenders, a considerable amount of research conducted in Canada and the United States indicates “that crime control activities generally occupy less than 25% of police officers’ time, and for most officers, this percentage is considerably lower” (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994, p. 71). A study of the telephone calls received by the Vancouver Police Department over a six-month period found that 49% of the calls were for service (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1989, p. 58). Another study of the activities of patrol officers in an Eastern Canadian city concluded that:

The bulk of the patrol officers’ time was spent doing nothing other than consuming the petrochemical energy required to run an automobile and the psychic energy required to deal with the boredom of it all...[E]ven in their “crime work,” patrol officers are most often ordering petty disturbances, regulating driving, and sorting out property relations. (Ericson, 1982, cited in Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1989, p. 58)

One difficulty arising from the expectation to maintain a crime control orientation while being asked to perform other duties by the public is the creation of considerable confusion and uncertainty among police officers about their proper role. One study found that officers in an Eastern Canadian department had considerable difficulty responding to a survey question about their role; 38% did not define any particular role in their work, 12% said their role is primarily public relations-social service work and 9% defined it mainly in terms of traffic law enforcement. Only 41% indicated that their prime role is law enforcement under the Criminal Code (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1989, p. 59).

The discrepancy between the traditional perception of the police as “crime fighters” and the reality of police activities has given rise to debate on whether policing services should be re-organized to more accurately reflect the tasks most officers are performing, or whether the police should maintain their current organization which is based on crime control as the primary function. Some suggest the crime control model may be inappropriate in the Canadian context:

...the bulk of criminal activity in most communities is of a less serious nature and has not yet created the levels of crime fear characteristic of the American situation. The majority of police departments in Canada are located in small cities, towns or rural areas with relatively low crime rates. An exclusive emphasis on crime fighting in these settings may be entirely inconsistent with community policing needs and priorities. (Murphy & Muir, 1985, cited in Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1989, p. 59).

There are others who contend that the crime control model in Canadian policing results more from the United States experience in which an aggressive law enforcement role for the police has traditionally been accepted. It is such criticisms of the crime control model which have been used as the basis for considering an alternative model of policing - community-based policing.

COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING

Community-based policing, also referred to as community policing or problem oriented policing, represents not so much a new policing alternative as a re-emergence of the original approach to urban public policing practised in 18th century England. This re-emergence has been mainly the result of three decades of re-assessment of the role and function of the police. While the Metropolitan London police provided the first model for modern urban community policing, Canadian municipal police were influenced by later developments that took place in the United States. These developments included the reaction to the close police-community ties which facilitated systemic corruption of the police by local political party organizations. From the 1930s onwards, the distancing of urban police from the community became the driving force in North American policing toward what became known as professional policing (Solicitor General of Canada, 1990).

The central principle underlying community-based policing is that it involves a full partnership between the community and its police in identifying and ameliorating local crime and disorder problems (Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994; Grinc, 1994). Community policing maintains that crime and disorder are the joint property of both the community and the police, and that this joint effort is carried out within an interactive, cooperative and reciprocal relationship. This relationship of partnership and participation contrasts with the professional model of policing in which crime is the exclusive property of the police who operate according to the crime control model (Sacco & Kennedy, 1994; Grinc, 1994). Under this model, the two main criteria for police force performance are the proportion of charges laid to offences reported to the police and the response time to calls from the public for police service. The marginal effectiveness of the professional model in the prevention and containment of crime, coupled with the loss of positive police-community relations, resulted in police executives over the past 20 years beginning to look for a new approach to policing (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994; Grinc, 1994; Sacco & Kennedy, 1994).

One of the more recent proposals for a new approach is found in a discussion paper from the Solicitor General of Canada titled A Vision of the Future of Policing in Canada: Police-Challenge 2000 (Solicitor General of Ontario, Correctional Service of Ontario & Solicitor General of Canada (SG,

CSO & SGC), 1991). Community-based policing is the mainstay of the vision outlined in the paper. In the same way that professional policing has been called the “thin blue line” against crime, this paper points out that community-based policing could be called the “new blue line.” There are 12 basic ingredients which go into this “new blue line:”

1. The role of the police in Canadian society is fundamentally that of peace officers rather than just law enforcement officers involved with crime control. Because police officers serve and protect the public, a police organization is primarily a service to the public for crime and disorder problems rather than a force focussed primarily on crime.
2. In adhering to a police-community partnership, the police adopt the key strategy of community consultation.
3. There is a proactive approach to policing. Rather than passively waiting for calls or randomly patrolling for a presumed deterrent effect, the police anticipate future calls by identifying local crime and disorder problems.
4. A problem-oriented policing strategy is developed which will address the crime and order problems and their underlying causes. A variety of proactive and reactive policing tactics may be used, depending on the problem and the neighbourhood.
5. Broader police responses to underlying causes of problems are introduced, particularly crime prevention activities.
6. Inter-agency cooperation is fostered, whereby there is a branching out to other service delivery agencies to form strategic partnerships and a more cooperative and productive division of labour. This cooperative response places the police within a service network of agencies addressing urban safety and health (Solicitor General of Canada, 1990, p. 22).
7. Much of the success of policing depends on how well its personnel operate as information managers who engage in interactive policing by routinely exchanging information on a reciprocal basis with community members through formal contacts and informal networks.
8. Tactics are developed to reduce the fear of being victimized, particularly among children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups in society. The police have a responsibility to ensure that this fear has constructive rather than debilitating effects, so that those who are vulnerable, or who view themselves as vulnerable, may take reasonable crime prevention measures.
9. Police officers are permitted to become career generalists rather than specialists and are responsible for a broader range of activities than permitted under the professional policing model. This would include solving neighbourhood crime and disorder problems.
10. Greater responsibility and autonomy for front line officers to undertake neighbourhood policing tactics is facilitated by decentralized police

management and resource deployment, which delivers services based on neighbourhoods rather than on shifts.

11. The police organizational structure is changed so that the hierarchical, paramilitary organizational model is replaced by one in which front line policing, where police services are delivered, is the most important part of the organization.
12. The community supports policing priorities, so there is a degree of accountability to the community in terms of a review of progress on those priorities, possibly conducted through public consultations (SG, CSO & SGC, 1991).

Many policing administrators are attracted to the idea of community-based policing and there is now a wealth of theoretical material available, such as that provided by the discussion above. However, the biggest issue and challenge in police management today lies in the actual implementation of community or neighbourhood policing. As with most new efforts, community-based policing requires change. In this case, significant organizational and cultural change is needed; not only basic changes in the mechanics of policing, but fundamental and far-reaching changes in both community perceptions of the police, as well as a redefinition by police officers themselves of what police do is required. Nonetheless, some municipal police forces have successfully implemented modest, but often effective, community-based policing programs. One such program was established by the Edmonton Police Service.

THE EDMONTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOT PATROL

Like many other community-based policing programs, the Edmonton Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Program represents what is essentially a return to the traditions of the earliest days of policing when citizens were expected to police themselves. At the turn of the 20th century in most North American cities, police were assigned to a beat and they acted as watchmen on their designated route. As cities grew, so did the number of beats and officers started to be sent out to different beats. Their main job was to be seen. By 1960, the Edmonton police officer walking the beat was an aloof authority figure (Koller, 1990). Police were conditioned to avoid chatting with people or lingering inside buildings. In winter they wore buffalo coats and at night in the sub-zero weather, a police officer was often the only one on the street. Since then, police began to abandon the beat for the patrol car, equipped with a two-way radio. The contemporary Edmonton police car is a mobile office with a computer terminal attached to the dashboard. However, the sophisticated equipment and its attendant paperwork have insulated police from the communities they patrol to the point where they tend to spend more time with other officers than with citizens (Koller, 1990).

In an effort to restore “people contact, not pavement contact,” the Edmonton Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Program (NFPP) was started in 1987 (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). It was designed with several specific objectives:

- to reduce repeat calls for service;
- to improve public satisfaction with the police;
- to increase job satisfaction of the constables;
- to increase reporting of intelligence in the area; and
- to solve community problems (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994, p. 195; SG, CSO & SGC 1993, p. 4).

The program also has several components to it which are aimed at achieving these objectives: foot patrols, store-front stations, community liaison committees, volunteers and problem-solving constables (SG, CSO & SGC, 1993). The 21 busiest neighbourhoods in Edmonton were initially selected for the neighbourhood foot patrol. All original officers participating in the program had volunteered and had an average of nine years of service; they were required to “shift their allegiance from their peers to their neighbourhood residents” (Koller, 1990, p. xi). Currently, 35 beat officers work out of 23 foot patrol offices in Edmonton (Personal communication, Edmonton Police Service Media Relations staff member, 1997).

A number of evaluations of the NFPP have been conducted throughout its operation. One study found that the foot patrol was seen as very useful in high crime areas and that the visibility of the constables and their direct contact with the residents increased, thereby improving constables’ knowledge of the community and its problems (Cassels, 1994). The evaluation also found that between 1991 and 1993, property related offences decreased 26%, insurance claims for break-and-enters decreased 17%, calls placed to the dispatch centre decreased 39% and the number of reports taken over the phone decreased from 54,000 to 11,000 (Cassels, 1994, p. 73). Another study found that foot patrol officers believed they set down roots in the community through such means as participating in community activities like marathons, picnics and charity functions (Koller, 1990). They found their invisibility as valuable as their visibility in some situations, as many offenders did not expect to see a police officer on foot or had a harder time knowing exactly where the officer was in the neighbourhood. They also had a greater opportunity to carry out preventive policing in forms ranging from setting up summer recreation programs for young would-be law-breakers to letting a mother know that her child’s babysitter is holding parties in her absence (Koller, 1990).

The store-front stations appeared to be useful in residential areas. However, public access was limited because many of the store-front stations were open only when the foot patrol constable was in the office, which reduced the effectiveness of these stations. The problem-solving approach to policing was used extensively by constables (Cassels, 1994). Evidence pointed to increased use of indirect methods rather than the use of enforcement to achieve long-term solutions. The major drawback to the problem-solving approach was that some of the constables seemed to be overwhelmed by the responsibility of solving the complex community problems. Meanwhile, the community liaison committees and the volunteers proved the least effective components of the program. There was little community effort put into establishing the committees, and in the downtown area where the whole concept of “community” did not apply, the committees were even less successful. The use of volunteers was not universally accepted by the constables, so their use varied from neighbourhood

to neighbourhood. In the downtown area, the use of volunteers was minimal because of the problems associated with using volunteers in potentially high risk situations (SG, CSO & SGC, 1993).

The program evaluation also made several recommendations, including that the foot patrol program be expanded into other high crime areas, the store-front stations be kept open longer by staffing them with volunteers, the constables be provided with training in volunteer coordination and that other community resources, such as professionals and agencies, be integrated into the problem-solving approach (SG, CSO & SGC, 1993). The NFPP will be continued with and expanded upon. As far as progress with the fundamental changes involved are concerned, there are also indications that these are being recognized:

...the police brass must be willing to trust the constables who are chosen for the neighbourhood foot patrol. The people who manage the service must trust the people who deliver the service. Sergeants who are responsible for beat cops are considered as coaches, not superiors, who recognize that each beat constable has his own personality and way of policing... The Edmonton Police Service neighbourhood foot patrol is perhaps one tentative step closer to Sir Robert Peel's principles of policing by consent, in which "the police are the public and the public are the police" (Koller, 1990, p. 60).

THE IMPACT OF MULTICULTURALISM

The increasingly multicultural nature of Canadian society is having an impact on Canadian policing. Relations between Canadian police and the members of minority groups have been the object of several official inquiries over the past two decades. In almost every region of the country, the relations between police and minority groups have undergone close examination and much of this attention has been prompted by police action which resulted in the death or serious injury of members of minority groups. Complaints about the police by members of ethno-cultural and visible minorities include over-policing of the communities in which they live, discrimination in the use of police power, "blaming the victim" of crime when the victim is a member of a minority group and under-representation of minorities among the members of police organizations (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994; Sacco & Kennedy, 1994).

The statistical risk of racial tension and conflict increases in proportion to the representation of visible minority groups, particularly in metropolitan areas. Crime rates for street crime, property crime and violence against persons may increase when disadvantaged new Canadian immigrants and rural disadvantaged Aboriginal people settle in urban areas, which is a situation reflecting their poverty rather than their ethnicity (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). Also, some immigrants may import crime patterns from their countries of origin, with the greatest impact falling upon the ethnic community itself. The implications of these trends for policing are far reaching. New immigrants without skills in either of the two official languages will pressure police forces to provide services in their own language. Police services must continue to recruit visible minorities, including Aboriginal

peoples and new Canadians, in response to the need to enhance police-minority relations and the demand for services in other languages. Cross-cultural sensitivity training will become an even more important part of the curriculum for police basic training, while promotion may become contingent upon mandatory refresher training.

Since 1980, federal, provincial and municipal governments have devoted considerable political and financial support to police-minority initiatives. The federal government has been active since 1979, primarily through the race relations unit of the Multiculturalism Directorate. The Directorate commissioned a series of reports about the state of race relations in major urban centres in 1983. Among the observations made were that one of the results of overt racism in Canada was a distrust on the part of visible minorities for the legal system and that police, lawyers, judges and correctional staff were seen to be antagonistic toward visible minorities (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). In 1984, the Multiculturalism Directorate developed a national strategy on race relations to eliminate racial discrimination in society's key institutions. This included the creation of a police-minority program which has concentrated on a variety of initiatives ranging from the preparation and publication of a police intercultural training manual to the development of minority recruitment guidelines and the sponsorship of regional police-minority symposia (Ungerleider & McGregor, 1991).

The federal government has also embarked on a number of initiatives addressing police-minority relations, including the introduction of cross-cultural training for RCMP officers. This training provides officers with information about cultural differences and traditions and teaches them to look beyond their immediate situation and ask themselves whether cultural factors are at play. Three major reasons for introducing this training were:

1. To reduce frustration and promote understanding for officers and their families stationed in remote settlements or culturally diverse communities;
2. To increase the effectiveness of police work by teaching that even subtle differences between cultures can lead to misunderstandings in such situations as a police interview or interrogation;
3. To increase the safety of officers and the people with whom they are interacting by promoting the understanding about cultural differences (Amyot, 1989, p. 14).

Another significant federal initiative was the 1989 RCMP-sponsored conference called "Policing for a Pluralistic Society." The purpose of the conference was to provide decision makers in the RCMP and other police forces with an opportunity to meet and discuss issues which affect police-minority relations with respected members of visible minority and Aboriginal groups from across Canada. The conference generated 170 recommendations organized around six themes: community consultation, national coordination and support, Aboriginal policing, cross-cultural and race relations training, multicultural and Aboriginal youth initiatives and personnel issues, including the selection and promotion of minorities (Ungerleider & McGregor, 1991, p. 559).

Whether these initiatives will prove effective in the long run is a subject still being debated by many. Definitive research into the effectiveness of cross cultural training is still scarce and some of the studies which have been carried out indicate that improvements in police officers' attitudes and behaviour toward minorities was negligible (Ungerleider & McGregor, 1991; National Crime Prevention Council, 1994). The results indicated by these programs, when compared with the large expenditures made for them, suggest that if these programs continue to be implemented, steps may need to be taken to improve the training programs. Another factor which has not yet been clarified is whether poor relations between police and minorities are primarily the result of police practice or police attitudes. The underlying assumption with most police-minority initiatives is that the police exhibit a lack of awareness and sensitivity to cultural and social diversity (National Crime Prevention Council, 1994). This view maintains that some police officers express ethnocentric attitudes and display discriminatory behaviour toward visible minorities. However, research has indicated that police officers were no more ethnocentric than their non-police counterparts. There are those who contend that, so far, most of the development and implementation of race relations training has been in response to a social prejudice explanation of poor relations between members of minority groups and the police. They maintain that this analysis has limitations which could undermine the effectiveness of future police-minority initiatives.

The social prejudice explanation fails to recognize the economic and political context of policing. Poor police-minority relations are also shaped by the structural features of a society in which opportunity, rewards, and constraints are unequally and unfairly distributed. The criminal justice system promotes the interests of the most powerful members of society. Within the context of that system, the police contribute to the criminalization of marginalized individuals by selectively perceiving and responding to deviance. Immigrants are especially vulnerable since they are frequently perceived as being different, excitable, and arrogant. (Ungerleider & McGregor, 1991, p. 561)

While race relations training may equip police with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to address issues and situations over which they have control, such as service delivery, it may not be capable of solving problems which originate from sources beyond their control. One such factor may be the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Policing in the 1990s may be significantly characterized by how well these issues are addressed and resolved.

THE FUTURE OF POLICING IN CANADA

Canadian policing could be described as having reached an intersection consisting of three critical variables: social behaviour, criminal law and the police infrastructure. In order to understand how these three variables might determine the future of Canadian policing, it is important to ask: What will people be doing in future years? What activities and behaviours will be outlawed at the start of the next century? What resources, technology and organizational structures will be available (Rossmo & Saville, 1991, p. 544)?

The social behaviour of Canada will most likely be characterized by diversity. Canada is no longer composed, if it ever was, of homogeneous communities. Unlike other professional groups, the police must act in the interests of all society as opposed to a single client. This may prove particularly important when considering community-based policing. It will become extremely important to define the “community” the police would be expected to represent. As for criminal law, the reliability of using crime statistics as a major indicator of future trends may come under more question because it is too limited and simplistic for the complex social problems and rapid social change of the 1990s (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994). The greater and more rapid the degree of change experienced by a society, whether in positive or negative directions, the more its norms and standards will be disrupted. Because the creation and enforcement of laws are often the result of an increase in social problems, the police may find themselves not only enforcing more laws, but under increasing pressure to do so from a more creative, community-based approach (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

The police infrastructure, how police organizations are structured and operated, is under increasing pressure. Legal restrictions have surfaced as a result of the influence of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has resulted in more lengthy and complicated investigative procedures while financial restraints have resulted in smaller budgets and limited personnel levels. The overall result of these pressures has been a decrease in the traditional levels of police service and serious questioning about whether the organization of policing is effective, or even relevant, to society’s changing needs (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994).

The Solicitor General Ontario and Canada and the Correctional Service of Ontario discussion paper, Community Policing, is one attempt to address major change in how police organizations operate. Specifically, it outlines the Police Challenge 2000 initiative and a vision of what the future of policing in Canada could and should be. Among the key elements of this vision are:

1. An interactive partnership between the police and the community, in which citizens have input into the setting of local police department priorities;
2. The return of community police officers who patrol in a manner which no longer isolates them from citizens;
3. Human resources, both within and outside police departments, will be more emphasized than the hardware and high technology;

4. Police organizations will be adaptable to changing environments and will confront the emerging issues of the day, whether they be criminal, legal or political;
5. Police organizations will operate much like private organizations, with a greater emphasis on quality service, core values, accountability and cost effectiveness;
6. Partnership with the community will be a central focus. Police managers will recognize the interconnectedness between their activities and those of other public services, such as housing, welfare and employment agencies. The police of the future will view themselves as one part of a community-wide effort to not only deal with crime but to improve community life in general. The idea of the solitary police officer, single-handedly stemming the tide of crime, with villains on one side and citizens on the other, is an image from the past. The police are the community and the community is the police (SG, CSO & SGC, 1993).

The Solicitor General discussion paper is a reflection of a growing agreement that the Canadian policing paradigm is getting ready to shift and there is much speculation over just where it will shift to. Police-Challenge 2000 predicts it will be in the direction of community-based policy and there are already modest but distinct indications that this may well be the case. However, there is still much to be done to ensure that whatever changes are made lead to effective results.

...the key to coping with rapid change is a restructuring of the traditional para-military organization of policing that was state-of-the-art in 1829. This is in keeping with the evolution of policing from a professional model, to a reform model, to a community-based model. It is important to realize that such a shift in philosophy must be a wholesale organizational strategy instead of a series of piecemeal tactics. The creation of flexible and responsive police/multi-agency structures will establish an ability for the organization to make adjustments. (Rossmo & Saville, 1991, p. 549)

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