

1 CONSIDERING POLICE WORK



LEARNING OBJECTIVES | After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss the legislative framework in which the police carry out their mandate
- Provide a definition of policing
- Compare and contrast the social contract and radical perspectives on the role of the police
- Discuss the warrior versus guardian role of the police
- Discuss the mandated and assumed responsibilities of the police
- Describe the factors that make the police unique in the criminal justice system
- Discuss the basis for the exercise of authority and the use of force by police officers
- Discuss the notion of political policing
- Discuss the challenges of police work in a democratic society
- Identify and discuss the environments in which policing takes place
- Discuss the dimensions of policing

“So where do you see this relationship going?” the mild-mannered police officer asks.

“I want him out,” the thirtysomething woman replies. “I thought the baby would change things—make him more mature. But he hasn’t changed. He’s the same.”

I’m accompanying a group of cops responding to a domestic-disturbance call at a working-class apartment complex on Kennedy Road in Brampton, Ontario. Alice and Tom (as I’ll call them) have a troubled relationship: Tom, a decade older than Alice, is a chain-smoker and heavy drinker with serious anger-management issues. This isn’t the first time the police have come knocking.

But the stakes are higher this time. They have a newborn baby, staring up at the uniformed visitors from a bouncy chair. And the hole Tom just punched in the wall is grounds for a mischief charge. He’ll spend the night in jail and will be released on condition that he keep away from this small apartment for a while.

Tom is led in handcuffs to a waiting squad car, and I follow Sergeant Winston Fullinfaw and Constable Jaime Peach as they tour the home. Even without a search warrant, they’re permitted to inspect items in plain view—which in this case includes a lot of drugs and a bewildering variety of paraphernalia.

“Is any of this yours?” Peach asks as she catalogues the marijuana. There’s a baggie of weed in the kitchen and a cereal bowl in the living room overflowing with it. The bathroom counter is littered with spent roaches.

“It’s his,” Alice says. “Feel free to take it away.”*

Fullinfaw informs her that the presence of drugs means he’ll have to notify Peel Children’s Aid Society. She nods. While Tom is drunk and talkative, she is calm and stoic. It seems she’s been waiting for a chance to throw him out.

Over the next half-hour, the officers interview her about the relationship—how she and Tom met (through friends), how much he drinks (up to twenty beers a day, including four as soon as he wakes up), and how he earns a living (disturbingly, it involves motor vehicles).

Eventually the questions stop, and Alice starts talking about her life more generally. It’s been a rough ride. Her baby is colicky, and the constant screaming sometimes sets Tom off. Making life even more complicated: one of their two bedrooms is occupied by Alice’s dementia-afflicted, octogenarian grandmother. (The officers pass by the open door to make sure the woman is okay. If she’s upset by the domestic fracas, there’s no sign of it—either because she’s accustomed to the screaming or she just doesn’t notice.)

Though Alice appears composed, the officers express concern that her multi-generational responsibilities will overwhelm her now that Tom is gone. Fullinfaw urges her to contact a seniors centre just down the street, which could provide daytime support. “I know she’s your grandma and you love her,” he says. “But in my experience, people in her condition do better when they’re with specialists and socializing with people their own age.”

And then we leave. From start to finish, the call takes about an hour. Yet in that short time, Fullinfaw and Peach act as law-enforcement officers, and informally as child-safety guardians, geriatric consultants, addiction experts, mental-health monitors, and couples counsellors.¹

*Note that this incident occurred prior to October 2018 when the Cannabis Act (SC 2018, c. 16) came into force. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Policing is perhaps the most high-profile, dynamic, and, oftentimes, controversial component of the Canadian criminal justice system. It is police officers who respond to criminal offences, disorder, and conflict in the community. How police services and police officers respond to the multifaceted demands that are placed on them affects individual citizens and their neighbourhoods and communities, as well as officers and the police services within which they work. Police are the only agents of the criminal justice system with whom most Canadians ever have contact.

In contrast to personnel in other components of the justice system, police officers work in environments that are always changing. Technological developments, most notably the prevalence of mobile phone cameras, Internet-based platforms such as YouTube, and social networking sites like Facebook, have significantly increased the visibility of police actions.² The pervasiveness of the media and social media ensure that critical incidents involving the police receive extensive coverage, and this has contributed to the Canadian public being more demanding and less forgiving of issues related to police misconduct.

CONTEMPORARY POLICE WORK

The police occupy a unique, and important, place in the criminal justice system and in Canadian society. With a few notable exceptions, police officers are the only personnel in the justice system with the authority to arrest and detain people and to use lethal force while carrying out their legally mandated duties. Policing issues are discussed and debated every day by politicians, the media, and the community—as well as within police forces themselves.

Police work presents challenges, risks, and rewards and requires special knowledge, skills, and abilities. Policing as an occupation is often characterized by considerable role ambiguity. The daily tasks of police officers are often difficult and at times unappealing. Officers must often search people who are dirty, neglected, or carriers of communicable diseases such as hepatitis or HIV/AIDS. Many of the people they deal with are marginal and vulnerable, suffering from addiction and/or mental illness.

Police officers in the early 21st century are highly trained, multiskilled professionals who have a broad range of demands placed on them. This includes training to deal with at-risk and vulnerable groups, cultural and ethnic minorities, newcomers, and Indigenous peoples. Police officers are often de facto psychologists, mediators, and problem-solvers who are in near-continuous contact with the public.

A large portion of police work involves officers restoring order in situations of conflict without resorting to enforcing the criminal law. Patrol officers, for example, are involved in a myriad of activities that are not directly related to law enforcement, yet play a critical role in reassuring community residents and ensuring that communities are safe and secure.

Police officers are involved in developing and sustaining partnerships with the community, taking initiatives to improve the quality of life in communities and neighbourhoods, providing reassurance to community residents, and conducting outreach to communities of diversity. This includes Indigenous persons, newcomers and refugees, persons in communities of diversity, and those who are vulnerable and at risk.

THE IMAGE AND REALITY OF THE POLICE

There is in our culture a fascination with the police that portrays the world of police officers in a highly seductive fashion: at times extremely dangerous, at other times isolated and lonely. The media—both print and electronic—have been a major contributor to the

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distorted images that Canadians have of police work. A Canada-wide survey ($N = 4,200$) found that one in four respondents cited television and movies as a key source of information about the criminal justice system, including the police.³ Most of the participants did not know where to find information on the criminal justice system and indicated that they knew very little about it.

Popular police dramas such as the *CSI* series attempt to whet what appears to be an insatiable appetite for the danger, intrigue, and excitement of police work. That these shows only distort the realities of police work is of little concern to either the producers or the viewing audience. Yet these images may have a strong impact on public perceptions of police and on the expectations that communities and victims of crime have on the ability of the police to prevent and solve crime. After all, on-screen police officers almost always solve the crime and arrest the suspects, and crime scene investigators are able to complete complex case investigations in the span of a one-hour time slot. Crime dramas may give the impression that the police are more effective than they are at solving crimes.⁴

See Critical Thinking Exercise 1.1 at the end of this chapter.

DEFINING POLICE WORK

policing

the activities of any individual or organization acting legally on behalf of public or private organizations or persons to maintain security or social order

A definition of **policing** must include both public and private police; it is the activities of any individual or organization acting legally on behalf of public or private organizations or persons to maintain security or social order while empowered by either public or private contract, regulations or policies, written or verbal.⁵

This definition is an acknowledgement that the public police no longer have a monopoly on policing, although with a few exceptions, they retain a monopoly on the use of force. An increasing role in safety and security in the community is being played by private security services and para-police officers—that is, community constables that have limited powers of enforcement.

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF POLICE WORK

Police officers carry out their tasks within a number of legislative frameworks that define their roles, powers, and responsibilities. These are generally set out in provincial legislation and—in the case of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)—in the federal RCMP Act (RSC 1985, c. R-10). When new legislation is enacted, it may result in increased demands on the police and extend the role and activities of the police. Among the more significant pieces of legislation are these:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

a component of the Constitution Act that guarantees basic rights and freedoms

Constitution Act, 1867

legislation that includes provisions that define the responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments in the area of criminal justice

- **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.** This is the primary law of the land in Canada and guarantees basic rights and freedoms for citizens. The Charter contains specific sections on fundamental freedoms, legal rights, equality rights, and enforcement. The courts may use the Charter to strike down legislation and criminal laws as unconstitutional. No other piece of legislation has had as strong an impact on the powers and activities of the police as the Charter, specifically sections 7 to 14, the Legal Rights section. This topic is discussed in Chapter 8.
- **Constitution Act, 1867.** This sets out the responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments in the area of criminal justice. The federal government has the sole authority to enact criminal laws and to establish the procedures to be followed in criminal cases (s. 91(14)), while the provinces are assigned responsibility for actually administering justice (s. 92(27)). If the Constitution Act were followed to the letter, the federal government would be limited to passing laws, with the provinces and territories given the task of policing and justice

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administration. In reality, it's much more complex than that. The RCMP is a national police force involved in federal, provincial, and municipal policing. The federal government operates a corrections system for individuals who receive sentences of two years or more. Also, provincial and municipal governments enact their own laws; however, provincial laws and municipal bylaws are generally for less serious types of offences and are most often punished by fines. Even though bylaws are relatively minor in the overall scheme of laws, they can be the source of considerable controversy. This was illustrated when municipalities began passing bylaws that severely restricted where persons could smoke.

- **Criminal Code** (RSC 1985, c. C-46). This sets out the criminal laws as well as the procedures for administering justice.
- *Other federal statutes.* These include the Anti-terrorism Act (SC 2001, c. 41), the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (SC 1996, c. 19), the Youth Criminal Justice Act (SC 2002, c. 1), the Canada Evidence Act (which pertains to evidentiary matters in the courts; RSC 1985, c. C-5), the Access to Information Act (RSC 1985, c. A-1), and various privacy acts.
- *Provincial and municipal legislation.* This includes a wide range of statutes such as motor vehicle administration acts, highway traffic acts, liquor acts, and provincial/municipal police acts. All of these provide the framework within which police services are structured and delivered. As well, the various police acts set out the principles of policing, processes for filing complaints against police officers, and disciplinary procedures for police officers, besides providing for and defining the activities of police commissions and municipal police boards.
- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.** This provides the legislative framework for the operations of the RCMP. It also contains provisions relating to the operations of the RCMP External Review Committee and the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, as well as to officer grievances, discipline, discharge, and demotion.

Criminal Code

federal legislation that sets out criminal law, procedures for prosecuting federal offences, and sentences and procedures for the administration of justice

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act

federal legislation that provides the framework for the operation of the RCMP

PERSPECTIVES ON THE POLICE

There are two competing perspectives on the role of the police, the social contract perspective and the radical perspective.

The Social Contract Perspective

The **social contract perspective** views the police as a politically neutral force that acts primarily to enforce the law and protect the public. The power of police and their mandate to use force against citizens is justified under the social contract vision of society. The police use of force is necessary to maintain order and maximize collective good by maintaining a safe and workable society. Under social contract theory, citizens are understood to voluntarily surrender some of their power and rights and delegate them to the state and to the police force. The social contract theory of policing informs mainstream views of policing, which see police as a protective force against crime and social disorder. The materials presented throughout this text will reveal that Canadian police services have often come up short in reflecting these values.

Given the widespread belief in the social contract theory of police and the partisan nature of media reporting, the general public is often uncritically supportive of police behaviour even where such behaviour involves high levels of force and coercion. Police violence against protesters will often be seen as legitimate even where it goes beyond the bounds of reasonable force.

social contract perspective (on the role of the police)

a perspective that considers the police to be a politically neutral force that acts primarily to enforce the law and protect the public

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radical perspective (of the role of the police)

a perspective that views the police as an instrument used by governments and powerful interests to suppress dissent, stifle protest, and help maintain the status quo

The Radical Perspective

While the social contract perspective depicts the police as a neutral agent of the state providing for the safety and security of citizens, the proponents of the radical perspective point out that since the police support the government which, in turn, supports the interests of the ruling class. The police are never politically neutral.⁶ The **radical perspective** on the police is captured in the following narrative:

Policing is part of the complex technologies, or methods of control (such as corrections institutions, public health administration, public education administration and corporate management) whose primary function in history has been to consolidate the social power of the capitalist class and administer the working class and poor. . . . [T]he police are integral to the manner in which the state controls and contains civil society in general and people in particular.⁷

The radical perspective considers police as a repressive force that is instrumental in the maintenance of an unjust social system: “The police are primarily utilized by the government to maintain the status quo and to protect the powerful against any perceived threats.”⁸ This includes conducting surveillance on individuals and groups who are deemed to be a threat to national security and suppressing public protests. For a radical perspective on the role of police in Canada, view the documentary film *Into the Fire (Canada Is a Police State)*, listed in Media Links section at the end of this chapter. Also, see Critical Thinking Exercise 1.1 at the end of the chapter.

Proponents of this perspective of the police and of Canadian society as a “police state” cite as evidence the historical record. There are numerous historical and contemporary examples presented in Chapter 2 wherein the police were used by the government to “pacify” the Canadian west so that it could be settled and developed, to break strikes and suppress citizen protests, and to monitor the activities of Canadians who were/are deemed to be a threat to the state.

The policing of the G20 protests in Toronto in 2010 raised concerns about the neutrality of the police. Documents obtained under the Access to Information Act revealed a massive RCMP-led initiative to infiltrate activist groups across the country, conduct surveillance, and ultimately arrest persons involved during the G20 protests.⁹ This initiative involved over 500 municipal, provincial, and federal police officers and contributed to the \$1 billion price tag for security for the G8 and G20 summits. Watch the videos *Police State Canada: From the McDonald Commission to the G20* and *Into the Fire*, both listed in the Media Links section at the end of the chapter. See also Critical Thinking Exercise 1.1 at the end of the chapter.

The persons most often the subject of government and police interest have been those involved in various political activities and/or those who had beliefs or engaged in behaviours (including sexual) that were viewed as a threat to the stability and status quo of the state. Continuing to the present, the police have spied on citizens and have engaged in activities that violated citizens’ rights. Police services, particularly the RCMP and CSIS (the Canadian Security Intelligence Service), have maintained extensive secret data files on citizens and engaged in activities that have often been determined to be illegal.

The discussion in Chapter 2 reveals that Canadian police services have been used by governments to conduct surveillance on groups that were deemed to pose a threat to the country and to enforce laws against persons in communities of diversity. The Canadian scholars Reg Whitaker, Gregory Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby have labelled this phenomenon **political policing**.¹⁰ There are numerous examples of this in Canadian history and in contemporary times. Several of these are discussed in Chapter 2 and throughout the text.

political policing

secretive police investigative activities and surveillance of persons and groups deemed to be a threat to the stability and status quo of the state

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The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States accelerated police surveillance on groups and persons identified as posing a terrorist threat. In Canada, increasing concerns with “homegrown terrorists” have led to an expansion of police powers and legislation that gives the police and security agencies even greater authority to conduct surveillance of persons and groups deemed to pose a threat. “Extremist travellers,” persons intent on leaving Canada to join conflicts in other parts of the world and those returning from conflict zones with terrorist training and combat experience, have become a major focus of police services.

As the front line of the criminal justice system, the police have always been drawn into situations involving social disorder and public protests, including demonstrations against global capitalism, the expansion of oil pipelines and counter-demonstrations related to various political causes. This will be revealed in the discussion of the origins and evolution of the police in Canada in Chapter 2 and of police powers in Chapter 8. In such instances, the neutrality of the police may be called into question.

The police are often caught in the middle between opposing groups and may be accused of favouring one group over another. This, in turn, may undermine public confidence in the police as being fair and impartial. One observer, commenting on the role of the police in situations involving right-wing demonstrators and anti-fascist (ANTIFA) groups, stated that when conflict appears imminent between the groups, “The police step in when things devolve, but they’re almost always engaging menacing, mask-wearing ‘ANTIFA’ agent provocateurs trying to violently de-platform conservative demonstrators.”¹¹

Developing a plan to effectively police demonstrations and counterdemonstrations as well as other forms of protest is made more challenging by the use of social media. Even large groups of protestors can be quickly mobilized.¹²

Whatever framework you bring to the understanding of the role of police in society, there is no doubt that they are a powerful force. On the one hand, the police enjoy high levels of public support; on the other, the police (along with the military and correctional officers) have a virtual monopoly on legitimate force combined with an array of weapons and tactics that provide the potential for coercion and repression.

POLICE WORK IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The Law Reform Commission of Canada identified four key values that form the framework for understanding police work in Canadian society.¹³

- *Justice.* The police are to maintain peace and security in the community while ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and that human rights are respected.
- *Equality.* All citizens are entitled to policing services that contribute to their feelings of safety and security.
- *Accountability.* The actions of police services, and police officers, are subject to review.
- *Efficiency.* Policing services must be cost-effective.

These are the ideal values that should underpin policing. In actuality, there are often conflicts between the role of the police in ensuring safety and security and ensuring that the rights of Canadian citizens are protected.

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THE CANADIAN PRESS IMAGES/Graham Hughes

Police monitor rival protests by right-wing and anti-fascist groups, Quebec City, 2017.

The separation of powers between the police and government is considered an important tenet of liberal democracy. The separation of powers assists in ensuring that the police are not used in a partisan political way to harass and punish political opponents and dissidents.

There is also a separation of roles and powers between the courts and the police. It is the police role to bring suspected offenders before the courts and the courts' role to decide on guilt or innocence and, in the case of conviction, decide on punishment. Among all of the institutions and organizations in society, it is the police that can have a direct impact on the rights and freedoms of individual citizens. This is due to the powers that police officers are given under the law.

The governments and the public rely on the police to prevent and respond to crime and to apprehend offenders; yet at the same time, these governments are committed to the principles of democracy and due process. It is not surprising, then, that police officers often experience conflict in carrying out their duties and that the police are often “caught in the middle.” Proponents of the radical perspective of the police would contend that there is no conflict in the police role; rather, the activities of the police are primarily directed toward supporting the state at the expense of citizens' rights.

The police mandate is at its heart contradictory: The police are expected to protect both public order *and* individual rights. There are natural tensions between the power and authority of the police and their legal mandate to maintain order, on the one hand, and the values and processes that exist in a democratic society, on the other. This tension is inevitable and may seem irreconcilable. As a judicial authority has stated, “There is a critical balance to be struck between the interests of community safety and the protection of civil liberties and human rights.”¹⁴

Police services are also required to monitor and control protest demonstrations involving opposing groups who support different sides in conflicts in other regions of the world. Given these circumstances, it is impossible for the police to avoid becoming involved in and affected by politics and other outside influences. A key issue is the extent to which this involvement, or influence, affects the ability of the police to carry out their mandate in a fair and impartial manner. There are numerous instances in which Canadian police have failed to do this.

A chief constable's perspective on how to do democratic policing—that is, respecting the rights of citizens while maintaining order—is presented in Police Perspective 1.1.

POLICE PERSPECTIVE 1.1

Democratic Policing: Maintaining the Balance

Democratic policing is our ability to allow people to express their rights in whatever way possible. In my municipality, we have several issues that are often at the centre of protests, including environmental issues relating to First Nations communities, such as gas lines and oil pipelines and other types of industries coming in. We have people who want to speak up for their democratic rights, and we have to support that. We provide a place for protestors

to demonstrate and allow the cameras to be there to record it. It's a relationship of trust that makes it peaceful. We build relationships with the leaders of the organizations prior to the protests. We were proactive so there weren't any issues. So, it's having that trust and having officers who are good communicators.

Source: Personal communication with author, December 2018.

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THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POLICE

The primary activities of the police have traditionally been viewed as centring on three major areas: crime control (catching criminals), order maintenance (keeping the peace), and service (providing assistance). These components, however, may no longer accurately capture the diversity and complexity of the police role in a highly technological, globalized community.

The role and responsibilities of Canadian police have changed over the decades and are much more complex and multifaceted than in the early days. Police services are often pulled in a variety of directions at any one point in time and are accountable to many publics.

The Unique Role of the Police in the Criminal Justice System

The police are only one component of the criminal justice system. While police officers have much in common with their professional counterparts in that system (e.g., they exercise considerable discretion in making decisions), they are also unique in many ways, including the following:

- Police work is carried out in diverse environments (Chapter 7).
- Police work takes place in a wide variety of situations and circumstances, many of which may involve personal conflict, crises and chaos, biohazards, blood, and sometimes death (Chapter 7).
- Police officers have the authority to detain people and to use force, including lethal force (Chapter 8).
- Police work—especially community police work—involves extensive personal contact with the general public and (increasingly) the development of partnerships with communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and increasingly, international partners (Chapter 9).
- Police work involves much more than law enforcement; it includes order maintenance, service, crime prevention, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and public relations (Chapters 7 and 9).
- Police work presents officers with situations in which they must make split-second decisions or decisions, often involving the use of force, based on a limited amount of information (Chapter 8).

The Police as Warriors versus the Police as Guardians

Discussions of the roles and responsibilities of the police often include the issue of whether the police are “warriors” or “guardians”—that is, whether the primary role of the police is to enforce the law through the exercise of authority (**warrior role of the police**) or one that emphasizes peacekeeping and protection of the community (**guardian role of the police**).¹⁵ Watch the video *Warrior vs. Guardian Mindsets in Policing*, listed in the Media Links section at the end of the chapter. The concern over the militarization of the police (discussed in Chapter 3), for example, reflects a view that the police are trending toward the warrior end of the spectrum. This may have significant impacts on police–community relations and, in particular, police relations with communities of diversity and racialized groups.

Police scholars have described this as an “impossible mandate”: the requirement that police officers be proactive in preventing and responding to crime, while at the same time protecting residents and treating them fairly and with respect.¹⁶ How the role of the police is conceptualized will affect recruitment, training, policies, and operations.

warrior role of the police

a view of the role of the police that emphasizes enforcement and the exercise of authority

guardian role of the police

a view of the role of the police that emphasizes peacekeeping and protecting the community

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mandated responsibilities (of the police)

the tasks assigned to the police by legislation, including the RCMP Act and the various provincial/territorial police acts, and regulations and policies formulated by government

assumed responsibilities (of the police)

the tasks of police that are a consequence of community expectations, downloading, third-party recommendations, and departmental strategic plans and policies

The Mandated Responsibilities of the Police

The **mandated responsibilities** include the tasks assigned to the police by legislation, including the RCMP Act and the various provincial/territorial police acts, and regulations and policies formulated by government. For example, the duties of police officers in Quebec are set out in section 48 of the Quebec Police Act (RSQ, c. P-13), which states, “The mission of police forces and of each police force member is to maintain peace, order and public security, to prevent and repress crime and, according to their respective jurisdiction as set out in sections 50, 69 and 289.6, offences under the law and municipal by-laws, and to apprehend offenders.” These are similar to the mandated responsibilities of police officers in other jurisdictions.

Police services are also responsible for adhering to provincial policing standards and regulations. One example is the Ontario provincial regulation that sets out the protocol that officers must follow when conducting street checks. This is discussed in Chapter 7.

The Assumed Responsibilities of the Police

The **assumed responsibilities** are those that are a consequence of community expectations, the expansion of police activities due to the downloading of responsibilities discussed below, recommendations of task forces and commissions of inquiry, and the policies of individual police agencies as set out in strategic plans and documented in annual reports, among others.

The police are being required to fill gaps in services that are the mandated responsibility of other agencies and organizations. For example, when governments cut the numbers of social workers and mental health workers and funding for shelter beds and for specialized facilities for the mentally ill, there is a direct impact on the demands placed on police resources.¹⁷

Among the assumed responsibilities of the police are the following:

- Developing and sustaining partnerships with the community.
- Taking initiatives to improve the quality of life in communities and neighbourhoods.
- Providing reassurance to community residents and reducing the fear of crime.
- Conducting outreach to newcomer groups, Indigenous peoples, and at-risk and vulnerable groups.
- Engaging in collaborative partnerships and integrated teams with agencies and organizations, including operating specialized patrol units.¹⁸

The police role has become much more multifaceted in recent years, often referred to as *diversification*. Increasingly, police services are being asked to address non-law enforcement issues, and most police services have developed an extensive network of collaborative partnerships with agencies and community organizations to address issues related to crime and disorder.¹⁹

The diversification of the police role has also been impacted by the downloading of responsibilities onto municipal governments. A review of the cuts in federal and provincial funding found, “Local governments are finding themselves picking up the slack on housing, mental health, addiction, social services, wastewater treatment, diking and flood management, drinking water and recreation infrastructure.”²⁰ This transfer of responsibility contributed to a 134 percent increase in policing costs in Canada between 2001 and 2010.²¹

An example is the increasing amount of police time and resources that are expended in responding to persons with mental illness (PwMI). The deinstitutionalization of mental health patients in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a growing number of PwMI

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requiring care and treatment in the community. The concept of deinstitutionalization was primarily accepted on the premise that psychiatric units and community care facilities would be developed in all major communities.²²

However, this often did not materialize, with the result that many PwMI became homeless and destitute and without the necessary supports to manage their issues.

A review of police encounters with PwMI in Toronto, for example, found that there had been a failure of the provincial mental health system to provide adequate community-based treatment resources. The report also concluded that police alone could not effectively address the needs of PwMI and that a robust response was required by the provincial mental health system and other agencies.²³ The implications of this for PwMI and for the police are discussed throughout the text.

It is estimated that Canadian police services have about one million encounters a year with persons who are mentally ill or are suffering from substance abuse, or both.²⁴ In some police services, up to 40 percent of the calls involve PwMI. Some PwMI have hundreds of contacts with the police annually.²⁵

The challenges have become even greater in cases of persons who are severely addicted and mentally ill (SAMI) and have complex treatment needs. This not only has a significant impact on police resources but also does not provide a long-term solution to the needs of this group. The challenges for patrol officers and the strategies being used by police services in responding to PwMI are discussed in Chapters 7 and 10 respectively.

Police observers have argued that many of the difficulties experienced by the police in fulfilling their mandate are the result of having assumed responsibility for a broad social domain in society. This has led to unrealistic expectations on the part of the general public as to what the police can realistically accomplish in terms of crime prevention and response. And it has challenged police services to document the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations.²⁶ See Class/Group Discussion 1.1 at the end of this chapter.

The multifaceted role of the police is reflected in the comments of one police leader, presented in Police Perspective 1.2.

POLICE PERSPECTIVE 1.2

A Police Leader Speaks to the Challenges of Policing Multi-Needs Populations

The police have extensive contact with multi-needs populations, which include persons who are challenged with mental health issues, homelessness, addiction, poverty, and FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder). These persons come to the attention of the police since we are the front-line workers for any problem. The fire and rescue service and emergency medical service have well-defined roles. The police deal with everything else. Today, we have a lot better communication and coordination with other agencies, including mental health services and

health agencies. In our police service, we have a joint program designed to help people who have a lot of contact with the police. We have a constable who focuses on persons who are homeless. She liaises with a variety of agencies, including the housing authority and social services. It's also important to remember that these special needs populations are also often at risk of becoming the victims of crime.

Source: Personal communication with author, August 2014.

The Changing Boundaries of Policing

Historically, there have been very clear boundaries between the various components of the criminal justice system. This often has resulted in agencies operating in *silos*, focused only on their specific mandate and not considering the larger context of the problem of crime and disorder, specific patterns of criminal behaviour, or the needs of offenders, which are often multifaceted (i.e., addicted, mentally ill).

Recent years have witnessed the development of integrated, multi-agency teams. These teams provide an opportunity to optimize information sharing and to create holistic solutions for the target audience. They may be focused on a specific neighbourhood or on a group of offenders and bring together police officers, social workers, mental health workers, and other community resources. This is a more holistic approach to problem-solving and has the potential to effectively address the underlying issues that contribute to crime and disorder, rather than merely responding to the symptoms of these issues. Examples of the collaboration between the police and other agencies and organizations are presented throughout the text.

Although there are benefits to agencies moving outside of their silos, concerns have been expressed that, in some areas, these teams blur the mandates of the individual agencies in the justice system. Collaboration between agencies compromises the individual mandates of the agencies. For example, collaborative initiatives between parole officers and police services may function to create an inordinate focus on surveillance and control to the detriment of the helping and assistance role of parole officers.²⁷

These changing boundaries are also illustrated by the rise of tiered policing, wherein private security and para-police are assuming functions traditionally performed by sworn police officers. This has resulted in relationships between the public and private police, which one police scholar has described as “messy and complex.”²⁸

The Moral and Ethical Dimensions of Policing

Police officers must not only exercise lawful authority, but also act morally in their exercise of discretion and making decisions.²⁹ In many situations, officers must decide between taking formal action and resolving the situation informally without invoking the law. Although the officer may have the legal authority to make an arrest in the case of protestors who occupy a park without a permit, the consequences of enforcing the law have to be weighed against the outcomes of those efforts (e.g., a confrontation between the protestors and the police or the escalation of a situation that can be peacefully resolved). This is the so-called “grey area” of policing.

The materials in the following chapters will reveal that police officers are involved in making many decisions that exist in this grey area.

The Use of Authority

A key element of the police role in society is their use of authority. This authority includes depriving citizens of their freedom, as well as the application of physical force—in extreme circumstances, lethal force. Police observers have pointed out, however, that police officers are generally quite subtle in their exercise of authority. They often project it merely by being a uniformed presence in public settings and by soliciting information from citizens. Canadian police officers derive their authority from the Criminal Code and various provincial statutes.

The legal authority of police officers, however, does not automatically translate into *moral* authority. The latter requires officers to establish their legitimacy in the community.³⁰ The importance of police legitimacy is discussed throughout the text.

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There are many instances in which a police officer may have the lawful authority for their actions, but doing so may undermine public confidence and trust in the police. This issue surrounds encounters between police officers and persons in communities of diversity, and is discussed throughout the text.

The Authority to Use Force

Another defining attribute of the police role is the authority to use force. With a few notable exceptions (e.g., correctional officers), no other personnel in the criminal justice system are invested with this authority. This authority is integral to all facets of the police role, from selection and training to operational patrol and high-risk policing situations. And while most incidents are resolved without the use of force, the potential for its use is always present. In recent years, there have been several high-profile cases involving police officers who used force in encounter situations. The police use of force and its consequences for police services, officers, suspects, and the community are considered in Chapter 8.

The Environments of Policing

There are two primary environments that affect the activities of the police. The first is the internal environment of the police service itself. The internal context includes the organizational features of the police service, including its size and structure and the activities and attitudes of its leaders, middle managers, civilian members, patrol officers, and investigative officers. It also includes the strategic planning and research capacities of the police service—that is, the organization's ability to develop strategic plans, evaluate its own performance, and implement reforms when required. The leadership of the police service is also important, as it contributes to the organizational climate in which officers work. The discussion in Chapter 6 will reveal that the dynamics inside the police service may have a significant impact on the morale, performance, and mental health of police officers.

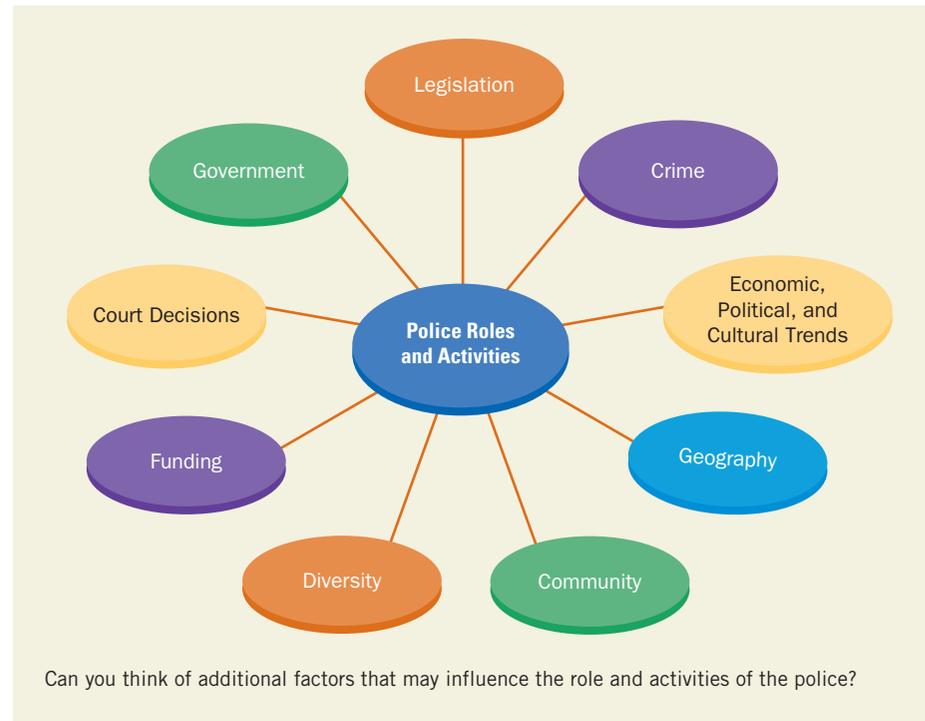
The second environment of a police service is the external environment, or **task environment**, in which officers carry out their responsibilities. There is a variety of policing environments across Canada, ranging from urban areas to remote communities in the Canadian north. The attributes of the community in which a police service operates have a strong impact on what police do and what is expected of them, as well as on the administrative, operational, and investigative activities of the service as a whole.

Communities vary on a number of important dimensions, including their size; their socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, and religious composition; the types and patterns of crime and disorder; the attitudes toward and expectations of the police; the demands citizens make on the police; and the levels of citizen interest in becoming involved in police–community partnerships. For example, residents in neighbourhoods with higher levels of crime and social disorder generally place heavier demands on the police than those in quieter neighbourhoods. Police services have to tailor their crime prevention and response strategies to the needs of specific neighbourhoods.

This external environment also includes the relations between the police service and communities; the impact of legislation, government policies, and court decisions; the fiscal decisions of governments and municipal councils; the media; and the specific incidents to which officers respond and what happens during those encounters, among others.

There are a number of factors that influence the role and activities of the police and the ability of the police to effectively respond to community expectations and to crime and disorder in any one jurisdiction. A number of these factors are depicted in Figure 1.1. Many of these same factors will influence the decision making of patrol officers, discussed in Chapter 7.

task environment
the organizational context and the community and areas in which police officers carry out their activities

FIGURE 1.1. Influences on the Role and Activities of the Police

The impact of the task environment on the decision making of police officers is discussed in Chapter 7.

Residents often have unrealistic and conflicting expectations of the police. Community residents often assign equal importance to crime prevention, crime control, order maintenance, and service functions and rarely provide any input into how police resources are to be allocated. Similarly, many individuals who phone the police expect an immediate response by a patrol car, no matter how minor the incident. Put simply, community residents often want the police to be all things to all people, which is an impossible goal.

THE DIMENSIONS OF POLICING

Policing in a Diverse Society

A key feature of Canada is diversity. This includes visible minorities, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation, among others. Canada is becoming more diverse. Nearly one-quarter of the Canadian population self-identifies as belonging to a visible minority, with the three largest groups being South Asian, Chinese, and Black.³¹ By 2036, it is estimated that between 31 percent and 36 percent of the Canadian population will be visible minorities.³²

The projections are also that the newcomer populations will continue to be concentrated in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal; more than one-half of this group will come from Asia; and more than 25 percent of the population will not have English or French as their first language.³³

This diversity raises a number of important issues. The changing demographics will require police services to become even more proactive in recruiting persons from communities of diversity and that officers have the requisite skills (often referred to as

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cultural competencies) to engage with persons in communities of diversity. Both of these issues are discussed in Chapter 5.

Diversity also highlights human rights issues. Section 15(1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality rights: “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.” Section 3(e) of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (RSC 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.)) states that it is the policy of the Government of Canada to “ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity.”

The Canadian Human Rights Act (RSC 1985, c. H-6) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of “race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability or conviction for which a pardon has been granted ...” (s. 2). Many provinces, including Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba, have human rights codes that mirror the federal human rights code, contain sections proclaiming the right of residents to be free from discrimination, and provide for human rights tribunals.

It is important to understanding the lived experiences of persons in communities of diversity. A project focusing on youth in the Jane-Finch community in Toronto gathered the perceptions of young persons ($N = 50$). One youth commented on the negative stereotypes that are often held of young Black men:

People automatically see you as a black young person and they feel that you being black, you would never amount to nothing. Especially coming from the Jane-Finch community, automatically number one what they think is that you being black, you're never going to be nothing good. But that's not always true.³⁴

The controversy over racial profiling and biased policing by the police, discussed in Chapter 7, is illustrative of the human rights issues that surround policing a diverse community.

Geography

Canada is a huge but sparsely populated country. A unique feature of Canadian police work is that Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Sûreté du Québec (SQ), and RCMP officers are posted to northern and remote communities. RCMP officers, often working in detachments as small as three members, are responsible for policing Indigenous and Inuit communities in Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The challenges of policing in remote communities, many of which are afflicted by high rates of crime and social disorder, have remained largely unexplored by Canadian police scholars. The discussion in Chapter 7 will reveal that the officers in these communities must be highly adaptable and, in the absence of the supportive infrastructure found in larger police services, self-sufficient.

The Police Organization

Police services engage in a wide variety of activities, including establishing policies and procedures that officers must follow, setting priorities, determining how resources will be allocated, and setting standards for assessing officers' performance and career advancement, among others.

Police services also differ regarding the expectations of the communities they police, the number of officers in the department, and the perspectives of senior management.

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However, all police services include a senior executive, middle management officers, patrol officers, investigative divisions (including specialty units), and various support services. General-duty policing is discussed in Chapter 7, and the work of specialty units and police investigators in Chapter 11.

Police officers in Canada work in departments and detachments that vary greatly in terms of size, structure, and activities. For example, although an RCMP officer may be posted to a three-officer detachment in a remote area, the officer is still accountable to an organizational hierarchy that stretches many kilometres from the detachment to the subdivision, to the division headquarters, and to RCMP headquarters in Ottawa. RCMP policies and procedures are formulated in Ottawa and then transmitted regularly to the detachments through the division headquarters.

The discussion throughout this text will also highlight the importance of the police organization in understanding police ethics and professionalism (Chapter 4), the occupational experience of police officers (Chapter 6), and police use of force (Chapter 8), among others.

Legislation

New laws and amendments to existing legislation can have a sharp impact on police powers, on the demands placed on police services, and on how police services set (and try to achieve) their operational priorities. Literally overnight, behaviour that was once criminal can become legal, and behaviour that was once legal can become criminalized. The Anti-terrorism Act, for example, gives police expanded powers to deal with individuals identified as posing a threat to safety and security; it has also established a new crime—“terrorist activity.” Increasing police resources are being directed toward identifying and monitoring persons who have been deemed at risk of engaging in terrorist activities.

Another piece of legislation that has impacted police resources is the Access to Information Act. This allows the public to request information from the police on a variety of matters, and there are extensive requirements for the police to obtain search warrants and DNA warrants. The expectation is that police services have the capacity to fulfill these requirements.

The impact on the police of the legalization of cannabis in October 2018 is uncertain, but is likely to increase pressure on police resources. Shortly after cannabis was legalized on October 17, the Toronto Police Service issued a public notice telling the public not to call the police to report on neighbours who were growing marijuana. Police services are concerned about increasing demands on forensic labs due to new impaired driving laws.³⁵ Bill C-46, in effect since Parliament passed it in June 2018, introduced three new drug-related offences for drivers who have consumed drugs within two hours of driving. It is estimated that requests for blood work will increase 12-fold between 2018 and 2021–22. This, in turn, may lead to more court delays.

Court Decisions

Court decisions may impact not only the powers of the police but also policing costs. The decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada have also been identified as a major reason that policing costs have increased.³⁶ One case that has had a significant impact on police resources is *R. v. Stinchcombe* ([1991] 3 SCR 326), which established the right to full disclosure of Crown evidence. Previously, police were only required to submit information sufficient for the Crown to make a case. Now the police are required to provide to Crown counsel and for dissemination to the defence lawyers, the following information:

all audio and video tapes; notebook entries from all officers; reports; all source debriefings; all tips (and outcomes of tips); all connected cases; all affiant

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material; all wiretap information; all operational plans; all surveillance notes; medical records; all analyses of telephone records or other documents; undercover operation information; information relating investigative techniques considered, whether they were actually used or not; and, investigative team minutes of meetings or debriefings.³⁷

These requirements may be particularly onerous in cases that have involved a lengthy and complex investigation. Significant police resources may be required to assemble this information.³⁸ Subsequent decisions of the SCC expanded the right to full disclosure. This included the decisions in *R. v. McNeil* (2009 SCC 3), where the court held that disclosure extended to providing information on the arresting officer, and *R. v. O'Connor* ([1995] 4 SCR 411), relating to the disclosure of medical records of the complainant under certain circumstances.

One study of police workload found that over a 30-year period (1975–2005), the time required of the RCMP to complete all of the procedural elements had increased dramatically; for example, break and enter went from up to one hour to five to ten hours, domestic assault from up to one hour to ten to twelve hours, and driving under the influence from one hour to five hours.³⁹

There has also been an expansion of legal regulations and levels of accountability that has affected all facets of policing, from the conduct of officers to case investigation. The procedural requirements for investigating and processing offences have resulted in a dramatic increase in the time and resources required to complete procedural requirements.

Crime

The nature and extent of crime in a community will have a significant impact on the demands made of the police service and its officers. In 2017, Canada experienced the highest rates of homicide in a decade, due in large part to the increased use of firearms and gang violence.⁴⁰ Rural homicide rates reached a near-decade high in 2017.⁴¹

There is a rural/urban split in terms of crime rates, which are higher in rural and northern communities than in urban centres.⁴² These are communities where there may be the fewest resources and where officers are challenged to meet the demands made on them (see Chapter 7).

In 2017, 17 percent of Canada's population was served by rural police services.⁴³ However, 25 percent of violent crime, 18 percent of property crime, and 24 percent of other Criminal Code offences were reported by rural police. The Canadian territories consistently report the highest rates of crime and violence, rates which exceed those of high-crime cities in the United States.⁴⁴

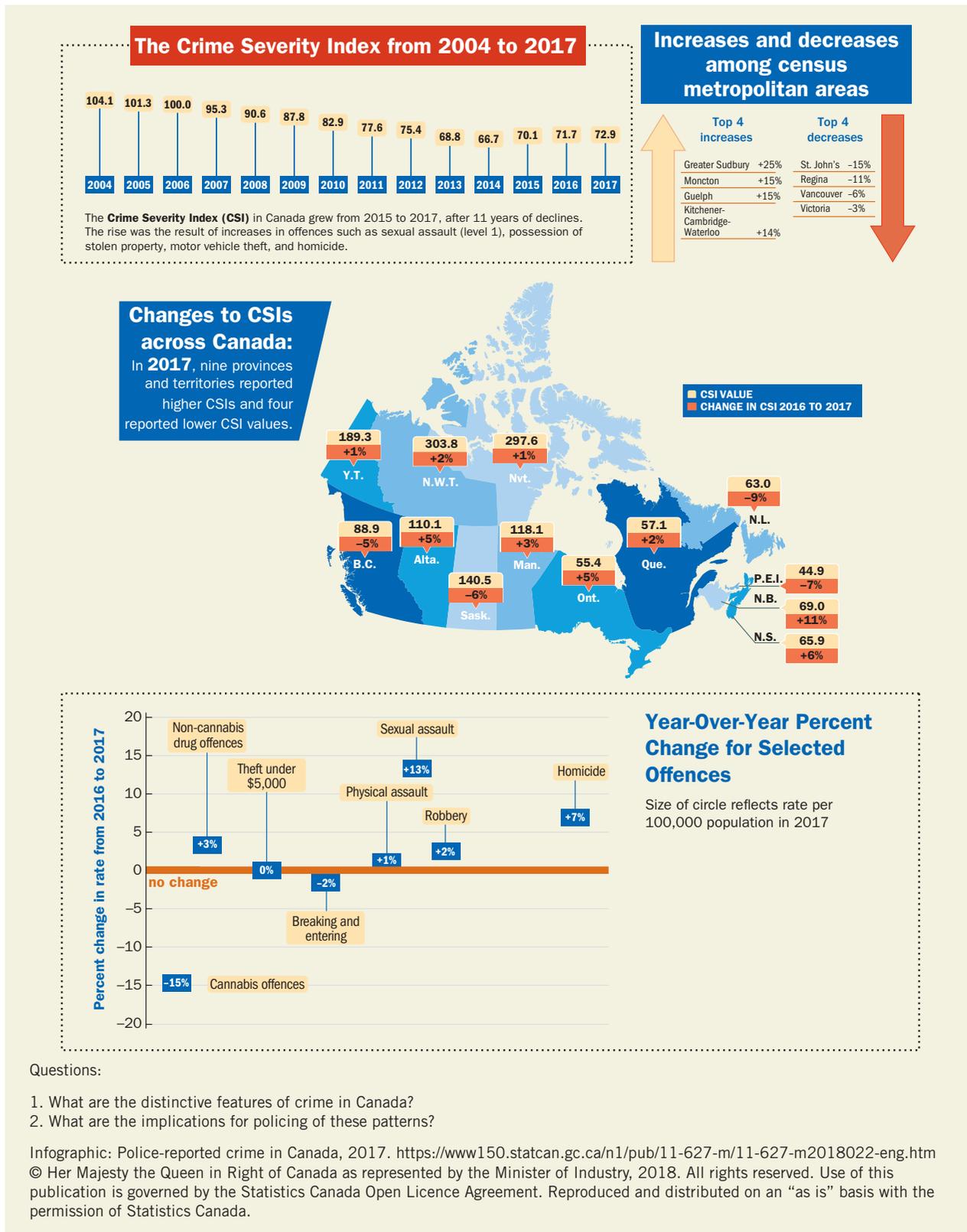
The Crime Severity Index (CSI) scores for Yukon (189.3), the N.W.T. (303.8), and Nunavut (297.6) are significantly higher than for other jurisdictions; for example, Nova Scotia's CSI score is 65.9, Ontario's is 55.4, and British Columbia is at 88.9.⁴⁵ Crime in the N.W.T. and Nunavut is about four times the national average, and in Yukon, it's about twice the national average.⁴⁶ The incarceration rates in Nunavut and the N.W.T. are among the highest in the G20.⁴⁷ These high rates of crime and violence often exist in communities where there are the fewest resources.⁴⁸ This poses unique challenges for police officers posted to rural and northern communities. These challenges are discussed in Chapter 7.

Besides the more traditional types of crime (i.e., robberies, assaults, property crimes), police services are now being confronted with increasingly sophisticated criminal activities that are often international in scope. This includes cybercrime, money laundering, and human trafficking.

Data on police-reported crime in Canada in 2017 is presented in Figure 1.2.

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FIGURE 1.2. Police-Reported Crime in Canada, by Crime Severity Index



Police-reported hate crimes were at an all-time high in 2017, due in large measure to increases in incident involving Muslim, Black, and Jewish persons. This is illustrated by statistics in Ontario: Muslims (+207 percent), Black people (+84 percent), and Jewish people (+41 percent).⁴⁹

The patterns of police-reported hate crimes and cybercrime are presented in Figure 1.3 and in Chapter 11.

Increasing attention is being given to the victimization of persons in other communities of diversity, including the LGBTQ2 community.⁵⁰ Persons in this community are more at risk of being a victim of a violent crime than their heterosexual counterparts.⁵¹

Caution should be exercised in any discussion of crime rates. There are a number of factors that may influence police-reported crime statistics, including legislative changes, the policies and procedures of individual police services, and public reporting rates, as well as the lack of awareness that a crime has occurred, among other factors. This creates a **dark figure of crime**—that is, the amount of crime that for whatever reasons is not reported to the police. On the other hand, increased awareness that certain behaviours are criminal, such as incidents involving hate crimes, may result in statistical increases in crime rates.

Sexual assaults have traditionally been underreported by women and, even when reported to police, may be dismissed as “unfounded.” This is discussed in Chapter 11. Even homicides may be underreported, especially in cases involving organized crime or the deaths of individuals who live and/or work on the street. (Conversely, in cases of theft or damage when the victim has insurance, report rates are higher.) This dark figure is a result of many factors, including the unwillingness of crime victims to report to the police, the fact that some crimes have no direct victim (e.g., pollution), and the fact that many of the conflicts to which police officers respond are resolved informally without any charges being laid. Persons or organizations may also not realize they have been victimized. Cybercrime and hacking attacks may never be discovered, or only discovered years after the crime has been committed.

dark figure of crime

the difference between how much crime occurs and how much crime is reported to or discovered by the police

KEY THEMES IN THE STUDY OF POLICE WORK

There are several themes in this text.

Police Ethics and Accountability

The powers of the police, including the authority to use lethal force, require that police officers adhere to a high ethical standard and are accountable for their actions. There is an increasing demand that police services be transparent in their activities and accountable for the decisions they make and the resources they expend, and that there be in place structures of oversight. Transparency and accountability are required at the community and government level, and best practice police services have in place capacities to provide ongoing communication and information-sharing with their key stakeholders. There may also be situations in which officers act in accordance with their legal authorities, but in which their actions raise ethical issues. This often comes into play in the exercise of discretion, discussed in Chapter 7. Ethics and accountability in policing are discussed in Chapter 4.

Police Legitimacy

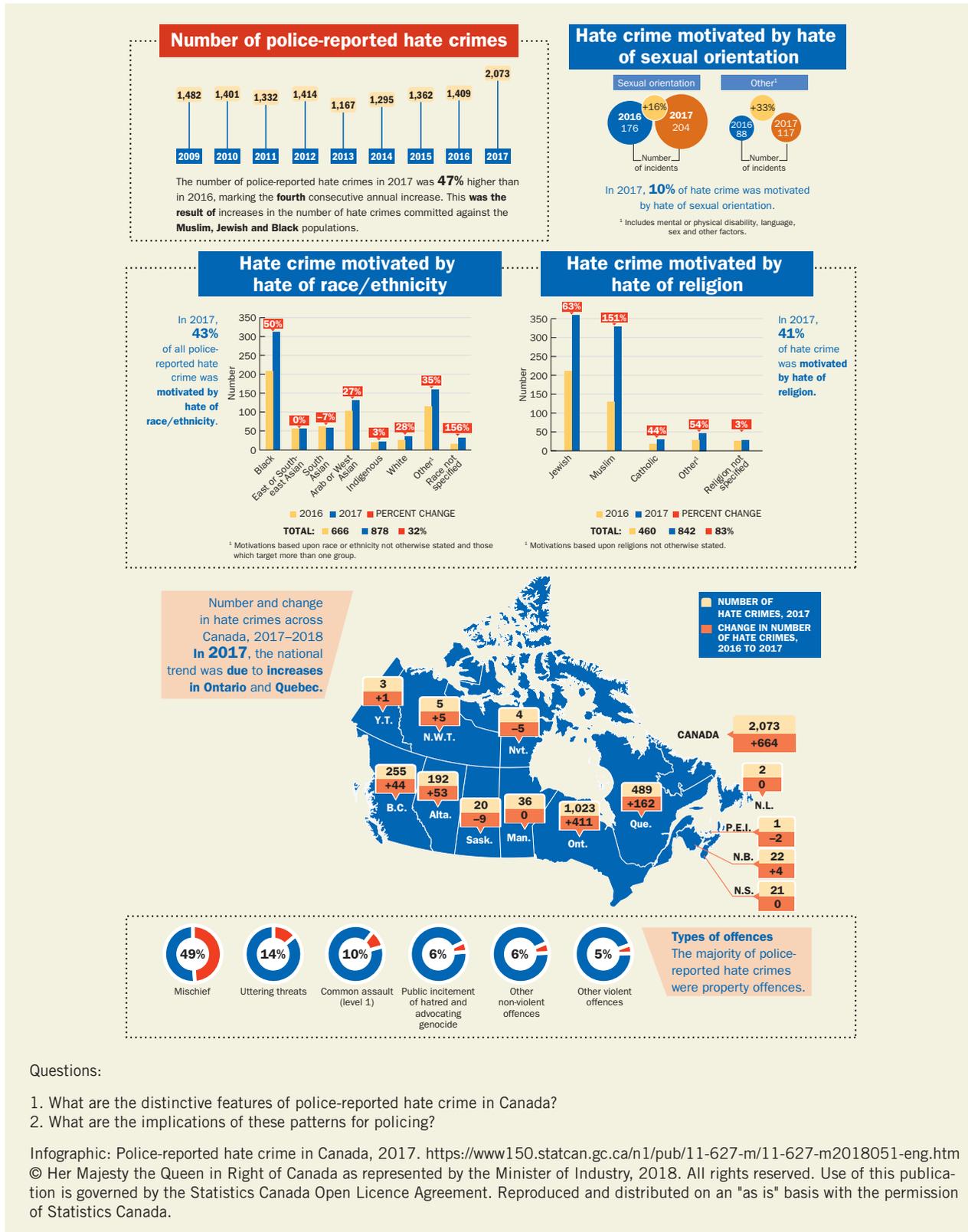
Another theme in this text is **police legitimacy**. If police services are to be effective in carrying out their various roles and responsibilities, they must have the trust and confidence of citizens. To establish and maintain legitimacy, the communities’ notions of

police legitimacy

the collective actions taken by the police to enhance the levels of trust and confidence that citizens have in the police

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FIGURE 1.3. Police-Reported Hate Crime in Canada, 2017



Questions:

1. What are the distinctive features of police-reported hate crime in Canada?
2. What are the implications of these patterns for policing?

Infographic: Police-reported hate crime in Canada, 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2018051-eng.htm>
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justice and fairness must be “enshrined in institutions and in the actions of authorities.”⁵² Research studies have found that police presence and visibility, the effectiveness of the police in preventing and responding to crime, and the extent to which the police address problems that have been identified by the community are positively associated with police legitimacy.⁵³

Case investigations, discussed in Chapter 11, may also be more challenging in communities where residents do not trust, or have confidence in, the police.

Police legitimacy is fragile and may be undermined by any number of factors, including high-profile incidents involving the police use of force, allegations that officers are involved in racial profiling and biased policing, and police misconduct. All of these issues are addressed in the following chapters.

Police Leadership

The effectiveness and efficiency of a police service may be determined in large measure by the quality of its leadership.

Studies of Canadian policing have tended to focus on uniformed patrol officers and, to a lesser extent, on investigative units. Yet it is police leaders who have a pronounced impact on the organizational culture of the police service as well as its policies and operations. This, in turn, may affect the health and wellness of officers (discussed in Chapter 6), the ability of patrol officers to be effective in their work, the nature and extent of community engagement (discussed in Chapter 9), and the effectiveness of police strategies (discussed in Chapter 10).

The Police and Communities

Police–community relationships are at the core of policing. The extent to which police services are successful in establishing partnerships with communities based on trust will have a significant impact on the effectiveness and efficacy of police service delivery.

Canada is a diverse, multicultural society that includes Indigenous peoples, Black persons and other racialized groups, the LGBTQ2 community, and religious and cultural minorities. Police relationships and encounters with persons in communities of diversity are the focus of ongoing attention and controversy. It is important that police officers have the requisite skill sets to engage with persons in communities of diversity, including utilizing the principles of procedural justice, which require specific listening and communication skills.

There are, for example, ongoing tensions between the police and communities of diversity over the issue as to whether police officers engage in biased policing and racial profiling. This is discussed in Chapter 7. Profiling can occur not only in policing, but at other stages of the criminal justice system as well. Black accused persons, for example, may be more likely to be denied bail due to an assumed higher level of risk and are disproportionately placed in segregation in correctional institutions.⁵⁴ Further, persons who are racialized often face challenges in accessing justice.⁵⁵

Racial profiling can also occur in the larger community. A survey of a non-random sample of Ontarians ($N = 1,503$) found that four in ten Black persons reported having been racially profiled and that being racially profiled by a private business or retail service (46.6 percent) was mentioned more frequently than being profiled by the police (37.9 percent).⁵⁶

The same survey found that the majority of Black persons (93 percent) in the sample felt they were profiled due to their “race or colour,” while the majority of Muslim respondents (79 percent) identified their religion as the reason they were profiled.⁵⁷ An online survey ($N = 1,000$) in Vancouver found that 82 percent of visible minorities indicated they had been subjected to prejudice or other forms of discrimination.⁵⁸

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The Police and Vulnerable and At-Risk Persons

A high number of the persons with whom police officers come into contact are vulnerable and/or at risk. This includes persons with mental illness, persons with addiction issues, persons living in poverty, and persons who are vulnerable to being victimized. There are, for example, high rates of victimization, particularly among Indigenous women.⁵⁹ The self-reported rate of sexual assault of Indigenous women is more than three times that of non-Indigenous women, as is the self-reported rate of spousal violence.⁶⁰

Higher numbers of Indigenous youth are in foster care who have higher rates of victimization than non-Indigenous youth.⁶¹ Indigenous persons are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, including in correctional institutions at a rate that is nine times their representation in the general population for adults and five times their representation for youth.⁶²

The Mental Health of Police Officers

Historically, little attention has been given to the health and wellness of police officers. This has changed in recent years, with increasing concerns being voiced about the high rates of depression, anxiety, cynicism, and post-traumatic stress disorder among officers, as well as other first responders. These issues, which affect the professional and personal lives of officers, are discussed in Chapter 6.

The Role of Technology

Technology is playing an increasing role in all facets of society. There has been an exponential growth in the use of sophisticated technologies by police services, including the use of facial recognition technologies, body-worn cameras, and drones. This has implications for policing and how police services use current technologies and those that will be available in the future. But its use is not without controversy.

On the one hand, there is the potential that certain technologies will assist the police in preventing, responding to, and solving crimes. This includes crime analytics, predictive policing, and the collection and analysis of crime scene evidence. However, the use of technology may also raise serious concerns about the rights and privacy of citizens. This is a major theme in the text and is examined in depth in Chapter 11.

SUMMARY

The discussion in this chapter has focused on some of the roles of the police in Canadian society. A definition of policing was provided. It was noted that the police carry out their activities within a legislative framework that defines their roles, powers, and responsibilities. Two different perspectives on the role of the police—the social contract perspective and the radical perspective—were examined. There are challenges of doing police work in a democratic society that centre on protecting the community while ensuring the rights of citizens.

A number of influences on the role and activities of the police were discussed. Among them are the community, diversity, the nature and levels of crime, legislation, and court decisions. Key themes in the study of police work were identified, including

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ethics and accountability, legitimacy, leadership, police–community relations, dealings with vulnerable and at-risk persons, the mental health of police officers, and the role of technology.

KEY POINTS REVIEW

1. The police occupy a unique, and important, place in the criminal justice system and in Canadian society.
2. There is often a disconnect between the image and reality of policing.
3. Policing can be defined as the “activities of any individual or organization acting legally on behalf of public or private organizations or persons to maintain security or social order.”
4. Canadian police operate within a legislative framework that includes the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, the Criminal Code, various police acts, and other legislation.
5. There are two major perspectives on the role of the police, one of which views the police as a politically neutral force and the other that views the police as an instrument of government and powerful interests.
6. The warrior versus guardian role of the police highlights the tension between protecting the community and ensuring citizens’ rights.
7. The police have both mandated and assumed responsibilities.
8. There has been an expansion of the police role in recent years that has included increased collaboration with agencies and communities.
9. The use of authority and the authority to use force are two defining components of the police role.
10. There are a variety of influences on the role and activities of the police.
11. In studying policing, it is important to consider the challenges of policing a diverse society and the role and impact of geography, the police organization, legislation, court decisions, and crime patterns.
12. Key themes in the study of police work are police ethics and accountability, police legitimacy, police leadership, the police and communities of diversity, the police and vulnerable and at-risk persons, the mental health of police officers, and the role of technology.

KEY TERM QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of **policing**?
2. Why are the **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**, the **Constitution Act**, and the **Criminal Code** important in any discussion of Canadian police work?
3. What is the **RCMP Act**?
4. Compare and contrast the **social contract perspective** on the role of the police with the **radical perspective** on the role of the police.
5. What is meant by the term **political policing** and how is this related to the study of police work?
6. Compare and contrast the **warrior** and **guardian** roles of the police.
7. What is meant by the **mandated** and **assumed** responsibilities of the police?
8. Discuss the concept of the **task environment** of the police and note its components.
9. What is the **dark figure of crime** and what factors contribute to it?

CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE

1.1. Lived Experience and Perceptions of the Police

Consider your experiences and impressions of the police. More specifically, consider the following:

1. What has been your lived experience with the police?
2. What perspective of the police—social contract or radical—do you tend to subscribe to? What are the primary reasons for your perspective?
3. In your view, what role does the media play in projecting images of the police?

CLASS/GROUP DISCUSSION EXERCISES

1.1. The Priorities of the Police

It's often said that the police "cannot be all things to all people." The limited resource capacities of the police require that they prioritize their activities.

A question is, "How are police priorities to be determined?" Consider the following for class/group discussion. Rank the following activities of the police on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not important at all and 10 being extremely important. You may assign the same numerical value to multiple activities.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce property crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Solve more violent crimes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce violence against seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> Solve more property crimes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce violence against sex trade workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Address the needs of at-risk youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce domestic violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop collaborative partnerships with other agencies and with community groups and organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce violence against children | <input type="checkbox"/> Respond faster to emergencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce violence caused by gangs | <input type="checkbox"/> Respond faster to calls for service that are not emergencies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce violence caused by guns | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend more time on each call for service drivers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve traffic safety by targeting speeders | <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that victims of crime have adequate assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve traffic safety by targeting impaired drivers | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate criminal incidents in a timely manner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve traffic safety by increasing police presence on the street | <input type="checkbox"/> More visible vehicle patrols |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce street disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> More visible foot patrols |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arrest more violent criminals | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arrest more drug dealers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generate more criminal charges | |

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Your Thoughts?

1. What is your rationale for the rankings you have assigned to each of the activities?
2. What do your rankings indicate about how you view the role of the police in Canadian society?
3. In your view, who should decide what the priorities of a police service should be? The police? Politicians? Community residents? All of the above working together?
4. What would be the best way to determine the priorities of the community?

1.2. Serving and Protecting the 1%

Following is a portion of an article that appeared in the publication *International Socialist* titled, “The Police: Serving and Protecting the 1%”:

Capitalism as a system uses the tools of racism, homophobia, sexism to divide and conquer. . . . If you look at prison statistics in the US and Canada, it’s overwhelmingly poor, Black, Hispanic and First Nations people who are incarcerated. . . . The state does not preside neutrally over society, but is fundamental to propping up the class divisions and the rule of the wealthy few over the rest of us.

Your Thoughts?

1. How would you respond to the comments made in this article?

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