

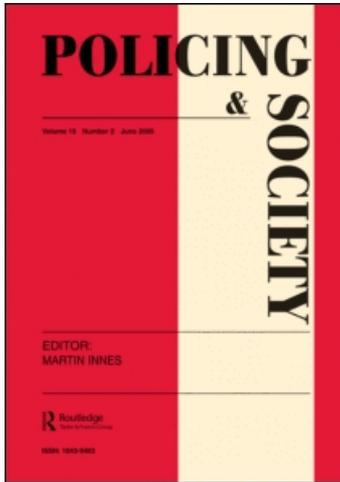
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Policing multicultural states: lessons from the Canadian model

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Policing is a controversial issue in diverse societies where cultures, religions and competing national identities challenge the existing order, and where the police have yet to develop the capabilities to engage with diversity and overcome its own biases and prejudices. Literature and experience point to two central problems of policy with regard to minority relations that can be described as ‘under-policing’ and ‘over-policing’. Thus, minorities can suffer from police neglect of their neighbourhoods, from an aggressive police approach or, at times, from both. As a result, the police can have a legitimacy problem *vis-à-vis* minority groups that may undermine its efficacy. This research, based on interviews conducted with Canadian police officers and documents collected, identifies three interrelated issues in police adaptation to a multicultural setting: recruitment and training, practices and community involvement.

Keywords: multiculturalism; Canada; under-policing; over-policing; recruitment; training

Policing is a controversial issue in diverse societies where cultures, religions and competing national identities challenge the existing order, and where the police have yet to develop the capabilities to engage with diversity and overcome its own biases and prejudices. The discussion of policing in multicultural society is embedded in a wider context of political responses to diversity. However, the issue of policing is salient because of the nature of police work and the type of engagement it entails. Minority groups may be alienated from the police they perceive as enforcing unjust and discriminating policies or because of language and cultural barriers. These perceptions can, on the one hand, undermine police work and, on the other hand, prevent minority groups from receiving the police services they need. These difficulties are especially acute where police and minorities have a history of violence that underscores high levels of mutual mistrust. The tense relation observed in different countries between police and minorities is a public policy dilemma where police debates its effectiveness against its legitimacy and its organisational structure and culture against the changes of a multicultural society that press for reform.

The purpose of this work is to explore the difficulties of policing in multicultural states, study the challenges of police reform and outline a model of multicultural policing based on the Canadian experience. While many democratic states debate their multicultural character and implement multicultural policies at different levels, Canada is unique in formally adopting a multicultural identity. This multicultural identity was translated into different policies and provides Canada with a comprehensive policy experience in various issues, including policing. Consequently, police reforms in Canada engage not only with neo-liberal cuts of spending and new modes of governance (Lithopoulos and Rigakos

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2005) or with 'rationalisation' of police services (Murphy 2004) but also reforms that aim to improve the police's credibility and legitimacy among ethnic minorities.

Police credibility and legitimacy among minorities is yet to be fully achieved in Canada as visible minorities feel they are treated unfairly by the police. Relations between police and minorities; certain visible minorities are greatly overrepresented in the criminal court system (especially in Ontario) and that black people believe that the police treats members of their racial group worse than they do white people so that they are more likely to be unfairly stopped and questioned by the police (Wortley 2003). The widespread public belief that the police engage in racial profiling was perceived a significant threat to the ability of the police to maintain public order and ensure public safety, even if the actual proof of racial profiling remained inconclusive (Melchers 2003). The dissatisfaction of minority groups and at times their distrust of the police, on the one hand, and the overarching commitment to multiculturalism, on the other hand, underscore initiatives for reform in police services in Canada. The Canadian experience is not one of complete success but rather an ongoing debate over various reforms this research will draw upon.

This research is the outcome of documents collected and interviews conducted with police officers in Ontario; it is designed to understand the problems of multicultural policing and the strategies employed to meet these challenges. While Ontario is one of Canada's 13 provinces and variations are likely between them its engagement with policing *vis-à-vis* the commitment to multiculturalism is a significant part of the Canadian experience. Moreover, it is the largest police force in terms of spending and number of police officers. Consequently, the study of this experience provides a framework for understanding the problems and solutions that the policing of multicultural states requires. Interviewees for this research were approached formally through several police organisations in Ontario and were representatives of the Toronto Police, Ottawa Police, Kingston Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. During the in-depth interviews they were requested to identify the main challenges of multicultural policing, describe initiatives and provide their personal experience and views of police reforms taken. Documents and policy papers were collected in the different agencies visited. Finally, interviews were conducted also with two civil rights organisations, the *Canadian Race Relations Foundation* and the *Urban Alliance on Race Relations* to gain some understanding of minority perceptions of police and police reforms.

The next, theoretical, section will delineate the relations between multiculturalism, public policy and police reform and will be followed by a more focused debate on the contemporary challenges the multicultural reality presents for police forces and the often tense relations between police and minorities. The Canadian multicultural experience will be described in the next section and the involvement of the debate over policing and police reforms. Finally, the three specific areas identified as central for police reforms and the dilemmas they entail will be described and analysed: (a) recruitment and retention; (b) practices of engagement with minority groups and their specific needs; and (c) the abilities of communities to influence policing and related policy-making.

Multiculturalism, public policy and police reform

Cultural diversity and ethno-national politics are common to most contemporary states who, contrary to their image of homogeneity, must contend with a multicultural and, at times, multinational reality (Connor 1994, Tully 2002). Different perceptions of government, police, the law, appropriate social order, justice, child rearing and different religious

and cultural practices common to multicultural societies present major challenges for state institutions in general and for policing in particular (Stenning 2003). Conflicts between minorities and the state can erupt for various reasons – economic, cultural or political – and it is the police who find themselves in the front line. The escalation of violence in some cases indicates that the state and the police are ill prepared for the task (Stenning 2003). In other cases, it is the overreaction of the police, underscored by its prejudices, that results in tragic consequences and further erodes the relations between the police and minorities. For example, the Israeli police's shooting of 13 Palestinian citizens during demonstrations in October 2000 further eroded the trust of the Palestinian minority in the police and the state. Or, the beating of Rodney King, an African-American, by the Los Angeles police became a symbol of police brutality against minorities.

Policing has become a major source of concern for democratic countries with a diverse population, especially when relations between minorities and the state become tense and when 'security concerns', real or imagined, erode tolerance towards minorities. These tensions can lead to mutually reinforcing negative perceptions between the police and minorities and outbursts of violence. Police reform, while necessary, is often a long and arduous process related to the nature of the police and its modes of operation. The police are regarded as a bureaucratic organisation with paramilitary overtones characterised by a central command, hierarchy, complex division of labour, the impersonal enforcement of formal rules and the provision of rationally based services (Fleras 1992: 116). Yet, police organisations function in a political context because they operate in a political arena and their mandate is defined politically (Manning 2006). Accordingly, the modes of operation of police forces change across time and place so they reflect the state and society within which they operate. Police managers formulate goals and design organisations to meet the expectations and needs of elected politicians, employees, clients and other individuals and groups affected by police activities.

Reforms of the police in the early twentieth century sought to professionalise the police, create uniform standards and make it effective in fighting crime so the police would be more accountable and predictable in its delivery of services (Roberg *et al.* 2002: 49). This policy, based on impersonal policing, has often led to the isolation of the police from society and, even more so, from minority groups who felt alienated from the police. Since the 1970s, the police in various democratic states have changed their strategy in order to gain legitimacy from society and to fight rising crime. The 'broken windows' approach advocated a zero-tolerance strategy for disorderly behaviour, in the belief that it would reduce crime. Police, according to this strategy, were to prevent 'criminogenic conditions from developing, by isolating problems in their early manifestations and by creating strategies for eliminating them' (Herbert 2006: 171). This strategy brought the police back into some communities. A focus on the external dangers to the community enhanced the role and authority of the police. Accordingly, this approach was often supported by middle class residents but raised objections among disadvantaged groups.

The broken windows policy dovetailed well with the neo-liberal climate in the USA and the emphasis on fighting crime instead of promoting welfare, so minority groups were defined as dangerous rather than disadvantaged. Naturally, this strategy was often detrimental to relations between the police and minority groups. 'To ardently mandate that officers acquire more and more arrests is to invite them to cast suspicion on those who do not warrant it and abuse those who should be left alone. Such suspicion will invariably fall disproportionately on minority citizens, and thus further inflame already tense police-community relations in minority-dominated neighborhoods' (Herbert 2006: 183). This type of community engagement did not change many of the negative perceptions of

minorities about the police. Rather, these policies served police 'clients', the law-abiding citizens, who shared the police notion of public order, but alienated the marginalised, the ethnically and racially diverse, or the 'troublemakers' (Findlay 2004: 34; see also Williams and Murphy 2006).

Where countries are changing and diversifying, the police are likely to be aligned with the old cultural, economic and ethnic guard, or may be perceived as such by other constituents (Erez *et al.* 2003). The recognition that the police must pay attention to the multicultural reality included the broadening of police functions from maintaining order to engaging in conflict resolution and problem solving, and providing services and activities that strengthen the link between the police and communities (Kelling and Moore 2006). This approach examined, on the one hand, the history, culture, and current needs of minority groups and, on the other hand, often more reluctantly, the mode of operation of the police itself *vis-à-vis* minority groups. The latter included the assessment of 'cultural sensitivity' or, in more extreme cases, 'police racism' (Chan 1997: 17). Consequently, the great challenge for police organisations at the turn of the twentieth century is to achieve legitimacy and credibility and the cooperation of minorities hitherto alienated from the police.

Engaging multiculturalism

Demands for police reform received heightened attention when police biases towards minorities were exposed in 'shocking' incidents or when events suggested that the police did not have the capacity to deal with the social tensions that are part of the multicultural reality. In the UK, for example, the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a young black man, by a racist group and the subsequent police mistreatment of the family exposed racism within the police and led to an inquiry committee and, later, to a debate over British multiculturalism and of 'The future of multi-ethnic Britain' (Runnymede 2000). In the USA, the beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police led to a heated public discussion over the mistreatment of African Americans by the police. Racial and ethnic minorities, it was demonstrated, are more likely than white Americans to be arrested, stopped, questioned and searched by the police (Walker *et al.* 2000).

The need for police reform was also acknowledged in Europe as the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities published a set of recommendations for policing multi-ethnic societies, a result of the absence, in some states, of institutional mechanisms to support the interaction and cooperation between police and national minorities (www.osce.org/hcnm/). Alternatively, police reform is part of a comprehensive process of post-conflict institution building. The Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, for example, emphasised that 'policing structures and arrangements are such that the police service is professional, effective and efficient, fair and impartial, free from partisan political control; accountable, both under the rule of law for its actions and to the community it serves'. Indeed, the RUC in Northern Ireland is an example of a police force held illegitimate by one community, the Catholics, because from its inception it was charged not only with ordinary police duties but also with defending the Union (McGarry and O'Leary 1999). In the 1990s, the demand for police reforms was a major part of the peace process and one of the more sensitive issues that had to be resolved. The Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland was set up as part of the Agreement reached in Belfast on 10 April 1998 and, following its recommendations, the RUC has changed to the *Police Service of Northern Ireland* with a new badge and new uniform.

The problems of police–minority relations can be defined as ‘under-policing’ and/or ‘over-policing’ that combined or separately underscore the police’s lack of legitimacy among minority groups. Over-policing implies mistreatment of minorities by the police, either by excessive use of force towards minorities or by discriminatory practices against them that include excessive routine use of ‘stop and search’ and disproportionate arrest rates. Over-policing is often embedded in ‘cop culture’ that includes moral and political conservatism related to prejudiced attitudes towards minorities, a siege mentality of ‘us against them’ and resistance to change and reforms (Findlay 2004: 101). Negative attitudes towards minorities often turn into self-fulfilling prophecies through actual encounters in poor minority neighbourhoods and underpin practices of ‘racial profiling’, the targeting of persons or groups by the police on suspicion of criminal activity based primarily on race, ethnicity or other identifiable marks (www.crr.ca). Thus, the connections between social disadvantage and over-policing are strengthened by selective law enforcement stimulated by discriminatory police stereotyping (Findlay 2004: 105). The stereotyping and discrimination that exist in routine police work can be compounded by the impact of (even a small minority of) true racists in the police force that ‘creates a vicious cycle that militates against good relationships between police and minorities’ (Casey 2000).

Under-policing is largely about police neglect of minorities and their needs. Thus, complaints of racial harassment and attacks against minorities by racist groups can be ignored or not taken seriously. More common is the absence of police from minority neighbourhoods regarded as ‘hopeless’ and the attempts to contain crime within the neighbourhood rather than make it a safe place for those who live in it. Thus, poor urban communities suffer from unresponsive policing and high crime rates. Finally, under-policing is apparent with respect to domestic violence characterised as ‘cultural’ and ignored by the police because they believe that such crimes are normative in these communities (Brunson and Miller 2006). The duality of over and under-policing implies that in minority neighbourhoods, there is limited or a complete lack of police presence or the police engage in violent and aggressive attempts to control crime. Minority groups are consequently torn between their fear of the police because of historic abuse and their desire for police protection from criminal elements that are disproportionately present in their communities (Howell *et al.* 2004).

Paradoxically, visible minorities can be inflicted with both under-policing and over-policing, suffer from crime in their neighbourhoods and from being stopped as suspects of crime outside of them. As a result, these minorities may have low trust in the police and be reluctant to cooperate with the police. Recommendations for police reforms related to multiculturalism and minority groups usually fall into six categories: (1) diversification of human resources; (2) cultural sensitivity training for police officers; (3) formal antiracism policies within the police; (4) review and revision of operational practices that may lead to ‘systemic discrimination’; (5) liaison between the police and minority communities; and (6) inclusion of minority group representatives within the membership of the police’s governing authorities (Stenning 2003). These recommendations can be divided into three central areas that together tackle the central issues of over-policing and under-policing: the patterns of recruitment and training of police officers, revisions of police practices, and relations between police and communities.

The police force may not be representative of society or even homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, gender and class. Consequently, it tends to respond in predictable ways to situations because of common heritage, interests and training. In Canada, police officers referred to the old police service as largely composed of white males, a police force that had various difficulties, described below, in performing in the changing Canadian society. In

more troubled areas like Israel and Northern Ireland very few, respectively, Arabs and Catholics were recruited to the police. Homogeneity can lead to a 'police subculture' that is usually influenced by the dominant societal culture, and consequently discriminates against and marginalises minorities regarded alien and suspicious. The diversification of the police force, therefore, is an important step in police reform. However, because the police subculture is characterised by a distinctive ideology, norms and values, it can be maintained through the assimilation of new recruits so that changes in recruitment patterns will have a limited influence (Desroches 1992). Training police officers to be culturally sensitive is central, therefore, to changing police attitudes and perceptions.

The measures of diversity and training have to be accompanied by actual changes in policy regarding the interaction between police and minorities and measured by the change in how the police operate on the streets. In order to gain legitimacy and the trust of minority groups, the police have to uproot prejudices and discriminatory practices in both under-policing and over-policing. These measures, however, have to be properly implemented and continuously assessed in order to determine their effect. Without the monitoring and review, the police may be tempted to just 'go through the motions', so that the gulf between them and the minority communities will not be bridged.

Finally, institutional changes in police-community relations are also part of the reform because they provide formal and informal channels for communities to convey their needs and concerns. This reform includes the involvement of the communities in everyday police work, in policy-making deliberations and in overseeing police work. Community policing includes principles, policies, and practices that link police and community members together in the joint pursuit of local crime prevention (Fleras 1992: 74). It is based on a decentralisation of authority and decision-making processes, neighbourhood focus and community input, accountability, partnership, community-based consultation and a general shift from criminal law enforcement towards social service, community problem solving and crime prevention (Roberg *et al.* 2002: 56). Combined, the measures of recruitment and training of police officers, reform of discriminatory practices of policing and the involvement of the community itself in policing, designing policy and oversight, underscore police reform and adaptation to a multicultural setting.

The Canadian context

In the adoption of multiculturalism in 1971 and its formalisation in the multiculturalism act (1985) the Canadian government declared that its policy is to 'recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage' (http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm). Multicultural policy had four aims: to support the cultural development of ethnocultural groups, to allow members of these groups full participation in Canadian society, to promote encounters and interchange among ethnocultural groups and to assist new immigrants in acquiring at least one of Canada's official languages (Kymlicka 1998: 15). As a policy, therefore, multiculturalism includes federal, provincial and municipal commitments to cultural diversity in order to accommodate the needs of different groups and provide culturally sensitive public services (Troper and Weinfeld 1999: 11–13).

Police departments in Canada began in the 1980s to debate how to improve their image among disaffected constituents and minority groups. Canadian police were criticised for discrimination, stereotypes and insensitivity, alienation from their clients, a militaristic

subculture and structure, the under-representation of minorities and inadequate grievance procedures for victims of police mistreatment (Fleras 1992: 92–93). While in the past the police might have been able to ignore the complaints of First Nations' people and ethnic minorities, due to their relatively small numbers, the flood of immigration from non-Western countries in the 1980s, described as a 'demographic revolution', demanded a new approach. 'We are witnessing nothing short of a demographic revolution following the influx of immigrants and refugees from Third World countries . . . the experiences, perceptions, and expectations that newcomers bring with them to Canada puts an additional burden on the police in coping with the demands of diverse constituents' (Cryderman *et al.* 1992: vii).

The events following the 9/11 terrorist attacks were a grim reminder of the need to adapt to diversity. Muslim citizens, on the one hand, complained they were harassed and the police, on the other hand, realised they had a limited ability to engage with these communities. Consequently, the police decided that they had 'to outreach all the diverse communities of Canada because the protection of national security needs the awareness and involvement of all citizens' (Royal Canadian Mounted Police internal document 2006). There was another aspect to this outreach, human resources. Expecting large retirements in coming years, the police would have to compete for talent among a labour force made up of immigrants. Diversity, therefore, will matter both inside the organisation and with the communities the police will serve, so there are business reasons for addressing diversity, something the private sector, a competitor for human resources, is already doing (Interview, A. Mukherjee).

The Canadian police are arguably at the forefront of engagement with the changing make-up of Canadian society in its comprehensive range of contacts with individuals and communities that requires open mindedness and adaptability, some claim the police have yet to achieve. Racial minorities, as well as the gay community, complain that their communities are over-policed, misrepresented within the police organisation and discriminated against in police practices. 'Citizens who belong to these groups believe that the police have placed them in a category of "other" which deserves less respect and is granted less status, fewer rights, and more obligations' (Ungerleider 1994). Suspicion of the police is exacerbated in some cases by immigrants' negative perceptions about and experience with the police in their home countries where the latter are associated with oppressive political regimes, the arbitrary use of power, and corruption.

Another source of tension is the struggle of marginalised groups against society and the state, a struggle in which the police are called upon to intervene to 'restore order'. Indigenous people, for example, fight through political, legal, or extra-legal means to regain lands, social rights and recognition. When these struggles escalate into confrontations, the police, as an arm of government, are at the forefront. Minority and Indigenous communities are often socially, politically and economically marginalised and disadvantaged, suffer from less education, high unemployment and, consequently, are over-represented in most facets of the justice system. In the end, 'in most communities it is usually the police who are called upon to deal with fruits of social, political and economic neglect' (Loree 2001). Prejudice within the police is strengthened by the negative experience of encounters with minorities, creating a vicious cycle between the police and minority communities.

Several inquiries and commissions regarding discrimination and racism have supported many of the claims made against the police. The Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989) clearly stated that, 'Public approval will be the result of visible and credible efforts by police to assess the nature and degree of racism in police forces. If the police are seen to eliminate organizational factors which perpetuate prejudice and to punish discriminatory

behavior they will be assured of public confidence'. The Task Force made 57 recommendations that included increasing the representation of visible minorities in the police services and improving community relations. The Ontario Police Service Act was introduced in 1990 as an attempt to reform the police and strengthen its relations with the communities. The justice system, as well as the police, seemed to suffer from biases and is therefore perceived by minorities unfair. A *Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System* of 1995 stated that, 'Commission findings leave no doubt that that the system is experienced as unfair by racialized people and, at key points in the administration of justice, the exercise of discretion has a harsher impact on black than white people. The conclusion is inescapable: the criminal justice system tolerates racialization in its practices'.

The negative engagements of visible minorities, aboriginals and gay people with the police led to wide criticism of its practices. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation found that the efforts of the police fell short of what communities expected. 'Most communities want the police to root out crimes . . . people would want that to happen. [but] They want also that the police would not be racist and mistreat minorities and that racist policemen would be rooted out. You want to see that a professional police takes on these issues but in many cases the police tend to protect their own, and because of the system they enjoy more than others the benefit of the doubt' (Interviews, S. Yep and P. Hunter). Similarly, the Urban Alliance on Race Relations challenged the police not to place the blame on a 'few bad apples' but to seriously reflect on changes necessary.

These complaints were not accepted by the police at face value but police officials recognised the need for reforms and have implemented various plans to address the grievances of minority groups. Police reform, according to senior personal interviewed, is, on the one hand, the result of a critique of police operations and charges of insensitivity or racism and, on the other hand, a growing recognition that cultural sensitivity and community outreach will create a better police force. The implementation of diversity as part of police reforms is essentially about ending over-policing and under-policing and making the police more acceptable to all communities. The Canadian federal system and internal diversity imply that different initiatives are carried out because the administration of justice is the responsibility of the provinces as well as the RCMP, which, as a national police service, provides policing services under contract to eight provinces and three territories. Even among the sites chosen for this research within the Province of Ontario – Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and the RCMP – attitudes and policies varied. Thus, as examined below, questions of recruitment, retention, training, community engagement and practices yield different answers and solutions.

It is recognised, therefore, that minority groups in Canada suffer from a combination of under-policing and over-policing. Reform, consequently, will be examined in this work in the context of the three issues identified as central to the relations between the police and minority groups – the measures of recruitment and training of police officers, reform of discriminatory practices of policing and the involvement of the community itself in policing.

Recruitment, retention and training

Police in multicultural societies have to make an effort in recruitment in order to make the police reflective of society at large. However, there are practical and environmental difficulties that include the educational levels of immigrants and minorities and intangible aspects of attitudes on both sides (Casey 2000). Sectors within the police might express

their 'concerns' over the lowering of standards for minority applicants, often an expression of their own biases. Minorities, for their part, might not regard policing as a desirable or respectable career and in more extreme cases may even portray those among them who join the force as 'traitors'. Such attitudes raise a first set of questions about how minorities are approached, what goals are set for recruitment and how are they measured. A second set of questions involves the roles minority recruits are assigned to, the police culture towards minority recruits, and the retention and promotion potential of minorities in the police force.

The attempts to diversify the police workforce were meant not only to follow the *Employment Equity Act* that intends to 'correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities' (<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/ShowFullDoc/cs/E-5.401///en>) but also to improve police performance. Police services in Canada are beginning to understand that they need to be an employer of choice, so they have to present themselves as part of society and diversify the police force (Interview, D. Snoddly). Recruitment of minorities involves making the police an attractive and respectable profession for minority groups and overcoming existing suspicions (Interviews, P. Yuen, B. Beahan and V. Bevan). These suspicions are the result either of immigrants' experiences in their home country or of minority groups' negative perception of the police. People who join the police from these groups may be viewed negatively by the communities, at times described by the derogatory terms 'Oreo' for a black police officer (black on the outside, white on the inside) and 'apple' for an aboriginal police officer (red on the outside, white on the inside).

The Toronto Police set goals for 2006 to achieve the status of an employer of choice and to increase recruitment from identified groups (women, visible minority, aboriginal, disability, sexual orientation and people who speak more than one language). These goals were translated into specific objectives of a formal 'Relationship Management' and a predefined number of recruits, representative of the city's demographics, so that an average of 40% diversity will be achieved in the graduating classes of recruits (Interview, P. Yuen). Statistics collected in 2007 find that among uniform police racial minorities occupy 9.3% of the senior positions, 7.7% of staff sergeants and 17.3% of constables and a total of 15.6% of the uniform employee. Aboriginals occupy none of the senior positions, 0.4% of staff sergeants and 1.1% of constables, and a total of 1% of the uniform employee (Employment Statistics, Toronto Police Services).

In the RCMP, targets for recruitment were also made, and the diversity of the police force is considered a significant benefit. 'Once you get into a room with diverse people you realise that your little world is just your little world . . . everybody has equal if not greater value to add . . . you get exposed to things you would never think would effect or implicate you of because they are not in your normal way of thinking . . .' (Interview, F. Macauley). In the Ottawa police, until not long ago, about 90% of the new recruits were white males, but in recent years, they have constituted only 50% or less of the class. The police also use community activists for recruiting from communities previously close to the police (Interview, V. Bevan). Several years ago, the Ottawa police began to conduct an internal census among its workforce in order to identify the demographic characteristics of its employees. The survey, voluntary and anonymous, asked not only about visible characteristics but also about less visible (or even invisible ones) like religion and sexual orientation and cultural groups of relatives. The results of the survey, in which 73% of employees participated, were to be used in police recruitment so that the police force would be reflective of the society it serves.

Efforts to diversify have to take into account the needs and desires of the communities the police serves. Thus, for example, Jamaican black officers may have limited significance for Nigerian or Haitian black communities (Interview, V. Bevan). Another question is whether the police should assign recruits to their 'own' communities. Considerations include the ability of officers to have authority within their own communities, the ability of the police to match officers to communities, the desire of the officers themselves and the general assessment of the benefits of such matches in bringing police services closer to the community (Interview, P. Yuen). Indeed, for many of the minority communities, it is argued, it is important to know that the police force is diverse and not necessarily be policed 'by their own'. From the officer's point of view, they are often uninterested in being assigned to their 'own' communities, especially when such assignments limit their promotion opportunities. Promotion is also a major issue for minority communities. 'They say the high command is white; there is some assumption that they cannot get to the top; we have to tell them this is a gradual process . . . I tell them, in ten years you come talk to me. You will see a black deputy or a black chief of police' (Interview, P. Yuen).

Recruitment of minorities to the police force might help solve issues of under-policing in which communities are alienated from the police, culturally or linguistically. Diversification in itself, however, might have a limited impact. Minority police officers can adopt an attitude that complies with existing police culture in order to succeed in the job and detach themselves from the community in favour of 'professionalism'. The success of recruitment, therefore, depends on the way the police treat wider questions of diversity. When recruitment is done only for the sake of appearance and recruits have to adjust to existing police culture, argue civic activists, they will do little service to their communities (Interview, S. Yep and P. Hunter). Police officers themselves recognise the limits of recruitment. 'We hire blacks and aboriginals and take pride in that. But after that? A black or aboriginal officer can be a bully and discriminate just like whites' (Interview, W. Closs).

The training of police officers is central for the ability to attract a diversity of recruits and to operate successfully among minorities. Consequently, training must change prejudices and equip the police with relevant and applicable tools for the operational experience it faces. During the training process, officers have to examine their own assumptions and perceptions about ethnic communities and have the opportunity for direct and positive engagements with communities with whom they may not have had previous contact (Casey 2000). The RCMP developed a model of training that includes the understanding of *clients* and their needs, the acquisition and *analysis* of information, the establishment and maintenance of *partnerships* for problem solving, the application of *response* strategies to solve problems, and the *assessment* and *review* of the outcomes of actions taken to support continuous improvement (Loree 2001). In the Ontario Police College, civilian instructors are brought in to teach race relations and introduce diversity questions. Cultural sensitivity is inserted into different parts of the programme with the aim of challenging and changing existing biased perceptions and teaching the recruits ways to engage with the communities and work together with them (Interview, D. Snoddy).

However, training is limited by budgetary concerns and in its impact on officer conduct afterwards. 'It is all about budgets', explained one officer. 'You have to equip them, which is more expensive these days, train them to use fire arms, situation diffusion and response, and then, if you have money left, cultural sensitivity'. Training is ultimately tested in everyday engagement with citizens where it does not always have sufficient influence. 'Police officers believe they are good people, and they are . . . some are offended when you talk to them about treating people better. We are talking about diversity, multiculturalism and sensitivity for 20 years but black people and others still feel the same [towards the

police]. Why is this so? Some of them are playing it for what it's worth but it is also because we are not focusing upon ourselves as police officers and not paying attention to what we are doing on the streets to some of these people' (Interview, W. Closs). Therefore, while training, like recruitment, is significant, police attitudes are tested in actual engagements with individuals and communities and are determined by institutional changes in the modes of operation.

Reforming practices – the means of engagement

Over-policing is rooted in biases against minorities that translate into discriminatory practices and mistreatment. Institutional reform, consequently, entails the eradication of police racism and the fair and equal treatment of individuals regardless of race and ethnicity. Racial profiling, the targeting of persons or groups by the police on suspicion of criminal activity based primarily on race, ethnicity or other identifiable marks (www.crr.ca), is an example of discriminatory practices because stereotypes rather than reasonable suspicion single out an individual for different treatment by police officers (Closs and McKenna 2006). Research in Canada reveals that such stereotypes affect how the police view minorities and, as a result, how minorities view the police.

Already in 1989 a task force report in Ontario concluded that visible minorities believe they are policed differently and treated unfairly by the police (OHRC 2004: 13). The accusations of unfair treatment of visible minorities turned into a large public controversy when in 2002 the *Toronto Star* newspaper published a series of articles that demonstrated that the Toronto police engage in racial profiling. The Toronto Police Service commissioned an independent review of the *Star's* analysis that concluded that the *Star* analysis was 'junk science' and the conclusions of the articles 'completely unjustified, irresponsible and bogus slurs' (Melchers 2006). Other studies also demonstrated that black people are stopped more often by the police than white people and that good behaviour does not shelter blacks from unwanted police attention. This attention, in turn, serves to further alienate black people from mainstream Canadian society and the police (Wortley and Tanner 2004). A study conducted by the Kingston Police has found that black young people are more likely to be stopped than white people, but not for different reasons and are slightly more likely to be arrested or charged during police stops (Closs and McKenna 2006). Police officers, argues Closs, have the opportunity to apply their personal beliefs and values through the discretion used in police stops, checks, warning and charges. Only through monitoring, measuring and knowing how police exercise their power can the police prevent racial profiling (Interview).

While the existence of racial profiling was difficult to prove, as critics of the *Star* report argued, and the concept itself is an 'unfalsifiable claim' (Melchers 2006), the large controversy forced the police to address the accusations as 'the issue of racial profiling has become a significant threat to the ability of police to maintain order, ensure public safety, and prosecute those accused of criminal offences' (Melchers 2003). Indeed, Aboriginal people and visible minorities were found generally satisfied with the job performed by their local police, but were more critical than the non-Aboriginal/non-visible minority population (Statistics Canada 2005: 92) and the number of visible minorities who felt that they had been discriminated against or treated unfairly by the police and courts was double (17% versus 8%) that of non-visible minorities (Statistics Canada 2005: 94).

Implementation of programmes designed to increase the trust of minorities in the police can reveal a gap between the commitment of senior police officers to multiculturalism and the actual performance of police officers in the street. This gap has been

raised by several community activists, who have noted the ‘intellectual commitment’ of senior officers as opposed to the apathy or resistance of lower ranking police officers. Senior police officers believe that the message is filtering down and making a difference in police operations. Even if the senior command is quicker to respond to social and political changes, the policies designed, they argue, are gradually being implemented. Moreover, according to police commanders (and even some community activists), the younger generation of police officers, more educated and accustomed to multicultural settings, is more receptive to the changes than the older generation that at times resists the changes.

Implementation also depends on the ability of the police to hold officers accountable for misbehaviour. The police, argue social activists, tend to close ranks and prevent investigations of and actions against fellow officers. Especially important, according to these charges, are the police unions that shield officers charged of abuse (Interview, S. Yep and P. Hunter). This claim is rejected by police officers who argue that professional standards are upheld and that improper behaviour is punished, even if, as some officials admit, this is a long and complex process. Kingston’s Police Chief Closs agrees that change has to happen ‘on the streets’ and the police have to commit fully to making this change. ‘They don’t want to change the real relations and they are taking the easy way and not having an impact on what is happening on the streets and that is where it has to change or nothing will change’ (Interview).

In order to examine whether multicultural policing reforms – recruitment, training and community engagement – are implemented and effective, police practices have to be monitored, the number of complaints and the way they are handled have to be examined, and the level of public satisfaction has to be measured. The number of complaints is another measure of satisfaction but a reduction in the number of complaints can be relevant to one community but not to another and may also be a result of citizens’ mistrust of the system. Accordingly, not only the number of complaints is important but also their ‘origin’ and, more importantly, the way they were handled. Complaints that are not handled and officers who are not held accountable can, for all the wrong reasons, contribute to the decline in the number of complaints. Finally, surveys are an important measure of the success of police reforms. Such surveys should be designed to reflect not only overall satisfaction but also the perceptions of different communities and their expectations from the police.

Involvement and oversight

Expectations of the police from minority communities can be influential, too, during the process of policy-making when they can provide their input. Community policing is a form of interaction that involves five main principles. *Partnership perspective* redefines the interaction between the police and the public through a consultative dialogue and interdependence. *Preventive/proactive policing* attempts to deal with problems before they arise by cooperation with the community and engagement with the underlying causes of problems rather than their symptoms. *Empowerment* means a decentralisation process that is likely to enhance community access to police service and, consequently, its influence over policing. Finally, *cultural sensitivity* compels the police to be attentive to the specific needs of communities.

The Toronto Police system of ‘community consultative process’ shares the responsibility for safety and security with communities, including disadvantaged ones. As it relies on community cooperation, it has to take into account the community’s history, culture, existing networks and politics and has to identify the community’s assets. ‘Given the

cosmopolitan nature of Toronto's communities, respect for community diversity can be challenging but absolutely necessary' (Internal document, Toronto Police). In practice, this involves the assignment of community policing ('neighbourhood') officers who are trained for the role. Officers learn about the community by engaging with it and are able to solve problems (Interview, P. Yuen). Similarly, in Ottawa, community policing philosophy has been defined in the following manner: 'to move in the direction of implementing a problem-oriented policing organization . . . to include the community as an active partner in problem-solving' (www.ottawapolice.ca). The involvement of the community includes not only various opportunities for dialogue with and access by the community to the police but also the partnering of police officers with members of the community for critical incidence teams trained to resolve situations between the police and the community. This access has also improved the recruitment from communities that previously stayed away from the police. Finally, this engagement has also provided police with critical information about how to approach and serve communities. 'We will not assume to know what is good for the community. This is the first parameter we set. We told the community: you tell us what we need to do in order to serve you better' (Interview, V. Bevan).

The power decentralisation in community policing raises the question of jurisdiction, especially when the community is a national minority. With aboriginal communities in Canada, for example, reliance on community resources and traditional systems is suggested because the conventional methods of the justice systems fail to deter crime (Interview, Sunhara). Thus, rather than rely solely on the formal justice system, other practices such as community forums and mediation can be useful (Loree 2000). Aboriginal communities can choose between creating their own independent police force (self-administered policing) and sub-contracting the RCMP to perform police services. The competition seems to encourage the RCMP to develop police programmes that appeal to the communities. Indeed, in its brochure the RCMP promises 'to assist in the identification and implementation of community policing initiatives . . . through a community consultative group'.

Engagement between communities and the police also includes the ability of the community to oversee police policies, procedures and practices. Thus, advisory boards and consultative committees give citizens the opportunities to raise concerns and complaints. In Toronto, Community Police Liaison Committees (CPLC) made up of community volunteers and police service representatives work together to enhance trust and develop solutions for emerging problems within the communities, ethnic or otherwise. The Police Services Board also formed consultative groups that advise the police at different levels including the chief of police, and help make the voices of the community heard. Meetings of the Police Board are open to all members of the public—individuals and groups. In the Toronto case, for example, this civilian oversight committee formulates policies and receives annual reports from the Police Chief on topics such as the effectiveness and implementation of policies related to diversity and multiculturalism.

Conclusions

The findings of this research on police reforms apply also to other public institutions that face contemporary multicultural challenges and have to adapt their services to diverse constituencies. These adaptations, in general, include recruitment patterns, procedures and practices and the input of minority groups on policy-making and implementation. Specifically, over-policing and under-policing are central concerns for minorities that are discriminated against by police procedures. The Canadian context in which civic

organisations began to take an interest in the question of policing and, more importantly, various police-initiated reforms, provides an ideal setting to examine these issues.

Changing discriminatory police practices that stem from over-policing and under-policing requires, first and foremost, attention to the problems, needs and desires of minority groups to devise a comprehensive, institutional reform. This study of the Canadian experience identified three central and interrelated issues. First, changes must be made in recruitment patterns that will diversify the police force, allow minority groups hitherto excluded to be part of police services, and narrow the distance between the police and minority communities. Second, changes in attitudes and practices through training programmes and a revision of discriminatory practices must occur. And, third, minority groups must have a voice in policy-making and oversight of police work to increase legitimacy and confidence. Under-policing and over-policing are often the results of stereotypes and biases that become self-fulfilling prophecies, leading to mutual distrust between the police and minorities. Combined, these interrelated measures suggest a way to narrow the gap between the police and minorities. Their actual impact requires further study.

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