Policing Multicultural States:
Lessons from the Canadian Model

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Abstract

and its organizational 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 upon the Canadian experience. [1] 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 with neo-liberal cuts of spending and new modes of governance (Lithopoulos and Rigakos, 2005) or with "rationalization" 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 over-represented in the criminal court system (especially in Ontario) and that black people believe that the police treats members of their racial group worst 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

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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; Walker, 1994). 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 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 organization with paramilitary overtones characterized by a central command, hierarchy, complex division of

labor, the impersonal enforcement of formal rules and the provision of rationally based services (Fleras, 1992: 116). Yet, police organizations 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 organizations 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 20th century sought to professionalize 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, Kuykendall and Novak, 2002: 49). This policy, based upon 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 be2.4(rs"e3(approach)-5.3(ad)-5.3D0 Tvoi)-5(l)froach sorderly be2.4(r Tw[ae

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

desire for police protection from criminal elements that are disproportionately present in their communities (Howell, Perry and Vile, 2004).

Paradoxically, visible minorities can be inflicted with both under-policing and over-policing, suffer from crime in their neighborhoods 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, to perform 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 marginalizes 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 characterized 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

The Canadian Context

In the adoption of multiculturalism in 1971 a

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, realized 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" (RCMP 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 labor force made up of immigrants. Diversity, therefore, will matter both inside the organization 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 (Mukherjee, Interview).

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 organization 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 marginalized 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

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" (Yep and Hunter, Interview). 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 recognized the need for reforms and have implemented various plans to address the grievances of minority groups21A(Tnal police) for re9(m)10.6(m),.3(to)-c4(ofecist po)rdingt.4(ofe4(s on))6.9(i)eedpers8(ss4.2(e) w on (m)tiquecauscist p5 bn Ra(e)opst p5 era-3.st p5 s p-5.34.6(cv)-rgst p5 erwa 2.2()-6(n)(tion7)-3.7(9(7.4(s)-5.,-3

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

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 pre-defined number of recruits, representative of the city's demographics, so that an average of 40 percent diversity will be achieved in the graduating classes of recruits (Yuen, Interview). Statistics collected in 2007 find that among uniform police racial minorities occupy 9.3 percent of the senior positions, 7.7 percent of staff sergeants and 17.3 percent of constables and a total of 15.6 percent of the uniform employee. Aboriginals occupy none of the senior positions, 0.4 percent of staff sergeants and 1.1 percent of constables and a total of 1 percent 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 realize 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, Macaulay). In the Ottawa police, until not long ago, about 90 percent of the new recruits where white males, but in recent years, they have constituted only 50 percent or less of the class. The police also use community activists for recruiting from communities previously closed to the police (Interview, Bevan). Several years ago, the Ottawa police began to conduct an internal census among its workforce in order identify the demographic characteristics 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 percent of employees participated, were to be used in police recruitment so that the police force would be reflective of the society it serves.

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

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 (Ibid, p.94).

Implementation also depends on the ability of the police to hold officers accountable for misbehavior. 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, Yep and Hunter). This claim is rejected by police officers who argue that professional standards are upheld and that improper behavior 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

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, Bevan).

The power de-centralization 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 chose 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 programs 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 organizations 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 hi

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