



SUMMARY REPORT

**POLICING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION ...
AND BEYOND.**

THE NEXT GENERATION IS HERE: WHERE ARE WE?

FROM THE 15TH COHORT - GLOBAL STUDIES 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents the findings of a comprehensive study exploring the intricate dynamics between youth and policing, with a particular focus on police recruiting and trust building in the Canadian context. Acknowledging the significance of increased immigration to the country, this research incorporates international perspectives to provide a broader understanding of the subject matter.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews, community-based participant observation and comparative analysis of policing practices across multiple jurisdictions. The primary aim was to identify effective strategies for increasing police recruiting among youth, while concurrently fostering trust and positive relationships.

The findings of this research highlight three key factors that can positively impact police recruiting efforts and trust building among the youth population in Canada. First, for society as a whole, it is imperative for police agencies to reimagine and reframe their identity to align with the expectations of a changing social and cultural landscape. More specifically, we must recognize the diverse experiences and needs of Canadian youth, including those from immigrant backgrounds, and developing recruitment strategies that reflect these realities. However, it *also* includes clearly identifying and prioritizing police responsibilities in order to keep pace with changing social dynamics in Canada.

Second, the professionalization of police services emerges as a crucial aspect in attracting and retaining qualified candidates. Enhancing education and training opportunities for aspiring and new police professionals, with an emphasis on building cultural competency, empathy, and conflict resolution skills, can contribute to the professionalization process. However, *further* success can be found in this area by diversifying the workforce to include opportunities for employees with certain specializations or qualifications to perform specific duties beyond those of the traditional police officer, and to allow for their entry into policing at a variety of levels.

Finally, police agencies must reclaim their own narrative by investing in proactive communications. This means developing a strategic recruiting communications strategy. But it *also* involves actively shaping and disseminating messages that counter negative stereotypes, emphasize community-oriented policing, and highlight success stories of police-youth collaborations. Establishing open channels of communication with youth through platforms relevant to them on social media and community forums is vital in bridging the gap and fostering mutual understanding.

This research underscores the importance of tailoring police recruiting efforts and trust-building strategies to the unique Canadian context, while also drawing valuable insights from international practices. By implementing the aforementioned recommendations, police agencies can enhance their capacity to recruit diverse youth populations and build trusting relationships, thereby fostering safer and more inclusive communities. The paper concludes with three calls to action for police executives seeking to initiate change by implementing initiatives within their organizations and within the broader context of policing in Canada.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Attracting and retaining quality employees is of utmost importance in a highly competitive talent market. Workforce turnover presents a challenge to industries and companies in Canada, and the policing profession is no exception.

Within the last decade, policing in North America has been under increased public scrutiny. A number of international incidents, along with the resultant negative media attention, have led to an erosion in public trust in policing. This has arguably led to declining interest in policing as a career as indicated in part by reduced applications to various police forces, and increased vacancy patterns.

Within the past five years, police agencies across Canada have noted unprecedented declines in applications, a marked uptick in early retirements and discharges, and declining graduation rates reported in some jurisdictions.

For any organization, a certain amount of employee turnover is to be expected and this can vary by region and industry. Canadian research on employee retention rates and trends is limited and it is difficult to identify an “acceptable” or “expected” rate of attrition. Still, when it comes to policing, it is suggested that the issue goes far beyond organizational comparisons with a perceived reasonable industry average.

Attrition rates impact a policing organization’s ability to meet its commitment to Canadian communities and its mandate of ensuring and enhancing public safety. Recent attrition trends, if continued, will be unsustainable for police agencies to continue serving Canadian communities, and it is critical that solutions be implemented to attract and retain a robust and qualified workforce for the future of policing in Canada.

RATIONALE

The study explored issues related to alleviating attrition in Canadian policing within a global context. The study was undertaken with certain assumptions, specifically:

RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Youth (10-20) and young adults (21-30) encompass 17% of the current Canadian population, and these groups are expected to grow through migration and immigration. Today's youth are current and future stakeholders in public safety service, both as community members and potential police professionals.

Diminished public trust in the police has led to the need to re-examine police service delivery. In order to succeed, police must aspire to achieve authentic relationships that are reciprocal, rooted in communication and collaboration, which may take time and effort to develop. Further, policing identity should be defined by community needs and expectations, and youth must have a significant role in transforming that identity; including a voice in future service delivery and recruitment strategies.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

The mission of Global Studies 2023 is to explore the relationships between police and youth in international settings to inform a transformation in policing identity in Canada. The study will guide Canadian police leaders toward modernizing our understanding of how policing and youth will build collaborative relationships based on mutual trust. This will ensure that both service delivery and recruiting strategies align with community needs and expectations.

OUTLINE OF STUDY

APPROACH

The CACP Executive Global Studies Program set out to explore next generation approaches to building relationships between youth and police, with a view toward increasing stability and longevity in recruiting.

Six research teams comprised of 24 policing professionals deployed to 15 countries around the world during the Spring of 2023. They met with local youth as well as representatives of the police and justice system, industry, community, education, and other parties who might be able to contribute to the study.

TEAM MEDITERRANEAN – Tunisia, Italy, France

- Inspector Veronica Fox – British Columbia Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Lieutenant Colonel Michael MacEachern – Military Police, Canadian Armed Forces
- Inspector Andrew Cooper – Peel Regional Police
- Inspector John Gibbons – Vancouver Police Department

Acknowledging that immigration and migration are significant factors shaping the future of Canada, each community this team chose to visit was selected based on its nexus to these issues. Tunis, Tunisia; Sicily and Rome, Italy; and Marseille, France have all been impacted specifically by post-Arab Spring migration. Team Mediterranean chose these locations of study specifically based on a research focus as to how migration impacts police service delivery.

TEAM NORTH-WEST – Morocco, Norway, Scotland

- Director Tara Holowka – Winnipeg Police Service
- Chief Superintendent Graham de la Gorgendiere – British Columbia Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Superintendent Todd Waselovich – Niagara Regional Police
- Superintendent Sony Dosanjh – York Regional Police
- Inspector Ed Armstrong – Windsor Police Service

These countries were strategically selected because all three have national police services. The national policing model ensures consistency in recruitment, training, and community engagement strategies. Additionally, Norway and Scotland were identified by the group as having socio-political characteristics that could be transferred to Canada, presenting an opportunity to review and potentially adopt best practices. Morocco, on the other hand, had never been visited by a CACP cohort, making it a valuable opportunity to examine strategies from a predominantly Muslim country on a continent that represents a substantial number of future immigrants to Canada.

TEAM OLG – Turkiye, Botswana, South Africa

- Inspector Stephanie Carlisle – Halifax Regional Police
- Superintendent Tracy Dobbin – Ontario Provincial Police

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- Superintendent Sean Gormley – Peel Regional Police
- Inspector Kelly Risebrough – Vancouver Police Department
- Superintendent Beth Houston – Waterloo Regional Police Service

A main focus of our research in Türkiye was to understand how mass migration from Syria impacted their national identity, social systems and police service delivery. The Canadian Government has a targeted immigration goal of 2.5 million, including a high target population from the African continent, by 2028. Researching the policing, political and criminal justice systems in Botswana and South Africa, as well as their impact on the attitudes and perceptions of those who will immigrate to Canada, was invaluable. Our research focused on how we can best integrate new immigrants into Canadian society and build trust in our Canadian policing services.

TEAM SUPER-TECH – Netherlands, Ireland, United Kingdom

- Superintendent Melanie Bilodeau – Canadian Police College, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Inspector Greg Robertson – Halifax Regional Police
- Certified General Accountant Makda Gheysar – Toronto Police Service
- Director Molly Kimpel – Waterloo Police Service
- Manager Jeff Morris – National Cybercrime Coordinator Centre, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The countries visited by this team have creative cybercrime youth diversion and prevention initiatives, forward-leaning online youth engagement strategies, and whole-of-society approaches to community policing. The partner countries and programs focused on letting the right partner lead for community safety, with an emphasis on co-response models, early youth interaction, and building police trust and legitimacy through partnerships and consent-based models.

TEAM TOA – Australia, New Zealand, Fiji

- Superintendent Kellie Morgan – Edmonton Police Service
- Superintendent Jonathan Ko – Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit, Greater Toronto Area
- Superintendent Clare Smart – Calgary Police Service
- Inspector Don Patrick – Durham Regional Police Service
- Inspector Brian Hill – Delta Police Department

This team selected their countries based on a potential high degree of transferability of experience between Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, specific to the understood similar Indigenous and colonial settler historical interactions. New Zealand, in particular, offered a parallel study for Canada. The country is dependent on a significant immigrant population with 70% of citizens having been born outside the country. Meanwhile in Canada, under its Immigration Levels Plan, Canada expects to welcome over 460,000 new immigrants each year, which is the highest levels in its history.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study took a qualitative and experiential learning approach. Information was collected in multiple international sites through face-to-face interviews, ride-alongs, tours and site visits of community and other locations, as well as community-based participant observation.

The findings from the research groups were analyzed and then triangulated through the engagement of a group of Canadian youth. A session of focus groups was held at the York Community Safety Village following the analysis phase of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

The study conducted internationally served as a valuable foundation for informing considerations of police recruiting and youth engagement in Canada. Despite variations in policing practices, demographics, immigrant (and migrant) populations, and educational systems across the 15 countries studied, several similarities emerged, offering insights that were relevant to the Canadian context. Some countries were more similar to Canada than others, in these respects.

In some countries, the research findings provided examples to aspire to, showcasing effective strategies and practices that could be easily adapted to the Canadian context. Conversely, some countries that differed significantly from Canada also contributed valuable insights by presenting cautionary examples, and highlighting potential pitfalls and challenges to be avoided.

By considering the diverse experiences and perspectives gathered from these international locations, the study in Canada was enriched with a nuanced understanding of successful policing organizations with limited recruitment issues. Strategies and best practices drawn from the field study informed recommendations for improving the recruitment process in the Canadian policing context.

The study found three broad themes that suggested investment opportunities informed by the international context, but tailored to Canada's unique culture and commitment to multiculturalism, democracy, and the rule of law. Specifically, the findings call for Canadian police agencies to:

- Reimagine and Reframe the Canadian Policing Identity by Identifying and Prioritizing Police Responsibilities
- Professionalize the Canadian Policing Service by Diversifying Service and Career Options
- Reclaim the Police Narrative by Investing in Proactive Communications (especially those aimed at youth and their families)

The study found with significant consistency that police agencies with robust initiatives or programs falling into the three broad categories identified above tended to have employees who espoused high levels of morale and pride in uniform. These police agencies tended to also have high levels of generational service (that is, families and relatives all serving in the same organization or larger industry). The study found resultant lower levels of attrition and organizations that not only experienced fewer difficulties in recruiting, but, in some cases, overwhelming numbers of applications. Some specifics of the more significant findings and examples are explored further in this section.

REIMAGINE AND REFRAME THE CANADIAN POLICING IDENTITY

The study found that police organizations with a clear mandate and a firm grasp on organizational identity tended to be successful on several of our selected dimensions. These organizations understood and espoused their mission, and societal responsibilities, and hired individuals for specific and defined roles

within this context. Recruits entered agencies with a clear understanding of the expectations of the job, and what they would be expected to do once employed.

The study found that many successful agencies had a very specific focus or a narrow mandate, and they were careful not to expand beyond same. This trend was noted in both westernized and developing countries.

The study found multiple examples internationally where police set and adhered to a clear mandate of service. However, most interesting, (and perhaps most relevant to the Canadian context), were cases where policing services identified and rectified a deviation from mandate that was negatively impacting their competence in service delivery. For example, in Ireland, police services are taking steps to codify co-response models and have joined into community safety plans with other sectors such as health and other emergency services. Key examples include ground-breaking legislation proposed to work toward “whole-of-society” community safety objectives and better ensure that the right partner takes the lead on community safety issues.

The study found similar examples of this in Tunisia, where regional civilian-led safety committees set priorities for police service in the community. Similarly, policing agencies in the United Kingdom are taking firm measures to ensure the appropriate segment of social service takes the lead for managing mental health calls. They have publicly served notice of a deadline calling for health and mental health practitioners to step up and lead. As acknowledged in that country, every day that the status quo remains is a collective failure for patients and police officers. The role of police in the United Kingdom is being clearly defined as dealing with victims and solving crime while patient care is seen as best dealt with by medical practitioners.

Meanwhile, in Canada, police agencies are facing increasing demands and expectations to address a wide range of societal issues beyond their traditional role of maintaining law and order. They are often called upon to fill gaps in essential services such as mental health support, public health interventions, and social services. This expanding role has stretched police resources thin, leading to negative impacts on morale and a compromise in their ability to effectively carry out their core duties.

The multifaceted responsibilities that police agencies in Canada are expected to undertake extend far beyond their initial mandate. While they were primarily intended to investigate and prevent criminal activities, they have increasingly been thrust into roles of social workers, counselors, school guidance personnel, and more. While the community safety and well-being (CSWB) concept is widely embraced across Canada, with aims of fostering collaborative solutions to very real needs, the reality on the ground continues to default to excessive reliance of police. This is largely due to a lack of required investment in the resources, skills and priorities of these other collaborative partners, and to date, the policing sector has been largely ineffective in its advocacy for such parallel investments and priority choices by others. The resulting ever-expanding scope of duties places significant strain on police resources, diverting their attention from core law enforcement activities and compromising their ability to deliver effective results. Police are Jacks- and Jills-of-all-trades, yet masters of none, and this has a significantly negative impact on police morale.

The burden of assuming responsibilities that fall outside the traditional purview of policing has had a detrimental effect on the morale of police officers. The stress and pressure of dealing with complex social issues without adequate training or support, or without adequate partner-agency support, can lead to burnout, diminished job satisfaction, and reduced overall performance. This can ultimately undermine the effectiveness of police agencies, as officers become overwhelmed with tasks for which they are ill-prepared and under-equipped.

It is important to distinguish morale from wellness in regards to the impact of the nebulous mandate and identity in Canadian policing. In the Canadian policing profession, great strides have been made in achieving a paradigm shift in employee wellness, with more supports in the areas of physical health and mental wellness than ever before. Those exposed to critical incidents or who develop occupational stress injuries over time, can access certain supports and receive a level of acknowledgement that their policing service has impacted their health. But there is less acknowledgement with respect to how consistently low levels of morale not only impact individual employees, but entire workplaces and organizations, and the resultant deleterious effect this low morale has on recruiting and retaining employees. In contrast to this, the New Zealand police currently enjoy an almost fractional rate of absenteeism and accommodation, and they credit much of this to the positive morale, supported by a clear and consistent sense of identity and purpose, among their employees.

The lack of clear mandate was reflected in discussions with Canadian youth. They were asked what they felt the true role was of police in the community. Some indicated that they felt police should be responsible for enforcing laws but others stated that they did not know. The varied responses suggest at least some inconsistency in mandate. The question that arises is: how can police agencies expect to recruit and retain employees if there is no clear understanding of what they are being hired to do? The need for a clear definition of identity is apparent.

PROFESSIONALIZE THE CANADIAN POLICING SERVICE

A second trend that emerged during the study was that of professionalization. The study found that specialized and diversified policing organizations were noted to be agile, and well positioned to leverage the strengths and skills of a diverse group of employees, beyond those of the traditional police officer. This allowed them to accomplish organizational goals and establish a positive reputation in the community including amongst their youth. As such, they were more effective and had little trouble attracting qualified and enthusiastic recruits.

With respect to recruiting, an example of a reasonably successful international police agency was found in Marseille, France. The Gendarmerie, (France's National Police Force), has well-established systems in place to incorporate specialists into their police service. In particular, the Gendarmerie boasts a cadre of unarmed, yet uniformed personnel who are hired, sworn, and trained, specifically to deal with non-policing matters. Some of the strength on staff include psychologists, mechanics, medical doctors, pilots, and engineers. Of note, the type of work this group was hired to do was specific to the needs of the organization.

The study found two benefits to the model of the Gendarmerie: First, a larger segment of the community was leveraged as employees as they could be attracted and retained based on their specific skillsets or interests, as opposed to their ability or willingness to take on all police-specific tasks or responsibilities. Second, the unarmed cadre, once hired and socialized to the policing profession, became a form of “farm team” for traditional policing roles. Combined with significant opportunities for training and development within the organization, the study found that this resulted in employees with high levels of work and career satisfaction, which in turn led to pride in uniform, and generational service (employees who encourage their relatives and children to join the organization). There were several other countries where police had similar models or were actively exploring the diversification of police professional by function, including Fiji, Morocco, and the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, in Canada currently, police agencies are struggling to meet organizational objectives with the traditional generalist police officer model. Frontline recruiting is already in a downturn across the country, and this issue is exacerbated internally with a bumper car effect of vacancies in a multitude of positions and ranks. Many agencies are also facing new challenges filling certain specialized roles, with multiple postings of previously sought after positions in specialized units now receiving few or no applicants. The generalist police officer model may have worked for Canadian police agencies before, but it is not sustainable for the future.

Canadian youth provided some context to this area of the study. They indicated they would generally be open to police-focused educational programs offering degrees or direct entry into policing service, similar to programs available in France and the Netherlands. However, more significantly, youth reported that entering police organizations with the option of a non-police specialization, (versus serving as a frontline police officer), was even more attractive to them. A number of youth who participated in the focus group expressed interest in specialized opportunities that could be leveraged within policing organizations such as those of the Gendarmerie in France. Further, some who had dismissed a career in policing over concerns about specific police-centric job requirements were interested to know that their assets and skillsets might actually be a valued contribution to the police mission in Canada.

RECLAIM THE POLICE NARRATIVE BY INVESTING IN PROACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A third trend that emerged during the study was the importance of proactive communications. The study found numerous examples of successful policing agencies with a strong and trusted voice in the media. In many cases, this was the result of consistent and conscious effort in police image work.

As an example, in Italy, police capitalized on the downturn of public opinion towards the Mafia. By juxtaposing their role in maintaining public order with that of extreme violence committed by the Mafia in the 70s and 80s, police agencies were able to demonstrate to the public that they were a trustworthy and honourable profession. It is interesting to note that this police image work was consciously undertaken in addition to demonstrating professionalism by making arrests and working towards successful prosecutions. Even as public opinion rose over time, Italian police have continued to tell their story in the media. There are some interesting examples of modern Italian police image work including publicly

available fictional graphic art novels following the exploits of an Italian police detective. These and other publications are created in-house and distributed to youth, or sold at low cost with proceeds benefitting police-run charitable endeavours.

There are multiple other examples of proactive police image work in many of the countries studied. In Australia, police are spending millions of dollars on their “Made for More” campaign to attract new talent to service. In countries like the United Kingdom, Netherlands, and Ireland, the focus is on telling the police narrative directly through online communications.

The study found in jurisdictions where police had been successful in leveraging various means and media to tell their own story of professionalism, honour, and pride-in-uniform, internal morale was high, there was obvious positive engagements with the public, including youth, and there were few reported challenges with recruiting. These countries generated multi-generational commitment to a career in policing. This stood in sharp contrast to the experiences of the 2023 Executive Global Studies cohort, where those with children and young relatives reported they could not recommend that their loved ones join policing service in Canada.

In Canada, consistently over the last several decades, communication from police agencies has been reactive, closed, and biased towards “need-to-know” and secrecy. Concerns over privacy, operational security, and politics can all explain this posture, however, the lack of narrative has left gaps in understanding of police roles and responsibilities. Other groups, often radically critical of police, are filling in the narrative and telling the public who the police are, in their viewpoint.

There are significant risks to having a misleading or false narrative about policing permeating the media. Currently, for the public, including potential future employees and their often-reticent families and teachers, policing service is increasingly looking to be a thankless and impossible job that will alienate friends, neighbours, and family. Further, the presence, and sometimes the very existence of the police, is portrayed as traumatic.

As the study demonstrated, engaging in media-based image work extends beyond conventional advertising strategies aimed at recruitment. It involves actively managing the portrayal of police organizations in the media and via online platforms through various channels, such as media releases, social media presence, and proactive communication strategies. Those who take control of their own narrative are able to define and promote their own brand. Over time this translates to a shifting of public perception away from negative stereotypes towards more accurate and nuanced understanding of the heart of the organization.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

THE HOURGLASS MODEL

The 2023 Executive Global Studies cohort identified the hourglass as representing the interconnected nature between internal conditions in policing organizations and the sector, more broadly, and the perceptions and reactions of the community, and in particular, amongst youth in Canada.

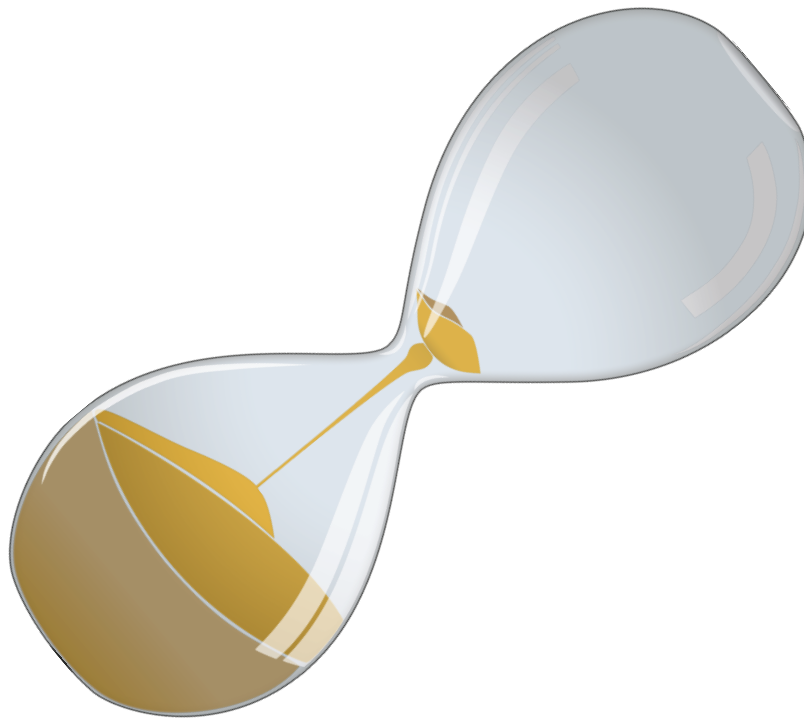


Figure 1: Time is Running Out – Diverging Parties, Partners, and Relationships in Policing

The hourglass in Figure 1 is representative of the fluid relationship between police and the community, as well as between police executives and the police professionals they employ.

Over time, and as a result of numerous social and political issues, the distance between the two domains has widened. The study argues that initiatives and processes falling under the three broad categories identified in the research will contribute to narrowing this gap and restoring symbiotic relationships for the next generation of policing in Canada.

The study found no shortage of innovative programs and initiatives employed by police agencies overseas. The most successful agencies were found to emphasize efforts in the areas of policing identity, professionalization, and policing narrative. It is argued that Canadian police agencies might find similar levels of organizational success through the development and execution of initiatives in these areas. It is acknowledged that it might take several years to fully realize the benefits in these areas, however it is imperative that action be taken immediately, before the current reality surpasses the point of no return.

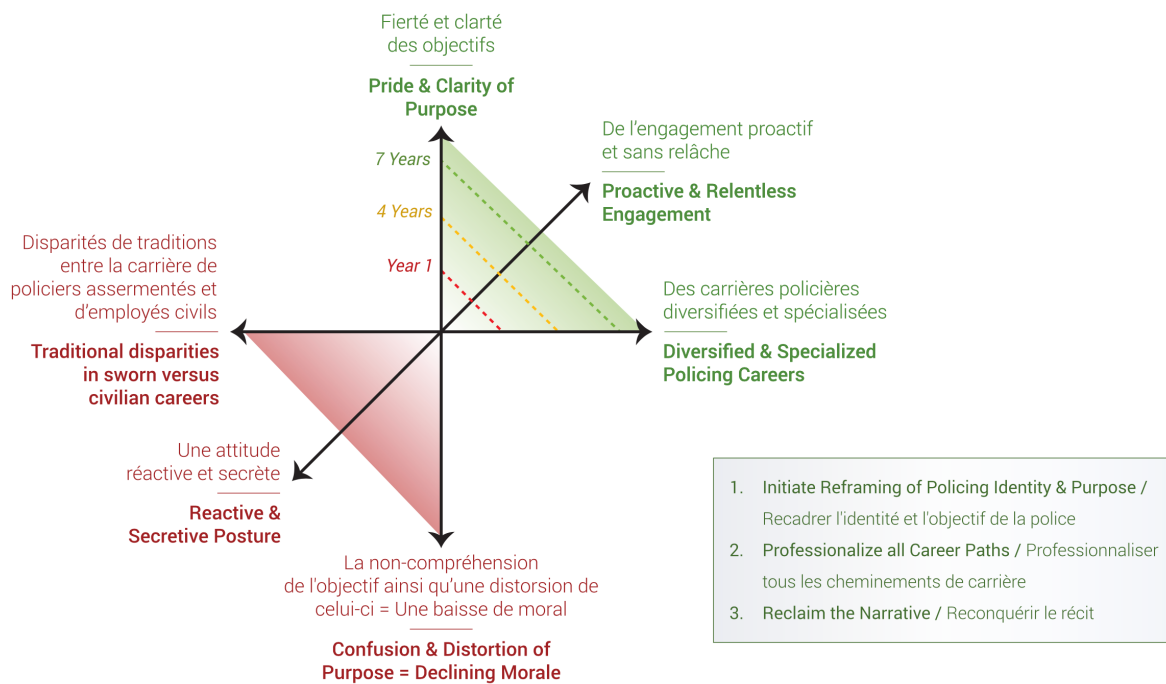


Figure 2: At a Crossroads – Two Potential Futures for Canadian Policing

Figure 2 visualizes a ‘designed-future’ methodical approach with incremental steps in implementation. Each quadrant represents a possible future where the desired outcomes of three interacting dimension are clustered. Back-casting from a seven-year future there are several mid-term and immediate investment opportunities in each category identified in the study that will be further explored in this section.

CALL TO ACTION: REIMAGINE AND REFRAME THE CANADIAN POLICING IDENTITY

Serve notice that police cannot continue to fill gaps in service within sectors for which they do not hold primary responsibility

With respect to framing the role of police in society, the example set by police in countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland could be applied to the Canadian context in policing. Now, and in the future, it will be imperative for police organizations to reframe their responsibilities, focusing on the business of policing, while supporting other non-criminal justice or direct public safety issues to sectors better qualified to handle them. By doing so, police agencies can enhance their effectiveness, improve public trust, and ensure the sustainability of their services.

The current model of relying on police agencies to address issues such as mental health crises, public health emergencies, and social service provision is not sustainable in the long term. The resources and expertise required to handle these challenges effectively lies within specialized sectors that are better equipped and trained to provide the required support. Police agencies cannot be expected to fulfill these roles without compromising their core function of maintaining public safety.

This reframing process will involve recognizing and embracing the limitations of police agencies in addressing non-criminal justice or direct public safety issues, and developing collaborative partnerships with sectors that possess the expertise and resources necessary to handle these challenges. By not only working in tandem with, but also insisting on the accountability of mental health professionals, social workers, and public health agencies, police can ensure that individuals in crisis receive appropriate care and support, while freeing up their own resources to concentrate on criminal investigations and proactive crime prevention.

The 2023 Executive Global Studies cohort calls upon the CACP to contact their partners with a view to mobilizing a multi-disciplinary Federal, Provincial, Territorial (FPT) Task Force at the Deputy Minister level and to formally “serve notice” that the current configuration with respect to police scope of service in non-policing related areas is failing the policing sector and failing Canadians. The role of policing in Canadian society should be clearly defined and the FPT Task Force would be encouraged to examine and rationalize how to mobilize the roles and resources of other social services to fill the gaps in service in sectors such as health and social welfare that are currently being managed by policing professionals. To the extent that the police should continue in their important collaborative CSWB roles, the scope of any such must become clear and balanced.

CALL TO ACTION: PROFESSIONALIZE THE CANADIAN POLICING SERVICE

Identify opportunities to diversify and legitimize alternative career paths in policing

With respect to professionalizing policing service, the example set by the Gendarmerie and similar international policing agencies could also be applied to the Canadian context in policing. In the future, agencies across Canada could have a diversified and specialized workforce with qualified police professionals of all categories performing specific jobs according to their individual competencies, skillsets, qualifications, strengths, or interests.

In order to leverage the future value of Canadian youth as policing professionals, within the within the next five years, Canadian police agencies will need to have an established process for direct entry into specialized units. Those with established expertise or education in complex areas such as cyber technology, financial securities, or forensics, for example, could be granted full agency to act as policing professionals within the area of their expertise, relieving pressure on frontline generalists.

Further consideration should be made to transform all policing agencies into true Learning Organizations. This means reimagining our traditional police offices as organizations where the doors are open to today's youth and where they are encouraged to bring their modern diversity to bear. Those with specialties and/or advanced educational standings can be streamlined early on. Frontline generalists may also welcome pathways and suitable continuing educational streams so they can specialize later, should they so desire.

By 2030, all agencies should have developed pathways to specialization and professionalization. An evolving stream of learning opportunities and initiatives will allow employees to develop and train as they desire, and as they need, which will translate to an organization ready and able to flex and adapt to future pressures, whatever they may be.

Starting today, Canadian police agencies, in consultation with unions, associations, and other internal stakeholders, should initiate changes to their human resourcing plans with a focus on professionalization through specialization.

The 2023 Executive Global Studies cohort calls upon the CACP to task the CACP Human Resources and Learning Committee to initiate source funding and resources to map policing careers, and identify parallel opportunities to the traditional police academy model of intake. Methods for specialized intake, education, and promotion that allow for the direct entry of experts beyond frontline police officer should be considered. Additionally, there should be recognition of the need within the policing profession for broad competencies, education, and experiences beyond those of the frontline and there should be legitimate alternative career paths within policing organizations for such employees.

CALL TO ACTION: RECLAIM THE POLICE NARRATIVE BY INVESTING IN PROACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Initiate a Canadian policing branding and attraction campaign

With respect to reclaiming the police narrative, the example set by police agencies in multiple countries studied could be applied to the Canadian context for policing. For Canadian police organizations, it is imperative to actively reclaim their narrative in both mainstream media and online platforms. Reclaiming the narrative can benefit police organizations in the long term by boosting morale among rank and file officers, legitimizing organizational objectives, defining policing identity, advertising police professionalism, but perhaps most importantly, preventing others from defining the police in the media for their own agendas.

By 2030, Canadian policing should have a consistent proactive approach to advancing the police narrative in the community. A positive narrative should not always be transactional. That is, public communications do not necessarily have to occur only when there is an issue to report on, or if there is a need for recruiting of employees. Rather, the police narrative should permeate mainstream and online media employed by all segments of the community. This would align with Peel's Principle that the public are the police and the police are the public.

In the short term, police should be forward learning towards a proactive posture. This will require a collective pan-Canadian approach as competition between police agencies in this area will otherwise undermine the underlying message of professionalism and respect.

Canadian police agencies can collectively decide to enable and arm police leaders at every level to communicate the positive values of policing professionals, and to fight back against the cynical sentiments that undermine employee satisfaction, even as work continues to resolve the job stressors and other challenges impacting recruiting.

It is critical that police agencies stir and encourage the interest and curiosity of young Canadians towards policing service, while simultaneously building internal capacity so that a future job-satisfied and supported membership becomes the most powerful and effective recruitment tool of all.

The 2023 Executive Global Studies cohort calls upon the CACP to invite the *National Strategic Communications Group* to seek out suitable resourcing streams to initiate a project to support the launch of a common branded "*I Am Canadian Policing*" media and social media campaign. This campaign would be designed to run locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally on mainstream media and online via suitable, youth-focused social media channels. The focus of such a campaign will need to be on inspiring a new generation of recruits to consider the diversity of policing careers, beginning in adolescence while also appealing to those about to enter or already among the workforce. It will also amplify our own *made-in-policing* narrative on police identity to better inform and educate Canadians on the Canadian policing "brand." The identification of funding or sponsorship for the campaign would be a critical part of this initiative and it would be undertaken separately from traditional "recruiting" campaigns at the agency level.

CONCLUSION

Police agencies across Canada are near a state of crisis in the area of attrition. There have been unprecedented declines in applications, a marked uptick in early retirements and discharges, and declining graduation rates in some jurisdictions. In previous generations, policing agencies enjoyed a climate where serving as a police officer was seen as honourable, desirable, and respectable. There were no concerns over recruiting as potential employees actively sought out agencies. The tide has changed, and the reverse is now true. Policing in Canada has become a “buyer’s market” ... many of those who bought in early are leaving early, and the young buyers we need are not showing up.

The study findings of the 2023 Executive Global Studies program are clear. It is critical that police reimagine and reframe their identity, professionalize their service, and reclaim their own narrative. Taking action in these areas today will help to sustain and prepare the profession for tomorrow. All indications are that Canada will continue to need us more than ever before.