



POLICING THE STATE MONOPOLY ON

VIOLENCE

A RAPID REVIEW OF
CANADIAN POLICING
AND THE POLICIES
NEEDED TO REFORM IT

Policing the State Monopoly on Violence: A Rapid Review of Canadian Policing and the Policies Needed to Reform it

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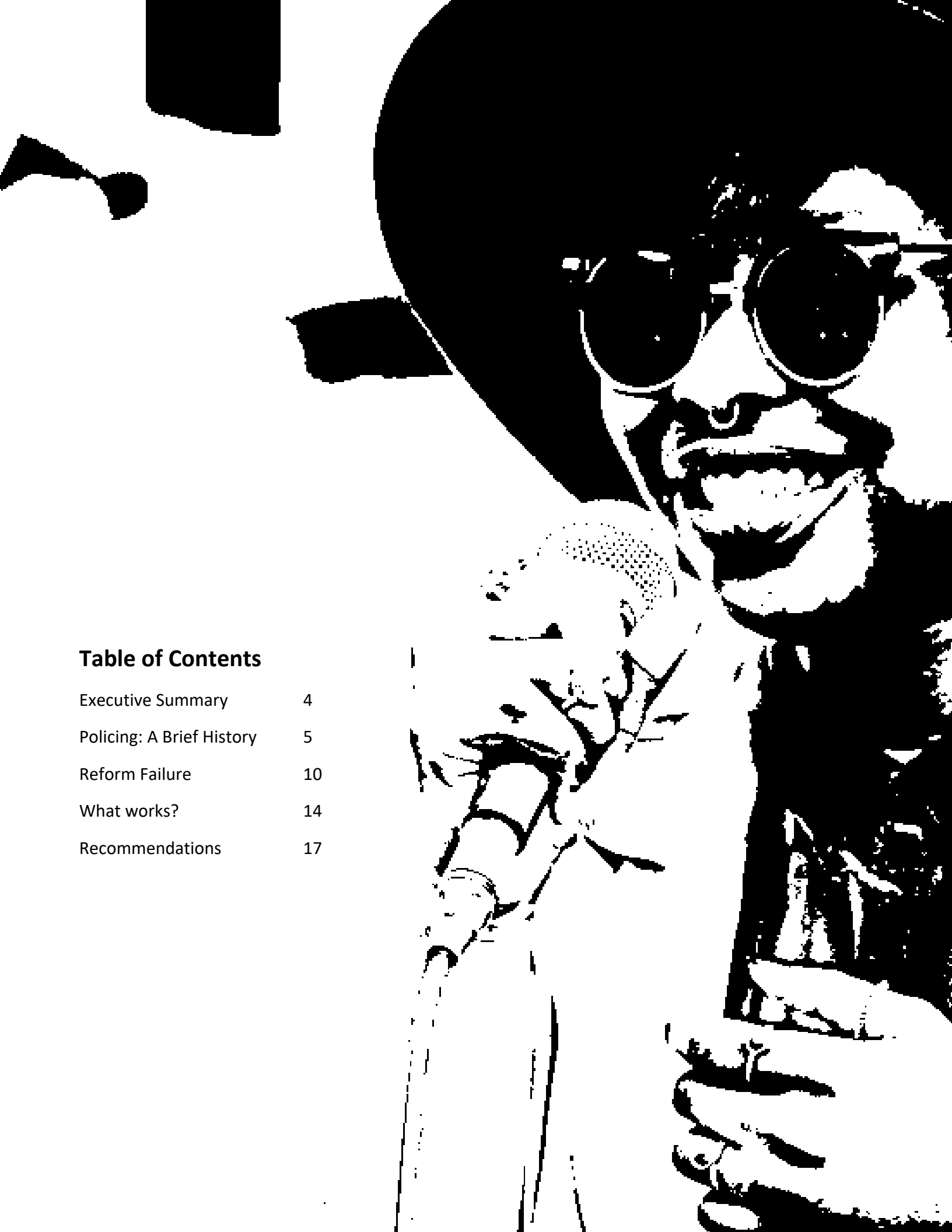


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Executive Summary

This rapid review explores the foundations of policing in Canada in order to demonstrate its history as a tool for state violence. In doing so, I briefly touch on the unfair treatment of Indigenous and racialized people, labour unions, and those living in poverty-entrenched communities. These vignettes demonstrate that the primary purpose of the police is to maintain the status quo and resist social progress. Moving into discussions of reform, I identify a few factors that make reform difficult, including the role of interrelationship between politicians, police, unions, and the public. From this discussion, it becomes clear that police reforms must respond to the very essence of policing, its expansion into social work and public health, and the ongoing militarization of police departments. I emphasize structural over individual-level reforms and recognize that police brutality is a systemic problem. In conclusion, I recommend divestment from policing and investment in other community service; and press the urgency of stop-gap measures that reduce opportunities for police violence. While I critique reformers who make police trainings and accountability the sole targets of police reforms, I acknowledge that these two approaches are essential, but only when they are rigorously implemented in ways that curtail the development of violence and aggression among police officers.

POLICING: A BRIEF HISTORY



“Not only is state violence rarely prosecuted as criminal, it is not commonly perceived as violence. Because the state is granted the moral and legal authority over those who fall under its jurisdiction, it is granted a monopoly over the use of violence in society, so the use of violence is generally seen as legitimate.”

- Robyn Maynard, “Policing Black Lives”

To understand state violence in Canada, you have to understand the police and to understand the police you have to understand their history. The origin of Canadian policing is unquestionably a matter of debate, but most scholars link it to the development of rural constabularies and urban watch-and-ward systems in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s. For example, in Toronto, all able-bodied male citizens were required to report for a night on the watch several times a year. These ‘police forces,’ if you can even call them that, mostly served to protect communities from fire, robbery, public drunkenness, and “strangers” who appeared at city gates after dark. The watchmen who filled these roles were generally untrained, unpaid, and thus unwilling to do much in terms of intervention.

However, the trajectory of policing in Canada dramatically changed in the 1830’s. During this period, the Toronto Police Service was formally established with the recruitment of 5 full-time constables in 1835. Serving the city and its population of 9,250 people, the officers were first issued uniforms in 1837 along with an annual income of £74 (about one-third the pay of the Toronto mayor at the time). Police officers were appointed almost entirely as political favours, and thus the Toronto police were loyal to the politicians who controlled the legislative, judicial, and executive functions of state.

With the Rebellions of 1837-1838 – events sometimes referred to as the “Canadian Revolution” – the political nature of the Toronto police came into full view. The mayor and alderman regularly deployed the police to harass,

intimidate, and oppress political reformers and opponents. With new found public scrutiny coming as a result of the rebellions, the Province launched a commission to investigate the Mayor, city council, and Toronto police. The resulting report, published in 1841, found that the police constables had been “*employed as political instruments,*” and used as “*formidable engines of oppression.*”

Rather than clean up its act, the city’s retort claimed that it was not the duty of constables “*to detect infractions of provincial or civic laws*” – suggesting that the police were not so much a crime fighting force as they were functionaries for the politicians running the city. This insight – that the primary purpose of police is not to fight crime, but to defend the political interests of the ruling class – is fundamental to understanding contemporary policing in Canada.

Indeed, over the next two decades as the population of Toronto tripled, tensions between the protestant ruling class and the Irish Catholic working-class led to many major riots (six between 1852 and 1858) and labour strikes (fourteen between 1852 and 1854). Police were embroiled in these disputes – representing the interests of the rich and powerful. Furthermore, in the 1850’s, the city council made police responsible for controlling vice industries – such as brothels and gambling houses. In some ways, this seemed like a natural expansion of power: The Toronto police had already been responsible for approving liquor licenses – dolling them out as political favours and withholding them as punishments. However, the police were also

gifted with the authority to “*punish persons for using grossly insulting language calculated to provoke breaches of the peace.*” These new powers represented the beginning of a grossly expanded role for police.

Coinciding with this period of expanded police authority, the influence of the industrial middle-class also began to expand – shifting the power from a select few politicians to a growing mob of white uneducated protestants. While the causal connection is somewhat murky, it is not too difficult to see the expansion of policing as an appeasement of middle and upper class social fears. By 1858, the influence of the City Council over the police began to show cracks and the control of the Police Board was transferred from the Toronto City Council to a Board of Police Commissioners – an act instigated by the province’s intervention. By 1959, the Police Commissioners had fired the Chief of Police and all but 24 of the officers on the force – a promising step towards reforming the police.

However, with a complement of now 60 police officers (about 1 officer for every 800 residents – which was more than double the ratio in 1835), the force began establishing a rigorous military discipline among its officers. Police participated in street skirmish training-drills that were meant to prepare them for handling riots, strikes, and other street disturbances.

By Confederation in 1867, the role of police as defenders of state interests had solidified. In addition to police forces developing in other cities, police forces were also established to impose order on the “frontier” in what is now western Canada; and in 1873, the North-West Mounted Police (now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) was established.

Throughout the 1870’s and 80’s, the discipline and military training of Canadian police made them ideal weapons for suppressing labour movements that threatened to upend the social, political, and economic structures that benefited

Canada’s ruling class. With the establishment of the Criminal Code in 1893, Police were given control over the monopoly on state violence. They were authorized by the state to use lethal force in order to protect themselves, protect their communities, or prevent the escape of those fleeing arrest. Once again, the role of police expanded giving them a larger share of the state’s monopoly on violence.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, labour unions had gained considerable ground and the Federal Government in Canada had established the Department of Labour to manage tensions between workers and businesses. However, with the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, Canada began to experience its own “Red Scare” in the wake of the First World War and the role of the police was once again expanded to include surveillance of so called “communists” (i.e., labour activists). Not surprisingly, the RCMP was forbidden to unionize because the police were responsible for “*the maintenance of order in connection with strikes, lockouts, and labour disturbances.*” This restriction serves as another reminder of the police’s functional role as an oppressive, rather than progressive force.

Labor unions were not the only communities targeted by politicians and police. Throughout the 1850’s, racial tensions between White and Chinese residents in Vancouver began to escalate. In 1871, special taxes began to target Chinese opium factories. By 1908, the government enacted legal bans on the import, manufacture, sale, and possession of opium – thus creating underground drug markets. Three quarter of those convicted under these laws were Chinese.

Similarly, tensions between Indigenous peoples and White settlers also created opportunities for an expanded police state. The Indian Act appointed the RCMP as truant officers responsible for forcing Indigenous children into

residential schools. The goals of these residential schools were to stamp out Indigenous culture that was seen as antithetical to Canada's colonial mission. In addition to this cultural violence, children in residential schools were molested, maimed, and murdered.

The RCMP's effectiveness as a federal policing body and willingness to enforce even the most violent of state policies led to its expansion into provincial policing. Provinces in Canada were allowed (and continue to) contract with the RCMP to meet their policing needs. In the modern era, local municipalities also frequently contract with the RCMP to provide policing services.

As municipal police forces became more common, the image that most middle-class Canadians had of the police was that of a friendly neighborhood foot patrolman eager to protect and serve. However, the 1960's, 70's, and 80's shattered that myth as the Police were increasingly embroiled in maintaining the social, political, and economic order preferred by the ruling and middle classes.

Indeed, building on the successes of the Labour movement in the first half of the 20th century, 1960's reformers sought sweeping social change in Canada. First Nations people were given the right to vote and the Canadian Bill of Rights received royal assent. In 1982, the Canada Act and Canadian Charter of Rights and freedoms were both passed. In 1996, the last residential school was closed. In 2005, same sex marriage was legalized.

However, the latter half of the 20th Century was not all progress. Violent setbacks were the norm. In 1965, the City of Halifax demolished a once-prosperous African community; and in 1967, the City of Vancouver destroyed Hogan's alley, another African-Canadian burrow. In the so called "sixties scoop", Indigenous children were stolen from their parents, placed into state

custody or into non-Indigenous homes. All of these racially motivated attacks were backed by the police. Similarly, queer Canadians were targeted by government officials. Police frequently raided bathhouses as recently as the 1980's in order to arrest and penalize gay men. The massive expansion of policing that was required to control these social movements was staggering. In fact, between 1960 and 2018, the total number of police officers in Canada increased by 260%. When examined on a per capita basis to account for population growth, the greatest expansion of policing occurred between 1962 and 1977 – years of intense social change and activism.

In addition to feminist, antiwar, multicultural, and queer social movements emerging in the mid to late 1900's, the 70's also brought an intensification of Canada's war on drugs, which had a profound effect on policing by providing governments with an uncritically accepted rationale for the expansion of policing and police budgets. Their activities were focused on poorer, predominately Indigenous and ethno-racialized communities. This war, which is more a war on drug users than on drugs themselves, has reshaped urban inner-cities into battlefronts upon which our moral expectations of justice are regularly counted as casualties among black, brown, and disabled bodies.

Beginning with policing's corrupt origins as an organized syndicate working for Toronto's small ruling class and following its development into the highly-trained paramilitary organization it is today, the history of Canadian policing serves as a testament to its true role as the defender of the state's monopoly on violence. Indeed, police forces have repeatedly demonstrated a lack of commitment to justice for marginalized populations. This is perhaps best exemplified by the unacceptable failures of police forces across the country to properly and thoroughly investigate the disappearance and killings of

missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada.

Like many great myths that we Canadians tell ourselves, the myth that the police are there to protect and serve the people is, unfortunately, a convenient piece of propaganda. To the contrary, the purpose of policing, at least when interpreted through a historical lens, is to maintain the power of the state and its ruling class through acts of intimidation, violence, arrest, and even deadly force, “if necessary.”

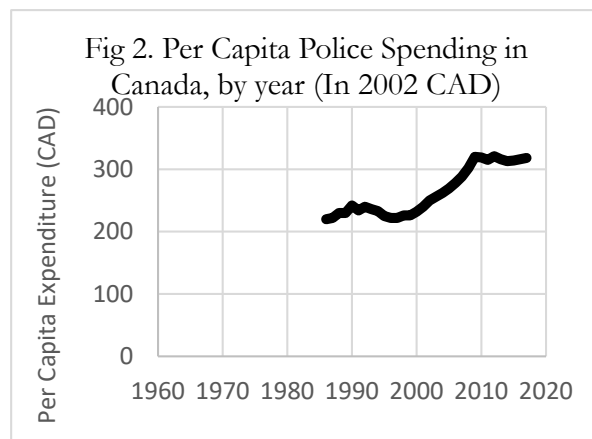
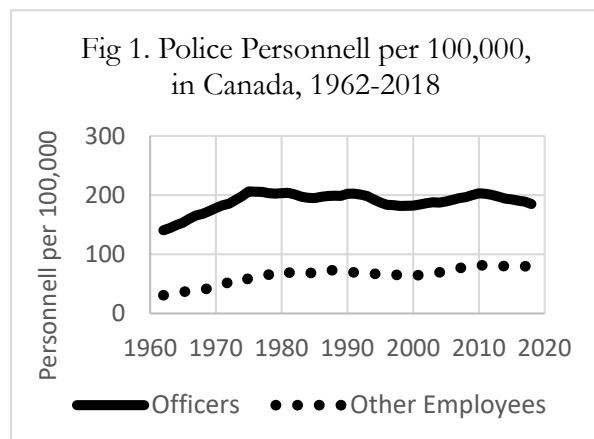
Given the value of the police force in protecting the interests of Canada’s ruling class, it should be of little surprise that police spending has outpaced even population growth. Between 1999 and 2009, per capita police spending increased 41% from \$226 CAD per person to \$320 CAD per person. Clearly, those controlling the levers of state budgets view policing as a significant investment in the maintenance of their wealth.

It is apparent by comparing Figures 1 and 2 that the growth in police spending is only partially accounted for by the increasing size of police forces. Another key development during this period was the post-9/11 militarization of Canadian police forces. Indeed, Kevin Walby with the University of Winnipeg studied police activities using data obtained through freedom of information requests in 12 cities. He found that that between 1980 and 2017, the yearly frequency

of SWAT tactical deployment increased by roughly 2100%. This staggering increase reflects a broader militarization of police that has helped equip departments with the capacity to deal with mass conflict, thus reducing the efficacy of direct action activities, such as protests and strikes.

On face value, an inattentive public might excuse the militarization of police as the byproduct of an arms race between criminals and our protectors. But when viewed within the context of two centuries of Canadian policing, it is clear that the blurring of the line between police and military forces is just the logical next step for a paternal order committed to the status quo.

This glum reality is brought into full clarity by the countless acts of police brutality that have been live streamed on television and social media accounts during the 2020 George Floyd protests (ongoing at the time of this writing). Indeed, it is readily apparent to even the most casual of observers that the image of the friendly neighborhood foot patrolman once imagined by the Canadian middle class is little more than a nice thought. Today, it serves as precursor to the glorified beat cop laying his life on the line to stop petty criminals, rapists, murderers, and kidnappers. Our image of policing in Modern Canada is largely constructed through rose-coloured glasses that seem to obscure a more than 200-year history of social oppression.



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“You may have heard the talk of diversity, sensitivity training, and body cameras. These are all fine and applicable, but they understate the task and allow the citizens of this country to pretend that there is real distance between their own attitudes and those of the ones appointed to protect them.”

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Between the World and Me”

Acknowledging the history of Canadian police as perpetrators of state violence, reformers have repeatedly tried to institute safe guards to limit the power of police. However, these have largely focused on limiting *unauthorized* state violence. Policy makers have done very little to interrogate the essential nature of policing. This has made meaningful reform difficult and explains why marginalized groups continue to be disproportionately impacted by aggressive police practices. In this area, it is no secret that reforms have largely failed to achieve their stated goals.

Policing bodies have made it even more difficult to implement and evaluate the effects of policies targeting them by resisting systematic data collection on their use of force and how they spend their time. Indeed, Canada has no central registry documenting use of force incidents or case clearance rates – the latter of these making it difficult to fully understand the extent to which police are abdicating their responsibility to serve communities (e.g., missing Indigenous women).

Despite these difficulties, expert panels have occasionally been convened to make recommendations for police reform. However, these frequently rely on academic organizations in which marginalized groups are under-represented. This means that most recommendations are coming from individuals who benefit from the systems of inequality that policing produces and reinforces. As such, narratives on police reform are often dominated with calls for greater respect, increased community engagement, enhanced training for police, and greater accountability.

Increasingly, however, the discussion of police reform has emphasized that training and accountability alone are insufficient to achieve needed changes. Indeed, police must not only be held accountable for police brutality, but should be screened in the police academy to ensure they are prepared to meet the high standards that communities expect of them (e.g., commitment to racial equality, peace, justice, anti-authoritarian beliefs). Police must not only abide by rules and policies, but the rules and policies themselves must be just (e.g., drug possession should be decriminalized). Police must not only wear body cameras, but the footage must be readily available to overseers and an independent body must be empowered to bring disciplinary and criminal charges. Police must not only receive anti-bias training, but they must be stopped from carrying lethal weapons to guarantee that their biases do not result in the use of deadly force.

While all of these suggestions have merits, studies repeatedly highlight that in addition to reforming police protocols, structural and societal reforms are essential. Indeed, a week of de-escalation training cannot overcome centuries of cultural conditioning. Furthermore, public pressure and democratic accountability is episodic at best – meaning commitments to behavioural reforms wain with time. Meanwhile, police leadership work every week of every year to pressure city councils, legislatures, and parliament to empower the police and increase their funding. Appeals for more training and more accountability are thus often accompanied with bigger budgets to fund these activities. In effect, this only expands the police state.

Adding to the complexities of reform, most advocates can only intervene with one police force at a time. While the scale of the RCMP opens opportunities for wide-reaching policy reforms, they still only make up about one-third of police in Canada. If meaningful reform is to be achieved, the nature of policing itself must be targeted by policy makers.

The need for structural reform is underscored by the nature of police accountability systems. In practice, police reform is frequently only brought up within the context of specific cases of police brutality: *Sammy Yatim, Ian Pryce, Alain Magloire, Nicholas Thorne-Belance, Jermaine Carby, Phuong Na Du, Marc Ekamba-Boekwa, Rene Gallant, Aburabman Ibrahim Hassan, Andrew Loku, Kwasi Skene-Peters, Bony Jean-Pierre, Abdirahman Abdi, Pierre Coriolan, Bydon Whitstone, Josephine Pelletier, Orlando Brown, Nicholas Gibbs, Jakamal Singh Lail, Chad Williams, Greg Ritchie, Machuar Madut, Sean Thompson, Randy Cochrane, D'Andre Campbell, Eishia Hudson, Jason Collins, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Chantel Moore*. However, in many of these cases, those defending police question every detail of the encounter between the police officer and the murder victim: “who moved which body parts and how?”, “what were they wearing?”, “how loud was the music?”, “what did the police officer have going on in their head?”. It goes on and on. All of these minute details are irrelevant to addressing the broader issues of police violence. The details of these encounters become points of debate that distract from the promises of due process, equity, freedom, and dignity.

Furthermore, the focus on individuals over social structures makes reform difficult on an interpersonal level. Many people in oversight roles know police personally. Most police are well intentioned and good natured – particularly so when they are not “on the beat,” assuming the machismo persona that society has constructed for police officers. Knowing police personally makes it difficult to reconcile the true nature of

policing (as a state monopoly on violence) with the smiling face of John’s colleague, Del.

That said, structural reform is easier taught in university lecture halls than done. Among the barriers to structural reform, police unions play a significant role in shaping reforms. Little academic research has been conducted to understand the role of police unions in Canada – largely because many Canadians who would like to see changes to policing systems are also supportive of organized labour. Research from Dr. Rob Gillezeau at the University of Victoria has shown that when police officers have gained access to collective bargaining rights, there have been substantial increases in the killings of civilians. Police unions not only bargain for wage increases and overtime hours like every other union, but for protections from prosecution for crimes they commit. They fight over subtle details such as when police involved in a civilian murder need to give statements, whether police body camera footage is public, and how histories of police misconduct can be used in disciplinary proceedings. This is the level of detail at which reforms are negotiated and it is difficult for advocates and community leaders to match the expertise of union representatives (particularly so when data on policing is so opaque).

As a result of these interlocking and reinforcing obstacles to police reform, recommendations for how to better control the police frequently fall back on policies that are acceptable to police, their unions, and politicians. These tend to favour reforms (such as enhanced training) which lead to significant budgetary increases.

However, the most pressing challenges to policing are not the structural hierarchies that form existing governance structures. Rather, the most effective barriers against police reform are the social hierarchies (e.g., racism, classism, colonialism) that motivate states to invest so heavily in policing in the first place.

The Difficulty of Police Reform

“Ten tactics are regularly used to excuse (or deny) institutionalized racism. Each of these tactics also has its police analogy, both as applied to individual cases and in regard to the general issue of police brutality. Here are a few examples:

(1) Denial. “The professionalism and restraint ... was nothing short of outstanding.” “America does not have a human-rights problem.”

(2) Minimization. Injuries were “of a minor nature.” “Police use force infrequently.”

(3) Blame. “This guy isn’t Mr. Innocent Citizen, either. Not by a long shot.” “They died because they were criminals.”

(4) Redefinition. It was “mutual combat.” “Resisting arrest.” “The use of force is necessary to protect yourself.”

(5) Unintentionality. “Officers have no choice but to use deadly force against an assailant who is deliberately trying to kill them....”

(6) It’s over now. “We’re making changes.” “We will change our training; we will do everything in our power to make sure it never happens again.”

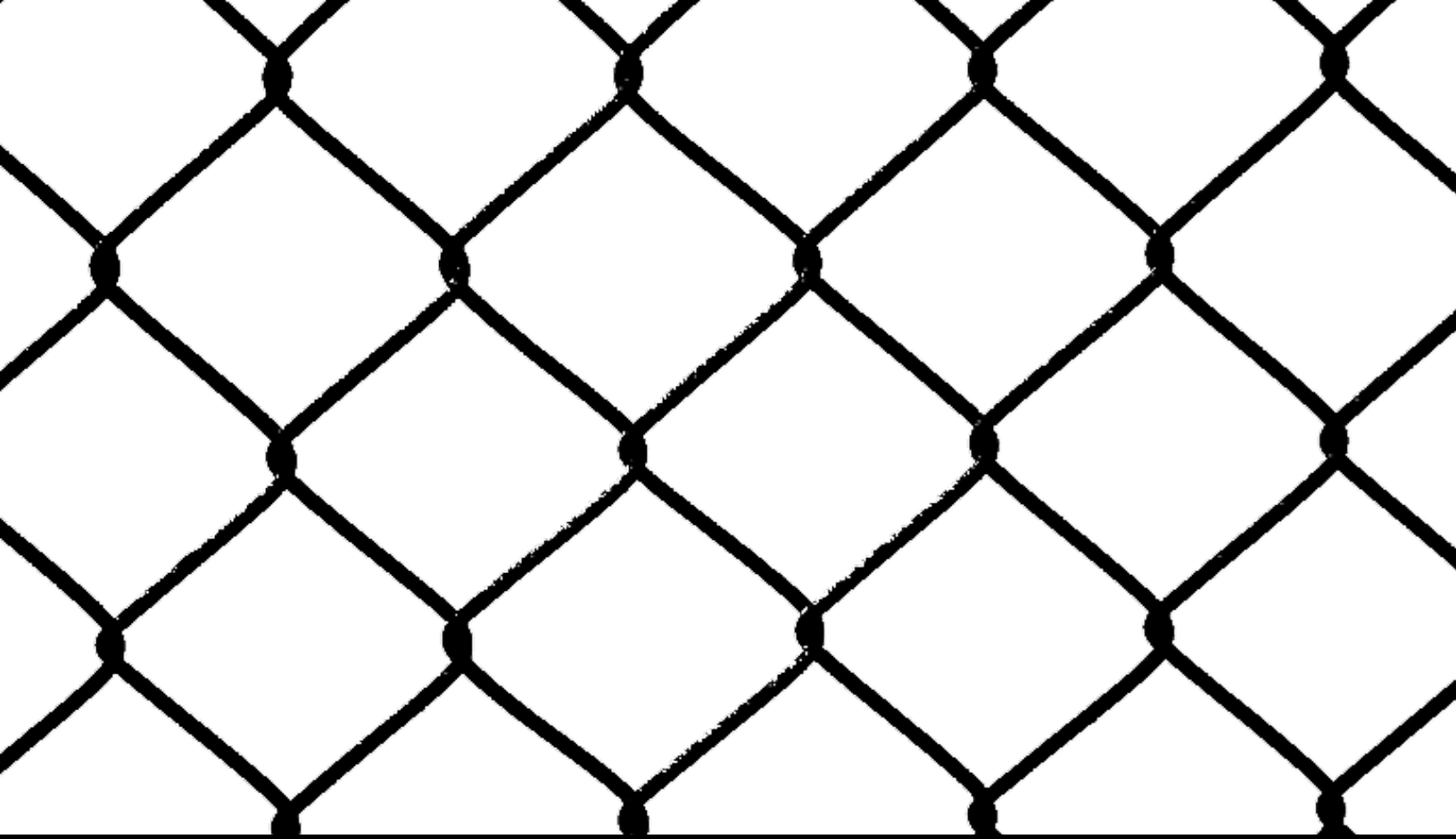
(7) It’s only a few men. “A small proportion of officers are disproportionately involved in use-of-force incidents.” “Even if we determine that the officers were out of line ... it is an aberration.”

(8) Counterattack. “The only thing they understand is physical force and pain.” “People make complaints to get out of trouble.”

(9) Competing victimization. The police are “in constant danger.” “Liberals are prejudiced against police, much as many white police are biased against Negroes.” The police are “the most downtrodden, oppressed, dislocated minority in America.”

(10) The thin blue line. “These guys are heroes.” “The police routinely do what the rest of us don’t: They risk their lives to keep the peace....” “Without the police ... anarchy would be rife in this country...” “They alone stand guard at the upstairs door of Hell.”

- Kristian Williams, “Our Enemies in Blue”



WHAT WORKS?



“The basic nature of the law and the police, since its earliest origins, is to be a tool for managing inequality and maintaining the status quo. Police reforms that fail to directly address this reality are doomed to reproduce it.”

- Alex Vitale, “The End of Policing”

When thinking about practical methods of reducing police violence, it is useful to understand what factors are associated therewith. Generally speaking, research evidence suggests that individual-level correlates have minimal impact on violence. As much focus as there is on diversifying police forces and eliminating implicit biases, these factors are not the primary determinants of police violence and therefore are likely to have minimal effect. This of course, is not to say that police forces should not be diversified – especially because the diversification of police forces can have long term benefits in changing the problematic cultures sometimes characteristic of white-dominated and male-led organizations. In any case, the narrow focus on individuals distracts from the structural and social changes that are most effective.

Procedural and systems-level variables are likely a better point of intervention. For example, some studies show that police departments that allow officers to self-complete reports on their use of force have higher rates of violence compared to departments where a report is completed by a supervisor. Consequences for police violence appear to be good. Another example is that increased field training has been linked to increased use of lethal force. There is also evidence supporting benefits of smaller neighborhood-focused policing. The idea behind so called *community policing* is that cooperative relationships between police and neighborhoods shift away from the hierarchical dynamic that might otherwise lead to violence and oppression.

However, community policing models are in many ways a fantasy. When implemented, they

are often done so using top-down approaches that lack true community partnerships. Some of the difficulties arise from the history and origins of policing, how it is funded, and how police bodies are governed. In many ways, it is simply not feasible to have highly trained police forces that are truly community-based. Certainly there are some examples in the literature of cooperation – but the personalities and characteristics of the real individuals who make these systems work are often ignored as key components to their success. Deep seeded distrust between communities and police further make these reforms difficult to implement.

That said, policing models that empower local neighborhoods to make decisions regarding police activities and budgets provide a much better policing model and minimize the extent to which policing serves as a tool of state violence. However, this raises questions over who gets to establish neighbourhood boundaries that would be used to develop these community policing programs. For a community-policing model to be effective it must truly center the voices and experiences of those most heavily impacted by discriminatory and oppressive forces. This impact must be measured not only in terms of police violence, but by considering broader racial and economic forms of oppression as well. Even better, these communities could be empowered to make decisions not only about policing activities, but also the tradeoffs between police spending and spending on other community supports and social services. For example, given the extent to which police regularly interact with homeless or street-involved people, transferring a portion of police budgets to pay for supportive

housing might prove to be an effective strategy for reducing the size of police forces while also reducing the need for police. Solutions that address the supply and demand for police simultaneously, while also addressing broader social and structural inequities are excellent targets for reform.

However, not all structural changes to policing can be accomplished with a single budgetary decision. Long term structural change can take time and effort. Immediate stop gap policies are needed that address on-the-ground realities of policing. Situational factors have consistently been identified as drivers of police violence. Among other factors, police are more violent towards intoxicated individuals, during civil unrest, when weapons are present, and when police are attempting to make an arrest. As such, reducing the number of police equipped with firearms, minimizing the extent to which police are interacting with people who use drugs or alcohol, and managing what role police play during protests are the sorts of reforms that you'd expect to generate a significant impact on reducing police violence. These sorts of solutions highlight a need to not just reform training and accountability, but to rethink the very nature of policing in contemporary society.

Indeed, as we have discussed, lack of careful oversight – both on the side of policy makers, but also on the side of the public – has allowed for the dramatic expansion of police department mandates. Police are now regularly involved in emergency medicine, social work, public health, addictions therapy, child education, mental health, and so many other domains – fields in which they lack expertise and training. Addressing the creeping scope of policing in Canada directly addresses the situational drivers that give rise to police violence by simply limiting the number of times in a day that a police officer

is put into a situation that is likely to lead to violence. We simply do not need heavily armed individuals to respond to every instance of social disorder, unrest, or public safety. Finding structural solutions that prevent dangerous situations from arising and using technology, such as automated ticketing systems, are essential strategies for policing the state monopoly on violence.

Suggested Readings

- Robyn Maynard. “Policing Black Lives”
- Angela Davis “Are Prisons Obsolete”
- Ta-Nehisi Coates. “Between the World and Me”
- Radley Balko “Rise of the Warrior Cop”
- Alex Vitale. “The End of Policing”
- Kristian Williams “Our Enemies in Blue”
- Michelle Alexander “The New Jim Crow”
- Desmond Cole “The Skin We're In”
- The Center for Popular Democracy. “Freedom to Thrive: Reimagining Safety & Security in Our Communities.”
- Encyclopedia Britannica. “Police”
- Steve Hewitt “Riding to the Rescue”
- Donald Fyson “Magistrates, Police, and People”
- The national Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. “Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls”
- Andrea Headley & James Wright. “National Police Reform Commissions: Evidence-Based Practices or Unfulfilled Promises?”
- Peter Vronsky “Crime and Punishment in Canada”



Decriminalize, Disarm, & Divest

Practical Recommendations for Long-Term Police Reform

- Stop incarcerating individuals for non-violent offenses and decriminalize personal drug possession and sex work.
- Utilize participatory policing models in which decision makers and neighbourhood communities share oversight over the police and their budgets.
- Outlaw ticket quotas and “productivity goals.”
- Shift police budgets 2.5% per year for the next 10 years to educational and social programs serving poverty-impacted and racialized communities.
- Shift 5% of annual police budgets to supportive housing programs to house homeless individuals.
- Reduce the size of police forces to no more than 175 officers per 100,000 residents and eliminate routine overtime.
- Restrict per capita police spending to \$275 CAD.
- Mandate “always-on” body cameras for all police officers and place video footage under the control of an independent civilian-led office.
- Increase utilization of non-contact police ticketing systems (e.g., traffic cameras, ticket-by-mail).
- Establish a strict accreditation system for police that screens out candidates who demonstrate authoritarian tendencies, aggression, or racial bias.
- Mandate a 1:1 ratio of field training and anti-bias/de-escalation training.
- Eliminate forms of qualified immunity and adopt a zero tolerance policy for excessive force.
- Institute responsive policing practices that restrict police from interacting with the public unless they are dispatched or it is necessary to protect individuals from immediate harm.
- Prohibit police officers from routinely carrying fire arms and create a multi-tiered system for police armament wherein only authorized officers and specialists routinely carry lethal weapons.
- Prohibit police forces from purchasing and using military-grade equipment, require them to surrender previously purchased equipment, and prohibit the Canadian armed forces from donating surplus equipment to police forces.
- Prohibit any holds or restraints that put undue stress on cardiovascular or respiratory function.
- Establish a civilian-led independent investigation office that automatically investigates, reports on, and, when appropriate, recommends charges for any police-related incident involving death or hospitalization.
- Create a national use of force database to track police behaviour and evaluate impacts of reforms.
- Implement a nation-wide hiring freeze to facilitate the phased scale down of police forces.

