

BUILDING A **SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA**



## **ECONOMICS OF POLICING**

*Baseline for Policing Research in Canada*



Public Safety  
Canada

Sécurité publique  
Canada

Canada 

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*The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Public Safety Canada or of those individuals interviewed.*

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## **Executive Summary**

### *The Need for Research-based Policing in Canada*

In contrast to other countries, Canadian police services, governments, research institutions and other policing stakeholders are not capitalizing on the many opportunities for better collaboration on policing research issues. In addition, with a few notable exceptions, Canadian police services have not invested in developing the capacity to conduct policing research that focuses on outcomes rather than outputs. As a result, police service operational and organizational strategies are not benefiting from evidence-based research and the intended impact may not be fully realized. To improve this situation, leading police scholars in Canada have called for the creation of a coordinating body to bring stakeholders together to conduct, disseminate and use policing research. The creation of a national, credible, broad-based and representative policing research centre is widely viewed as the cornerstone to any strategy to overcome many of the noted challenges.

### *Background*

Growth in the cost of police service is a major concern for the Canadian policing community. In 2011 alone, the total operating expenditure for Canadian local policing was roughly \$13 billion. As a result, police services across Canada are facing increased fiscal challenges while attempting to balance the need to combat crime. To respond to this challenge, Canadian police services will need to consider a new management paradigm focusing on the use of evidence-based research to help: 1) develop efficient and effective law enforcement strategies; 2) generate improved outcomes to make our communities safer; and 3) better control policing costs.

### *Methodology*

This research paper examines the state of police research in Canada. More specifically, it assesses the extent to which policing research is carried out in Canada, by whom and how policing research is shared nationally. Structured interviews with police services, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and universities across Canada were carried out. The views of several organizations abroad that conduct police research in the UK, Australia, the Netherlands and the US were also examined to determine how policing research is conducted and networked and to identify international best practices. Lastly, discussions were held with a

number of participants at the National Summit on the Economics of Policing, held in Ottawa in January 2013, to solicit their views on police research in Canada. Public Safety Canada funded this study to understand the state of policing research in Canada and to benchmark the Canadian situation in comparison to other countries.

### Key Findings

#### *State of Policing Research*

In light of the different policing jurisdictions at the various levels of government (e.g., federal, provincial, municipal), policing research is not centrally coordinated. Instead, individual police services, governments, academic institutions and policing stakeholders conduct research to meet their own specific needs. It is likely that strategic coordination in this area would lead to greater efficiencies.

#### *Police Services*

With a few notable exceptions, Canadian police services have not invested in developing the capability to conduct in-depth evidence-based research and analysis, and it has proven difficult to sustain efforts to build this capability. In addition, most police services do not have resources dedicated to reviewing police research in order to implement evidence-based best practices.

#### *Universities*

While a number of universities in Canada have faculty members with research interests in policing, there is currently no national consortium of Canadian researchers coordinating or collaborating on major research projects. In addition, research conducted in these universities is generally specific to the interests of individual faculty members, as is the extent of collaboration with police services.

#### *Professional Organizations*

There are a number of specialized professional organizations and networks that support research related to policing. Two of the more prominent organizations are:

- The Canadian Police Research Centre (CPRC) which conducts policing research, but is limited to more technical and scientific aspects of policing; and

- The Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) which plays a key role in e-learning in the field of policing offering approximately 80 courses to police personnel across the country. While the CKPN does not conduct research, it is a valuable mechanism for disseminating research-informed materials.

### *Research Sharing and Stakeholder Collaboration*

On a national level, police research is not fully integrated, coordinated, or available in a single location to provide ready-access to existing research for law enforcement practitioners. Other countries, such as Australia, the UK and the US serve as excellent models of how to develop collaboration among academia and police services while leading policing research in a strategic fashion.

### *Funding Policing Research in Canada*

Canada offers generous support to fund research in this country. The majority of current funding for police research in Canada is provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and to a lesser extent by municipal, provincial and territorial government on an ad hoc basis. However, other funding options remain largely untapped in the public, private and academic sectors and these potentially could be leveraged to fund policing research in Canada. For example, the Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) provides grants intended to engage industry, academia and all levels of government in collaborative research projects that address Canada's public safety priorities. Organizations such as the DRDC represent possible avenues to fund current and future policing research requirements.

### *Moving Forward*

It is evident from this research study that the debate over the economics and sustainability of policing, budgets and operational policy decisions could be supported by research findings or evaluated best practices from a Canadian perspective. In addition, Canada has the capacity and expertise to facilitate the necessary changes to ensure that evidence-based research supports police operations, strategic planning and policy-making. We can leverage the expertise from our international partners who have developed successful policing research institutions. However, in order to do so, it must be championed at the senior levels. In addition, police services need to make more progress in attracting and retaining civilian analysts with specialized skill-sets to



conduct research and apply it to policing matters, in collaboration with universities on an ongoing basis. It would also require input and support from different jurisdictions in Canada (e.g., municipal, provincial, territorial, federal levels) and other partners.

Research-based policing is not an end unto itself. Policing in Canada will only be economically sustainable if police services have a clear understanding of how to apply research findings strategically and in a pragmatic fashion to improve the quality of services while at the same time reducing costs. In this sense, research-based policing could serve as the foundation for developing a national research agenda and coordinating resources to generate solutions to important policing problems affecting multiple jurisdictions. In doing so, it could provide police services with a toolkit of options from which to draw upon as they work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of policing in their jurisdictions, thereby making communities safer across Canada. As a result, there are likely significant opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing operations in Canada.

## **Introduction**

The increasing complexity of the issues surrounding the delivery of police services requires that policy-makers, operational personnel and funding bodies be informed by evidence-based research. This is optimized when there is: funding for police research; police services have the capacity to conduct analyses on all phases of their operations; there are collaborative relationships between the police and academia; and structures exist to facilitate the dissemination of research findings to a wide audience.

## **Project Objectives**

This project was designed to gather information on the state of police research in Canada and to examine the structures and programs for police research in several international jurisdictions and how they are working together. The materials gathered in this project can be used to inform the creation of a framework to advance police research in Canada and to create structures that will facilitate the development of relationships between police services, governments and academia. At the outset, it is important to note that the term “research” is used generically throughout this report. There are a broad range of activities and methodologies that are described as “research”. This includes both quantitative and qualitative data and activities ranging from a simple listing of

descriptive statistics, to sophisticated statistical analyses. Also, the following discussion is designed to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. In the space of one paper, it is not feasible to document all police research. In some instances, specific figures as to levels of funding from government, universities and other sources were not available due to the absence of a central repository. Finally, the following discussion is designed to provide an overview of the topic; a comprehensive review of all facets of police research in Canada and internationally, including specific research initiatives, was beyond the scope of this project. It is likely that such a review would be challenging, particularly in Canada, where there is no centralized repository of research projects, funding support, key findings and implications of the results.

## **Project Method**

The project utilized a variety of methodologies, including: 1) a review of the published and unpublished research literature; 2) an internet search on existing structures involved in funding and conducting research and disseminating research findings; 3) a scan of conference presentations and other forums featuring police research; and 4) interviews with key respondents. The project involved a scan of the situation in Canada and in several international jurisdictions. Particular attention was given to the capacities that exist to facilitate police research.

Interviews were conducted by telephone and by SKYPE with representatives from police services, government, universities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Canada (27) and several international jurisdictions, including the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the US (8). In addition, discussions were held with a number of participants from the national *Summit on the Economics of Policing: Strengthening Canada's Policing Advantage*, held in Ottawa, January 16-17, 2013.

## **The Interview Schedule**

The interviews were centered on several general themes.

### In Canada

The Evolution and Current State of Police Research:

- The evolution of structures and processes for police research, including funding in Canada;
- The current landscape of police research, including the current capacities for conducting police research, as well as the structures and processes that exist to enhance the dissemination of research findings to a wide audience;
- The gaps in capacity with respect to funding, collaboration and the dissemination of research findings;
- The areas of policing that remain largely unexplored by researchers; and
- The role of private consultants and private consulting firms in police research.

#### Police Research and the Economics of Policing:

- The extent to which discussions of the economics of policing have been informed by evidence-based research and research on specific issues;
- The optimal arrangements for funding and conducting research on the economics of policing; and
- The processes that can be established to ensure that the findings from this research inform deliberations on the economics of policing.

#### Going Forward:

- The structures and processes required to improve the infrastructure and capacity for policing research in Canada; and
- Suggestions for creating a national research centre.

#### At the International Level:

- The structures and processes for funding, conducting and disseminating the findings of police research in other jurisdictions, including the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands;

- The range of topics that have been examined in research projects;
- The involvement of government agencies, not-for-profit foundations, police research units and others as sponsors of police research;
- The level of funding support for police research;
- The collaborative arrangements that exist between governments, universities and police services to facilitate police research;
- The models that exist in these jurisdictions to enhance funding and conducting police research;
- The processes that exist to ensure the dissemination of police research to a wide audience, including the use of social media; and
- The experience in international jurisdictions in developing the infrastructure for police research and the lessons learned about the challenges in developing the capacity to fund and conduct police research and disseminate findings in a timely manner.

An attempt was also made to determine the role that private consultants and private consulting firms play in police research in Canada and selected international jurisdictions.

## **The Evolution and Current State of Police Research in Canada**

Overall, Canadian respondents acknowledge that there are opportunities to improve the current state of police research in Canada. This is reflected in the comments of a number of scholars, government representatives, private consultants and police personnel, including the following:

*“Policing research is at a significant disadvantage because there is currently no academy for policing research in Canada. There are no systems in place for evidence-based research, as opposed to the UK, US, Australia and the Netherlands. As such, much Canadian research is based on international studies. It is estimated that we are 10-15 years behind those countries in terms of the research systems we have in place and the capacity to conduct that research. In short, the state of policing research is poor and in its infancy.”* (Senior police leader, municipal police service)

*“Currently policing research in Canada is disjointed, incoherent, fragmented and inconsistent. It tends to be narrow and abstract, insular and focused on a specific*

*task (e.g., public policy or a police department's internal study). There is not much in the grey area in between.” (Academic)*

*“It (policing) is a \$12 billion industry and we are currently spending the equivalent of 12 cents on research and development. It is fragmented and there is no connectivity between those conducting the research. At the moment nothing is being done to improve the state of Canadian police research and no resources are being specifically allocated to this field. The state of policing research has slipped significantly since the 1970's.”(Academic)*

*“There is a pretty good academic tradition in Canada regarding ‘academic type’ research on policing; however, ‘research’ is probably not the best term. It is more like policy analysis or the development of theoretical work. Actual research with data collection in police departments or police services is limited.” (Academic)*

*“Research is being done, but by accident. Most police organizations don't know why it's important or how to use the information that is gathered. There is no strategic plan for police/criminological research.” (Former Canadian police leader)*

*“There is not much going on. There are no forums and no dollars.” (Senior police leader)*

*“We are not serious enough about policing in Canada.” (Senior police leader)*

*“When we compare police research in Canada to what is being done in US, Australia and UK we fall way behind.” (Police Educator)*

*“Currently, research tends to be driven by a narrow focus of what the research should be and also the narrowness of its application.” (Police Educator)*

*“Current research in Canada is not very robust. The research is not focused. There is no strategic overlay or direction on putting the pieces together.” (Executive Director, regional police service board)*

*“The focus of police research tends to be driven by the interests of individual academics.” (Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) official)*

One academic noted that the current capacity for the production and dissemination of police research by the federal government is not as extensive as it has been in past years:

*“People tend to gravitate to areas where they can get funding and as there is little funding support for policing research, there are few people currently producing consistent work. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is no capacity development being done.”*

This lack of capacity is also evident in Canadian universities where there are few streams for the study of policing. As one police leader commented, “In universities, there are few undergraduate and graduate degrees specific to policing and no doctoral policing degrees. The Canadian

academic research community is very small and quite limited.” Much of the academic research that has been conducted in Canada remains “hidden in plain sight”, published in professional journals that are rarely accessed by police services and not written in a manner that is understandable and actionable by police leaders (Nixon and Bradley, 2009). This lack of access to police research extends to the members of police service boards, municipal councilors and government policy-makers.

This also increases the likelihood that funding decisions for police by municipal and provincial governments will not be informed by the research literature and best practices in policing, but rather by political expediency. Police scholars have noted that “there is a tendency for governments under pressure to abandon long-term policies of reform and replace them with short-term ones of expediency” (Johnston and Shearing, 2009:418). This is evident in the dialogue on the economics of policing that is presently occurring in Canada.

Several observers interviewed for the project also indicated that it was important to move beyond the “personification” of research wherein the focus of research is only within the interests of specific academics. This does not require the abandonment of the principles of critical inquiry; rather perhaps an expansion of the range of issues addressed in research and a milieu in which police services can be active partners in the conduct and dissemination of research findings. These are areas that would be addressed by a national police research centre.

## **The State of Canadian Police Research**

Interviews with Canadian respondents revealed that there is only a limited capacity among the key stakeholder groups in Canadian policing, including police service boards, municipal councils, and police associations, to conduct research. It is difficult to access Canadian and international research studies and there is often little communication between academics and these groups. In this regard, collaborative partnerships could increase access to expertise in the field of policing. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) and many other associations have also noted that it is important to begin building this capacity.

To bridge this gap, Canadian organizations rely on research findings from other international jurisdictions, particularly the UK and the US. An RCMP official stated:

*“If the RCMP is looking for law enforcement data research they will look to the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand. All of these countries are doing substantially more research than Canada and there appears to be an increase in research in the US and UK. Challenges occur because it can be comparing apples to oranges because of the policing model in Canada.”*

The extent to which the findings from these jurisdictions are applicable to Canadian police work has not been examined. There has, for example, been strong interest in developments of policing in the UK, including the outsourcing of traditional police activities to the private sector. The extent to which this practice would be an effective strategy in Canada is unknown. Certainly, the current absence of structures of accountability and transparency for private security firms would suggest that there is the need for a close examination of alternatives.

The Canadian policing landscape – geographical, jurisdictional, legislative and political – is considerably different from that of other jurisdictions. With the exception of Australia, there are considerable differences in the geographical contexts within which Canadian police services are delivered. Take for example policing in remote and northern communities, which presents challenges to police services not seen in other jurisdictions and requires a different framework for discussions regarding key issues such as the economics and sustainability of policing. Comparatively, little research has been conducted on policing in these environments, despite their importance in the Canadian policing landscape.

Policing in the UK, Netherlands and Scotland is also highly centralized. This makes it less difficult to establish performance standards, coordinate research and disseminate research findings to a wide audience.

## **The Federal Government and Police Research**

Several interviewees noted that in many international jurisdictions, the state plays a major role in funding police research. Governments in these nations also are involved in assisting with establishing portals and platforms through which research findings are made accessible to a broad audience, and collaboration and networking between academics, police services and other stakeholder groups is encouraged. In contrast, Canada does not centrally coordinate its policing research and there is no strategic plan for police research across the country.

A review of the history of police research in Canada reveals that at one time there was a robust capacity for funding police research and disseminating those findings widely. During the 1980s, the federal Ministry of the Solicitor General operated a well-staffed and highly qualified Police Research Unit that was a focal point for collaboration with university-based police scholars and produced high-quality police research. In addition, the federal government provided annual funding support for a number of university-based Criminology Research Centres across the country. The federal government also sponsored national conferences on police-related topics. One police educator stated, “Funding cuts by the federal government has dramatically changed the landscape of research.”

An academic recalled the previous involvement of the federal government in police research:

*“In the 70s, the Solicitor General had an active role in police research with a research division staffed with researchers and inspectors from various police departments that were seconded to that office. This was highly beneficial as the inspectors that worked in the research division invariably went on to become chiefs of police. Funding was also significantly greater and more readily available. Moreover, in the current climate, there is a distinct lack of qualified staff (people with a research background) to fill research division positions.”*

Over the past three decades, the infrastructure for research support and the funding mechanisms that were designed to facilitate research and foster collaborative relationships between the universities, governments and police services have been cut back. One police scholar noted that “at the moment, there is currently no source of funding specifically for police research. The SSHRC exists for researchers, but it is not specific to policing.” The role of the federal government in the dissemination of research findings has also diminished.

Similarly, in 2006 the Law Commission of Canada (LCC) was dismantled, which significantly weakened research capacity on policing issues. The Commission was involved in facilitating research on police policy and practice, and was by all accounts, good “value for money.” The last volume produced by the LCC, *In Search of Security: The Future of Policing in Canada*, is still widely-cited by police researchers. Now over five years old, this report is the most recent examination of the various dimensions of policing in Canadian society.



One outcome of these developments is that compared to other international jurisdictions, there is virtually no private sector or government funding specifically for police research. The current state of funding for police research in Canada is summed up in the comments of a provincial Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice: “There is no funding and there never has been funding.” Currently, the majority of federal funding for police research comes from only a few consolidated funding sources, including SSHRC and from ad hoc government contracts for short-term projects that are comparatively small in breadth.

SSHRC awards funding for research through a number of programs, including Standard Research Grants, the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives Program, Knowledge Mobilization grants and the Networks of Centres of Excellence. SSHRC is a primary funding source for police research conducted by university-based scholars. A review of research grants awarded by SSHRC during the period 2009-2011 provides an illustration of the range of police-related topics that received support. These are set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Police-Related Research Studies Funded by SSHRC, 2009-2011**

<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Investigating Police Investigators Perceptions of Eyewitnesses	\$32,346.00
Minding the Gap: State Accountability for Human Rights Abuses of Private Security Companies	\$20,000.00
The Effect of Perceived Threat on Use of Force Decision Making: A Study of Conducted Energy Weapon Use	\$17,500.00
The Ontario Police Complaints System: Perspectives on Where We are Three Years Later	\$100,000.00
Improving the Comprehension of Canadian Police Cautions	\$27,998.00
Policing the Eastern Caribbean 1834-1962	\$27,000.00
Threat, Partnership, or False Alarm Canadian Public Policing and the Realities of Secularization	\$10,000.00

Tracking Transnational Crime Effectively: Assessing Police Cooperation in Drug Smuggling Cases	\$32,498.00
Le Peacekeeper Comme Nouveau Visage de la Police: Les Cas de la Participation Policière Canadienne à la Mission des Nations Unies Pour la Stabilisation en Haïti	\$11,709.00
Toward a Comprehensive Theoretically-based Program of Criminal Profiling Research	\$17,500.00
Public Complaints Against the Police: A Call for Meaningful Oversight and Police Accountability	\$17,500.00

Although SSHRC does fund joint initiatives and projects that involve partnerships between academics and the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, according to several informants interviewed for the project, police services are rarely involved as collaborators in SSHRC-funded research projects. As one academic noted:

*“Those applying for SSHRC can seek partnership development grants that can be done directly between police agencies and researchers; however, this is left solely to the initiative of the individual applicants. That is, the police must approach researchers or vice versa.”*

Another academic interviewed for the project who frequently accesses SSHRC funding noted that these grants often involve heavily theorized kinds of studies, stating, “They tend to produce studies that are written for other academics as opposed to the policing community or the broader community.” Most often, this scholar noted, the research is reported in academic journals and remains “hidden in plain sight.”

Although SSHRC-funded research studies may make a significant contribution to the academic literature, there is no mechanism in place to disseminate the findings to a broader audience, including the police. When available, the research reports are often in their original format (lengthy and some with sophisticated statistical analysis) and are not presented in alternative formats that may be accessible to, useable for, or comprehensible to non-academics. Much of the research remains “unpublished” or is published in academic journals. In addition, SSHRC

funding is often for “one-offs” rather than being awarded to studies that are part of a national program for police research designed to inform evidence-based policy and practice.

Concern over the adequacy of funding for police research, even during the period of federal involvement, is not new. Two decades ago, the Canadian criminologist Anthony Doob (1993), wrote:

*“Given the national cost of policing and the concerns expressed by various governments with those costs, one might expect commensurate investment in and attention to policing research. Yet that has not been the case.”*

A number of interviewees indicated that Public Safety Canada should be the proper umbrella organization for a national strategy for police research. A police educator interviewed for the project stated: “it is critical that Public Safety become vested in the process and develops leadership, vision and the ability to operationalize the mandate.” Another noted, however, that there was a lack of interest in transitioning the Police Sector Council responsibilities to Public Safety Canada. That said, there was a consensus among the Canadians interviewed for the project that the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments *do* have a role to play in the creation of a model for police research and collaboration. There has been a significant devolution of police research over the past 25 years that has contributed to the current fragmentation of research and the absence of research networks that bring together police services, universities and other stakeholder groups. One university-based scholar offered the following observation: “In terms of policing research in Canada, we tend to think in local and provincial terms” and added that the federal government no longer plays a significant leadership or coordination role policing policy.

Although limited in its funding and capacity, Public Safety Canada has a number of research units that undertake research that is of interest to the policing community in Canada. Each unit has operated slightly differently over the years with some more focused on researching projects with in-house resources or through program evaluation (which is the case in the area of crime prevention), some that mainly do in-house research but often partner with academics (e.g., the area of corrections), as well as other research and policy units that mainly contract out research of interest, such as organized crime, or other policing issues. Contracted research of most direct interest to the policing community has been undertaken by the former Law Enforcement and Policing Branch, managed through units such as

Research and National Coordination, Organized Crime (RNCOC) and the RCMP Policing Policy Division (RCMP PPD). For example, since 2008-2009, RNCOC has invested about \$250,000 to \$300,000 a year in contracted research. The contracting process has largely used the government's competitive procurement process which has resulted in a mix of international and Canadian academics, as well as professional consultants, undertaking this work. The majority of the research reports, particularly those projects undertaken under contract, is publicly available on the Public Safety Canada website ([www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/index-eng.aspx?t=cntrng-crm](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/index-eng.aspx?t=cntrng-crm)) and is provided directly to policing stakeholders.

## **The Role of the Provincial, Territorial & Municipal Governments in Police Research**

Information provided by the interviewees indicates that provincial/territorial governments are not generally involved in research nor in facilitating collaborative research partnerships with colleges and universities. As well, it was noted that there are no structures in place to facilitate the involvement of provincial and territorial governments in collaborative networks. One provincial Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice who was interviewed had never heard of the Canadian Police Research Centre and saw only "limited to nil" research from universities in his province. No provincial or territorial jurisdiction currently has a strategic plan for police research or assumes the lead in funding and disseminating police research. In Alberta, for example, funding for policing research is essentially fueled by the provincial policing services themselves, most often by the larger Calgary and Edmonton police services. This research is limited and is mainly focused on patrol deployment and arrest rates. A small amount of funding is provided by the provincial Solicitor General; however, there are no government funded research chairs in Alberta.

Most often, provincial and territorial funding is provided as a "one-off". In 2012, for example, the province of Ontario provided \$1 million in funding to the Toronto Police Service to research anti-gang violence initiatives. While the project may result in key insights into best practices in this area, there is no mechanism to facilitate the dissemination of the results of the study, including best practices and "lessons learned." This example illustrates the point that where funding is being made available for police-related research, the investment is not being

maximized. A review of provincial police service divisions indicates that there is very little research being conducted by these units. As one provincial program manager stated:

*“It is all done on an ad hoc basis. There is no provincial strategy for policing research and no forum for personnel in these units from across the country to meet and to network. Any research that is required is most often topic-specific and most often involves a search of the literature.”*

A senior program manager in a provincial Police Services Division observed:

*“There is a fundamental problem between quality research and public policy: by the time the government is aware that they need research they don’t have an adequate timeline to do research, and if research is undertaken, by the time it is complete the issue isn’t topical anymore and research is not required. It is very difficult to have evidence-based policy because of the time it takes to synthesize the research into public policy.”*

Several interviewees indicated that there was a need to close the gap between police policy and police researchers. This could be facilitated by regular communication of research findings from academic studies, the identification of trends and ongoing communication with policy-makers.

One informant who had previous experience working with the Police Services Division in Ontario stated that the Government did not want to be associated with research in case of any negative results. They also tend to focus exclusively on research topics that have a political cache such as domestic violence and on research topics that were timely in a political sense. Similarly, another police services division was characterized as having no experience in conducting research and often focused on issues prevalent in the media. A current staff member in a provincial police services division indicated that “key areas of policing remain unexplored.” This includes police performance measures and measures of effectiveness. Currently, most police services divisions look only at crime rates. This staff member also noted that there are currently no mechanisms in place for research to inform policy.

One area where provinces and territories are engaged in policing research is with regards to studies conducted in conjunction with commissions of inquiry or investigations into specific areas of policing and/or criminal justice, often in response to a critical incident or series of incidents. Examples include:

- *The Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba* (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1999), commissioned following the deaths of Helen Betty Osborne in Thompson, Manitoba and

John Joseph Harper in Winnipeg. The three volume final report included an in-depth examination of Aboriginal peoples and the justice system, as well as the circumstances surrounding the two deaths and numerous recommendations for addressing the challenges surrounding Aboriginal peoples in the justice system.

- *Restricting the Use of Conducted Energy Weapons in British Columbia* (Braidwood Commission on the Death of Robert Dziekanski, 2009), Part 1 of a provincially-sponsored inquiry into the death of Mr. Dziekanski at the Vancouver International Airport on October 14, 2007. This portion of the inquiry focused on the police use of Tasers and contains a comprehensive review of the literature.
- *A Review of Yukon's Police Force* (Yukon Government, 2010), commissioned following the death of an Aboriginal man in RCMP cells in Whitehorse. The final report, *Sharing Common Ground* (Arnold, Clark and Cooley, 2011), contained materials gathered in consultations with Yukon First Nations communities; focus group sessions with RCMP members in "M" Division and identifies the challenges surrounding the delivery of police services in remote and northern communities. The report contained a number of recommendations for improving police-community relations and the delivery of policing services in Yukon.

The extent to which the provincial and territorial governments are involved in sponsoring research and involved in collaborative partnerships with universities is, at best, uneven. A provincial Assistant Deputy Minister of Justice indicated that there were currently no agreements in place between his ministry and universities. He noted that, on occasion, his ministry receives a request from a student for assistance on a thesis project and they will attempt to connect the student with appropriate contacts in a police service. Any research required is done on an internal basis and in his province, there were no structures or processes in place to disseminate research findings. From the materials gathered in interviews with other informants across Canada, it appears that the situation in this province is not unique.

Municipal governments may also be involved in funding research on specific police issues. The City of Richmond, BC, for example, sponsored research examining the feasibility of creating its own municipal police service to replace the RCMP. A number of municipalities, including Vancouver and Winnipeg, have contracted for operational reviews of their police services.

Unfortunately, there is no central repository where information can be gathered and disseminated on the levels of funding for these projects, the research design, the data gathered, the findings from the analysis and on the researchers who conducted the studies.

## The Absence of Research and the Dialogue on the Economics and Sustainability of Policing

*“Policing research is highly important because policing is so expensive.” (Academic)*

*“Currently, there are no measures to inform or reform policies. There needs to be research done on the economics of policing and this needs to be fed into decisions on funding and policing and how/where dollars are spent. There is a need for evidence-based research to support current policy decision making and determine funding requirements.” (Senior Program Manager, provincial Police Services Division)*

The many opportunities to improve research in Canadian policing are evident in the current debate over the economics and sustainability of policing. Several informants noted that research findings could inform fiscal and policy decisions on policing issues. Police Service Boards and municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments could also improve policing related decisions with the use of empirically-generated information.

The deficiencies in police research in Canada are reflected in the dialogue that has surrounded the discussions of the economics of policing. Police services, police boards and municipal councils are faced with immense challenges to maintain appropriate levels of police services while being mindful of the sustainability of policing. The discussions, budget decisions and decisions of police policy and practice are not informed by research findings or evidence-based practice.

As one person interviewed stated: “the level of the dialogue, – e.g., crime rates are down and police costs are up – is over-simplistic and obscures the complex dynamics of policing in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

Several interviewees noted that what constitutes “sustainable policing” in any one jurisdiction or municipality has not been defined, nor have other key concepts that form part of the discussion. Conflicting evidence exists as to whether the costs of policing are rising in all jurisdictions. Mention was made that police scholars have noted, for example, that contrary to concerns that the rising costs of policing will overwhelm municipal budgets, in some jurisdictions the proportion of the municipal budget devoted to policing has remained fairly constant and that “crime rates tell us more about a community than its police.” Citing data from Statistics Canada,

it is not evident that “Canada’s police services are over-staffed, particularly in comparison with police-to-population ratios in other comparable countries” (Robertson, 2012: 353-354).

It was also noted by several respondents that efforts to have an informed discussion about policing costs are complicated by a lack of capacity in many police services to conduct the required analysis on how resources are being expended and on the outcomes of those expenditures. Yet, as a number of respondents pointed out, the decisions that are made may have significant implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of police services and for the quality of life in communities.

A submission prepared by the RCMP included the following assessment of the role that research can play in discussions of the economics of policing:

*“Research can have an enormous impact on these discussions. For example, in personnel selection there are dramatic increments in identifying top performers by choosing selection method A versus method B. Building on our scientific knowledge, we can reap far greater benefit and police service performance for the same dollars (e.g., if every police officer or leader is 10% better). This is similarly the case with training, where rigorous scientific knowledge about the best means of developing the next general duty constable, forensic identification expert, or emergency response team member will lead to significantly greater performance (and ultimately public safety) for the same number of tax dollars. And so on for knowledge criminal behaviour, pay packages, intelligence gathering, equipment and techniques, etc.”*

Commenting on the role of research in discussions of the economics of policing, one police scholar stated:

*“There is a great need for research to show how to reduce cost and how to do as much with less. There needs to be an evidence-based approach to evaluating the role of private security agencies and how police can partner with private security. Research is also needed to examine the efficacy of alternative models of policing and police partnerships with external agencies. Research can also be used to explore how police processes may be made more efficient.”*

Another academic offered the following observations on the role that research can play in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of police services:

*“Academics can establish evidence-based research on how police agencies can save money. A good example is the marijuana grow-op study in southern BC. This research allowed investigators to deploy their resources more efficiently, which reduced cost. The problem is that there is currently no money in policing for research of any kind.”*



*As such, in the current environment, the research needs to be initiated by academics or individual officers entering into academia.”*

## **The Capacity of Police Services to Conduct Research**

Discussions with informants revealed that, with a few notable exceptions, Canadian police services have not invested in developing the capacity to conduct in-depth research and analysis. One academic stated: “most police agencies do not read the existing academic literature, let alone develop new research.” Even larger police services may not have a cadre of analysts who are capable of conducting sophisticated analysis of police data. In one Ontario police service, for example, the person in charge of planning is also responsible for facilities management. Most police services do not have the capacity in their Planning and Research (P&R) units to continually scan the police literature and document best practices and evidence-based policies and practice. As one Director of P&R in a police service noted:

*“You simply don’t have enough time to remotely go and research best practices, or emerging trends, or emerging research around the world. I and my staff don’t have time to search the University of Toronto Criminology website to check out their latest publications.”*

Police services often find it difficult to sustain efforts to build analytical capacity. A member of one police service recalled that when he was appointed to P&R section, the functionality of the unit was very rudimentary. All of the efforts of the unit were focused on internal policy development. The unit was composed of one person in P&R and one officer in charge with oversight of the position but not the function. He reflected that “the P&R position was a very lonely position.”

A former member of a P&R unit in a large Canadian police service stated, “there is a lot of research, but not a lot of evaluation.” This person noted that in this particular police service, there was no interface with universities or any collaborative partnerships with academics. A recommendation that the research and planning unit participate in the field practicum program for local university students did not come to fruition.

All of the corporate planning in this police service was done in-house and was centered primarily on records. The one analyst focused primarily on internal analysis, e.g., “are calls for service up or down?”, “why are they up or down?”, “is priority response time up or down?”, “why are they

up or down?” In other P&R units, there is often limited formal training for crime analysts. Analysts may be sworn members who are self-taught in the use of analytical tools such as MapInfo. These are often accommodative positions – officers who, due to factors such as pregnancy or injury, are not able to function in their regular positions.

A director of the P&R unit in a large Canadian police service noted that even in large police services in Ontario and regional police services that serve 400-700K people, the numbers of staff devoted to planning and research is minimal:

*“Most of their work is strategic planning and business plans. This involves descriptive, statistical analysis and business planning. Most of this is template-based. Most of these research units are under-resourced.”*

While this is a common situation across Canadian police services, it is quite dissimilar to the US where some larger police services have highly trained crime analysts who conduct sophisticated analyses. One former member of a planning unit in a large Canadian police service stated:

*“When I attended police conferences in the States, I often was unable to follow the discussion. It was that sophisticated.”*

One former analyst in a large urban police service noted that even in those instances in which there have been patrol constables with special expertise, managers could not understand their reports, so they were not used. One informant shared an experience in a major urban police service involving a patrol constable who had exceptional analytical skills and produced very sophisticated analyses:

*“Most command officers didn’t understand the officer’s analytics, so discounted his work. The reports sat on the shelf. Middle managers didn’t understand the CAD [Computer-aided design] data or how to use it; so, they didn’t use it. A major disconnect was with the Staff Sergeants who did not know how to use the data. The annual reports of this police service were described as basically counting numbers with no analysis.”*

In this person’s view, the police service “doesn’t do the work to speak from an educated view on issues.” It was also noted that police services have also experienced difficulties in attracting and retaining civilian analysts. Many of the civilians with specialized skill sets and sworn officers with information technology expertise have left policing for the private sector.

These comments suggest there is a need for a strategy to increase the capacity of P&R units in Canadian police services to the extent that these units can conduct sophisticated research studies

and collaborate with academics. A number of interviewees indicated that if police services are going to develop the capacity to conduct sophisticated research and analysis, it must be an organizational effort. As one stated: “there have to be champions of building capacity and interfacing analytics and research with policy and operations.” Unfortunately, in most police services in Canada, there are no such champions or, in the case of the RCMP, there may be individual champions in the leadership ranks but the constant movement of officers has undermined continuity of effort and the legitimacy of the research enterprise.

### **Challenges in Building Capacity in P&R Units**

Continuity and sustainability of effort is a challenge for all police services and this is especially the case in P&R units where staff may transfer, lack expertise and even access to research materials. A former analyst in a large Canadian urban police service recalled that one particular Deputy Chief had introduced a crime management approach based on COMPSTAT (a performance management framework that synthesizes analysis of crime and disorder data, strategic problem solving, and a clear accountability structure). Division leaders were required to attend monthly “crime conferences” and to report on crime activity in their division and what they were doing about it. These division police personnel were not allowed to have their subordinates attend and report on their behalf. When this Deputy Chief left to take a position with another police service, the crime conferences came to an end.

Another respondent related that during his tenure in the P&R unit, he was able to add internal audit and public policy research to its mandate. P&R was strengthened to a standard that it had not been before and was appreciated. However, when he was transferred from the unit, it reverted to one position focused solely on policy review and now the police service lacks the budget for increasing the capacity of its P&R unit.

A major obstacle is that police agencies lack access to university libraries and databases and other research tools. The primary data used is mostly public access via the Internet, which does not allow full access to specialized materials or current research findings<sup>1</sup>. In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> The CPC Library makes available many information resources and research tools to the RCMP, Canadian police and law enforcement personnel, and academics who require access to policing research.

conducting primary research using in-house data is limited by the strength of the people doing the work.

Further, police services generally lack knowledge about research that could be conducted on their behalf and are unaware of its potential value. As one senior police leader stated, “They don’t know what they don’t know.” Police services may fear the potential embarrassment that can result from academic studies that are critical of the police or identify potential flaws and shortcomings in the policies and practice of a police service. This is compounded by police concerns about freedom of information regarding handing over data to academics. In one respondent’s opinion:

*“The result is a suspicion and hostility that has formed between academics and the police. Consequently, the capacity to do the research is lacking. Additionally, when research is conducted, there is nowhere to store it.”*

### **Best Practice Planning and Research Units**

The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) P&R Unit was identified by a number of respondents as a best practice police service with a well-resourced planning, research and audit unit with significant research and analytical capacities.

As one respondent stated:

*“The Executive at VPD values analysts and what they offer. They understand the importance of analysis. The VPD Executive is ahead of the curve. For many Chiefs, research is an afterthought. There is no police service in Ontario that can match the VPD in terms of talent and capacity. The Executive understands the importance of business case analysis.”*

Another commented:

*“When you have an executive that doesn’t understand, or see the value of it, then you aren’t going to get any kind of good research. The value varies across these departments. Depends upon how much exposure these Chiefs have had to its value during their careers. In Vancouver, most of the senior leadership at one time worked in the research and planning unit.”*

## RCMP Research

As a national police service, there appears to be significant opportunities to improve the capacity of the RCMP to conduct and disseminate research. A Director with the RCMP stated that each Division manages its own research, either in-house or through contracts with academics or private consulting firms. However, there is no national strategy or framework for disseminating the findings from research conducted in the Divisions. The official further stated: “There are no set (research) objectives, only a limited amount of research dollars and research that is conducted is often not available outside the Division.” For example, this respondent noted:

*“If ‘E’ Division wants to undertake research there is no obligation to go to National headquarters to seek approval... In policy, RCMP does have an obligation to send copies of research to the Canadian Police College (CPC) (three in English/ three in French). In practice, although this is a formalized procedure, it is questionable how much of the research being conducted is actually sent to CPC.”*

Under the RCMP Administration Manual, RCMP employees have an obligation to send copies of all RCMP "publications", including "published" research materials, to the CPC Library. However, the RCMP does not maintain a centralized database of research projects it has funded or the findings of these studies. This makes it impossible to determine the amount of funding expended on research activities in the RCMP. Information provided by RCMP personnel interviewed for the project indicated that there is no process for ensuring that RCMP HQ is aware of research being conducted by or sponsored by the Divisions. This raises the specter that studies conducted at the divisional level may not be shared with other divisions or even with national headquarters or that similar studies could be duplicated in a number of divisions.

There is also considerable variability across the RCMP Divisions in their research capacity. There are no minimum standards for staffing in research and planning units at the Division level. This means there is considerable variability among the Divisions in terms of their capacity to conduct research and the levels of expertise of sworn and civilian personnel who staff these units.

Illustrative of the lack of research capacity is a situation that arose in 2013 wherein it was revealed that the RCMP did not maintain a comprehensive list of RCMP members who had been disciplined for misconduct. A request by the media for this information was answered four years later.

The current situation is perhaps most aptly summed up in the comments of one police educator:

*“Research in RCMP has been the elusive Holy Grail for the past 10 years. The research is done within the Divisions and there is no communication and dissemination. Many attempts have been made to develop some governance over research but it has been challenging and ultimately unsuccessful.”*

A civilian member of the RCMP who is involved in the policy area stated:

*“There is no Planning and Research budget from an organizational perspective. Each Division has their own budget. Bigger Divisions would have research budgets to contract with academics and consultants. Smaller Divisions wouldn’t have a research budget and don’t have any way of determining what research is being done in other divisions. There have been at least two major attempts to build a centralized research function, however, the idea never got any traction.”*

### **Specific Areas of RCMP Research**

There are a few exceptions to the situation described in the preceding section, including environmental scans and specialized areas, such as human resources (HR) (personnel selection, organizational research, training and pay), national security criminal investigations, missing children and behavioural science and technology. There appears to be processes in place for the dissemination of the findings from these research activities. Written documentation was provided by RCMP contacts on a number of research initiatives, including the following:

#### *Personnel Selection and other HR Research*

Much of this research is conducted by academics and practitioners affiliated with organizations like the *Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, the *International Personnel Assessment Council* and the *Academy of Management*. These organizations have regular conferences, websites and journals disseminating research results. Public sector safety organizations (e.g., police and fire) and the military are particularly active in this work. This results in the availability of police-specific as well as more general (but still relevant) research. The RCMP’s HR sector has recently initiated an HR Research Review Board to streamline and coordinate the evaluation, approval and tracking HR research. One goal of this initiative is to reduce the isolated nature and redundancy of some internal research.

### *Pay Research*

The Pay Research and Support Services Unit conducts broad compensation research on behalf of the RCMP Pay Council. The goal is generally to look into best practices in Canadian police compensation, as well as to compare the RCMP compensation package against that of other Canadian police departments.

The analysts and researchers working on these projects generally hold professional designations from HR organizations such as Human Resource Professional Association and WorldatWork. Although these organizations do not provide research and data specific to police compensation, RCMP analysts apply the knowledge gained from training with these professionals to tailoring data collection and research for RCMP purposes. Research reports are disseminated to all study participants, including other police services, government departments and central agencies, as well as upon request.

### *National Security and Criminal Intelligence Research*

On June 23, 2011, the Government of Canada, led by Public Safety Canada, announced the Kanishka Project – a new 5-year \$10M initiative, which will invest in research on pressing questions for Canada on terrorism and counter-terrorism, such as preventing and countering violent extremism. According to materials provided by the RCMP, “the Project is about better understanding terrorism in the Canadian context, how that is changing over time and what we can do to support effective policies and programs to counter terrorism and violent extremism in Canada.” ([www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cntr-trrrsm/r-nd-flight-182/knshk/index-eng.aspx](http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cntr-trrrsm/r-nd-flight-182/knshk/index-eng.aspx))

### *Learning and Development Partnerships*

The RCMP is working with other government agencies on the use of social media to advance organizational learning and development. The Technology Assisted Learning Unit within Learning and Development has been present in two social media environments: ONGARDE and CUSSTG:

1. *ONGARDE: Online Government Advanced Research & Development Environment.*

This is a framework for collaboration between government organizations to facilitate, expand and optimize mutually supportive efforts. The initiative is designed to support innovation by linking operational organizations with advanced institutional support to eliminate historic “distance” and barriers between operators and academia at the organizational levels, and to establish new models for industry collaboration. It is a technology infrastructure that will enable government organizations to collaborate within a common virtual environment for the purposes of research, development and evaluation of emergent methodologies and technologies.

2. *CUSSTG: Canada/US Security Simulation Training Group*

The RCMP Learning and Development created the Can/US Security Simulation Technologies Group (CUSSTG), with support and guidance from the Department of National Defence and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centre (US Department of Homeland Security). The group currently includes five Canadian and six American federal agencies, bridging law enforcement, defence and security. The focus of the group is on training and operational uses of simulators, desktop simulations, gaming and virtual and mirror worlds. The group collaborates in areas such as joint research projects, sharing of best practices, joint product development, sharing of 3D assets and terrain and delivery of joint training simulations.

*Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children/Behavioural Sciences Branch (CPCMEC/BSB)*

A key priority within the CPCMEC/BSB is the linkage between current and innovative research and policing practice. The mandate of the Program Research and Development Unit (PRDU) within CPCMEC/BSB is to conduct operationally relevant research in the areas of missing persons and unidentified remains, Internet-facilitated child sexual exploitation and behavioural sciences. At present there are two full-time permanent research positions, with one in the process of being categorized and staffed. The unit is supported by one Temporary Civilian Employee (TCE) and one Federal Student Work Experience Program (FSWEP) student at the Ph.D. level. Field placement students from local universities are utilized when appropriate candidates are identified.



The PRDU conducts both primary and secondary research in support of the numerous programs operating under the CPCMEC/BSB mandate. Primary empirical research studies contribute to our knowledge and understanding of Internet-facilitated child sexual exploitation nationally and internationally, missing persons (both youth and adults), as well as violent, sexual and/or serial offences and offenders. A primary aim of this research is to enhance law enforcement's capacity to protect the public and improve upon investigative practice. Secondary research involves a critical review of the works of external researchers to determine applicability of findings to law enforcement. Police researchers digest the information stemming from the empirical works of others, make this information accessible to the law enforcement community, determine applicability and make recommendations for application where appropriate.

Owing to limited resources within CPCMEC/BSB PRDU and the multiple areas of research expertise and input that are required (for example, strategic direction, government responses), the current capacity to conduct primary empirical research is limited. Projects must be selected based on priority with various requests originating from the internal programs and emerging trends. To complement the sometimes limited financial and human resources, the PRDU prioritizes partnerships with academic, government and non-government agencies where appropriate. Due to issues of security and privacy of information, the establishment of partnerships can be a lengthy and complicated process. Thus, caution is always used when entering into collaborative research agreements. The majority of the research conducted within CPCMEC/BSB is intended for internal consumption. The findings of this research are distributed through RCMP organizational channels and may be shared with the law enforcement community and/or partner agencies.

Senior program personnel in the RCMP acknowledged that the current internal capacity for conducting and disseminating police research is modest and, as noted, dispersed through the organization based on specialty area. There are very structured external systems for more specific and general research areas (e.g., personnel selection, training, or national security) that the RCMP can monitor and benefit from.

### *Technical Research*

Much of the research that is conducted by the RCMP is of a technical nature. For example, the RCMP Learning and Development Branch is entering into preliminary discussions with DRDC

with regards to research to determine whether there is equivalency in range length and target size. For example, whether a regular sized target 100 meters away is equivalent to a reduced (1/2 sized) target 50 meters away. This could increase accessibility to ranges for live fire (re)qualifications and training, by doubling the number of ranges.

As well, in 2010 the RCMP Learning and Development commenced Skills Perishability and Retention evidence-based research with the aim of determining the point at which a member would need to “refresh” his or her psychomotor skills, specifically in firearms and intervention options. Learning and Development then involved the Police Sector Council in gathering select academics and researchers in Canada and the US to discuss the literature and experiences. They are now planning to reconvene the working group to map out next steps in this research. Depot, the RCMP recruit training facility which is part of this research working group, is furthering its research on skills retention with the use of simulation. The research is ongoing and preliminary findings are expected in 2014.

#### *Environmental Scans*

In addition to these activities, for the past decade or so the RCMP has conducted environmental scans. According to an RCMP official, the original intent of the scans was to get management to think beyond the day-to-day. The scan was intended to look at trends in other communities and focus on strategic implications and to prepare for emerging issues. It appears that the 2011 scan may be the last due to the fact that the information gathered was not used within the RCMP and was viewed in some quarters as an “end unto itself”.

#### *Outstanding Areas of Concern*

In the view of RCMP personnel contacted for this study, there are a number of areas where additional research is required, including Internet-facilitated child sexual exploitation and behavioural science. In their view, researchers must continuously examine the techniques used by offenders and assist law enforcement in keeping pace in terms of leveraging technology and anticipating adaptations to *modus operandi*. Currently, there is only a small body of research in this area, due to the sensitivity around this subject and research ethics. Another area in which there has been little Canadian research is in the behavioural sciences, where there is a need to

replicate the early work done by the FBI and to enhance the investigative and analytical capacity of criminal profilers.

There was also the view that it is important that targeted research focuses on identifying empirically reliable techniques for streamlining investigations. For example, in the area of child pornography, the PRDU is prioritizing research into developing empirically valid risk assessment tools that help to identify which offenders are most likely to commit offences offline. Similar research into risk assessment, prioritization and triaging across cases is also needed in other investigations run by the CPCMEC and the BSB. With limited financial resources, it is imperative that research efforts are directed at helping investigators prioritize the most prolific offenders.

Research in the area of technological tools that assist investigators was also identified as a priority. This is viewed as particularly important to ensure that investigators' time and efforts are maximized and that existing tools are utilized, and new investigative tools are developed where required.

## **Organizations with a Research and/or Dissemination Component**

There are a number of specialized professional organizations and networks that support research related to and specifically about policing. Several of the more high profile organizations include the following:

### **The Police Sector Council**

The Police Sector Council operated under Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and was a national initiative to identify common human resource challenges and to find innovative solutions to urgent human resource issues in policing. Funding for the Police Sector Council ended in March 2013 and there are no transitional plans in place to ensure that its work will continue.

The Police Sector Council received federal funding of \$8 to \$11 million during the eight years it was in operation and was involved in a variety of research initiatives. Among the issues addressed by the Police Sector Council were recruitment, education and training, leadership development and performance measurement. The Police Sector Council also conducted the

Competency Framework Project 2008-2013 which received funding of approximately \$4.5 million. The research was completed by a number of external private consulting firms including Deloitte & Touche. There was also a focus on skills perishability. The initial plan was to begin with a literature search to identify prior research studies, although this phase was short-lived due to the absence of research.

An academic interviewed for the project offered the following observation concerning the Police Sector Council:

*“The Police Sector Council was doing some great work in trying to disseminate the information about the work that they were doing. That was successful partly because of the networks that were created, but it wasn’t consistent in any way. It wasn’t accessible to everybody in the way that it should have been.”*

One police educator noted that the Police Sector Council had attempted to create a coherent approach that would bring academics and practitioners together and coordinate and disseminate research but had been largely unsuccessful.

### **The Canadian Police College**

According to several interviewees, the Canadian Police College (CPC) is currently in a rebuilding mode and has been evaluating its role in research and development. The current CPC budget for research is approximately \$225,000 per year. The CPC operating budget has been reduced by 33%, and according to respondents, has significantly degraded their research capacity. The CPC is facilitating ongoing discussions about the economics of policing and is in the process of pulling together practitioners and academics to produce a series of academic papers on the sustainability of policing. Most recently, the CPC was involved in three symposiums on the economics of policing and sponsored an executive study tour to the UK. To date, however, no materials have been published from these initiatives. ([www.cpc.gc.ca](http://www.cpc.gc.ca))

### **Canadian Police Knowledge Network**

The Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) was created from a variety of funding sources and plays a key role in e-learning in the field of policing. The CPKN offers approximately 80 courses to police personnel across the country. While it does not conduct research, this is a valuable mechanism for disseminating research-informed materials. The

Stanhope Workshop is a CPKN and Police Sector Council initiative that brings together the police and other enforcement personnel “to discuss pertinent issues and advances in technology-enhanced learning” ([www.stanhopeconference.com](http://www.stanhopeconference.com)). ([www.cpkn.ca](http://www.cpkn.ca))

## **Police Boards**

Police boards generally do not conduct or fund research. Individual boards may sponsor local projects but these do not involve academic review or evaluation. In 2012, the CAPG held a forum on Economics of Policing looking at landscape, issues and costs. A key output that was identified was the need for independent research and evaluation of best practices. Several respondents noted that most police board members across Canada do not have access to policing research. As a consequence, significant decisions, including funding decisions in some jurisdictions, are made in an informational vacuum.

The President of the CAPG was of the view that the involvement of the federal government in supporting research is essential. This involvement should be at arms-length to ensure academic independence. The view is that the government’s support should be the development of a research centre that would bring together academics and content experts.

## **The Canadian Police Research Centre**

The CPRC has been amalgamated into the Canadian Safety and Security Program (CSSP) under the auspices of DRDC. The CPRC conducts research on the more technical aspects of policing . They also recently supported an RCMP HR initiative, the development of a computerized adaptive test for police officer selection. One respondent estimated that the CRPC has received \$5 million in funding over the past five years, although this figure cannot be verified.

There is some indication that the research conducted by the CPRC has become more rigorous in recent years, with the study by the Taser research team cited as one example. ([www.drdc-rddc.gc.ca](http://www.drdc-rddc.gc.ca))

## **The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police**

The CACP is highly regarded in the Canadian policing community and sponsors a research foundation. Unfortunately, the project team was unsuccessful in making contact with a spokesperson for the organization. Thus, this study is unable to explore the issues surrounding

the current state of police research in Canada, the role of the CACP in sponsoring research, disseminating research findings, or the level of funding that the CACP provides for research.

However, several people interviewed indicated that the CACP research foundation was originally initiated by an individual donation that was to be matched by the CACP. The focus of the research foundation includes: understanding the current landscape of policing research in Canada; exploring the potential for the CACP to be a repository for research; and investigating/researching the potential role of the CACP as a facilitator of research. One respondent noted, however, that “this is still in the development phase, difficult to say how it will be operationalized.” ([www.cacp.ca](http://www.cacp.ca))

The CACP also sponsors the Institute for Strategic International Studies (ISIS) . The ISIS program “is based upon an experiential, problem-based learning and research model that combines classroom sessions, independent online study and computer-mediated conferencing with international field research into a variety of operational and management aspects of policing and justice administration” (CACP, 2011).

The program involves cohorts of police leaders conducting research on research themes related to current issues in policing. The 2012 report was titled *Full Circle Community Safety: A Model That Will Change the Conversation About Policing Economics and Performance*. The results of the study were presented at various forums across the country and at:

[www.cacp.ca/ISIS/pages/ISIS.php?title=ISIS\\_2012\\_Full\\_Circle\\_Community\\_Safety\\_Model](http://www.cacp.ca/ISIS/pages/ISIS.php?title=ISIS_2012_Full_Circle_Community_Safety_Model).

Several of the interviewees exhibited a degree of pessimism about the role of the CACP in police research. One senior provincial minister sees the CACP more as a lobby group that may only focus on research issues that are of interest to police chiefs. Another person interviewed stated: “The Research Foundation does fall within the CACP and the type of research being conducted in this foundation could be influenced by what the association deems important.” Another interviewee stated that a priority of the CACP should be to increase the capacity in research and planning units in police services. Other organizations that may be involved in specific areas of research include the Canadian Committee of Police Psychologists and the Ontario Association of Law Enforcement Planners, is the latter being a loose network that is attempting to raise its profile. ([www.cacp.ca/ISIS/index.php](http://www.cacp.ca/ISIS/index.php))

## **The Law Enforcement Aboriginal Diversity Network: Lessons Learned?**

The Law Enforcement Aboriginal Diversity Network (LEAD) was funded in 2003 and was a partnership between the Multi-Cultural Program of Canadian Heritage and the CACP and was facilitated by the RCMP. Part of LEAD's mandate was to "conduct background research on national standards, international best practices and universal definitions for hate/bias crimes for police officers and justice personnel working with Aboriginal and diverse ethnic, racial and religious communities."

Despite the fact that LEAD no longer exists, it is still referenced on the websites of the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association and (until March 2013) the Police Sector Council. According to one police policy person interviewed for the study, the major reasons why the LEAD program was not successful were an absence of leadership, a lack of funding and the challenges of moving an idea from concept to operational reality. The absence of an archive of initiatives precludes an understanding of the origins, evolution and dissolution of the LEAD program. Such information could be used to inform future policy and programs.

This illustrates the larger point that there is no mechanism in Canada to record the ongoing activities in police programs and research. The lack of a cumulative "wisdom", in the view of several people interviewed for the study, meant that there was little or no opportunity for lessons learned and to accumulate a literature on evidence-based practice.

## **The Relationships Between Police Services and Academics**

There was a widely shared view among the academics interviewed that relations with police services were either non-existent or characterized by some degree of distrust. Noting this divide, one observer stated that what is required are "scholar-practitioners who can authoritatively and productively bridge this divide... Police and the public would be well served by more independent research and critical analysis of policing" (Robertson, 2012: 343).

It was noted by several respondents interviewed for the project that across Canada there are few partnerships between academics and the police and even fewer institutional relationships between the two parties. As noted above, this is due in large measure to a lack of understanding

among police as to the role of academics and to the absence of an overall strategic framework and organization to facilitate the creation of sustainable relationships.

Other reasons for the absence of police-academic partnerships were characterized by one police educator who noted that police agencies are fearful of what might come out of research. They are also timid when it comes to dealing with academics because, “traditionally, if you leave it to academics to pick things that they find interesting, they’re going to find the warts in policing.” Police services are nervous about this even when they commission the research. There is trepidation about the outcomes. The respondent also noted that police services really have to, at some point, become accepting of the need for an evidence-based approach relating to issues of legitimacy and credibility.

This educator noted that another challenge was that the police often received few recommendations from academics about how to improve the delivery of policing services:

*“It is many times a case of researchers pointing out faults and failing to provide answers or methods of improvement. The research tends to be a critique of the moment and is not an operational analysis or a cultural analysis that would allow the organization to move forward and identify the things that are required to make the shift in policing.”*

A major obstacle to police-academic collaboration is the absence of a commitment, on both sides, to understand the other’s objectives when it comes to research.

*“Police need to be open to researchers that challenge their philosophies and researchers need to be open to doing research that helps police first and advances their academic interests second. Academics have not helped themselves. Most academic writing in the last twenty years has tended to be fairly critical or negative toward the police (“bashing” them). The result is that little research has been produced that can be incorporated into police policy. Research requires a great deal of trust between academics and police. Police are well aware of the need to change their practices and to lower costs. They need help on how to accomplish this.”*

Another reason for the disconnect between police services and academics is the absence of a process for ongoing communication and collaboration. There are no forums, electronic or otherwise, for the discussion of policing issues, dissemination of research findings or networking.

One consequence of the disconnect between the police and academia is what Bradley and Nixon state is mutual misunderstanding resulting in a “dialogue of the deaf” (2009: 423). This might



lead to the following conversation:

Academic: “Why don’t police officers ever read research reports?”

Police: “Why can’t researchers write in plain English?”

Academic: “Why are the police unwilling to examine their own organizational performance?”

Police: “Why are researchers unwilling to produce information that a practical person exercising power can use to change a limited aspect of the organization instead of theoretical and explanatory structures of no use to the problem-solver?”(Bradley and Nixon, 2009: 427)

This can only be overcome through the development of collaborative partnerships between researchers and practitioners (Bradley and Nixon, 2009; Johnson and Shearing, 2009: p. 415).

One police leader commented:

*“At this point, the barrier between academics and the police represents a challenge to conducting the necessary research. A balance needs to be struck between the two sides. That is, police need to maintain control over what is released, while academics need freedom to conduct the necessary (relevant) research. Academics and police need to develop trust. In order to do this, it is important that academics are critical but not condemning or set out to embarrass police services with their findings.”*

Police-academic relationships seem to be strongest in jurisdictions where the police are active participants in the identification of issues to be researched and there is an “applied” dimension to the studies. One academic in BC noted that there was often good collaboration between the police and academics in the province. This has been facilitated by the creation of three RCMP-funded Research Chairs (discussed below). In this scholar’s view, input from the research chairs has been incredibly valuable to both the RCMP and municipal police agencies in BC.

Another issue is that there needs to be a clear definition of what research is and what research needs to be done. That is, there is very narrow applied work that is complimentary and supports what the police service is doing. At the moment, police services tend to be open to that type of research. Conversely, open-ended, more critical work is less appealing to police services; yet, this is the kind of research that needs to be done. However this can be addressed by framing

research as something that is appealing to both police and academics. One police scholar offered the following observation:

*“There needs to be some form of roundtable discussion between police and academics that have done research on policing, or there needs to be some third party entity in place to negotiate the relationship/partnerships between academics and police services.”*

Several respondents noted that police services should be developing their own research capacities and sophistication. This would be helpful, because if there are people within the organization that are doing research, they will have a greater understanding of the role of research and what it means to do research. Subsequently, police agencies are largely unwilling to invest much of their own money into police research. They tend to be very cautious and careful about what they do.

There does seem to be considerable potential for colleges and universities to develop collaborative relationships with police services. An in-depth examination of the potential for developing university-police collaboration in Alberta, that would include research studies, a scholar-in-residence program in the police service and field placements for undergraduates, found considerable potential for such an initiative (Griffiths and Fennig, 2010).

### **University-based Programs in Police Studies**

A number of universities, such as Dalhousie, York, Carleton, Ottawa, University of Toronto and the University of the Fraser Valley have a small number of faculty members with research interests in policing. However, there is currently no national consortium of Canadian university departments that have faculty members with expertise in police research. The research being conducted in these universities is generally specific to the interests of individual faculty members as is the extent of collaboration with police services. There is presently one Canada Research Chair in a research area related to policing: the Canada Research Chair in Security, Identity and Technology at the Université de Montréal.

There are several university programs that have a specific emphasis on police studies. These programs have a number of courses taught by full-time faculty and sessional instructors that may include currently serving police officers or instructors with knowledge of police policy and practice. Programs highlighted by interviewees included, among others:

### **University of the Fraser Valley School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (UFV)**

This program offers a B.A. and M.A. that includes courses on policing. The program houses the Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research directed by a faculty member who holds an RCMP Research Chair (discussed later). The Centre has an active program of research with police services throughout the province and makes a concerted effort to involve students in field research projects. ([www.ufv.ca/cjsr](http://www.ufv.ca/cjsr))

**The School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University (SFU)** This program includes a Police Studies Program that offers a Certificate in Police Studies as a component of the B.A. in Criminology. There are a number of faculty members with police-related research interests, including forensic entomology, terrorism, forensic anthropology, crime analysis, major crime case management, diversity in policing, police accountability, community policing, policing in northern and remote communities, among others. Faculty members in the school work closely with police services in the province, nationally and internationally and there are a number of ongoing collaborative projects. The school also hosts the International Centre for Urban Research Studies (ICURS), directed by two faculty members who hold RCMP Research Chairs (discussed below). ([www.sfu.ca/criminology/](http://www.sfu.ca/criminology/))

### **Mount Royal University (MRU)**

MRU offers a four-year B.A. in Criminal Justice. There is also the Center for Criminology and Justice Research that exists to facilitate research on a broad range of criminal justice issues, including policing.

The program at MRU includes a field practicum program for undergraduate students, which allows them to be placed in police services and other criminal justice agencies.

([www.mtroyal.ca/](http://www.mtroyal.ca/))

### **University of Regina**

The Police Studies program at the University of Regina offers a B.A. in Police Studies. This undergraduate degree includes three years of study in liberal arts courses, followed by one term at the Police College and then a one-term internship at a police service. The program has two tracks: 1) a professional track for students who are employed by a police service prior to their fourth year of study and includes a practicum placement with a police service; and 2) an academic track that also includes a field practicum placement. Students in this track are not

oriented toward a career in policing. The Department of Justice Studies at the university also offers an M.A. in Police Studies. The Police Studies program has developed extensive collaborative relationships with a variety of police services and professional organizations in the province. It also features the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan Chair in Police Studies.

In the absence of graduate programs in policing that offer flexible learning modes, for example, a combination of on-line and on-campus courses, many police officers enroll in off-shore programs. One program that is frequently accessed by Canadian police personnel for graduate study is the School of Policing Studies at Charles Stuart University in Australia ([www.csu.edu.au/study.arts-courses.policing/](http://www.csu.edu.au/study.arts-courses.policing/)). This program is offered in a flexible online/in-residence format. There is no similar graduate program in Canada. ([www.uregina.ca/](http://www.uregina.ca/))

### **University-based Research Labs and Research Chairs: The British Columbia Experience**

In British Columbia, the RCMP, provincial policing services, SFU and the UFV have developed a unique collaborative partnership to fund research labs and Research Chairs at SFU and UFV. The Research Chair positions are similar to endowed professorships, with the exception that the positions have fixed five-year terms and the chairs are exempted from teaching responsibilities.

The Research Chair positions were created through an agreement between SFU, UFV and the RCMP and are completed through the provincial Public Safety and Solicitor General. The RCMP pays the \$150,000 annual salary, per Research Chair (a total of three Chairs – two at SFU and one at UFV), while the respective universities cover overhead and benefits, estimated to be \$30,000 per year. Additional funds are used to support lab employees.

The University provides office space and space to house the lab. There are also offices for police officers who are involved in collaboration on various projects (although these are rarely, if ever, used). The expectation is that the Chairs get supplemental funding from other sources to pay the employees and maintain the lab, so they fund-raise additional money (about \$5–7 million) from the government, SSHRC, NSRC, health and partnering corporations (e.g. IBM).

The research labs at SFU and UFV are the only two of their kind in the world. A key distinguishing attribute of the labs is that police data are stored and analyzed outside of “in-

house” police service databases. A primary objective of establishing the two centres in B.C. was to provide academics with access to police data, so that they may conduct research analysis to help inform police policy and practice.

The research priorities for the research labs are established collaboratively between the centres and the RCMP. Among other projects, the research labs have been involved in the crime reduction strategy in BC. The labs have also emerged as a major training ground for undergraduate and graduate students who have unprecedented access to police services and police data in a secure setting.

### **The Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies (ICURS) at Simon Fraser University**

The ICURS lab work is directed by two RCMP Research Chairs. The lab employs M.A. students, Ph.D. students, postdoctoral students, fellows and visiting scholars (sabbatical professors). ICURS was established prior to the creation of the Research Chair positions and the MOU with RCMP E Division and the provincial government. The Board of Directors at ICURS is composed of the RCMP Deputy Commissioner for RCMP E Division, the Director of provincial police services and the Vice-President of Research at SFU. There are also regular meetings with the Officer-in-Charge of the Criminal Analysis Section, RCMP E Division. IBM donated the computer equipment.

A detailed protocol has been established to ensure the security and anonymity of the RCMP data that are transferred to the ICURS lab. The data are brought to SFU by security-cleared IT Services staff. Then, the data are stored on the university’s main secured computer before being transferred to ICURS through a secure network. IT staff assist by parsing the data. The identifying information is stripped from the data prior to being analyzed in the research lab.

There is a myriad of security provisions that surround the operation of the ICURS lab, including a prohibition against cameras and cell phones and the requirement that people entering the lab must sign in and out. Inside the lab, the computers do not have CPUs. Rather, the work stations are composed of a computer monitor and a keyboard. The CPU is located in a separate room on “blade” technology (donated by IBM) that cannot be accessed by those working in the lab.

The research focus of the lab is strategic and academic with an emphasis on “big picture” issues and longitudinal, multi-year studies. Faculty and students in the lab work within a multi-disciplinary framework and utilize large databases. The ICURS lab at SFU has hosted police scholars from a number of Canadian and international universities and government agencies. Many of the visiting scholars have been on sabbatical leave from their home university, or are on leave from their home agency. In 2012, Dr. Graham Farrell, Professor of Criminology at Loughborough University in the UK joined ICURS as a Senior Research Fellow. ICURS also has a number of postdoctoral Fellows and researchers.

It is estimated that it costs \$3-5 million to build a lab with the capacities of the BC facilities. In addition, it costs approximately \$100,000 for IT services of the universities to maintain the lab and ensure the security of the data. These costs are assumed by the university. The MOUs had to accommodate both the federal and provincial Access to Information legislation, as the RCMP operates as both a federal and provincial entity. The research labs may also be involved in conducting research projects for specific government agencies. Similarly, the RCMP lab cost approximately \$7 million, which includes the \$3–5 million to build the lab.

### **The Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research at the University of the Fraser Valley**

The UFV Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research is under the direction of an RCMP Research Chair. The research lab at the Centre is security-cleared to a level below “Top Secret.” The Centre employs undergraduate practicum students and other undergraduate students to work on various, short-term projects.

The focus of the Centre is on operational/tactical research. All of the written reports that the Centre completes for the RCMP are posted on the RCMP website.

The Centre is involved in an initiative called “university-led research” which is facilitated through the Operations Strategy Branch at RCMP E Division. The ICURS lab is not participating in this initiative. A primary objective of the Centre is to have an “operational collaboration” with the RCMP. The Director stated: “The RCMP collaborates with us nonstop, like, there’s police here all the time.”

The focus of the Centre at UFV is applied research and responding to requests from the field. As the Director noted, “the RCMP decides the work. They help inform the research priorities; the type of research that we do in the Centre is operational and of practical importance to the RCMP.” The overall objective of the Centre is to assist police services in doing what they do better. ([www.ufv.ca/cjsr](http://www.ufv.ca/cjsr))

### **The Evolution of the Two Centres**

The research labs at SFU and UFV have evolved into two different models since their inception: the UFV program is, by the admission of its Director, more “applied” than the SFU lab.

The Director of the Centre at UFV makes extensive use of undergraduate students in conducting operationally-focused field projects, whereas the SFU lab examines more global issues and involves graduate students, although some undergraduates participate in lab activities as part of the School of Criminology field practice program. There is currently no permanent on-site RCMP or municipal police presence in either of the research labs. The two centres are largely reflective of the orientations and academic perspective of the Research Chairs who are involved in operating the labs.

### **The Impact on Canadian Police Research**

The two research centers in B.C. are primarily focused on policing issues in the province. Neither centre has the capacity nor the mandate to serve as a portal for police research in Canada although each of the centres has established collaborative partnerships with police services and, in the case of ICURS, with other institutes internationally. The centres are a potential component of a national strategy for police research in Canada, although their role in such an initiative would have to be determined in consultation with the Research Chairs and the RCMP.

### **The Role of Private Consulting Firms in Canadian Police Research**

A number of the respondents interviewed for the project noted that in recent years, private sector firms have become increasingly involved with conducting studies of and for police services. In their view, this has been precipitated by the absence of an infrastructure for funding police research, the lack of in-house capacity in many police services and few collaborative relationships between police services and academics. It is also a function of the fact that much of

the academic research does not examine the policy and operational challenges of police work. As well, academic research studies are often conducted in lengthy timeframes which reduce their utility for police services who may be confronted with immediate challenges.

Private firms, including KPMG, Deloitte (formerly Deloitte & Touche), EY (formerly Ernest & Young) and others have conducted a number of studies for police services. These firms are readily accessible and, in the absence of a national coordinating structure for police research, are able to provide clients with timely information on various facets of police delivery. An assessment of the extent to which these studies accurately capture the dynamics and nuances of policing is beyond the scope of this paper. However, several interviewees noted that many of the larger private consulting firms conduct business case analysis of police services which may involve a project design quite dissimilar to one that would be used by an academic with expertise in conducting police research. A member of a professional association noted that a key “selling point” for private consulting firms was that the analysis can be completed in a short timeframe. A recent “operational review”, conducted on a major urban police service in Canada, for example, was scheduled to be completed in only 14 weeks.

Canadian and international contacts identified a number of significant differences between academic research and research conducted by private consulting firms. This included the fact that private firms do not have the same requirements as academics in terms of method rigor, “independence” and the requirement that all field projects undergo a thorough ethics review to ensure that, among other things, participants provide “informed consent” and that the interests of vulnerable and at-risk populations and youth are protected.

Respondents identified a number of difficulties with private sector firms being involved in conducting “research” on police services, including:

- Private sector firms do not bring the same rigour of method in conducting studies as would academics;
- Most private sector firms utilize a business case analysis framework and a standardized template that may not be a valid measure of the demands on police services, the efficiency and effectiveness of resource deployment, nor the more qualitative dimensions of police work, including the notion of police “legitimacy”;



- Studies conducted to date by private consulting firms often do not consider the “drivers of demand” on police, including the pervasive downloading that has/is occurring from other agencies;
- Studies conducted by private firms generally do not involve sophisticated statistical analyses;
- Studies by private sector firms generally exclude an examination of public expectations and experiences and the challenges of providing policing services to high-risk, at-risk and vulnerable populations;
- Studies by private sector firms generally exclude a consideration of the dynamics surrounding the delivery of policing services to visible and cultural minorities;
- This research does not function to build capacities in police services to conduct future research studies;
- The findings from studies conducted by private firms are rarely published and disseminated;
- The studies may not be disseminated and many may not be accessible on the Web;
- The studies do not foster the development of collaborative relationships between universities, governments and police services;
- The majority of studies conducted by private sector firms are of the “one and done” variety and do not make a contribution to the building of a cumulative knowledge base about policing in Canada or best practices;
- It is often difficult to access information on the costs of these studies; and
- The primary driver of private sector firms are contracts and cash flow which may compromise the rigour of project designs.

One police leader offered an assessment of the studies conducted by private consulting firms, stating these studies were often superficial and were not able to capture the nuances of policing.

Although an accurate accounting of the overall cost for studies conducted by private consulting firms cannot be determined, the cost of individual studies are known to be substantial, with many studies costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is unlikely that

private consulting firms would be partners in the development of a Canadian police research strategy or in the creation of a national institute for police research.

## **The Dissemination of Police Research**

In contrast to other jurisdictions surveyed for the project, there is currently no structure or process by which the findings from police research can be disseminated in a timely, accessible and useable format. At one time, the CPC produced the *Canadian Police College Journal* that often contained research articles. Publication of the *Journal* ceased over a decade ago and has not been replaced by a police-specific journal. Periodically, police research is published in the *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, *Canadian Public Administration* and the *Canadian Journal of Sociology* and less frequently in academic journals published in the US, the UK and Australia. These are the materials that are often referred to as being “hidden in plain sight” yet could be used to inform policy decisions and operational practice.

Canada was described by one interviewee as being “light years behind the US, which has the National Institute of Justice, the Police Executive Research Forum and other platforms for facilitating collaborative research and information dissemination.” There was consensus on the need for a structure that brings together the academic, government and independent police service research. In the other jurisdictions surveyed, there are a variety of structures that serve as repositories for research, produce research summaries and facilitate collaborative relationships between the police and academics. Speaking to the dissemination of research findings, one academic noted:

*“Research is not disseminated in any systematic fashion. Researchers can submit their work to journals or write books, but there is no specific entity that is responsible for disseminating policing research. The Canadian Police College Journal was one such source; however, this was discontinued in the mid-nineties. Essentially, the entire dissemination and research capacity for policing research has been reduced from the mid-nineties onwards. For example, a greater amount of research is done to inform training in the military as opposed to policing.”*

This echoed the view of one police leader who noted that much more attention was given to research in the military even though there are many more police officers than soldiers.

## **The Role of the Federal Government**

Several interviewees speculated as to whether the federal government would assume a leadership role in facilitating initiatives to address the current state of police research in Canada and to support the creation of a structure to facilitate dissemination of research findings. One academic observed that the federal government often focuses exclusively on the work of the RCMP and does not currently finance a national centre for policing research as policing is a provincial responsibility. The academic went on to note that the federal government may have a role to play in financing such a centre, given the current challenges facing police services in Canada.

A number of the academics interviewed for the project contrasted the current situation in Canada with that in the US, observing:

*“The United States is currently employing some interesting models such as PERF and the NIJ, which is, in some way, a site for collection and a focus of research and it can disseminate information broadly, because it has credibility and is driven by an agenda of knowledge transfer. There is nothing akin to that in Canada. The Police Sector Council was somewhat like that, but it was narrow in its orientation and it was successful only because of the networking process that it was able to facilitate.”*

*“We don’t even have a way of disseminating the good work that’s happening in the country that would even support or suggest that kind of research is important and credible. We have no way of saying, ‘This is the great work that is happening in Canada’ or ‘Here are the ways of fostering the need for that kind of ongoing research.’”*

The general consensus among the Canadians interviewed for the project was that there is a need to create a new structure and process for the dissemination of research. It needs to be credible, broadly based and more representative of the different jurisdictions. The following sections of the report discuss initiatives in international jurisdictions that could provide guidance to any effort to create new structures and processes in Canada.

## **The State of Police Research in Selected International Jurisdictions**

The second component of the project was an examination of police research in selected international jurisdictions. A review of selected international jurisdictions revealed that there are a variety of funding sources for police research, frameworks for academic-police collaboration and structures designed to ensure wide dissemination of research findings. Despite this, a study

by the European Police College (cited in Weisburd and Neyroud, 2011: 3) found that only five out of 30 countries assigned a “high” value to police science research. This suggests there is much work to be done in these jurisdictions as well.

## England

### The College of Policing

The UK College of Policing began operation in 2013 as a professional body for policing research. It replaced Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) Improvement Agency. The College is designed to help police establish an evidence-based approach to operations. According to the Head of the Research Analysis and Information unit, a body with this structure and mandate had never been attempted before in England. It represents a significant step forward, in terms of the police use of evidence-based research, as traditionally police have been craft-based as opposed to operating from a scientific base. Consistent with this notion, a further function of the College is to provide officers with research skills and capabilities moving forward.

Most of the staff of the College of Policing are originally from the Home Office. While much Home Office work is practice-focused with an orientation toward broader issues such as cybercrime and gangs, the College of Policing’s work is narrower in scope (Operational Reviews). However, they will work with the Home Office on crime reduction programs that require broader partnerships. Presently, the College is funded primarily by the Home Office. The plan is for the College of Policing to become a chartered body, at which point funding will change. This change will mean that funding will come from grants and partner organizations.

([www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/college-of-policing/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/college-of-policing/))

### Mandate

The mandate of the College of Policing is to:

*Protect the public interest:*

- Promoting values of effective policing;
- Learning from and supporting improvement in policing; and

- Maintaining ethics and values.

*Set and enhance national standards of professionalism:*

- Developing a set of nationally agreed standards for officers and staff;
- Providing frameworks for testing standards and rewarding achievement; and
- Supporting national business areas.

*Identify evidence of what works in policing and share best practices:*

- Developing a body of knowledge that is informed by evidence-based research and best practices; and
- Developing an understanding of the evolving threats to public safety and enable the service to retain the capabilities needed.

*Support the education/professional development of police officers and staff:*

- Developing and maintaining the national policing curriculum, assessment and accreditation frameworks;
- Delivering leadership and specialist training;
- Accrediting and quality assuring training providers; and
- Developing future leadership and expertise via effective talent management.

*Enable and motivate staff and partners to work together to achieve a shared purpose:*

- Forming partnerships to best utilize specialist knowledge;
- Supporting desired behaviour and actions that embody the service's values; and
- Ensuring interoperability with partners and other sectors.

A key role of the College of Policing will be developing evidence-based research for policing practice and ensuring that it is disseminated. This will be accomplished through partnerships with universities and academics. The College also works with other organizations, including the private sector, to ensure that, where appropriate, the police service is able to access optimal training from external sources. The College works with police services to impart knowledge and to provide advice and assistance on a range of policing activities, including uniformed

operations, recruitment and training, leadership development and effective police service delivery. The College also informs training standards and the development of police officers and police staff to ensure that they continue to retain the skills necessary to perform their duties.

### **Research Activities**

The research studies conducted by the College are designed to build capacity and partnerships with police services. There is a small research team that conducts projects. Currently, most research is focused on developing pilot projects. For example, the College is currently undertaking an analysis of police training techniques and practices. The College partners with both academia and policing practitioners. Academics are brought in to peer-review projects and practitioners are included as authors in order to provide them with hands-on experience and the necessary skills to conduct this work moving forward. Typically, police agencies approach the College to conduct research. They explain the issues that they wish to tackle and the College will either carry out the research if the project is feasible or will seek clarification to uncover the true issue and propose an alternative avenue to police. For the most part, police have been amenable to this process.

According to the Head of the Research Analysis and Information Unit, there has been an increase in the willingness of the police to partner with the College and to become involved in an evidence-based approach. Agencies are gradually recognizing the need for evidence-based research and an increasing number of senior leaders support evidence-based work.

Research findings are disseminated in a number of ways. Completed research is fed into various streams of the College in the form of packages and other materials and studies are posted on the College website, tailored to various audiences. In addition, the College offers master classes, supplemented by the increasing use of social media (particularly Twitter). The College's desire to use social media is reflected in the College's appointment of a specific individual assigned to maintaining and managing this area. The extent to which police services incorporate the findings from research depends upon the individual police agency. The London Metropolitan Police (the Met) recently revamped their performance management structure predicated on seven evidence-based principles. The College provided the Met with research to underpin those principles.

## **The Economics of Policing**

The College of Policing is taking on a more prominent role in this area, particularly through the “What Works Centre”. The Centre designed a ranking system for cost and developed a common currency to describe the cost of interventions. On a broader level, there is also an increasing focus on how to measure cost and efforts to encourage practitioners to have a basic scientific approach in order to conduct the work themselves. The Centre will work with university-based scholars, police services and other partners to provide evidence-based materials to inform policy decisions on police expenditures and resource utilization.

## **College of Policing Initiatives**

### ***The Police On-Line Knowledge Area***

The Police On-Line Knowledge Area (POLKA) provides a secure virtual environment “to share insights, discover ideas and suggest new ways of working”.

Over 90 police services in England and Wales are currently participating in POLKA. The content is user-generated and members can download case examples, access research findings and participate in discussions. The objective of POLKA is to provide a platform for police personnel to share knowledge and expertise on police practice and to have these discussions informed by research findings. ([www.college.police.uk/en/20019.htm](http://www.college.police.uk/en/20019.htm))

### ***The National Police Library***

This is a broad collection of materials on policing that can be accessed by all UK police personnel.

### ***The College of Policing Digest***

The Digest is a monthly e-publication that contains articles on policing issues, summaries related to police and the law and operational policing practices.

## ***The Research Map***

The Research Map is an on-line resource that presents summary information on police research conducted in the UK. The information is presented in table form and includes the following information for each project:

- Project Title;
- Location: Principal Researcher, Research Supervisor, Research;
- Institution/Organization, Department/Research Group;
- Project Dates: Project Start Date/Due for Completion/Date Completed; Level of Research (e.g., Masters);
- Project Focus: Priority Areas, Keywords, Research Context;
- Summary: Research Methodology, Summary of findings; and
- Contact Details: Contact Name, Institution/Organization, Department.

([www.college.police.uk/en/18616.htm](http://www.college.police.uk/en/18616.htm))

## **Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned**

The Head of the Research Analysis and Information unit described challenges faced and the lessons learned as being “unending and innumerable.” A major lesson learned was the need to put oneself in the shoes of the people or organization that wish to use the evidence. This involves focusing on the motivations of the instigators and considering how the research findings would be used. In her words: “there are many different ‘levers’ to pull on and the challenge is identifying the quickest and cheapest levers to pull (avenues to take) and exploiting them. The next challenge is identifying the most difficult levers and developing a strategy for how to address them.”

Another challenge was getting police agencies onboard and being able to demonstrate the benefits and usefulness of evidence-based research. This requires a number of “Look at Me” or “flagship” studies, while also focusing on infrastructure issues. This is a delicate balance that must be achieved. In her view, “flagship studies” are those designed to make other agencies and senior leaders see the value of participating in the research process. A final challenge is the



necessity of finding police officer champions that will understand the value of research and will promote its benefits and importance.

## **Emerging Issues**

The Head of Research Analysis and Information identified a number of key issues that require attention going forward, among them being:

- Developing standards;
  - Research design
  - Analysis/reporting
- Qualification and accreditation standards;
  - Evidence-based skills requirements
- Packaging knowledge for practitioners to use;
  - Making it readable and understandable
- Talent measurement/career progression; and
- How to build partnerships with academics and local police services.

## **The UK Police Foundation**

The Police Foundation is an independent non-profit think-tank that conducts police research and works toward improving policing for the benefit of the public. The work of the Police Foundation is fairly broad and includes promoting events such as an annual lecture and conference and sponsoring discussion forums, including the *Oxford Policing Police Forum*. The research is conducted in the form of projects such as the *Police Effectiveness in a Changing World* project and is aimed at improving practice in policing and crime reduction. The research findings are disseminated in a range of publications. ([www.policefoundation.org.uk](http://www.policefoundation.org.uk))

## **Universities' Police Science Institute**

The Universities' Police Science Institute (UPSI) was established in 2007 in partnership with South Wales Police to develop the research evidence base for the art, craft and science of policing. The tag line for the Institute is “Evidence for the art, craft & science of policing”. Since its inception, it has secured £2 million in external funding from various policing and governmental agencies. Combining academic rigour with a strong focus on policy and practice,

it has achieved international renown for its innovations in designing, developing and assessing new solutions to policing problems.

The UPSI team has particular expertise and has made an impact in the areas of reassurance and neighbourhood policing, prevention and counter-terrorism and democratic policing. In addition to these areas, ongoing research studies are being conducted in a number of areas, including:

- Police homicide investigations, cold case reviews and the impacts upon communities of major crime events such as murders;
- The police role in counter-terrorism;
- Policing domestic violence and child protection;
- Gun crime in the United Kingdom and elsewhere;
- Violent youth gangs and crime in inner-city areas;
- Spatial analysis of crime data; and
- Witness identification.

The UPSI works to identify interventions that are evidence-based and can be objectively assessed. The work of the UPSI has been important in providing an evidence base to inform policy including:

- PREVENT Strategy (counter-terrorism program);
- Home Office Policy on Anti-Social Behaviour; and
- Community Intelligence Methodology adopted by both the London Borough of Sutton and South Wales Police Forces.

The Institute publishes the findings from police research. A recent volume is titled *Assessing the Effects of Prevent Policing* and is available online at the Institute's website. UPSI also sponsors events, most recently hosting the annual meetings of The Society of Evidence-Based Policing, held at Cardiff in 2012. This Society is composed of police members and researchers and focuses on producing and disseminating best practice research evidence in policing. ([www.upsi.org.uk](http://www.upsi.org.uk))

## **The Role of the Private Sector in England**

In recent years, there has been an exponential growth in the role of the private sector in policing in the UK. This has been due in large measure to the government's efforts to reduce the costs of policing and broader considerations of the benefits of private sector management. For example, "privatization" is also a factor in other areas of the justice sector, including probation. It is anticipated that up to 60% of services currently performed by probation officers will ultimately be contracted out to private firms. The impact of these initiatives on the effectiveness of justice service delivery remains to be determined through evaluation research.

Private firms are involved in all facets of policing. For example, KPMG is seeking to "transform policing" and to pursue "continuous improvement" in police services through changes in police management and operations through an initiative called Operation Quest (KPMG, 2010; 2012). KPMG and other private sector firms are involved in assisting police services to reorganize their operations. Respondents indicated that the involvement of the private sector in UK policing does not appear to have fostered the development of collaborative research partnerships involving police services, academics and government.

## **Scotland**

### **The Scottish Institute for Policing Research**

The Scottish Institute of Policing Research (SIPR) was established in 2007 and is supported by investment from the Scottish Funding Council and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. SIPR is an interdisciplinary collaboration between 12 Scottish universities established to carry out high quality independent research and to make evidence-based contributions to policing policy and practice. ([www.sipr.ac.uk/](http://www.sipr.ac.uk/))

#### **Creating the Institute**

The Director of SIPR noted that, prior to the creation of the institute, police research in Scotland was highly fragmented, both geographically (people working in Edinburgh with no connection to researchers in Aberdeen doing similar work) and disciplinarily (e.g., forensic sciences, sociology, psychology). As well, he noted:

*“There was no substantive relationship between academics/researchers and the police... a very ad hoc style relationship, where certain researchers had individual contact with the police, but there was no systematic connection. Also, the results of the research being done were not being fed back to the police in any systematic way.”*

The police service in Scotland approached the universities and asked for the creation of a police research institute in Scotland. The police service offered to fund the initiative, provided that academic institutions would create the necessary structures. The Director notes that the establishment of a collaborative partnership would be the best model for achieving a national police institute. Instead of having one standalone institute, universities would instead pool their resources. SIPR’s research was then divided into three broad areas: police and community relations; police investigation; and police organization. These areas would serve as the building blocks for the Institute.

For each of these networks, an academic leader was identified whose responsibility included uniting the researchers within that field. Relationship-building between the research community and the police services paralleled the organization of the academic community. As part of this process, the Institute established an executive committee for each of the overarching research networks that includes chiefs of police. This proved to be advantageous in that there was an increase in interaction between academics and the chiefs of police, which served to build trust between the academic community and law enforcement and to mutually inform both sides about the nature of the work being done.

The SIPR also included a high-level board of governors through which the Chief Inspector of the Constabulary for Scotland met with university leaders. Additionally, an international advisor group was established in order to improve Scotland’s relationship with other countries within the sphere of policing research.

### ***Objectives***

The key objectives of SIPR are to:

- 1) Undertake high quality, independent and relevant research;
- 2) Support knowledge exchange between researchers and practitioners;
- 3) Improve the research evidence-base for policing policy and practice;

- 4) Expand and develop the research capacity in Scotland's universities and the police service; and
- 5) Promote the development of national and international links with researchers, practitioners and policy communities (SIPR, 2011: 3).

### *Activities*

The research activities of the SIPR are centered on three thematic research networks:

- 1) Police-community relations: focused on the relationships between police and different social, cultural and economic communities;
- 2) Evidence & investigation: focused on the role of the police in the recovery, interpretation and effective use of intelligence and evidence in the investigation of crime; and
- 3) Police organization: focused on the internal dynamics of police organizations, including issues of management, policy and leadership.

Each thematic network is headed by an Associate Director and managed by a steering group comprising academic and police representatives. The main objectives of the networks are to coordinate research and knowledge transfer activities within their particular fields of interest.

Coordinating the work of the three networks is an Executive Committee comprised of: the Director, the three Associate Directors, three senior police representatives drawn from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and the Scottish Police Services Authority, a co-Director of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and a representative of the Scottish Funding Council. The Executive Committee is accountable to a Board comprised of university principals and a representative of HMIC. There is also an Advisory Committee to provide independent and expert advice to SIPR from UK and overseas representatives of relevant organizations and individuals of international standing.

Members of SIPR undertake high quality, independent research of relevance to policing in Scotland and engage in a range of knowledge transfer activities in order to strengthen the evidence base on which policing policy and practice are developed. By providing a single focus for policing research in Scotland, SIPR also helps the development of national and international links with other researchers, policy makers and practitioners involved in policing research.

Collaborative research involving academics and practitioners is encouraged. The Institute also sponsors graduate research and operates a postgraduate program in Policing Studies for police practitioners and those who work with police services. A postgraduate Policing Studies Diploma and M.Sc. are offered via distance-learning and involve five universities supported by funding from the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Police Services Authority.

Publications cited in the 2011 Annual Report include: “Geographies of Missing People: Processes Experiences and Responses”; “Rural Policing: Understanding Police Knowledge and Practice in Rural Communities”; “A Comparative Study of Scottish Police Boards”; and “Exploring the Relationship Between Performance Management and Community Policing” (SIPR, 2011: 4-5).

Police representatives play a key role at all levels of the management structure of SIPR. Within the research networks, there is a senior police representative on each network steering group whose role includes bringing forward proposals for research from within the police service and helping facilitate access to police personnel and data for researchers. These police representatives also sit on the Executive Committee so they have a role in developing the strategic research direction of SIPR.

At present, SIPR has only limited resources to directly fund new research projects and most of this funding is tied to postdoctoral research assistants and Ph.D. scholarships. In addition, SIPR has some funding to support Practitioner and Overseas Research Fellows for those wishing to undertake a piece of supervised research within one of the five participating universities.

The SIPR disseminates research through a variety of methods. The website includes the findings of recent research. There is also a Policing Research Seminar series where researchers and practitioners can meet to discuss relevant research, an Annual Policing Lecture and Research Conference and a SIPR Newsletter that is distributed to a wide range of UK and overseas researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. SIPR's close links with the Scottish Police College also ensure that any research that has implications for training can be fed into relevant College courses.

## The Challenges of Establishing Collaborative Relationships

The development of partnerships is viewed as a priority in Scotland. The *Police Reform Act* specifically states that police must work in partnership with other organizations to reduce harm, to reduce crime and to increase people's feelings of safety. The Director of SIPR provided insights into the challenges of creating collaborative relationships between the police services and academics.

The first challenge involved building relationships between researchers in different institutions and between researchers and the police. The second challenge was building a research program that began to address issues and problems that the police viewed as being relevant and important, but simultaneously maintained the independence of the research community. In this respect, both the academic community and the police wished to maintain a level of independence, which was based on the belief that it would provide the Institute with a greater level of credibility and was not simply an extension of the police service.

One way in which these challenges were addressed involved the distribution of the initial resources available to the institute (£2 million over four years: one million from the police and one million from the higher education funding council). The decision was made to use the funding in a variety of ways. For example, a portion of the money was allocated to post-doctoral research projects linked to the overarching research networks. Funding was also allocated to Ph.D. research projects. In both cases, those applying for funding were required to demonstrate that they had engaged in a dialogue with the police on the relevance of the research and involved the police on issues of access and supervision. Collaborative bids were also encouraged in order to foster cooperation between institutions.

The institute also created the position of "Knowledge Transfer Manager" to organize seminars, workshops and an annual conference on police research. The objective of these activities was to increase the visibility of the Institute in the police and academic communities and to create opportunities for police officers and academics to come together and talk about research in a conference setting.

## **Funding for Police Research in Scotland**

Researchers have access to a variety of funding sources. The SIPR receives annual funding contributions from government and continues to get investment from the police service that is provided annually. These funds are used to conduct research projects that are aligned with police interests/agendas. In addition to this, academics compete for research funding from research councils and funding is available for Ph.D. internships. A key component of SIPR's mission is to build research capacity in the policing area and to encourage the development of young scholars. There is also funding support available from the European Union, where there is a significant program of research that is focused on security. There are multiple streams of funding that serve a variety of functions for the SIPR.

## **The Evolution of Police Research in Scotland**

The Director of the SIPR reflected on the evolution of police research in the country, noting that traditionally, the government did not invest a significant amount of money in police research. The government had a central research unit that commissioned research on crime and criminal justice, although this often produced only one or two projects on policing a year. However, as the SIPR has become more established, the government is making greater use of the research findings produced by the Institute and is providing more funding and research grants to the Institute to conduct policing research. This movement has also gained momentum through the significant policing reforms occurring in Scotland, specifically the establishment of a National Scottish Police Force.

## **The Role of Private Firms in Conducting Research**

Prior to the creation of the SIPR, much of the government research on policing was carried out by private research consultancies. This was, in part, due to the fact that these firms were in a better position to compete for bids on cost and efficiency. The Director of SIPR noted that the situation at the time was similar to the current situation in Canada, wherein private consultants and private consulting firms are very involved in conducting studies on policing. Since Scottish universities have begun to better meet the policing communities' research needs, private consulting firms have become less prominent and government is leaning more heavily on universities to conduct research.



## The Dissemination of Research Findings in Scotland

There are three elements involved in the dissemination of research findings. The first element involves paper-based dissemination – briefing papers and research summaries. The second element involves digital or Web-based dissemination via the SIPR website. The third and most essential element is face-to face dissemination between researchers and the police through seminars, conferences and other forums. The Director noted that a key to the dissemination of research findings is the relationship that has been established between the SIPR and the Scottish Police College, which is responsible for training and professional development of police officers. A joint professional development program was established whereby researchers would visit the College and provide programs and workshops on specific police issues to police officers. This program is a cost-effective method of providing the police with tangible results that benefitted officers from a training and professional development perspective.

The SIPR *Annual Report* contains a list of SIPR-supported postdoctoral research assistants and Ph.D. scholarships, the topics being studied, project start dates and other information that would be of interest to police and academics alike.

([www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/SIPR\\_Annual\\_Report\\_11.pdf](http://www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/SIPR_Annual_Report_11.pdf)).

## Processes for Incorporating Research in Police Policy

The Director of SIPR stated that the management structure of the institute has a key role in this area. There are a number of chiefs of police on the Executive Committee of the Institute. This provides an opportunity for them to return to their own policy forums and begin conversations regarding the utilization and implementation of research findings. In the view of the Director, having senior level officers within the management structure of the Institute is an important part of the process for incorporating research into policy. More specifically, the SIPR is contributing to the discussions on the economics of policing.

Commenting on this, the Director noted that all police organizations in the UK are facing massive budget cuts but that there is limited information on the costs of policing:

*“There is a long tradition in the UK of health economics, but policing has never really engaged with that field of research and ways of thinking. There is a budget of £1 billion for policing in Scotland, but if one were to ask a police officer how much it costs to*

*deliver community policing in Edinburgh as opposed to some of the remote highlands and islands, he/she would likely be unable to provide a specific answer.”*

## **Police Use of Research Findings**

The Director noted that, at present, the extent to which the findings from police research are incorporated into police policy and practice are limited. In his view, it is a matter of changing the police culture: “As recently as 10-20 years ago, there was basically no discussion between police and researchers and decisions about policing strategy were largely based on professional judgments and intuition. There is a constant challenge to make research part of the conversation about police policy and practice.”

On a more general level, however, the role of SIPR is to facilitate research that will assist the police to think differently about problems. For example when the SIPR started out, it was very rare for police to carry out any systematic evaluation of new initiatives. However, police services are now approaching the SIPR to evaluate new initiatives and programs that they plan to implement. There has been a shift in thinking on behalf of police services that is much more research oriented. This is part of a broader shift in thinking by the police, which is predicated on the notion that for them to secure resources from government and elsewhere, they must implement evidence-based approaches.

## **Police Education**

One component of the strategy to build relationships between the police and universities was the creation of a Master’s program specifically for police officers developed in association with the Scottish Police College. Creating a dedicated Master’s program creates a body of police officers who are interested in police research and who realize that research can actually help police with their jobs and improve their understanding of what they do. The program has encountered a number of challenges including the Scottish government’s decision to move to a national police force, which changed the program’s direction, and the economic downturn which resulted in a loss of funding for the M.A. program. The program is currently in its infancy (going into its second year) and the current group of eight student-officers are required to pay their own tuition. The students are all based at Dundee University, but they complete modules that are delivered by four other Scottish universities, each of which collaborates on the M.A. program – a unique feature of the program.

Within the sphere of police education, the SIPR has also established practitioner fellowships where police officers and police staff were encouraged to work with an academic on a small piece of work related to one of their areas of responsibility. The academic provides expertise about research methodology, accesses to the wider literature and a connection to evidence-based research for the police. The fellowships last between six and twelve months. Projects cover a variety of topics including a police social survey of the economic community and a project aimed at updating hostage negotiation training by incorporating the current research and available literature. These fellowships provide a great opportunity for police to engage the academic community and are cost-effective and require little funding beyond travel expenses.

## **The United States**

In the US, the federal government plays a significant role in facilitating police research. The Bureau of Justice Assistance, the National Institute of Justice and others make funds available annually for university-based researchers and collaborative projects involving police services. There are a number of organizations that facilitate and disseminate police research, including:

### **The Law Enforcement Organization of Planning and Research Directors**

The Law Enforcement Organization of Planning and Research Directors (LEOPRD) provides police leaders and research and planning directors with for a forum to discuss best practices, current research and methodologies to enhance the role and impact of P&R units. It was initially a joint venture of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Statistics. Funding was discontinued for this initiative in 2011 and it is now funded through CNA Analysis & Solutions, a public research institute in Alexandria, VA under the Smart Policing Initiative of the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s (BJA).

### **The Police Executive Research Forum**

PERF is a federally funded, independent, non-profit think-tank. Its members include police leaders from across the US and a few from Canada. The PERF Research Group conducts research studies on police organizations, policy and practice that are designed to inform police services and to build a knowledge base on policing. These studies have included research areas

such as community policing, problem-solving policing, hotspot policing, civilianization in police services and the police response to those with mental illness, among others. PERF's Law Enforcement Center for Survey Research (LECSR) conducts field surveys on behalf of private and public institutions. ([www.policeforum.org/](http://www.policeforum.org/))

## **National Institute of Justice**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is involved in a wide range of activities, including sponsoring research on the police. It also sponsors the National Police Research Platform, discussed below. NIJ and the Harvard Kennedy School Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management are currently sponsoring a second Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety (2008-2014). Among the topics being addressed are community policing, the challenges of reducing crime and the fear of crime while maintaining legitimacy with the public; the role of police in reducing incarceration; and procedural justice in policing. Participants include scholars and police practitioners and the results of the discussions are published as *New Perspectives in Policing*. Among the publications are: "Making Policing More Affordable: Managing Costs and Measuring Value in Policing" (December 2010); "The Persistent Pull of Police Professionalism" (March 2011); and "Police Leadership Challenges in a Changing World" (July 2012) ([www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/criminaljustice/research-publications/executive-sessions](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/criminaljustice/research-publications/executive-sessions)). ([www.nij.gov](http://www.nij.gov))

## **The Police Foundation**

The Police Foundation plays a major role in facilitating police research and in disseminating the findings from research studies. The tagline of the Police Foundation is "Advancing policing through innovation & science." The Foundation facilitates collaborative research relationships between researchers and police services and has a number of initiatives that are designed to facilitate discussion of policing issues and the dissemination of research findings. Current research projects include "Cost Reduction Strategies Used by Police Agencies", "The Shift Length Experiment" and "Smartphones in Policing" ([www.policefoundation.org/content/current-projects](http://www.policefoundation.org/content/current-projects)). The Foundation also publishes *Ideas in American Policing*, a newsletter that features current issues in policing. ([www.policefoundation.org/](http://www.policefoundation.org/))

## **Rand Centre on Quality Policing**

The Rand Centre on Quality Policing (RCPQ) has as its mission “to help guide the efforts of local police agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations, manage costs and where possible, reduce them”. The activities of the RCPQ are centered on research on contemporary police policy and practice. A number of research studies are designed to increase the performance, effectiveness and efficiency of policing and address a range of topical areas, including racial profiling, cost efficiencies in policing, police community relations and reducing community violence. Among the more recent research publications are: “Selected International Best Practices in Police Performance Measurement” (Davis, 2012); and “What Cost-of-Crime Research Can Tell Us About Investing in Police” (Heaton, 2010). A recent commentary was titled “Short-Term Savings, Long-Term Losses: When Police Departments Respond to Economic Pressures by Cutting Their Forces” (Heaton and Jackson, 2012). The Rand Centre on Quality Policing also has a program that focuses on researching best practices in policing that includes producing training guides to assist police services in becoming more effective and efficient ([www.rand.org/jie/centers/quality-policing/research/practices.html](http://www.rand.org/jie/centers/quality-policing/research/practices.html)). ([www.rand.org/jie/centers/quality-policing.html](http://www.rand.org/jie/centers/quality-policing.html))

## **Community Oriented Policing Services**

The primary objective of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) is to advance community policing practice in the US. COPS provide grants to police services and run an outreach program called Knowledge Resources. This program makes information available to police services on best practices in policing and provides access to publications covering a wide range of topics from computer mapping, school bullying and specific crime prevention initiatives. ([www.cops.usdoj.gov/](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/))

## **CrimeSolutions.gov**

CrimeSolutions.gov is a website maintained by the Office of Justice Programs, in the US Department of Justice. This site provides a quick and accessible guide to new research, including the title of the research study, an “evidence rating” (Effective, Promising, or No Effects) and a summary of the strategy and its objectives ([www.crimesolutions.gov/TopicDetails.aspx?ID=84](http://www.crimesolutions.gov/TopicDetails.aspx?ID=84)). ([www.crimesolutions.gov](http://www.crimesolutions.gov))

## Research Capacity in US Police Services

A national survey of the P&R units in police organizations and municipal and country police services (671) found considerable variability in their capacities to conduct research activities (Haberman and King, 2011). The majority of the P&R units in these agencies focused their efforts on administrative support activities rather than on research and planning. This led the authors of the study to conclude that “research is not an institutionalized part of police culture” (Haberman and King, 2011: 695).

Another study of the research, analysis and planning capacities in US police services (118) found:

- 75% of the P&R directors indicated that they would benefit from additional training and certification related to their role, in particular training in statistical and research methods and in strategic planning;
- Only about a quarter of the directors were satisfied with the level of funding, training and staffing that their units received;
- 80% of the directors felt that their unit served as a “catch-all” in the police service; and
- The involvement and impact of the P&R unit was affected by the educational level of the director and the level of resources received by the unit (Chu, 2012).

These findings led the author to state: “We still don’t know much about the P&R unit in police agencies, or the conditions under which they excel, or under which they are highly valued organizational components” (Chu, 2012: 15). A specific concern was expressed by the author that in times of fiscal restraint, P&R units may be the most vulnerable to cutbacks, despite their importance in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service.

Another survey of P&R directors (86) conducted by PERF found:

- 45% of the directors had a high school diploma, or an undergraduate degree (36%), while 45% had a graduate degree and 10% a doctorate;
- 66% of the directors indicated that they would benefit from training and certification related to planning and research, including strategic planning, statistics and research methods and leadership;

- The majority of the P&R units were involved in strategic planning and the evaluation of programs and strategies, but less so in the areas of technology and resources and staffing;
- P&R units are most often (74%) involved at the beginning of the strategic planning process and in evaluation and less so in subsequent stages; and
- The majority of the directors surveyed (69%) indicated that the Chief or the Sheriff maintained primary control over the content of P&R documents (Gunaratne, 2008).

At a recent annual meeting of LEOPRD, police leaders and P&R managers identified a number of strategies to enhance the role and impact of P&R units. These included being aware of best practices, staying involved in initiatives taken in their police service, providing background information for new initiatives in the police service and aligning the unit's activities with the strategic objectives and goals of the police service (US Department of Justice, 2010: 10).

## Australia

### Overview of Policing Research in Australia

Australia has a national police service – the Australian Federal Police (AFP) – six state and two territorial police services. Police services tend to be large, with the police service in New South Wales having 16,000 sworn personnel. The limited number of police services means fewer obstacles to the development of collaborative relationships than in Canada and the US, where there are multiple police services that cross many jurisdictions.

Funding for academic research in Australia comes principally from the Australian Research Council's Centers of Excellence Program (CEP). Similar to the SSHRC Canada Research Chairs, CEP has a budget in the millions of dollars and covers the fields of science and technology. There are roughly 30 Centers of Excellence funded at the present time, 27 of which are involved in hard science. There are three Centers of Excellence in the social sciences. Through a competitive process, the CEP identifies national research priority areas and invites submissions of proposals. Most often, funded research is a collaborative effort between industry and academia and is designed to establish and foster research nodes that will commit themselves to undertaking important work on a long-term basis. There is also research funding provided by individual police agencies and by state governments.

The move towards collaborative research centres discussed below is changing the nature of policing research in Australia. Previously, there were a number of small research centres that tended to reflect the interests of the centres' directors and adopted an insular approach to research. In general, they did not develop collaborative partnerships with police services and other stakeholder groups. Evidence that this is changing is explained below.

### **Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security**

The Australians interviewed for the project identified the Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS) as the most ambitious initiative designed to develop collaborative relationships and research partnerships between the police and academia. CEPS was established in 2007 “to boost policing and security research capacity in Australia amid the growing complexity and internationalization of transnational crime in the post 9/11 environment”.

The result was a competitive process in which universities and police agencies put forth proposals. The competition was won by a consortium involving Griffith University in Queensland, the Australian National University in Canberra, Charles Stuart University based primarily in New South Wales and Queensland University, as well as a range of police partners including the Australian Federal Police, the Victoria Police Service, the Queensland Police Service, the Tasmanian Police Service and a range of smaller specialist bodies, such as the National Forensic Program and the Australian Crime Commission. The Centre is administered by Griffith University in Brisbane and operates across four University Nodes. The Centre sponsors forums and workshops and publishes research studies.

CEPS is increasingly becoming the focal point for most of the major Australian research studies conducted on policing and security. The program provides fellowships, which allow senior or regular police officers with an interest in a particular project to come in and spend one to two years working at CEPS. This provides an opportunity for police officers to become involved in research and to establish links between research and police services. Currently under discussion is a program that would embed researchers in policing agencies and services.

([www.ceps.edu.au/home](http://www.ceps.edu.au/home))



## **Australian Institute of Criminology**

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is another major centre for policing research in Australia. The AIC was established in 1973 and operates under the federal *Criminology Research Act* (1971). The Director of the Centre reports to the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Justice and there is a Criminology Research Advisory Board composed of distinguished criminal justice practitioners. The AIC is involved in a variety of research activities and produces publications on a variety of crime and criminal justice topics. Recent publications include: “Responding to Welfare Fraud: The Australian Experience”; “Effective Community-based Supervision of Young Offenders”; and “Effective Crime Prevention Interventions for Implementation by Local Government.” The AIC conducts contract work for government bodies, including police agencies and also maintains national data banks, including deaths in custody and a national homicide-monitoring program. ([www.aic.gov.au/](http://www.aic.gov.au/))

## **The Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies**

The Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES) is located at the University of Tasmania and facilitates collaborative research involving academics and practitioners. Recent publications include “The Effectiveness of Forensic Science in the Criminal Justice System”, “Policing Issues and Crime – Analysis of Tasmanian Data” and “Criminal Justice Policy and the Mentally Ill in Tasmania.” In recent years, the Institute has been affected by the budget crisis, which has had a significant impact on its activities. ([www.utas.edu.au/](http://www.utas.edu.au/))

## **University-Based Police Scholars**

Research studies on policing are also carried out by university-based scholars, although there is no one university that has a core of distinguished academics doing research on policing issues. In recent years, much of the criminological “action” has shifted to Queensland, particularly, Griffith University, where there are several faculty with an interest in policing. There are currently no university-practitioner initiatives focusing on the challenges of policing in the Northern Territory, which would have the most comparability for Canada’s challenges in policing rural and remote communities.

## **Role of Private Research Agencies**

Australian contacts indicated that there has been a shift away from the use of private consulting firms due to cost and a perceived failure to receive maximum value for money. However, they noted a recent shift in the Australian government from more social democratic parties to a more conservative government may change this trend, as the conservatives are much more open to the private sector. In addition, in the view of respondents, the existence of the AIC has made it more difficult for the private sector to compete, as the AIC does a considerable amount of contract work and does not charge the same high fees as private firms.

## **The Timely Dissemination of Research Findings**

There are a number of initiatives currently underway to disseminate research findings. The AIC produces a “Trends and Issues” series, which presents “snapshots” of different research projects that the institute and other bodies are conducting. These are similar to the Harvard/NIJ publications. These briefs are widely disseminated in both hard copy and through the Web. CEPS has a similar program including a working paper series and a briefing paper series. In this way, a considerable amount of information is consistently being released regarding the types of research being done and the findings of that work.

There is also an active academic publishing program. Researchers at CEPS are expected to publish in high-level peer-reviewed journals. Their performance is measured on the ability to get work published. CEPS also hosts a significant number of workshops and has an active workshop program in addition to holding an annual conference on particular topics. Both the workshops and the annual conference involve close collaboration with industry partners and are often jointly sponsored. Another way of disseminating the work is through bringing visiting scholars who are able to tour the country and to collaborate with various police services who have an expressed interest in this type of partnership. The Web is a major dissemination tool and all seminars and workshops are available as podcasts.

CrimNet is an electronic criminal justice information network sponsored by the Sydney Institute of Criminology (<http://sydney.edu.au/law/criminology/index.shtml>). It is designed to provide ongoing communication between criminal justice professionals, practitioners, academics and

students in Australia and overseas. CrimNet has as a core activity the dissemination of information on a wide range of criminological issues, including police research.

Despite these initiatives, the Australians interviewed for the project indicated that there are challenges in disseminating research findings to the general public and to the media. In recent years, CEPS has been discussing how to improve the distribution of the outcomes of new research. This will require addressing the tensions that often exist between academics and practitioners.

### **The Australia New Zealand Police Advisory Agency**

Most recently, the Australia and New Zealand Police Advisory Agency (ANZPAA) has been established representing all jurisdictions. ANZPAA is designed to be a clearinghouse for information on policing and to coordinate research efforts across the country. It conducts research, sets research priorities for all police agencies (common problems that they want to examine) and identifies researchers. This may involve contracting research out to university-based scholars and institutes or to the private sector.

One of ANZPAA's tasks is to examine why previous attempts to develop police research and collaborative partnerships have not been successful. More specifically, the group aims to determine how research can be made more relevant to police services. One Australian contact noted that much of the research that is being produced is not getting published in journals and is inaccessible to practitioners. In some cases, this is a result of using private sector researchers, as their findings are likely to be proprietary and stay in house, such as the work done by KPMG. In some instances, academics are reluctant to share the findings from their research, as it may contain classified or sensitive information. According to another Australian interviewed for the project, much of the research conducted by police services is "secret" and not for public consumption. ([www.anzpaa.org.au](http://www.anzpaa.org.au))

### **Police-Academic Relations**

According to Australian sources, there are often differing expectations of research which can lead to tensions between academics and practitioners. A senior professor stated,

*"The industry partners want very specific questions answered, in a short time-frame and in language that they can understand and use. However, the measure of*

*performance that the ARC (the funding body) runs counter to this. So, this tension is an ever-present challenge that is not an easy gap to bridge.”*

Another Australian contact indicated that, in some cases, academics are part of the problem; “There is an arrogance of researchers. Basically, the view is the police provide me with access to their data and I’ll provide them with a signed copy of my book.” That said, Australians interviewed for the project indicated that police services are increasingly receptive to research and are more willing to engage in research, particularly studies conducted by external bodies. This has resulted in a much more open environment in which there has been collaboration between academia and the law enforcement communities.

## **The Netherlands**

The Dutch police are currently undergoing restructuring that will result in 10 regional police services.

### **Police Education**

Police officers in the Netherlands are educated differently than in Canada. Different police academies are used to train each level of police officers and the amount of training an officer receives depends on his or her level. Police officers who will be deployed on the street are offered a basic level of training. For those officers who want to go to a higher level, they can return to the academy for a B.A. or an M.A. For these degrees, the officers work with professors from Dutch universities and abroad. The Academy offers programs on leadership, community policing and criminal investigation, among others. In the Netherlands, a major function of the police academies is to connect research and practice. The restructuring that is currently underway will create one national police academy.

### **Research Chairs**

The Dutch National Police (DNP) co-funds a number of Research Chairs with Dutch academic institutions. These Research Chairs articulate thematic research areas related to policing and training. Current themes include the use of force and knowledge transfer. This means that all academic research that is being undertaken relates to one of these themes and everything must be applied back into the training environment. A Canadian respondent involved in criminal justice

education indicates that there was nothing similar to this arrangement in Canada. Research chairs and police research are financed by the national government and academic institutions. Funding is also provided for the development and application of technology in policing in the Netherlands. Dutch universities also receive money from the national government to conduct police research. A specific police force may also fund university research to focus on local issues.

## **Police Research**

The Dutch police work in close collaboration with universities. Research studies are conducted at the police academy, at the Masters level by police officers and in programs such as the Netherlands School of Public Administration (NSOB) located in The Hague. Under the Dutch Model, the committee that sets the agenda for research or sets the agenda for the theme also sets the discussion for the use and dissemination of research findings. This ensures the data is being used for its intended purpose. The committee agrees upon all the aspects of the research findings' use, with the view that the research needs to influence decision making, policies and practices in order to enhance policing for the Dutch State. However, it should be noted that this model is possible because the Dutch police are centralized. This is not the case in Canada, as the number of policing services and complicated policing arrangements across the country limit the ability of a national body to direct research in this fashion.

The Dutch have also been a co-sponsor of the Pearls of Policing initiative that brings together senior police leaders from across the world to discuss issues related to police work ([www.spl.politieacademie.nl](http://www.spl.politieacademie.nl)). The group publishes an Executive Summary from its annual meetings: "Policing for a Safer World" (Singapore, June 2012: p. 9-13) (<http://spl.politieacademie.nl/Portals/0/docs/Parls%20Conference%202012%20Executive%20Summary%20Final.pdf>). Although the group itself does not sponsor research, it is a forum for discussion of research findings and their implications for policing.

## **Potential Models for Canada: Programs, Portals and Platforms**

A general theme that emerged in discussions with Canadians was the absence of a national strategy for police research and a structure that would play a coordinating role in the development of a program of police research and dissemination of research findings. There have

been a number of false starts in Canada in attempts to create a framework for facilitating police research, but none have yet proved successful. Several respondents noted that it would be instructive to examine models operating in other jurisdictions. There are a number of initiatives that are centered on policing and provide examples of the types of information resources that are available. Note that the following discussion is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

### **The Campbell Collaboration**

The Campbell Collaboration (C2) is an international research network that produces systematic reviews of the effects of social interventions, including policing. C2 “helps people make well-informed decisions by preparing, maintaining and disseminating systematic reviews in education, crime and justice and social welfare” ([www.campbellcollaboration.org](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org)). C2 is situated in Oslo, Norway and is hosted by the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Health Services ([www.kunnskapssenteret.no](http://www.kunnskapssenteret.no)). The Centre provides coordination of C2, including the production of systematic reviews of police research, external and internal communication, fundraising and events, including an annual colloquium.

C2 maintains an on-line library of documents that can be downloaded. Publication titles include: “Effects of Close Circuit Television Surveillance on Crime” (Welsh and Farrington, 2008); “The Effects of Hot Spot Policing on Crime” (Braga, Papchristos and Hureau, 2012); and “Legitimacy in Policing: A Systematic Review” (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant and Manning, 2013). The site also provides an opportunity for researchers to register reviews of topical areas in policing with C2. This includes the title of the review, the background of the review and the method to be used (e.g., meta-analysis and the lead reviewer’s contact information).

### **SMART Policing Initiative**

The SMART Policing Initiative (SPI) is a collaborative consortium composed of the Bureau of Justice Assistance and more than 30 law enforcement agencies in the US. The activities of SPI are designed to:

- Develop strategies and tactics that are “effective, efficient and economical”;

- Build on the concepts of offender-based and place-based “hotspot” policing by replicating evidence-based practices or encouraging exploration of new, unique solutions to public safety problems and criminogenic circumstances;
- Support law enforcement agencies in building evidence-based, data-driven law enforcement tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient and economical while containing costs; and
- Transform policing into a more scientific, analytical, strategic, collaborative and efficient enterprise ([www.smartpolicinginitiative.com/background](http://www.smartpolicinginitiative.com/background)).

SPI has a number of components, including:

- A quarterly *Smart Policing Newsletter* that highlights developments in police tactics and strategies;
- *SPI Site Spotlight Reports* that highlight research, methodologies and evaluation outcomes of initiatives taken by police services. Recent reports include an evaluation of the Safe Street Team in Boston and the application of the SARA problem-solving model in an attempt to reduce gun-related violence in Los Angeles;
- *Development of Effective Marketing Practices: A Guide for SMART Policing Initiatives*, providing police services with marketing strategies to improve the success of their programmatic initiatives;
- Webinars on a variety of policing tactics and strategies that are made available in podcasts;
- Monthly Web updates; and
- A list of SPI Subject Matter Experts that can be contacted by police services for research, evaluation and consultation.

## **National Police Research Platform**

This initiative is funded by NIJ and is described as:

*“[A] long-term project designed to collect systematic data about individual police officers, supervisors and organizations over time and to help document excellence in policing... The Platform promotes evidence-based learning within the policing field and contributes to the continued professionalization of law enforcement.”*

The Platform draws upon the participation of police services across the US. These services provide researchers with ready access to police service personnel. Many of the studies involve the use of online surveys of personnel in police services. The Platform's website provides access to a number of Overview Reports, including: "Measuring Police Organizations"; "Community-based Indicators of Police Performance"; and "Longitudinal Study of New Officers." There are also Topical Reports on issues such as: "Police Stress, Burnout and Health"; "Receptivity to Police Innovation"; and "Police and the Community."

The NIJ continues to fund the expansion of the Platform with the goal of generating knowledge about policing that can be transferred into evidence-based practice.

([www.nationalpoliceresearch.org/](http://www.nationalpoliceresearch.org/))

## **Creating a New Paradigm for Police Research in Canada**

Leading police scholars are calling for the creation of a new paradigm that will bring together police services, academics, governments and other stakeholders to conduct, disseminate and utilize police research.

The potential for police research to have a significant impact on police policy and practice will be enhanced by the move to what is termed "science-based policing," a framework that is designed to overcome many of the obstacles that have hindered collaboration and the utilization of research findings.

The police scholars David Weisburd and Peter Neyroud (2011: 3) have argued that there is a need to change the relationship between science and policing. They have documented the disconnect between research and police practice, pointing out that most police practices are not systematically evaluated and that "we still know too little about what works and under what conditions in policing." These scholars point out that most police initiatives are not evaluated and researched and the use of evidence-based practice is not central in the development and implementation of organizational activities. On the other hand, academics have done little to foster productive relationships with the police and "academic research is generally divorced from the realities of policing... Real issues in policing often have little salience in the halls of universities" (2011: 5). This results in research being produced that is either not timely, has little relevance to the day-to-day challenges of police leaders and/or is "hidden in plain sight" in



academic journals. There are costs, fiscal, organizational and to the community, of this state of affairs.

Weisburd and Neyroud have noted that this new “police science” paradigm “demands that the police adopt and advance evidence-based policy and that universities become active participants in the everyday world of police practice” (2011: 6). It should be noted that by referring to a science-based paradigm, Weisburd and Neyroud mean the broad array of methods available such as social sciences, forensics, structured analytical and evaluation techniques, technology and innovations in police strategies.

The changes involved in shifting from the old paradigm to a science-based paradigm are set out in Table 2.

**TABLE 2. Changing to a Science-Based Policing Paradigm** (Weisburd & Neyroud, 2011: 16)

	<b>Old Paradigm</b>	<b>Science Based Policing</b>
Education and Training	Based around legal knowledge and work-based learning	Founded in science, linking scientific knowledge with practice and continual professional development
Leadership	Leaders see science as useful when it supports initiatives, but an inconvenient part of their own when it does not	Leaders both value science and see it as a crucial part of their own, their staff and their agencies’ development and essential to their agencies’ efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy with the public

Academic-Police Relationship	Separate and distinct institutional structures	University police schools combining both teaching and research, with strong institutional links and personnel exchange with local police agencies
Development of Practice	Practice developed by individual initiatives and political mandates	Practitioners and agencies are committed to constant and systematic research and evaluation of practice
Investment in Research	A limited national and local or individual commitment to evaluating specific initiatives	A committed percentage of police spending devoted to research, evaluation, and the development of the science and research base which is framed within a national (and possibly international) strategy to build the knowledge base over the medium to long term

Weisburd and Neyroud (2011: 15) argue that the training of police and police scholars should take place “at least in part, at university policing centres” to be done in parallel with police services developing the capacity to follow evidence-based practice:

*“In short, we need to see the development of the sort of shared academic-practitioner infrastructure that is an accepted part of medicine and education: websites and publications that are jointly used by and contributed to by academics and practitioner users; a culture of continuous professional development, supported by accreditation, that encourages practitioners to engage with the evidence and contribute more of their own; [and] rewards and recognition in policing that showcase high-quality evidence-based practice.”*

## **Creating a Framework for the Conduct & Dissemination of Police Research in Canada**

In its report, *In Search of Security: The Future of Policing in Canada* (2006), the now-disbanded Law Commission of Canada (LCC) recommended the creation of a National Policing Centre, “independent of any particular police service, with a broad mandate to foster and coordinate research, experimentation, innovation and best practices in policing, policing policy and relevant legislation in Canada” (2006: 153). In the view of the LCC, the Centre would foster collaboration among key stakeholders, be overseen by a Board of Directors and have sufficient funding to support research and serve as a clearinghouse for materials on policing in Canada and internationally.

The materials presented in this report have documented the fragmented state of Canadian police research and the absence of mechanisms to disseminate, in a usable form, the findings from research studies conducted by academics, police services, private consultants and governments. Similarly, there is no entity that can coordinate efforts to secure funding for police research, assist police services in building research capacities and sponsor initiatives and events to enhance collaborative partnerships between all of the stakeholders. In the view of the majority of the Canadians interviewed for the project, the consequences of this fragmentation and the absence of a centralized portal are significant. The dialogue surrounding a strategy to increase the quantity and quality of police research in Canada and to ensure its timely dissemination to police scholars, police leaders, governments and other stakeholder groups is in the early stages.

### **A National Police Research Centre**

There were differing views offered on the creation of a national police research centre. Several individuals felt that the centre should be set up as a separate NGO or government body and serve as a structure that would bring academics, associations and police organizations together. Others offered that it would be most feasible and effective if university-based.

The creation of a national centre in Canada would address many of the issues that have been identified in this paper. If properly conceptualized, implemented and sufficiently funded, the centre could become the key structure for moving toward science-based policing in Canada, fostering collaborative relationships among police services, academics and governments, serve as a central portal for the collection and dissemination of research findings and increase the role of

research findings in police policy and practice. It would also assist in identifying the best ways to allocate funds, increasing police effectiveness and improving overall police performance.

In the view of many of the Canadians interviewed for the project, a centre would function to break down the many “silos” that exist in Canada that have hindered collaboration, limited accessibility to research studies and reports and precluded the development of networks of information sharing. Information dissemination would be a key role of a national centre. Police scholars have documented the exponential growth of the police research literature and noted that it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the literature: “Today, there is so much that scholars and police find it difficult to keep up, let alone evaluate its qualitative merits and practical utility” (Skogan and Frydl, 2004: 20).

A centre could also serve as a focal point for training young police scholars. As one respondent stated: “the police scholars in Canada today are all gray”, referring to the aging of the cohort of academics who began conducting police research in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s.

Alarming, the new cadre of police researchers are fewer in number and largely works in isolation from one another and from police services. As police services become more amenable to science-based policing, it is important to focus on educating tomorrow’s police scholars.

A police educator offered the following observation:

*“It could be some form of collaborative institute, which has limited staff but is made up of interested police and academic partners working on a national research agenda, creating funding availability and setting up parameters for that. At the outset, there does not need to be a physical central location. It could start as a community, collaborative research fund or board that would have both a research and communication function to ensure that the research findings are disseminated.”*

## **Challenges in Establishing a National Centre**

There was, among some of the Canadians interviewed, considerable doubt that a national centre for police research could be created. One respondent stated that the likelihood of creating a National Institute will depend on the support of senior political and government officials, however if such support is obtained, the institute could be set up immediately. Among the challenges noted were overcoming the “jealousies” that exist among the various groups involved in policing and police research; the limited pool of academics with expertise in policing; the need

for the federal government to take a lead role and to provide funding; and the amount of effort required to build and sustain collaborative networks.

Respondents offered a number of strategies to address these challenges, including the importance of articulating the mandate, mission and parameters of the initiative; and consulting with all stakeholder groups. These included the following:

*“Establishing a national institute requires like-minded institutions that are committed to sharing resources and forming the necessary partnerships in a collaborative effort.... When the Dutch were forming their Research Chairs, they started with a few key members, figured out how they worked and then slowly expanded. The same principles and processes should guide the development of a national police research centre in Canada.”*

*“We need to start thinking about the possibility of creating partnerships with academic institutions that are willing to work with each other and that are also willing to work with the police sector. There needs to be something else that would support that. That may be with the provincial governments and the federal government, being a little bit like the Police Sector Council, but with a broader agenda and with a broader set of partners that are linked with a common approach to that research.”*

*“It is critical to find pockets (of support) across the country and then outline a clear path on which to embark. The initial core support could come from universities, including Simon Fraser University, the University of Regina and the University of Alberta working with police services, including the Vancouver Police Department, Calgary Police Service, the BC Transit Police and E Division RCMP, all of whom are receptive to research-driven, evidence-based policies.”*

*“There are people and interest groups that are willing to come on board. Additionally, there are a number of provinces and organizations that would likely be willing to participate. A number of major police agencies throughout the country would also be willing to participate. However, it should be the role of the Federal Government to take the lead on this project. The provinces cannot be relied on.”*

## **Potential Areas for Police Research**

The Canadians interviewed for the project identified a number of areas that should be the subject of research, among them being:

- The economics of policing and sustainable models of policing;
- What works in policing: evaluating police initiatives;
- Community constables and the role of private security;

- Key competencies for police leaders;
- Policing northern and remote communities;
- The impact of downloading on police services;
- The potential and limits of tiered policing; and
- Building police, university and government networks and collaborative partnerships.

Speaking to areas where research was required, one academic stated:

*“Everything needs to be studied. There is a dearth of evidence-based research on so many facets of policing in Canada. There is currently a huge push for police legitimacy. As such, there is a need for research that shows police efficacy (“how police services are doing”) outside of a quantitative or statistically driven model. The COMPSTAT phenomenon is over-explored. We do not have a good handle on the ‘craft of policing’. Until we understand that, it is difficult to move forward. For example, there is very little data on police leadership and leadership development. Also, a great deal of study needs to be directed at training (in all areas).”*

## Concluding Comments

The research questions for this project were centered on the structures for funding and conducting police research and the processes for disseminating research findings. In Canada, the materials gathered focused on the state of police research in Canada, its evolution and various funding sources, sponsors and topics in police research. Attention was also given to the current capacities for disseminating research findings, including the link between research, policy and practice.

The materials presented in this report have documented the fragmented state of police research in Canada. This state of affairs is due in large measure to the absence of a federal body or national organization that has a general responsibility to encourage the development of new knowledge around policing issues and communicate that knowledge to the broader community. As one academic stated: “at the moment we are working in silos out of necessity, not by choice. There is no unifying body that could overcome this.”

Discussions with Canadians and with key respondents in several international jurisdictions have provided a wealth of materials and ideas on how to improve the capacity to conduct police research in Canada as well as creating structures that would facilitate the development of

collaborative partnerships between the police, academics, governments and other stakeholders. There was near-unanimous view that the creation of a national police research centre would begin to address the current deficiencies as well as provide for the timely dissemination of the findings from police research so as to inform police policy and practice. The respondents from international jurisdictions indicated that they would be available to participate in any discussions surrounding the development of a framework in Canada and to lend their experiences and expertise to the enterprise.

There was a general consensus among the Canadian interviewed for the study that the *status quo* with respect to police research in Canada is untenable and inefficient. It is viewed as depriving academics, policy-makers, police services and communities with access to information that could guide evidence-based policy and practice. The extent to which these perspectives are considered and the opportunities acted upon will depend upon the efforts of all parties.

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