

Report in Focus

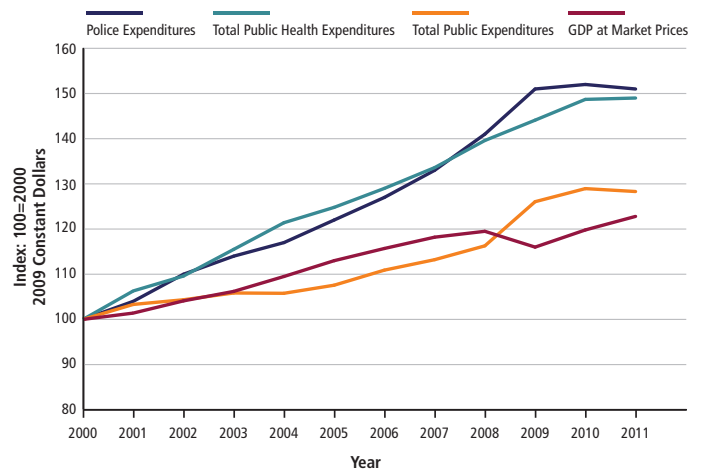
POLICING CANADA IN THE 21ST CENTURY: NEW POLICING FOR NEW CHALLENGES

Police have played a critical role in Canadian communities for nearly three centuries, yet today they stand at a pivotal point in their development. *Policing Canada in the 21st Century: New Policing for New Challenges* looks at the context in which police operate and the unprecedented demands they face at a time when effectiveness, accountability, and cost are foremost in the minds of the public they serve, and when public demand for safety and security remains undiminished, despite falling rates in crime reported to police.

Among the many developments that are redefining today's policing context is the fact that police are now just one of many actors providing safety and security. This poses questions about their core role and purpose, and the continued prevalence of a traditional policing model that is reactive in nature, geographical in focus, and structured for officers qualified for general constabulary duties. Another development is the inflation of police costs, which is forcing various levels of government to re-examine the sustainability of their policing models. These pressures, which are being felt by police not just in Canada but also internationally, are generating wide debate on the sustainability and effectiveness of current models of policing and how these models can succeed in the 21st century.

CHARGE TO THE EXPERT PANEL

To help inform this debate, Public Safety Canada, with support from Justice Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, asked the Council of Canadian Academies (the Council) to undertake an expert panel assessment bringing together the available evidence on how to improve policing. Specifically, Public Safety Canada asked the following question:



Data Source: CCJS & SC, 2013; SC, 2013a, 2013b

Figure 1

Trends in Police Expenditures Relative to GDP in Canada, 2000–2011

By presenting expenditure data as an index, the figure shows relative increases that have occurred in different areas of public expenditures against a baseline year of 2000. Although police expenditures have increased at a more rapid rate than total public expenditures, they have increased at a rate similar to that of public health-care expenditures. From the early 2000s police expenditures grew faster than GDP, making policing relatively more expensive. This trend reversed in 2009 when GDP once again began to rise faster than police expenditures.

Given the evolution of crime, the justice system, and society, what do current evidence and knowledge suggest about the future of the public policing models used in Canada?

To address the charge, the Council assembled a multidisciplinary panel of 12 experts (the Panel) from Canada and abroad. The Panel's composition reflects a balance of expertise, experience, and demonstrated leadership in a number of areas relevant to the charge, including the areas of police reform, police administration and governance, criminology, and law. The Panel drew from a detailed review of peer-reviewed literature, official reports, and statistics.

The Safety and Security Web

The Panel adopted the term “safety and security web” to describe the way policing operates across a network of agencies, and used this concept as a framework for its findings. The safety and security web — the context in which police now operate — comprises an increasing number of non-police organizations (e.g., private security, health professionals, community and municipal groups, and other government organizations) that interact with police in the provision of safety and security (see Figure 2). This web presents both the central challenge and the central opportunity for today’s police. Working effectively within and through this web — rather than as isolated entities — will allow policing organizations to better respond to existing and emerging issues. Other important contextual changes include shifts in the nature of threats and crime, the demand for greater cost-effectiveness, and the emergence of a body of knowledge on what works best in policing. Although police have begun to adapt to this evolving context, more change is needed if they are to overcome organizational and operational challenges, including the rising costs of policing. Read more about the web and the challenges facing police in Chapters 1 and 2 of the report.

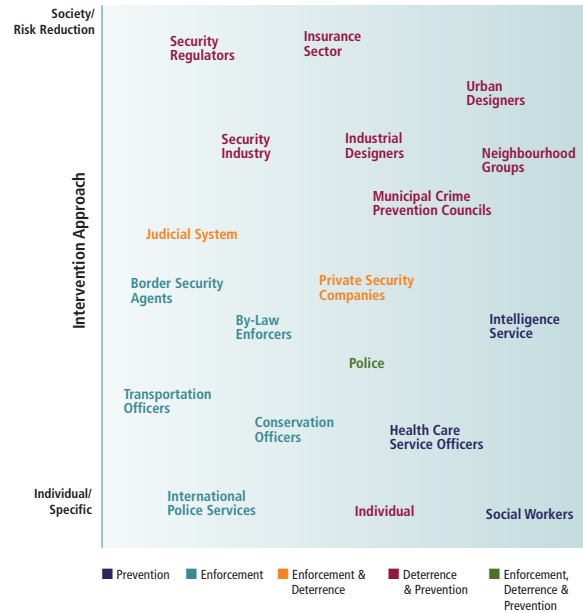


Figure 2

The Diversity of Actors in the Safety and Security Web

Public safety and security, although a public good, are undertaken by many kinds of providers, both public and private. Some actors focus on reduction of risk through society-wide interventions, while others are more oriented towards intervening at the individual level. The activities that actors perform range from those focused on preventing crime, to deterring crime, to enforcing the law. Police are primarily oriented towards managing risk at the individual level, and their activities are focused on all three areas: enforcement, deterrence, and prevention.

Key Findings

Successful policing models require police to adapt to, and leverage, the specialized capabilities and resources in the safety and security web.

The one-size-fits-all model of today’s municipal police services, whereby officers are trained to respond to a variety of situations from traffic incidents to violent crime, was established for a different risk environment and time. Improving efficiencies in the face of complex modern-age crimes and leveraging the skill-sets and resources of professionals outside of the traditional police service are important. Operating effectively within the safety and security web requires clarity in police roles, so that police can decide when best to engage the unique assets of other actors and when to follow through on opportunities for fostering partnerships (see Box 1). This means that, in some instances, police are leaders, while in others they are supporting partners. Effective adaptation also requires an understanding that the safety and security web is geographically variable —

its structure is determined by local conditions, available safety and security providers, and community capabilities and initiatives. To succeed, policing models must be tailored to the local context and possess the flexibility to adapt further, since the safety and security web continues to evolve.

BOX 1: Community Mobilization Prince Albert: A Promising Example of Web Policing

The Community Mobilization Prince Albert initiative brings together some 15 community agencies twice a week, including the Prince Albert Police Service, to discuss high-risk situations and coordinate integrated responses through the mobilization of resources. In 2012–2013, 307 situations were discussed at these sessions, known as “the Hub.” In that period, response teams involved an average of 4.8 agencies for each situation, with the lead agency determined by the nature of the issue. Since launching the initiative in early 2011, Prince Albert has seen a notable drop in its violent crime severity index, with a decrease of 25% in 2012 alone, the largest reduction since 1998.

“Policing is becoming increasingly complex thanks to multiple security actors and new types of crimes.”

– Hon. Stephen Goudge, Q.C., Expert Panel Chair

Evidence-based policing and increased professionalization of police would optimize their role in the safety and security web.

Improving the professionalization of police can systematically prepare employees to focus on the tasks best suited to their unique powers. This would involve a greater investment in, and use of, the best evidence and best practices in policing, such as those illustrated in Table 1. It would also involve differentiation of roles within police organizations, with less reliance on generalist police officers — who are needed for first-responder work — and more reliance on accredited police specialists with the know-how to address new threats like cybercrime and to manage partnerships in the safety and security web. This level of professionalization requires broad agreement among the police community on an evidence-based professional police practice, engagement in police-related research, and sound performance measures. An example of such an approach is the recently established College of Policing for England and Wales. This professional body has a mandate to advance leadership, learning, evidence-based approaches, and standards for police practice. Read more about opportunities for supporting these transitions in Chapters 5 and 6 of the report.

Table 1
Systematic Reviews of Evidence-Based Policing Interventions

What Works?	What's Promising?	What Doesn't Work?
Hot spot policing (Braga <i>et al.</i> , 2012)	Information-gathering interrogation methods (Meissner <i>et al.</i> , 2012)	Second responder programs (Davis <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
Focused deterrence (Braga & Weisburd, 2012)	Programs to increase procedural justice and enhance legitimacy (Mazerolle <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	Stress management programs (Patterson <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
Problem-oriented policing (Weisburd <i>et al.</i> , 2008)		Community policing to reduce crime (Gill <i>et al.</i> , 2014)
Directed patrol for gun violence (Goss <i>et al.</i> , 2008)		
Neighbourhood watch (Bennett <i>et al.</i> , 2008)		
DNA for police investigations (Wilson <i>et al.</i> , 2011)		

Some police interventions are more effective than others at achieving results. This table identifies a range of interventions that, from systematic reviews of research, have been shown to work or show promise. It also identifies those that have been found ineffective; for example, community-oriented policing has positively contributed to citizen satisfaction and police legitimacy, but has had limited impact, as practiced, on reducing either reported crime or the fear of crime.

The diversity of actors in the safety and security web creates accountability concerns that have yet to be addressed.

When police break the law, they are accountable through the courts and the *Criminal Code*. When laws are not broken but public confidence is breached, police are subject to multiple mechanisms of accountability for propriety. These types of accountability mechanisms, however, are not yet in place to the same degree for private security and other actors in the safety and security web. As these non-police actors come to play more extensive roles and engage in more sophisticated partnerships, the need to develop accountability structures for all actors in the web is expected to grow. Public security boards have been proposed as one promising solution; membership on these boards would include professionals and community group leaders from the civilian population who are representative of the public, and who have some expertise to help set police priorities while ensuring human rights (Patten *et al.*, 1999; LCC, 2006). With authority that spans multiple jurisdictions, these boards have the potential to oversee the full range of safety and security providers for both propriety and efficacy.

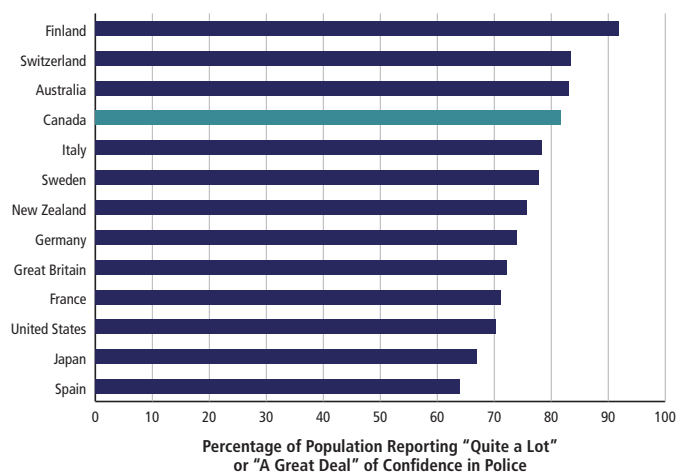


Figure 3
Public Confidence in Police, by Country, 2005–2008
Confidence in police is high in Canada relative to that in other countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Data from the World Values Survey (collected between 2005–2008) show that more than 80% of Canadians report having “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in police.

“Dynamic and collaborative approaches to policing are required for the 21st century.”

– Hon. Stephen Goudge, Q.C., Expert Panel Chair



Governments can serve as enablers of safety and security by ensuring that the safety and security web serves the public interest.

The production of safety and security is a whole-of-society affair involving multiple jurisdictions and many mandates beyond the policing system. Police cannot initiate change on their own if the institutions and organizations in the wider safety and security web are not flexible. An effective transition to new policing models must therefore happen in concert with changes made by other actors, supported by governments. Governance of the web must also support the broader objective of freedom from harm and ensure that the public interest is served. While the diffusion of successful models can be encouraged, no one model is universally applicable given the diversity of local crime contexts and community-based safety and security efforts.

The Panel identified various potential options through which governments at all levels could shape the future of a well-functioning safety and security web. Such options include: regulations and policies that foster safe and secure environments and optimize accountability across the safety and security web; strategies that combine multiple safety and security approaches across traditional sectors; adequate support for all actors in the safety and security web; and governance structures that coordinate and incentivize police and other providers to achieve safety and security in a manner that accounts for their unique roles.

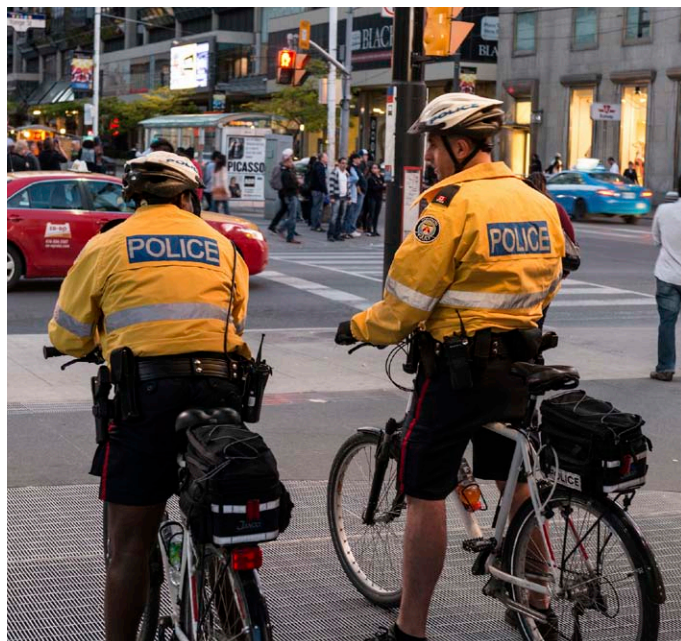
Knowledge gaps hinder the optimization of the safety and security web.

Police everywhere are working in the web, albeit to varying degrees. Understanding this variation and identifying the most promising web practices that increase safety and security in different contexts is important to understand the scope of opportunities and related challenges for Canada. There is, however, a lack of adequate and comparable data on crime and victimization levels, and on police costs and their use of resources, especially in the context of the safety and security web. This makes it difficult to evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of police and to develop the knowledge base that can optimize the functioning of the safety and security web.

Canada’s distinctive tripartite (federal, provincial, and municipal) policing system and the influential role of the RCMP at all three policing levels provide a unique context within which Canadian policing must evolve, and one that would benefit from further research. While providing diverse and sometimes dynamic national, regional, and locally based responses, this policing structure also presents some systemic challenges and limitations, many of which need more research especially given increasing multijurisdictional crime and security issues, and the corresponding need for more integrated “national” policing responses. Important research gaps include the coordination and clarification of policing roles and responsibilities in cross-jurisdictional federal and municipal policing activities such as drugs, the internet, and terrorism, and the problematic issue of establishing “national” policing standards and policies.

Successful 21st-century policing requires adaptation, knowledge, and interdependence by stakeholders at all levels operating within the safety and security web.

Transformational change requires the engagement of Canadian stakeholders at all levels of government, as well as across the police sector. The Panel identified three dominant themes that, if embraced by all stakeholders, could initiate change. (1) *Adaptation*: Any policing model cannot be singularly applicable across all of Canada but needs to be flexible and tailored to local contexts and capacities. (2) *Interdependence*: As the complexity of police responses to



crime grows, so too will the reliance upon resources, knowledge, and capabilities external to most police services. This type of resource interdependency requires police to become more adept at managing partnerships towards strategic goals and to become more open to shared roles in delivering safety and security in a cost-effective manner. (3) *Knowledge*: By further developing and applying the growing body of police and public safety knowledge, 21st-century policing can be more effective and better aligned with the ever-changing environment in which police now operate.

CONCLUSION

Canadian policing organizations are under increasing pressure to improve the effectiveness and efficiency with which they deliver safety and security. An effective transition to new models needs to happen in concert with changes by other actors in the safety and security web, and in concert with all levels of government. Successful policing models in the future will embrace adaptation, knowledge, and interdependence, with recognition that no one solution can apply to all jurisdictions. *Policing Canada in the 21st Century: New Policing for New Challenges* offers critical insights to help policing organizations better understand their operating context and more effectively position themselves for future challenges.

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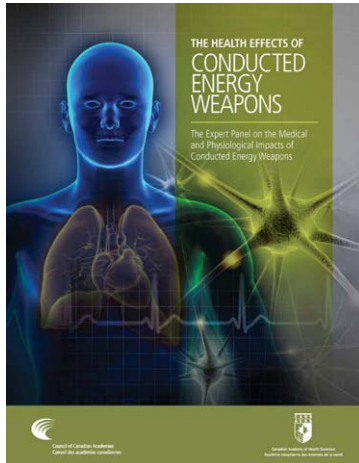
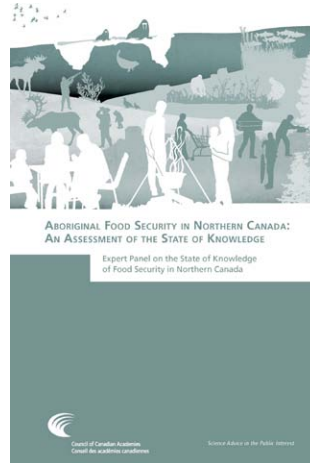
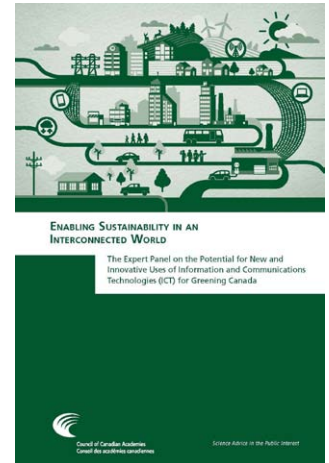
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SC (Statistics Canada). (2013b). *Table 380-0106 – Gross Domestic Product at 2007 Constant Prices, Expenditure-based, Annual (Dollars), CANSIM (Database)*. Ottawa (ON): Statistics Canada.

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OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST:
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This *Report in Focus* was prepared by the Council based on the Report of the Expert Panel on the Future of Canadian Policing Models.